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Roennfeldt, Ray C. William, Ph.D.

Andrews University, 1990

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# Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

CLARK H. PINNOCK'S SHIFT IN HIS DOCTRINE
OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY AND RELIABILITY
AN ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

bу

Ray C. W. Roennfeldt
December 1990

#### CLARK H. PINNOCK'S SHIFT IN HIS DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY AND RELIABILITY AN ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE

A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

by

R. C. W. Roennfeldt

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#### ABSTRACT

CLARK H. PINNOCK'S SHIFT IN HIS DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY AND RELIABILITY AN ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE

by

Ray C. W. Roennfeldt

Faculty Adviser: Raoul Dederen

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH Dissertation

#### Andrews University

#### Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: CLARK H. PINNOCK'S SHIFT IN HIS DOCTRINE
OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY AND RELIABILITY:
AN ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE

Name of researcher: Ray C. W. Roennfeldt

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Raoul Dederen, Dr. ès. Sc. Morales
Date completed: December 1990

This study investigates Clark H. Pinnock's shift in his doctrine of biblical authority and reliability.

A brief introduction, delineating the objectives, method, and delimitations of the study, is followed by an historical survey of developments in regard to biblical authority and reliability from the sixteenth century onwards. There were few doubts regarding scriptural authority and veracity until the rise of English Deism, biblical criticism, and religious liberalism. The resulting demolition of the traditional view of Scripture was protested by Fundamentalism, then by evangelicalism. Contemporary evangelicals, however, reveal little uniformity in regard to the doctrine of Scripture. Pinnock's own role in the Southern Baptist inerrancy debates can be viewed as representative of that diversity.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of Pinnock's major concerns, shaping influences, and shifts of opinion regarding apologetics,

soteriology, theology proper, political theology, and Pentecostalism. His desire that evangelical theology be both conservative and contemporary is revealed in his development in all these themes.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on Pinnock's early and later thinking concerning biblical authority/reliability. The early Pinnock considered that Scripture explicitly taught the inerrancy of the original autographs. He qualified the inerrancy category by reference to the "intention" of the text, regarded biblical difficulties as "apparent," and argued from biblical reliability to authority. The later Pinnock attempts to move conservatives toward acceptance of Scripture's human form. He rejects his earlier view as inadequate from the standpoint of biblical teaching and the role of the Spirit. A strict view of inerrancy is now considered incompatible with anything less than a deterministic doctrine of God.

The final chapter evaluates the strengths, weaknesses, and consistency of Pinnock's two views and suggests the reason/s for his shift. While the early Pinnock stresses the divine role in inscripturation, the later seems to emphasize the human. His conclusions in each of these periods reflect his presuppositions. Pinnock's change of perspective is probably the consequence of a Calvinism to Arminianism paradigm shift which began with his soteriology, moved to his doctrine of God, and filtered into his view of Scripture. He may need to make adjustments to his system to maintain a high view of biblical authority and reliability.

To Carmel, Claire, and Jonathan

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How does one come to choose a particular topic for a dissertation? Many academic and not a few practical concerns have combined to ignite and fan my interest in the subject of biblical authority and reliability. My parents, Clarence and Faith Roennfeldt, were responsible for my early, thorough-going conviction that the Scriptures are God's Word. However, their's was no easy acceptance of the Bible--biblical difficulties were acknowledged, answers were sought, and unresolved problems were lived with--yet biblical authority was never evaded. My students at Omaura Bible School (Papua New Guinea) and Avondale College (Australia) served to further focus my attention on biblical reliability.

Many others, too many to mention by name, have contributed to this work. To Dr. Raoul Dederen, for his stimulating lectures and seminars on biblical inspiration and for his guidance and friendship as chairman of my dissertation committee, I am particularly grateful. Such is my admiration for him that I chose him as my chairman before finally settling on my topic. In addition, I would like to thank Drs. Kenneth Strand and Fernando Canale, the other members of my committee, for their constructive criticism and encouragement.

This project would not have been started without the support, both moral and financial, of Avondale College, the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, and the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Special thanks go also to the staff of the James White Library at Andrews University for assistance in acquiring many of the items essential to my research. In addition, I am grateful for the efforts of Joyce Jones, the dissertation secretary at

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Professor Clark Pinnock, the subject of this study, deserves specific mention. He cheerfully allowed me two days for questions and discussion, gave me typescript copies of all his forthcoming articles, lent me his dissertation and other irreplacable materials, and has responded by latter and telephone to my requests for additional information. Above all, along with his wife, Dorothy, and daughter, Sarah, Dr. Pinnock opened his home so that I was able to observe him at table, recreation, and worship, as well in his more public roles as theologian, teacher, and writer. I have not always agreed with his conclusions, but I have great admiration for the ability and forthrightness with which he presents his case.

Words cannot express the gratitude I feel for the support of my family. To my two sets of parents (by birth and marriage), thank you for your willingness to allow your children and grandchildren to live on the other side of the world for almost four years. To my children, Claire and Jonathan, thanks for allowing me to use the computer when you wanted to and for sometimes giving me peace and quiet. What can I say to my beloved wife, Carmel? You often sacrificed your own academic pursuits for mine, you set deadlines for me when I was too tired to set them for myself, and you provided the love, care, and support which brought this "monster" to completion. Thank you!

Finally "thanks be to God, who always leads us" (2 Cor 2:14; NIV).

#### INTRODUCTION

Clark Harold Pinnock, presently Professor of Systematic
Theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, has
attained a position of considerable eminence within evangelicalism and
may well represent the evangelical theology of the future. Robert M.
Price remarks that while it is perhaps too early to spot Carl F. H.
Henry's successor as the new dean of evangelical theologians, "it
would not be surprising to see the name of Clark H. Pinnock rise to
the +op" and that "to understand Pinnock's theology may well be to
understand the evangelical theology of the coming generation." Still
in his early fifties, Pinnock is at the height of his writing career.
Articles, reviews, and books written or edited by him are flowing in a
steady stream from a variety of publishing houses.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Price, "Clark Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," Evangelical Quarterly 60 (1988): 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock's writings encompass the doctrine of Scripture and theological motifs as varied as the doctrines of God, Christ, man, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the Christian life, eschatology, political theology, as well as Christian apologetics and evangelism (see chap. 2). Books written or edited by Pinnock include A Defense of Biblical Infallibility (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967); Set Forth Your Case: Studies in Christian Apologetics (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1967); A New Reformation: A Challenge to Southern Eaptists (Tigerville, SC: Jewel Books, 1968); Evangelism and Truth (Tigerville, SC: Jewel Books, 1969); Biblical Revelation: The Foundation of Christian Theology (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971; reprinted [with a "Foreword" by J. I. Packer], Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1985); Toward a Theology for the Future, edited with David F. Wells (Carol Stream, IL: Creation House, 1971); Are There Any Answers? (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1972, 1974); Truth on Fire: The Message of Galatians (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1972); Grace Unlimited, edited by Pinnock (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1975); Reason Enough: A Case for the Christian Faith (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980); The Scripture Principle (San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1984); Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1985); The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism, edited by

#### Statement and Justification of the Problem

The particular problem addressed in this dissertation is Pinnock's theological development and shift of opinion in regard to the nature of, as well as the relationship between, biblical authority and reliability.

In addition to Pinnock's prominence within evangelicalism, I have chosen his work for several other reasons. First, he has written extensively on the doctrine of Scripture. His two books, <u>Biblical Revelation: The Foundation of Christian Theology</u> (1971)<sup>1</sup> and <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), which provide the major resources for this study, stand as the twin peaks of his theological endeavors. Yet, these works, although dealing with the same subject, appear to offer two distinct views of "the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture."<sup>2</sup>

Of course, many other articles and books disclose Pinnock's prior development and later defense of the positions espoused in the above-mentioned works. These include "The Case Against Form Criticism" (1965), A Defense of Biblical Infallibility (1967), Our Source of Authority: The Bible" (1967), and "The Inspiration of the

Pinnock (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1989); <u>Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way Through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective</u> (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990); and <u>Theological Crossfire: An Evangelical-Liberal Debate</u>, with Delwin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., forthcoming 1990-91).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Hereinafter referred to as <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See J. I. Packer, "Foreword," in <u>Biblical Revelation</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock (1985 ed.), 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "The Case Against Form Criticism," <u>Christianity</u> <u>Today</u>, July 16, 1965, 12-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>A Defense of Biblical Infallibility</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, "Our Source of Authority: The Bible," <u>Bibliotheca Sacra</u> 124 (1967): 150-56.

New Testament" (1968), 1 all of which anticipated Pinnock's <u>Biblical</u>

<u>Revelation</u> (1971); while "The Inspiration of Scripture and the

Authority of Jesus Christ" (1974) and "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical

Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" (1974)<sup>2</sup> represent his

continuing explanation of that perspective. Likewise, Pinnock's

"'. . . This Treasure in Earthen Vessels': The Inspiration and

Interpretation of the Bible" (1980), 3 and "A Response to Rex A.

Koivisto" (1981)<sup>4</sup> forewarned of the content of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>

(1984); whereas in his "Reflections on <u>The Scripture Principle</u>"

(1986), 5 "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy" (1987), 6 and "The Battle

over the Bible" (1989), 7 Pinnock has continued to defend and define

his latest thinking regarding Scripture.8

Second, it seems that biblical authority, reliability, and their connection stand together as Pinnock's central concern in both

<sup>1</sup> Idem, "The Inspiration of the New Testament," in <u>The Bible--The Living Word of Revelation</u>, ed. Merrill C. Tenney (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1968), 141-61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, "The Inspiration of Scripture and the Authority of Jesus Christ" and "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative," both in <u>God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture</u>, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1974), 201-18 and 143-58, respectively.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, "'. . . This Treasure in Earthen Vessels': The Inspiration and Interpretation of the Bible" <u>Sojourners</u>, October 1980, 16-19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto," <u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 24 (1981): 153-55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, "Reflections on <u>The Scripture Principle</u>," <u>TSF Bulletin</u>, March-April, 1986, 8-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Idem, "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy," in <u>The Proceedings</u> of the <u>Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987</u> (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 95-101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Idem, "The Battle over the Bible," <u>Equipping the Saints</u>, January 1989, 15-18, 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Further items are available in my chronological bibliography of Pinnock's works (pp. 374-86).

his early and later works on the Bible. For instance, in the leading paragraph of his "Conclusion" in <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), Pinnock states: "To cast doubt on the complete veracity and authority of Scripture is a criminal act creating a crisis of immense proportions for theology and faith." In a similar vein, Pinnock concludes his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984) by confessing that at times he has "felt like rejecting biblical inerrancy," but in the end he has had "to bow to the wisdom that says we need to be unmistakably clear in our convictions about biblical authority."

Third, an examination of Pinnock's reflections on the scriptural authority/reliability issue is clearly relevant in the current theological climate. James Barr, for instance, contends that the question of the authority of the Bible "underlies many of the problems within modern biblical study, even where it is not expressly mentioned." The whole idea of authority was called into question by a new way of thinking which began with the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and was enhanced by the scientific movement of the nineteenth century.

Pinnock, Biblical Revelation (1971), 228.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Barr, "Scripture, Authority of," <u>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</u>, suppl. vol., ed. Keith Crim (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1976), 794. In answer to the question as to what is meant by authority and, more particularly, biblical authority, Barr describes authority as "a term which defines relations," which, when it is used in connection with Scripture, defines the relationship between the Bible and ourselves and between the Bible and other religious sources or documents. It means, in Barr's view, that the Bible is "binding" on us; that we must "submit" ourselves to it because it comes "from God" (pp. 794-95).

While not accepting Barr's opinion that the idea of the divine origin of the Bible must be formulated to include historical inaccuracies, contradictions and even "theological imperfection" (p. 794), Taccept his basic definition of biblical authority for our purposes here. Moreover, such a definition describes well the general attitude toward the Bible throughout most of Christian history.

<sup>&</sup>quot;See C. H. Dodd, <u>The Authority of the Bible</u> (Glasgow, Scotland: Collins, 1929, 1960), 19.

At the same time, scriptural reliability also found itself in great difficulty with the rise of a critical, scientific, and historical approach to Scripture which seems to have been planted by the English Deists, spread to the Continent, and flowered in Protestant liberalism. This critical approach has meant that the traditional view of biblical authority (which was at least partly based on the reliability of Scripture) has become "untenable for those who are not willing to keep their religious beliefs isolated from the rest of their thinking." To put it simply, modern man does not take

<sup>&#</sup>x27;As a basis from which to work, we will define biblical reliability in terms of inerrancy which means that "when all the facts become known, they will demonstrate that the Bible [when] . . . correctly interpreted is entirely true and never false in all it affirms, whether that relates to doctrine or ethics or to the social, physical, or life sciences." This is Paul D. Feinberg's definition without his original autographs qualification regarding inerrancy (Feinberg, "Bible, Inerrancy and Infallibility of," Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984], 142).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Henning Graf Reventlow, <u>The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World</u>, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984). For a brief portrayal of "the roots of the eclipse of authority," see Gerhard F. Hasel, <u>Understanding the Living Word of God</u> (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1980), 18-28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Dodd, 19. Observe that Barr repudiates out of hand any connection between biblical reliability (or inerrancy) and authority. He critically reviews four other options which have been proposed as bases for biblical authority (i.e., the Bible's character as the classical literature of the people of God; its relation to the events which it narrates and from which it derives; its theology; and Scripture as cumulative tradition [Barr, 795-97]), concluding that the ultimate question is whether or not Scripture is relevant to the contemporary situation (p. 797). Thus, it seems that even Barr cannot entirely elude a version of the biblical reliability/authority relationship, since his canon of relevancy can be construed in terms of functional reliability.

For a more complete account of Barr's positions, see his <u>The Scope and Authority of the Bible</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1980), 52-54. Note that Paul J. Achtemeier ("The Authority of the Bible: What Shall We Then Preach?" <u>TSF Bulletin</u>, November-December, 1986, 19-22) takes a similar position which he summarizes as follows: "It is finally the Christian community . . . who determines what in fact constitutes the authoritative speaking and hearing of the Word of God" (p. 19). See also Krister Stendahl's attempt to build a hermeneutical system on this view in his "Ancient Scripture in the Modern World" (in <u>Scripture in the Jewish and Christian Traditions: Authority, Interpretation, Relevance</u>, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1982], 201-214). In contrast to Barr and Stendahl, all the contributors in James M. Boice, ed., <u>The</u>

kindly to any concept of authority, let alone biblical authority!1

If biblical authority is a "hot" issue among theologians of Barr's ilk, it is even more so among evangelicals. Robert K. Johnston maintains that the acceptance of biblical authority is the second of evangelicalism's two tenets, and that it is this characteristic which really sets evangelicals off from their fellow Christians. But, the similarity among evangelicals ends there, since they are at an "impasse" concerning the nature of scriptural reliability and the authority/reliability relationship. 3

Fourth, in spite of Pinnock's prominence no doctoral study has been devoted exclusively to his views. Three dissertations do, however, discuss portions of Pinnock's work. Ronald W. Leigh's 1980 dissertation discussed disagreements and incompatibilities within the apologetical writings of Bernard Ramm, Francis Schaeffer, John Warwick Montgomery, Clark Pinnock, Paul Little, Edward J. Carnell, Henry Morris, Josh McDowell, and F. F. Bruce.<sup>4</sup>

Foundation of Biblical Authority (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1278) build their case on the premise that inerrancy is the foundation of biblical authority.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See, for instance, John D. Zizioulas' contribution in E. Jüngel, G. Krodel, R. Marlé, and J. D. Zizioulas, "Four Preliminary Considerations on the Concept of Authority" (appendix to James Barr's "The Authority of the Bible: A Study Outline"], <u>Ecumenical Review</u> 21 (1969): 160-66. Zizioulas remarks that "in the history of Christianity the problem of authority appears to be a 'Western problem'" (p. 166).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Johnston, <u>Evangelicals at an Impasse: Biblical Authority in Practice</u> (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1979), 3. Johnston considers that the first tenet of evangelicalism is belief in "the need for personal relationship with God through faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Johnston notes that evangelicals are heatedly divided into camps which espouse detailed inerrancy, partial infallibility, irenic inerrancy, and complete infallibility (ibid., 19-35).

Leigh, "Incongruities within the Literature Adopted for Teaching Apologetics at Schools Which Are Members of the American Association of Bible Colleges" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1980). Leigh concludes that Pinnock disagrees with some of the other apologists regarding common ground between the believer and the unbeliever (p. 101), that Pinnock uses a circular argument for

In 1981 Robert M. Price completed a dissertation on the evangelical "crisis" concerning biblical authority. He discussed five major approaches to biblical authority and inerrancy—"limited inerrancy" (Daniel P. Fuller and Clark H. Pinnock), "partial infallibilism" (Jack Rogers, George Eldon Ladd, and Donald G. Bloesch), "pluriform canonists" (James D. G. Dunn, John Goldingay, and Charles H. Kraft), "cultural deabsolutizing" (Virginia Mollenkott and Charles H. Kraft), and the rejection of sola scriptura in favor of ecclesiastical and creedal authority (Robert Webber and Peter Gillquist). Price contends that all these strategies designed to salvage biblical authority are hermeneutical devices imported from contemporary non-Evangelical theologies, including Neo-orthodoxy. <sup>2</sup>

John Paul Nyquist's dissertation, completed in 1984,<sup>3</sup> concludes that the theologians included in his study could be divided into three categories: (1) those who are essentially orthodox, but have a process "quirk" in their theology (i.e., J. Oliver Buswell and Barry Applewhite); (2) those who once held to classical theism, but are now "reconsidering" (i.e., Clark Pinnock, Ronald Nash, and Bernard Ramm); and (3) those who are "essentially evangelicals in name only" (i.e., Paul Mickey, Donald Bloesch, and Nicolas Wolterstorff).<sup>4</sup>

Scripture (pp. 90-91), and that minor incongruities between Pinnock and the other apologists were sometimes due to differing theological presuppositions (pp. 124-25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Price, "The Crisis of Biblical Authority: The Setting and Range of the Current Evangelical Crisis" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1981).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 93, 249-53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Nyquist, "An Evaluation of the Inroads of Process Theology into Contemporary Evangelicalism" (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 161-62. Also worthy of mention is Mary Jane digh's "The Development of Clark Pinnock's Concept of Biblical Authority" (M.Th. thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1989). High examines Pinnock's view of biblical authority by tracing his developments in the areas of theology, epistemology, hermeneutics, and use of the historical-critical methodology. She concludes that

These, and other secondary materials, have been used especially in the evaluative sections of this study. 1

Finally, Pinnock's development in regard to biblical authority and reliability provides a convenient launching pad for a study of two of the alternatives facing contemporary evangelicals and Seventh-day Adventists.<sup>2</sup>

#### Purpose and Scope of the Study

The purpose of this study is to set forth, analyze, and evaluate Clark Pinnock's views and developments in regard to biblical authority and reliability, with the ultimate goal of discovering the reason(s) for his shift in perspective. In order to reach our objectives it is necessary to study these matters within the context of Pinnock's personal and theological background, other parts of his theological system, and various connected aspects of Pinnock's doctrine of Scripture.

It should be observed, however, that this dissertation is delimited in several respects. First, while including facets of

Pinnock's "doctrine of biblical authority demonstrates surprising consistency" throughout his theological career (p. 118).

¹Particular attention is directed to Rex A. Koivisto, "Clark Pinnock and Inerrancy: A Change in Truth Theory?" <u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 24 (1981): 139-51; Robert M. Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 157-183; Delwin Brown, "Rethinking Authority from the Right: A Critical Review of Clark Pinnock's <u>Scripture Principle</u>," <u>Christian Scholar's Review</u> 19 (1989): 66-72; and Robert V. Rakestraw, "Clark H. Pinnock: A Theological Odyssey," <u>Christian Scholar's Review</u> 19 (1990): 250-70 (a slightly expanded version of the latter article with a bibliography of Pinnock's works is also in <u>Baptist Theologians</u>, ed. Timothy George and David Dockery [Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, forthcoming 1990]).

The alternatives offered by Pinnock are similar to the ones which face the Seventh-day Adventist Church, not only in regard to Scripture, but also in reference to Ellen G. White. See, for instance, Arthur L. White's discussion of inerrancy and conservative non-inerrancy in his "Toward an Adventist Concept of Inspiration," series in the Adventist Review, January 12, 1978, 4-6; January 19, 1978, 7-9; January 26, 1978; 6-8; and February 2, 1978, 6-8 (since reprinted in Arthur J. White, Inspiration and the Ellen G. White Writings: A Reprint of Articles Published in the "Adventist Review" [(Washington, D.C.): Review and Herald Pub., 1978], 3-12).

Pinnock's overall outlook that particularly impinge on the topic under discussion, this study does not provide an exhaustive coverage of the total scope of Pinnock's theology, or even of his views on revelation, inspiration, illumination, canonicity, hermeneutics, and the witness of the Spirit, important as these factors may be to him. Such an approach is justified in that Pinnock's emphasis appears to be on scriptural authority and reliability.

Second, the focus of this study will be on Pinnock's view of biblical authority and reliability rather than on the way that he uses Scripture, although, undoubtedly, there is a close connection between the two. Bernard Ramm is certainly correct in his assertion that there is "no absolute correlation between what a theologian thinks about Scripture and how he uses it," but it would also be difficult to deny that there is a high degree of correlation. Although this study does not substantially enter the issue of whether Pinnock's use of the Bible is consistent with his view of its authority and reliability, it will become evident that he attempts to submit every area of Christian life and teaching to the scriptural standard.

Finally, this dissertation exhibits the limitations (and hopefully, some of the strengths as well) of any study done in the field of systematic theology. It does not purport to provide the kind of biblical exegesis, even of the most relevant passages, which would be expected of work done in the arena of biblical studies.

Nonetheless, our evaluation of Pinnock's development regarding biblical authority and reliability is based, not only on the inner consistency of his views, but also on how they measure up to the biblical materials. While this study does not discuss my own views,

As already intimated above; see pp. 3-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ramm, "Is 'Scripture Alone' the Essence of Christianity?" in <u>Biblical Authority</u>, ed. Jack Rogers (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1977), 115 (emphasis supplied).

the discerning reader will find that my critique of Pinnock's positions proceeds from within my own Seventh-day Adventist tradition.

#### Outline of the Study

In that this dissertation will attempt a description, analysis, and evaluation of Pinnock's views, I have, insofar as is possible, adopted a method of organization that maintains consonance with his chronological development.

Chapter 1 purposes to provide a glimpse of the landscape within which Pinnock's theology of Scripture has developed. In that Pinnock finds his roots in evangelicalism, the Reformation provides our starting point for a survey of the biblical authority/reliability debate. The Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the rise of Protestant liberalism, all come into focus as we trace the factors that combined to produce Fundamentalism's inerrancy emphasis and the contemporary evangelical diversity over the same issue. The context is sharpened further, particularly in relation to Pinnock's doctrine of Scripture, by reference to Pinnock's early life, development, and role within his own Baptist tradition.

The emphasis in chapter 2 is on Pinnock as a theologian. His major concerns, shaping influences, significant developments, and shifts of opinion are examined in regard to his theological reflections regarding apologetics, soteriology, the doctrine of God, political theology, and the New Pentecostalism. Only those aspects of his theological contribution which have particular bearing on his convictions regarding biblical authority and reliability have been treated.

A description and analysis of Pinnock's early and later thinking on the scriptural authority/reliability issue is attempted in chapters 3 and 4. Attention is given to the "crises" which precipitated his writing,<sup>1</sup> the way in which he saw biblical authority interrelating with other facets of what he considered to be a pattern of theological authority, the implications of scriptural authority, the nature of biblical reliability, and the several directions of operation which he saw in the relationship between scriptural authority and reliability.

The strengths and weaknesses of both Pinnock's early and later views are suggested in chapter 5. This evaluation is followed by in endeavor to understand the reason (or reasons) for Pinnock's shift in regard to biblical authority, scriptural reliability, and the relation between these two aspects of his doctrine of Scripture. The final section of this chapter, and of this dissertation, is devoted to a summary of findings, implications of the study, and recommendations for further research.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>That is, whom or what Pinnock saw as his primary theological opponents in regard to biblical authority and reliability.

#### CHAPTER I

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE BIBLICAL AUTHORITY/RELIABILITY DEBATE

#### Introduction

The question of authority is a central concern of twentieth-century society and its importance is heightened further when it is considered in relation to religion. This situation is only of relatively recent origin. Peter Berger notes that the pre-modern situation was "a world of religious certainty, occasionally ruptured by heretical deviations," while the modern environment is "a world of religious uncertainty, occasionally staved off by more or less precarious constructions of religious affirmation." Although not always acknowledged, pluralization is now a "worldwide phenomenon."

Protestant Christians have customarily appealed to the Bible as the solution to the problem of religious authority. However, "today the solution itself has become a problem, due to the complexity of modern

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Leonard Swidler, "Preface: The Critical Divide," in Authority in the Church and the Schillebeeckx Case, ed. Leonard Swidler and Piet F. Fransen (New York: Crossroads, 1982), 1.

Peter L. Berger, The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press Doubleday, 1979), 25 (emphasis, Berger). Clyde L. Manschreck concurs with Berger's analysis. He notes that "we live [today] in a world in which there is no generally accepted authority." See his "Presuppositional Directions for the Problem of Authority," Review and Expositor 75 (1978): 181.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Berger, 55. For Berger's complete discussion of pluralization, see his chapter entitled "Modernity as Universalization of Heresy," pp. 1-29.

biblical scholarship."<sup>1</sup> The fact is that there has always been a close connection between biblical reliability and biblical authority and when the Bible's trustworthiness is cast into question, there is a consequent loss of belief in it as a basis of religious certainty.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of a general loss of faith in biblical reliability and authority, many conservative Christians remain "whose knees have not bowed down to [the] Baal" of modernity. They stand in reaction to the tenor of the times. Nevertheless, contemporary conservative positions are partly misunderstood if they are only viewed as reactions to post-Enlightenment opinion. They have their roots at least as far back as the Reformation.

#### Construction: The Protestant Reformation

While it is becoming increasingly common to interpret the Reformation, and Martin Luther in particular, as a quite natural development of medieval theology, it is impossible to comprehend all that happened in that upheaval within such a framework. Be that as it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Egil Grislis, "Martin Luther--Cause or Cure of the Problem of Authority," <u>Consensus: A Canadian Lutheran Journal of Theology</u> 14 (1988): 24. Grislis continues: "Whether we like it or not, the floods of modernity have torn our once secure understanding of authority from its traditional moorings" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See John Warwick Montgomery, "Biblical Inerrancy: What Is at Stake?" in <u>God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture</u>, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1974), 38-40. Other works which take a similar position include James M. Boice, <u>Does Inerrancy Matter?</u> (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1981); Norman L. Geisler, ed., <u>Inerrancy</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1980); and Gordon L. Lewis and Bruce Demarest, eds., <u>Challenges to Inerrancy: A Theological Response</u> (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See, for instance, several chapters in John Olin, ed., <u>Luther, Erasmus and the Reformation: A Catholic-Protestant Reappraisal</u> (New York: Fordham University Press, 1969). Especially relevant are Robert E. McNally's "The Reformation: A Catholic Reappraisal" and John T. McDonough's "The Essential Luther," pp. 26-47 and 59-66, respectively.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See Heiko A. Oberman's "Headwaters of the Reformation: '<u>Initia Lutheri-Initia Reformationis</u>'." in <u>Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era: Papers for the Fourth International Congress for Luther Research</u>, vol. 8: Studies in the History of Christian Thought, ed. Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 40-88.

may, since contemporary evangelicalism continues to look to the sixteenth-century Reformation as the great watershed for theology and Christian life, it provides us with a convenient starting point for this investigation. 1

#### Martin Luther's View of Biblical Reliability and Authority

Martin Luther (1483-1546) "stumbled" into the question of theological authority via his convictions regarding <u>scriptura sola</u>.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Robert C. Johnson, <u>Authority in Protestant Theology</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1959), 24. Luther's own recollections (in 1545) of the circumstances surrounding the Ninety-five Theses indicate that he had not struggled with the question of theological authority previous to 1517. He explained that "I was once a monk and a most enthusiastic papist when I began that cause. I was so drunk, yes, submerged in the pope's dogmas, that I would have been ready to murder all, if I could have, or to cooperate willingly with the murderers of all who would take but a syllable from obedience to the pope" (Martin Luther, <u>Luther's Works</u>, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Lehmann (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Press, 1955-76), 34:328 [1545]). Hereinafter, this edition of Luther's works is referred to as <u>Luther's Works</u>, and the date of the writing appears in brackets immediately following the page reference.

Luther was probably led to define his view of scriptural authority in response to the attacks of such "friends" (see "Luther to John Sylvius Egranus at Zwickau," in <u>Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters</u>, vol. 1 [1507-1521], trans. and ed. Preserved Smith [Philadelphia, PA: Lutheran Publication Society, 1913], 160 [February 2, 1519]) as Eck, Tetzel, and Cajetan (Johnson, <u>Authority in Protestant Theology</u>, 24. By 1519 Luther declared that "we are simply forced to fly for refuge to that solid rock of Scripture, and not to believe anything, no matter what, that speaks, commands or does anything without this authority" ("Luther to Peter Lupinus and Andrew Carlstadt," in <u>Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters</u>, 1:159 (January (?), 1519)).

While a full-blown historical study of biblical authority and reliability (and their relationship) is outside the scope of this dissertation, an understanding of the church's doctrine of Scripture in pre-Reformation times is of major importance in that the Reformers saw themselves as heirs of earlier fathers (e.g., Augustine). In this regard, see Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, vol. 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 114-15, 209-10, 247, 303-4, and 335; Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration," in Revelation and the Bible, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1959), 203-18; and Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1979). Notice that John D. Woodbridge, Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1982), severely criticizes Rogers and McKim for their tendency to impose a particular mold on the historical data.

From the fourteenth century onwards there had been a "growing crisis in authority," and hence it comes as no surprise that this issue should be the central theme of the Reformation. Defending himself before the Diet of Worms, on April 18, 1521, Luther appealed to the Scriptures as the final authority by which he should be convinced of heresy. Thus, sola scriptura was affirmed as a basic principle of the Protestant Reformation. In fact, it is probably true to say that it is the Reformation fundamentum, because all the others depended upon it. This conviction was predicated on Luther's overwhelming sense that the Bible was the word of God.

Luther's opinions regarding the Bible were worked out in a fight on two fronts--against the Roman Catholic Church as well as the Radical Reformers. While seeking to avoid the subordination of Scripture to church tradition or the interpretative authority of the pope, he also hoped to escape its subjection to merely individual subjectivity.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, it should not be thought that Luther entirely rejected the tradition of the church or subjective experience.<sup>5</sup> It is probably preferable to see Luther's idea of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Alister E. McGrath, <u>Reformation Thought: An Introduction</u> (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 23-25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Paul Althaus, <u>The Theology of Martin Luther</u>, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1966), insists that "all Luther's theological thinking presupposes the authority of Scripture. His theology is nothing more than an attempt to interpret the Scripture. Its form is basically exegesis" (p. 3). See also William M. Landeen, <u>Martin Luther's Religious Thought</u> (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub., 1971), 1st page of "Preface" (no pagination).

<sup>3&</sup>lt;u>Luther's Works</u>, 34:227 [1538].

<sup>4</sup>See, for instance Luther's Works, 33:90 [1525].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>For Luther and the other magisterial Reformers the idea of a traditional interpretation of Scripture meant "that this traditional interpretation could be justified" from Scripture. See McGrath, p. 106 (McGrath's emphasis). Luther's personal "discovery" or "tower experience" was also to have a substantial effect on his theology, but it should be recognized that in his mind even this was based very firmly on his struggles to correctly interpret Scripture. See his autobiographical statement in <u>Luther's Works</u>, 34:334-38 [1545]. For other perspectives on the relationship of Luther's "conversion"

biblical authority within a "circle" of authority which viewed the Bible as preeminent but also included the traditional dogmas of the early church, his own interpretation, and the consensual theology of the University of Wittenberg. 1

There is little doubt that Luther considered the Scriptures to be "God's Scriptures and God's Word," while there is considerable controversy over what he meant by the "Word." This discussion is best illustrated by Luther's own statement in his "Preface to the New Testament" in which he commends the Gospel and the first epistle of John, Paul's epistles (especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians), and Peter's first epistle as "books that show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and salvatory for you to know, even if you were never to see or hear any other book of doctrine." It appears that Luther is here applying some sort of "canon" to the canon of Scripture. This has

experience on his theology, see John P. Dolan's <u>A History of the Reformation: A Conciliatory Assessment of Opposite Views</u> (New York: Desclee Co., 1965) and John M. Todd's <u>Luther: A Life</u> (New York: Crossroad Pub., 1982). Luther students are not agreed on the significance of his "tower experience" or its theological significance. For a summary of the relevant literature and the current discussion, see Kenneth A. Strand, "Current Issues and Trends in Luther Studies," <u>Andrews University Seminary Studies</u> 22 (1984): 155-56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Grislis, 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See, for example, <u>Luther's Works</u>, 22:7-14 [1537] and 34:227 [1538].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>An extended contemporary debate, which is outside the scope of this dissertation, has pursued the question as to whether or not Luther identified the Bible as the Word of God. See John K. S. Reid, The Authority of Scripture: A Study of the Reformation and the Post-Reformation Understanding of the Bible (London: Methuen and Co., 1957), 72, and Emil Brunner, Revelation and Reason: The Christian Doctrine of Faith and Knowledge, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1946), p. 145, n. 23. Both Brunner and Reid consider that for Luther Scripture is only a witness to the Word (i.e., Christ as the Word). On the other hand, A. Skevington Wood, Captive to the Word. Martin Luther: Doctor of Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), 150, and Michael Reu, Luther and the Scriptures (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1944), 17-18, conclude that Luther held the Bible to be the very Word of God. For a convenient summary of the debate see Eugene F. Klug, "Word and Scripture in Luther Studies Since World War II," Trinity Journal 5 (1984): 20-27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Luther's Works, 35:362 [1522].

become known as Luther's "christocentric" or "christological" view of Scripture.

This matter is of vital importance in understanding Martin
Luther's view of both the authority and reliability of the Scriptures.
His christocentric "canon" is seen as either a "bold critical freedom in
assessing individual books and passages," or as a hermeneutical device
designed to account for the differences between books and passages.
William Landeen adopts the latter view. He contends that Luther used a
christological approach, not to reject some books from the Christian
canon, but in order to hold together writings that appeared
dissimilar. Landeen's solution certainly has merit in that it is
able, without resorting to the category of paradox, to account for
Luther's comment that James' epistle, the "epistle of straw," is also
"a good book, because it sets up no doctrings of men but vigorously
promulgates the law of God." Luther can say that Scripture is the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>David W. Lotz in his "<u>Sola Scriptura</u>: Luther on Biblical Authority," <u>Interpretation</u> 35 (1981), considers that "by urging Scripture alone Luther was in fact urging Christ alone" (p. 273).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 260.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ See Landeen, 94-96. Eugene Klug agrees with Landeen's assessment (Klug, 27).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For an example of this explanation, see Lotz, 260.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup><u>Luther's Works</u>, 35:362 [1522]. Observe that in this remark concerning James' epistle, Luther is arguing that it is "really an epistle of straw, compared to these others [i.e., John's Gospel and first epistle; Paul's epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians; and Peter's first epistle]" that "show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and salvatory for you to know."

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 35:395 [1522]. Notice here Klaas Runia's careful comment in his "The Hermeneutics of the Reformers," Calvin Theological Journal 19 (1984): 138, that "Luther's problem is only that James preaches the law rather than the gospel." The same explanation is surely true for Luther's many positive statements regarding the Old Testament (e.g., Luther's Works, 35:238 [1523], 247 [1523], 254 [1528], and 313-314 [1530]). For a summary of Luther's teaching regarding the Old Testament, see Landeen, 93-94. However, it should be observed that Luther's christocentric principle was not without its problems. David S. Dockery, in his "Martin Luther's Christological Hermeneutics," Grace Theological Journal 4 (1983), remarks that because of this hermeneutical principle, Luther was sometimes led into forced interpretations in his

servant of Christ and exists for the sake of the gospel, but he certainly did not mean to place Christ and his gospel in opposition to Scripture; for, according to Luther, Christ and the gospel are only revealed in the Scriptures.

While Luther held that the Scriptures were to be attributed to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he also recognized the human element in his observation that "every apostle has his peculiar way of speaking, as has every prophet also." Luther had no difficulty acknowledging and remarking upon certain problems within Scripture. He observed, for instance, that Jude's epistle was a copy of the second epistle of Peter; that some of the large numbers in the Bible are

reading of New Testament meanings into the Old (p. 193). Of interest in this regard are David C. Steinmetz' "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis," Theology Today 37 (1980-81): 27-38, and Wolfhart Pannenberg's Basic Questions in Theology: Collected Essays, vol. 1, trans. George H. Kehm (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1970), 4-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup><u>Luther's Works</u>, 26:58 [1535], 295 [1535]; and 52:205 [1521-1522].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Compare this conclusion with Lotz' statement that Luther "used his Christ-principle to criticize the biblical canon itself. If Scripture must often be opposed to tradition, the need may also arise to oppose Christ to Scripture" (Lotz, 272). For a more balanced perspective, see Grislis, 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See, for instance, <u>Luther's Works</u>, 11:110 [1513-1515]; 23:16 [1530-1532]; 25:405 [1515-1516]; 35:132 [1522]; and 52:173 [1521-1522].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See <u>Luther's Works</u>, 15:280 [1543] and 275 [1543].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Martin Luther, <u>Dr. Martin Luther's sämmtliche Werke</u>, 67 vols., ed. Johann G. Plochmann and Johann K. Innischer (Erlangen: C. Heyder, 1826-57), 52:90 [Luther's date of writing unavailable]; quoted in Francis Pieper, "Luther's Doctrine of Inspiration," <u>Presbyterian and Reformed Review</u> 4 (1893): 252.

<sup>6</sup>Luther's Works, 30:203 [1523]. In regard to the Epistle of Jude, Luther observed that "this letter does not seem to have been written by the real apostle, for in it Jude refers to himself as a much later disciple of the apostles. Nor does it contain anything special beyond pointing to the Second Epistle of Saint Peter, from whom it has borrowed nearly all the words" (ibid.). See also ibid., 35:397-98 [1522].

problematical; <sup>1</sup> and that Job "didn't speak the way it is written" in the Book of Job because "one doesn't speak that way under temptation." <sup>2</sup> Still, we do not find that Luther ever spoke of Scripture as being unreliable or of human origin. On the contrary, he consistently argued for its absolute dependability and divine provenance. <sup>3</sup>

If Luther accepted the Bible as authoritative and reliable, did he see any connection between these two concepts? While he was not backward in propounding arguments about the clarity, simplicity, and reliability of the Scriptures in favor of biblical authority, Luther's primary theme was that the Bible was authenticated or authoritative for him because in it he had met the accepting and forgiving Christ. 5

In his later years, reflecting on the course of the Reformation, Luther forcefully reminded his followers that "the Word did everything." That is an apt portrayal of Luther's high view of the authority of Scripture. He accepted it as of divine origin, but was not embarrassed by its humanness. For him it was totally trustworthy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See ibid., 54:452 [1542-1543]. Here, Luther remarks that "when one often reads [in the Bible] that great numbers of people were slain-for example, eighty thousand-I believe that hardly one thousand were actually killed. What is meant is the whole people. Whoever strikes the king strikes everything he possesses. So if the king of France should be defeated with ten thousand of his men, it is said that eighty thousand were defeated because he has that many in his power, etc. Otherwise I can't reconcile the numbers."

 $<sup>^2</sup>$ Ibid., 54:79-80 [1533]. Luther favored a Solomonic authorship for the Book of Job.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>In ibid., 32:11 [1521], Luther asserts that Scripture "has never erred." He also comments that the Scriptures, although "written by men, are neither of men nor from men but from God" (ibid., 35:153 [1522]).

<sup>4</sup>see ibid., 32:11 [1521].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Compare Althaus, 75-76, and Lotz, 269. Lotz is probably correct in his assertion that Luther held to a doctrine of the "real presence" of Christ for both the sacraments and scripture. He notes that "this 'real presence' of Christ in Scripture is the bedrock, the fundament, of Luther's teaching on biblical authority" (Lotz, 271).

<sup>6</sup>Luther's Works, 51:77 [1522].

because it unerringly pointed to Christ and his gospel.<sup>1</sup> Yet, what Luther had to say concerning the Bible, and more particularly his "christological" hermeneutic, has provided "grist for the mills" of pietists, fundamentalists, liberals, and Neo-orthodox alike.<sup>2</sup>

## John Calvin's View of Biblical Reliability and Authority

John Calvin (1509-1564), a second-generation Reformer, had little desire to be a preacher, let alone a reformer. Rather, he wanted to be a man of letters, a scholar, an intellectual whose struggles would all be carried on in a library. However, at twenty-six years of age he published the first edition of The Institutes of the Christian Religion, and he found himself thrust onto the center-stage of the Reformation. He did become a preacher and reformer, and his continuously reworked Institutes meant that he also became the Reformation's foremost theologian.

Calvin's view of Scripture was to have an enormous effect on later generations. 3 He had such a high view of the Bible that in his

¹This appears to be the focus of Luther's stance regarding the relationship between biblical authority and reliability. For him, the Bible (in spite of difficulties which he freely commented on), was to be accepted as the authoritative Word of God which, in turn, spoke reliably concerning the Word (i.e., Christ). To argue that Luther supported any stricter view of the biblical authority/reliability relation would be anachronistic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Compare Lotz, 259-60, and John E. Goldingay's "Luther and the Bible," <u>Scottish Journal of Theology</u> 36 (1982): 58. For material on later Lutheran views of the doctrine of Scripture, see Robert D. Preus' <u>The Inspiration of Scripture: A Study of the Theology of the Seventeenth Century Lutheran Dogmaticians</u>, 2d ed. (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1957), and <u>The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism</u>, 2 vols. (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Pub., 1970-72); Rogers and McKim (1979), 147-92; and William E. Nix, "The Doctrine of Inspiration Since the Reformation," <u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 25 (1982): 443-54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>D. Clair Davis, "Inerrancy and Westminster Calvinism," in Harvie M. Conn, ed., <u>Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, A Challenge, A Debate</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988). 37. James I. Packer claims that Calvin, through his commentaries, "became the father of modern critical and theological exegesis." See Packer's "Calvin's View of Scripture," in <u>God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture</u>, ed. John Warwick

preaching he did not feel free to select a text of his own, since such separation of a text could pervert its meaning. If God's providence had placed Scripture in books, that was enough for Calvin! His practice was to take a whole book of the Bible and devote years, if necessary, to its exposition. Thus, it seems surprising that fierce debates are still carried on regarding Calvin's view of the reliability of the Scriptures. These arguments center around whether he held to "verbal inspiration" which guaranteed the reliability, even inerrancy, of the Bible, or whether he had a relatively "liberal" opinion such as would have made him comfortable within Neo-orthodoxy?<sup>2</sup>

The starting point for Calvin's theological system was that "God has spoken." While acknowledging that some knowledge of God is available to humankind in the created works of God, Calvin believed that knowledge had been distorted by the entrance of sin into the world,

Montgomery (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany Fellowship, 1974), 95. According to Donald K. McKim's "Calvin's View of Scripture," in Readings in Calvin's Theology, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), the "literature on Calvin and the Scriptures is immense" (p. 43, n. 1).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Paul T. Fuhrmann, "Calvin, the Expositor of Scripture," Interpretation 6 (1952): 191. In the same place Fuhrmann observes that Calvin preached 350 sermons on Isaiah and 200 on the Book of Deuteronomy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>T. C. Johnson maintains that arguments about whether Calvin held a "liberal" view of Scripture extend back to the last half of the nineteenth century. See Johnson's "John Calvin and the Bible," Evangelical Quarterly 4 (1932): 257. For extensive lists of scholars who held Calvin to be either "liberal" or "inerrantist," see Roger R. Nicole, "John Calvin and Inerrancy," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 25 (1982): 427.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>This is Fuhrmann's expression (Fuhrmann, 93), but his conclusion is well attested within Calvin's own writings. Notice here that Calvin begins his <u>Institutes</u> with Book One, entitled: "The Knowledge of God the Creator." See John Calvin, <u>Institutes of the Christian Religion</u>, vols. 20-21: Library of Christian Classics, ed. John T. McNeill; trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960), 1.1.1. Hereinafter this work is referred to at the <u>Institutes</u>. All citations are from the LCC edition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Institutes, 1.5.2.

and so nature speaks in vain. Therefore, according to Calvin, reliable knowledge of God could only be obtained from the Scriptures. In fact, the Bible is essential "if we wish to obtain the knowledge of Christ."

It is important to keep in mind that Calvin's view of the authority of the Bible was not worked out in an atmosphere of peace and tranquility. His <u>Institutes</u> were hammered out in a topsy-turvy world of reformation and revolution. Even in its final edition (1559), Calvin did not edit out the evidences that it was written in an atmosphere of conflict. In fact, at almost every point, it is relatively easy to determine with whom Calvin was reacting. His view of biblical authority found opposition on both right and left, with the Catholics and the Anabaptists.<sup>4</sup>

Against Roman Catholicism, Calvin found it necessary to affirm that the Bible has its authority from God, not the church. In response to the "pernicious error" that "Scripture has only so much weight as is conceded to it by the consent of the church," Calvin scoffed: "As if the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 1.5.14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1.6.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>John Calvin, <u>Calvin's Commentaries</u>, on John 5:39 (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, ca. 1960). Hereinafter Calvin's Commentaries are cited as <u>Comm</u>. John T. McNeill claims that Calvin held to a christocentric view of the Bible which allowed him to "silently exclude from <u>functioning</u> as divine Scripture a good many passages of the Bible." See McNeill's "The Significance of the Word for Calvin," <u>Church History</u> 28 (1959):134 (emphasis, McNeill's). However, in my opinion this conclusion is probably unfounded, especially when Calvin's extensive commentaries are taken into consideration. Robert M. Grant, in his <u>The Bible in the Church: A Short History of Interpretation</u> (New York: Macmillan, 1948) confirms this conclusion. He wrote of Calvin: "For him [in contrast to Luther], scripture itself is the authority for Christian belief, rather than any Christocentric interpretation of scripture" (pp. 113-14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Istafanous contends that Calvin had to fight a battle on at least three fronts: against the Catholics, the Anabaptists, and some humanist rationalists. See Abd-El-Masih Istafancus, "Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority" (Th.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1963), 14. For further details on Calvin's relationships with the Anabaptists, consult Willem Balke's <u>Calvin and the Anabaptist Radicals</u>, trans. William Heynen (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981).

eternal and inviolable truth of God depended upon the decision of men!" Rather, in his view, the church is itself grounded upon Scripture. On the other hand, against the Anabaptists, Calvin held that the Bible could not be supplanted in matters of doctrine even by what may appear to be direct revelations from the Holy Spirit. He warned that "if any spirit, passing over the wisdom of God's Word, foists another doctrine upon us, he justly deserves to be suspected of vanity and lying." Although Calvin was fighting on at least these two fronts, he used only one defense for his view of the authority of the Bible—that humankind (individually or corporately) should never be placed in a position of judgment over the Bible.

In line with this insight is the fact that Calvin showed extreme sensitivity in the area of apologetics. Even the traditional proofs for the veracity of Scripture, such as its superior content, antiquity, miracles, and prophecies, are accorded a secondary place. For Calvin, the "highest proof" of the Bible's credibility derived from the fact that "God in person speaks in it." To argue from one or another characteristic of Holy Scripture to its authority was to do "things backwards." Instead, Calvin regarded Scripture as "self-

Institutes, 1.7.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See ibid., 1.7.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 1.9.2. In the same place Calvin explains why he takes such of view of Spirit and Word: "He [the Holy Spirit] is the Author of the Scriptures: he cannot vary and differ from himself. Hence he must ever remain just as he once revealed himself there. This is no affront to him, unless perchance we consider it honorable for him to decline or degenerate himself." It should be noted that this passage also reveals much about Calvin's view of the essential unity of Scripturg.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See ibid., 1.8.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1.7.4.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

authenticating." In other words, "the certainty it deserves with us, it attains by the testimony of the Spirit."

The foregoing discussion has indicated that while Calvin certainly believed in the authority of the Bible, he consistently down-played arguments which attempted to prove biblical authority by appealing to its credibility or trustworthiness. What, then, did he hold regarding biblical reliability?

Calvin considered that the Scriptures had been "divinely inspired." This meant that they had been "dictated by the Holy Spirit," and that the biblical writers could be seen as "sure and genuine scribes of the Holy Spirit." What did he mean by "dictation"? Certainly, it meant that ultimately the Bible had a

¹Ibid., 1.7.5. Some authors have considered that Calvin's stress on the inner testimony of the Spirit in the authentication of Scripture is proof that he did not regard inspiration as exclusively attached to the written Word. See, for instance, Reid, 53. In that Calvin does not discount the common proofs for the "credibility" of Scripture—he merely ranks them secondary—it is unlikely that such a conclusion is warranted. Calvin's discussion of the "sufficiently firm proofs" which confirm the Bible's authority to human reason, is found in his <u>Institutes</u>, 1.8.1—13. For a contemporary discussion of the "testimony of the Spirit" idea, see Bernard Ramm, <u>The Witness of the Spirit</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1959).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See <u>Comm.</u>, on 2 Tim 3:16. In his <u>Institutes</u> Calvin, while noting the labor of the prophets, affirmed that the Scriptures had been "composed under the Holy Spirit's dictation" (4.8.6). In a similar vein is his comment that the apostles were not to expound the ancient Scripture themselves, but "with Christ's Spirit as precursor in a certain measure dictating the words" (4.8.8).

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ Ibid., 4.8.9. Note that the original of this passage was "Certi et authentici Spiritus sancti amanuenses" (n. 9, in the same place).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Constraints of space forbid more than a brief mention of Calvin's use of the term "dictation." The extensive debate on this issue has been briefly summarized in H. Jackson Forstman's <u>Word and Spirit: Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority</u> (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 4-6, and J. I. Packer's "Calvin's View of Scripture" (1974), 95-114. Packer claims that Calvin employed the term as "a theological metaphor conveying the thought that what is written in Scripture bears the same relation to the mind of God which was its source as a letter written by a good secretary bears to the mind of the man from whom she took it—a relation, that is, of complete correspondence and thus of absolute authenticity" (p. 103).

divine rather than a human origin, 1 and as well it conveyed a guarantee that "all perfection was contained" in Scripture. 2 There appears to be no doubt that, for Calvin, the whole Bible was considered as the Word of God. 3 Definitely, there was never a time when he tried to evade the theological force of any biblical phrase "by labeling it the word of man."4

Nevertheless, while it was never Calvin's intention to speak of the humanness of Scripture—for him, it was the very Word of God—he does give account of the fact that the writers were not mere automatons, that diversity could be seen even among writers dealing with the same materials, and that "popular" but less than scientifically accurate language could be employed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>So, ibid., 4.8.3, where Calvin affirms that "none of the prophets opened his mouth unless the Lord had anticipated his words."

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See Brian A. Gerrish, "Biblical Authority and the Continental Reformation," <u>Scottish Journal of Theology</u> 10 (1957): 353. In fact, Gerrish contends that Calvin stresses the divinity of the Word to such a degree that the human authorship is usually greatly minimized when he writes directly on the subject of inspiration (pp. 353-54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>J. H. Leith, "John Calvin--Theologian of the Bible," Interpretation 25 (1971): 338.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See <u>Comm.</u>, on 2 Pet 1:20-21 where Calvin notes that the prophets were "moved" but not "bereaved of mind (as the Gentiles imagined their prophets to have been) . . . "

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Consider Calvin's remark that while the three Evangelists "intended to give an honest narrative of what they knew to be certain and undoubted, each followed that method which he reckened best" ("Argumentum," in his Commentary, <u>Harmony of Matthew, Mark, Luke</u>). However, in the same place, he makes it clear that such diversity was not to be construed as outside the "direction of Divine Providence."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>At no point did Calvin show any defensiveness regarding the "phenomena" of Scripture (Paul J. Achtemeier, for instance, uses this term in speaking of biblical discrepancies, divergencies, etc., in his The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1980), 76-77). Rather, he acknowledged that Jeremiah's name had "crept in" instead of Zechariah's in Matt 27:9 (Comm., on Matt 27:9); that Matthew "incorrectly," but with "no impropriety," calls a comet a star (Comm., on Matt 2:1); that it would be "absurd" to try to reduce "to the rules of science" what is written in the Psalms (Comm., on Ps 148:3); and that Moses "does not speak with

Calvin was able to hold together the divinity and humanity of the Bible by his idea of "accommodation." Divine "accommodation" is seen as the condescension and love that caused God to adjust to human "ignorance" when he "prattles to us in Scripture in a rough and popular style" and in "mean and lowly words." In answer to why God would choose to speak to humanity in this way, Calvin proposed that impious men would have scoffingly claimed that the power of Scripture lay in its eloquence. Instead, as it is, the "almost rude simplicity inspires greater reverence for itself than any eloquence," and one can only conclude that "the force of the truth of Sacred Scripture is manifestly too powerful to need the art of words." While acknowledging that some of the biblical writers possessed an "elegant, even brilliant" style, these traits are ultimately credited to the Holy Spirit who "wished to show that he did not lack eloquence while he elsewhere used a rude and unrefined style."

Contemporary scholars have come to different conclusions regarding Calvin's view of biblical authority and reliability. Pinnock holds that "Calvin may fairly be cited as one who would not be caught resting the authority of the Bible upon the mechanical precision of

scientific acuteness" concerning the stars (Comm., on Gen 1:1-14).

<sup>1</sup> Comm., on John 3:12.

<sup>2</sup>Institutes, 1.8.1. Dirk W. Jellema rightly points out that
Calvin applied his idea of "accommodation" very widely. In his "God's
'baby-talk': Calvin and the 'Errors' in the Bible," Reformed Journal,
April 1980, 26, he writes that "Calvin uses the idea of accommodation to
explain not only anthropomorphic references to God, but also, in a
rather far-reaching manner, metaphorical references of various types,
apparent errors in quotations and lists, and the like." A similar view
is found in Ford Lewis Battles' "God Was Accommodating Himself to Human
Capacity," in Readings in Calvin's Theology, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand
Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 23-24.

<sup>3</sup>Institutes, 1.8.1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1.8.2.

every detail." Roger Nicole, on the other hand, maintains that Calvin believed in the verbal inerrancy of the original biblical autographs. Donald Bloesch sees Calvin as holding to biblical infallibility and inerrancy "without falling into the delusion that this means that everything that the Bible says must be taken at face value." Robert Ayers claims that Calvin was not entirely consistent. What is the solution to this question?

Istafanous, in his 1963 study of Calvin's view of biblical authority, concludes that he was a man of his times with many contextual pressures which shaped him and his theology. In Istafanous' view, it is anachronistic to force Calvin into the contemporary inspiration debates since he lived before the revolution wrought by biblical criticism. 

Istafanous also confirms what we have intimated previously: that "Calvin moves from the authority of Scripture to its inspiration rather than leading from a theory of inspiration to the authority of Scripture."

In summary, then, it is probably most fruitful to say that while Calvin believed in both biblical authority (the Bible was the very

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Clark H. Pinnock, "The Inerrancy Debate Among the Evangelicals," <u>Theology</u>, <u>News and Notes</u>, Special Issue, 1976, 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Nicole, "John Calvin and Inerrancy," 425-42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Donald G. Bloesch, <u>Essentials of Evangelical Theology</u>, 2 vols., San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1978-79, 1:66.

Authority in Selected Contemporary American Theologians" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1958), 8-9. It is worthy of notice that some scholars claim that a distinctive mark of Calvin (and Calvinism) was the ability to live with unresolved logical tensions in theology because of a submissiveness to God's divine grace and mystery. See, for instance, Anthony A. Hoekema, "The Covenant of Grace in Calvin's Teaching," Calvin Theological Journal 2 (1967): 135; and Edward A. Downey, Jr., The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 39-40. I tend to disagree with this conclusion in that it always seemed to be Calvin's obvious purpose to present his position in as coherent a manner as possible.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Istafanous, 215-16. Istafanous cogently argues that the issue of Calvin's time was not inspiration, but interpretation (see ibid., 217).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., 207.

Word of God) and biblical reliability (even seeming deficiencies were part of the Holy Spirit's inspiration), he saw the relationship between the two as a movement in only one direction—that is, from authority to reliability, rather than from reliability to authority. It is now time to move on to a discussion of the views of some of Calvin's archrivals—the Anabaptists. 1

# Radical Reformation Views of Biblical Authority and Reliability

The Radical Reformation, also known as the "Left Wing of the Reformation" or the "Third Reformation," included all those not encompassed in the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican wings of the magisterial reformation. Therefore, it is not surprising that the radical reformers held a wide spectrum of views, thus making attempts at classification somewhat futile. This section of the Reformation usually received a "bad press" until the 1930s, when historians began to reexamine Anabaptism. Reventlow points out that new sources and

This somewhat lengthy portrayal of Calvin's views of biblical reliability and authority has been necessary for two reasons: (1) the predominance of Calvinistic theology within contemporary evangelicalism as well as the earlier Fundamentalism; and (2) the fact that Calvin, more than any of the other Reformers, gives a systematic treatment of his view of Scripture. For further study of the views of Scripture held by Calvin and his followers see, for instance, Rogers and McKim (1979), 147-99; John H. Gerstner, "The View of the Bible Held by the Church: Calvin and the Westminster Divines," in <a href="Interrancy">Interrancy</a>, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1980), 383-410; Jack B. Rogers, <a href="Scripture">Scripture</a> in the Westminster Confession: A Problem of Historical <a href="Interpretation">Interpretation for American Presbyterianism</a> (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. <a href="Eerdmans">Eerdmans</a>, 1967); John D. Woodbridge, <a href="Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal">Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal</a>; and Donald K. McKim, <a href="What Christians Believe about the Bible">What Christians Believe about the Bible</a> (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Pub., 1985). 30-33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>There does, however, appear to be three main groups: the Anabaptists, the spiritualists, and the evangelical rationalists. See George H. Williams, <u>The Radical Reformation</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1962), xxiv-xxv.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Writing in 1957, Lowell H. Zuck states that "within the past thirty years a painstaking literature has been produced by the descendants of the sixteenth century Anabaptists, mostly Mennonites, in an effort to replace the traditional European interpretation of Anabaptism as fanaticism beginning with the revolutionary mystic, Thomas Muentzer, and ending with the revolutionary-polygamous debacle at Muenster" (Zuck, "Anabaptism: Abortive Counter-Revolt within the

reevaluations of the evidence have led to an overturning of the previous verdict that all in the left wing of the Reformation were enthusiasts."

It seems clear that the majority of the Radical Reformers acknowledged the authority of Scripture.<sup>2</sup> Alister McGrath goes so far as to say that the Radicals were "the only wing of the Reformation to have been utterly consistent in its application of the <u>scriptura sola</u> principle."<sup>3</sup> This was certainly true of the Swiss Anabaptists who split from Zwingli because they "were concerned to carry through consistently the demands of the New Testament." Their attitude to the Bible is shown by the fact that all of their arguments against their Zwinglian opponents were based wholly on biblical texts.<sup>4</sup>

Still, most of the Radical Reformers had a predilection for the New Testament over the Old. Without a doubt, the attitude of the radicals to the New Testament was strengthened by the mainline Reformers' approach to war, oaths, government, rule or authority,

Reformation," Church History 26 [1957]: 211). Spitz observes that there has recently been an "astonishing increase in contemporary scholarship devoted to the Radical Reformation." He attributes this interest to the maturation of Mennonite scholarship, greater interest in church-state issues, the Marxist preoccupation with the Peasant Revolt, the Kingdom of Münster, and the communal aspect of the sectaries (Lewis W. Spitz, The Protestant Reformation, 1517-1559 [New York: Harper and Row, 1985], 167).

Henning Graf Reventlow, <u>The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World</u>, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 49. For a listing of primary and secondary sources, see Reventlow, 443-447.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Williams, 816.

<sup>3</sup>McGrath, 108-9. See also, Reventlow, 53.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

See Williams, 815-32, for a discussion of the hermeneutical and theological problems they had with the Old Testament. Sebastian Franck was typical in this regard. Speaking of the magisterial Reformers, he exclaimed: "They confuse the New Testament with the Old . . . and if they have no means of defending their causes they run straight to the empty quiver, to the Old Testament" (cited in Reventlow, 59).

priesthood, and infant baptism. Yet, it would probably be overstating the case to argue that the Anabaptists accepted parts of the Bible as authoritative and rejected other parts as unreliable.

Reventlow carries on a sustained argument to show that this tendency to downgrade the Old Testament (in relation to the New) was part of a much wider tradition which can be traced from medieval Spiritualism, through Erasmus' humanism, the "left wing" Reformers, and Martin Bucer to England. In England, Reventlow observes a similar attitude among the Puritans and the seventeenth-century rationalists which culminated in the criticism of biblical authority in English Deism. We consider some of these strands further on in this chapter; suffice to say here that it appears that what was merely intimated in the Radical Reformers came to fruition several centuries later. 4

¹Reventlow, 60. It should be considered that the radicals also had an effect on the Reformers in that they backed them into a corner or bent them to the right. See also Leonard Verduin's The Reformers and Their Stepchildren (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964). Verduin is probably too generous in his praise of the Radical Reformation, but he contends that this is necessary in order to reverse the usual derogatory approach (p. 276).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Rather, they probably argued that the Old Testament had been messianically superseded by the New. Hence, the Anabaptist approach was to interpret the Old Testament by resorting to allegory, concordance, typology, and other nonliteral hermeneutics (Williams, 830). After all, for them, the issue was not authority/reliability, but hermeneutics (ibid., 828). Certainly, the Anabaptists did not seem to be concerned with the issue of scriptural reliability or its relation to biblical authority.

In my view, it is probably just as difficult to find linkages of more than a circumstantial nature for Reventlow's whole scenario. Compare the reviews of Reventlow's work by F. Gerald Downing, in the Journal of Theological Studies 36 (1986): 532-34, and Peter Byrne, in Religious Studies 21 (1985): 601-2. Both these writers comment that similarities could have been demonstrated much more briefly. Downing states that "The issue of 'influence' admittedly demands very careful statement (as the author is aware), but still could have been displayed much more selectively" (Downing, 533). Nevertheless, Reventlow's work is of immense value in that it traces attitudinal trends which undoubtedly culminated in an avalanche of biblical criticism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>It would not be correct to conclude this section and give a completely negative picture of the Radical Reformation. Grislis notes that "Lutherans owe an immense debt of gratitude to the Zwinglians and the Anabaptists" who began to disagree with Luther's reliance on arguments from late Nominalism for his view of the Lord's Supper and his

## <u>Deconstruction</u><sup>1</sup>: The Rise of Protestant Liberalism

The early sixteenth century saw the maturation of at least two powerful movements—the Reformation and Renaissance humanism.<sup>2</sup> It is to the latter that Reventlow traces the contemporary demise of biblical authority.<sup>3</sup> Humanism, which today is strongly secularistic if not atheistic, did not have the same meaning in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. In fact, most humanists "were remarkably

dependence on the infallibility of the church for his ideas on infant baptism (Grislis, 33-35).

<sup>1</sup>We are, here, using "deconstruction" in a general sense, rather than in reference to the "deconstructionist" school which opposes literary structuralism and finds its roots in the philosophical work of Jacques Derrida and Paul De Man. See, for instance, Patrick J. Hartin, "Deconstruction and Theology," Journal of Theology for Southern Africa 54 (1986): 25-34; Robert P. Scharlemann, "Deconstruction: What Is It?" Dialog: A Journal of Theology 26 (1987): 184-88; and Alan Jacobs, "The Values of Literary Study: Deconstruction and Other Developments," Christian Scholar's Review 16 (1987): 373-83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>'Renaissance' is the name given to a period of history that began around 1300 and lasted about three hundred years. It describes the 'rebirth' of Western culture and was expressed by a new interest in the arts and literature, education, exploration and discovery, science, and trade. But, overarching all of this was an emphasis on man and his concerns. This philosophical emphasis became known as 'humanism.' For details on Renaissance humanism, see Richard L. DeMolen, ed., The Meaning of the Renaissance and Reformation (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974). Especially relevant is DeMolen's "The Age of Renaissance and Reformation" (pp. 1-25). Peter Burke, The Renaissance (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1987), prefers to think of the "Renaissance" as an organizing concept which refers to "a particular cluster of changes in western culture" rather than as a golden age from which modernity emerged miraculously (p. 5). Robert Mandrou, From Humanism to Science, 1480-1700, trans. Brian Pearce (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979) argues that the Renaissance refers to the changes in the century between 1450 and 1550 (p. 17). Other works of interest are Lewis W. Spitz, The Renaissance and Reformation Movements (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1971); Wilhelm Rüdiger, Die Welt der Renaissance (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1970); Kenneth A. Strand, ed., Essays on the Northern Penaissance (Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Pub., 1968) [George A. Hoar's "Protestant Reformation-Tragedy or Triumph for Christian Humanism," pp. 67-91, is of particular value here]); and Charles Trinkaus, <u>The Scope of Renaissance Humanism</u> (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1983). Benjamin G. Kohl provides a bibliography of Renaissance references with his <u>Renaissance</u> Humanism, 1300-1550: A Bibliography of Materials in English (New York: Garland Pub., 1985).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Reventlow, 3.

religious," concerned mainly "with the <u>renewal</u> rather than the <u>abolition</u> of the Christian Church."

The program of humanism can be expressed in the slogan <u>ad</u>

<u>fontes</u>, back to the original sources.<sup>2</sup> Applied to the church, this
meant a direct return to the Bible and the patristic writers with the
hope that the apostolic age could "once more become a present
reality."<sup>3</sup>

### Erasmian Humanism

It was Northern European Humanism, and Erasmus, in particular, rather than the Italian variety, that prepared the ground and provided some of the tools used by the Reformation. To many observers Luther's and Erasmus' programs for reform looked similar, yet there were important differences. One factor that caused tension between the humanists and the magisterial reformers was their respective views of the authority of Scripture. "For the humanists, the authority of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>McGrath, 27. McGrath cites A. Campana, "The Origin of the Word 'Humanist,'" <u>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</u> 9 (1946): 60-73, to show that the term "humanist" was first used in 1808 to refer to a form of education which placed emphasis on the Greek and Latin classics (McGrath, 29).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Thus, the humanists' interest in the Greek, Roman, and Early Christian writings. McGrath points out that "for the humanists, classical texts mediated an experience to posterity—an experience which could be regained by handling the text in the right way" (ibid., 33).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For connections between Italian and Northern European Humanism, see Burke, 17-48, and Margaret E. Aston, "The Northern Renaissance," in The Meaning of the Renaissance and Reformation, ed. Richard L. DeMolen (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974), 73-82. Erasmus of Rotterdam stands out above all the other Northern European humanists. His 1504 Enchiridion Militis Christiani (translated into English as Handbook of the Militant Christian, trans. John P. Dolan [Notre Dame, IN: Fides Pub., 1962]) contains all of Erasmus' major emphases: that the church could be reformed by a return to the writings of the Fathers and Scripture, that the New Testament is to be seen as 'law of Christ' which transforms the reader as he or she imitates Christ, that true Christianity is an inner religion rather than an institution, that the future of Christianity lay with the laity and not the clergy, and that reformation of the church was to be accomplished through an educational process (McGrath, 37-38, and Aston, 89-90).

scripture rested in its eloquence, simplicity and antiquity." This was in contrast with the Swiss and Wittenberg Reformers, who "grounded the authority of scripture in the concept of the 'word of God'" and based all their faith and practice on sola scriptura.

What was the significance of Erasmian humanism for later developments? Reventlow believes that it was humanism. not the Reformation, that "determined the relationship of more recent academic Protestant theology to the Bible" and provided the norms for Old Testament exegesis as well.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it seems that Erasmus and his kin may have provided the seed-bed for future critical developments regarding the authority (as well as the reliability) of the Bible.

### The Age of Reason

The period reaching from the 1600s through to the late 1700s is known as the Age of Reason or the Enlightenment. Human reason was exalted, if not worshiped, as the measure of man's understanding of himself, of the world, and of God. Although René Descartes (1596-1650) has become known as "the father of modern philosophy," much of what he and the other Continental rationalists (Spinoza and Leibniz) proposed to do by way of formulating "clear rational principles that could be organized into a system of truths from which accurate information about the world could be deduced," had already been attempted by Francis Bacon

McGrath, 46. In the same place McGrath also points out that a further tension existed between the Wittenberg and Swiss Reformers. The former primarily regarded the Scriptures as "a record of God's gracious promises of salvation to those who believed", while the Swiss--who had been influenced greatly by humanism--looked to the Bible as "a source of moral guidance." Further information on Zwingli's doctrine of Scripture can be found in Gottfried W. Locher, Die Zwinglische Reformation im Rahmen der europäischen Kirchengeschichte (Göttingen and Zurich: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 1979), 211-13; W. P. Stephens, The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 51-53. Ulrich Gäbler, Huldrych Zwingli: His Life and Work, trans., Ruth C. L. Gritsch (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986), Observes that for Zwingli "the Bible and biblical statements have a pedagogical character" (p. 40).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Reventlow, 3.

(1561-1626) and Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). Continental rationalism spawned a "cousin" and challenger, empiricism, which was exemplified in Britain by John Locke (1632-1704). Although these Britishers were not Deists (i.e., Locke, Bacon, and Hobbes), they are seen by Reventlow and others as precursors of English Deism. 2

Locke, a Latitudinarian in theological posture, did not discount the need for biblical revelation or even its authority, but he "twisted decisively" the sola scriptura of the Reformation so that the New Testament was identified as "the lawbook of Christ the lawgiver." In addition, the Old Testament was seen as binding on Christians only to the extent that it could be shown to be in harmony with the law of nature. This position is indicative of the fact that for Locke, "reason is . . . the ultimate criterion for the exposition of scripture." Still, it appears that Locke was essentially a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Samuel E. Stumpf, <u>Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy</u>, 3d ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 227. While both Bacon and Hobbes can be considered rationalists in that they did not raise "any question about the intellectual powers of man," they also revealed empiricist tendencies in that they "urged that knowledge should be built upon observation" (Stumpf, 254).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Reventlow, 194-285, for details on Hobbes and Locke. For Reventlow's note on Bacon, see ibid., 594, n. 66. Observe also that Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) is seen by Reventlow as a Deist before his time in that while he had imbibed the rationalism of his own time, he also anticipated "the unqualified trust in reason in all instances where a verdict is called for on a specific revelation or the tradition of a revelation (like the Bible)" (p. 193). Reventlow's work is also supported by the older one by John Orr, English Deism: Its Roots and Its Fruits (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub., 1934), 59-113. Contrast Richard I. Aaron, John Locke, 3d ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 298-99, and John D. Mabbott, John Locke (London: Macmillan Press, 1973), 136-37, who argue emphatically that John Locke cannot be classified with the Deists.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ Reventlow, 283. The same author maintains that in this Locke was the heir of the Puritans (p. 283).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 284. Eldon J. Eisenach, <u>Two Worlds of Liberalism:</u>
<u>Religion and Politics in Hobbes, Locke, and Mill</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), remarks that for Locke, Christ's coming made natural law obligatory by superseding God's "prophetic rule" (p. 86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Reventlow, 277. See also Eisenach, 80, 84.

"conservative" in matters of religion, and it was left to his followers to pursue some of the "ambiguities" within his system. 1

It remained for the Deists to develop the 'Enlightenment philosophy of religion.' Without always challenging the possibility of faith in revelation, they were convinced that natural religion took precedence over all religions of revelation. John Toland (1670-1722), although not regarding himself as a Deist, expounded the basic assumptions of Deism in the preface of his Christianity Not

Mysterious. His fundamental position was that "all that is essential in Christianity must be understandable." For Toland, the mysterious (including miracles) must be eliminated from Christianity lest it provide an easy refuge for the unthinking and a stumbling block to the thoughtful. He was convinced that if the mysteries could be

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Reventlow, 285. For further study refer to John Redwood, Reason, Ridicule and Religion: The Age of Enlightenment in England, 1660-1750 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This is Troeltsch's expression from "Der Deismus" (1898), in <u>Gesammelte Schriften</u>, IV, 1925, (429-87), 429, as cited in Reventlow, 289.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>G. Gawlick defined Deism as a conviction that "there is a natural religion and that this precedes all religions of revelation." This quotation is from Gawlick's "Deismus," in <u>HWP</u>, 2, cols. 44f., as cited in Reventlow, 289.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See H. D. McDonald, <u>Ideas of Revelation: An Historical Study A.D. 1700 to A.D. 1860</u> (London: Macmillan and Co., 1959), 43. Toland contended in his <u>Christianity Not Mysterious</u> (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1964 [facsimile of the 1696 ed.]) that it was the rejection of his views that was causing so many to become "Deists and Atheists" (p. 176).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>McDonald, 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid. Also Stephen H. Daniel, <u>John Toland: His Methods</u>, <u>Manners, and Mind</u> (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1984), 4. Daniel observes also that Toland was a key link from English to Continental Deism (p. 5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>According to Toland such mysteries as miracles were not originally part of Christianity but were naturally introduced by Jewish and Gentile converts who brought with them their own heritage (Toland, 158-59). They may also have been deliberately introduced by the primitive clergy in order to further their claims to the sole right of interpretation (ibid., 170-71).

eliminated and reason be allowed to exercise its true ability, humankind would "come to the pure essence of Christianity, the true understandable revelation of God--the revelation of reason."

The limitations of this study prohibit more than a cursory glance at Deism,<sup>2</sup> but it is hard to fault Reventlow's claim that Toland, more than his contemporaries, "reflects the revolutionary situation giving rise to the spiritual constellation of the eighteenth century."<sup>3</sup> Toland's questions and propositions regarding written revelation called into question both the authority and the reliability of the Bible and provided the foundations for the modern Protestant understanding of the Scriptures.<sup>4</sup>

The emergence of modern science was another factor which effected a loss of faith in the authority and reliability of the Bible during the Age of Reason. 5 Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543), J. Kepler

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>McDonald, 46. In the same place, McDonald remarks that Toland's ideas were pressed to their ultimate ends by Anthony Collins (1676-1729) who argued in his <u>The Discourse of Freethinking</u> that revelation was to be identified with reason.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>For a comprehensive survey of deistical writers and their entire movement, see Reventlow, 289-410. Roger L. Emerson provides a critical bibliographical survey of recent literature on Deism in his "Latitudinarianism and the English Deists," in <u>Deism, Masonry, and the Enlightenment: Essays Honoring Alfred Owen Aldridge</u>, ed. J. A. Leo Lemay (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1987), 19-48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Reventlow, 308. Robert E. Sullivan, <u>John Toland and the Deist Controversy</u> (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), provides further details regarding Toland's thought and connection with English Deism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Reventlow, 308. It should not be thought that the Deists held the stage unopposed. The Christian satirist, Jonathan Swift was just one of their opponents, but his was a voice that contradicted the rationalistic mood of his age. However, it was not the apologists of the church who brought Deism down. Rather, it was David Hume's (1711-1776) "acute criticism of the possibilities of reason arriving at a certain knowledge in the sphere of religion" that sounded the death knell for both Deism and its opponents in England (ibid., 350-53, 410), although it did reappear in late eighteenth-century America and Germany (ibid., 411-12). For further details on Swift's opposition to Deism, see R. W. Harris' "The Limits of Reason" (chap. 7), in Reason and Nature in the Eighteenth Century (London: Blandford Press, 1968), 132-50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>It should be noted here that the Age of Reason is generally characterized as an age of discovery and experimentation. But it is

(1571-1630), and Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) produced revolutions in the way people understood the world but at a price for biblical authority and reliability. Kepler, in particular, specifically argued that scriptural reliability pertained to matters of faith and morals rather than to matters of science. However, it was Isaac Newton (1642-1727) with his mechanistic concept of the universe who unwittingly provided "evidence" for the superiority of human reason and the geoming unscientific character of the biblical statements about the natural sphere. 4

often forgotten that many of the people at the forefront of discovery were also theological thinkers in their own right. For an indication of the impact of theology in the career of Isaac Newton, for instance, consult Klaus-Dietwardt Buchholtz, <u>Isaac Newton als Theologe: Ein Beitrag zum Gespräch zwischen Naturwissenschaft und Theologie</u> (Witten: Luther-Verlag, 1965); Gale E. Christianson, <u>In the Presence of the Creator: Isaac Newton and His Times</u> (New York: Free Press, 1984); P. B. Scheurer and G. Pebrock, eds., <u>Newton's Scientific and Philosophical Legacy</u> (Dordrecht and Boston: Kluwer Academic, 1988); and Frank E. Manuel, <u>The Religion of Isaac Newton</u> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Many churchmen opposed Copernicus on the basis that the language of the Scriptures favored a geocentric rather than a heliocentric view of the universe. See John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity Interpreted Through Its Development (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), 324, where even Melanchthon is named as one of the opposers of the new view. See also R. Hooykaas, Religion and the Rise of Modern Science (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub., 1972), 126-35. For an early discussion of the historical relationship between science and religion, see Andrew D. White, A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom (New York and London: D. Appleton and Co., 1896, 1923). Hordern remarks that White's work pictures science in the role of "a knight in shining armor" while religion is "the stupid dragon that tries to devour the truth." See William E. Hordern, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan Pub., 1968), 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Gerhard F. Hasel, <u>New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate</u>. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978, 26 (especially n. 73).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>E. J. Dijksterhuis, <u>The Mechanization of the World Picture</u>, trans. C. Dikshoorn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), maintains that "nothing contributed so much in the eighteenth century to the mutual estrangement of religion and science as the development of celestial mechanics, which is the finest fruit of the science founded by Newton and intended by him as a confirmation of religion" (pp. 490-91).

Gerald R. Cragg, The Church and the Age of Reason 1646-1789 (New York: Atheneum, 1961), points out that "the principles which Newton had found in the physical universe could surely be applied in every field of inquiry" (p. 236). The French philosophes (e.g., Voltaire and

## The Nineteenth Century--The Demise of Biblical Authority and Reliability

As we have seen, biblical authority and reliability had been placed in difficulties during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but the "dam broke" in the nineteenth. Among the factors which contributed to this situation were higher criticism, philosophical and scientific theories of human progress, and the Kantian/Schleiermachian separation between reason and theology. All of these factors contributed to the rise of religious liberalism and come into focus in this section of our study.

Biblical higher criticism<sup>1</sup> originated in Germany in the 1700s, although its ancestors can be traced at least at far back as the English Deists. Others who contributed to its advance were Benedict Spinoza (1631-1677), Richard Simon (1638-1712), and Jean Astruc (1684-1766).<sup>2</sup>

J. G. Eichhorn (1752-1827) considered that more than textual criticism

Rousseau) certainly did this in the area of religion, revelation, and authority (pp. 236-49).

The term "higher criticism" was first used by Johann G. Eichhorn to refer to literary criticism in distinction to "lower criticism" or textual criticism. See Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, Einleitung in das Alte Testament, 3 vols., 3d ed. (Leipzich: Weidmannischen Buchhandlung, 1803), 2:330.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Spinoza devoted a large part of his <u>Tractatus Theologico-Politicus</u> (1670) to the relationship between theology and philosophy. He elevated reason to such a degree that he considered it "able to undermine the authority of scripture as revelation or even as record of revelation." See Robert M. Grant with David Tracy, <u>A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible</u>, 2d ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 105-6.

Simon, a French Catholic priest, published the results of his studies in <u>Histoire critique du Vieux Testament</u> (1678) which earned him the title of 'the father of biblical criticism.' He concluded that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, that Old Testament chronology was confused, and that the contents of some of the Old Testament books had been transposed. See Norman Sykes, "The Religion of Protestants," in <u>The Cambridge History of the Bible: The West from the Reformation to the Present Day</u>, ed. S. L. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 194. For a listing of Simon's other works of biblical criticism, see ibid., 194-95.

The French physician Jean Astruc was a disciple of Simon. He advocated in 1753 what he thought to be evidence of Jahwist and Elohist documents having been used in the compilation of the Pentateuch (ibid., 220, 269-71).

was necessary to distinguish materials from different writers and times that had been woven together in order to determine their provenance in terms of date, circumstances, and authorship. 1

This type of biblical study became known as historical criticism, and it quickly moved from focusing on the Old Testament to the New. The work of David Strauss (1808-1874) and F. C. Baur (1792-1860) further strengthened this approach to the Bible. In his <u>Das Leben Jesu</u> (1835), Strauss denied the possibility of miracles including the resurrection. The stories of Jesus he considered to be fabrications of the early Christian community.<sup>2</sup>

Baur, at Tübingen University, who had been influenced by Hegel's dialectical view of reality<sup>3</sup> wrote the first history of early Christianity based on historical criticism.<sup>4</sup> In his view, the thesis was represented by the Christian Judaizers, the antithesis by the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Eichhorn, 1:61-63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Werner C. Kümmel, <u>The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems</u> (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1972), 120-29. See also Edgar Krentz, <u>The Historical-Critical Method</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 25-26. For additional details regarding Strauss, see Horton Harris, <u>David Friedrich Strauss and His Theology</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), and Richard S. Cromwell, <u>David Friedrich Strauss and His Place in Modern Thought</u> (Fair Lawn, NJ: R. E. Burdick, 1974). Harris claims that Strauss' book was the "most important theological milestone of the century" (p. 41). William Madger, <u>The Core of the Christian Faith: D. F. Strauss and His Critics</u>, American University Studies, series 7, Theology and Religion: vol. 38 (New York: Peter Lang, 1987), and Edwina G. Lawler, <u>David Friedrich Strauss and His Critics: The Life of Jesus Debate in Early Nineteenth-Century German Journals</u>, American University Studies, series 7, Theology and Religion: vol. 16 (New York: Peter Lang, 1986), provide recent discussions of the effect of Strauss' views.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ For a convenient summary of G. W. F. Hegel's (1770-1831) view of reality, see Stumpf, 315-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>F. C. Baur's <u>Lectures on New Testament Theology</u> were published posthumously in 1864 under the title <u>Vorlesungen über neutestamentliche Theologie</u>, ed. F. F. Baur (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag, 1864). Peter C. Hodgson provides a convenient summary of Baur's thought in <u>A Study of Ferdinand Christian Baur: The Formation of Historical Theology</u> (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

Gentile Christianity of Paul, resulting in the Gospels and the Epistles in the Second Century, i.e., the synthesis. 1

It is impossible to present here even the major developments of the German neology, but it is sufficient to say that by the end of the nineteenth century historical criticism reigned supreme in Continental Liberal Protestantism.<sup>2</sup> The effects of this discipline on belief in the authority and reliability of the Bible were also clear. Conclusions regarding the composition, authorship, and date of certain biblical books were not only in conflict with traditional views, but they often contradicted evidence within the texts themselves as well. In addition, some scholars considered that they must have the freedom to study the Bible as they would study any other book.<sup>3</sup> The result was that the traditional concepts of biblical reliability, inspiration, and authority were often discarded or reinterpreted.<sup>4</sup>

Another factor which lay behind the growth of theological liberalism was the idea of progress as an explanation of the history of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Gerhard F. Hasel, <u>New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), 31-32; Kümmel, 127-43; and Krentz, 26-27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Krentz, 29. For a helpful summary of the development of New Testament criticism, see Hasel, 13-53. Stephen Neill and Tom Wright thoroughly cover the more recent period in their <u>The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1986</u> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Their first chapter, "The Challenge to Orthodoxy" (pp. 1-34) deals with the genesis of the critical approach to the New Testament.

<sup>3</sup>Peter van Bemmelen observes that Johann Salomo Semler (1725-91) and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81) proposed the right of "free enquiry" that came to be accepted by many biblical scholars as "axiomatic for an unbiased, scientific investigation of the questions which higher criticism attempts to answer." In the same place, van Bemmelen also remarks that "the problem was that in their historical research these critics often excluded a priori any supernatural causation as a valid principle of interpretation" (van Bemmelen, "Issues in Biblical Inspiration: Sangay and Warfield" [Th.D. diss., Andrews University, 1987], 60, n. 1). According to Henry E. Allison's Lessing and the Enlightenment: His Philosophy of Religion and Its Relation to Eighteenth-Century Thought (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1966), it was Lessing who dealt the final blow to the old orthodc: "doctrine of verbal inspiration" (p. 165).

Van Bemmelen, 59-60.

humankind. This view had its roots in antiquity but only came to maturity in the nineteenth century with the writings of Auguste Comte (1798-1857) and others. From classical times through to the twentieth century, the theme of progress has exhibited itself in a conviction that humankind was to make gradual progress in all areas of knowledge, but particularly in the arts and sciences. In conjunction with this idea was a high optimism regarding the possibilities of moral and spiritual progress. The spiritual progress is all areas of world and spiritual progress.

This latter idea posed difficulties for those who held that the Bible taught a perfect beginning, a moral fall, and a continuing deterioration of humankind. In addition, as van Bemmelen explains, the "moral difficulties" of Scripture also presented a problem for the "refined ethical conscience" of people convinced of the possibility of human progress. Thus, the idea of human progress which continued to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Ludwig Edelstein, <u>The Idea of Progress in Classical</u>
<u>Antiquity</u> (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1967), and Radoslav A.
Tsanoff, <u>Civilization and Progress</u> (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1971), 19-30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Robert Nisbet, <u>History of the Idea of Progress</u> (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 171. Compare J. B. Bury's classic, <u>The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry into Its Origin and Growth</u> (New York: Dover Publications, 1932, 1955), which maintains that the idea of progress is a modern phenomenon.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Nisbet, 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Nisbet notes that there have been "classical and Christian minds convinced of a primal golden age followed by degeneration. But, as we shall see there were from the beginning Greeks and Romans who believed the very opposite, that the beginning was wretchedness, that salvation lay in the <u>increase</u> of knowledge. So have there been such minds in the Christian, the medieval, and above all in the modern epoch" (ibid., 6; emphasis Nisbet). Perhaps, for Nisbet, the very fact that the idea of progress has become more dominant in modern times is an evidence of human progress.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Van Bemmelen, 68. In the same place, van Bemmelen cites Howard R. Murphy who contends that a meliorist ethical bias was even more important as a factor in the rejection of traditional Christian dogma than were higher criticism and evolutionary biology. See Murphy's "The Ethical Revolt Against Christian Orthodoxy in Early Victorian England," <a href="Maintenanger: American Historical Review">American Historical Review</a> 60 (1955): 800-17.

make advances through to the 1930s<sup>1</sup> contributed in a marked way to the rise of Protestant liberalism and became a dominant part of its theological agenda.

Supportive of the idea of human progress and of some higher critical theories were certain scientific theories of the nineteenth century which called into question the Genesis accounts of creation and the flood.<sup>2</sup>

This concept of uniformity, popularized by James Hutton in his Theory of the Earth (1795), is summarized by his statement: "We see no vestige of a beginning, no prospect of an end." However, only when Charles Lyell published his <u>Principles of Geology</u> from 1830 to 1834 did "uniformitarian theory really become dominant among scholars and students of earth science." Lyell discounted the idea of special creation with his opinion that "all former changes of the organic and

¹See Leo Gershoy, "Introduction," in Carl Becker's <u>Progress and Power</u> (New York: Vintage Books, 1936, 1965), ix. The reasons for the decline of the idea of progress in the 1930s are covered in Nisbet, 317-51. He cites such factors as the nineteenth-century brand of skepticism espoused by Tocquerville, Burkhardt, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche, a loss of interest in history, displacement of the West, the attack on economic growth, the unsettling effects of new knowledge, boredom due to the technological society, and declining belief in the "sacred and mythological" (p. 355). Joseph Hough contends that the concept of human progress was not crushed in North America until after World War II when the civil rights conflicts and the Vietnam War dealt the final blows. See Joseph C. Hough, Jr., "The Loss of Optimism as a Problem for Liberal Christian Faith," in <u>Liberal Protestantism</u>: <u>Realities and Possibilities</u>, ed. Robert S. Michaelson and Wade Clark Roof (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1986), 150-58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>That this is almost exclusively a nineteenth-century development is attested by Charles C. Gillispie. See his <u>Genesis and Geology: A Study of the Relations of Scientific Thought, Natural Theology, and Social Opinion in Great Britain, 1790-1850 (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 42.</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Harold G. Coffin and Robert H. Brown in their <u>Origin by Design</u> (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Pub., 1983) point out that uniformitarianism had its origin with two Frenchmen, Benoit de Maillet and le Comte de Buffon, who wrote from 1740-1780 (p. 102).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Cited in ibid., 102-3.

 $<sup>^{5}</sup>$ Ibid., 103. Sydney E. Ahlstrom has observed that American acceptance of the new theory was not as widespread as in Britain (Ahlstrom, 766-67).

inorganic creation are referrible [sic] to one uninterrupted succession of physical events, governed by the laws now in operation<sup>\*1</sup> and by his observation that there was no record of creation in the fossil record which the rocks preserved.<sup>2</sup>

Even more devastating for those who still believed in the historicity of the Bible was Charles Darwin's Origin of Species (1859). After more than a decade of fierce controversy, Darwin published his The Descent of Man (1871), which drew the human species into the same fold as the other animals. Not since the scientific revolution completed by Newton had Western "humanistic and religious traditions . . . been confronted by a greater need for adjustment and reformulation." Although Darwin himself did not reject the idea of a Creator, biblical authority and trustworthiness were again cast into extreme doubt.

Important for future theological developments was the way that Darwin's theory of origins was applied to biblical critical studies. Probably the most important contribution in this area was made by Julius

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>As cited in ibid., 766.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ Ahlstrom is hardly mistaken in his remark that this was "the most important book of the century" (ibid., 767).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>In the closing section of the first edition of his <u>Origin of Species</u>, Darwin gave "reverent acknowledgement to the idea of a Creator," arguing that his explanation "involved a far loftier conception of God's wisdom and power than the orthodox doctrine of the appearance of separate species by distinct accs of God." See H. D. McDonald, <u>Theories of Revelation</u>, 15.

<sup>6</sup>See John C. Greene, <u>Darwin and the Modern World View</u> (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1961), 3-38. Compare McDonald, <u>Theories of Revelation</u>, 13-40. It should be observed here, however, that not all who accepted Darwinian evolution rejected the authority and reliability of the Bible. A notable exception was B. B. Warfield who advocated a qualified evolutionism while holding to biblical inerrancy. See Warfield's "Calvin's Doctrine of Creation" (1915), in <u>The Princeton Theology 1812-1921</u>, ed. Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 293-98.

Wellhausen (1844-1918) who restated the documentary hypothesis within the context of the Darwinian presuppositions and postulated the evolutionary development of Israelite religion from polytheism through henotheism to monotheism.

With biblical authority and reliability facing increasing opposition, theologians were forced to search for a new starting point for their endeavors. This they found in the thought of Kant and Schleiermacher. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) began where David Hume left off,<sup>2</sup> arguing that it was impossible for pure reason to find God.<sup>3</sup>
But, if pure reason could not find God, practical reason could postulate God as necessary for moral living.<sup>4</sup> "Kant's God was hardly the God of orthodoxy,"<sup>5</sup> but his placing of reason in a position of supremacy over revelation means that it is "virtually impossible to philosophize today without taking his views into account."<sup>6</sup>

Taking Kant seriously, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) proposed a new foundation for the theological enterprise. Sensing that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See R. K. Harrison, <u>Introduction to the Old Testament</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), 19-32; and Hans-Joachim Kraus, <u>Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart</u> (Neukirchen: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1956), 222-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Kant wrote: "I openly confess, the suggestion of David Hume [that knowledge can only be derived from experience] was the very thing, which many years ago first interrupted my dogmatic slumber and gave my investigations in the field of speculative philosophy quite a new direction" (cited in Stumpf, 292).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Immanuel Kant, <u>Critique of Pure Reason</u> (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Critique of Practical Reason</u> (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Hordern, 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Stumpf, 309. Cauthen points out that Kant opened the way for the "principle of autonomy in theology" by showing that it was "possible to ground religion in reason without reference to supernatural revelation" and that it was "philosophically permissible to justify faith in God on the basis of man's moral nature." See Kenneth Cauthen, The Impact of American Religious Liberalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 17.

religion no longer had an authoritative and reliable foundation in Scripture, in his On Religion<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher drew on his pietistic background in an attempt to show that religion could still have meaning if it were centered in "feeling" (Gefühl).<sup>2</sup> His later work, The Christian Faith, expanded on this theme of the "feeling" of absolute dependence on God. This was nothing less than a "Copernican" revolution in theology.<sup>4</sup>

Whereas, for more than one and a half millennia, Scripture (and the creeds) had been held to be the foundation for Christian theology, the Bible was now cast into a secondary role. While the Scriptures were still looked on as important, they were now seen as "records and interpretations of the experience of Christians." It was this new

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, <u>On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured</u>
<u>Despisers</u>, trans. John Oman (New York: Harper and Row, 1958).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 15. John Dillenberger and Claude Welch in their Protestant Christianity Interpreted Through Its <u>Development</u> observe that "Schleiermacher's understanding of the nature of religion provides a vehicle for expressing the vital dimensions of the Christian faith which had been nearly lost sight of in Protestant scholasticism and abandoned in rationalism" (p. 186).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Friedrich Schleiermacher, <u>The Christian Faith</u> (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>This theme meant an entire reorientation of Christian theology. Christ was the redeemer because he experienced a sense of absolute dependence to the superlative degree, sin means mankind's lack of Godconsciousness, and "the basis of our faith in Christ is not particular events of his life . . . but the total impression which he makes upon us" (Dillenberger and Welch, 182-88).

For an indication of the theological restructuring wrought by

For an indication of the theological restructuring wrought by Schleiermacher, see Karl Barth, <u>The Theology of Schleiermacher: Lectures at Göttingen</u>, <u>Winter Semester of 1923/24</u>, ed. Dietrich Ritschl, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 274-75; Martin Redeker, <u>Schleiermacher: Life and Thought</u>, trans. John Wallhausen (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1973), 113-19; and B. A. Gerrish, <u>A Prince of the Church: Schleiermacher and the Beginnings of Modern Theology</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 20, 69-70. Barth remarks that "if anyone still speaks today in Protestant theology as though he were still among us, it is Schleiermacher" (Barth, xiii).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Dillenberger and Welch, <u>Protestant Christianity Interpreted</u>
<u>Through Its Development</u>, 188. Schleiermacher, a Christologist, held to a thoroughly christocentric view of Scripture. Therefore, for him "the Christian does not have faith in Christ because of the Bible; rather the Bible gains its authority from the believer's faith in Christ. The heart of Christianity, Schleiermacher had learned from the Moravians, is

approach to biblical authority which earned Schleiermacher the title of "the father of modern theology" since it was to become central in Liberal Protestantism. 1

### American Protestant Liberalism

In that the focus of this study is on the North American scene, it is essential that we take a brief glance at the the landscape of Protestant liberalism in that context.<sup>2</sup> American liberalism partook of the main features of its European antecedents—that is, a desire to adapt religious ideas to modern ways of thinking, a rejection of religious belief based on authority alone, a central motif of divine immanence, and an anthropological optimism<sup>3</sup>—but it also exhibited traits which were characteristically American.<sup>4</sup>

Religion in the United States had long had a minor rationalistic strand due to prominent Unitarians and free-thinkers such as Thomas Paine (1737-1809), Francis Abbot (1836-1903), and Robert

not doctrine or ethic, but a new life in Christ" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Note here that Jean Réville would distinguish between "Protestant Liberalism" and "Liberal Protestantism." See his "What Liberal Protestantism Stands For," in <u>Liberal Protestantism</u>, ed. Bernard M. G. Reardon (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1968), 191. In this study, however, the terms are used interchangeably.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See R. V. Pierard, "Liberalism, Theological," in <u>Evangelical Dictionary of Theology</u>, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 631-32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>American liberalism was characterized by "a strong sense of activism and a feeling that God is present and active in the great forward movements of human culture" (ibid., 633). For further details of American liberalism's social agenda, see Hough, 150-52.

Studies of the liberal strand in North American Protestantism are available in Lloyd J. Averill, American Theology in the Liberal Tradition (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1967); Bernard Reardon, ed., Liberal Protestantism (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1968); Jerry Dean Campbell, "Biblical Criticism in America 1858-1892: The Emergence of the Historical Critic" (Ph.D. diss., University of Denver, 1982); William R. Hutchison, ed., American Protestant Thought: The Liberal Era (New York: Harper and Row, 1968); and William R. Hutchison, The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976).

Ingersoll (1833-1899). This tendency was strengthened by German liberal theology. By 1890 most of America's prominent theologians had been educated in German schools and were putting the results of their study into popular form. <sup>2</sup>

American liberalism took two major forms. These have been delineated by Cauthen as "Evangelical Liberalism" and "Modernistic Liberalism." Evangelical liberals, "convinced of the truth of historic Christianity," were also aware of a need "to adjust this ancient faith to the demands of the modern era." Thus it was common for such preachers and scholars as Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969) and Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) to appeal to the normativeness of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, they did not have a traditional view of scriptural authority. The Bible was seen as a record of God's progressive revelation of himself and of man's growing discovery of God in experience, not as a source of authoritative doctrine.

The other side of American liberalism "had no sense of continuing in the line of the historic faith." This perspective which flourished for several decades at Chicago was led by Henry Wieman and others. These theologians, having "abandoned belief in revelation, . . . had no norm in the Bible, Christ, or tradition to which they could appeal." Therefore their major concerns often revolved around methodology—how to find a source and standard of religious truth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ahlstrom, 764-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Averill, 30-49; and Reardon, "Introduction," in <u>Liberal</u>
<u>Protestantism</u>, 58-62. Campbell maintains that the period covered in his study (1858-1892) was characterized by the pervasive influence of German critical scholarship in America (Campbell, 313-16).

<sup>3</sup>See Cauthen, 27-30. Compare Ahlstrom, 781-83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Cauthen, 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ahlstrom observes that since the vast majority of American churchgoers shared this concern, this form of liberalism won a wide audience (Ahlstrom, 782).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Cauthen, 28.

independent of the historic faith--rather than definition of the content of theology. 1

### Post-Liberalism

Just when Protestant liberalism appeared the victor in both Europe and America, it found itself in disarray. This was due in part to the crises which faced Western civilization during the Great War and immediately thereafter. Recent events had exposed to derision liberalism's talk of "religious experience," its concern for the rights of critical reason, its belief in human achievements as an expression of the divine purpose, and the idea of progress.<sup>2</sup>

In Europe, Karl Barth, for instance, who had been thoroughly trained in liberal theology became increasingly dissatisfied with the flabbiness of liberalism and the impracticality of the social gospel. In his <u>Römerbrief</u> (1919) he attacked liberal theology while stressing the reality and majesty of God in comparison with the sinfulness and smallness of man. In the United States, Reinhold Niebuhr faced a similar crisis. He, too, had been educated in liberalism, but in his Detroit pastorate he found that he had no answers to the pressing questions of life. He concluded that "modern liberalism is steeped in a religious optimism which is true to the facts of neither the world of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 29-31. See also Frank G. Opton, <u>Liberal Religion:</u>
<u>Principles and Practice</u>, <u>A Popular Theology</u> (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1981), 18, 46-52, and Henry Nelson Wieman, <u>Religious Inquiry:</u>
<u>Some Explorations</u> (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1968), 3-34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Reardon, 63. For further details, see John B. Cobb, Jr., <u>Liberal Christianity at the Crossroads</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1973), 12-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For a convenient summary of Barth's early life and theological development, see David L. Mueller, <u>Karl Barth</u> (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1972), and Clifford Green, <u>Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom</u> (London: Collins, 1989). S. W. Sykes, ed., <u>Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method</u> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), offers a helpful discussion of Barth's method.

nature nor the world of history." Such defections were evidence that liberalism had run its course.<sup>2</sup>

Chief among the critics of Protestant liberalism were men like Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Rudolf Bultmann in Europe, and Reinhold Niebuhr in North America. They started the new trend in theology variously called Neo-orthodoxy, crisis theology, and neo-Reformation theology. Proponents of this theology found new meaning in such orthodox doctrines as sin, revelation through Christ, and salvation through grace. Yet, educated by the great liberal theologians such as Hermann and Harnack, they did not make a complete return to orthodoxy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, <u>Does Civilization Need Religion?</u> (New York: Macmillan Co., 1927), 9-10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Reardon rightly wonders if it is really possible to point to a chronological terminus for liberalism. He asks, "Do not Bultmann and Buri stand firmly within the liberal tradition?" (Reardon, 63). William Hordern also comments that "the term 'liberal' may be in disfavor but the legacy of its thought is still a powerful force in theology" (Hordern, 110).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>It should be recognized that the leading figures of Neo-orthodoxy differed significantly from one another. For instance, Barth, at least in his early years, was dependent on the existentialism of Kierkegaard and Dostoyevsky (see D. F. Ford's "Barth's Interpretation of the Bible," in <u>Karl Barth: Studies of his Theological Method</u>, ed. S. W. Sykes [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979], 55). On the other hand, Brunner acknowledged his debt to Martin Buber's personalism (Brunner, 60, n. 41), and Bultmann openly admitted that it was Heidegger's existentialist analysis of the ontological structure of being which lay behind his revolutionary "New Testament and Mythology" (in <u>Keryama and Myth: A Theological Debate</u>, ed. Hans W. Bartsch [New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961], 24-25).

Further evidences of differing standpoints are exemplified in E. Brunner and Karl Barth, Natural Theology: Comprising "Nature and Grace" by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the Reply "No!" by Dr. Karl Barth, trans. Peter Fraenkel (London: Geoffrey Bles, Centenary Press, 1946), and the Karl Barth-Rudolf Bultmann Letters, 1922-1966, ed. Bernd Jaspert; trans. and ed. G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981). For a moving, personal account of the differences between Barth and Brunner, see I. John Hesselink's "Karl Barth and Emil Brunner--A Tangled Tale with a Happy Ending (or, The Story of a Relationship)," in How Karl Barth Changed My Mind, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 131-42.

<sup>4</sup>Hordern, 111-12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Avery Dulles, <u>Models of Revelation</u> (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1983), 84.

One of the major obstacles in the way of a return to Reformation orthodoxy was that the Neo-orthodox theologians accepted biblical criticism and its conclusions. Hence, their focus was to find a theology of revelation that could stand amid the onslaught of evidence that seemed to question Scripture's trustworthiness. Rather than viewing revelation as a giving of information or propositions about God, they viewed it as "a mysterious salvific encounter with the living God."

¹Hordern, 112. This is evident from Karl Barth's comment in The Epistle to the Romans, that the "historical critical method of Biblical investigation has its rightful place" (p. 1). Emil Brunner remarks also in his Truth as Encounter, that "genuine Bible faith . . . self-evidently belongs together with Biblical criticism; for a Bible free from error would no longer be human, and, contrariwise, the recognition of the humanity of the Scriptures calls for a distinction between the fallible vessel and its divine infallible content. Through orthodoxy, however, Biblical criticism as such is excluded and its application is abhorred as a sign of unbelief" (p. 176, see also pp. 49 and 81). That Rudolf Bultmann accepted scriptural (form) criticism is apparent in his observation that the cosmology of the New Testament rests on "the language of mythology, and the origin of the various themes can easily be traced in the contemporary mythology of Jewish apocalyptic and in the redemption myths of Gnosticism" (Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," 3).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This is Dulles' expression (Models of Revelation, 85). That this encounter does not impart information about God is made clear by Bultmann's answer to the question as to what is revealed: "Nothing at all, so far as the question concerning revelation asks for doctrines-doctrines, say, that no man could have discovered for himself--or for mysteries that became known once and for all as soon as they are communicated. On the other hand, however, everything has been revealed, insofar as man's eyes are opened concerning his own existence and he is once again able to understand himself. R. Bultmann, Existence and Faith (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), 85 (emphasis Bultmann).

Barth's position is evident in his claim in Church Dogmatics, vol. 1, The Doctrine of the Word of God, 2 parts (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936-56), that "God is not an attribute of something else, even if this something else is the Bible. God is the subject, God is the Lord. He is the Lord even over the Bible and in the Bible. The statement that the Bible is the Word of God cannot therefore say that the Word of God is tied to the Bible. On the contrary, what it must say is that the Bible is tied to the Word of God" (1/2, 513). Relevant here is Barth's observation that it is by the Holy Spirit that the Scriptures "became and will become to the Church a witness to divine revelation" (p. 457). See also Barth's Evangelical Theology: An Introduction, trans. Grover Foley (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 35-36.

Brunner is even more explicit in his <u>Truth as Encounter</u>: "Truth as encounter . . . points to the God who speaks to us in the Bible, above all, in the history of Jesus Christ. This Christ is neither the Christ of orthodoxy, nor the "historical [historische] Jesus" of liberalism, but the historic [geschichtliche] Jesus, the Christ and

Scripture is authoritative but not as the Word of God in the traditional sense. Rather, the Bible is a human witness to revelation in the past that can become the word of God as Christ chooses to speak to man through that witness. Therefore, in this view, revelation is not just something that occurred in the past, but it encounters man in the present. At this point it is apparent that Neo-orthodoxy's break with liberalism is somewhat less than complete. Although there were basic differences between Schleiermacher's grounding of theology in religious experience and Barth's grounding it in a mysterious encounter, the results were sometimes the same. Both refused to put the gible at the epistemological center of their theology.

Savior of the Biblical message. Much in the Biblical picture has not stood the test of historical criticism. But he himself speaks to us in this Biblical tradition with as much power today as before the beginning of Biblical criticism. In confrontation with the Bible, now as before, there happens 'truth as encounter'" (p. 49).

Barth, Church Dogmatics, 1/2, 457 (quoted above, p. 44, n.3).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Bultmann, <u>Existence</u> and <u>Faith</u>, 89.

The basic difference between Schleiermacher and Barth was in their starting points. While the former's work was anthropocentric, Barth's was theocentric (even Christocentric). See S. W. Sykes, "Barth on the Centre of Theology," in <u>Karl Barth: Studies of His Theological Method</u>, ed. S. W. Sykes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 30-33, 50-54. Further details of differences and similarities are available in Alasdair I. C. Heron, "Barth, Schleiermacher and the Task of Dogmatics," in <u>Theology Beyond Christendom: Essays on the Centenary of the Birth of Karl Barth, May 10, 1886</u>, ed. John Thompson (Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986), 267-84, and Hans W. Frei, "Barth and Schleiermacher: Divergence and Convergence," in <u>Barth and Schleiermacher: Beyond the Impasse?</u> ed. James O. Duke and Robert F. Streetman (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988), 65-87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See S. W. Sykes, "Scheiermacher and Barth on the Essence of Christianity--an Instructive Disagreement," in <u>Barth and Schleiermacher: Beyond the Impasse?</u> ed. James O. Duke and Robert F. Streetman (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1988), 98-100, 105. Hare, Sykes maintains that both Barth and Schleiermacher belonged to the "interiority" tradition, and that the differences between the two theologians "need to be progressively qualified" (ibid., 100). For Karl Barth's own assessment of Schleiermacher, see Barth, <u>Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl</u> (being the translation of eleven chapters of <u>Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert</u>), trans. Brian Cozens (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 306-54.

Hordern considers that contemporary theology is "becoming atomized into an increasingly baffling number of trends, schools, and moods." However, whether it is process, liberation, or any other theology, it seems that a dominant characteristic is to regard the Bible as a human book with all the common foibles of a human book. In addition, the category of revelation is separated from the Scriptures and placed somewhere else. This approach has contributed to the present crisis for biblical authority and reliability, a situation that has produced modern evangelicalism's strident attacks against "liberalism."

# Reconstruction<sup>3</sup>: The Emergence of Evangelicalism

Contemporary evangelicalism<sup>4</sup> has roots at least as far back as the Reformation. Yet, it is clear that some of its antecedents are to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Hordern, 230.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>It can be placed in human experience, a mystical encounter, history, or the religious community.

<sup>3&</sup>quot;Reconstruction" is used here in its general sense rather in the way R. J. Rushdoony, Gary North, and Greg Bahnsen use the term. For them, "Reconstructionism" (otherwise called "Theonomy" or "Dominion Theology") means that Christians must work to bring every institution under the law of God (i.e., the law of Moses). Theonomists maintain that the Bible teaches free-market capitalism and that the United States, as a "Christian" nation, has been blessed. For further study, see Rushdoony's The Foundation of Social Order (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972) and North's Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory (Tyler, TX: Geneva Press, 1981). Thomas D. Ice ("An Evaluation of Theonomic Neopostmillennialism," Bibliotheca Sacra 145 [1988]: 281-300), and Douglas Chismar with David A. Rausch ("Regarding Theonomy: An Essay of Concern," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 27 [1984]: 315-23), have provided critiques of the movement.

<sup>4&</sup>quot;Evangelicalism," here and throughout this study, is taken to refer to contemporary "theologically conservative Protestantism" which encompasses a "wide variety of religious and denominational traditions." As such it includes, but is not synonymous with "Fundamentalism" which is taken to refer to the conservative reaction to Protestant Liberalism in the early part of this century (James Davison Hunter, Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987], 3-4).

be found in the more immediate past, in Fundamentalism, for instance, which arose during and after World War I in response to factors such as liberal theology, German higher criticism, Darwinism—all of which were perceived to be dangerous to American Christianity. Therefore, this section examines evangelicalism's approach to scriptural authority and reliability by surveying its connections with Fundamentalism, by reference to contemporary evangelical diversity, and by clarifying the place of the Baptist tradition within the evangelical discussions.

## Fundamentalism and Biblical Inerrancy

While it is commonly acknowledged that Fundamentalism arose during the late 1800s and the early part of the twentieth century, unanimity regarding its origins has not been forthcoming to this point. 5 Currently, it is common to see Fundamentalism as a movement

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Refer to our discussion of the roots of Fundamentalism, below (this page, n. 4). Evangelicalism's Fundamentalist roots have been acknowledged by many evangelicals. See, for instance, Harold J. Ockenga, "From Fundamentalism, Through New Evangelicalism, to Evangelicalism," in <a href="Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith">Evangelicalism</a>, "in <a href="Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilbur Smith">Evangelicalism</a>, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1978), 36-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Hunter, 20-22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For other roots of evangelicalism, see below (p. 60, n. 5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>It is necessary to observe the Baptist perspective in regard to biblical authority and reliability because of Clark H. Pinnock's affiliation with (and influence within) the Baptist tradition.

Smorris Ashcraft, in his "The Theology of Fundamentalism,"

Review and Expositor 79 (1982): 31, remarks upon the paucity of materials dealing with the theology of Fundamentalism, although much has been written on the movement's historical background and a lesser amount on its political implications. Stewart Cole set the stage in 1931 with his work which argued that the ancestry of Fundamentalism was to be found in the evangelical concerns of early American Christianity and that it flourished in response to the threats presented by industrialization, science, state education, World War I, and religious liberalism. See Cole's The History of Fundamentalism (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1931). Compare Norman F. Furniss, The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954).

Ernest Sandeen began a new trend in Fundamentalist studies with his The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). Sandeen's thesis was that it was millenarianism that gave shape to Fundamentalism, and that when premillennial dispensationalism united with the Princeton Theology, the Fundamentalist movement was born. While Sandeen argued for

which united a variety of ecclesiastical, theological, and cultural traditions in a fight against a common enemy--modernism, or religious liberalism.

Fundamentalism seems to have received its name from the publication of <u>The Fundamentals</u> from 1910-1915.<sup>2</sup> A cursory examination of these volumes reveals that they attacked a wide variety of opponents, including Roman Catholicism, socialism, modern philosophy, Christian Science, Mormonism, and spiritism. It is also clear that their primary targets were liberal theology, German higher criticism, and Darwinism.<sup>3</sup> McIntire notes, however, that "almost immediately" the index of enemies became smaller and the "fundamentals less comprehensive." The inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, his substitutionary atonement,

the essential unity of Fundamentalism under the banner of inerrancy, C. Allyn Russell illustrated its theological diversity in his <u>Voices of American Fundamentalism</u>: Seven Biographical Studies (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976). George Marsden was even more critical of Sandeen's views. He contended that Sandeen had subordinated Fundamentalism to millenarianism, and that it had, instead, a variety of origins. See Marsden's <u>Fundamentalism and American Culture</u>: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism: 1870-1925 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980).

Bill J. Leonard's "The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism," Review and Expositor 79 (1982): 5-17, provides an excellent convenient summary of Fundamentalist historiography.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Leonard, ll. Morris Ashcraft sees a parallel between the rise of Protestant and Catholic conservative perspectives. He writes that "in 1870 the Roman Catholic Church was embroiled in a struggle which issued in the formal declaration of papal infallibility. It is not accidental that the Fundamentalist campaign for verbal inerrancy of the biblical autographs was framed during and after this parallel event." See Morris Ashcraft, "Revelation and Biblical Authority in Eclipse," Faith and Mission, Spring 1987, 10.

The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth, 12 vols. (Chicago: Testimony Publishing Co., 1910-15). The original paperback edition has been republished in a set of four hardback volumes, edited by George M. Marsden (New York: Garland Publ., 1988). The Fundamentals were originally published anonymously by the Christian philanthropist brothers Lyman and Milton Stewart. The term, "Fundamentalist," was probably coined by the Baptist editor, Curtis Lee Laws (see Marsden's "Introduction," in the 1988 reprint of The Fundamentals [1st page of "Introduction"; no page numbers]).

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ For a cogent description of <u>The Fundamentals</u> and their writers, see Leonard, "The Origin and Character of Fundamentalism," 11-12.

his bodily resurrection, and the historicity of miracles came to be viewed as the "fundamental doctrines of Christianity itself."

Through the 1920s, the Fundamentalists fought to expel the "modernists" from the large northern denominations, but by 1926 it was clear that the battle had been lost and the Fundamentalists began leaving their "apostate" parent churches to found new denominations and schools. The term "Fundamentalist" came to designate, almost exclusively, separatistic groups whose principal mark was belief in the inerrancy of the Bible.<sup>3</sup>

It appears that Princeton theologians Charles Hodge and Benjamin Warfield can be credited with introducing this concept into early Fundamentalism.<sup>4</sup> It was Hodge who introduced the idea of "the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>C. T. McIntire, "Fundamentalism," <u>Evangelical Dictionary of Theology</u>, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 433.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Struggles occurred among the Methodist Episcopals, the Protestant Episcopals, the southern Presbyterians, northern Presbyterians and northern Baptists (ibid., 434).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For instance, the Independent Fundamentalist Churches of America (1930), the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (1932), the Presbyterian Church of America (1936), the Bible Presbyterian Church (1938), and the Conservative Baptist Association of America (1947). For further details, see McIntire, 434. On the Fundamentalist concentration on the inerrancy of Scripture, see Ashcraft, 39-40; Ockenga, 35; and James Barr, Fundamentalism (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1977-78). A slightly contrasting, but expected, view is found in Sandeen, 103.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Note here that this was one of Sandeen's major points. He contended that it was in the conjunction of the Princeton doctrine of the Scriptures and the Millenarian literalistic hermeneutic that Fundamentalism was born. See his <u>The Roots of Fundamentalism</u>, 130-31. Observe that the Princetonians were not actually part of the Fundamentalist protest although they, according to George W. Dollar, "appreciated the outcries of the Fundamentalists" and were, in turn, appreciated by the Fundamentalists for their "solid contributions to applead by the Fundamentalists for their "solid contributions to applead by the Fundamentalist pro-Fundamentalist A History of Fundamentalism in America (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1973), 70.

That Hodge and Warfield did not originate the concept of biblical inerrancy is acknowledged by John W. Beardslee, III, in his "Introduction," in Francis Turretin, The Doctrine of Scripture: Locus 2 of Institutio theologiae elencticae, ed. and trans. John W. Beardslee, III (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1981). Rather, Beardslee contends that the Princeton theologians were indebted to Turretin (1623-1687), the Reformed scholastic (p. 9).

inspiration of the very words of scripture, verbal inspiration," but he was satisfied with the term "infallibility" or "unfailing" and was quite comfortable with acknowledging "errors in matters of fact," although he regarded them as insignificant. Warfield, however, pushed Hodge's theory of verbal inspiration to the point of verbal inerrancy, but only of the original manuscripts. In this way errors and discrepancies could still be acknowledged, but only in secondary manuscripts, not in the originals. This effectively stymied further debate, although the problem remained.

The threefold contribution by the Princeton theologians which described the Bible as verbally and plenarily inspired, inerrant, but inerrant only in the original autographs became the Fundamentalist defense against the inroads of "modernism." As well, it became the very center of their legacy to the ongoing discussion concerning the authority and reliability of the Bible.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ashcraft, 34. See Charles Hodge, <u>Systematic Theology</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, reprinted 1970), 170.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. Mark Noll as well, in his "Introduction," in <u>The Princeton Theology 1812-1921: Scripture, Science, and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield</u>, ed. Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), argues that it was Warfield who "brought the tradition [i.e., the Princeton doctrine of Scripture] to its culmination by defining exactly what it meant for Scripture to be inerrant" (p. 26). Note, however, that Jack B. Rogers and Donald McKim contend that the idea of the "infallibility" of the "original autographs" among the Princetonians extends back at least as far as A. A. Hodge (1823-1886), the son of Charles Hodge. See their <u>The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach</u>, 298-309.

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ For an excellent discussion on Warfield's view of inerrancy, see van Bemmelen, 293-303.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ashcraft remarks that "unless I have misread the literature of Fundamentalism, this view of inerrancy is the basic or foundational theology of Fundamentalism early and late. Everything else depends on it, hence its necessary defense regardless of the cost" (Ashcraft, 34).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>It is interesting to note that B. B. Warfield did not write the chapters in <a href="The Fundamentals">The Fundamentals</a> which dealt with scriptural inspiration. He, instead, contributed a chapter entitled "The Deity of Christ" (vol. 1:21-28). There are two chapters that explicitly address the issue of inspiration. James M. Gray's "The Inspiration of the Bible--Definition, Extent and Proof" (vol. 3:7-41) and L. W. Munhall's "Inspiration" (vol.

What, in summary, did the Fundamentalists hold regarding biblical authority and reliability, and what relation did they see between the two? Although it must be acknowledged that not all supporters of Fundamentalism acccepted Warfield's view of the inerrancy of the original manuscripts, his opinions became the dominant position for the movement. There can be no doubt concerning Warfield's view of the authority of the Scriptures. They were, to his mind, superhuman, trustworthy, profound, authoritative, and profitable to the extent that they were "altogether divine."

<sup>7:21-37)</sup> both contend for the inerrancy of the original manuscripts (see Gray, 10-12; and Munhall, 22). It should be observed that James Orr also contributed extensively to The Fundamentals. See his "The Virgin Birth of Christ" (vol. 1:7-20); "Science and Christian Faith" (vol. 4:91-104); "The Early Narratives of Genesis" (vol. 6:85-97); and "Holy Scripture and Modern Negations" (vol. 9:31-47). Orr, although maintaining a high view of Scripture, certainly held a qualified version of inerrancy. He contended that it was possible that the biblical writers could have incorporated error which was already present in the historical sources they used. See Orr, Revelation and Inspiration (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1951), 179, 216. Note that in his "Holy Scripture and Modern Negations," Orr consistently argues that Scripture is "authoritative" and "an infallible guide to the true knowledge of God and of the way of salvation" (see The Fundamentals, vol. 9:32).

See p. 55, n. 5 (above) for Orr's view. Certainly not all Fundamentalists would have been happy with Warfield's extreme Calvinism which he used as a support for his view of inerrancy in the following argument concerning the role of human personality in the inspiration of the Scriptures: "What if this personality has itself been formed by God into precisely the personality it is, for the express purpose of communicating to the word given through it just the colors which it gives it? What if the colors of the stained-glass window which have been designed by the architect for the express purpose of giving to the light that floods the cathedral precisely the tone and quality which it receives from them? What if the word of God that comes to His people is framed by God into the Word of God that it is, precisely by means of the qualities of the men formed by Him for the purpose, through which it is given? When we think of God the Lord giving by His Spirit a body of authoritative Scriptures to His people, we must remember that He is the God of providence and grace as well as of revelation and inspiration, and that He holds all the lines of preparation as fully under His direction as He does the specific operation which we call technically, in the narrow sense, by the name of 'inspiration.'" See Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 155-56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Benjamin B. Warfield, <u>The Bible: The Book of Mankind</u> (New York: American Bible Society, 1915), 158. His confidence in the authority of Scripture enabled Warfield to say: "Such a word of God, Christ and his apostles offer us, when they give us the Scriptures, not as a man's

In addition, Warfield's view of the absolute authority of the Bible was correlated with a view of the absolute infallibility of Scripture. For Warfield the controlling concept in his view of Scripture was that of inspiration. It was this that guaranteed both the Bible's absolute authority and absolute reliability. Not only was it possible to argue that the inspiration of the Bible made it impossible for it to be anything other than inerrant, it was also legitimate to argue from the objective phenomena of inspiration to the Bible's authority. In other words, if Scripture could be shown to be reliable, it must also be objectively authoritative. In this Warfield was criticized in his own lifetime, and the debate continues unabated.

report to us of what God says, but as the very word of God itself, spoken by God himself through human lips and pens" (cited in van Bemmelen, 291). In fact, Warfield's high view of the divinity of Scripture has meant that he has often been accused of neglecting the humanness of the Scriptures. Notice here that Robert J. Hoefel, in his "The Doctrine of Inspiration in the Writings of James Orr and B. B. Warfield: A Study in Contrasting Approaches to Scripture" (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, School of Theology, 1983), although generally sympathetic to Warfield's approach is critical of his failure to give due emphasis to the human element in inspiration (p. 276, n. 70). A more positive discussion of this aspect of Warfield's thought can be found in A. N. S. Lane's "B. B. Warfield on the Humanity of Scripture," Vox Evangelica 16 (1986): 77-94.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Of course, as already intimated, this infallibility resided primarily with the original autographs. Van Bemmelen considers that while there was some evolution in Warfield's terminology regarding biblical reliability, it should not be thought that he softened his view that the Bible showed an "absolute infallibility" (van Bemmelen, 298).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Van Bemmelen contends that Warfield counted biblical authority, infallibility, inerrancy, trustworthiness, truth, and immediateness as "the effects of inspiration" (see ibid., 290-303).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>On this Warfield has been accused of arguing syllogistically rather than exegetically. See, for instance, James D. G. Dunn, "The Authority of Scripture According to Scripture," <u>Churchman</u> 96 (1982): 111. Van Bemmelen concludes that this contention is sustained in light of the evidence within Warfield's own writings (van Bemmelen, 300).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See Warfield's "Apologetics," in his <u>Studies in Theology</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 3-21. Pinnock comments that Warfield, although maintaining that reason could not inaugurate revealed truth, held that reason with history and science, was competent to test religious claims (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u>, 45).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See, for instance, Thomas M. Lindsay, "The Doctrine of Scripture: The Reformers and the Princeton School," <u>The Expositor</u>, 5th

The debate also persists as to whether or not the idea of the inerrancy of the original manuscripts was a Warfieldian innovation, but it seems clear enough that Warfield set the parameters for the Fundamentalist stand on biblical reliability and authority which, in turn, has provided at least some of the agenda for Evangelicalism even up to the present day.

# Contemporary Evangelicalism: Biblical Reliability and Authority

By the late 1920s the influence of American Fundamentalism had begun to fade. From the heady days of 1892 to 1910 when the Hodge-Warfield doctrine of biblical inerrancy was given official status by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church which legislated subscription to the "five points" of Fundamentalism as a condition of ordination, the movement tumbled to the reverse at the Scopes Trial of 1925 where, "with the whole country looking on, conservative Christianity was not only repulsed, but seemingly crushed."<sup>2</sup>

series, 1 (1895): 281, 285, 287, 288.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Mark A. Noll remarks that "recent debate over the Princeton Theology can be regarded as a commentary on the present state of evangelical intellectual life." See his "Introduction" in <u>The Princeton Theology 1812-1921</u>, 43. Sandeen, in his <u>The Roots of Fundamentalism</u>, argues that "the Princeton doctrine of inspiration was characterized by a concentration upon external verifications to the neglect of the internal—a prejudice extremely serious for those who make such a show of orthodoxy, for the emphasis in the Westminster Confession is, though judiciously balanced, decidedly in favor of internal proofs" (p. 118). If true, this seems to be a somewhat different emphasis to that of Calvin on the "internal witness of the Spirit."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "From Puritanism to Evangelicalism: A Critical Perspective," in <u>The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing</u>, ed. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975), 283-84.

Wells and Woodbridge, "Introduction," in <u>The Evangelicals</u>, ed. Wells and Woodbridge, 12. For further details regarding the Scopes Trial, refer to Lyon S. De Camp, <u>The Great Monkey Trial</u>, 1st ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968); Barry L. Grossbach, "The Scopes Trial: A Turning Point in American Thought?" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1964); and Jerry R. Tompkins, ed., <u>D-days at Dayton: Reflections on the Scopes Trial</u> (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1965).

Within a year, the Fundamentalist movement was in disarray. Its battles seemed to have been lost on all fronts. Certainly, it no longer held control of the mainline denominations, and the "final straw" came in 1929 when Gresham Machen and others left Princeton to found Westminster Theological Seminary. Henceforth, Fundamentalism proper became more and more divisive and separatistic. 2

There were, however, some who were more moderate in that they continued to work within the mainline churches, and it is with them that "the emergence of a self-conscious new evangelicalism" finds its immediate antecedents. Added to this is the fact that many contemporary conservative Protestants had come from traditions which had little connection with organized Fundamentalism. Therefore, it is not surprising to find perspectives which evidence quite some diversity

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See George M. Marsden, "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism: A Historical Analysis," in <u>The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing</u>, ed. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975), 126-127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See ibid., 127-28, where Marsden notes that "the doctrine of separation was often a test of fidelity" (p. 127). He observes that "those who throughout the entire period persisted in calling themselves fundamentalists were marked by continued militant separatism." These presently constitute the minority among conservative Christians (ibid., 128).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>It was Harold Ockenga who coined the term "new evangelicalism" in 1947 in order to take account of the fact that "the new evangelicalism differs from fundamentalism in its willingness to handle the societal problems that fundamentalism evaded" (Ockenga, 38).

These included all the wings of the sixteenth-century Reformation (Lutheran, Reformed, and Radical) as well as the vigorous movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (German pietism, Methodism, and the Great Awakening) which were mainly based in Puritanism. Marsden argues that even evangelicals who had originated in movements without Fundamentalist ties were generally "shaped by some conscious ties to the fundamentalist heritage" (Marsden, "From Fundamentalism to Evangelicalism: An Historical Analysis," 128).

within the Evangelical community; 1 more so especially in the last few years. 2

Is there a theological center to this vigorous movement? In fact, the center is difficult to find in that it seems to vary with the particular opponent it is addressing. Certainly one of its chief opponents has been liberalism and at the site of that battle the center of Evangelicalism appears to be a strong conviction regarding the authority of the Bible. Whether or not this is the true center of gravity in Evangelicalism will continue to be debated, but there is little doubt that it has been a most important factor in Evangelical thinking and development. While there seem to be quite major

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Marsden seems to indicate that the glue that holds evangelicals together is their common opposition to theological liberalism. He notes that they are willing to reevaluate some of their theological heritage, even allowing debate on the question of the inerrancy of Scripture (ibid., 128-29). Nyquist, in his "An Evaluation of the Inroads of Process Theology into Evangelicalism," acknowledges but laments the "current theological shifts in the evangelical movement, most noticeable in the areas of Theology proper and bibliology" (p. 1). Contrast Nyquist with Donald Bloesch's Essentials of Evangelical Theology, 1:12.

While two or three decades ago, Evangelical theology was much more homogeneous because of the "almost automatic respect" in which Carl F. H. Henry was held, such is not the case presently (Clark H. Pinnock, Review of Confessions of a Theologian, by Carl F. H. Henry, Christian Scholar's Review 17 [1987-88]: 211). Robert M. Price mentions the previous dominance of Henry, Bernard Ramm, and E. J. Carnell, in his "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Kenneth S. Kantzer maintains that "the formal principle of biblical authority is the watershed" dividing liberal Protestantism from evangelicalism, in his "Unity and Diversity in Evangelical Faith," in The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing, ed. David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975), 39.

When evangelicalism is defined in relation to Roman Catholicism, however, it appears that its emphasis is on the doctrine of salvation (Bloesch, 2:238). Another emphasis of the movement appears to have come from its strongly Puritan, Reformed roots. Pinnock remarks on the influence of Calvinism's emphasis on the sovereignty of God as "highly influential," even to the point of having a "hegemony" in Evangelical circles (Pinnock, "Introduction," in The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism (1989), xi. Observe that Bloesch appears to assume the Calvinistic character of Evangelical theology (Bloesch, 1:11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For a very helpful bibliography on Evangelical views of the Bible, see John R. Muether, "Evangelicals and the Bible: A Bibliographic Postscript," in <u>Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, A Challenge, A</u>

variations in regard to other doctrines, 1 Evangelicals appear to have maintained real unanimity regarding their views of the authority of Scripture—that Scripture is the written Word of God. 2

Still, there has been evident a remarkable variation of views regarding the Bible's reliability (or inerrancy). This subject has proved to be an "impasse" of major proportions to continued Evangelical cooperation and collegiality. This is due to the fact that in the minds of some sectors of Evangelicalism there appears to be a very strict relationship between biblical reliability and biblical authority. Hence, a failure to affirm the absolute inerrancy of the Scriptures is seen as a denial of biblical authority as well. 5

Robert Johnston acknowledges four types of inerrancy held among evangelicals: detailed, partial, irenic, and complete inerrancy. In 1981, Robert M. Price discussed five major approaches to the inerrancy question in his dissertation. These were "limited inerrancy," "partial infallibilists," "pluriform canonists," "cultural deabsolutizing," and the rejection of sola scriptura in favor of

Debate, ed. Harvie M. Conn (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 253-64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For example, in apologetics, the sacraments, ecclesiology, church unity, and eschatology (Kantzer, 42-59).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>In fact, the <u>magnum opus</u> of Evangelicalism is probably Carl F. H. Henry's <u>God, Revelation and Authority</u>, 6 vols. (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976-83).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>While D. Clair Davis notes that "inerrancy came to be the most ecumenical doctrine of all evangelical theology," such seems no longer to be the case today (Davis, 36).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See Robert K. Johnston's <u>Evangelicals at an Impasse</u>: <u>Biblical Authority in Practice</u> (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1979).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See, for instance, Harold Lindsell, <u>The Battle for the Bible</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1976).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Johnston, 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Robert McNair Price, "The Crisis of Biblical Authority: The Setting and Range of the Current Evangelical Crisis."

ecclesiastical and creedal authority. 1 Clark Pinnock provides a simpler model with his division of the evangelical spectrum into three camps on the inerrancy question—unqualified biblical inerrantists, nuanced inerrantists, and non-inerrantists. 2

Whether there are actually three, four, five, or more views presently current among Evangelicals on the subject of inerrancy is not the point here. What is important to notice is that the situation is extremely complex. This complexity is probably due to the type and number of qualifications individual scholars place on the term inerrancy. Warfield's limitation of the category of inerrancy to the "original autographs" was the first and basic qualification or nuancing of inerrancy, but from his time onwards many other qualifications have been added. These have included the view that inerrancy only applies to the intentional teaching of the Bible, that human languages and cultural terms are not increant, that discrepancies and rounded numbers are "innocent errors" and do not constitute errors, that misquotes of the Old Testament by the New are not errors, that apparent errors will be reclassified with future information, that minor problems such as grammatical errors are not errors, and that an error would have to be an intentionally misleading statement. 4 Such is the complexity of views that Fisher Humphreys protests the confusion which ensues when

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 99-243. See above, pp. 7-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock names Harold Lindsell as a militant advocate of unqualified biblical inerrancy in the tradition of Warfield and the Fundamentalists. As examples of nuanced inerrancy, Pinnock cites the Lausanne Covenant (1974) statement that the Bible is "inerrant in all it affirms" and his own <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971). According to Pinnock evangelical opponents of inerrancy (but neither are they advocates of biblical errancy either), while in the minority, "happen to include some of the best known and most capable" of evangelical scholars (e.g., F. F. Bruce, G. C. Berkouwer, David A. Hubbard, and George E. Ladd). See Clark H. Pinnock, "Evangelicals and Inerrancy: The Current Debate," Theology Today 35 (1978): 66-67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Morris Ashcraft, "Revelation and Biblical Authority in Eclipse," 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 11.

inerrantists end up condemning "non-inerrantists" who hold virtually their own position minus the slogan of "inerrancy."

When one considers the overall agreement within Evangelicalism over the authority of Scripture and the major altercation regarding the issue of inerrancy, one can credit at least some of this situation to the different strands which were combined in weaving the cloth of Evangelicalism. Is it any wonder that Evangelicals who see themselves as faithful descendants of the Fundamentalists would disagree with those who see their movement as a combination of many traditions? This all-too-brief portrayal of the Evangelical scene allows us to focus our sights still further as we turn to consider the role played by the Baptist tradition within Evangelicalism; in particular, its Southern Baptist Convention branch.<sup>2</sup>

The Place of the Baptist Tradition in the Contemporary Evangelical Debate

Although the Baptist tradition extends at least as far back as the sixteenth century and the rise of Anabaptism, American Baptists probably find their most immediate roots in the same soil as the English Baptists of the seventeenth century. The New Testament doctrine of the church stands at the center of Baptist thinking, believers' baptism

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Fisher Humphreys, "Biblical Inerrancy: A Guide for the Perplexed," <u>SBC Today</u>, February 1987, 6-7, 13. Perhaps a small sign of rapprochement between the opposing camps within contemporary Evangelicalism is the fact that some inerrantists are beginning to acknowledge that they have sometimes depended on questionable arguments to support their positions. See Michael Bauman's "Why the Noninerrantists are not Listening," <u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 29 (1986): 317-24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Whether or not Southern Baptists are actually evangelicals is discussed in James L. Garrett, Jr., E. Glenn Hinson, and James E. Tull, <u>Are Southern Baptists "Evangelicals"?</u> (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See William L. Hendricks, "Scripture: A Southern Baptist Perspective," <u>Review and Expositor</u> 79 (1982): 246.

being a corollary of this. 1 Baptist ecclesiology also lurks behind such facets of Baptist belief and practice as believer membership of the "gathered church," independence and congregationalism, the ordinances, and ministry. 2

Ecclesiology is evident also in the overall attitude of Baptists to creedalism.<sup>3</sup> W. R. Estep remarks that "Baptists are not a creedal but a confessional people."<sup>4</sup> Although there seems little difference between a creed and a confession, Baptists have usually differentiated between the two in order to state their strong belief that their confessions had no ultimate authority.<sup>5</sup>

Baptist confessions of faith had various uses<sup>6</sup> and are by no

This is in spite of a common misconception from the time of Anabaptism to the present that Baptist theology revolves around the subject of baptism. See E. F. Kevan, "Baptist Tradition, The," in the Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House) 122. Observe that Baptist writers regularly discuss the subject of baptism within the overall perspective of ecclesiology. This is evident in Bill J. Leonard, The Nature of the Church (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1986), 70-74; Morris West, "Toward a Possible Agenda," Review and Expositor 77 (1980): 15; Charles W. Deweese, A Community of Believers: Making Church Membership More Meaningful (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978), 13; and Augustus H. Strong, Systematic Theology (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1907), 939.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Kevan, 122-24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For a convenient summary of Baptist statements of faith and confessions, see Roy L. Honeycutt, "Biblical Authority: A Treasured Heritage!" Review and Expositor 83 (1981): 613-616.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>W. R. Estep, "The Nature and Use of Biblical Authority in Baptist Confessions of Faith, 1610-1963," <u>Baptist History and Heritage</u>, October 1987, 3-16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>In the Baptist mind, "a confession is a creed without sanctions." In contrast with creeds, "confessions provide agreement without anathema and consensus without censurability." They are also "convenient and affable." Additionally, "they also admit ambiguities and loose-knit associations" (Hendricks, 246). See also William Lumpkin, Baptist Confessions of Faith, rev. ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1969), who maintains that "no confession has ever permanently bound individuals, churches, associations, conventions, or unions among Baptists. Even when issued, the confessions have allowed for individual interpretation and perspective, so that each signatory was made to feel that the statements spoke for him" (p. 17).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Torbet, the Baptist historiographer, has summarized five uses of Baptist confessions of faith as follows: to maintain purity of doctrine; to clarify and validate the Baptist position; to serve as a

means uniform. They clearly reflect the understanding of the faith of the group who framed them as well as the historical context that called them into being. Yet, regardless of the circumstances, these documents acknowledge "the sufficiency of biblical authority for the faith and order of the churches," although this was not always addressed explicitly. 2

The heritage of the Southern Baptist Convention<sup>3</sup> has also been in confessionalism.<sup>4</sup> This vigorous denomination which counts millions of members in the southern United States<sup>5</sup> has, until "recent years," shown a general apathy towards its own history.<sup>6</sup>

guide to the General Assembly or local association in counselling churches; to serve as a basis for fellowship within local churches, associations, or General Assembly; and to discipline churches and members. See Robert G. Torbet, <u>A History of Baptists</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Judson Press, 1950), 74-75. Compare Estep, 4.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. Estep also notes that most Baptist confessions place the article on Scripture before the article on God. However, it should not be thought that the Bible was ever intended to take the place of God. He comments concerning the Baptist view of Scripture that "its authority is derivative, not ultimate. It is, therefore, derived from the God who revealed himself finally and completely in Jesus Christ to whom the Scriptures bear witness, and that witness is credible. Therefore, the Bible remains the sole authority for Baptists in matters of faith and practice" (p. 16). For further study, see James L. Garrett, Jr., "Biblical Authority According to Baptist Confessions of Faith," Review and Expositor 76 (1979): 43-54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Hereinafter referred to as the SBC.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Hendricks, 246. See also Herschel H. Hobbs, "Southern Baptists and Confessionalism," Review and Expositor 76 (1979): 55-68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Although its power base is in the South, because of its widespread missionary and evangelistic enterprises, it has spread to many countries worldwide. See Hendricks, 245.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>See Lynn E. May, Jr., "Introduction," in Hubert I. Hester, Southern Baptists and Their History (Nashville, TN: Historical Commission, SBC, 1971), 7. Hester comments that while it has been said that Southern Baptists were too busy making history to write or study their own history, this is at best a "half-truth"; an excuse, not a reason. Rather, in Hester's view, the real reason is a failure to realize the importance of their own history (ibid., 26-27).

Molding to a high view of the authority of Scripture, the SBC managed to escape most of the divisiveness that surrounded the demise of the Fundamentalist movement in the 1920s. However, it did not escape entirely. The controversial J. Frank Norris "created ripples among Southern Baptists that still flow throughout the Convention. "Norris, the leader of Baptist Fundamentalism, repeatedly tried to gain control of the Convention but was finally "excluded and his movement soundly repudiated by mainline Southern Baptists," but not before the SBC was forced in 1925 to revise the New Hampshire Confession of 1833 by tightening up the wording of Article 1 concerning the Bible.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Such was not the case for the Northern Convention. For a portrayal of the Fundamentalist-Modernist battle in the latter, see C. Allyn Russell, "The Northern (American) Baptist Experience with Fundamentalism," Review and Expositor 79 (1982): 45-61. See also Sandeen, The Roots of Fundamentalism, 264.

Pobby D. Compton, "J. Frank Norris and Southern Bertists,"

Review and Expositor 79 (1982): 79. For further data on Norris, see J.

Frank Norris, Inside History of First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, and

Temple Baptist Church, Detroit: The Life Story of Dr. J. Frank Norris

(n.p., n.d.); E. Ray Tatum, Conquest or Failure? Biography of J. Frank

Norris (Dallas, TX: Baptist Historical Foundation, 1966); and Clovis G.

Morris, "He Changed Things: The Life and Thought of J. Frank Norris"

(Ph.D. diss., Texas Tech University, 1973).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Leon McBeth, "Fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention in Recent Years," Review and Expositor 79 (1982): 86. Compton considers that in 1925-26 Norris and his associates wanted a complete denial of evolution in Article 3. The Convention refused to comply but later voted the "McDaniel statement" which effectively amended the article in question (Compton, 76-77). For further details, see Walter B. Shurden, Not a Silent People: Controversies That Have Shaped Southern Baptists (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1972), 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For the text of the New Hampshire Confession, see John H. Leith, ed., <u>Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present</u>, 3d ed. (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1982), 334-39.

<sup>5</sup>Article 1 of the New Hampshire Confession (1833) reads as follows: "We believe [that] the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true centre of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried" (Leith, 334-35). The addition made by J. Newton Brown in 1853 is enclosed in brackets. The SBC Convention in 1925 inserted "religious" to modify "opinions" and provided an extensive preface as a guide for

In the past few decades, the SBC has had to face similar problems again. The Convention was forced to make further additions to the New Hampshire Confession in 1963. The inerrancy question then incubated for some years only to erupt with full force at the 1979 Convention. Leon McBeth notes that not since the days of Norris has there been such a concerted effort to take over the entire SBC and lead it into a more conservative position regarding Scripture, the attempt being headed this time by Paige Patterson of Dallas and Paul Pressler of Houston. Houston.

understanding and interpreting the confession. See Estep, 14. Further details regarding the revisions of 1925 can be found in Lumpkin, 390-91. A complete text of the 1925 Confession is available in Robert A. Baker, A Baptist Source Book: With Particular Reference to Southern Baptists (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1966), 200-205.

This was mainly due to the Elliott controversy from 1961 onwards, and the Broadman Commentary controversy beginning in 1970. While it is not our purpose here to deal in detail with these controversies, it is interesting to note that both of them dealt with the Book of Genesis. For further details, see McBeth, "Fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention in Recent Years," 87-92; Robert A. Baker, The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People, 1607-1972 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1974), 416-417; L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles, Baptists and the Bible: The Baptist Doctrines of Biblical Inspiration and Religious Authority in Historical Perspective (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 388-92; and G. Hugh Wamble, "Baptists of the South," in Baptists and the American Experience, ed. James E. Wood, Jr. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1976), 287-290

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Again in the first article, "and is a record of God's revelation of Himself to man" was added after the word "inspired." A closing interpretative sentence was also added: "The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ." Commenting on these changes, Estep remarks that they brought the SBC confession closer to the earlier English Baptist confessions and the "Southern Baptists emerged in the 1960's reaffirming their confidence in the Bible and its authority while at the same time introducing two significant phrases that attempted to clarify its nature and provide a key for its understanding" (Estep, 14-15). The 1963 Statement, with scriptural references omitted, is available in Lumpkin, 393-400.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>McBeth, "Fundamentalism in the SBC in Recent Years," 95. However, it should not be thought that the inerrantist elements were silent during this period. In 1973, for instance, The Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship was founded to push for "ultraconservative emphases" in SBC schools, programs, and literature. In addition, in the same year The Southern Baptist Journal was founded "to save the church from destruction by Bible-doubting liberals" (ibid., 92-95).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 98-99. It should be observed that at least some SBC scholars do not believe that the present battles really concern the

What caused the fires of contention to burn at white heat in the SBC for over two decades? One factor, undoubtedly, is that there has long been two levels of understanding in the SBC regarding Scripture. Ashcraft calls one "the tradition of the theological seminaries" which was maintained by the professors in the SBC seminaries who held to a high view of the Bible but did not advocate the view of inerrancy developed by the Fundamentalists. The other, he labels "a popular inerrantist tradition" which has existed alongside the tradition of the seminaries. Another factor which has served to heighten the conflict is the increasing pluralism within the Convention. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the opposing camps tend

issue of biblical authority or even inerrancy. Hendricks claims that it is "a confusion of issues to presume that the area of disagreement is one of biblical authority" (Hendricks, 251). In his view, the issues are those of power (who will represent Southern Baptists on their boards and agencies?) and hermeneutics (what is the correct way to interpret an infallible, inerrant Bible?). After all, doctrinal agreement cannot be secured "unless a specific hermeneutic is applied" (p. 250). See also Fisher Humphreys, "Biblical Inerrancy: A Guide for the Perplexed," 13.

The latest round of the controversy has produced at least two major SBC contributions to the biblical authority/reliability discussion. See Russell H. Dilday, Jr., The Doctrine of Biblical Authority (Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1982); and L. Russ Bush and Tom J. Nettles, Baptists and the Bible: The Baptist Doctrines of Biblical Inspiration and Religious Authority in Historical Perspective (1980). Dilday's work presents a high view of Scripture but does not emphasize inerrancy, while Bush and Nettles' work is a sophisticated presentation of inerrancy. That the heated discussion is still continuing is evident from the report of The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987). This conference was sponsored by the six seminaries of the SBC (see the "Editorial Preface").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ashcraft, "Revelation and Biblical Authority in Eclipse," 16-17. Confirmation of this view is found in H. Leon McBeth, <u>The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness</u> (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 755, and Martin E. Marty's "Fundamentalism as a Social Phenomenon," <u>Review and Expositor</u> 79 (1982): 25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See, for instance, William E. Hull, "Pluralism in the Southern Baptist Convention," <u>Review and Expositor</u> 79 (1982): 121-46. Illustrative of this is the varying use made of historico-critical principles of interpretation within the six SBC seminaries. See Hendricks, 251.

to label each other as "fundamentalists" and "liberals," with the meaning of "moderate" depending on who is defining it. 1

Mark Noll, a Presbyterian, offered an insightful comment during his presentation at the 1987 SBC Conference on Inerrancy. He considers that while Southern Baptists (e.g., E. Y. Mullins) have always held to a high view of the authority and reliability of Scripture, "technical arguments about the Scriptures, while important, were not as significant for faith as the experience of Christ." This approach, Noll identifies as the "Baptist way." However, he senses that representatives of non-Baptist approaches to the question of scriptural reliability have influenced Southern Baptists in recent years.

The contemporary SBC battle over Scripture is insightfully summarized by Estep in his comment that "apparently there are quite a few Baptists who feel the need of 'nailing down' a concept of religious authority that cannot be challenged or evaded." There, in a nutshell, is the problem—one side appears to be starting from a position of biblical authority and arguing towards a view of reliability, while the other appears to argue from a quite detailed kind of reliability to biblical authority.

Noll's final point is of crucial importance here. He observes that the history of inerrancy "shows that the question has been worked out differently among different groups of Christians" and that debates

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See McBeth, "Fundamentalism in the Southern Baptist Convention in Recent Years," 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Mark Noll, "A Brief History of Inerrancy, Mostly in America," in <u>The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987</u> (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 18-19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 17-19. The other approaches found in America, Noll characterizes as the Princeton Presbyterian, the Dispensational/Fundamentalist, and the British Evangelical (ibid., 13-21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Estep, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>The emphasis appears to be on soteriological reliability.

about the Bible mean something different among "no creed but the Bible" denominations. The SBC story is far from over, but in churches like this such questions are hardly ever resolved by a Convention fiat!

#### Clark H. Pinnock: The Immediate Context

In order to understand the views of another person, at least some knowledge of his or her early life and experiences is essential. It would be a surprise to find that the theological perspectives of Clark Pinnock—a prominent player in recent scenes of controversy in the SBC concerning inerrancy—had developed in a vacuum.

### Pinnock's Early Life

Born in 1937 in Ontario, Canada, Pinnock was brought up in a Baptist congregation in Toronto which was "under the influence of the progressive theological views which had swept through scholarly Baptist circles in North America in the first decades of the 2Cth century."<sup>2</sup> Pinnock admits that as a young lad he "had forgotten the truth and reality of God pretty much" and found religion a bore.<sup>3</sup> He claims that he owes his conversion in 1949, not to his "liberal" church, but to "a Bible-believing grandma and a like-minded Sunday School teacher at the

Noll, "A Brief History of Inerrancy, Mostly in America," 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Clark H. Pinnock, "Baptists and Biblical Authority," <u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 17 (1974): 193. In the same place Pinnock claims at that time these "progressive" views were being disseminated from the Canadian Baptist Seminary at McMaster University. For Pinnock's own description of early liberal influences at McMaster, see his "The Modernist Impulse at McMaster University, 1887-1927," in Baptists in Canada: A Search for Identity amidst Diversity, ed. Jarold K. Zeman (Burlington, ON: G. R. Welch, 1980), 193-207. Further discussion of liberal influences at McMaster are available in Walter E. W. Ellis, "Social and Religious Factors in the Fundamentalist-Modernist Schisms among Baptists in North America, 1895-1934 (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1974), 211-34, and in Leslie K. Tarr, "Another Perspective on T. T. Shields and Fundamentalism," in <u>Baptists in Canada: A Search for Identity Amidst Diversity</u>, ed. Jarold K. Zeman (Burlington, ON: G. R. Welch, 1980), 209-24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See Clark H. Pinnock's contribution in "I Was 2 Teenage Fundamentalist," <u>Wittenberg Door</u>, December 1982-January 1983, 18.

church, who led me to know Christ." He received further assistance from Youth for Christ and the Canadian Keswick Bible Conference.<sup>2</sup>

From the very beginning of his Christian life, Pinnock states that he was "aware of the need to be alert to defections from the true faith and to maintain a theologically sound testimony."3 He remembers at fifteen years of age attending a lectureship on biblical subjects sponsored in one of the Toronto Baptist churches by the McMaster faculty "in which higher critical theories regarding the Pentateuch, the Book of Daniel, and the Psalms" were presented to a congregation of lavmen.4 He writes that he "can remember feeling then . . . how destructive to our confidence in the reliability of the Bible some of these views were."5 But it was not just scriptural reliability that concerned the young Pinnock at that time. He recalls his "puzzlement" as he tried to discover how the Baptist faith which he had been told "rested squarely and solely upon the unique and final authority of the Bible" would be able to survive these new views. 6 Thus, if Pinnock's memory serves him correctly, even as a teenager he was already concerned about biblical reliability and authority and their relationship.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. Compare Pinnock, "Baptists and Biblical Authority," 193. Here, in recalling the influence of his Sunday school teacher, Pinnock remarks: "I do not owe my conversion in 1949, humanly speaking, to that congregation or its ministers, but rather to a teacher in our Sunday school who, though deeply troubled by the lack of sound biblical preaching in the pulpit, continued to teach the Word of God to his intermediate class of boys, aged 12-14."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, in "I Was a Teenage Fundamentalist," 18. Pinnock observes: "I washed the dishes" at the Keswick Conference. In the same place, he maintains that he "was introduced to God in the context of the fundamentalist portraiture of the Gospel."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "Baptists and Biblical Authority," 193.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid. Pinnock describes in the same place how, "upon seeking out reaction from other laymen present, I found that they eitner shared my concern and horror or else regarded the whole matter as the province of biblical scholars whom they trusted meant no harm."

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

# Pinnock's Education and Career

Pinnock received his early theological training at the University of Toronto. In 1960 he graduated with a B.A. Honors in Ancient Near Eastern Studies<sup>1</sup> and was awarded a Commonwealth Research Fellowship for three years.<sup>2</sup> He undertook doctoral studies at Manchester University under the direction of F. F. Bruce in New Testament Studies, receiving his Ph.D. in 1963.<sup>3</sup> Then, for two years Pinnock was Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at Manchester<sup>4</sup> before accepting a position at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary as Assistant Professor of New Testament in 1965.<sup>5</sup> While in New Orleans it appears that his theological interests changed from New Testament Studies to Systematic Theology.<sup>6</sup>

From 1969 to 1974 Pinnock taught theology at the Trinity

Evangelical Divinity School in Illinois before moving on to Regent

College in Vancouver where he stayed until 1977. Since then he has been Professor of Systematic Theology at McMaster Divinity College in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See "The Author," in Clark H. Pinnock, <u>A Defense of Biblical</u>
<u>Infallibility</u> (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1967).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See the biographical note in Clark H. Pinnock, "The Structure of Pauline Eschatology," <u>Evangelical Quarterly</u> 37 (1965): 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "The Author," in <u>A Defense</u>. Pinnock's dissertation was entitled: "The Concept of Spirit in the Epistles of Paul" (Ph.D. diss., Manchester University, 1963).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>It was apparently during this time that Pinnock was in correspondence with Francis A. Schaeffer and worked for a while at his retreat at L'Abri, Switzerland. See Robert M. Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 158.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid. It is significant that Pinnock has only written one book of exegesis, his <u>Truth on Fire: The Message of Galatians</u> (1972).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 158.

Hamilton, Ontario. <sup>1</sup> In his present capacity Pinnock has had a considerable, even controversial, influence in Canadian Baptist life through his trenchant calls for renewal (both personal and corporate), <sup>2</sup> his advocacy of charismaticism, <sup>3</sup> and his promotion of a Canadian Baptist confession of faith. <sup>4</sup>

Throughout his career Dr. Pinnock has been a prolific writer, having produced scores of articles and book reviews for a variety of scholarly and popular religious journals. 5 In addition, he has written or edited over a dozen books on a wide spectrum of theological topics 6 and is presently working on another with process theologian, Delwin

<sup>1</sup>From the dustcover of Pinnock's The Scripture Principle (1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See, for instance, Pinnock's <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Mainly through his <u>The Canadian Baptist</u> articles (e.g., Pinnock's "Alive in the Spirit," <u>The Canadian Baptist</u>, February 1980, 5-7, and "God's Megatrends," <u>The Canadian Baptist</u>, September 1987, 10-12).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See Pinnock's "Baptists and Confessions of Faith," <u>The Canadian Baptist</u>, May 1980, 4-7. A convenient summary of Pinnock's influence within Canadian Baptist life is available in Alan S. Orser's "An Interpretation of Dr. Clark H. Pinnock and His Contribution to the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, 1977-1985" (unpublished term paper, Acadia Divinity College, November 1985).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Refer to the bibliography at the end of this study. Pinnock has contributed a particularly large number of articles and reviews to <u>Christianity Today</u> and the <u>TSF Bulletin</u>, both of which he has served as a contributing editor.

<sup>60</sup>n the doctrine of Scripture, Pinnock has written A Defense of Biblical Infallibility (1967), Biblical Revelation—The Foundation of Christian Theology (1971), and The Scripture Principle (1984). He has been productive in the area of Christian apologetics with his Set Forth Your Case: Studies in Christian Apologetics (1967), Are There Any Answers? (1972; first published as Live Now, Brother!), and Reason Enough: A Case for the Christian Faith (1980). Southern Baptist Convention concerns were Pinnock's focus in A New Reformation: A Challenge to Southern Baptists (1968) and Evangelism and Truth (1969). Systematic theology, the Christian life, and the doctrine of salvation were under Pinnock's scrutiny in Toward a Theology for the Future (1971; edited by David F. Wells and Clark H. Pinnock), Truth on Fire: The Message of Galatians (1972), Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985; published in Canada as The Untapped Power of Sheer Christianity), Grace Unlimited (1975; edited by Pinnock), and The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism (1989; edited by Pinnock) and Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective (1990). Full bibliographical details on these works are available above, p. 1, n. 2.

Brown. Pinnock is the founder of the Theological Students Fellowship in North America and has lectured on numerous campuses under its auspices. He has attained a position of prominence, even notoriety, in Evangelicalism.

# Pinnock's Role in the Southern Baptist Convention Debate

Clark Pinnock's early interest in biblical reliability and authority was to find later expression in his connection with the Southern Baptist Convention.<sup>3</sup> His rise to prominence among Evangelicals took place in the strongholds of the SBC,<sup>4</sup> and his teaching stint at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has had continuing repercussions for that denomination.

While at New Orleans (1965-69) Pinnock had wide influence with Southern Baptists through his speaking at ministerial and evangelistic conventions as well as through his classroom lectures and writing. His A New Reformation summarized his message to the SBC that a true Baptist was "a believer in the evangelical truths of an inerrant Bible" rather than "a person of any persuasion who happens to hold to adult baptism. "6

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See the back cover of Pinnock's (ed.) <u>The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism</u> (1989).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Pinnock, "The Author," in <u>A Defense of Biblical</u> Infallibility.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Over a decade elapsed between Pinnock's early experiences (as described above) and the beginning of his relationship with the SBC.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock's prominence among both Evangelicals and Baptists is attested by Richard Klann in his review of Clark Pinnock's <u>Scripture Principle</u>: "The author is Professor of Systematic Theology at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. Not yet fifty years old, he has written widely and achieved a considerable reputation among Baptists and other evangelical circles" (<u>Concordia Journal</u> 13 [1987]: 280).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>For Pinnock's views of the SBC's position regarding Scripture at that time, see Clark H. Pinnock, "Southern Baptists and the Bible," Christianity Today, May 27, 1966, 30-31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Clark H. Pinnock, <u>A New Reformation: A Challenge to Southern</u>
<u>Baptists</u> (1968), 15. Pinnock also claimed that the "convention is not

The recollections of this period by Pinnock and some of his associates is that his stand was marked by "a certain militancy." Robison James maintains that while it "would be an exaggeration . . . to say Pinnock started the inerrancy controversy which broke up the convention in 1979," half or more of the main leaders of the fundamentalist side of that controversy were "admiring students of his during his tenure on the faculty of New Orleans Seminary, 1965-69." Certainly, it is clear that Pinnock's views "strongly influenced Southern Baptists as he affirmed 'inerrancy' on the seminary campus, in pastors' conferences, conventions, and elsewhere in the Southern Baptist Convention."

an umbrella stretched to its limits to cover all possible shades of human opinion." Rather, he believed that "it is (or was) a voluntary association of evangelical believers who hold to the norm of the infallible Word . . . " (p. 16). Pinnock just a little later claimed that "the degree of opposition it [i.e., A New Reformation] received from high up in the denominational bureaucracy was a measure of the seriousness of our present position." See Pinnock's Evangelism and Truth (1969), 43.

¹Pinnock, "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy" (1987), 95.
Pinnock has recently admitted that burdened as he was by the fear of the influx of liberal theology in the SBC, he may "have behaved crudely during the New Orleans years and hurt some innocent people." See his "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?" in <a href="The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987">The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987</a>, 73. T. C. Smith, Emeritus Professor of Religion at Furman University, writes that Pinnock "marshaled a host of disciples who took him seriously on inerrancy and used his scholarly support to bring untold troubles for the Southern Baptist Convention. See Smith's review of Clark Pinnock's The Scripture Principle in Faith and Mission 3 (Spring 1986): 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Robison James, "Pinnock's Discovery: A Way Out," <u>SBC Today</u>, May 1986, 1. James lists Paige Patterson, Jim Henry, Jerry Vines, and apparently Adrian Rogers among Pinnock's students. He notes that Pinnock was also in contact with Paul Pressler during this period (p. 1). Regarding Patterson, an acknowledged leader of SBC inerrantists, Charles Allen argues that "in the 1970s a pattern of confrontation over doctrinal issues was developing in Patterson, which was reinforced by two prominent role models—his own father and the early Clark Pinnock." Allen notes also that while a student, Patterson was involved in a seminary conflict between the theologies of Clark Pinnock and Robert Scileau. See Charles W. Allen, "Paige Patterson: Contender for Baptist Sectarianism," <u>Review and Expositor</u> 79 (1982): 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Honeycutt, "Biblical Authority," 607-8.

Since leaving New Orleans for Trinity Evangelical Divinity
School in 1969, Pinnock's major contact with the SBC, until recent
years, appears to have been through his writings. In 1987, however,
he was invited to present two papers at the SBC Conference on Biblical
Inerrancy held at Ridgecrest, North Carolina. There, he eschewed
combativeness in favor of an irenic approach, stating that the SBC
controversy is not now between "a few liberal leaders and the Baptist
majority" (as he saw the situation in the 1960s) but between "large
numbers of evangelicals and fundamentalists in conflict with each
other." Such was the contrast between Pinnock's manner of twenty

¹Pinnock's lack of continuing contact with the SBC is hinted at in Paige Patterson's comparison of his own labors in the denomination with those of Clark Pinnock. He remarks that "my distinguished and greatly loved professor [Pinnock] wants peace in the Southern Baptist Convention. So do I. In fact, I probably desire peace more than he does since I, unlike my professor, still labor within the Southern Baptist context and endure the misunderstandings and misrepresentations associated with the questions I have raised. Unlike Pinnock, the convention has been my life from the time I was a Sunbeam, Royal Ambassador, Baptist college student, Southern Baptist seminary student, Southern Baptist pastor, until this moment. Pinnock grieves over the state of disarray. I probably grieve more than he." See Paige Patterson, "Response" [to Clark Pinnock's "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?"], in The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 93. It is worthy of note that Pinnock's theological writings address a wider spectrum of subjects after 1969 than before. However, it is also obvious that he had not relinquished his interest in Baptist (even SBC) affairs. See, for instance, his "Baptists and Biblical Authority" (1974), 193-205.

Prinnock's papers appear in The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987 under the titles, "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?" and "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy" (pp. 73-80 and 95-101, respectively). Further discussion of the themes of this Conference can be found in Robison B. James, ed., The Unfettered Word: Southern Baptists Confront the Authority-Inerrancy Question (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987). This book is written from the position of the SBC "moderate-conservatives" (as opposed to the "fundamental-conservatives") and includes such writers as R. Alan Culpepper, Russell H. Dilday, Jr., William R. Estep, Jr., Fisher Humphreys, Robison B. James, Edgar V. McKnight, Thomas J. Nettles, Stewart A. Neuman, Mark A. Noll, Clark H. Pinnock, and Charles H. Talbert.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?" (1987), 73.

years before and his present strategy that it aroused comment from more than one of the Conference participants. 1

It appears that Pinnock's interest in biblical reliability and authority is a preoccupation that can be traced from his youth. It is illustrated in his interactions, both past and present, with the SBC. That Pinnock's opinions have not remained static is evident. Currently, he looks to the concept of inerrancy to provide "an irenic force in Baptist life," whereas he previously used it "to blow the whistle" on the liberalism he perceived as "seeping into the ranks of the educated elite of the Convention."

#### Conclusion

Until the height of English Deism in the late seventeenth century there was little question regarding the authority and reliability of Scripture. It was biblical criticism, in particular, that called into question the veracity of the Scriptures and ever since a good deal of theologizing has been done without the benefit of an authoritative "thus saith the Lord."

The Fundamentalist movement which arose to protest Liberalism's demolition of biblical authority and reliability borrowed Warfield's "inerrancy in the original autographs" and used it in its defense of the traditional view of Scripture. From the ruins of Fundamentalism, but

For instance, in a comment that recalled the "New Orleans" Pinnock, William Hull stated: "Twenty years ago is was my assignment to bring Bible studies opening each session of the Louisiana Baptist Convention. One afternoon, just after I finished my exposition and sat down on the front pew, a visitor [Pinnock] from New Orleans unwound his lanky frame, peered over the pulpit, and proceeded to unleash a withering attack on my most cherished friends in Southern Baptist theological education. That harsh jeremiad was my first encounter with the spirit and strategy of 'strict inerrancy,' but it was the harbinger of things to come a decade later. See William E. Hull, "Response" [to Clark Pinnock's "What Is Bible Inerrancy?"], in The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 84.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Hull, 83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?" (1987), 73.

with links to earlier revival movements, emerged contemporary

Evangelicalism. While holding to a high view of scriptural authority,

Evangelicalism has not shown itself particularly amenable to acceptance
of a uniform approach to biblical reliability.

Any analysis of a present-day theologian must take into account the milieu from which he comes. Of necessity this includes his immediate and more distant theological heritage. Clark Pinnock, who must be studied within the context of a multi-faceted Evangelicalism, is no exception in this. In order to understand his theological interests, development, and shifts it has been necessary to first observe the kind of "omnibus" in which he rides as well as his fellow-passengers and baggage. Now, however, it is time to move on to a consideration of Pinnock, the theologian.

#### CHAPTER II

# CLARK H. PINNOCK, THE THEOLOGIAN

#### Introduction

Christians have long been convinced that the Bible should be the sole source of their beliefs and practice, but at the same time they are persuaded that the production of books of theology is necessary for a proper understanding of the Bible. This theological task finds it roots in a recognition that there appears to be a gulf between the world of the Bible and the world of today. Hence, the theologian's vocation has revolved around the "contemporizing" of the biblical message. Traditionally, the theologian was seen as a "translator" of the Scriptures for his contemporaries. More recently, however, the theological enterprise has taken on the characteristics of a rather radical "transformation."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See, for instance, "John Calvin to the Reader" (1559) in the <u>Institutes</u>, 1:4. Calvin remarked, "It has been my purpose in this labor to prepare and instruct candidates in sacred theology for the reading of the divine Word, in order that they may be able both to have easy access to it and to advance in it without stumbling." In the same place he speaks of his work as a "necessary tool" (p. 5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The difference was very pointedly accentuated by Rudolf Bultmann in his "New Testament and Mythology," in <u>Kerygma and Myth</u>, 1-44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For a helpful evangelical discussion of this subject, see Millard J. Erickson's chapter entitled "Contemporizing the Christian Message," in his <u>Christian Theology</u> [one-volume ed.] (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), 105-25. For a liberal perspective on the same issue, see John Carmody, <u>Theology for the 1980s</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1980), 164-72. David Ray Griffin's <u>God and Religion in the Postmodern World: Essays in Postmodern Theology</u> (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989) exemplifies an attempt at contemporizing Christian theology from a process viewpoint.

<sup>4</sup>See William Hordern, New Directions in Theology Today, vol. 1,

Like Carl F. H. Henry before him, 1 Clark Pinnock has, at least as far back as 1971, been appealing for evangelicals to make their theology both "conservative and contemporary." He characterizes "classical" theology as a concentration on "fidelity and continuity with the historic Christian belief system set forth in Scripture and reproduced in creed and confession." This approach Pinnock

Introduction (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1966), 141-54. The difference between the two approaches to theology can be seen in the contrast between Dale Moody's conservative discussion of the "Sources for a Christian Theology" in his The Word of Truth: A Summary of Christian Doctrine Based on Biblical Revelation (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981), 1-11, and Gordon D. Kaufman's comment that "Christian theology-being rooted in an attempt to explicate the Christian faith-seeks to grasp our common human existence in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. It should not be supposed however, that this implies a deliberate submission to heteronomous authority, whether of church, Bible, or even God. A thinker may never give up his moral and epistemological autonomy and integrity in the search for truth: he can recognize and honestly declare as true only what he himself can perceive to be the truth. However, no man searching out this difficult path cuts an entirely new, untried trail; each is heavily dependent on the work and insights of those who have gone before" (Gordon D. Kaufman, Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968], vii-ix).

¹Henry's intention that evangelical theology be both conservative and contemporary is evident in his "Preface," in Contemporary Evangelical Thought, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (New York: Channel Press, 1957), 7-9. There, Henry writes of "traditional religion," "contemporary evangelical thought," and "present evangelical thought" (p. 8). The same theme is also found in his God, Revelation and Authority, vol. 1, God Who Speaks and Shows, where he observes that "Evangelical theology is heretical if it is only creative[,] and unworthy if it is only repetitious. That it can be freshly relevant for each new generation of persons and problems is a continuing asset" (p. 9).

Prinnock, "Prospects for Systematic Theology," in Toward a Theology for the Future, 93-97. That this has been a continuing theme is evident by the title of Pinnock's inaugural lecture delivered at McMaster Divinity College in October, 1977: "Evangelical Theology—Conservative and Contemporary." For the text of this lecture, see Pinnock's "Appendix," in his Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal: A Challenge to the Church (1985), 85-100. A slightly edited version of this address appears as "An Evangelical Theology: Conservative and Contemporary," Christianity Today, January 5, 1979, 23-29. That the conservative/contemporary theme is dominant in Pinnock is attested by Robert M. Price, "Clark Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 157-83.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), 88. For a much more positive perspective on Christian tradition, see Pinnock's "Tradition Can Keep Theologians on Track," <u>Christianity Tcday</u>, October 22, 1982, 24-27.

criticizes for its "anti-cultural and world-denying" tendencies. On the other hand, however, the "liberal experiment" allows modernity such a position in theology that it places it "on a par and often even above Scripture" to the extent that "modern man gives revelation to himself." The ideal, Pinnock holds, is to be found in a bi-polar approach: faithfulness to historic Christian beliefs combined with authenticity and responsibility to contemporary hearers.

The present chapter intends to examine some basic aspects of Pinnock's thought through a variety of theological themes. These include such diverse topics as apologetics, soteriology, doctrine of God, political theology, and the New Pentecostalism. To scrutinize all of these aspects in detail is beyond the scope of this study, however, an adequate overview is essential in order to discover how his view of Scripture—especially his perspectives on its authority and reliability—relates to his overall system.

The method adopted here is thematic, descriptive, and analytical. Aspects such as formative influences, early positions, developments and new directions, relationships, and later perspectives are all taken into consideration. Rather than following the classic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), 90. Observe also that Pinnock maintains that a neglect of tradition constitutes "a lack of appreciation of historicity in a broader sense ("Tradition Can Keep Theologians on Track" [1982], 25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 95. That this has been both an early and later criticism of liberalism by Pinnock is made clear in his "The Harrowing of Heaven," Christianity Today, June 19, 1970, 7-8, and his "Response to Delwin Brown," Christian Scholar's Review 19 (1989): 75-76. The latter article responds to Delwin Brown's "Rethinking Authority from the Right: A Critical Review of Clark Pinnock's Scripture Principle," 66-72. Robert W. Yarbrough, "Retreating Authority: Evangelical-Liberal Rapprochement?" Christian Scholar's Review 19 (1989): 149-62, gives an evangelical response to both Brown and Pinnock.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), 86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Secondary sources are used only as they clarify Pinnock's positions. Chapter 5 is devoted to an evaluation and critique of his theological views, especially as they intersect with his thinking on biblical reliability and authority.

order of systematic theology, a chronological approach is followed insofar as is possible. That is, Pinnock's early interests are discussed before those arising later in his career, in order to uncover his long-standing interests and their interconnections.

#### **Apologetics**

Edward Carnell has defined apologetics as "that branch of Christian theology which answers the question, Is Christianity rationally defensible?" That apologetics was an early and continuing interest for Clark Pinnock is evident from his wide range of books and articles on the topic. Although his doctorate was taken in New Testament Studies under F. F. Bruce, it would appear that the influence of Francis Schaeffer along with that of John Warwick

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Edward J. Carnell, <u>An Introduction to Christian Apologetics: A Philosophic Defense of the Trinitarian-Theistic Faith</u>, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948), 7 (emphasis Carnell).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>For instance, Pinnock's "In Defense of the Resurrection,"

Christianity Today, April 9, 1965, 6-8; Set Forth Your Case: Studies in Christian Apologetics (1967); "Toward a Rational Apologetic Based upon History," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 11 (1968): 147-51; "Cultural Apologetics: An Evangelical Standpoint," Bibliotheca Sacra 127 (1970): 58-63; "The Philosophy of Christian Evidences," in Jerusalem and Athens: Critical Discussions on the Theology and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til, ed. E. R. Geehan (n.p: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), 420-27; Are There Any Answers? (1972); "The Living God and the Secular Experience," Bibliotheca Sacra 129 (1972): 316-20; "The Moral Argument for Christian Theism," Bibliotheca Sacra 131 (1974): 114-19; and Reason Enough: A Case for the Christian Faith (1980). This latter work is an expansion and revision of seven articles which appeared originally in HIS, October 1976-April 1977. A fair, but negative, reaction to Pinnock's Reason Enough (1980) is available in Nicholas Wolterstorff's "Is Reason Enough? A Review Essay," The Reformed Journal, April 1981, 20-24. Peter J. Steen, Westminster Theological Journal 31 (1968-1969): 101-9, provides a major, but less than positive appraisal of Pinnock's Set Forth Your Case (1967).

Montgomery was most dominant in Pinnock's early career<sup>1</sup> and probably triggered his interest in apologetics.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Influence of Schaeffer

During 1966 Clark Pinnock worked at Francis Schaeffer's L'Abri center, in the tiny town of Huémoz, Switzerland, having already been a student there in the years before that. That experience was to have a marked effect on his theological interests. Pinnock describes himself as being a young postwar convert who was "on the lookout for a well-reasoned biblical faith." Feeling sure that the traditional faith was superior to the liberal revisions, he found in Schaeffer a

¹This was affirmed in conversations with Pinnock himself, April 11-12, 1990, at McMaster Divinity School, Hamilton, Ontario (hereinafter referred to as Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990). Pinnock referred particularly to the influence of Montgomery's The Shape of the Past: An Introduction to Philosophical Historiography (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, 1962).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>For a limited, yet insightful, discussion of Pinnock's apologetics, see Leigh's "Incongruities Within the Literature Adopted for Teaching Apologetics at Schools Which Are Members of the American Association of Bible College." Leigh contends that Pinnock disagrees with some of the other apologists included in his study regarding "common ground" between believer and unbeliever (p. 101) and that he uses a circular proof for Scripture (pp. 90-91). Overall, Leigh maintains that the writers he studied were congruous in regard to the fundamental evangelical doctrines, the law of contradiction, the historicity of Christianity, and the importance of presuppositions. He attributed some minor incongruities, such as those found in Pinnock, to a theological incongruity between Calvinism and Arminianism (pp. 124-25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>An account of how Schaeffer came to establish his L'Abri (a French word meaning "the shelter") Fellowship in the Protestant canton of Vaud, in the southwest corner of Switzerland, is found in Edith Schaeffer's <u>L'Abri</u> (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1969).

Pinnock, Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 101, n. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock recalls this 1960s experience with his remark: "I realize afresh how profoundly the L'Abri themes have affected me ever since I was a worker there in 1966 and a student there in years before that" (ibid.).

teacher who claimed "to be able to vindicate conservative theology in dialogue with the best and brightest" liberals.

Schaeffer, in Pinnock's view, was "a most important person" in his life. He admits that he has "not known another like him to this day." He convinced the young theologian "of the importance of keeping a balance of mind and heart and not backing down in the face of opposition whether from within the church or the culture." It was from Schaeffer that Clark Pinnock appears to have borrowed his emphasis on "cultural apologetics."

# Cultural Apologetics

According to Pinnock, cultural apologetics, which "falls within the field of general revelation or natural theology," aims at uncovering grounds for belief in God as well as the refutation of the grounds advanced for disbelief. However, unlike Thomistic natural theology which concentrated on theistic argument, cultural apologetics is a relatively new form of apologetics which "focuses on the existential dilemma of unbelieving man."

Cultural apologists, in Pinnock's view, should begin with the dilemmas of man expressed in the media and attempt to show that according to the best non-Christian minds of the twentieth century, human significance is questionable and human problems are

¹Pinnock, "Schaeffer on Modern Theology," in <u>Reflections on Francis Schaeffer</u>, ed. Ronald W. Ruegsegger (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1986), 174. In the same place, Pinnock remembers that there "were exciting ideas at L'Abri, and we flocked to hear the new scholar-prophet in droves." From the vantage point of the intervening years, Pinnock admits that "to this day Schaeffer seems to me to have discerned better than most evangelical leaders the true proportions of the challenge that biblical Christianity faces in our time. He may not have been the best educated and polished of these leaders, but he possessed a gift of discernment that anabled him to articulate a great many truths. We sensed at L'Abri that we were in the presence of someone who really understood the spirits at work in contemporary theology" (p. 174).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 192.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "Cultural Apologetics" (1970), 59.

insurmountable. An attempt is then made to establish links between the questions raised in literature (and other media) and the answers contained in the Bible. Therefore Christians must be culturally aware if they are to gain a hearing, since cultural "isolationism" has the price of irrelevance.

A large portion of Pinnock's early and later writings, in the area of apologetics, bear the marks of this kind of argumentation.

Thus, in his <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967) he argues in chapter 3 that twentieth-century painting, music, literature, theater, and film testifies to "the death of hope and the loss of the human." In chapter 4 he insists that for the modern humanist, the only escape route seems to be a retreat from rationality to "nonrational, subjective, personal experience." Chapter 5 contends that Western civilization is approaching its "breaking point" under the influence of the "nonchristian ethos" and that any remaining bastions of optimism are the result of an inconsistent retention of the Christian value system. Christians "must seek to destroy [man's] . . . spurious security by every tool at our disposal," observes Pinnock. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 60. At the time of writing this article (1970), Pinnock listed as representative evangelical cultural apologists Stuart Barton Babbage, Virginia Mollenkott, and Francis A. Schaeffer. From outside evangelicalism, he mentions John Killenger, Sallie M. TeSelle, William F. Lynch, H. Graef, Nathan A. Scott, Jr., Randall Stewart, Amos N. Wilder, Jerry H. Gill, and Charles L. Glicksberg (p. 59).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), 30. For specific examples from the cultural media, see Pinnock's <u>Are There Any Answers?</u> (1972), 9-19.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, Set Forth Your Case, 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 46-52. In Pinnock's view, Christians should "revolt" against the "incredibly arid and barren TV culture and stand for something that is sensitive and real, or the name of God will be blasphemed because of us" (Pinnock, "Cultural Apologetics" [1970], 62).

pointed out in chapter 6.1 Only after this extensive cultural analysis does Pinnock turn to the Christian gospel as found in the Scriptures.2

For this type of apologetic Pinnock was most certainly indebted to Francis Schaeffer, but even while under Schaeffer's "direct influence" he became convinced that cultural apologetics was insufficient. In order to overcome what Pinnock perceived as an "upper-story" weakness in Schaeffer's thought, he added "evidentialist apologetics," although this was "something Schaeffer never was willing to do."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>Set Forth Your Case</u>, 53-60. "Man, cut off from his religious roots," Pinnock writes, "is withering." The "agonizing questions man is asking" are answered by "no good news in the literature of anxiety, only alienation and the fear of death. But there is a hungering and thirsting for the abundant life which Jesus Christ can give" (Pinnock, "Cultural Apologetics" [1970], 63).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Set Forth Your Faith</u>, chaps. 7-14 (pp. 61-118). Clark Pinnock uses a similar, though wider, approach in his later <u>Reason Enough: A Case for the Christian Faith</u> (1980). In this work he proposes "five circles of credibility" or "categories of evidence" to argue for the reasonableness of the Christian faith. The five bases for faith advanced by Pinnock are the "pragmatic," the "experiential," the "cosmic," the "historical," and the "community." Of these five, the first two--the pragmatic and the experiential--are arguments from the perspective of "cultural apologetics" (chaps. 1-5, pp. 21-106).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "Schaeffer on Modern Theology" (1986), 184-85. Here Pinnock criticizes Schaeffer for building his whole system on "biblical presuppositionalism" which asks that the Bible be accepted "as inerrantly true because it would be pragmatically wise to do so and because it would give us a rational system of truth to depend on" (p. 184). Pinnock remarks that this sounds a lot like "voluntarism in religion, as if ultimates are chosen in the final analysis, as if religion is a wager or a leap of faith" (p. 184). Such an approach, because of its refusal to give independent evidence on behalf of the ultimate axioms is, according to Pinnock, little different from the modern "upper-story" theologies that Schaeffer attacks (pp. 184-85). Pinnock also notes that his own Set Forth Your Case (1967) shows the combination of "cultural" and "evidentialist" apologetics (ibid., 193, n. 6).

While Pinnock felt it necessary to add "evidence" to Schaeffer's apologetics in 1967, in more recent years he has criticized Schaeffer for his "lack of credible scholarship when it comes to the details" (p. 185) and for his inconsistency as a theological rationalist (p. 186). However, one cannot help but think that Pinnock's quarrel with Schaeffer is "a lover's tiff" since he concludes: "On the subject of modern theology, Schaeffer was an insightful interpreter. Although the details of his analysis will not bear much close scrutiny, the general lines of his intuitions need to

# Evidentialist Apologetics: Going Beyond Schaeffer

Evidentialist apologetics attempts to provide "objective evidence of the truthfulness of the Christian message." To the theological neophyte this seems a quite "reasonable" thing to do, but the subject represents a littlefield of some major proportions.<sup>2</sup>

be taken seriously. Obviously he is a stepping stone rather than a final authority. In many ways he ventured beyond his intellectual depth. One could not compare him in a class with Carl Henry or Van Til, or with Barth or Bultmann. His influence as a thinker will not last long. But what is impressive and what will last, as in the case of Bonhoeffer, is not the thought but the total quality of the man in whose face the glory of God shone" (p. 192). For an earlier critique of Schaeffer's views, see Pinnock, "Schaefferism as a World View: A Probing Perspective on How Should We Then Live?" Sojourners, July 1977, 31-35. Pinnock sets the stage for his comments with the statement that "all too often Schaeffer's work receives devoted and uncritical praise when it needs a critical response" (p. 32) and concludes that "it is a pleasure to encounter an unashamed apologetic, unafraid to take a stand in the midst of the most secular thought. But it is important that the work be done well" (p. 35).

For further discussion of Schaeffer's apologetics, see Gordon R. Lewis, "Schaeffer's Apologetic Method," in <u>Reflections on Francis Schaeffer</u>, ed. Ronald W. Ruegsegger (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1986), 69-104; and Thomas V. Morris, <u>Francis Schaeffer's Apologetics: A Critique</u> (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976); and E. R. Geehan, "The 'Presuppositional Apologetic' of Francis Schaeffer," <u>Themelios</u> 8 (1972): 10-18.

1Pinnock, Are There Any Answers? (1972), 20.

<sup>2</sup>See, for instance, Edward J. Carnell's discussion of the difference between the empiricist and the presuppositional rationalist approaches to apologetics (Carnell, 122-210). Note that in the following, Carnell himself emphatically rejects the empiricist stance in favor of presuppositionalism: "... how does the Christian prove the validity of the Bible? He does it in the same way that the scientist proves the law of gravity. He shows that, granting the hypothesis of the existence of the God Who has revealed Himself in Scripture, he can produce a system of philosophy which is horizontally self-consistent, i.e., which makes peace with the law of contradiction, and which vertically fits the facts of life. Having fulfilled these two standards, the Christian is assured that there is enough rational evidence for him to believe in a supernaturalistically ordered universe" (p. 355).

Compare Bernard Ramm's <u>Varieties of Christian Apologetics</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1962) which indicates some of the philosophical differences between the three apologetical paradigms discussed in his work (i.e., systems stressing subjective experience, systems stressing natural theology, and systems stressing revelation). Ramm makes his own position regarding "Christian evidences" quite explicit in his statement that "those who approach apologetics with a strong philosophical bent make short work of apologetics. They maintain that Christian evidences are accepted or rejected in terms of one's philosophical position. The real issue

Pinnock clearly indicates that, in his evidentialist apologetics, he is swimming against the contemporary current. He observes that the "bane of modern theology has been the insistence that the acts of God are visible only to the eyes of faith." He sees Bultmann as the epitome of this trend, Barth as a "less strident form of this neognosticism," and even Cornelius Van Til and Gordon Clark as encouraging Christian disengagement from history with their "presuppositional apologetics."

As previously intimated, Pinnock found a mentor for his espousal of evidentialist apologetics in John Warwick Mongomery. He provided a model for Pinnock's emphasis on historical evidence for the

then is arguing philosophical position, and not Christian evidences. In the final analysis evidences are immaterial to Christian apologetics" (p. 26).

In Pinnock's 1971 "Appendix: On Method in Christian Apologetics," in <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971 ed.), 132. This "Appendix" was added to provide "further explication and exhibition of the structure underlying the argument" presented in 1967 (p. 131).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 132-33. For further details of Pinnock's view of Barth's apologetical contributions, see his "Assessing Barth for Apologetics," in <u>How Karl Barth Changed My Mind</u>, ed. Donald K. McKim (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 162-65, and his earlier "Karl Barth and Christian Apologetics," Themelics, May 1977, 66-71. In his "Appendix: On Method in Christian Apologetics" (1971; see n. 1, above), Pinnock explains that Van Til and Gordon Clark promote the idea that "the facts of redemptive history are not accessible until after the commitment to the Christian position has been secured. This not only leaves us with no possible way to distinguish a true commitment from a false one, but is fundamentally incompatible with the apostolic appeal to what God did as a basis for what men ought to believe" (p. 133; emphasis Pinnock). For a more complete portrayal of his view of Van Til's system of apologetics, see Pinnock's "The Philosophy of Christian Evidences" (1971), 420-25. See also the "Response by C. Van Til," in <u>Jerusalem and Athens:</u> Critical Discussions on the Theology and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til, ed. E. R. Geehan (n.p: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), 426-27. Pinnock contends that Van Til's views are based on "a curious epistemology derived from a modern Calvinistic school of philosophy in Holland" which has led him to "align his orthodox theology with a form of irrational fideism" (p. 425) while Van Til, in turn, retorts that Pinnock holds to "the Butler-Arminian form of apologetics" (p. 427).

veracity of both Christianity and the Scriptures. In addition, Pinnock, particularly in his earlier years, appears to have been much influenced by Warfield's view that the inspiration of the Bible was an integral part of divine revelation which could be attested historically. More recently it seems that Wolfhart Pannenberg has also provided content for Pinnock's views in regard to evidentialist apologetics.

Pinnock's evidentialist bent is clear in both his <u>Set Forth</u>

<u>Your Case</u> (1967)<sup>4</sup> and his <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980). In the former he concludes that "a historical approach to Christian evidences is valid" from the implication of both the Old and New Testaments that divine revelation is accompanied by supernatural events which are empirically discernible in history.<sup>5</sup> Religious experience alone cannot be the foundation upon which the Christian religion rests.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See above, p. 84. For Pinnock's view of Montgomery's contribution, see his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971) where he remarks that "a most emphatic voice on behalf of a historical apologetic has been Lutheran scholar John Warwick Montgomery, who touches this theme in all that he writes" (p. 47). Notice also Pinnock's comment in his "Cultural Apologetics" (1970) that in his view "the soundest and most promising line of apologetic now in the stage of development is John Warwick Montgomery's historically grounded defense of the gospel" (p. 58, n. 2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 44, which refers to B. B. Warfield's "Apologetics," in <u>Studies in Theology</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 3-21. See also Pinnock's remark that Warfield "shaped" his interest in biblical systematic theology in "An Interview with Clark Pinnock," <u>HIS</u>, March 1974, 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock maintains that with his conviction that historical study is able to validate the resurrection claim of the New Testament, Pannenberg should also be seen as an ally of evidentialists (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 48, and Pinnock's 2-part series on "Pannenberg's Theology," in <u>Christianity Today</u>, November 5, 1976, 19-22 and November 19, 1976, 14-16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>A similar approach is found in Pinnock's <u>Are There Any Answers?</u> (1972), 20-33. See also his "Toward a Rational Apologetic Based upon History" (1968), 147-51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), 65. See the whole of chap. 7 ("Validating the Gospel"), pp. 61-68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., chap. 8, pp. 69-76.

What are the "evidences" advanced by Pinnock? These include the historical trustworthiness of the New Testament documents, the historicity of Christ, the factuality of the resurrection, the inerrancy of Scripture, theistic proofs for God's existence, and the unscientific nature of the evolution "myth."

Pinnock himself observes that while he was bitten by the "bug" of "apologetic certainty" in the 1960s, he has "recovered" and now sounds less desperate and dogmatic. Pinnock's adjustment in his apologetics is in content rather than method. Presently characterizing himself as a "soft rationalist," Pinnock still follows

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., chap. 9 (pp. 77-84).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., chap. 10 (pp. 85-91).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., chap. 11 (pp. 92-99).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., chap. 12 (pp. 100-106).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., chap. 13 (pp. 107-11). For Pinnock's positive evaluation of Aquinas, see his "Schaeffer on Modern Theology" (1986), 185-86.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Idem, <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), chap. 14 (pp. 112-18). A similar approach is also found in Pinnock's later <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980). On one hand his brand of evidentialist apologetics turns to natural theology including theistic arguments for the existence of God, arguments from design and the existence of the world, beauty, pleasure, and morality, as well a contention that belief in God is the "end of my quest for intelligibility" (p. 68). Consult this whole chapter, entitled "Circle Three: The Cosmic Basis for Faith," pp. 55-77. On the other hand, Pinnock offers a "historical basis for faith" which includes the Bible's own claim that God has revealed himself in historical events, the fact of Christ, and the resurrection (chap. 4, pp. 73-91).

Probably Pinnock's "community basis for faith" could also be included within the "historical basis" in that it encompasses actual instances of the effects of the "new community" in the world. Included are examples from the Old and New Testaments, and the social impact of the gospel since New Testament times (chap. 5, pp. 93-106).

<sup>7</sup>Idem, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 154-55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990. In conversations with me, Pinnock indicated that he now holds to a position in-between fideism and hard rationalism. Such a stance, he maintains, has been described by William J. Abraham (<u>An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion</u> [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1985], 98-113) as "soft rationalism." Abraham defines "soft rationalism" as a "middle way between classical natural theology and fideism" (p. 104) that builds

both cultural and evidentialist apologetics. However, in his latest writings he omits mention of such details as the proofs for strict biblical inerrancy among the "circles" of evidence<sup>1</sup> and claims less in the way of certainty.<sup>2</sup>

Evidentialist (and cultural) apologetics, in Pinnock's perspective, has the purpose of "getting people to seriously consider Christ's claims" when "intellectual difficulties are a hindrance," as well as "nurturing Christians" by promoting growth "in the area of the mind." Thus, for Pinnock, Christianity's truth claims are open to testing just like any other area of human knowledge. This leads us into a consideration of his epistemology.

### Pinnock's Epistemology

The particular theory of knowing which lies behind Pinnock's apologetics (and all of his theological work) was only specifically addressed by him in 1980 in his <a href="Reason Enough">Reason Enough</a>. Basically an empiricist, Pinnock holds to a "correspondence" or "common-sense" view

its claims on "cumulative-case arguments" (p. 107). According to Abraham, "hard rationalists" tend to "set the standards far too high for the subject matter" (ibid.). For an open-minded critique of "soft rationalism," see Rod Sykes' "Soft Rationalism," International Journal for Philosophy of Religion 8 (1977): 51-56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See, for instance, Pinnock's <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980) where he argues for the "factual evidence for the truth of Christian message" rather than using the terminology of strict inerrancy (p. 91). Contrast this with his earlier (1967) <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> in which Pinnock proposes that "difficulties in Scripture do not overthrow the infallibility principle. They are but mountains yet to be scaled and lands yet to be conquered" (p. 106). It is significant that this observation should come immediately after he cites examples of difficulties which have found modern resolutions (pp. 103-6).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Preferring, rather, to build his case on cumulative evidence which is open to personal judgment, Pinnock observes that God approaches us "gently with clues and reminders of who he is as if to woo and win us" (Pinnock, Reason Enough [1980], 18).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, in "An Interview with Clark Pinnock" (1974), 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>While Pinnock does not explicitly discuss his epistemology in his earlier apologetical works, it seems that the same theory of knowing applies to them as well.

of reality and knowing. He rejects skepticism in knowledge as merely "a nice game to play" since "there is no way one can live on the basis of it."

Knowing, in Pinnock's view, is divided into two sections.

First, "we gain our knowledge of reality through our interaction with the external world." He acknowledges that such a view entails the acceptance of such assumptions as belief that an actual world exists and that the impressions of it in our minds correspond to something real. However, the acceptance of these presuppositions are seen as "inescapable if not self-evident" because they "underlie all our being and knowing."<sup>2</sup>

Pinnock sees the second part of knowing as taking place when "reliable conclusions" are drawn "from what we perceive" as we think "consistently and coherently about the data we encounter." Thus, Pinnock's intention is to use "logical thinking" to examine "the truth claim of the Christian gospel." He emphatically rejects the view that Christianity's truth claims lie in an "upper-story" realm which is beyond human verification.

Pinnock, Reason Enough (1980), 16-17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 17. Observe that Pinnock defines "logical thinking" as "the practice and art of seeing correctly the relationships which exist between the items of observation and the truth we already possess," and that it is his contention that the truth of the gospel can be "checked out in the ordinary ways we verify the things we know" (Reason Enough [1980], 17). It should not be thought that Pinnock is here espousing some formal system of logic (either ancient or modern). Instead, he pleads for the applications of "logical" or consistent thinking in order to ascertain the truthfulness of religious claims (Pinnock, Biblical Revelation [1971], 45).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980), 17. This amounts to a rejection of that aspect of Kantian epistemology which prevented verification of anything in the "upper-story." See our discussion of Kant's epistemological contribution to the rise of contemporary views of biblical reliability and authority in chap. 1, above (p. 44). In his "Peril with Promise" (in James H. Olthuis et al., <u>A Hermeneutics of Ultimacy: Peril or Promise?</u> [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987]) where, though admitting that the faith event is a mystery, Pinnock argues that the "God who made the human mind can

What, then, is the extent of religious knowledge available to humankind? Pinnock maintains that he is not aiming at "rational proof" but at "a testing of faith in the light of knowledge" that will allow Christian commitment without a sacrifice of the intellect. 

Therefore, the kind of evidence presented by Pinnock, he believes, is only of a "probable" and partial kind. 

2

Pinnock's conviction is that "apologetic methodology" should reflect biblical theology, particularly as it relates to scriptural anthropology and the doctrine of revelation. This introduces the question as to what humans can know. Humans are, so Pinnock believes, "finite and sinful." Their "reason is not ultimate in the universe," and their minds are "also fallen and twisted (Eph 4:18)." For their "finiteness" they need "revelation" and for their "sinfulness" they need "regeneration." Thus, in Pinnock's view, "it will be forever impossible for man to explain the meaning of reality starting from himself alone."

surely use the evidences of his activity and existence to effect the conversion of the human heart" (p. 54). In the same place, Pinnock contends that he does not want Christian theologians telling unbelievers that there are no reasons why they should believe or Christian believers smugly saying that they believe and the matter is settled. He concludes by saying: "I tremble for the future of the Christian mission if we cannot go out into the market place or ideas convinced of the objective truthfulness of our message" (p. 55). For further information, see Pinnock's Reason Enough (1980), 9, 13; Are There Any Answers? (1972), 20-21; and Set Forth Your Case (1967), 13, 61.

<sup>1</sup>Idem, Reason Enough (1980), 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>In his <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), 67. See also Pinnock's <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980), 18, where he admits that he is "dealing here with reasonable probabilities." In addition, notice his arguments regarding the value of probable evidence in <u>Set Forth Your Case</u>, 68, and his contention that "reasonable probabilities," although unable to "compel belief," are a sign that "the Lord protects our cognitive and personal freedom" (<u>Reason Enough</u> [1980], 18).

JIdem, Set Forth Your Case (1967), 119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 119-20. Closely related here is the question of "common ground" between the believer and the unbeliever. In that Pinnock writes for people who "are interested in investigating the truth claims made on behalf of the Christian message" as well as for

### Summary

Although he demands that "faith needs to face up to the truth question and that the Christian message fits the facts," Pinnock does not consider that cultural or evidentialist apologetics is in any way qualified to provide the content of religious belief. Such content, because of the very nature of humankind, must, of necessity, be provided by revelation. For Pinnock, apologetics involves the testing and verifying of Christianity's truth claim on the basis that it can and must meet our existential needs and religious intuitions, will stand up to rational and historical scrutiny, as well as speak to contemporary moral necessities.

It is clear that Pinnock saw a connection between one's apologetics and one's view of biblical reliability and authority. The early Pinnock, at least, expected that the biblical materials would be able to withstand the most intense kind of empirical scrutiny and testing. He took a similar position in 1980 when he argued that the Christian message "is not a presupposition that has to be accepted on authority or a self-evident truth that needs no argument." Thus, Pinnock's apologetics appears to proceed from the position that it is possible for one to assess the reliability of Scripture, and then advance to an acceptance of biblical authority. This point of view

<sup>&</sup>quot;believers" who "find themselves asking the same question," he considers that a large "circle" of common ground exists (p. 9). This is in obvious contrast to Van Til's sturdy defense of the thesis that "no such circle of common ground may be drawn" in that it would deny divine sovereignty. See Ramm, <u>Varieties of Christian Apologetics</u>, 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, Reason Enough (1980), 119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Sc Pinnock can speak of Scripture as the "epistemological base" of theology in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 11.

<sup>3</sup>Idem, Reason Enough (1980), 119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>This is evident from Pinnock's section in his <u>Biblical</u>
<u>Revelation</u> (1971) entitled "The Credibility of Revelation" which
discusses revelation "fideists" and "empiricists" (pp. 37-52).

<sup>5</sup>Idem, Reason Enough (1980), 119.

receives close scrutiny in the following chapters, but now it is time to turn to another of Clark Pinnock's theological concerns.

### Soteriology

Clark Pinnock's interest in the doctrine of salvation stands behind a wide range of writings which cover almost the whole gamut of his writing career. Of these, the most decisive have probably been those edited by Pinnock--Grace Unlimited (1975) and The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism (1989)--in which he and other evangelical theologians present the "all-inclusive scope of God's salvific will." However, these works represent the peak of a gradual

These include his <u>Truth on Fire: The Message of Galatians</u> (1972); <u>Grace Unlimited</u> (1975; ed. Clark H. Pinnock); "Why Is Jesus the Only Way?" <u>Eternity</u>, December 1976, 13-15, 32; "Chalcedon: A Creed to Touch off Christmas," <u>Christianity Today</u>, December 12, 1980, 24-27; "The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions," in <u>Christian Faith and Practice in the Modern World: Theology from an Evangelical Point of View</u>, ed. Mark A. Noll and David F. Wells (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 152-68; "Fire, Then Nothing," <u>Christianity Today</u>, March 20, 1987, 40-42; "A Response to Papers by Kraus (Anabaptist), Weborg (Evangelical Covenant), and Shelton (Holiness)" (an unpublished paper presented on the theme: "Alternative Evangelical Models of the Atonement," at the Evangelical Section of the American Academy of Religion meeting, Chicago, November 19, 1988 [typescript available; hereinafter referred to as "A Response to Papers by Kraus et al." (1989)]); <u>The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism</u> (1989; ed. Clark H. Pinnock); "Inclusive Finality or Universally Accessible Salvation" (an unpublished paper presented at the Third Plenary Session of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, CA., November 17, 1989); "Acts 4:12: No Other Name under Heaven," in <u>Through No Fault of Their Own</u>, ed. William V. Crockett and James G. Sigountos (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, forthcoming (typescript available)); "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," <u>Criswell Theological Journal</u>, forthcoming (typescript available); "Is Christ the Only Way?" <u>Channels Magazine</u>, forthcoming (typescript available); and <u>Tracking the Maze</u>: Finding Our Way Through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective (1990), 147-218 (hereinafter referred to as <u>Tracking the Maze</u>: Finding Our Way Through Modern

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, "Introduction," in <u>Grace Unlimited</u> (1975), 11. In regard to <u>Grace Unlimited</u>, Leonard G. Goss in his "Salvation and Grace Re-Examined" [a review of <u>Grace Unlimited</u>], <u>Review of Books and Religion</u>, May 1976, commented: "With the publication of these 13 essays on grace and salvation, by several respected non-Calvinist evangelical theoregians, one can at last recommend scholarly reading which will in part recompense for the present lack of serious literature dealing with the unlimited extent of Christ's atonement" (p. 4).

development in thinking regarding theology proper and soteriology, in particular. 1

#### Creation and Fall

In his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), Pinnock argued strongly that "New Testament soteriology is poised upon the truth of the Genesis narratives" of the creation and the fall.<sup>2</sup> He held that the biblical creation story, which shows Adam as living in "fellowship with God" and able to "choose between loving obedience and rebellious disobedience," as well as the fall were historical events.<sup>4</sup> Still, even in 1971, Pinnock preferred not to dogmatize regarding the literal historical "understanding of details" in the Genesis narratives.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The roots of Pinnock's shift from a Calvinistic view of soteriology and theology proper to a more Arminian approach is discussed in further detail in the following section which deals with his doctrine of God (pp. 107-114).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 2C3-4. The same view appears to be taken in his "Responsible Freedom and the Flow of Biblical History" (1975), 97-99. The latter article appears in Pinnock's (ed.) <u>Grace Unlimited</u> (1975), 95-109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 98.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 100. It is worth noting Pinnock's conclusion that to "take the Fall to be myth or 'saga,' and not genuine history, is to shatter the consistency and meaning of the biblical understanding of history and the divine solution to its dilemmas" (ibid.).

More recently Pinnock has proposed that Scripture should be

More recently Pinnock has proposed that Scripture should be allowed to use whatever forms of literary composition it chooses, whether it be legend, saga, or symbolism (in his The Scripture Principle [1934], 115-117). This suggestion, he confesses, has met with a "cool response" because conservative Christians are "touchy" about the harmful effects of existential interpretations of Genesis 1-3 on their soteriology and theodicy (see Pinnock's latest thinking on the Genesis narratives in his "Climbing Out of a Swamp: The Evangelical Struggle to Understand the Creation Texts," Interpretation 43 (1989): 151, n. 27). Pinnock responds that this need not be the case since "Genesis 1 still affirms a creation event and Genesis 2 still asserts a fall into sin at the beginning of human history" (ibid., 154). For further details of Pinnock's position in regard to the Genesis narratives, see The Scripture Principle (1984), 116, and "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology," in The Use of the Bible in Theology/Evangelical Options, ed. Robert K. Johnston (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1985), 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See Pinnock's remarks in connection with the Fall (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 76).

The fall, in Pinnock's perspective, did not mean that humans were deprived of their ability to choose, 1 but it did cast them into a situation where sin is "inherited" to the extent that man is "shaped by the warped social situation into which he is born and in which he grows up to maturity." Nevertheless, humankind "though corrupted by the historical process, and shaped by a twisted past" cannot escape the realization of responsibility for "the present and the future."

## Substitutionary Atonement

Central to Pinnock's thinking regarding salvation is his view of the death of Christ as a substitution for sinners. In 1968 he argued that to attack "the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement is to strike at the heart of the gospel." In 1975, while it was Pinnock's aim to counter the limited-atonement view of Calvinism, he makes it very clear that it is Christ's substitutionary death which lies at the heart of his concerns. Writing in 1980, Pinnock again affirms that when Christ "gave up his life for us," we do not see "the heroic willingness of a Jewish martyr" but "God in action dealing with his enemies." "It is difficult," Pinnock explained in 1988, "for a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, "Responsible Freedom and the Flow of Biblical History" (1975), 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. Pinnock wants to make it clear here that he does not follow Augustine in his theory of biological inheritance of sin or the legal imputation of Adam's guilt as in the federal theology.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>A New Reformation</u> (1968), 13. See also Pinnock's emphasis on substitutionary atonement in his <u>Evangelism and Truth</u> (1969), 22-27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>For example, Pinnock writes in his "Introduction" to <u>Grace Unlimited</u> (1975) that "we are implacably opposed to any attempt to limit grace and the atonement. It is because he died for all that we can claim for ourselves and confidently extend to others the right and title to sonship and salvation in Christ" (p. 12).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Pinnock, "Chalcedon, a Creed to Touch off Christmas" (1980), 27. See also Pinnock's aside in <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984) that religious liberals use "accommodation" to deny "that Paul taught a substitutionary atonement, and try to escape by saying that the belief

biblical faithful Christian to overlook some notion of a penalty being satisfied in Jesus' death, however hard it may be to understand it rationally."

As a consequence of his development in thinking regarding "free-will theism," Pinnock found that he also "had to think" about the atoning work of Christ. He maintains that a "difficulty" arises if one assumes ("as any evangelical would") that the cross "involves some kind of substitution in which Christ bore the guilt of human sin." That difficulty involves the place of the human response. Pinnock observes that if one accepts that "Christ really took away the guilt of the sins of the race," the logical consequence is either "universal salvation" or "the doctrine of limited or particular atonement."

in blood atonement was a cultural assumption and not meant to be carried over into modern theology" (p. 110).

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$ Idem, "A Response to Papers by Kraus et al." (1988), 8-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See below, pp. 109-114.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology," in <u>The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism</u>, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1989), 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 22. For Pinnock's pre-"Arminian" view of the human response to the offer of salvation, see his <u>Evangelism and Truth</u> (1969), 28-31. Here he remarks that "evangelism is in constant danger of affirming the freedom of man and limiting the freedom of God. This can result in a carnal battle for the mind, the use of any and all means to get the sinner to make his 'decision,' a kind of pious brainwashing. The Bible teaches a marvelous concurrence in salvation of the work of God and man. A decision made by the choice of significant men can at the same time be the decision of a sovereign God" (p. 31).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 22-23. Pinnock, however, believes that neither of these theories is biblically supported (p. 23). In his <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), Pinnock describes himself as "a universalist in the biblical sense." He pointedly explains that "God so loved the whole world that he sent his Son to save it" and that he has "no interest in a pseudo-gospel which leaves out most of the human race" (p. 26). See also Pinnock's "A Response to Papers by Kraus et al." (1988), 10-11.

Therefore, Pinnock felt himself required "to reduce the precision" in which he understood the substitution of Christ and concluded that "Christ's death on behalf of the race evidently did not automatically secure for anyone an actual reconciled relationship with God," but rather made "possible" that relationship. This conclusion caused him to "look again" at the theories of Anselm and Hugo Grotius who "encourage us to view the atonement as an act of judicial demonstration rather than a strict or quantitative substitution."

Sometime later he also became impressed with Karl Barth's version of substitution "in terms of a great exchange" in which Christ as the last Adam proved victorious over sin and Satan by taking the place of the human race, bearing God's wrath against human sin, and achieving the objective reconciliation of humankind. However, Pinnock has remained hesitant regarding Barth's view because of a strong conviction that a "greater stress" needed to be placed on the "human appropriation of this saving act."

Recently, while Pinnock has reaffirmed his belief that the substitutionary aspect of Christ's atonement should not be dropped out by evangelicals, he has also argued that other biblical models may, in

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Idem, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 23. In the same place Pinnock remarks that the New Testament "gospel invitations" make this clear. See also Pinnock's comment that it "seems . . . that we are required" to "introduce an Arminian condition into the equation" of the atonement. After all, he argues, "the cross is only effective when accepted by faith" (Pinnock, "A Response to Papers by Kraus et al." [1988], 11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 23. Pinnock notes that Rom 3:25-26 now became more important to him since Paul "declares that the cross was a demonstration of the righteousness of God, proving God's holiness even in the merciful justification of sinners" (ibid.). In his "A Response to Papers by Kraus et al." (1988), Pinnock admits that "there are more ways than one to understand this penal element." Such efforts made by Anselm, Calvin, Grotius, Barth, Forsyth, and Pannenberg to explain this dimension are, in Pinnock's view, "only imperfect human thinking. There is the stamp of human culture upon them all" (pp. 9-10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 23. Here, Pinnock complains that "Barth leans too far in the objective direction and needs to be better balanced."

fact, speak more powerfully to twentieth-century humanity. In addition, he maintains that since the cross should not be seen merely as a sin offering (i.e., a saving event)—it is also a "revelation of God" as well as a "conquest of evil"—it is even permissible to deemphasize the substitutionary model while emphasizing one of the others. 1

## Justification by Faith

It should not be a surprise to find that an evangelical such as Pinnock would emphasize salvation by grace through faith. However, his view does hold some unexpected features. These grow out of his conviction that "sons of the Reformation" have often been guilty of "an extrinsic view of justification. To Pinnock, it is "completely unscriptural" that anyone could be declared righteous and then go on living in the same way as before. Being a Christian involves a lifestyle requirement which grows out of the free gift of salvation—he or she "must obey the commandments of God."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, "A Response to Papers by Kraus et al." (1988), 13-14. Observe that Pinnock does not actually state his own preferred model.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See, for instance, his remark that salvation by grace through faith "is a central theme" of both the Old and the New Testaments (<u>Truth on Fire</u> [1972], 37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. Pinnock, in the same place, observes that Paul and James are not in contradiction since "justifying faith must issue in concrete righteousness." See also his objections to "cheap grace" in "An Interview with Clark Pinnock" (1974), 5. Compare Pinnock's calls for radical obedience to Christ during his politically radical period in his "The Moral Argument for Christian Theism" (1974), 116-18; "The Coming of Christ," Post American, December 1974, 8; and "Second Mile Lifestyle: A Short Manual for Resurrection People," Sojourners, June 1977, 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 57. See this whole chapter, "Obeying the Lord," pp. 57-78. For a similar evangelical perspective, see Donald Bloesch, Freedom for Obedience: Evangelical Ethics in Contemporary Times (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1987).

Finnack considers that the admission that justifying faith must issue in concrete righteousness is of "considerable importance" since it raises the question as to the present gap between the Reformation and Rome. He asks what all the "fuss" is about if the Reformation stresses a "declaring just that implies a making just" while Rome emphasizes a "making just that implies a declaring just." To Pinnock, the present situation demands that Protestants and Roman Catholics discuss again their differences since continued division "merely out of habit" rather than that based on "deeply felt principles" deserves the judgment of God.<sup>2</sup>

### Salvation and Eschatology

Believing, as he does, that the world religions do not offer salvation, Pinnock worries about the problem of the millions that

<sup>1</sup>Pinnock, Truth on Fire (1972), 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. For further details regarding Pinnock's view of church unity, see his "Prospects for Systematic Theology" (1971), 115-16, and "An Evangelical Observes a WCC Assembly," <u>TSF Bulletin</u>, October 1980, 7-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See Pinnock's review of <u>Jesus: The Death and Resurrection of God</u>, by Donald C. Dawe, <u>TSF Bulletin</u>, March-April 1987, 35, where he asserts that "to think that the world religions are a means of grace" is unscriptural as well as contrary to evangelistic experience. His "Why Is Jesus the Only Way?" (1976) and "The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions" (1988) support the same view. In recent years the subject of religious pluralism has become a topic of major interest to Pinnock. He intends that his next book will address that issue (see Pinnock's Letter to May High, April 4, 1990 [copy available]).

For further details regarding Pinnock's view of Christ, the "only way," see his "Is Christ the Only Way?" (forthcoming), 1-3, and "Acts 4:12: No Other Name under Heaven" (forthcoming 1990). The latter article argues that Acts 4:12, while supporting the finality of Christ, does not espouse the notion that salvation is only available to those who have acknowledged the name of Christ. Presently Pinnock seems to maintain a more positive view of the other world religions than held by him previously. In his "Cultural Bridges and Religious Pluralism" (a talk given at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario, September 7, 1989 [typescript available; forthcoming in The Enterprise]), Pinnock observes that some aspects of the world religions are "positive," some "negative," and still others, "neutral" (pp. 5-8). Still, he contends that "dialogue [with non-Christian religions] does not imply that we surrender our belief in the finality of Jesus Christ" (p. 9). See also Pinnock's "Toward an Evangelical Theology of Religions," McMaster Journal of Theology (forthcoming,

have not "heard the strong name of Jesus." The solution, he considers, probably lies in Pannenberg's theory that 1 Pet 3:19 and 4:6 indicate that salvation is made available in the "realm of the dead" to those who did not encounter Christ or the gospel message during their lifetimes. It should be noted, though, that Pinnock recognizes that he is "venturing into controversial theology" here and that his contention should be seen as "a reasonable hope, not a dogma."

typescript [1990]), where he specifically locates the idea that God "will be sending to hell millions upon millions of people who lacked the opportunity to call on the name to Jesus" with the theology "stemming from Augustine and Calvin" (p. 5). Recently, Pinnock has termed his own position "inclusive finality" (see Pinnock, "Inclusive Finality or Universally Accessible Salvation" [1989]).

¹Pinnock, Review of <u>Jesus: The Death and Resurrection of God</u> (1987), 35. For a pertinent discussion of this problem, see Colin Chapman, "The Riddle of Religions," <u>Christianity Today</u>, May 14, 1990, 16-22. John Sanders, "The Perennial Debate," <u>Christianity Today</u>, May 14, 1990, 20-21, outlines the current evangelical thinking on the issue of salvation and the unevangelized. He observes that the dominant view (held by L. S. Chafer, Carl F. H. Henry, and R. C. Sproul) is that no unevangelized person will be saved. However, Sanders points out that another "popular evangelical position" (as espoused by J. N. D. Anderson, Clark Pinnock, and Charles Kraft) is that some will find salvation through Christ, although they have been ignorant of Christ's work. Other variants include Geisler's view that anyone following present light will have an opportunity to accept Christ before death, Bloesch's notion that some will find conversion after death, Stott's idea that multitudes of the unevangelized will be saved (although he does not outline details of his theory), while Packer and Nicole believe there to be "some possibility" of salvation for the unevangelized, but that one should leave the matter in the hands of God rather than engaging in speculation (Sanders, 21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock remarks that Pannenberg's viewpoint, which he finds "basically acceptable," does not divide evangelicals from Pannenberg "so much as it divides evangelicals among themselves" (Pinnock, "Pannenberg's Theology," part 2: "No-Nonsense Theology," Christianity Today, November 19, 1976, 16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, as cited by Randy Frame, "Leading Evangelical Scholars Trade Their Latest Insights," <u>Christianity Today</u>, April 29, 1985, 56. It is of interest that Kenneth Kantzer is also quoted by Frame as saying that he had "great caution" in holding out much hope "for the salvation of those who do not know Christ as Savior in "his life" (ibid.). For a more complete portrayal of Pinnock's position on this subject, see his "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent" (forthcoming), where he presents theological, moral, and scriptural arguments against the traditional view. In regard to the biblical "hellfire" texts (pp. 21-24), Pinnock concludes: "I think it would be fair to say that the biblical basis for the traditional view of hell has been greatly exaggerated" (p. 24).

Closely connected with this idea is Pinnock's view of immortality and the resurrection. He credits Greek thought as the source of the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. By contrast, according to Pinnock, the scriptural idea of the resurrection involves "the complete redemption of man, body and soul." He argues that the "everlasting-torment view" does not arise from a required exegesis of Scripture, but stems, via Augustine, from a combination of Platonic anthropology and the assumption that Scripture teaches that the wicked are to be thrown "into the Gehenna of fire." Pinnock's contention is that "if one thinks biblically," seeing human beings as mortal and "needing to be given eternal life," then we "are not required to believe in everlasting punishing."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "The Incredible Resurrection: A Mandate for Faith," Christianity Today, April 6, 1979, 16, and "Fire, Then Nothing" (1987), 40. See also Pinnock's "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent" (forthcoming), 16-18 (Typescript).

ZIdem, "The Incredible Resurrection: A Mandate for Faith" (1979), 16-17. In the same place, Pinnock remarks that "to reduce the resurrection to an immaterial symbol of new life is to rob salvation as the New Testament understands it of the dimension of world transformation, and to push it in the direction of Greek thought. Bodily resurrection is important because it signifies the salvation of creation and creaturely existence, not simply the liberation of man's spiritual essence." Notice also Pinnock's "In Defense of the Resurrection" (1965), 7-8, where he argues that rejection of the bodily resurrection ultimately leads to "rejection of the doctrine of creation."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, "Fire, Then Nothing" (1987), 40-41. With these assumptions it is logical to conclude, Pinnock maintains, that the fate of the wicked must be an "everlasting burning and torment" (p. 41). For further details of Pinnock's view of Augustine's role in mediating such a view to the church, see Pinnock "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent" (forthcoming), 2-3 (Typescript).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, "Fire, Then Nothing" (1987) 41. See also Pinnock's affirmative remarks concerning E. W. Fudge's <u>The Fire That Consumes: A Biblical and Historical Study of Final Punishment</u> (Houston, TX: Providential Press, 1982), on the book's dustcover.

addition, he sees the annihilationist interpretation as an antidote to the advances of "the error of universal salvation."

For Pinnock, the doctrine of hell or the final judgment has as its purpose to impress on human minds "how terrible it will be to exist outside the presence of God." He maintains that the punishment will "not be so much torment visited upon lost souls" but an overwhelming sorrow for having "chosen to play god to the end and reaping the harvest of that choice." By comparison, Pinnock holds to the opinion that the judgment, as it pertains to believers refers primarily to "investigation" rather than salvation. Human secrets and the "works done under grace" will come under the "careful and merciful eye" of Christ, the Judge.

#### Summary

The developments evident in Pinnock's doctrine of salvation have been closely intertwined with his "pilgrimage" in theology proper. His "free-will theism" which was germinated by the rejection of the Calvinian doctrine of perseverance<sup>5</sup> grew into a wholesale

¹Ibid. For a response to Pinnock's "Fire, Then Nothing" (1987), see David F. Wells, "Everlasting Punishment," Christianity Today, March 20, 1987, 41-42. Adrian Rogers, "Response" [to Clark Pinnock's "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy"], in The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 105-6, remarks that "conservative Southern Baptists are sad" both at Pinnock's renunciation of his former commitment to "strict Biblical inerrancy" and to belief in "eternal punishment." Rogers wonders "just what the next port of call may be in the curious theological odyssey of Clark Pinnock."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980), 117.

<sup>3</sup>Idem, "The Structure of Pauline Eschatology" (1965), 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. Pinnock notes here that the Pauline epistles lay "considerable stress on the notion of rewards for faithful service," thus making eschatology "a strong sanction for Christian ethics." For a more complete portrayal of Pinnock's eschatological views, see this whole Evangelical Quarterly article (pp. 9-20) and his more recent "Eschatological Hopes in the Protestant Tradition," in The Human Condition in Jewish and Christian Traditions, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Pub. House, 1986), 235-55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See below, pp. 108-9.

denial of what Pinnock understands to be an alliance of Greek and scriptural ideas about God, and led in turn to him looking again at Christ's substitutionary atonement. The same desire to rid Christian theology of Hellenistic influences is seen in his rejection of the natural immortality of the soul and eternal hellfire in favor of the resurrection and irreversible destruction. Nevertheless, Pinnock's proposal regarding the preaching of the gospel to those who have not had the chance to respond to it during their lifetime seems to endorse a "conscious intermediate state" middle position such as was advocated by Martin Luther. 1

How much interplay is there between Pinnock's doctrine of salvation and his view of the reliability and the authority of Scripture? It seems clear that it is his intention that systematic theology, including soteriology, be cleansed of extraneous elements borrowed from Greek philosophy and that it be allowed to rest entirely on the authority of the Bible. Important, also, is Pinnock's emphasis that the Scriptures are "christological" or "soteriological" in that their ultimate purpose is to present Christ as the Redeemer in a reliable manner.<sup>2</sup> But that introduces a theme that needs to be discussed in following chapters.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For a pertinent discussion of Luther's doctrine of man in death, see Landeen, 200-208. A similar perspective on Luther's position is available in Hans Schwarz' "Luther's Understanding of Heaven and Hell," in <u>Interpreting Luther's Legacy: Essays in Honor of Edward C. Fendt</u>, ed. Fred W. Meuser and Stanley D. Schneider (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Pub., 1969), 90-93. See also Pinnock's own discussion of this theme in his "Eschatological Hopes in the Protestant Tradition" (1986), 241-42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Compare his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 36-37 with his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See below, pp. 189-90, 271-74, 316-18, and 329-330.

### Doctrine of God

Clark Pinnock's major theological interests are so intertwined that it is difficult to separate them. Thus, his doctrine of God is so intimately connected to his apologetics that Pinnock considers the greatest difficulty to faith and belief in the gospel to be "a mistaken impression about who God is." Believing as he does that the doctrine of God is the "central theological problem of our day," it is not surprising that Pinnock has written widely on this topic.

Pinnock's earliest experiences as a Christian were in the "quasi-denominational world" of evangelicalism in the 1950s, a world perceived by him to be dominated by Reformed or Calvinian theology. 4

He remembers how John Murray, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Cornelius Van Til,

Pinnock, Reason Enough (1980), 118. He continues by asking: "Why should they believe in a God they see to be remote, arbitrary, unemotional, strict, sexist and so forth? Why would anyone expect them to be impressed with intellectual arguments for the existence of such a God, much less feel any desire to love, worship, or serve him? Misunderstanding the nature of God is the greatest all-time hindrance to becoming a Christian and understanding him correctly the greatest incentive" (p. 118).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, "The Living God and the Secular Experience" (1972), 316.

<sup>3</sup>For instance, his "The Living God and Secular Experience" (1972), 316-20; "The Problem of God," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 16 (1973): 11-16; "The Moral Argument for Christian Theism," Bibliotheca Sacra 131 (1974): 114-19; "Introduction," and "Responsible Freedom and the Flow of Biblical History," in Grace Unlimited (1975; ed. Clark H. Pinnock), 11-20 and 95-109 (respectively); "The Need for a Scriptural, and Therefore a Neo-Classical Theism," in Perspectives on Evangelical Theology: Papers from the Thirtieth Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, ed. Kenneth S. Kantzer and Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1979), 37-42; "God Limits His Knowledge," in Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom by John Feinberg, Norman Geisler, Bruce Reichenbach, and Clark Pinnock, ed. D. Basinger and R. Basinger (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1986), 141-62; and "Introduction" and "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology," in The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism (1989; ed. Clark H. Pinnock), ix-xiv and 15-30 (respectively).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 16-17. Pinnock does not consider it surprising that Calvinist theology held an "elitist position of dominance" in British and North American evangelicalism in the postwar years. After all, "it was and is also a scholarly and historic system of evangelical theology" (p. 17).

Carl Henry, James Packer, and Paul Jewett--authors recommended to him as theologically 'sound'--were "staunchly Calvinistic." Thus,

Pinnock began his theological life as a Calvinist "who regarded alternate evangelical interpretations as suspect and at least mildly heretical." He did not question Calvinism's answers "for a long time."

## Coming to Theology Proper Through Soteriology

Pinnock remarks that he held to a Calvinian approach until about 1970. At that time he was teaching at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and was addressing the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints in the book of Hebrews.<sup>3</sup> He became increasingly convinced that security could only be found in a personal "faith-union with Christ" and that the exhortations and warnings signified that at least something depended on the human factor. It was this insight which broke "the logic of Calvinism" for Pinnock.<sup>4</sup>

Calvinism, however, is a coherent system, and Pinnock found it necessary to reconsider "many other issues" including double predestination, divine election, predestination, human depravity, and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 17. In the same place, Pinnock recollects that "theirs were the books that were sold in the Inter-Varsity bookroom I frequented. They were the ones I was told to listen to; sound theology was what they would leach [sic] me."

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. From within the Calvinistic idea of "absolute security," Pinnock recalls that he was not able to make sense of the vigorous exhortation to persevere, as found in Heb 3:12, or the awesome warning against falling away in Heb 10:26 (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. Pinnock's own description of his experience is worth quoting in full: "... once I saw that [i.e., the human part in perseverance]. the logic of Calvinism was broken in principle, and it would only be a matter of time before the larger implications of its breaking would dawn on me. The thread was pulled, and the garment must begin to unravel, as indeed it did (p. 17). "What had dawned on me was what I had known experientially all along in my walk with the Lord, that there is a profound mutuality in our dealings with God" (pp. 17-18).

the atonement of Christ. 1 It is also clear that at this stage Pinnock had not really entered "onto the territory of Christian theism itself," 2 but he "could not finally escape rethinking the doctrine of God, however difficult." 3

## Toward a Reformulation of Classical Theism

Pinnock became convinced that the doctrine of God was in disarray because of pressures brought to bear by such influences as theology, culture, and philosophy. In particular, he became convinced that the attack by process theology and philosophy on traditional theism would have to be met with a careful rethinking of several traditional concepts which adhere to Christian theism, such as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 19-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock observes: "Although I had already come to a fresh understanding of the goodness and power of God, I realized in the early 1980s that there were still more implications to be drawn in the area of divine attributes" (ibid., 23).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See Pinnock's "The Problem of God" (1973), 11-12. Here Pinnock acknowledges that God has always been "a problem" in that he is transcendent and comparable to nothing. However, the impact of "cecular modernity" upon theological thinking has exacerbated the problem by shaking confidence in "objective and cognitive special revelation." In addition, in Pinnock's view, "most of us have contributed to the problem of God" by separating the cognitive from the existential. In this way God is treated merely as a "theoretical construct, an explanatory hypothesis, which does little to transform and illumine human life," thus effectively denying the reality of God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 13-15. Although he denies here that modern man is completely secularistic, Pinnock contends that humankind is "nonetheless pre-occupied with this worldly reality," a preoccupation that is exhibited in anti-supernaturalism (e.g., Rudolf Bultmann's naturalism) and aggravated by contemporary questions as to God's responsibility for "the painful experience of evil in the twentieth century."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., 15-16. While remarking that belief in natural theology has declined since Hume and Kant, Pinnock concludes here that this decline has meant the inevitable threatening of belief in God.

timelessness, immutability, and impassibility." The "form of theism received from great theologians like Augustine and Anselm," to Pinnock's mind, was not entirely faithful to Scripture but had adopted Greek philosophical notions, and "therefore does not stand beyond criticism from a biblically-oriented evangelical."

# Immutability, Impassibility, and Timelessness

In regard to the immutability of God, Pinnock contends that the effect of this marriage of Greek and Christian ideas has resulted in a tendency to "picture God as virtually incapable of responsiveness." While believing that the Bible taught divine constancy and reliability, he was convinced that nowhere did it "teach or imply immutability in the strong metaphysical sense which was adopted in the classical tradition." In addition, Pinnock maintains that there are "innumerable texts" which describe God's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 15. Pinnock also notes that "we must give ourselves to work in the philosophy of theism" in order to expose the serious biblical and rational inadequacies of such an alternative as process theism (pp. 15-16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, "The Need for a Scriptural, and Therefore a Neo-Classical Theism" (1979), 37. See also Pinnock's "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 23. Augustine, according to Pinnock, was "the first thinker to propose in a systematic way that we should think of God as existing outside the temporal sequence altogether." This idea, which Augustine borrowed from Platonic thought, appeared to overcome the problem that if God were "temporal in any way," he would consequently be "limited on that account." But, in this explanation, Augustine went beyond the Bible "which is satisfied to declare that God is everlasting." (Pinnock, "The Need for a Scriptural, and Therefore a Neo-Classical Theism," 39; emphasis Pinnock).

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ Idem, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See "The Need for a Scriptural, and Therefore a Neo-Classical Theism" (1979), 39-40, where Pinnock remarks that "Karl Barth was correct to substitute the term <u>constancy</u> for the term <u>immutability</u>... because immutability in the strong Greek sense contradicts the Christian faith and is subevangelical" (emphasis Pinnock).

"responses and actions" in such a way as "to convey real and dynamic change in him."

For Pinnock, the way forward involved speaking of ways in which the God of the Bible is "unchangeable," as well as of "ways in which God is able to change." Whereas, for the Greeks, divine change would of necessity mean a movement from better to worse, Pinnock's conclusion was that God's changing has nothing to do with better or worse but rather "of his pursuing covenant relationship and partnership with his people out of love for them flexibly and creatively."

The so-called impassibility of God was, for Pinnock, "an even clearer case of a category applied to God which is emphatically Greek and not biblical in origin." In his view, impassibility "introduces

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 38-39. According to Pinnock, "the idea that God must be unchangeable in <u>every</u> conceivable sense is foreign to the Bible, while being axiomatic in Greek thought. . . . Plato, not the apostles, taught that God was not subject to change from within or from without (<u>Republic</u>, II. 380-81)." Pinnock acknowledges his agreement with Emil Brunner on the doctrine of God (Pinnock, "The Need for a Scriptural, and Therefore a Neo-Classical Theism" [1979], 38; emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Such included the being and character of God. See Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 24.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ These involve God's personal relationships with us and his creation (ibid.).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, "The Need for a Scriptural, and Therefore a Neo-Classical Theism" (1979), 39. Notice here Pinnock's conclusions regarding the classical categories of immutability, timelessness, and impassibility: "In each of these three cases we see an example of the synthesis which classical theism is, being the product of biblical revelation and Greek reasoning. It would therefore be quite wrong to speak as if biblical theism and classical theism were just the same thing, or, as if nonclassical forms of theism are automatically nonbiblical or subchristian. Classical theism is not a revealed model of deity beyond criticism and correction. It must stand under the light of Scripture equally along with competitive theories" (emphasis Pinnock).

the most serious distortion of all" in that it carries with it the view that God does not experience "sorrow, sadness, or pain."

Pinnock also came to regard timelessness, although involving some advantages for the Christian theist, as a threat in that it made the central biblical symbol of God as personal agent "very difficult to accept." Although having known for some time of the basic philosophical objections to the timelessness of God, Pinnock now realized how strongly "the Bible itself speaks of God as operating from within time and history," and classical theism no longer provided satisfactory explanations of the biblical materials. The importance of a "temporal God," in Pinnock's view, is that God is now free to join us on our journey, to relate to what goes on, to make plans, to

¹Ibid., 41. Pinnock believes that passages like Exod 2:23-25 are contradicted by such a view. In addition, it also compromises the "glory of the gospel," the cross. Here he cites approvingly Jurgen Moltmann's The Crucified God (London: SCM Press, 1974), 267-78. It is of interest that in his 1989 "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology," Pinnock hardly mentions the category of impassibility. It may be subsumed under divine immutability.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "The Need for a Scriptural, and Therefore a Neo-Classical Theism" (1979), 40-41. In the same passage, Pinnock complains that "the negative notion of timelessness is just not rich enough to handle the requirements that future events be truly contingent, and not in name only, and that a temporal dimension be recognized within the life and being of God himself. The Bible speaks temporally of God, and the theologian or philosopher has no right to declare such language improper or merely figurative. God's eternity according to the Bible refers to his everlasting existence without beginning and without end, but does not teach a simultaneity of past, present, and future in God all at once" (emphasis Pinnock). In addition, consult Pinnock's "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 24. Fernando L. Canale in his A Critique of Theological Reason: Time and Timelessness as Primordial Presuppositions, Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 10 (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983) takes a similar position on divine timelessness.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock lists the following: "How could a timeless being deliberate, remember, or anticipate? How could it plan an action and undertake it? How could it even respond to something that had happened? What kind of a person would a timeless being be?" (Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" [1989], 24-25).

According to Pinnock, the Bible always presents God as unthreatened by time; as "one who can look back to the past, relate to the present as present, and make plans for what is yet to happen" (ibid., 25).

carry them out, to experience joy and anguish "as Scripture says he does."

## Divine Foreknowledge

The latest classical theme to be called into question by Clark Pinnock has been that of divine omniscience.<sup>2</sup> Apparently he came to the subject of whether or not God has "an exhaustive foreknowledge of everything that will ever happen" quite "reluctantly."<sup>3</sup> But he found, with Richard Rice, Richard Swinburne, and Keith Ward,<sup>4</sup> that he could not "shake off the intuition" that total omniscience necessarily predetermines and makes insignificant all future choices.<sup>5</sup>

In Pinnock's perspective, God is "omniscient in the sense that he knows everything which can be known." Free actions, for instance, cannot be known ahead of time because they are not "entities" which exist to be known.<sup>6</sup> He argues that the biblical materials assume a perspective in which God is seen as anticipating the future in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Thid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>It is on divine foreknowledge that Pinnock has probably written most in the area of theology proper. See particularly his contributions in David Basinger and Randall Basinger, eds., Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 57-60, 95-98, 137-140, 143-162.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 25. In the same place, he points out that even most Arminians believe that God has such exhaustive pre-cognition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock admits his indebtedness to Rice, Swinburne, and Ward (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990). See, for instance, Rice's <u>God's Foreknowledge and Man's Free Will</u> (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1985; first published as <u>The Openness of God: The Relationship of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will</u> (Nashville, TN: Review and Herald Pub., 1980]); Swinburne's <u>The Coherence of Theism</u> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 162-78; and Ward's <u>Rational Theology and the Creativity of God</u> (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982), 129-35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid. Pinnock fears that belief in the timelessness and omniscience of God would land us "back in the camp of theological determinism" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Idem, "God Limits His Knowledge" (1986), 157. In the same place, Pinnock notes that God is omnipotent in the same sense. That is, he "can do everything that can be done."

same way humans do. 1 Decisions can still be made that can change history. 2

But, does not the genre of predictive prophecy indicate that God knows everything about the future? Pinnock anticipates this very question and counters that most predictive prophecy can be explained in one of three ways: as prior announcements of God's intentions, as conditional predictions which leave the outcome open, and as predictions based on God's exhaustive knowledge of past and present. These conclusions regarding predictive prophecy are consonant with Pinnock's view of God as "dependent on the world" in the sense that he relies on it "for information about the world."

Cannot some texts be found that will "embarrass" Pinnock's view that "God limits his knowledge"? He admits that there may be some that cannot be fitted into his schema but claims that "the overwhelming impression the Bible leaves us with is one of significant human freedom and dynamic divine sovereignty" and that such a perspective demands a new expression of Christian theism. 5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. Pinnock, in the same place, cites such examples as Gen 22:12 and John 3:10. In his "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), he cites Jer 3:7; Ezek 12:3; Jer 7:5-7; Hos 6:4 (p. 27).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, "God Limits His Knowledge" (1986), 157.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 146. Pinnock also states that God is "dependent" on the world in the sense that he "most certainly knows and cares for the world" (p. 146).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 158-59. Pinnock admits that Richard Rice holds to the same view but gives a longer account of it (p. 144, n. 2). See Rice's God's Foreknowledge and Man's Free Will (see above, p. 113, n. 4) and his "Divine Foreknowledge and Free-Will Theism," in The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1989), 121-139. Compare my own "Divine Foreknowledge in the Writings of Charles Hartshorne and Richard Rice" (unpublished term paper, Andrews University, March 1988). An evangelical rebuttal of Rice's stance regarding divine foreknowledge is available in Royce G. Gruenler, The Inexhaustible God: Biblical Faith and the Challenge of Process Theism (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 38-44.

### Pinnock's Relation to Process Theology

Pinnock's "pilgrimage" in the doctrine of God must raise questions regarding his relationship to process theology. The very fact that he has suggested that queries posed by contemporary

John Bowden [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1983], 467).

Included among the "things" in process is God. Ronald Nash points out that process theism contrasts sharply with classical theism in that the process God is in becoming, interdependent, capable of change, personal, temporal, relative omniscient in respect to the past and present, the final cause of the world (i.e., "the goal or lure of the entire cosmic process"), dipolar (transcendent and contingent), and incapable of finally conquering evil. On the other hand, classical (Thomistic) theism has generally viewed God as being, independent, immutable, impersonal, timeless, absolute, omniscient in respect to past, present and future, efficient cause of the world, monopolar (transcendent), and capable of overcoming evil (Ronald H. Nash, "Process Theology and Classical Theism," in Process Theology, ed. Ronald H. Nash [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987], 14-21). Constraints of space forbid more than a cursory glance at this very vigorous school of theology. Helpful bibliographies can be found in Cobb and Griffin, "Appendix B: A Guide to the Literature," pp. 162-185; in Nash, "For Further Reading" (pro and con), 377-79.

185; in Nash, "For Further Reading" [pro and con], 377-79.

The question as to Pinnock's relationship with process thought has already been raised and addressed by John Paul Nyquist in his "An Evaluation of the Inroads of Process Theology into Contemporary Evangelicalism." Nyquist concluded that the authors he studied could be divided into three categories: (1) those who are essentially orthodox, but have a process "quirk" in their theology (i.e., J. Oliver Buswell and Barry Applewhite); (2) those who once held to classical theism, but are now "reconsidering" (i.e., Clark Pinnock, Ronald Nash, and Bernard Ramm); and (3) those who are "essentially evangelicals in name only" (i.e., Paul Mickey, Donald Bloesch, and Nicholas Wolterstorff). See pp. 161-62. In the same place Nyquist notes that "Charles [sic] Pinnock" represents a growing movement among evangelicals who are using process presuppositions to attack the classical understanding of the nature of God and the inspiration of Scripture.

Pinnock specifically comments on his connections with process theology in his "Between Classical and Process Theism," in <u>Process Theology</u>, ed. Ronald Nash (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 309-27.

Process thought, according to John B. Cobb, Jr., and David R. Griffin, "by definition affirms that process is fundamental. It does not assert that everything is in process; for that would mean that even the fact that things are in process is subject to change. There are unchanging principles of process and abstract forms. But to be actual is to be a process. Anything which is not a process is an abstraction from process, not a full-fledged actuality" (Cobb and Griffin, Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1976], 14; emphasis Cobb and Griffin). The "process" way of viewing reality which has its roots in the varied thinking of such philosophers as Henri Bergson (1859-1941), Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), and Charles Hartshorne (1897- ), has been espoused in more recent times by Henry Nelson Wieman, Schubert M. Ogden, John B. Cobb, and Norman Pittenger (David A. Pailin, "Process Theology," in The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology, ed. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1983), 467).

secularity may be considered a catalyst for theological change, would seem to indicate a loose connection with process theism. However, there is a distinct difference, for while Pinnock wants the contemporary pole of theology to query and probe any theological construction, it is still the conservative pole (i.e., Scripture) which must be allowed to provide the content of theology. Pinnock happens to believe that his view most satisfies the "scriptural data and the requirements of intelligence."

In specifically addressing his connection with process theology, Pinnock, while admitting his sympathy "with a number of

reason to tamper with them (p. 31).

In conversations with Pinnock, he acknowledges that his present thought on the foreknowledge of God is a "recent discovery" (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "Our Audience: Atheist or Alienated?" in <u>Conflict and Context: Hermeneutics in the Americas</u>, ed. M. Branson and C. Padilla (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 40. Notice that here Pinnock is particularly addressing theological change in the area of theology proper.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Observe how Charles Hartshorne, for instance, attempts to redefine God in terms amenable to contemporary human thinking in his The Divine Relativity: A Social Conception of God (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1948). See particularly pp. 149-58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See, for instance, Pinnock's "Building the Bridge from Academic Theology to Christian Mission," <u>Themelios</u>, April 1984, 5. Here, Pinnock contends that some modern theological discussion is unreliable "because the scriptural foundations have been cast aside and people are floundering about. Christianity is being equated with Marxism, process philosophy, and self-fulfillment ideology in ways that biblical Christians can only protest against."

<sup>4</sup>Idem, "God Limits His Knowledge" (1986), 144. Pinnock remarks that while J. I. Packer, in his Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1961), chap. 2, urges the believer to accept the tension between divine sovereignty and human freedom upon the basis of the authority of the Bible, he finds that difficult because of the problems it presents to the unity of Scripture, credible apologetics, and on the practical level (pp. 143-44). Notice, however, that Pinnock appears to plead for a "hands-off" approach to the biblical tension between sovereignty and freedom in his "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" (1985). He writes: "We must not seize the sovereignty pole and block out the human freedom pole, or vice versa, which would violate the Bible's integrity. Theologies which have tended to do this have resulted in really unfortunate positions by way of implication and extension. The biblical balance is what we should strive to maintain in our theology, too. The mark of a wise and sound theologian is to let the tensions which exist in the Bible stay there and to resist the temptation from reason to tamper with them (p. 31).

motifs in process theism, "1 also asserts his divergence from process thought with his strongly held, classical theistic convictions concerning the doctrine of creation and "the entological independence of God from the world." Nevertheless, he does not think that

<sup>2</sup>Idem, "God Limits His Knowledge" (1986), 147. In his "Between Classical and Process Theism" (1987), Pinnock specifically addresses the question, "What is wrong with process theology?" He observes that the "basic problem with process theology for a biblically and rationally oriented evangelical" is the fact that it is an "extreme correction and overreaction" to classical theism (p. 318). Such overreaction can be seen in process theology's insistence that the Bible is "ambiguous about God being the creator of the world" (ibid.) and that "the world is a kind of evil power against which God has to struggle eternally" (p. 319). The result is that "process thought robs God of his sovereign freedom" (ibid.).

In addition, Pinnock faults process theology on rational grounds since, "If one is looking for a God who can explain the world and supply assistance to us in the living of life, process theology is pretty thin soup" (ibid.). He complains that "process thinkers have reacted so sharply to the monarchial model of God that they have reduced him to a puny godling who behaves like a cosmic sponge . . (or] little more than nature itself" (pp. 319-20). Pinnock pleads instead for evangelical theists to go "much further" than process theologians by working "on the classical concept of God to bring into it such good insights as process theology has identified, but without going to those extremes we have mentioned" (p. 320).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>In particular, his seeing reality as open and not closed and his view of the temporality of God (Pinnock, "God Limits His Knowledge" [1986], 147). Compare "The Need for a Scriptural, and Therefore a Neo-Classical Theism" (1979), where Pinnock comments: "I do agree with much of the process critique of traditional theism and in that negative sense at least would express my admiration for it" (p. 37).

In his "Between Classical and Process Theism" (1987), Pinnock agrees with the process critique of the classical view of God as closed and immobile, immutable and impassible (pp. 314-16). He states that while process theists like Ogden and Hartshorne do tend to "caricature" the classical position, "I have to acknowledge the stimulus I have personally received from them, and how they have made me aware of the need to introduce changes into the received doctrine of God. Hartshorne, for example has put a lot of effort into exposing the difficulties and suggesting alternatives. I have been helped by his ideas on various things. He has taught me that thinking of God as literally all-powerful divests the finite universe of a degree of power. He has pressed the point that God, though unchanging in his character, is certainly able to change in response to a changing creation [here, Pinnock refers to a number of Hartshorne's books on theism]. In my theology, at least, God has used process thinkers to compel me to change certain ideas which I had and bring them up to scriptural standards. . . . Unless we [evangelical theologians] construct a model of the divine somewhere between classical and process theism, I fear that we will lose some of our keenest minds to process liberalism" (pp. 316-17; emphasis Pinnock).

immutability, timelessness, or total omniscience can "be saved" against the process critique. Pinnock tends to agree with Hartshorne that "we need a neo-classical theism," but he does not consider that God be seen as "radically different as the process God."

### Summary

The basic problem of classical and process theism, in Pinnock's view, is that they do "not square with the requirements of biblical revelation." For instance, the classical synthesis claims that biblical references to divine change are anthropomorphisms and figures of speech rather than (as Pinnock would have it) evidences of real changes and responses on the part of God. In addition, in Pinnock's view, evangelical theology can be just as guilty as liberalism in allowing "philosophical borrowings" to take the place of scriptural teachings and "become idols that compete with God's self-disclosure." On the other hand, Pinnock does not think that certain

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Pinnock's review of <u>Tensions in Contemporary Theology</u>, 2d ed., ed. Stanley N. Gundry and Alan F. Johnson, <u>TSF Bulletin</u>, March-April 1985, 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This comment (ibid., 25) refers specifically to classical theism. However, in regard to process theism, Pinnock also remarks that "no one with a high view of the Bible is going to be able to accept such a model [i.e., the process view of God]" (Pinnock, "Between Classical and Process Theism" [1987], 319).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The prime example of divine change cited by Pinnock is the incarnation. In this respect he cites Karl Rahner, <u>Foundations of Christian Faith</u> (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 220: "If we face squarely and uncompromisingly the fact of the Incarnation which our faith in the fundamental dogma of Christianity testifies to, then we have to say plainly, God can <u>become</u> something." See Pinnock's "The Need for a Scriptural, and Therefore a Neo-Classical Theism" (1979), 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 42. It should be noted that Pinnock is not entirely negative regarding the value of philosophy. He observes that "it may well be" that we can be helped in the formulation of a "neo-classical theism by modern philosophical ideas which are ripe for theological expropriation." However, he warns that if use is made of such ideas, "let us exercise the greatest care not to twist the Scriptures on their behalf" (p. 42).

aspects of classical theism will measure up to modernity's litmus test of relevancy.  $^{1}$ 

Controversial though it is,<sup>2</sup> a grasp of Pinnock's view of theology proper is of great importance for understanding his overall theological system. Certainly this doctrine is intimately related to his system of apologetics. Nor should it be forgotten that the Subject of his call for a "neoclassical theism" is also the God who has revealed himself in history, the incarnation, and in the Scriptures. Could it be that expectations concerning that revelation and the subsequent inspiration process are different for the classical theist and the neoclassical theologian? Norman Geisler hints, without elaborating, that it is Pinnock's rejection of the classical view of God that explains his recent "departure from the historically orthodox view of the infallibility (and inerrancy)" of the Bible.<sup>3</sup>

¹So, Pinnock's extreme negativeness to Paul K. Jewett's view of God. In his review of <u>Election and Predestination</u>, ed. Paul K. Jewett, <u>TSF Bulletin</u>, May-June 1987, a vehement Pinnock observes: "It is impossible for me to read or review this book dispassionately. God, if he is as Jewett describes him, is simply not a good God. He does not deserve our worship, nor will he receive it. We are dealing in doctrinal tragedy" (p. 31)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>For a careful rebuttal of Pinnock's doctrine of God from a traditional theistic perspective, see Richard A. Muller's "Incarnation, Immutability, and the Case for Classical Theism," Westminster Theological Journal 45 (1983): 22-40, and Robert L. Reymond, "Divine Sovereignty: The Ground of Human Responsibility--A Review Analysis of Clark H. Pinnock's Contribution to Grace Unlimited, "Presbyterion: Covenant Seminary Review, Fall 1982, 25-48. Less comprehensive are the response articles to Pinnock's "God Limits His Knowledge" (1986) by John Feinberg, Norman Geisler, and Bruce Reichenbach, in Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom, ed. David Basinger and Randall Basinger (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 162-68, 169-73, 175-77 (respectively). The four views presented in this latter work are critiqued in Richard A. Muller's "God Only Wise," The Reformed Journal, May 1987, 31-34. Muller observes that the positions taken by Feinberg, Geisler, and Reichenbach "fall roughly within the bounds of the tradition on a continuum extending from the more strict of the Augustinian or Calvinist positions to the semi-Pelagian and Arminian view, " while he questions Pinnock's evangelical credentials (p. 31).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Norman Geisler, "Norman Geisler's Response" [to Pinnock's "God Limits His Knowledge"], in <u>Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom</u>, ed. David Basinger and Randall Basinger (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 169.

What is without contradiction at this stage is that God, in Pinnock's opinion, is very deeply involved in the dust and dirt of human existence. This conviction probably lies behind Pinnock's interests in political theology.

### Political Theology

Clark Pinnock's interest in political matters extends back into the 1970s and is evidenced in a major portion of his writings. One of his pilgrimage pieces has political theology as its theme, and that forms the skeletal system for this section.

It is Pinnock's hope that others who are struggling in this "difficult and confusing" field will be helped by a recital of his own struggle.<sup>2</sup> He describes his own path in political theology as a fairly straight line "with the exception of one enormous zigzag in the middle."<sup>3</sup> Thus, Pinnock's quest for clarity in this area can be described as proceeding through three major phases: mainstream (1953–69), radical (1970-78), and a return to the center (1978-84).

<sup>1</sup>See, for instance, Pinnock's "Credo," Post American, April 1974, 20; "Theology of Public Discipleship," Post American, January 1975, 16-19; "A Call for the Liberation of North American Christians," Sojourners, September 1976, 23-25 (this article can also be found in Evangelicals and Liberation, ed. Carl E. Armerding [n.p: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977], 128-36); "Evangelical Theology of Human Liberation" [2-part series], Sojourners, February 1976, 30-33 and March 1976, 26-29; "Liberation Theology: The Gains, the Gaps," Christianity Today, January 16, 1976, 13-15; "Fruits Worthy of Repentance: The True Weight of Biblical Authority," Sojourners, December 1977, 29; "Second Mile Lifestyle: A Short Manual for Resurrection People" (1977), 31-32; "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology-A Personal Witness," in Liberation Theology, ed. Ronald Nash (Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1984), 101-20 (hereinafter referred to as "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology [1984]); "A Political Pilgrimage," Eternity, October 1984, 26-29; "Our Audience: Atheist or Alienated?" (1986), 31-57; "Pursuit of Utopia, Betrayal of the Poor," Crux, December 1987, 5-14; and "The Pursuit of Utopia," in Freedom, Justice, and Hope: Toward a Strategy for the Poor and the Oppressed, ed. Marvin Olasky (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1988).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984), 105.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

### In the Mainstream, 1953-1969

Clark Pinnock, born and raised in a middle-class southern Ontario home, during the years following his conversion, was introduced to "all the major lines of evangelical social thought." His admitted admiration for Billy Graham, the overarching influence of Francis Schaeffer, Carl Henry's espousal of cautious reformism, and Bill Buckley's "feisty" defense of capitalism all had some effect on Pinnock during this period, though he confesses to a much greater interest in biblical inerrancy than in the issue of racism.

Skeptical of the effectiveness of governmental intervention in economic and social welfare matters, viewing the "Great Society" as "a bit of a farce," seeing democratic capitalism in a good light (and atheistic communism as negative), and wishing America well in its "duty" to defend freedom in Southern Asia, Pinnock was convinced that "society's greatest need was the conversion of its people."

While Schaeffer may have sparked in him a radical impulse during those years, Pinnock also cites the possibility that his "conversion to premillennialism in the late 1960s through influences

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Particularly Graham's approach to social change through evangelism (see ibid.). In the same place Pinnock observes that while Graham "taught us to love America, he also helped us to recognize her sins."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock asserts that the seeds of radicalism that may have been sown by Schaeffer did not entail the rejection of democratic capitalism, but may be found in the way he identified with "alienated youth in a way that appeared to support some of their concerns" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. An engaging recital of events during the same period may be had from Carl F. H. Henry's perspective in his <u>Confessions of a Theologian: An Autobiography</u> (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 144-301. Of particular interest is the part social questions played in the replacing of Henry at <u>Christianity Today</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984), 107. <sup>6</sup>Ibid., 107-8.

at Dallas Theological Seminary could be seen as another radical seed." This, he claims, "makes one a potential radical" by putting one into opposition to "the powers that be."

Out on the Edges, 1970-1978

Criticism of the "plastic culture," the violence in Vietnam, and American racism which was common for young people in the 1960s "happened late" for Pinnock. The early 1970s found him at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where Jim Wallis gathered a small group<sup>3</sup> which was "deeply critical of America and supportive of radical politics and anabaptist hermeneutics." This group exhibited "a deep alienation from North American culture," found its theological

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 108. Pinnock describes his eschatology previous to his change to premillennialism as amillennial. This eschatological leaning had meant, he says, that "I really did not place much emphasis upon political affairs. I valued democracy, our historical Christian rects, and capitalist institutions" (ibid., 106).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 108. While admitting that dispensational premillennialists are "notoriously passive politically," Pinnock claims that such an eschatology "puts one in radical opposition to the powers that be and makes one a potential radical."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Out of this group came first the <u>Post American</u> and then its successor, the influential <u>Sojourners</u> (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. In the same place Pinnock confesses that it was without his "conscious awareness" that he "bought into" the combination of leftist and anabaptist thinking. In fact, he observes that "at that time I perceived the union [i.e., of leftist and anabaptist thought] as enjoying God's favour."

The thinker behind this change in social and political thought, according to Pinnock, was John H. Yoder; especially his <u>The Original Revolution</u> (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1971). See Pinnock, "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984) 119, n. 4. Pinnock remarks that in contrast to such mainstream evangelicals as Henry, Schaeffer, and Graham who "wanted reform of a basically good culture, not a complete overthrow," the Trinity group saw "North America as the polar opposite of the gospel" (see ibid., 108). They applauded declarations that America was to be identified with the great whore of Rev 17-19 and while, in theory at least, insisted that all earthly systems were evil, looked "wistfully" at the Marxist societies "which seemed to embody the communitarian ideal more perfectly than my own" (ibid., 108-9).

In what comes close to a psychological analysis of his thinking during that time, Pinnock says that "it was a revolt of the disadvantaged. We hated those who were successful in the system, and therefore ourselves who had tasted all of its benefits. For me,

foundations in "a resurgence of anabaptist theology," and a political home with "the new left." Pinnock admits that by 1974, having

radicalism served to take away the guilt I felt for being born into an advantaged situation" (ibid., 109).

For an example of Pinnock's deep sense of alienation from things North American, see his "A Call for the Liberation of North American Christians" (1976), where he writes of "shame and outrage at the moral callousness in our collective North American behavior" (p. 23). See also Pinnock's "The Secular Prophets and the Christian Faith," in Quest for Reality: Christianity and the Counter Culture, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 133-34. The whole of this latter work is of interest in that it constitutes a "cultural apologetic" for Christianity from the perspective of the 1970s counter culture.

¹Describing the radicalizing process wrought by anabaptist theology as having "the feeling of a second conversion," Pinnock writes: "It taught us a way to go back to our conservative churches and preach the new gospel of Christian radicalism in an evangelical modality" ("A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" [1984], 109). "Simple lifestyle, nonviolence, economic sharing, equality, communitarianism" were viewed as the signs of the "authentic church" which ensured that these "anabaptist" evangelicals were "always countercultural and never culture-claiming" (ibid., 110). Notice also Pinnock's "A Call for the Liberation of North American Christians" where he makes a plea that Christians repent and return to their radical roots (p. 25); his "Second Mile Lifestyle: A Short Manual for Resurrection People" (197., 32; his "Credo" (1974), 20, which calls for a fresh confession of faith which has relevance to social and political issues; his "The Coming of Christ's coming to earth to "the social dimension of our problem of sin" (p. 8); and his "The Acts Connection," Post American, May 1974, 24-25.

<sup>2</sup>Idem, "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984), 110. Pinnock explains that corporate capitalism was seen as "the root of America's degeneracy and the source of its injustice, violence, and racism" (ibid., 110). He, "without being ideologically left" himself, was "in considerable agreement with what the new left said both by way of criticism and suggestion" (ibid.). He remembers being puzzled at being asked if he realized the Marxist content of what was being said in the Post American and later observed: "I was a babe in political thinking and was saying things based on what I thought were exegetical grounds, the importance of which I did not fully understand. I felt that the poor were poor because the rich were rich, and what was needed was state intervention and voluntary poverty on the part of Christians. It seemed reasonable to think of the rich as oppressors, and the poor as their victims. The Bible often seemed to do the same thing. It was obvious to me that the welfare state needed to be extended, that wealth ought to be forcibly redistributed through taxation, that the third world deserved reparations from us, that our defense spending was in order to protect our privilege, and the like. I did not require proof of such propositions-they all seemed obvious and self-evident. The excitement of the change of thinking suppressed even the small amount of critical judgment I had acquired before 1970" (ibid., 111).

Remembering his attraction to socialism, Pinnock comments that while not equating "the socialist utopia and the promised kingdom of

returned to his native Canada, he "even voted for communist candidates in the Vancouver civic elections."

### Return to the Center, 1978-1984

Late in the 1970s Pinnock began to awaken out of his "radical dream." First, he came to see "once again the positive tendencies of democratic capitalism" in such features as free speech, limited government, an independent judiciary, genuine pluralism, and the concern for human rights. Freed "from the hold of the radical perspective," Pinnock became much more optimistic of North American efforts to overcome racial and ecological problems. Even the Vietnam war looked quite different. He now saw the radical movement of which he was a part as "accomplices" in the "betrayal" of Southeast Asian nations into enslavement to totalitarian powers.

However, Pinnock still claims to be politically radical in one respect. While still holding to millennialism, he now espouses a

God" he associated the two which meant a decided admiration for Mao's new China and a hope that the Viet Cong would win out against American forces (ibid.).

¹Ibid., 106. Also Pinnock's two-part series, "An Evangelical Theology of Human Liberation" (February 1976), 30-33, and (March 1976), 26-29. Note especially his comment: "Our hope in the coming of God's kingdom places us more in a class with Marxists than with our Western secular contemporaries whose only eschatology seems to be Epicurean, 'eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die'" (February, 1976, 33). For another report of Pinnock's recollections of his political thinking during this period, see his Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 63-69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984), 111-12. Pinnock recollects that it "now struck me as somewhat ridiculous to overlook those positive features of North American life which had incidentally made it possible for radicals like me to express and live out our concerns. How could I have had such deep contempt for a culture which surely stands as a beacon of hope in this suffering world? How ironic to call for 'liberation' in the very place there is probably more of it that anywhere else in the world, and to be sympathetic toward societies where neither liberty nor justice is in good supply. It began to dawn on me that if one was locking for Babylon in this present world, one might rather look toward the threat of totalitarian government which seeks to usurp all sovereignty in a culture" (p. 112).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 112-13.

"neo-Puritan vision" that includes "a greater realization of the kingdom in society before the eschaton," and so has not returned to the relative political indifference of his first phase. Rather, he now believes that in "cultures like our own where the gospel has taken deep root," the church's task is to "encourage the christianization of the culture and call the nation to the will of God, and to assure people that God will surely bless the nation whose God is the Lord." Therefore, Christians should be at the forefront of those calling for such things as fiscal responsibility, effective law enforcement, limited government, the right to life, the stability of the family, adequate defense, the needs of the poor, and the problem of poverty.

Secondly, the shift from an anabaptist hermeneutic to a Reformed one involved a recovery of "the Old Testament as the foundation of New Testament politics." Pinnock came to the point where he saw that "the anabaptist reading of the Bible pits the Old Testament against the New at many crucial points" and that the two testaments when read in conjunction support the notion that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 113. In the same place Pinnock states that he anticipates Christ's rule being extended to all nations and that he now has "a stronger faith" that the nations will be discipled. This resurgence of "the old Puritan eschatology and vision" he sees in the work of Schaeffer, in the New Right, and in the Chalcedon movement for Christian reconstruction (see also p. 106).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 113.

<sup>41</sup>bid., 113-14. See also Pinnock's "Erickson's Three-Volumne Magnum Opus," TSF Bulletin, January-February, 1986, where Pinnock criticizes Millard Erickson for not being Calvinistic enough regarding the "Christ the Transformer motif" (p. 30). It should be noted that John H. Yoder takes issue with the "Reformed" versus "Anabaptist" characterization of approaches to socio-political questions in his "Reformed Versus Anabaptist Social Strategies: An Inadequate Typology," TSF Bulletin, May-June 1985, 2-7. See also Richard J. Mouw's response to Yoder in his "Abandoning the Typology: A Reformed Assist," TSF Bulletin, May-June 1985, 7-10.

"evangelical political work ought to have an institutional as well as intentional component."

Finally, Pinnock has changed his mind about democratic capitalism.<sup>2</sup> While denying that he is an expert in economics, he claims that he "can now see" why North America is rich in comparison with the nations that are not. Pinnock denies that it is because of North American exploitation of third world wealth, but because "the world is poorest precisely where there has been no contact with the West."<sup>3</sup> However, he advises caution regarding the question as to whether the Bible supports Western economic policy,<sup>4</sup> and firmly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984), 114. As for the Western democracies, Pinnock remarks that "it seems plain to me now that the Christian heritage operating in them is profound and precious, and renders them worthy of critical support and reforming efforts. . . " (ibid.).

<sup>2&</sup>quot;I have come to see it in a very different light," writes Pinnock. "Far from being the enemy of the poor, it now seems to me to offer both liberty and prosperity in abundance and to deserve our cautious support. Socialism, on the other hand, has a dismal record of providing neither" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 114-15.

If Western economic policy is the teaching of Scripture, Pinnock remarks that it is "strange" that "we did not discover it earlier." He also observes that it is "risky to tie the Scriptures to any such system, thus repeating the radical mistake of regularly linking it to socialism" (ibid., 115). Nevertheless, he does see the Bible as calling for responsible stewardship of resources, praising honest labor, and insisting on a stable currency and just weights and measures. In addition, in his view, "Scripture teaches us that long term economic growth flows from obedience to God and that stubborn poverty is the result of disobedience. It defends the rights of the disadvantaged and calls upon the godly to help them to get on their feet by means of the Lord's tithe." However, he also warns that "Christian economics" is often "actually secular economics imported into theological ethics" and that we need to "study and utilize the biblical materials on this subject more fully" (ibid., 116). For further details, see Pinnock's "The Pursuit of Utopia, Betrayal of the Poor" (1987), 5-6, 13. Note that he claims that the "market approach works well because it is realistic about human nature whereas socialism presupposes saints" (p. 11). This latter article appears in almost the same form as "The Pursuit of Utopia" (1983), 65-83.

believes that democratic capitalism will have to face divine judgment due to its current materialistic stance.

At the same time that Clark Pinnock was experiencing this "reawakened belief" in the potential of democratic capitalism, he was becoming increasingly disillusioned with socialism. He has "come to feel . . . that socialism represents false prophecy and a cruel delusion." He considers that, even in its democratic form as in Sweden and North America, socialism "threatens our liberties and bankrupts our economies."

Pinnock admits to the considerable pain, resentment, and suspicion that has been the result of his excursion into radical political theology. He states that he feels badly "that some who appreciated" his writing during his radical period now find him "some distance from those ideals." However, Pinnock sees the whole experience as confirming "the considerable truth of the hermeneutical circle." It is apparent that we are "deeply affected in our reading of the Bible by our circumstances"; something that has compelled him to reflect on whether his present position is "really scriptural or reflects . . . [his] own class setting."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984), 116-17. Also Pinnock's "Additional Comments by Pinnock," in <u>Conflict and Context: Hermeneutics in the Americas</u>, ed. M. Branson and C. Padilla (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984), 117.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock cites Pierre Trudeau's socialist Canadian government as an example of "how to destroy the private sector and prosperity and how to expand government so that it gains control in every possible area of life" (ibid.). Notice here Pinnock's wholehearted endorsement of Harry Antonides' views in his review of <u>Stones for Bread, The Social Gospel and Its Contemporary Legacy</u>, by Harry Antonides, <u>Crux</u>, September 1985, 28.

<sup>\*</sup>Pinnock, "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984), 118. Pinnock in commenting on his change from radicalism to a more conservative approach notes that the idea of the radicals "was to convert mainline evangelicals to the radical vision and not the other way around. But this is what happened to me and I set it forth as a possible lesson to all" (ibid.).

### Pinnock's View of Liberation Theology

Given Clark Pinnock's interest in political theology, it is not surprising to find that he has shown quite an interest in liberation theology. His view of "the theology of liberation" and his call that North American Christians were to "enter into the same struggle" as the Latin American and Black theologians by practicing the gospel, rather than just defending it, was probably more positive during his radical period than it is presently. 2

More recently Pinnock notes that "one thing I do like about liberation theology" is the way hope for history has again been

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Beginning in the 1960s in Latin America and exhibiting itself in a variety of forms (e.g., black, feminist, African, and Asian theologies), the theology of liberation emerged from the "ethical, mystical and theological experience of poverty" (Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, Salvation and Liberation [New York: Orbis Books,. 1985], 24). Liberation theologians read Scripture and interpret salvation through the eyes of the poor. For instance, Gustavo Gutiérrez explains that "to believe . . . is to be united with the poor and exploited of this world from within the very heart of the social confrontations and 'popular' struggles for liberation" (Gustavo Gutiérrez, "Freedom and Salvation: A Political Problem," in G. Gutiérrez and R. Shaull, Liberation and Change, ed. R. H. Stone [Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1977], 92).

Possibly the most controversial aspect of liberation theology has been its willingness to accept the Marxist analysis of society and economics. While claiming that the "Marxist scheme cannot be taken as a dogma," José Míguez-Bonino asserts its validity as a "method" (Míguez-Bonino, <u>Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation</u> [Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975], 35).

Well-known proponents of liberation theology include Rubem

Well-known proponents of liberation theology include Rubem Alvas, Helder Camara, Paulo Freire, Gustavo Gutiérrez, José Miranda, Hugo Assmann, José Míguez-Bonino, Juan Luis Segundo, Eduardo Frei, and Jon Sobrino (Ronald Nash, "Introduction," in <u>Liberation Theology</u>, ed. Ronald Nash [Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1984], 1st page [no pagination]). Nash also provides a comprehensive bibliography (both pro and con) on the theology of liberation (pp. 249-55).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Carl E. Armerding's "Introduction," in <u>Evangelicals and Liberation</u>, ed. Carl. E. Armerding (n.p. Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977), where he describes Pinnock's presentation of "A Call for the Liberation of North American Christians" to the April 1976 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society of Canada as a "ringing call to self-liberation from the oppression of our North America materialism and the slavery of consumerism." He continued that Pinnock "left no doubt in anyone's mind that our examination of liberation theology and liberation movements remains hollow apart from a new "llingness to look at those structures which have oppressed our society and, through us, the rest of the world" (p. viii). Note particularly Pinnock's "A Call for the Liberation of North American Christians" (1976), 23-24.

introduced into the Christian perspective "after a century of gloom and doom pessimism." However, he can also say, "I do not think liberation theology has much to offer" because it is "a thinly disguised religious version of Marxist politics." Rather, he looks for "a liberation theology that really does offer liberation." by a reliance on Jesus' word and power and does not collapse the "truth question" into the "justice question."

### Summary

Pinnock's pilgrimage in political theology, including what he calls his radical "zigzag" from 1970 to 1978, is illustrative of his penchant for a systematic theology firmly established on an authoritative Bible. Even at his most radical Pinnock called for "a systematic theology for public discipleship" which would be based on all the major pillars that support "the entire edifice of Christian orthodoxy"6—the doctrines of revelation and inspiration, the Trinity, creation, human nature, and redemption.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "Pursuit of Utopia" (1987), 13. In the same place Pinnock remarks that liberation theologians "actually dare to believe that Christ is Lord and can bring the nations under his righteous rule."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "Erickson's Three-Volume <u>Magnum Opus</u>" (1986), 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See, for instance, Pinnock's "Liberation Theology's Curious Contradiction," <u>Christianity Today</u>, July 10, 1987, 56. This article is a review of Michael Novak's <u>Will It Liberate? Questions about Liberation Theology</u>. Pinnock notes that Novak has also undertaken a journey from the utopian Left to democratic capitalism (p. 56).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, "Pursuit of Utopia" (1987), 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, "Our Audience: Atheist or Alienated?" (1986), 38.

<sup>6</sup>Idem, "A Theology of Public Discipleship" (1975), 16, 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>See Pinnock's "A Theology of Public Discipleship" (1975) and his "An Evangelical Theology of Human Liberation" (1976). Note particularly that in the former article Pinnock affirms that the "inspiration and normative authority of Scripture is an indispensable foundation for our social concern and public discipleship" (p. 16).

Of interest also is Pinnock's interaction with Reformed theology. While his theology proper has recently seen a rejection of the classical theism advocated by Calvinism in favor of "a neoclassical theism," his political thought has progressed through an "anabaptist" rejection of Reformed thought to a "neo-Puritan" perspective. We have found that Pinnock is presently rather negative regarding liberation theology, and it is now time to discover his thinking about another movement that has often received a "bad press" from evangelical writers—the New Pentecostalism.

#### The New Pentecostalism

Clark Pinnock's attitude towards the Charismatic Movement illustrates both his willingness "to go in to bat" for unpopular positions and to take an irenic middle stance. In his 1971 article with Grant R. Osborne, 1 the position taken allows for "tongues" to include both "real languages" and "ecstatic speech." Still Pinnock and Osborne denied that tongues are "the normative sign of Spirit baptism" while affirming that they are "a legitimate gift of the Spirit to the church today" and recommended that glossalalists should be welcomed into Christian fellowship, but they should not "take a superior attitude toward those who have not experienced tongues." 3

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Clark H. Pinnock with Grant R. Osborne, "A Truce Proposal for the Tongues Controversy," <u>Christianity Today</u>, October 8, 1971, 6-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This is based on the Pentecost account of Acts and 1 Cor 13:1 and 14:2. See ibid., 7. In the same place Pinnock and Osborne deny that the "nature of the gift" can be the "criterion for veracity." Such can only be determined by the "manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23) in the life of the tongues-speaker."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 7-9. Note that Pinnock here explicitly rejects Augustine's and Warfield's view that the gifts of the Spirit ceased with the early church. See Pinnock's argument for the continuing presence of the "gifts" in his "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections of an Evangelical Observer," in <u>Perspectives on the New Pentecostalism</u>, ed. Russell P. Spittler (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 188-90.

This attitude of approval combined with warnings regarding excesses has characterized Pinnock's writings on the subject since his own experience of being "filled with the Spirit" in New Orleans in 1967. Previous to this event Pinnock admits to holding a negative view toward the Charismatic Movement. Presently, however, he actively promotes charismatic-type revival as the remedy for Canadian Baptist lethargy, has received "a word of prophecy" on several occasions (at least), and claims to have "received healing from a serious macular degeneracy" in his only functioning eye in 1982. Still, although believing the New Pentscostalism "to be a genuine

¹For Pinnock's own description of that experience, see his Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 50-51. There he describes how he (and his wife, Dorothy), as a "young theologian, heavily into intellectual reflection . . . but feeling a lack of reality and power" (p. 50), while attending a home prayer fellowship "glimpsed the dimension of the Spirit which the New Testament describes but is so often absent in churches today" (p. 51). He claims that "the Bible came alive to me" and that being a Christian "became an exciting adventure instead of a drag" (p. 51).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990. See also Pinnock's dissertation ("The Concept of Spirit in the Epistles of Paul" [1963]), where he discusses "spiritual girts" without providing endorsement for contemporary glossalalia (pp. 256-66). In fact, Pinnock seems to endorse Warfield's view of the "cessation of the charismata" in his remark that such a view "has history on its side, and may be harmonious with Paul's thought" (p. 256).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See, for instance, Pinnock, "Baptists and the 'Latter Rain': A Contemporary Challenge and Hope for Tomorrow," in Costly Vision: The Baptist Pilgrimage in Canada, ed. Jarold K. Zeman (Burlington, ON: Welch Pub., 1988), 255-72; "Spring Rains Are Coming," The Canadian Baptist, June 1987, 6-7; "Boarding a Moving Train," The Canadian Baptist, October 1987, 12-14; "Alive in the Spirit" (1980), 5-7; and Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 37-56.

See ibid., 54, and Pinnock, "God's Megatrends" (1987), 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, "A Revolutionary Promise" (a review of <u>Power Evangelism</u>, by John Wimber and Kevin Springer), <u>Christianity Today</u>, August 8, 1986, 19. In the same place, Pinnock remarks that he lost the other eye from retinal detachment "much earlier." In regard to the healing of his eye, Pinnock states: "I know from personal experience that one such incident can be worth a bookshelf of academic apologetics for Christianity (including my own books)" (ibid.).

movement of the Spirit of God renewing His church," Pinnock has remained outside of it. 1

Pinnock presently holds some features of the Charismatic Movement to be "spurious and affected" but also considers that "much of it" cannot be dismissed in this way and "must be considered by a fair-minded Christian as a rejuvenation of the pentecostal reality."<sup>2</sup> To his mind it is something of a remedy for the fact that the church has been "binitarian" throughout much of its history.<sup>3</sup> As to the relation between Evangelicals and charismatics, he regards the latter as "high voltage Evangelicals who share the basic profile down the line."<sup>4</sup>

What of the significance of the charismatic experience in the Christian life? After pointing out the problems with calling it (i.e., the charismatic experience) "a baptism of the Spirit," he

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections of an Evangelical Observer" (1976), 183. In fact, recently, Pinnock has opined that the Charismatic Movement represents "the most important happening in the church today" (Pinnock, "Baptists and the 'Latter Rain'" [1988], 255).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), 40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections of an Evangelical Observer" (1976), 184. Pinnock continues by asserting that contemporary evangelicalism has tended to become "overly intellectualized and 'Apollonian'" (p. 185), and that the New Pentecostalism is "a well-justified protest against the cold and impersonal form which institutional evangelicalism has often taken" (p. 186).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, "Who Are the Evangelicals in Canada?" <u>Ecumenism</u>, March 1987, 5. Note that during his politically radical period, Pinnock hoped that the "worldwide charismatic renewal . . . [would] become prophetic in the face of the needs of the world and so atcain the end God has for it," while his hope for the "new evangelical movement" was that it would be "charismatically renewed, equipmed with all spiritual gifts, and enabled to act in the power of the Spirit." See Pinnock's "Charismatic Renewal for the Radical Church," <u>Post American</u>, February 1975, 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See Pinnock, <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), 52, where he remarks that it can hardly be called a baptism of the Spirit since "baptism into Christ by the Spirit is something which happens when we accept the Lord and not something that happens much later (Acts 2:38[,] 10:45)." Pinnock also concludes that it is "obviously not conversion but an enrichment in Christian experience" and to "call it

comments that his own "preference" is to speak of the "infilling of the Spirit" which is a "realization of what is already ours potentially in Christ." In Pinnock's view there are certain steps which one may have to undertake in order to receive the "infilling" or "spiritual renewal." These include being "serious about wanting it," recognition that "God gives the Spirit to those who ask him (Luke 11:13)," and the usefulness of consulting with another Christian about the matter. Yet he is quick to point out that there are dangers involved. These include elitism, fanaticism, and separatism. Nevertheless, he contends that "dangers or not,"

a baptism would be to suggest that people did not even have the Spirit before this experience."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 53-54. Here Pinnock makes it clear that "the renewal" will "not be exactly the same for every one." For one it occurs at "a very definite moment" and the person may or may not speak in tongues, but in another "the renewal is more hidden."

<sup>4</sup>Tbid., 54. In the same place, Pinnock suggests that "if you want to be filled with the Spirit, you should go to a community of Christians who are filled and ask for their help." It should not be thought, however, that "the gift of the Spirit [is] dependent upon human achievement." A similar point of view can be found in Pinnock's "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections of an Evangelical Observer" (1976), 188.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>According to Pinnock, the "fallen flesh will seek to manifest itself in us whether we are spiritually alive or lukewarm." Detractors can always point to "defects and excesses." People who have come into renewal can see themselves as "a superior class within the church" (Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal [1985], 54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Fanaticism can occur because with "the renewed sense of the Spirit's presence," people can "assume that their thoughts are God's thoughts and that they are enlightened directly from on high" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Pinnock remarks that "those who have received the Spirit may think of themselves as superior as a group and despise the ordinary Christianity of the local church. They may reject church authority and separate to form a new sect" (ibid., 54-55). For another look at the dangers of the movement, see Pinnock's "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections of an Evangelical Observer" (1976), 190-91. Here he lists such dangers as a "unitarianism of the Spirit" where everything is subordinated to personal experience and intuition, equation of changing human emotions with the presence or absence of the Spirit,

individuals and congregations "need to experience a fuller sense of what it means to be the Spirit-filled people of God." His plea is that the New Pentecostalism, which has occasioned quite bitter divisions within the evangelical community in the past, should not be allowed to drive evangelical believers from each other as has happened with eschatology, social practices, and the sovereignty of God.<sup>2</sup>

The Spirit and the Individual Christian

Pinnock's view of the New Pentecostalism does not by any means exhaust his doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it could be said that his perspective on the charismatic movement rests firmly on a theology of the Spirit, particularly the Spirit's role in the individual Christian's life and within the Christian community. According to Pinnock, there is no way for a person to be an effective disciple without dependence on the Holy Spirit. Again, he holds that the Spirit causes the righteousness of the law to be fulfilled in the Christian (Rom 8:1-4) and his indwelling produces ethical fruit (Gal 5:21-22). In fact, the Spirit is able to change people into the likeness of Christ (2 Cor 3:18).

and a kind of "tritheism" which is exhibited in the "double faith" idea. Pinnock's "A Theological Evaluation and Critique," in Tonques, ed. Luther B. Dyer (Jefferson City, MO: Le Roi Pub., 1971), 134-140; and "A Revolutionary Promise" (1986), 19, also offer similar perspectives.

<sup>1</sup>Pinnock, Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections of an Evangelical Observer" (1976), 183, 191

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "Second Mile Lifestyle: A Short Manual for Resurrection People" (1977), 32. We do not discuss here Pinnock's view of the role of the Spirit in the inspiration of Scripture since that falls within the purvey of the two following chapters of this dissertation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. In the same place, Pinnock remarks that "Jesus himself, the model of the new direction, actually comes to us in the Spirit and begins to work the new lifestyle out in us."

In addition, for Pinnock, the Holy Spirit is also active in the life of the individual Christian in helping him or her to recognize and interpret God's Word. In his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), Pinnock affirmed the Spirit's role in the illumination of the mind by "creating that inner receptivity by which the Word of God is really 'heard,'" but downplayed the "testimonium of the Holy Spirit" in regard to acceptance of the inspiration of the Scriptures. In fact, Pinnock argued that "Scripture mentions this witness in connection with Christ and the gospel, not inspiration per se." However, in his later <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), he emphasizes the Spirit's role in bringing us "to <u>recognize</u> the Scriptures," in the "interpretation of Scripture," and in the "application of the Bible."

The Spirit and the Christian Community

"The church," writes Pinnock, "is a charismatic community." While it can be viewed as a human assembly, it has "received the eschatological gift of the Spirit" and would have no existence were it not for that outpouring. The church, as the body of Christ, has been

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 214. See also Pinnock's section entitled "The Illumination of the Spirit;" pp. 215-17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 51 (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 165-174 (emphasis Pinnock). This topic is handled in greater depth in the next two chapters.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections by a Well-Wisher," Christianity Today, September 14, 1973, 6. Compare Pinnock's view that the "church is a sign of the coming order, a community which, just because it is responsive to God's love and purposes, constitutes the vehicle of his Spirit in history." See Pinnock, "The Coming of Christ" (1974), 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, "The New Pentecostalism: Reflections by a Well-Wisher" (1973), 6. Pinnock concludes here: "One of the most fundamental things the Bible has to say about the church is that it is the creation of the Holy Spirit."

equipped by the Spirit "with a wonderful range of spiritual gifts" to build up and equip it for ministry to the world.

Every believer is a priest of God and is gifted in order to serve God.<sup>2</sup> For Pinnock, this indicates "that we must be done with clericalism" and that "God does not want the church to be dominated by the ego and gifts of one person."<sup>3</sup> Rather, the whole body is to be engaged in exercising the gifts in ministry.<sup>4</sup> But this does not mean that ministers are no longer needed. Pinnock explains that "they will be needed more than ever" in nurturing, enabling, and overseeing.<sup>5</sup> In fact, in Pinnock's view, the need for "pastoral oversight" is of utmost importance "where the gifts of the Spirit are freely exercised" because of the pastoral problems that "always" arise.<sup>6</sup>

In summary, Pinnock's doctrine of the Holy Spirit is primarily illustrated by his writings on the New Pentecostalism. However, standing behind his opinions on this topic is a firm conviction that the Scriptures are the ultimate judge of any moving of the Spirit, hence his several criticisms of the Charismatic Movement. The church,

<sup>1</sup> Idem, Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. Pinnock goes so far as to say that "the church is an egalitarian community, each person is gifted by God."

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 44-45. For a discussion of the meaning of the individual gifts of 1 Cor 12:8-10, see ibid., 46-48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 45. Note Pinnock's observation that churches, in order to prevent the unpredictable from happening, have fallen into a pastor-dominated hierarchical congregation which, in turn, suppressed the leading of the Spirit (p. 46).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., 49. Such "pastoral problems" include belief in the normativeness of the gift of tongues, the idea that healing is always the will of God, the kind of "charismania which puts enormous emphasis on the extraordinary gifts and miraculous occurrences as if the everyday working of God were somewhat inferior to that." Further, Pinnock credits such problems to "the Enemy"--"Satan is always eager to discredit true revival by spreading false revival in the midst of it" (ibid.).

too, in harmony with Baptist ecclesiology, 1 is seen as a "charismatic community" in which the members are to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Even more relevant to the theme of this study are Pinnock's insights regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in assisting the individual Christian in his recognition, interpretation, and application of the Scriptures. 2 That this has immediate significance for Pinnock's view of biblical reliability and authority becomes clearer in the following chapters. And we have not even mentioned what Pinnock thinks about the Spirit's part in the formation of the Bible!

#### Conclusion

Given Clark Pinnock's desire that evangelical theology be bipolar--that is, conservative and contemporary--it is not surprising
that he has no embarrassment in admitting to being "on a pilgrimage in
theology."

He maintains that the majority of theologians "change
their minds quite often" and that it is "better to change one's mind
than to continue on a wrong path."

Far from being a sign of "some
kind of weakness of intelligence or character," Pinnock claims that
his theological development is evidence of the nature of the
theological task; that we must feel our way "toward the truth" even
"with the help of Scripture, tradition, and the community."

See our brief discussion in chap. 1, above, p. 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This motif lies behind at least one-third of Pinnock's <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See Pinnock's comment in his "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 16. Another piece in the same "pilgrimage" genre is his "A Pilgrimage in Political Theology" (1984), 101-20.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 16.

Development has been observed in every one of Pinnock's theological interests brought into focus in this chapter. His emphasis on cultural and evidentialist apologetics has matured to the point where he is now apologetically less "desperate." Pinnock's thinking on theology proper has moved from "classical theism" to a form of "neo-classical theism" which he calls "free-will theism." Closely related to this realignment has been a re-drawing of his doctrine of salvation in terms which are Arminian rather than Augustinian or Calvinian. Ironically, perhaps, Pinnock's ideas regarding political theology have, after a "zigzag" into "anabaptist" radicalism, returned to a Reformed position. Even his view of the New Pentecostalism has developed from a stance of suspicion to one of critical openness, while at the same time modifying slightly his opinions regarding the role of the Holy Spirit.

Our own pilgrimage through Pinnock's theology has opened to view many sub-themes which illustrate his stance regarding such topics as the foreknowledge of God, process theology, the creation and fall, liberation theology, and ecclesiology. All of these illustrate Pinnock's attitude that there is no such thing as an evangelical "orthodox systematic theology." Rather, there are "various accounts of it" and Pinnock has nothing to say to "those who are frightened to think that God may have more light to break forth from his holy Word." 1

It appears that the key to understanding Pinnock's systematic theology is his view of Scripture. As we have seen, every one of his theological interests is closely related to the authority of Scripture. Part of the task ahead of us relates to how his overall theological development relates to his perspective on biblical reliability and authority. Have some of his shifts of opinion

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 28.

affected his view of the Bible, or has his view of Scripture precipitated some of the changes?

#### CHAPTER III

# BIBLICAL AUTHORITY/RELIABILITY: PINNOCK'S EARLY VIEW (1965-1974)

# Introduction

Our survey of some of Clark Pinnock's major theological interests in Chapter 3 only incidentally touched on what is his main preoccupation—the doctrine of Scripture. In his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), Pinnock made it clear that the whole theological enterprise is cast into a situation of crisis if the Bible is not permitted to hold its place as "The Foundation of Christian Theology." The "principal cause of the modern theological sickness," in Pinnock's perspective, is "a crisis in valid authority" which is due, in turn, to "the rejection of biblical infallibility." The present chapter intends to examine Pinnock's early view of biblical authority and reliability.

This expression is the subtitle of Pinnock's <u>Biblical</u>
Revelation. Pinnock argues that Scripture provides "a proper
epistemological base" for theology" (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u>
(1971), 14. Note that <u>Biblical Revelation</u> supplies the backbone for
the present chapter since it constitutes Pinnock's major work on the
doctrine of Scripture during his early period. Undoubtedly, it stands
as the peak of his accomplishments in the years from 1965 to 1974.
His other writing regarding the Bible during this phase either leads
up to or else proceeds from this work.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 10.

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ Ibid., 13. Elsewhere, Pinnock characterizes this crisis as being an epistemological one, which is exemplified in the question: "Is the Scripture a reliable teacher of revealed truth, or not?" (<u>A Defense of Biblical Infallibility</u> [1967; hereinafter referred to as <u>A Defense</u>], 4).

on various related issues such as inspiration and hermeneutics as well.

# The "Early" Pinnock?

It is important to delineate just what years are encompassed by the expression, the "early Pinnock." Rex Koivisto contends that a distinct change can be discerned in Pinnock's writings concerning Scripture after his move from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School to Regent College in the fall of 1974. Pinnock, nimself, considers that

¹It is not our purpose to provide an in-depth study of the many side issues, but rather to examine them as they have definite connections to Pinnocks's view of biblical authority and reliability. That they are related, at least for Pinnock, is made clear by his comment that "every low view of its [i.e., the Bible's] inspiration ends up robbing" us of an authoritative Word (Pinnock, Biblical Revelation [1971], 230.

Z"The early Pinnock" is Pinnock's own expression in his "A
Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Koivisto, "Clark Pinnock and Inerrancy: A Change in Truth Theory?," 139 (n. 2), 146-47. The latter reference is of particular value in that Koivisto lays out in chronological order, there, Pinnock's works on biblical inspiration. He maintains that "Pinnock's shifting views do not appear in print until his first article written at Regent College" (p. 147) This article was his "The Inerrancy Debate among the Evangelicals" (1976), 11-13. Koivisto observes that although the article came out in the 1976 edition of the Fuller Seminary's alumni magazine, it was "distributed to members of the Theological Students Fellowship on December 5, 1975" (Koivisto, 147). It is important to notice, however, that Robert M. Price ("Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary" [1988]: 157-83) ("Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary" [1988]: 157-83) divides Pinnock's theological career into three periods: (1) "Defending Biblical Authority" from his conversion to 1971, (2) "Obeying Biblical Authority" from 1971-1977, and (3) "Rethinking Biblical Authority" from 1977 onwards. Mary J. High ("The Development of Clark Pinnock's Concept of Biblical Authority") follows a scheme which divides Pinnock's development into a "Formative Period" (1937-1970), a "Transitional Period" (1970-1980), and a "Contemporary Period" (1980-1989). See also Pinnock's "From Militancy to Moderation: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (tape of class discussion, McMaster Divinity College, April 3, 1990). We have chosen an "early" and "later" approach here, since Pinnock's two major works on Scripture (Biblical Revelation [1971] and The Scripture Principle [1984]) appear to illustrate two distinct perspectives, although it is acknowledged that there was (and has been) development and clarification before and after these works. However, to my knowledge, no one has suggested that Pinnock has propounded more than two views of Scripture during his theological pilgrimage. For instance, Mary High concludes in regard to Pinnock's "Transitional Period" that although the years 1970 to 1980 involved "some important overall changes in his theology," the "actual changes in his doctrine of

Koivisto is "much too alarmist" in depicting him as having "departed" from his earlier convictions, 1 and argues that his impression of the relation between the early Pinnock and the present Pinnock is that of "basic continuity accompanied by minor adjustments in style and emphasis."

However, Pinnock does admit that there are changes and that "Koivisto is not making it all up." Still, he sees those changes as evidence that his position has "evolved but not reversed itself." As

scripture, however, have been relatively minor." According to her analysis, Pinnock's "most important" change in his doctrine of Scripture concerned his increasing dissatisfaction with the term inerrancy (High, 73).

Robert Price, too, claims that the middle period did not see Pinnock denying "the biblical authority he had argued for so vociferously," but instead applying what he had learned about biblical authority in practical, obedient, and sometimes radical ways. Thus, his changes regarding the charismatic movement, political theology, and soteriology are considered by Price as an outgrowth of Pinnock's early period. Again, Price views Pinnock's growing hesitancy regarding the use of the term innerancy as his major change regarding Scripture (Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 164-74). Notice that we have traced some of Pinnock's other theological changes (e.g., his political theology) using other than a dual approach where that seemed most appropriate (see above, chap. 2, pp. 120-127) and that we take into account even minor developments in Pinnock's views in this chapter and that following.

¹Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 153. Pinnock comments, "People of the Koivisto position [i.e., strict inerrantists] tend to exaggerate any shifts that occur in neo-evangelical thought in order to keep the lines of dogmatic clarity clear, while evangelicals who have introduced changes into their theology tend to minimize them in order not to lose their evangelical credentials. . . . Therefore the reader ought to watch for possible exaggeration in Koivisto and possible minimization in me" (ibid).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. The matter of the extent and reasons for Pinnock's shift regarding his doctrine of Scripture are returned to a little later. See below, chap. 5, pp. 344-6.

<sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 154. As to his changes, Pinnock cites three areas: that of the Bible's claims to its own inspiration, his increased candor regarding the phenomena of Scripture, and a greater confidence in the power of the Spirit to make the Bible come alive for believers (ibid., 154-55). These adjustments are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

<sup>4</sup>Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 154. It is Pinnock's contention that "there cannot be more than a handful of theologians whose theology has not evolved internally and in response to changing situations. I think it would even be possible to say that my position is truer to itself now than earlier—and stronger, not

for Koivisto's charge that in addition to his change regarding scriptural inerrancy, Pinnock has also undergone an "even more alarming . . . epistemological shift," Pinnock counters that while including in his "model of rationality such items as what Koivisto calls pragmatism," he is not aware of having dropped his earlier concerns "for logic and evidence."

Is there an "early Pinnock" as regards his doctrine of Scripture? Whether there has been evolution and development (as Pinnock suggests) or an alarming reversal (as is claimed by Koivisto) in Pinnock's doctrine of Scripture becomes clearer in the following chapter. Suffice to say here, that in that at least some changes have been admitted by Pinnock himself, the expression the "early Pinnock" seems justified on that basis alone. Following Koivisto, we accept Pinnock's early period as extending from 1965 to 1974. An examination of his writings from this period should uncover evidence

weaker" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Koivisto, 139. He maintains that Pinnock has shifted from the "correspondence idea of truth" which meant that when Scripture recorded a historical fact one could assume that a real event corresponded to the record (ibid., 148), to "a pragmatic view of truth" which holds that it is "the effectiveness of the Bible that is central in defining its truth" (ibid., 149).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 155. Pinnock refers to his <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980) as illustrative of the fact that epistemologically, he thinks he can "make a better, fuller case now than before" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Observe that J. I. Packer, in the following statement, has also noted Pinnock's change: "Pinnock has never hesitated to rethink, and it is noticeable that his recent writing about the Bible offers a more 'functional,' less 'intrinsicalist' view of the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture" than is found in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (Packer, "Foreword," in the 1985 reprint of Pinnock's <u>Biblical Revelation</u>, 7).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>In 1965, Pinnock arrived at the SBC New Orleans Baptist Seminary, whereas he left Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for Regent College in 1974.

of his early approach to Scripture, and more particularly, his thinking regarding biblical authority and reliability.

Biblical Revelation (1971) constitutes the early Pinnock's major writing in regard in Scripture. In fact, J. I. Packer counts it as "the major triumph . . . of Pinnock's first period." First published by Moody Press in 1971, it went through several reprintings before being reissued by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company in 1985. Although originating from his Trinity Evangelical Divinity School years (1969-74), a cursory examination of the book reveals that it is very much an expansion of materials already presented by Pinnock in "The Tyndale Lecture in Biblical Theology for 1966" at Cambridge on July 12, 1966, at a meeting convened by the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research.

The context from which Pinnock wrote his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971) was one in which he viewed non-cognitivist, relativist, and existentialist ideas of revelation as flooding into the mainline

Included are such writings as Pinnock's "The Case Against Form Criticism" (1965), 12-13; "Southern Baptists and the Bible" (1966), 30-31; A Defense (1967); "Our Source of Authority: The Bible" (1967), 150-56; "The Inspiration of the New Testament" (1968), 141-61; "Southern Baptists and the Bible" [news item], Christianity Today, April 25, 1969, 34; "The Harrowing of Heaven" (1970), 7-8; Biblical Revelation (1971); "Theology and Myth: An Evangelical Response to Demythologizing," Bibliotheca Sacra (1971): 215-26; "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" (1974), 143-57; "The Inspiration of Scripture and the Authority of Jesus Christ" (1974), 201-18. Pinnock's A New Reformation (1968) and Evangelism and Truth (1969) also bear, indirectly, on our topic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>J. I. Packer, "Foreword," 5.

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ Ibid. Note that the only difference between the 1971 and 1985 "editions" is the "Foreword" by J. I. Packer which was added in 1985. The pagination remains the same.

<sup>\*</sup>See chap. 1, p. 73, and chap. 2, pp. 122-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>This lecture was revised slightly for publication as <u>A</u>
<u>Defense</u> (1967), in the International Library of Philosophy and
Theology (Biblical and Theological Studies) (see Pinnock, <u>A Defense</u> [1967], iv).

churches. In contrast, Pinnock presented a defense of the Bible as inspired, inerrant, and inscripturated revelation, in what he considered to be a "radical" approach. Part of the background to the writing of Biblical Revelation must also be found in Pinnock's experiences in the Southern Baptist Convention and his conviction that there "has been a remarkable degree of slippage from faith in a verbally inspired Bible" within the Convention. Pinnock had carried with him to New Orleans Francis Schaeffer's doctrine of biblical inerrancy with its agenda of change or separate, and anything less he considered tantamount to rejection of biblical authority.

Reviews of Pinnock's <u>Biblical Revelation</u>, printed shortly after its initial publication, give an indication of the importance of this book's place in evangelical literature. Gordon R. Lewis referred to it as "the most vigorous scholarly statement of verbal, plenary inspiration since Warfield"; Alan F. Johnson remarked that it was more "up-to-date and to-the-point" than Packer's <u>'Fundamentalism'</u> and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Packer, "Foreword," 5, and Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 9-11.

<sup>2&</sup>quot;Radical," Pinnock remarks, since he intends to get to the "essential core" of evangelicalism and in that he means to do "some fresh digging around the <u>roots</u> of the biblical faith" (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 18; emphasis Pinnock). See also Robert L. Reymond's "Editor's Preface" to Pinnock's <u>A Defense of Biblical Infallibility</u> (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967), v. It is interesting that Pinnock uses the term "inerrant" on p. 1 of his <u>A Defense</u> (1967), although he then appears to prefer "infallible" in the main body of the text, whereas in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), which presents a more trenchant defense of inerrancy, he does not really explain that category until pp. 73-81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 159. See our discussion in chap. 1, above, pp. 75-78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>As acknowledged by Pinnock in an interview with me on April 11-12, 1990 (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990). Pinnock explains that he aimed to turn back the liberal trend in the Southern Baptist Convention and was convinced that should that prove impossible, the fundamentalist faction would have to separate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Lewis, "Reaffirming Biblical Inspiration," a review of <u>Biblical Revelation: The Foundation of Christian Theology</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Eternity</u>, January 1972, 50.

the Word of God, more "theologically astute and relevant" than Pache's The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture, and offered "greater comprehensiveness" than Shelley's By What Authority? and Ramm's Protestant Biblical Authority and Special Revelation and the Word of God. Even more telling as to the importance of Pinnock's Biblical Revelation is Packer's remark, fourteen years after its publication, that one "could read his [Pinnock's] lean and fast-moving book as an introduction to Henry's massive juggernaut, like an armored car clearing the path for a tank." Add to this the fact that such diverse scholars as Dewey Beegle and Avery Dulles had to take Pinnock's Biblical Revelation into account, and one has to acknowledge its importance, though written while Pinnock was still in his early thirties!

# Authority: The Crisis of Modern Theology

Pinnock's early writing on biblical authority and reliability emerged from a strong conviction that "modern theology of every shade is in [a] crisis" in which "a sure word resonant with divine authority is scarcely to be heard." He saw the "principal cause of the modern

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Johnson, a review of <u>Biblical Revelation: The Foundation of Christian Theology</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Moody Monthly</u>, November 1971, 54. Of course, not all the reviews were complimentary; see Dallas M. Roark, a review of <u>Biblical Authority: The Foundation of Christian Theology</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Southwestern Journal of Theology</u> 15 (1972): 105-6. Roark objected strongly to Pinnock's characterization of the SBC and complained that <u>Biblical Revelation</u> brought "no fresh insight to old problems," with the consequence that "its value will be limited" (p. 106).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Packer, "Foreword," 6. Observe that Carl F. H. Henry, in his <u>God, Revelation, and Authority</u>, both affirmed and reacted to Pinnock's work (for instance, 3:166, 5:402).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See Dewey Beegle, <u>Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1973), 268, 275, 280-81, and Avery Dulles, <u>Models of Revelation</u>, 38-40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 9. Pinnock believed that a major cause of the "ferment" in theology was due to "the breakdown" in the liberal and Neo-orthodox proposals "due to severe internal weaknesses" (ibid.). He contends that the breakdown in liberalism was

theological sickness" to be "a crisis in valid authority" which had, at its heart, "the question as to what constitutes revelation data."

Traditional theology, in Pinnock's view, sought to be "normative" in that "it believed it would on the basis of divine revelation articulate solid truth regarding God and man," whereas contemporary theology, he maintains, has tended to be "almost entirely 'descriptive.'" Hence, for the likes of Tillich, Macquarrie, Kaufman, and Gilkey, 'revelation' is "the word given to the various symbolic languages which men from time to time have adopted in an attempt to qualify their experience of being and existence." 'Theology' becomes the "systematic reflection upon such symbolization, usually by a person participating in this ethos," and 'truth,' rather than being absolute, is something that "happens when a given symbol of human origin meshes with what we feel today and renders intelligible for us our experience in the world."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, according to Pinnock, modern theology which has rejected a direct "correlation between revelation and inspiration" has been forced to "relocate the locus of God's Word" onto some other ground

due to the attempt to "wed two incompatible entities: the secular world view of liberalism, and the supernatural outlook of the Bible" (p. 10). Similarly, the Neo-orthodox refusal to repudiate liberal criticism of Scripture and, especially, its denial that God's "Word" could be identified with any extant text has led to the weakening of that alternative (ibid., 10; also, 22-23). According to Pinnock, Evangelicalism has the opportunity to step into "the vacuum left by the demise of these recently influential positions" (ibid.). Further details regarding Pinnock's view of the "crisis in contemporary theology" are available in ibid., 107-13.

lbid., 10 (emphasis Pinnock). His position is made even clearer with his comment that "the central problem for theology is its own epistemological base. From what fountainhead does theology acquire the information from which she forms her doctrinal models and tests her hypotheses? What is the principium theologiae which measures and authenticates the subject matter for theology and preaching? No endeavor in theology can begin until some kind of answer is given" (ibid., 11; emphasis Pinnock). See also Pinnock's A Defense (1967), 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 109. For further details, see Pinnock's <u>Truth on Fire</u> (1972), 22, and <u>A New Reformation</u> (1968), 1.

than the text of the Bible. Either it has been shifted from the "propositional to the personal," or from "literature to history." "Subjective faith," in Pinnock's view, had taken the place of the Bible as "the source and norm of theology." This tendency he traces from Kant's questioning of the "objectivity and rationality of divine revelation" as well as to the rise of "negative biblical criticism." He asserts that while contemporary theologians point to rising secularity as the cause of the rejection of biblical authority, the real reason is modernity's predilection for positivistic science. In his early period, not only did Pinnock notice this drift as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 23. While Pinnock acknowledges that the personal and the historical are both "valid biblical motif[s] which Protestant orthodoxy never denied," he considers that "in both cases the shift involves a faulty construction" (ibid., 23, see also <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 11-12. Pinnock observes that in "the present climate the Bible provides some themes for theology, but no norms. Its true canonicity is broken. . . . The loss of the <u>sola scriptura</u> leads to a new sacerdotalism (the church is the matrix of the tradition), a new clericalism (the scholar applies his existential gnosis to the text on our behalf), and a new mystical agnosticism (a faith tailored to survive even if God is not there)" (ibid., 111).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 12; also <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 4-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, "Prospects for Systematic Theology" (1971), 96-101. He observes, further, that "the effect of this new mood upon traditional Christian theology can scarcely be exaggerated. The very historical facts upon which theology formerly sought to rest her claim to divine truth have been declared spurious. The biblical documents, which have from earliest times been regarded as God's written Word and in which these redemptive events are recorded, are judged unreliable and perhaps deceptive" (ibid., 100-1).

In his <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), Pinnock expressed the same idea in terms of biblical errancy/inerrancy: "Until relatively recent times . . . Scripture was the ground for believing revealed truths. Now all of that has changed. A destructive principle has been admitted, the <u>dichotomy</u> of biblical errancy. If something is taught in Scripture, it may <u>or</u> may not be true. In other words, Scripture is not the ground for believing anything. If the Bible errs in minor matters, perhaps it errs also in major ones; if in incidental things, perhaps in substantial things as well (p. 101; emphasis Pinnock).

characteristic of liberal Protestantism, but he trenchantly warned of the dangers threatening Protestantism's evangelical wing.

Recently, this demise of biblical authority has exhibited itself in "the intellectual and cultural malaise of our time."<sup>2</sup>

However, a general sense of uneasiness also pervades the whole field of theology, since, so Pinnock holds, theology has no prospects without biblical authority.<sup>3</sup> Scripture, contends Pinnock, provides theology's "proper epistemological base," philosophy's "empirical anchor to resolve the truth question," as well as "a particularly compelling solution to man's existential dilemmas."<sup>4</sup>

Writing in 1969, Pinnock stated that "many of the historic evangelical denominations have been subverted by neo-Protestant theology. In each case a self-styled intellectual elite has quietly taken over the power structure, and proceeded to indoctrinate the people in their sub-biblical views." Then, in particular reference to the SBC, he noted that "there are in operation . . . forces which wish to transform the denomination from being a theological-spiritual union of Bible-believing congregations, into a merely financial corporation of indifferent assemblies believing what they please" (Pinnock, "Southern Baptists and the Bible" [1969], 34).

For further discussion of the evangelical response to the

For further discussion of the evangelical response to the "crisis of the Scripture principle," see Pinnock's "Baptists and Biblical Authority" (1974), 197-201. Of especial interest is his discussion of the question: "To what extent did Baptists share in the great defection from belief in the infallible Scriptures?" (p. 199). His answer, put very briefly, is "to a large extent" (ibid., emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 13. Pinnock remarks that "there is widespread despair about the possibility of arriving at truth and of finding any solid meaning to life itself. The longing cry is audible on every side; if only there were some anchorage beyond the world of flux in which our lives might be rooted!" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, "Prospects for Systematic Theology" (1971), 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 14 (emphasis Pinnock). Notice here the connection between Scripture and cultural apologetics (discussed in chap. 2, pp. 94-95). Pinnock actually cites several representative works in cultural apologetics: Stuart Barton Babbage, <u>The Mark of Cain</u>; Hilda Graef, <u>Modern Gloom and Christian Hope</u>; John Killenger, <u>The Failure of Theology in Modern Literature</u>; Francis A. Schaeffer, <u>Escape from Reason</u> and <u>The God Who Is There</u>; and Charles I. Glicksberg, <u>Modern Literature and the Death of God</u> (ibid., 14, n. 7).

#### The Pattern of Authority

Following Bernard Ramm, Pinnock believes that religious authority is to be seen as a "mosaic" rather than in terms of a monistic principle. However, while Ramm discusses the whole gamut of religious authority, Pinnock concentrates on revelational authority in his attempt to relate and prioritize revelation by deed and word, inscripturated revelation, and the relation of revelation to reason and the testimony of the Spirit. 2

#### Revelation as Act and Word

Pinnock, in his early period, saw the "core" of the biblical conception of revelation<sup>3</sup> to be "divine activity in history." While

Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965). Ramm succinctly expresses the idea of a pattern of religious authority in his comment that "the keyproblem in religious authority is to find the central principle of authority and the pattern through which it expresses itself concretely and practically. Principles of religious authority founded on a bare monistic principle soon founder. . . A principle of religious authority, along with its pattern designed for its practical and concrete expression and execution, should incorporate all the necessary elements associated with such a complex notion as religious authority. The authority of God, of Jesus Christ, of Sacred Scripture, and of truth must be properly related, as well as proper regard given for human personality and freedom. The result will be a mosaic of authority, with the central piece being the principle of authority with the principle of authority being the first and most important link" (p. 18).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See his discussion of "The Pattern of Divine Revelation" in Biblical Revelation (1971), chap. 1, pp. 19-52. In <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), 101, Pinnoch refers to a "pattern of authority." See also his "The Inspiration of the New Testament" (1968), where Pinnock remarks upon "the pattern of authority in the New Testament" (p. 148).

<sup>3&</sup>quot;Revelation" Pinnock defined as a category covering "the semantic breadth of numerous biblical terms," which "refers to the divine self-disclosure, the purpose of which is, by intervention in history and communication in language," to call men and women into a relationship with God (Biblical Revelation [1971], 29).

Depth is added to this definition by Pinnock's previous

Depth is added to this definition by Pinnock's previous comment that "Christianity claims to be a revealed religion. The Creator Himself has removed the obstacles to understanding and revealed Himself to men (Heb 1:1-5). In the works of creation (Ps 19:1) and in the acts of redemption (Ac 2:11) the sovereign Lord has disclosed something of His character and purposes (Deu 29:29) so that men might enter into covenant with Himself (Jn 17:3). Revelation is a gracious divine activity, a free and voluntary gift which has as its

God's mighty acts at creation, on behalf of Israel, and in behalf of the redemption of humankind, have "existential import" for Christian believers, Pinnock was convinced that the "historical factuality" of these works was of the utmost importance. For him, faith could not be accorded "a creative role," because that would mean that "the Bible does not really contain a record of the acts of God so much as an anthology of creative religious opinions by assorted Hebrews."

To Pinnock's mind, there could be "no doubt" that the biblical writers believed that the mighty acts they were describing were "historically factual." For him, even miraculous events cannot be

end the salvation of sinners (1 Ti 1:15). Because of revelation we have been privileged to see 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ' (2 Co 4:6)" (ibid., 19; emphasis mine).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 31. Pinnock cites here such texts as Exod 20:1; Mic 6:5; Ps 78:4; Act 2:11; John 1:14; and 2 Kgs 17:36, in order to demonstrate that "revelation is concrete and historical in mode. It frequently involves God's transcending the alphabet of human power in order to make His name known upon the earth" (ibid.). For a similar perspective, see Carl F. H. Henry's discussion in his God, Revelation and Authority, 2:311-34.

¹Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 31 (emphasis Pinnock). In fact, for Pinnock, "the <u>existential</u> import of these works is dependent on their <u>historical factuality</u>" (ibid., emphasis Pinnock). He observes that the "biblical writers, unlike modern theologians, do not place the existential cart before the historical horse" (ibid., n. 24).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 31 (emphasis Pinnock). In his <u>A Defense</u> (1967), Pinnock specifically refers to the modern concern to correlate revelation with response (p. 6). Pinnock's discussion of what he terms "the Neo-Protestant view of revelation" is of interest here. He claims that contemporary systematic theologians have switched from the "propositional to the personal" which has resulted in them viewing revelation as "subject to subject encounter" (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 23-25). On the other hand, scholars belonging to the biblical theology school have interpreted revelation as "a series of disclosure situations in history, in which God's hand is seen to be at work by faith" (ibid., 23, 25-28). For the former view, Pinnock cites William Temple's <u>Nature</u>, <u>Man and God</u> (London: Macmillan Pub., 1949), and on the latter, G. E. Wright and R. H. Fuller, <u>The Book of the Acts of God</u> (London: Duckworth Pub., 1960).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 31-32. Pinnock cites here J. Barton Payne's "Faith and History in the Old Testament," <u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 11 (1968): 111-120. Pinnock saw this view as diametrically opposed to the insistence of the <u>Heilsgeschichte</u> school which suggested that "normal historical

demythologized away since "if we may speak of God," then "we may speak of miracle." In his view, it was "odd" that those with a "naturalistic bias" which prevented them from believing in miracles, could continue to refer to God, "the largest supernatural entity in the biblical record." Pinnock remarks that "if God exists, miracles are not a problem," and "if God does not exist, everything everywhere is a problem."

The incarnation of Christ was seen by the early Pinnock as the "supreme example of revelation in history." He insists that God the Son "stepped forth into the empirical realm where He might be met and known." His purpose in coming was not only "soteric" but also "epistemological" in that he came as the "Revealer" of the divine nature.<sup>2</sup> As such, Jesus Christ is the one to whom "the Scriptures witness," since he "is the heart of the revelation they display and the substance of their good news."<sup>3</sup>

What, in Pinnock's perspective, is the relationship between the revelation of God in his "mighty acts" and the Scriptures? For

occurrences were creatively transformed by faith into 'the acts of God'" (Biblical Revelation [1971], 25).

¹Ibid., 32 (emphasis Pinnock). Pinnock maintains that miracles "confront the mind with evidence of the truth of God and the gospel" (ibid.). For further discussion of miracles, see Pinnock, A Defense (1967), 9-10. There, he contended that "the Bible does not place interpretation after miracles. On the contrary, God first reveals his message, and then confirms its substance by miraculous attestation." Modern theology, on the other hand, has reversed the order because "its 'divine acts' are not at all supernatural in the old-time sense, they are natural cause and effect happenings interpreted by means of the theistic parable. The whole divine element exists only in the mind of the believing viewer. Hence, modern theology will not permit its 'miracles' to stand in the open light of investigation. For they are only 'upper story,' leap of faith miracles, which have no grounding in concrete history" (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. This is in distinction to the way in which he sees "revelation as divine activity" functioning in Neo-Protestant theology. In Pinnock's mind, this view meant that "even 'Christ' becomes the name of an event occurring, not in history, but over and over again in existential experience (e.g., H. Braun)" (ibid., 26).

him, the Bible represented "the concluding redemptive act" in that God "did not leave the understanding of them [i.e., his redemptive acts] nor the testimony to them to chance." Rather, God "graciously assisted in the illumination of minds and the inspiration of pens, so that the infallible Scripture might result," thereby continually rendering divine revelation "effective in men's lives." According to Pinnock, both revelation as encounter and revelation as activity leave "the nature of Scripture vague and vulnerable," "play down the noetic side of revelation to the point of virtual mysticism," and "are too narrow to do justice to the pattern of divine revelation in Scripture" in that they "make it impossible to define the content or defend the validity of divine revelation."<sup>2</sup>

While divine action was seen by Pinnock as the "core" in the biblical pattern of revelation, he observed that the Bible "gives an important place to divine <u>speaking</u>." Language is understood as the mediator of revelation, with Pinnock commenting that "God did not act without speaking, nor speak without acting." That God actually spoke "truth" to mankind is affirmed in Pinnock's statement that "revealed truth belongs to special revelation and is of divine origin." For Pinnock, "act and word are perfectly blended in the biblical pattern

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 33. Note also Pinnock's remark that inspiration of the biblical writers meant inspiration of their thoughts as well as their words (<u>A Defense</u> [1967], 8).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 26. For a parallel (but not entirely equivalent) discussion of the "existentialist interpretation of revelation exclusively in terms of a personal encounter" and the "<u>heilsgeschichte</u> [sic] concept of revelation as an act of God in history," see Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 7-10. In his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971) account, Pinnock seems to have more cognizance of the internal differences within the <u>Heilsgeschichte</u> school (see p. 25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 33 (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 34. See above, p. 151, n. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 34 (emphasis Pinnock).

of revelation. Event and interpretation are bound together in indivisible unity."

Pinnock's perspective on "revelation by word" is in conscious opposition to the "truth as encounter" theology of Neo-orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup> In fact, contrary to that view, he maintained that there was a direct connection between divine speaking and the Scriptures. Revelation in the spoken mode meant that "man and God have become speech partners." The Bible "grew out of the divine speaking as it was cast into writing for the welfare of God's people" for it is "an extension of the modality of the divine speaking."<sup>3</sup>

In summary, Pinnock, in his early years, affirmed Scripture as "both a record of the historical acts of redemption and the transcript of the prophetic Word of God." But, it was not to be considered merely a human record. Rather, it was seen as "truly and exclusively" God's Word and the "product of his breath." Since both approaches ultimately meant that "divine speaking lacked full revelation status,"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. At this point Pinnock approvingly cites Kenneth Kantzer's statement that "the revelation of mighty deeds of God without revelation of the meaning of those deeds is like a television show without sound track; it throws man helplessly back upon his own human guesses as to the meaning of what God is doing" (K. S. Kantzer, "The Christ-Revelation as Act and Interpretation," in <u>Jesus of Nazareth: Saviour and Lord</u>, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1966), 252.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock observed that "truth as encounter" constituted a "crisis of content," whereas "the Bible tells of God whispering to His servants the prophets, and informing men of His person and plans." On the other hand, in the encounter theory of revelation "there is a meeting without a knowing, and consequently, no way whereby errant human notions about revelation may be tested and corrected." In the biblical framework, he sees "personal revelation" taking place "in the context of truth revelation. Revelation about God is crucial to the knowledge of God. Content of the divine imperative is inseparable from the demand itself" (Pinnock, Biblical Revelation [1971], 24; emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 33. Further explanation, on Pinnock's part, of the existentialist or encounter interpretation of revelation is available in his <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 9. For a general overview of the subject, see our discussion in chap. 1, above, pp. 48-51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 34.

Pinnock refused to allow the validity of either the Neo-orthodox limitation of revelation to an 'encounter' with God, or the Heilsgeschichte concept of revelation as divine acts in history. Instead, for Pinnock, "revealed truth belongs to special revelation and is of divine origin."

# The Place of Scripture and Christ Within the Pattern

Pinnock spoke of the Bible as "the witness to and the graphical residue of the divine act-word event," the "locus" of God's present "revealing activity." Thus, Scripture stands as both the "culmination of revelation" and revelation's "primary product." It is the Holy Spirit whom Pinnock credits with the conservation of divine revelation in written form (i.e., with "inspiration"). Such a written record of revelation was necessary, from Pinnock's point of view, for the benefit of God's church and gospel. Unwritten, revelation would have been in such danger of neglect, disappearance,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. (emphasis Pinnock). For a similar evangelical view, see Bernard Ramm's <u>Special Revelation and the Word of God</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961), 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 35 (emphasis Pinnock). In the same place, Pinnock remarks: "The Bible is the embodiment of extant revelation, the deposit of divine truth for the doctrinal, moral and spiritual welfare of God's people" (ibid.). It is for this reason that Pinnock could say that "verbal inspiration" is the "only scriptural and meaningful" theory (ibid., 89). Further, "verbal inspiration is at the heart of what inspiration is, and underlines the fact that God has spoken to us in our language" (ibid., 92).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock defined "inspiration" during this period as "the miracle of <u>conservation</u> whereby the Spirit has preserved and conserved divine revelation (cf. Is 30:8). Revelation <u>generates</u> Scripture! Inspiration settles its actual form that the text might serve as an 'adequate, authentic, and sufficient vehicle of special revelation' [quoted from Bernard Ramm's <u>Special Revelation and the Word of God</u>, 179]. Pevelation and inspiration are inseparable, though they are not identical. The creation of <u>graphe</u> [sic] is the final stage in quite an extended process of divine revelation. Revelation is the act of God revealing Himself; inspiration is the recording of the revelation in writing, so that Scripture is the authentic expression of it" (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 35; emphasis Pinnock).

and corruption, that the church could "scarcely have distinguished God's Word from her own."

It is significant that the early Pinnock, while stressing the role of the Scriptures within the overall pattern of revelation and authority, did not consider that the Bible held a position of "absolute importance." That capacity could only be held by "the redemptive revelation in Christ on which salvation rests." Scripture can only hold a place of "relative importance" in that it is the "vehicle and record" of that revelation.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, Pinnock also observed that the "purpose of Scripture is identical with the purpose of revelation itself: to witness to Jesus as the Christ (2 Ti 3:15)." This conclusion would indicate that Scripture should not be construed as "an almanac of sundry information" or "a book of historical curiosities." Rather, it is "Christocentric," "Christological," and "soteriological." Still, Pinnock would not have wanted anyone to assume that since "Christ is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 35-36. Pinnock cites here Calvin's <u>Institutes</u>, 1.6.3; Barth's <u>Church Dogmatics</u>, I.1:117; Warfield's <u>The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible</u>, 210-11; and J. Orr's <u>Revelation and Inspiration</u>, 155. For further details of Pinnock's stance that inspiration is verbal (as opposed to "thought" inspiration), see his <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 8.

Prinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 36 (emphasis Pinnock). As to the relation of Scripture and the gospel, Pinnock remarked that "there could be a gospel without inspired Scripture. The Bible is not a necessary rational postulate required for the gospel to survive; it is a witness to revelation and generated by it, and a text which enjoys its validity on the basis of the prior validity of the gospel it attests" (ibid., 36). That this view does not downgrade the authority of Scripture is made explicit in ibid., 114: "Orthodoxy holds that only Scripture constitutes revelation data, and therefore, theology is to be relative to Scripture alone." See also Pinnock's discussion of the meaning of the Protestant <u>sola scriptura</u> principle, in ibid., 114-15. In fact, his whole discussion of "The Character of Christian Theology" (ibid., chap. 3, 107-46) is relevant to our discussion here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 36 (emphasis Pinnock).

the hermeneutical <u>Guide</u> to the meaning of Scripture," that "Guide" could be used as a "critical scalpel."

Thus, for the early Pinnock, the Bible is a "vehicle" and a "witness" of the unique revelation of Christ, but not in the "witness to" sense of Neo-orthodoxy. Rather than being man's attempt to describe a "contentless" divine-human encounter where nothing is spoken and no information is conveyed, Scripture's role "is to witness truly to the divine activity and the divine speaking."<sup>2</sup>

# The Credibility of Revelation

As we have already indicated, Pinnock was convinced that Scripture held "normative authority shared by nothing else," yet he did not believe that such factors as reason, tradition, and conscience had no role to play within the pattern of authority. On the contrary, he remarked that "we read [Scripture] as intelligent men in a modern society." The relationship between faith and reason, and whether or not a person could "reach the assurance that revelation is authentic and true, and Scripture trustworthy and authoritative," were questions of great importance in Pinnock's early view of revelation and inspiration.

For Pinnock, the "mere claim to authority" could "not be self-validating." Instead, any claims to divine revelation stood in need

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 37 (emphasis Pinnock). He protested that "the fact that the Bible focuses on Christ gives no basis for critical mutilation of its text. Scripture is a seamless robe of truth-telling language. We have no right to delete passages we regard as unessential or incidental. Christ's attitude to Scripture was one of total trust. The Bible testifies to Christ precisely by being truthful in every part" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 36 (emphasis Pinnock). For Pinnock, there could be no separation between the Bible and the Word of God. Rather, "the Bible is truly written revelation, the inscripturated Word of God" (ibid., 37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 37. Of particular importance here is Pinnock's approach to Christian apologetics. See chap. 2, pp. 83-96.

of checking and screening for their "truth value." He acknowledged in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971) the "vigorous tug of war" between his position as a "revelation-empiricist" who stressed "the intrinsic credibility of revelation and Scripture" and the "fideists" who believed "that Scripture and the revelation it contains are <u>autopistic</u> (self-authenticating)."

Pinnock considered it "intriguing" to observe "the extreme diversity of the theologians" whom he categorizes as "fideists." He held that the fideist claim appears to be based on the profession that the Bible is inspired because (1) "it says it is," and (2) "the Spirit accredits it subjectively." Such an approach he labels as a "part-authoritarian, part-existential solution to the question of

<sup>1</sup>Pinnock, Biblical Revelation (1971), 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. (emphasis Pinnock). Pinnock illustrates the difference between the two views with a comparison between B. B. Warfield and Cornelius Van Til. According to Pinnock, Van Til held that the infallibility of Scripture must be presupposed, for "to establish the truth of revelation apart from first presupposing the truth of it . . . is to light the sun with a candle" (ibid., 38). On the other hand, Warfield "believed that inspiration rests on the credibility of the revelation Scripture contains" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 39. He maintains that such include Baillie, Van Til, Bultmann, E. J. Young, Calvin, John Murray, Gordon Clark, Bavinck, Kuyper, and Barth (ibid., 38-42). Pinnock observes that these include Fundamentalists, conservative Calvinists, Neo-orthodox loyalists, and post-Kantian liberals (ibid., 39). Although Pinnock asserts, in Biblical Revelation, that "Barth is the great fideist of the twentieth century" (ibid., 42), in other writings from his early period, Bultmann appears as the major villain. See, especially, Pinnock's "The Harrowing of Heaven" (1970), 7-8. "Theology and Myth: An Evangelical Response to Demythologizing" (1971), 215-26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For Pinnock this line of argument combines "a bare authority claim, and a bare religious experience claim." Both of these, he contends, are extremely susceptible to criticism (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 42). In Pinnock's thinking such an argument cannot be sustained because valid authority "must present <u>credentials</u> which can identify it." A subjective religious experience is a "flimsy foundation for anything" in that it lacks "substantive content," tends to confirm whatever beliefs are present already, and is "incapable of assuring us whether its origin is divine, demonic or human" (ibid., 42-43; emphasis Pinnock).

credibility," and suggests that while it may sound "pious," it is in fact, "docetic in tendency."

In agreement with Warfield, Pinnock held that, whereas reason "was not capable of inaugurating revealed truth," it "was competent to test religious claims." This stance, he acknowledges, is based on such "a positive evaluation of the relation between history and faith," that it is possible to say that "if the gospel cannot be sustained by historical data, it cannot be sustained at all." While he cites in support of his approach, C. S. Lewis, Frank Morrison, James Orr, John Gerstner, Kenneth Kantzer, Daniel Fuller, John Warwick Montgomery, and Wolfhart Pannenberg, Pinnock also admits that "the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 45 (emphasis Pinnock). See also Pinnock's "Faith and Reason," <u>Bibliotheca Sacra</u> 131 (1974): 304-310, for further study of his view of the faith-reason relationship. In his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 122, Pinnock writes that "we wish to <u>defend</u> vigorously the competence of reason to test religious claims, but we dispute its ability to inaugurate revealed truth" (emphasis, Pinnock). He cites approvingly (in ibid., 45, n. 61) Charles Hodge's remark in his <u>Systematic Theology</u>: "Reason is necessarily presupposed in every revelation. Revelation is the communication of truth to the mind. But the communication of truth supposes the capacity to receive it. Revelations cannot be made to brutes or to idiots. Truths, to be received as objects of faith, must be intellectually apprehended" (1:49). Although Pinnock quotes Hodge for Warfield's view, here, similar thinking can be found in B. B. Warfield's "Apologetics," in <u>Studies in Theology</u>, 3-21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Here Pinnock cites his own "Toward a Rational Apologetic Based upon History (1968), 147-51.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, Biblical Revelation (1971), 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 46-48. Observe, however, that while Pinnock approved of Pannenberg's historical apologetic, there are hints that he rejected Pannenberg's acceptance of biblical criticism (ibid., 56). A little later (in 1976), Pinnock's ambivalent attitude toward Pannenberg is even more evident (see Pinnock, "Pannenberg's Theology: Reasonable Happenings in History," Christianity Today, November 5, 1976, 19-22, and "No-Nonsense Theology: Pinnock Reviews Pannenberg," Christianity Today, November 19, 1976, 14-16). In these articles, Pinnock is particularly critical of Pannenberg's rejection of biblical infallibility because he sees "a weak concept of Scripture leading into the very subjectivity that Pannenberg abhors" (Pinnock, "Pannenberg's Theology: Reasonable Happenings in History" (1976), 21-22).

line of defending the gospel historically" is very seldom discussed in books on the philosophy of religion. 1

Pinnock claims that the problems posed by biblical criticism and a naturalistic bias when combined with existentialistic thought patterns has so "subjectivized" the historical task that pessimism has grown concerning whether objective findings are even possible. He maintains that such "a bias is untenable and such pessimism unwarranted" in the light of the sheer number of facts. Pinnock contends that if, as Bultmann would have us believe, the Christian faith has no possibility of verification, the only guarantee is that every Christian belief is "indistinguishable from nonsense."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 49. This, in Pinnock's view, is due to the fact that "the notion is foreign to versions of theology affected by Kant and Kierkegaard." Included are "the rise of scientific criticism in biblical studies" which has made it seemingly impossible to treat the biblical materials as historically reliable, and vestiges of "nineteenth century historicism" which weakened the possibility of an inductive approach "by entertaining an antisupernaturalistic bias" (ibid.).

In Pinnock's view, Bultmann popularized this approach to the extent that his views have "become part and parcel of the intellectual equipment of most nonevangelical theologians" (Pinnock, "Theology and Myth: An Evangelical Response to Demythologizing" [1971], 215).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 50. While granting that there are numerous "possible" interpretations of any historical datum, he contends that there are not as many "probable" ones. Therefore, "while it is possible that Jesus was a Martian, a charlatan, or a madman, it is not probable that He was any of these. The manner in which we ascertain who He was is by a measuring and weighing of the pertinent data. A standpoint on anything should be <u>criticizable</u> and subject to the constraint of the evidence" (ibid; emphasis Pinnock).

Jidem, "Theology and Myth: An Evangelical Response to Demythologizing" (1971), 224. For Bultmann's statements that the historical facts concerning the cross and the resurrection must have "immunity from proof," see his "New Testament and Mythology," 41-44. Pinnock remarks that it is "deeply ironical that Bultmann who wishes to clear away mythology from the Christian faith in order to win a hearing from modern man should then confront them with a kerygma which has no authenticating credentials whatsoever!" He asks, "What is the difference between his incognito Christ and no Christ at all? Why should one suppose that faith is due to more than psychological influences?" Further, according to Pinnock, "Bultmann says nothing which could possibly be meaningful to a non-Christian. Only orthodoxy can do that, because the biblical faith makes no dichotomy between faith and knowledge. The cognitive bridge from nonfaith to faith is the public historical activity of God in the Incarnation. In demythologizing this event for the sake of modern man, Bultmann has

The resurrection of Christ, Pinnock holds, is "a beautiful answer to the truth question" in that it provides the "clue" or hermeneutical perspective to the whole of history. He sees the resurrection clue, however, as evidence that we cannot "by ourselves comprehend universal history." In this, as in "everything else," we must depend on Christ, but that does not mean that historical "facts are inscrutable." Pinnock proposes that "objective saving events belong to the very heart of the gospel and that this historical core is capable of reasonable defense." "After that", he observes, it remains "to point out that apostolic content is inseparable from apostolic faith" and to "demonstrate that this content has the deepest relevance to modern man."

In summary, the early Pinnock, held that revelation in its inscripturated form<sup>5</sup> allows verification in the same manner as any other knowledge. For him even the biblical claim to authority was not enough in that it must be open to verification or falsification from an historical perspective. However, this does not mean that he allowed reason a role above Scripture. Reason, in Pinnock's view, cannot provide revelatory content, but it is capable of testing the truthfulness of claims to revelation. The results of reason's inquiry

removed the only possible basis on which to appeal to him!" (Pinnock, "Theology and Myth: An Evangelical Response to Demythologizing," 224-25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 50. See also <u>Set Forth Your</u> <u>Case</u> (1967), 100.

<sup>2</sup>Idem, Biblical Revelation (1971), 50-51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, "Theology and Myth: An Evangelical Response to Demythologizing" (1971), 225. See also Pinnock's <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), where he remarks that the "credibility of the Christian message is bound up with the reliability of its historical proclamation" (p. 102).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. Here Pinnock appears to be recommending an apologetic method that moves from the evidential to the cultural, rather than from the cultural to the evidential.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>In fact, revelation in any form.

will always be only "probable," since the ultimate guarantee of the truthfulness of revelation's claims has been provided by God in the resurrection of Christ--an event that Pinnock considers is also "criticizable" by human reason. As we will later observe, this approach demands an extremely close tie between biblical reliability and biblical authority.

## The Testimony of the Holy Spirit

The early Pinnock emphasized a close relation between the "credibility" of the revelation data and the "testimonium of the Holy Spirit." His basic position was that Scripture mentions the witness of the Spirit "in connection with Christ and the gospel," not inspiration, and that "there is no evidence that the testimonium is some sort of mystical proof of inerrancy."

In this stance, Pinnock seems to have consciously followed both B. B. Warfield<sup>5</sup> and James Orr. Like Orr, he argues that the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>That Pinnock views the resurrection as historically verifiable is evident from his citation in <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 47 (n. 67), of Frank Morrison's <u>Who Moved the Stone?</u> (London: Faber and Faber, 1958).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock's main discussion of this topic in <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971) actually occurs within his section entitled "The Credibility of Revelation" (see pp. 51-52).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 51. He comes to this conclusion through such texts as Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6-7; and 1 Thess 1:6; 2:13 (ibid.). The same perspective is also to be found in Pinnock's "The Concept of Spirit in the Epistles of Paul" (1963), 146-47, 181, and 227.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 51. Here, Pinnock also remarks that "the Spirit glorifies <u>Christ</u> and should not be used to serve as the <u>deus ex machina</u> for fideism" (ibid., emphasis Pinnock). Notice that Pinnock cites Kuyper as one who tends to use the testimony of the Spirit as a defense for inerrancy (ibid., 51, n. 76).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>In one of the longest citations in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u>, Pinnock quotes Warfield's statement that "one might as well say that photography is independent of light, because no light can make an impression unless the plate [film] is prepared to receive it. The Holy Spirit does not work a blind, an ungrounded faith in the heart. What is supplied by his creative energy in working faith is not a ready-made faith, rooted in nothing and clinging without reason to its object; nor yet new grounds of belief in the object presented; but just a new ability of the heart to respond to the grounds of faith,

witness of the Spirit could hardly settle the question of the canonicity of Esther or Ecclesiastes, and when misused, it "comes perilously close to accrediting only those scriptures which one finds 'inspiring.'" It is Pinnock's contention that the Spirit does not bring a new and different kind of evidence to the human mind, but that his witness "terminates upon the evidence for the truth of revelation." Assurance (or faith), in Pinnock's view, is "an inner persuasion based upon extrasubjective truth, not a blind, ungrounded conviction." He understands 1 Pet 1:23 as indicating that the

sufficient in themselves, already present to the understanding. We believe in Christ because it is rational to believe in him, not though it be irrational. . . . [F]or the birth of faith in the soul, it is just as essential that grounds of faith should be present to the mind as that the Giver of faith should act creatively upon the heart." This statement, cited by Pinnock in ibid., 52, is from Warfield's "Introductory Note" to Francis R. Beattie's Apologetics: or the Rational Vindication of Christianity, 1:25. It is also available in "Introduction to Francis R. Beattie's Apologetics," in Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield, 2 vols., ed. John E. Meeter (Nutley, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub., 1970-73), 2:98-99.

¹Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 51. Here (in ibid., n. 77), Pinnock cites James Orr's <u>Revelation and Inspiration</u> (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, n.d.), 201-4. Orr's observation that Calvin, some of the Reformed Confessions, and John Owen "rest almost exclusively the certainty of the divine origin and authority" of the Bible on the testimony of the Spirit, is particularly noteworthy (Orr, <u>Revelation and the Bible</u>, 201). Pinnock's view of the "testimonium" is all the more intriguing in that it is a non-Calvinistic viewpoint found in a book characterized by J. I. Packer as presenting the "conservative Reformed view of the Bible" (Packer, "Foreword," 5).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 51. That is, "the Spirit creates faith <u>through</u> the indications and evidences" (ibid.; emphasis Pinnock). Again "the Spirit creates certitude in the heart on the basis of good and sufficient evidence" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. For him "faith is related to historical verity," and so it cannot "escape . . . involvement in historical probabilities." Pinnock uses the following illustration to clinch his argument: "If Christ be not raised (fact), our faith is vain (experience). Ours is a credible <u>and</u> spiritual conviction." Faith cannot be "a grand assumption" or "an unspiritual syllogism," rather it "is man's response to the Word of God, the good news, as the Spirit attests the Christ event past and the Christ presence now" (ibid.; emphasis Pinnock).

"testimonium is pointed at the stuff of revelation so that the objective datum becomes a subjective datum in our hearts."

In spite of the fact that Pinnock denied that it was part of the Spirit's testimony to accredit the reliability and authority of Scripture, he does acknowledge that there is "a real sense in which the Bible does 'become' the Word of God for us when the Spirit makes its message personally effective." Still, this "becoming" of the Scriptures is not to be construed in the way liberalism "conflate[s] inspiration and illumination," because "Scripture becomes the Word of God for us because it is the Word of God in itself."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. Observe that Pinnock does not altogether deny the validity of the subjective, but calls for a "balance between subjective and objective factors" (ibid.). However, it seems that during his early period, Pinnock counted any subjective form of authentication of Scripture as invalid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 217. Continuing, Pinnock writes that "truth available (revelation past: Scripture) becomes truth personal (revelation present: experience)" through the Spirit's ministry (ibid.; see also Pinnock's <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> [1967], 65-66, 63). In <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 216, Pinnock calls this "revelation present" the "miracle of illumination." In addition, see his <u>Evangelism and Truth</u> (1969), 20.

For the early Pinnock, the Holy Spirit had a definite role to play in biblical interpretation. He explains that "spiritual truth will not be grasped simply by an analysis of biblical texts" (Biblical Revelation, 144). Elsewhere, this aspect of the Holy Spirit's work was recognized by Pinnock as a "accreditation" of sorts; i.e., an accrediting "of truth deposited already by the Spirit in the infallible Word" (A Defense [1967], 11).

<sup>3</sup>Idem, Biblical Revelation (1971), 216.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 217 (emphasis Pinnock). "The Spirit takes the text," Pinnock adds, "infallible and true, and prepares our hearts to receive its message" (ibid.). Notice also Pinnock's remark that "the witness of the Spirit in the heart is important for the accrediting of divine truth to the darkened minds of men. But this testimony does not create the truth; it attests it. It certifies the truth of the gospel to the man who formerly disbelieved it. The Bible is trustworthy and true prior to the faith of anyone who trusts it, even as the resurrection was a fact of history before anyone believed it" (Pinnock, "Our Source of Authority: The Bible" [1967], 152). Further discussion of this theme can be found in Pinnock's A Defense of Biblical Infallibility (1967), where he shows his marked dependence on Bernard Ramm's The Witness of the Spirit. See particularly Pinnock's A Defense (1967), 11, n. 35.

The "testimony of the Spirit" is undoubtedly an important part of Pinnock's early approach to both Scripture and apologetics. He reacted strongly to any attempt to place the internal witress of the Spirit in a position where it would be the sole accreditation of the reliability and authority of the Scriptures. Such accreditation could only come from historical evidences which, of course, the Spirit was able to use in order to bring assurance to the individual Christian's mind. For Pinnock, the truth of the Bible was already there "by inspiration," and the Spirit does not, in the present time, make it inerrant or authoritative. Rather, he makes it powerful!<sup>2</sup>

#### Summary

In his early period, Pinnock recognized that revelation, rather than standing by itself, operated within a pattern of authority that included divine acting and speaking, inscripturation, reason's use of historical evidences, and the present workings of the Holy Spirit. He maintained that revelation came to humankind through divine activity as well as divine speech. This revelational activity is seen as climaxing in the life, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ. The Bible, which Pinnock views as having validity because of the prior validity of the gospel to which it testifies, represents the concluding redemptive act in that God did not leave the testimony of his mighty deeds to chance.

Thus Scripture, in Pinnock's perspective, has the same purpose as revelation itself--to witness to Jesus Christ. While Christ is seen as the "hermeneutical Guide" to the meaning of the Bible, Pinnock

This is in spite of the fact that he does not deal with the theme at length in any one place. Rather, his view must be pieced together from snippets here and there (mainly) in his <u>Biblical</u> Revelation where he appears to assume a familiarity with Ramm's <u>The Witness of the Spirit</u> (see, particularly, <u>Biblical Revelation</u>, 51, n. 75).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 102.

believes that the Bible testifies to Christ by its reliability. Following B. B. Warfield's lead (and contra the fideists), he is convinced that biblical authority rests firmly on the historical credibility of the revelation contained in Scripture.

Without a doubt, the Bible holds the key place in the early Pinnock's pattern of authority. Reason has no right of domination, 1 although it can test Scripture's revelatory claims in the same way that any other knowledge is verified. 2 To emphasize, for the early Pinnock, biblical reliability and authority rest firmly on evidence of an historical kind which is open to human reason. Even the witness of the Spirit cannot be appealed to as a mystical proof of inerrancy, although the Spirit can use historical probabilities to bring assurance to the hearts of Christians. As already intimated, Pinnock's early approach seems to require such a tight connection between biblical reliability and authority that it was possible to argue from historical evidences for reliability to authority. 3 The

Although it seems that reason has a preeminent role in that it is capable of discovering revelation's authoritativeness through its reliability. Sensitive to this problem, Pinnock concludes that in a "limited sense" reason is prior to revelation "because, if it were not, we could not think at all" (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 45. Here Pinnock cites Charles Hodge's <u>Systematic Theology</u>, 1:49 [ibid., 45, n. 61]).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>The early Pinnock appears to hold that the primary evidence for biblical authority is to be found in objective (although only probable) historical facts, although he does mention "logical evidences" as well (Biblical Revelation [1971], 47). It is unlikely that Pinnock is pointing here to two means of verification of biblical authority (i.e., through history and reason), but rather, that reason works with historical data. For instance, Pinnock states: "The validity of Christian theism rests on its historical credentials (ibid., 45, emphasis Pinnock). See also Pinnock's "Toward a Rational Apologetic Based upon History" (1968), 147-51.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Of course, the difficulty with this argument was that due to the merely "probable" nature of the historical evidence, there remained a considerable gap between reliability and authority. The later Pinnock attempted to close that gap somewhat with his view of the Holy Spirit's role in the human recognition of Scripture. This was confirmed by me in a telephone conversation with Pinnock, July 13, 1990. See also my own discussion in chap. 4, below, pp. 285-87.

kind of reliability demanded by his view of biblical authority becomes clearer in the remainder of this chapter.

## Defending Biblical Authority and Reliability

Pinnock argues that it is "the pattern of divine revelation" that makes it possible to answer the "question" of inspiration. Biblical self-validation is meaningless as far as Pinnock is concerned. Mere claims to authority are not enough. The important thing, for him, is "that divinely accredited men claim[ed] authority for their words and writings," and that the value of their testimony can be measured "in terms of the trustworthiness of those who utter it." Pinnock offers several lines of evidence for his view of Scripture: the Bible's own doctrine of its inspiration, Christ's doctrine of inspiration and authority, and the traditional view of the Christian church in regard to the Scriptures.

# Scripture's Own Doctrine of Inspiration and Reliability

Against the opinion that the Bible contains no doctrine of its own inspiration which requires infallibility or inerrancy, Pinnock agrees with both Warfield and Orr that "our problem" is not one of paucity of materials, but of "superabundance." The method chosen by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 53. His argument proceeds as follows: "Holy Scripture is a component part of divine revelation, and our view of inspiration is that which revelation requires. The validity and nature of biblical inspiration rests on the credentials and shape of revelation. If we are satisfied that God has indeed revealed himself in Christ, we may proceed directly to determine what view of Scripture that disclosure demands" (ibid.).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Here, he cites Donald B. Stevick (<u>Beyond Fundamentalism</u> [Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1964], 89-93) as one who holds such a view (ibid., 54, n. 1).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 54. In the same place he cites Warfield's <u>The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible</u>, 119-20, and Orr's <u>Revelation and Inspiration</u>, 160. Gleason L. Archer takes a similar stance in his "The Witness of the Bible to Its Own Inerrancy," in <u>The Foundation of</u>

Pinnock to discuss the "avalanche" of biblical materials relating to biblical inspiration and reliability is that of selecting four texts around which he plans to group the evidence.

#### 2 Timothy 3:16

It is Pinnock's contention that, in 2 Tim 3:16, Paul<sup>2</sup> affirms the divine authorship of all Scripture. "What Scripture says, God says." The Bible is "God-breathed" and, hence, Paul can "personify Scripture as God speaking." For Pinnock, God is to be seen as the "author of what Scripture records," and the whole Bible is "a divine oracle." Its "divine authorship" can only mean one thing--that "authority belongs to every part." Pinnock finds evidence for this conclusion in Paul's attitude to the Bible. Whether he refers to biblical history, doctrine, morals, or prophecies, it is always as "a

<sup>&</sup>lt;u>Biblical Authority</u>, ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1978), 85-99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 54-55. The texts chosen are 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21; Matt 5:17-18; and John 10:35. Note that Pinnock does not profess to do exegesis on these texts, or even on the term <u>theópneustos</u>. Rather, he admits his dependence on Warfield's <u>The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible</u> (see ibid., 54, n. 2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>That he accepts the Pauline authorship of the pastoral epistles is obvious in ibid., 55, n. 6, where he cites E. E. Ellis' Paul and His Recent Interpreters (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961), 49-57; and D. Guthrie, New Testament Introduction, rev. ed., vol. 2: The Pauline Epistles (London: Tyndale Press, 1970), 198-236.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 55. Pinnock mentions such passages as Gal 3:8, 22 and Rom 9:17. He explains that this personification is only possible if Paul identified Scripture and the Word of God (ibid.; see also Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 55 (emphasis Pinnock). In support, Pinnock cites Act 13:32-35 and Rom 3:2 as well as the fact that Paul drew on Old Testament texts from almost every book. He observes also that in some passages (e.g., Gal 3:16) Paul's argument can turn on just one word (ibid., 55-56).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 56.

completely trustworthy record."

This view of biblical trustworthiness, Pinnock explicitly refers to as "inerrancy."

In Pinnock's perspective, that "God is the ultimate Author of Scripture" can only mean one thing: that the Bible "does not err because He cannot lie." Therefore, "Scripture is to be believed in all that it teaches because of its divine authorship." In summary, Pinnock holds that it is "an incontrovertible historical fact" that Paul wrote from an attitude of belief in the "plenary inspiration of Holy Scripture."

### 2 Peter 1:20-21

According to Pinnock, like Paul, Peter<sup>5</sup> affirms both the "plenary inspiration and divine authorship" of the Scriptures.<sup>6</sup> Peter is seen as emphasizing, in 2 Pet 1:20-21, that the Bible was "not initiated by man" as the result of human research. On the contrary,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. In the same place Pinnock notes that the other New Testament writers and teachers had the same attitude to Scripture (e.g., Act 1:16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See ibid., 73-81. See above, p. 145.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 56. Harold Lindsell sets out this same argument quite syllogistically in his <u>The Battle for the Bible</u>, 31. Paul J. Achtemeier maintains that "virtually" all the conservative doctrinal formulations depend on "this fundamental statement" of the inerrantist position (in his <u>The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals</u>, 50-51).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 56. By "plenary," Pinnock means that Scripture is "inspired in the whole, not merely in its parts. It is truthful in the soteric and nonsoteric, in the doctrinal and the historical, in the primary and the secondary features. Inspiration guarantees <u>all</u> that Scripture teaches" (ibid., 86-87; emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock accepts the Petrine authorship of 2 Peter. In ibid., 57, n. 10, he cites E. M. B. Green's <u>Second Peter Reconsidered</u> (London: "yndale Press, 1961), and Guthrie, vol. 3: <u>Hebrews to Revelation</u>, 143-71, in support of his position. See also Pinnock's "The Inspiration of the New Testament" (1968), 158.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 57. In the same place, though, Pinnock remarks that Paul stresses the positive ("<u>all</u> scripture is inspired"), while Peter mentions the negative ("<u>no</u> prophecy has ever yet originated in man's will") (emphasis, Pinnock). See also p. 168, above.

"it is of divine origin."<sup>1</sup> Pinnock maintains that Peter picked up an "Old Testament conception" in his notion that men were "energized by the Spirit and compelled to speak God's Word."<sup>2</sup> But, did Peter intend to restrict his meaning to just the prophetic sections of Scripture? Pinnock says, No! He argues that it is a case of pars pro tota. One part stands for the whole, since all Scripture is "prophetic in that it is a divine Word."<sup>3</sup>

In spite of Pinnock's strong conviction that Peter was supporting divine biblical authorship, he is also cognizant of the fact that the passage mentions that it was "men" who wrote. Pinnock maintains that humans wrote in "the style, vocabulary and modes of their day." They were "controlled" by the Spirit, but were not obliterated. However, Pinnock is quick to stress again that "in the very mentioning of the human side of Scripture, the apostle makes it abundantly clear that the initiative lay with God, and the literary product was divinely authored."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 57. Peter, so Pinnock held, believed that the Spirit spoke through the prophets (1 Pet 1:11), as well as through his contemporary, Paul (2 Pet 3:16) (ibid).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock cites here Mic 3:8; Zech 7:12; Amos 3:8; Exod 4:10-16; 7:1; 2 Sam 23:2 (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. Pinnock continues: "It is clear from Peter's epistles and his speeches in Acts that he regarded the whole extent of Scripture to be divinely authoritative."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. For instance, in the early Pinnock's view, inspiration did not imply exhaustive knowledge of a subject or even prohibit the "deliberate omission or inclusion of details" in historical narratives, "pre-scientific" descriptions of the world, arguments "styled" in a rabbinic mode of thought, differences in "incidental" details, "a lack of meticulous precision" in detail, or even that the "inspired penmen were necessarily conscious of the breathing of the Holy Spirit at the time of their writing and research" (Pinnock, "The Inspiration of the New Testament" [1969], 152-54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 57. For Pinnock, there was no possibility of human error creeping into the text for "their work has a divine stamp upon it. For they were moved by the Spirit, and their word was endowed with singular power and truthfulness" (ibid.).

## Matthew 5:17-18

In Matt 5:17-18, Pinnock sees Jesus<sup>1</sup> as pronouncing upon the "indefectible authority of the Old Testament, and the eschatological understanding of His own ministry." Pinnock holds that, for Jesus, Scripture is "God-given" in "its whole extent," in "all its parts," and even in "seemingly unimportant details." He regards it as of great significance that Christ, on whom "the salvation of men depends," taught with "the greatest force the full inspiration" of the Bible, respected it as having God as "its true Author," believed in its "divine authority," and "refused to separate revelation from Scripture."

This is not to say that Pinnock does not recognize some difficulties in Christ's doctrine of Scripture. These include such factors as the historical setting of each of Jesus' statements about the Scriptures, the differences in citation between the gospels, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, in ibid., 58, n. 12, cites W. D. Davies, <u>Christian Origins and Judaism</u> (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1962), 31-66, in support of his position that this passage is an authentic word of Jesus.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. Pinnock cites here, Matt 22:29, 31-32; 19:4-5; Mark 14:29; Matt 26:53-54; Luke 24: 45-56; John 7:16; 12:48-50; and Matt 24:35, in order to illustrate Christ's view and teachings concerning the Scriptures. See also Pinnock's "Our Source of Authority: The Bible" (1967) where he observes that Jesus "acknowledged the infallibility of Scripture" in "the smallest details," such as the ministry of Jonah, the destruction of Sodom, the flood of Noah, and the wife of Lot (p. 153).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 58-59. Pinnock comments that although Jesus "showed tremendous freedom from human convention and tradition, and claimed inspiration for His own teachings, yet He bowed to the voice of His Father speaking in the Scriptures. His arguments were clinched by a text, His foes were rebuked for not knowing the Scriptures better, Satan himself was rebuffed by a simple appeal to the written Word of God, His ministry was governed down to the smallest detail by what Scripture predicted the Messiah would be and do" (ibid.). Also relevant, here, is Pinnock's assertion that "Jesus rarely appealed to direct revelation for teaching about his mission" (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 60). See also Pinnock's <u>Evangelism and Truth</u> (1969), 18; <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), 101; and <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 10-11.

Aramaic "substratum," the fact that not all of the canon was cited by Christ, and that "care must be exercised in ascertaining precisely what Jesus intended by His words," since he was trying to break through to the Jews by means of "a fresh hermeneutic." Still, Pinnock maintains that even "in the face of such considerations," the fact remains that Jesus regarded the Old Testament as an inerrant "divine oracle."

But, could it not be argued that Christ's view of Scripture is not binding on contemporary Christians, since he would have "accommodated Himself to the presuppositions of His time"? Pinnock has anticipated such an objection and argues that "if this be true, the discussion shifts from inspiration to Christology." He contends that Christ's view of the Bible was "fundamental" for His perspective of revelation and authority. "If He was mistaken in this, nothing He says concerning God and salvation may be trusted." As far as Pinnock is concerned, it is consistent to accept or reject both Christ and Scripture, but it is "not consistent or honest" to accept one and reject the other. For him, it is clear that "where Christ is Lord and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. In support of his view that "Jesus believed in the inerrancy" of the Scriptures, Pinnock observes that "biblical critics whose views are anything but evangelical" regard this as true. He cites F. C. Grant, <u>Introduction to New Testament Thought</u> (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1950), 75, in ibid., n. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 59. In other words, did Jesus know what he was talking about when he confirmed the divine authority of the Bible? Or, was he merely culturally dependant? Notice also Pinnock's comment in <a href="Evangelism and Truth">Evangelism and Truth</a> (1969) that "the issue at the root of Biblical authority is nothing other than CHRISTOLOGY" (p. 17).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 59. "His [Christ's] entire career would have been based upon a fallacy of no small magnitude," writes Pinnock. His "divine authority is plainly discredited," if Christ was wrong about the Scriptures, for he "located the utterance of God in Scripture" (ibid., 60). See also Pinnock's <u>Evangelism and Truth</u> (1969), 17.

Saviour, the matter of authority is settled: Scripture is divinely authored and absolutely trustworthy."

#### John 10:35

While acknowledging that Christ's citation of Ps 82:6 was for the purpose of rebutting the charge of blasphemy in claiming to be the Son of God, Pinnock chooses to reflect on the doctrine of Scripture presupposed in the text as it appears in John 10:35.<sup>2</sup> For him, it is obvious that Jesus looked on the Old Testament Scripture as "a body of sacred literature whose utterances are completely true and divinely authoritative."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 60. Herein lies an implicit denial that biblical reliability has reference only to soteriological matters.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock observes that the Old Testament passage indicates that the term "God" could, under certain circumstances, be used to refer to human beings. In the case of Ps 82:6, he remarks that it refers to men "in their official capacity as judges" (ibid., 61). Franz Delitzsch takes the same view in his <u>Biblical Commentary on the Psalms</u> [in the Keil and Delitzsch Commentaries on the Old Testament series], trans, Francis Bolton (Grand Rapids, MI,: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1958), 2:403-4. Artur Weiser, <u>The Psalms: A Commentary</u> [in the Old Testament Library series], trans. Herbert Hartwell (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1962), 560, is of the opinion that the psalmist is writing about the downfall of deities. Weiser observes that "the comparison made in v. 7 refutes the widespread interpretation of the deities as human judges." Carroll Stuhlmueller, <u>Psalms 2 (Psalms 73-150)</u>, vol. 22, Old Testament Message: A Biblical Theological Commentary Series (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 41-42, takes a middle position that the passage contains mythological allusions which can be taken to refer to deities and human rulers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 61. For Pinnock, this means that the "Scriptures in their precise verbal form embody and comprise God's written Word, whose binding force cannot be annulled" (ibid).

As to the charge that the entire argument is <u>ad hominem</u>, only dictated by the situation, Pinnock counters that "indeed the argument itself was calculated to refute the charge against Jesus on a biblical technicality. However, the view of inspiration which made such an argument possible underlies Christ's attitude to Scripture on every occasion. . . Jesus' constant attitude to Scripture was that it had legal, binding force, and that its authority could not be broken" (ibid.).

For the early Pinnock, Christ's view of the Scriptures was of immense significance. After all, it was the Father "who spoke infallibly in Scripture" and Christ's doctrine "was not peripheral to His message." Pinnock maintained, therefore, that "an intelligent person cannot claim to worship the Christ without believing the plain teachings of Jesus." In other words, "belief in Scriptural inerrancy is a token of obedience to Jesus Christ." In addition, Pinnock held that, just like any other doctrine, the doctrine of inspiration is "established and believed" on the basis of "the teachings of Christ and His apostles." He maintains that, given the clarity of the teaching of Christ and his apostles on this topic, it is not surprising to find "an amazing unanimity among the classical theologians about the infallibility of Scripture." But, what Pinnock has had to say about Christ and the Scriptures actually refers to the Hebrew Bible. What of the authority of the New Testament?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The importance of this topic is brought out in Pinnock's "The Inspiration of Scripture and the Authority of Jesus Christ" (1974), 201-17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, "Our Source of Authority: The Bible" (1967), 152. Pinnock, in an appeal to the leaders of the SBC, in 1968, remarked that "to affirm Christ and reject infallibility is an act of intellectual impenitence and schizophrenia." "Evangelicals," he says, "learn their doctrines from Christ, and make a plea for consistency and fidelity among the leaders of our denomination [the SBC]" (A New Reformation [1968], 9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "Our Source of Authority: The Bible" (1967), 153.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 152. Similar views can be found in John W. Wenham, "Christ's View of Scripture," in <u>Inerrancy</u>, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1979), 3-36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, "Our Source of Authority: The Bible" (1967), 152. Pinnock characterizes the doctrine of Scripture held by the classical theologians in the following way: they argued for infallibility because it was the clear teaching of Christ and the apostles; they maintained that if the Spirit was its author, then Scripture must be both infallible and inerrant; and since God forbids lying and deceit, "his Word keeps the same truth standard" in that it "does not mislead and deceive us" (ibid).

## The Basis of New Testament Authority

Pinnock has observed that, for "reasons of chronology," the New Testament Scriptures could not have been "authenticated" in the same way as was the Old Testament. He argues, however, that Christ's doctrine of Scripture is able to establish "the nature" (though, not the full extent of Scripture) as well as "the principle that written revelation is the product of special revelation." As far as the authentication of the New Testament is concerned, Pinnock points to the "evident analogy" between the Old and New Testament periods of revelation and the "structure of authority" which Christ put in place in the early church. 2

Just as inspired writings had been "the complement" of revelation "under the old covenant," so with the new. Pinnock maintains that it was not Christ who gave authority even to the Old Testament. Rather, Jesus simply "recognized and received it" as authoritative, since "what gave it authority was its divine authorship," something that people had recognized long before Jesus' time. As for the New Testament, it "finds its validity" as the "written complement and product" of revelation in a new era. The fact that revelation had occurred in connection with the new covenant,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 62 (emphasis Pinnock). He explains that Christ's "witness covers the Old Testament retrospectively and the New Testament prospectively" (ibid.).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. (emphasis Pinnock). In the same place Pinnock observes: "Divine revelation calls for and generates inspired Scriptures." Because the early Christians believed in the genuineness of the Christian revelation, they were, according to Pinnock, "predisposed to receive it" (ibid.). Additionally, the very nature of the revelation in the Old Testament "called for its fulfillment in the New," just as the Old Testament Scriptures "called for a written complement in the New" (ibid., 62). Pinnock follows, here, the arguments of A. Kuyper's Principles of Sacred Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1963), 466.

guaranteed, so Pinnock maintains, that the New Testament writers would hold positions of "even greater dignity" than their Old Testament counterparts.

While, for Pinnock, the New Testament finds its "theological" validity by analogy with the Old Testament, the "historical basis" for the inspiration of the New Testament "lies in the authority of Christ and His delegation of that authority" to his apostles.<sup>2</sup> The disciples had access to Christ whose words and deeds are "the fundamental revelation of the New Testament." He called them, prepared them for their future ministry, and promised them "the teaching charisma of the Holy Spirit," thereby preauthenticating "their teaching for the early church and ensured respect for their authority." Pinnock believes that Christians are "bound" to the word of the apostles because of their place in the pattern of authority set in motion by Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup> As such, the New Testament writings "represent the earliest examples of systematic reflection" on the content of Christianity," and "constitute both the starting point and ruling norm of all subsequent efforts."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>In support of this contention, Pinnock cites 2 Cor 3:4-18 and Matt 11:11 (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 63). This position must have implications for Pinnock's view of the priority (in both time and rank) of the New Testament over the Old.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 63-64 (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 64. The apostles were "supremely conscious of the authority delegated to them by Christ," maintains Pinnock. This, he holds, is evidenced in the fact that they preached and acted with authority; that their ministries were accompanied with supernatural signs (Act 3:6-7; Heb 2:3); that they claimed divine authority in their writings (Act 10:41-42; 1 Thess 2:13); and that they spoke and acted on Christ's authority (Gal 1:1, 11-12; 1 Cor 2:13; 14:37; 2 Cor 13:3, 5, 10; 1 Thess 5:27; 2 Thess 3:14). He observes that their epistles were written "as authoritative teachings of divinely authorized apostles of Christ" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid. On the basis of Act 2:42, and writings from Clement of Rome and Polycarp (see ibid., 65, n. 23), Pinnock believes that there are good indications that the authority claimed by the apostles was readily received in the early church (ibid., 64-65). See also

While the New Testament, in Pinnock's view, flowed "naturally" from the pattern of prophetic and apostolic authority, written Scriptures were "necessitated" by the church's rapid growth and the precariousness of revelation tied to oral tradition. Whatever the

Pinnock's <u>Truth on Fire: The Message of Galatians</u> (1972), where he remarks that "our lives are to be subject to Jesus Christ speaking through His apostles. Although Paul is a believer in Christ as we are, we are not apostles as he is. Proper authority is vested, not in human consensus, but in apostolic teaching. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. What is the reason for this? It is because salvation history has entered its definitive and final stage in Jesus Christ. All our thinking henceforth must be referred back to this normative beginning, which will not be succeeded or surpassed. The teachings of Christ and the apostles are therefore completely normative for the faith of all later Christians. All human opinion and tradition are to be measured and subordinated to this standard" (p. 14).

<sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 65. Pinnock also points to Bernard Ramm's identification of three pressures which accelerated the process: the need to settle controversies in distant churches with a stable, written word; the need to bolster the historical faith in Christ by means of the gospels; and the need to check the distortion of the tradition. See B. Ramm, <u>Special Revelation and the Word of God</u>, 172-73.

The inscripturation of divine revelation raises the important question of canonicity. Pinnock deals briefly with this subject in his Biblical Revelation (1971), 104-6. He observes that this question which needed to be dealt with in greater depth by evangelical scholars is "of considerable intricacy and importance" (note that F. F. Bruce has attempted such a study in his recent The Canon of Scripture [Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988]). That the Spirit did not provide a list of inspired books is readily acknowledged by Pinnock. Rather, God's people "learned to distinguish wheat from chaff, and gold from gravel, as He worked in their hearts." Pinnock affirms (in his Biblical Revelation, 104-5) J. I. Packer's view that the church "recognized," but did not "authorize," Scripture" (see Packer's God Speaks to Man [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1965], 81). Pinnock considers that it is "instructive" to note that Jesus and the apostles accepted, "without hesitation," the Palestinian Jewish canon. This "placid" acceptance which was duplicated "for the most part" in the early church is viewed by Pinnock as evidence of "a deep confidence in the providence of God who caused His people to recognize His Word." The early church is portrayed as using such criteria as whether the work was apostolic or sanctioned by the apostles, and whether the work had proven itself inspired in Christian worship and devotion" (Pinnock, Biblical Revelation, 105).

Within his discussion of canonicity, the early Pinnock considered it necessary to address Luther's attitude toward canonicity. He acknowledges Luther's hesitancy "in admitting the canonicity" of several books (e.g., James, Jude, and Revelation), but he categorically denies Luther's calling into question the "plenary inspiration" of the books he considered "undoubtedly canonical." It is Pinnock's contention that "the fact of inspiration and the extent of the canonical list, are . . . two different things." Luther's attitude, according to Pinnock, can be attributed to his "candid

reasons, Pinnock observes that "the authority of the message proclaimed by Christ's apostles attached itself to their literary remains." In fact, without actually stating it, Pinnock appears to hold that this pattern of apostolic authority culminated with the death of the apostles specifically delegated by Jesus Christ, but continues to adhere to their literary remains.<sup>2</sup>

In summary, in his early period at least, Pinnock held that the New Testament taught, by way of analogy as well as by the pattern received from Christ, a doctrine of its own inspiration and authority (just as it did for the Old Testament). He was convinced that "Scripture itself makes it plain" that divine revelation comes to humankind in human language as a "genuinely verbal" communication. This revelation "is enshrined in written records and is essentially propositional in nature." Such is his confidence in the evidence to

honesty in admitting an uncertainty which expediency would cover up." He concludes that it would be "arrogant for us to criticize Luther for his integrity to keep to the facts as he had them. Nothing can be concluded from this to prove Luther was a liberal in his attitude to Scripture," since he considered the canonical books inerrant (ibid., 105-6; emphasis Pinnock). See also our discussion of Luther's view of biblical authority and reliability in chap. 1, above, pp. 13-20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 65. Pinnock continues by noting that "by her acknowledgement of the canon," the church has set herself to live by the word of Christ coming to her through his apostles. See also Pinnock's <u>Truth on Fire</u> (1972), 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This, in opposition to the Roman Catholic view of apostolic succession (see, for instance, Pinnock's "The Inspiration of the New Testament" (1968), 148-49). His view that "the Bible is a <u>critical authority</u> confronting the church" and that "the church and tradition are guided and corrected by the canon of Scripture" is also relevant here (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 119; emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 66 (emphasis Pinnock). Again, Pinnock, while acknowledging that Neo-orthodoxy has performed a "valuable service" in the renunciation of liberalism's "humanistic conquest of the gospel," claims that it does not do justice to the Bible's view of itself in the interpretation of revelation in "terms of selective historical events, fallible records, and encounter with God" (ibid., 65-66).

this point that he is ready to construct an "adequate" and a "judicious" doctrinal model of inspiration. 1

## The Church's Doctrine of Inspiration

Clark Pinnock, in his early years, held that there was a close connection between Christ's doctrine of the Bible and the church's doctrine. He contends that it was Christ who "constituted Christianity a religion of authority," and that the view of the Scriptures which takes them to be "trustworthy in all matters" upon which they touch is "no recent innovation." Rather, contemporary supporters of "plenary, verbal inspiration" stand in the "the midst of a mighty stream of historic Christian opinion."

While it is not my intention, here, to outline all of the details of Pinnock's thinking on this topic, it is important that we

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 66. "Adequate" in the sense that it is "able to do justice to the evidence," and "judicious" in that it is "cautious not to overstep the bounds of evidence."

Pinnock's thesis, which he divides into thirteen <u>ektheses</u> is as follows: "All Scripture is God-breathed, and is God's written Word to man, infallible and inerrant, as originally given. Divine inspiration is plenary, verbal, and confluent. As the very Word of God, Scripture possesses the properties of authority, sufficiency, clarity, and efficacy. The central purpose of Scripture is to present Christ" [Pinnock's line numbering has been removed here] (ibid., 66).

<sup>2</sup>Idem, Evangelism and Truth (1969), 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 147 (short portrayals of the historic doctrine of inspiration are also to be found in Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 1-3, and "Baptists and the Bible" [1974], 194-97). Pinnock continues: "The high view of inspiration has without doubt been the majority opinion of Christian theologians, despite the concerted effort to deny it by neo-Protestant thinkers, who have a bad conscience on the subject" (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 147).

Though admitting that it is surprising that the doctrine of Scripture was not explicitly defined in the ecumenical creeds of Christendom, Pinnock observes that the reason is not hard to find. He contends that the "divine authority of Scripture was never a disputed question" (ibid., 149). Similar viewpoints can be found in Geoffrey W. Bromiley's "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration," in Revelation and the Bible, 203-18; John H. Gerstner's "The Church's Doctrine of Biblical Inspiration," in The Foundation of Biblical Authority, ed. John Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1978), 23-58; and John D. Woodbridge's Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal (1982).

observe his major arguments.<sup>1</sup> The early Fathers and apologists, Pinnock considers, believed in the self-evident, incontrovertible, divine inspiration of the Bible. For them, the "fact of inspiration was never in doubt." Likewise, in his view, the theologians of the medieval period were totally convinced regarding the "full authority and material sufficiency of Holy Scripture." <sup>3</sup>

Pinnock's running battle with Neo-orthodoxy continues in his discussion of the view of the Bible held by the Protestant Reformers. Against the Neo-orthodox interpretation of the Reformers, Pinnock holds that Luther and Calvin identified the Bible with the Word of God and believed in verbal inspiration and biblical inerrancy. The English Reformers are also viewed as believers in the "sufficiency,"

¹Christian history or tradition is an important part of Pinnock's overall defense of biblical reliability and authority. While, for him, Scripture is "the primal witness to the Christ event" and has priority over tradition, he believes that it is "uneconomical" and an "insult" to the Holy Spirit to ignore the thinking of the church over the past two thousand years (Pinnock, Truth on Fire: The Message of Galatians [1972], 14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 150. Here Pinnock cites Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian, Athanasius, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Jerome, Theophilus of Alexandria, and Augustine, in support of this position (ibid., 150-51).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>In support, he cites St. Anselm, Rupert of Deutz, St. Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Gerson, and John Driedo. Nevertheless, Pinnock does not consider that the medieval theologians were "crypto-Protestants," since their "grasp of evangelical truth was sadly lacking" (ibid., 152).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 153-55. Pinnock protests that Neo-orthodox theologians seem to find a "brief neoorthodox paradise" between the medieval period and the age of Protestant orthodoxy, in which such views were "for a moment grasped, only to be quickly lost again, and rediscovered by Barth!" He argues, "It would surely be an amazing historical anomaly if the Reformers differed from their predecessors and successors in this respect, and prove to have anticipated neoorthodoxy in their thought! To lessen the shock it is often allowed that Luther and Calvin did in fact hold to verbal inspiration, but by a felicitous inconsistency on occasion rose above it to a personalistic, 'Christocentric' conception" (ibid., 153; emphasis Pinnock). Here, Pinnock cites Barth, Brunner, James Smart, J. K. S. Reid, and Reinhold Seeberg as exemplifying such a position (ibid., 153, n. 30).

authority, and infallibility" of the Scriptures. According to Pinnock, Lutheran and Calvinistic orthodoxy reveals the same picture. 2

This widespread agreement concerning the nature of biblical authority and reliability has, in Pinnock's conception, been only recently replaced by a "great defection" from such views. It is his contention, however, that the "verbal inspiration" theory has been ignored rather than having been refuted by "intelligent argument." He believes that it is not better arguments, or the pressure of difficulties, that has demolished the traditional view of the Bible, but a "shift" in the philosophical climate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock cites the Thirty-Nine Articles, Cranmer, and Latimer (ibid., 155-56).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Although he observes that the orthodox theologians were sometimes excessive in their claims (ibid., 156). From this period, Pinnock cites the Formula of Concord (1576), the Helvetic Confession (1536), the Belgic Confession (1561), the Work of the Westminster Assembly (1647), the writings of various Puritans, the New Hampshire Baptist Confession (1933), John Wesley, and the Council of Trent (ibid., 156-58).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 158. Pinnock finds that even such orthodox Protestant groups as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Southern Baptist Convention, exhibit "a remarkable degree of slippage from faith in a verbally inspired Bible" (ibid., 158-59). See our discussion of Pinnock's own role in the SBC inerrancy conflicts, in chap. 1, above, pp. 75-78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 159. He complains that often "it seems as if all good manners may be suspended when one is engaged in demolishing this doctrine; certainly few make much effort either to understand or to refute it with intelligent argument" (ibid). Observe that Pinnock, while holding to a theory of "verbal inspiration," does not consider that a "mechanical-dictation theory of inspiration is . . [a] concomitant of verbal inspiration." He argues that the "humanity of the Bible no more necessitates errors in the text than the humanity of Christ requires sin in His life" (ibid., 162).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 161. In the same place, Pinnock contends that the "difficulties" advanced by critics of the traditional view are "highly archaic," "pseudo-problems created by hypercriticism," or "the result of a non-Christian approach to Scripture." It is Pinnock's view that "the really significant advances in biblical studies have been in the area of languages and archeology, not literary criticism, and the results from these areas have been most hospitable to a very high view of biblical integrity" (ibid.).

This "defection" from the historic view of Scripture has, Pinnock argues, "left theology without a truth base--hesitant, floundering, uncertain." Therefore, in his view, the "only truly

Pinnock identifies four major categories of "evasion" which have been proposed as substitutes for the historic view of inspiration. All of these, he submits, stem from the Neo-orthodox approach to the Bible, although their background is to be found in Protestant liberalism. These four include the view that Scripture "does not communicate propositional truth, but mediates a personal encounter with God"; that revelation "consists of a series of historical events with revelational significance, not an inspired record of divine truths"; that the Bible "is not a deposit of divinely revealed truth, . . . but a medium of Christian existential experience"; and the hydra-headed "limitation of inerrancy to certain matters held to be central to the Bible, while allowing for errors in the peripheral matters."

fruitful direction for theology to take is a return to her only sound basis in the high view of inspiration" (ibid., 162).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 164-65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 165-68. Pinnock maintains that the "personal meeting" cannot be separated from the "conceptual knowing" aspect in revelation experience. Rather than an encounter in which is given no "verifiable truth content," he opts for a revelation which "is at least informational" (ibid., 168). The importance of propositional revelation, from Pinnock's perspective, is laid bare in his claim that "without propositional revelation, there is no sure basis for the Evangel" (Pinnock, Evangelism and Truth [1969], 11-12; also p. 17). Pinnock offers further criticisms of "encounter" theology in his "Our Source of Authority: The Bible" (1967), 154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 168-70. In this "evasion" as in the former, Pinnock detects the selection of one biblical truth (i.e., that God acts in history) and the rejection of another (i.e., that God speaks). He contends that "the Bible contains a recital of the acts of God in history, but in no way does it discourage interest in what the prophets and apostles wrote, as though the divine activity alone enjoyed revelational status" (ibid., 168).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 170-71. Pinnock considers that this "evasion," which is epitomized by Bultmann, is a "more straightforward and honest" version of the first two, but the result is the same: "the principle of authority is the pious self-consciousness of the theologian himself" (ibid., 170).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 171-74 (emphasis, Pinnock). Pinnock observes that theories of this type include those in which inspiration "guarantees" the sacred, but not the secular side of Scripture. He counters that the "moment we allow that the Bible is trustworthy on a limited range

When all is said and done, Pinnock claims that there is really only one "evasion" of the historic doctrine of Scripture as authoritative and inerrant. That is, "a disinclination to submit to Scripture as the Word of God." Such an attitude, he states, has led to the "saddest chapter" in theological history. The "net effect" has been "not a liberation of divine truth from bondage to the letter of Scripture, but a questioning of any normative significance for the Bible at all."

### Summary

The defense of biblical authority and reliability propounded by the early Pinnock stands on a threefold foundation. First, he claims that the Bible, in passages exemplified by 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet

of topics and not others, we must be ready for a progressive reduction of its authority and content to a point without magnitude. . . . Everything in Scripture contributes to the total impact of Scripture, and there is no justification either biblically or logically for accepting some and rejecting other of its teachings. The doctrine of inspiration inductively derived from the testimony of special revelation insists that we treat <u>all</u> the matters which Scripture teaches as reliable and true" (ibid., 172; emphasis Pinnock).

teaches as reliable and true" (ibid., 172; emphasis Pinnock).

For Pinnock's view of limited inerrancy during his early period, see his discussion in his "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" (1974), 143-148. There, in a two-pronged approach, Pinnock argues against both Catholic and Protestant limited inerrantists that (1) while Scripture has an overall soteric purpose, such a principle is not meant to give us license to limit inerrancy, and (2) that while soteric truth can be distinguished from non-soteric truth in the Bible, such a recognition should not be used to limit the reliability of the non-fundamental doctrines. For further details (and a two-way dialogue), see Daniel Fuller's "On Revelation and Biblical Authority," and Pinnock's "In Response to Daniel Fuller," in Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 16 (1973): 67-69 and 70-72, respectively (the same articles are also in Christian Scholar's Review 2 (1973): 330-35). It is of more than passing interest that Fuller argues that his view of limited inerrancy was basically equivalent to Pinnock's nuanced or qualified view (pp. 68-69), especially so, in view of the fact that Robert M. Price has recently categorized both Pinnock and Fuller as limited inerrantists (see Price's "Inerrant the Wind: The Troubled House of North American Evangelicals," Evangelical Quarterly 55 [1983]: 133-36. Note that this article is a synopsis of Price's dissertation ["The Setting and Range of the Current Evangelical Crisis]").

Pinnock, Biblical Revelation (1971), 163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 174.

1:20-21; Matt 5:17-18; and John 10:35, teaches its own doctrine of inspiration. From the "avalanche" of evidence, he concludes that Christ and the apostles explicitly taught the complete truthfulness and divine authoritativeness of the Scriptures (particularly the Old Testament).

Second, for the Old Testament as for the New, Christ's doctrine of Scripture that written revelation is the product of special revelation, establishes the "nature" of the Bible. By the pattern of authority already established in the Old Testament Scriptures and the pattern of authority set in motion in the infant church by Jesus Christ, the New Testament canon was virtually "preauthenticated."

The third factor involved in Pinnock's defense of his doctrine of Scripture is the historic doctrine of inspiration. While denying authoritative status to tradition, he believes that it is foolishness to ignore the guidance of the Spirit in the church during the Christian era. It is Pinnock's contention that ecclesiastical history reveals an almost continuous belief in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the canonical Scriptures right up to the modern defection and dissent. Thus, he maintained that there was sufficient reason to hold to the authority as well as the infallibility of the Bible.

### Biblical Inerrancy and Its Implications

It is apparent that the early Pinnock viewed Scripture as having divine authority. However, in addition, he was thoroughly convinced of its reliability which he believed was a corollary of biblical authority. Such was Pinnock's conviction regarding scriptural reliability that he considered it necessary to express it in terms of infallibility and inerrancy. In this section, it is my intention to examine what the early Pinnock meant by biblical

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 169-71.

"inerrancy" as well as the qualifications he placed on that category and their implications.

## "Infallible" and/or "Inerrant"?

Pinnock, in his early theological reflections on the doctrine of Scripture, appears to almost equate biblical infallibility and inerrancy. He defines 'infallible' as "incapable of teaching deception" and 'inerrancy' as "not liable to prove false or mistaken." "Infallibility" is described by Pinnock as "a necessary deduction from the doctrine of inspiration, "2 while "inerrancy "is to be regarded as an essential concomitant of the doctrine of inspiration, a necessary inference drawn from the fact that Scripture is God's Word." If there is a difference between the two terms, it is expressed in his comment that "inspiration involves infallibility

¹Pinnock, <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 1. Observe, however, that in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), "infallibility" is defined as "'not liable to deceive' or 'make a mistake'" (p. 70). It is of interest that Pinnock does not seem to have a definition of "inerrancy" in the latter work, although it is described comprehensively in pp. 73-81, and that he appears to prefer 'infallible' in his former work, because of its use throughout Christian history (<u>A Defense</u> [1967], 20, for instance). In 1974 (actually presented in 1973), Pinnock remarked that even if 'infallible' were the older term, "the idea of ascribing error to the Scriptures has always been unthinkable" (in "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" [1974], 143). Pinnock justifies the use of non-scriptural terminology on the basis that "infallible" and "inerrant" serve to protect the doctrine of Scripture by repulsing "heretical notions without reducing the mystery to a formula." He regards the Chalcedonian use of "inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably" (all negatives as well) to describe the two natures of Christ as analogical for the church's doctrine of Scripture (<u>Biblical Revelation</u>, 70; emphasis Pinnock). See also Pinnock's "The Inspiration of the New Testament" (1968), where he links "inerrant" with "infallible" (p. 152).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 73 (emphasis Pinnock). One is tempted to ask why, if inerrancy is a "necessary deduction" of inspiration (or biblical authority), should Pinnock be interested in verification of biblical authority by means of historical evidences? It appears that the early Pinnock felt that arguments for biblical reliability which rested merely on deductions from the nature of God and biblical authority tended towards fideism without a complementary empirical examination of the Bible's historical reliability. The results of such an investigation, Pinnock maintained, would be such that one could argue from them back to biblical authority (see ibid., 44-52).

as an essential property, and infallibility in turn implies inerrancy."

Inerrancy, so Pinnock contends, is not "absolute" in all senses of the word. He considers that "its field is restricted to the intended assertions of Scripture" as it is interpreted by "an ordinary grammatical-historical exegesis of the text." Such a use of the Bible assumes "a normal correspondence idea of truth, " which means that when Scripture records a historical fact, we can assume that "a real event . . . occurred corresponding to it. " Pinnock holds, though, that the "intentionality of Scripture" is "identical" with the "plain and literal sense" and should not be "superimposed arbitrarily"

¹Idem, <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 1 (emphasis Pinnock). Thus, "infallibility" seems to be part of the very nature of the inspiration process (for Scripture to be inspired is the same as saying that it is infallible, since God is its Author), while "inerrancy" is an implication drawn from the fact that God is the Author of the Bible. Notice, however, that Pinnock uses the argument that the Bible has been given by God, who cannot lie, for both infallibility and inerrancy (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 70, 79). In this chapter, following Pinnock's <u>Biblical Revelation</u>, I use the terms interchangeably.

ZIdem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 71 (emphasis, Pinnock). Notice that this statement refers to "infallibility," although it is paralleled by a remark that inerrancy "is relative to the intentionality of Scripture" (ibid., 75). This qualification is basically the same as that endorsed in the Lausanne Covenant (clause 2) that Scripture is "without error in all that it affirms" (the Covenant and commentary thereon is available in C. René Padilla, ed., The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1976]; see p. 33 for the "Scripture" statement). Observe also that the Chicago Statement (1978) takes the same position in its "Summary Statement," point 2 (see "The Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy," <u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 21 [1978]: 290).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>As propounded by Robert Preus, "Notes on the Inerrancy of Scripture," in <u>Crisis in Lutheran Theology</u>, 2 vols., ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1967), 2:37-38. See <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 71, n. 39. See also our discussion of Pinnock's epistemology (chap. 2, pp. 92-94).

Pinnock, Biblical Revelation (1971), 71.

on the Bible. Such a qualification is surely part of what Pinnock means when he maintains that he has "always argued for a nuanced definition of inerrancy that allows give and take."

What, in practical terms, does such a "nuancing" of inerrancy mean? For one thing, Pinnock maintains, it may be necessary to distinguish between the "subjects" of biblical teaching and the "terms" used to discuss them. Nonetheless, he also contends that the belief that "the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture are relative to what the text . . . intends to teach should not be misconstrued as a restriction on biblical authority. Pinnock offers the narrative of Adam's fall into sin as an example of what he means.

While holding that "a fair reading" of the Fall account, "standing as it does at the beginning of Old Testament history,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. Pinnock explains further: "The divine intention is revealed precisely <u>in</u> the text of Scripture. There is no justification for arbitrarily deciding beforehand wherein Scripture may truly speak." Thus, he can say that "Scripture is true in <u>all</u> that it teaches" and "the sense of Scripture is left up to Scripture" (ibid.; emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>2</sup>Idem, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 153.

Jibid., 71-72. In this, Pinnock follows J. I. Packer's 'Fundamentalism' and the Word of God (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1958), 96-99. Pinnock in recognizing, for instance, that the biblical writers used current modes of expression in describing the natural order of the world, observes that infallibility "does not update the writer's view of the physical cosmos where this is unnecessary" (Biblical Revelation [1971], 72). He claims that the "writers used modes of speech common to their day" in order to be understood in their own day. Consequently, God's Word is "colored" by "a particular social and cultural situation" (ibid., 72-73). Therefore Pinnock views the "task of interpretation," which proceeds from the conviction "that the biblical teaching is infallibly true on the subjects it claims to treat," as attempting to "penetrate the form of Scripture so as to elucidate its matter." He cites as examples the commands regarding foot-washing and wearing of the veil, and remarks that "we are capable of distinguishing the concrete cultural act from its absolute, religious principle" (ibid., 73).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 76. In the same place, Pinnock explains that restricting inerrancy to the intentionality of the text allows biblical authority to function properly. He states that "we are not free to determine beforehand what God would say to us. By careful and responsible exegesis we are to define the boundaries of teaching binding upon us."

absolutely requires that a time-space rebellion against God on the part of the first man is being described," Pinnock claims that "it is far less obvious" just how the writer "intends us to understand various details in the story." His contention is that an understanding of the "fall" narrative requires "a determination of the precise literary genre that lies before us." Belief in inerrancy cannot "close the question" as to whether or not the serpent really spoke, "because it cannot be established without doubt that the writer intends simple literalism." Pinnock concludes that "whether the account is literal description or a graphic depiction of the historical fall is a matter of interpretation, not inerrancy." In his view, we must "indeed insist on the basic historicity of the event described," but also be willing to allow "a certain latitude in the understanding of details where it is not possible as yet to ascertain completely the degree of literalness intended."

Still, Pinnock does not agree that inerrancy should be limited to "revelational matters," for this would "severely undercut the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. As can be imagined, this kind of "nuancing" of inerrancy did not meet with acclaim from all sections of evangelicalism. See, for instance, Robert L. Saucy's review of Pinnock's <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (<u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 15 [1972]: 122-24). Further data are available in Pinnock's recent survey of evangelical approaches to the Genesis narratives (particularly regarding creation), "Climbing out of a Swamp: The Evangelical Struggle to Understand the Creation Texts" (1989), 143-55.

Prinnock observes (in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 77) that the "more liberal view" (i.e., among evangelicals), which regards inerrancy as applying only to "revelational" or "soteric" doctrines, probably originated with James Orr. While acknowledging that Orr "had a magnificent view of Scripture," Pinnock maintains that Orr, being "keenly aware of 'apparent errors' existing in the text," suggested "a seemingly innocent theory" that "some of these difficulties might be explained if the sources of information on which some of the historical writers depended were themselves in error" (Pinnock cites, here, Orr's <u>Revelation and Inspiration</u>, 216, 179). According to Pinnock, E. F. Harrison endorsed this idea (Harrison, "The Phenomena of Scripture," in <u>Revelation and the Bible</u>, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1958], 249), while E. J. Carnell subsequently "translated the theory" into the principle that "the Old Testament contains 'infallible' accounts of historical errors which were lifted without correction from the public registers and genealogical lists" (in this connection, Pinnock cites Carnell's <u>The</u>

truth value of the Bible." Also rejected by Pinnock is Daniel P.

Fuller's proposal that inerrancy is limited to "soteric" matters. In an "all or nothing" stance, Pinnock contends that "the extent to which the verifiable portions of Scripture are fallacious is the degree to which the whole of Scripture is discredited. " Although not allowing

Pinnock proposes, as a "safe" rule, that "where the sacred writer records data in such a way that it is apparent he regards it to be true and expects us to take it as such, we must assume that it is. Inspiration is posited in reference to writing. For that reason, whatsoever it asserts as true and free from error is to be received as such" (ibid., 78-79). Pinnock strongly contends, however, that such a restriction of inerrancy "to the sense intended by the inspired writers" is no basis for speaking of "limited inerrancy" (Pinnock, "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" [1974], 148-49).

<sup>2</sup>As found in Fuller's "Warfield's View of Faith and History," <u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 11 (1968): 75-83. Observe, though, that while Pinnock rejected the idea of limited inerrancy, he admitted that those who held such a view were conservatives of "very traditional loyalties" (Pinnock, "Limited Inerrancy. A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" [1974], 145).

Jidem, Biblical Revelation (1971), 79 (emphasis Pinnock). Fuller objected that he believed that "all that the Bible teaches is infallible and inerrant," although the Scripture's "intention" is to "make a man wise unto salvation" (Fuller, "On Revelation and Biblical Authority," 68). He also protested Pinnock's tendency to categorize him with Dewey Beegle (see Pinnock's Biblical Revelation, 80, and A Defense [1967], 12). Fuller stated, "I certainly have never said, like Beegle, that parts of the Bible are not inspired" (Fuller, "On Revelation and Biblical Authority," 68). For Beegle's position of "degrees of inspiration," see his The Inspiration of Scripture, especially pp. 135-39. Pinnock regards as unwarranted and foolisn "any attempt to dissect out of the body of Scripture the trivial and errant minutiae" (A Defense [1967], 13).

Case for Orthodox Theology [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1959], 102-11). For a somewhat more positive explanation of Orr's position, see Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 12.

Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 78. Pinnock admits that little of Scripture was written "without the use of some sort of source, whether written or oral," and "if inspiration cannot guarantee the integrity of what is actually set down in Scripture, what can it guarantee?" He refers to the "errors" in the speeches of the liars in the book of Job and concludes that the "deliberate literary mode makes it clear that the writer was not trying to put anything over on us here" (ibid.). Luke's record of Stephen's apology (Act 7) is seen as a "less obvious example." He maintains that "inerrancy in this case would have primary reference to the fact that a speech of this substance was actually delivered on that occasion. Luke is concerned to give us a résumé of the speech itself, not to teach us Old Testament history" (ibid.).

a limitation of inerrancy, Pinnock did accept a major qualification of his theory in the proposition that inerrancy applied primarily to the Scriptures "as originally given."

# Inerrancy of the Original Autographs

Against the objections of the "critics," the early Pinnock maintained that infallibility or inerrancy "has its primary reference to those writings produced under the inspiration of the Spirit as they came from the hand of their human authors." In fact, he goes so far as to say that it is "common" for Evangelicals to distinguish between the "inspired originals or autographs and the uninspired copies or apographs."

He argues that the distinction is both "necessary," since it is "of great interest what the sacred penman set down as distinguished from a mistake in copying and translating," and "logical," in that while there is evidence for the trustworthiness of the Bible as it came from the hand of God, "there is no evidence for the inspiration

Still maintaining that Fuller taught "limited errancy," Pinnock warned in his "In Response to Dr. Daniel Fuller" (1973) that Fuller "can slide easily into an unlimited errancy stance. Just because the "revelational/nonrevelational" distinction is so fuzzy, he gives us a slope, not a platform. Until now he has confined his 'biblical errors' to the marginalia. May it always be so" (p. 72).

Another significant sidelight to the Fuller/Pinnock exchange are the charges from each side that the other is less than empirical or inductive (see Fuller, "On Revelation and Biblical Authority," 68-69; Pinnock, Biblical Revelation [1971], 79, and "In Response to Dr. Daniel Fuller" [1973], 71-72).

 $<sup>^{1}</sup>$ This is Pinnock's own expression in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 81.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 15. See also his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 81, where Pinnock notes some of the arguments contra this view. These include the contention that since the original text has disappeared, it is "impossible to define its character in terms of infallibility;" that "such a theory has no practical value" since it "refers to no extant text;" and that appeal to an infallible autograph is nothing but "an escape from the embarrassment caused by the fallibility of copies."

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

of copyists or translators." Yet, Pinnock also holds that divine providence protected the copies and translations from becoming "corrupt as to be unintelligible" for the purpose of instruction of God's people.<sup>2</sup>

The "original autograph" distinction leads Pinnock to the conclusion that priority should be given to "the original-tongues text over the translation, and to the best text over the lesser," and that a challenge remains "to strive after the highest standard possible" in translating the Scriptures. Nevertheless, "our Bibles" should not be thought of as something less than the Word of God. On the contrary, Pinnock affirms that because "they are virtually identical to it [i.e., "the Scripture as originally given"], it is also correct to regard them as virtually infallible themselves."

### The Phenomena of Scripture

It is the early Pinnock's strong conviction that the doctrine of inspiration, like all other doctrines, be defined "in reference to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 81-82. Pinnock insists that "divine inspiration . . . has immediate reference to writing as God gave it. If someone insists that no one has seen the infallible originals, it is just as correct that no one has seen the fallible originals either! It boils down to the question of what Scripture is. God gave His Word in human language. That Word has been entrusted to God's people. The errors they may make in transmission are certainly not to be attributed to God" (ibid., 82).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 83. In the same place, Pinnock remarks that "the character of the Word of God remains unaffected by the minor variants on the borders of Scripture." Further, the "textual variants effect not a single item of evangelical belief" (ibid., 85).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 86. Pinnock notes that the major difference between Evangelicals and their critics (the liberals) is that the former "hold with good reason that the Bible they possess is substantially identical, apart from minor transcriptional variations, with the inspired originals," while the latter "believe that the authenticity of the Bible is discredited in both copy and original" (ibid.). Thus, it would appear that Evangelicals would still be opposed to liberalism even if they abandoned belief in the inerrancy of the original autographs. See also Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 16, and <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), 77-84, for his defense of the trustworthiness of the extant biblical manuscripts.

the teaching of Scripture alone."<sup>1</sup> He insists that "inductive difficulties" in no way change the Bible's claim to inerrancy.<sup>2</sup> Yet, according to Pinnock, one who holds to a high view of inspiration will undertake a "careful and minute study of the phenomena of Scripture."<sup>3</sup> Included in his discussion of the biblical "phenomena" are such things as the humanity of the Bible, difficulties in Scripture, and biblical criticism; all of which have implications for his early view of biblical reliability.

## The Humanity of Scripture

In his statement that "the Bible is the Word of God in the words of men," Pinnock means to confirm his belief in the humanity of Scripture, while wishing to avoid the idea that the Bible is only human. He emphatically rejects the "puerile maxim" that "to err is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 18. This is what Pinnock means by his repeated calls for an "inductive," rather than a "deductive" approach to Scripture. See, for instance, Pinnock's <u>Evangelism and Truth</u> (1969), 17, and <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 18. In the same work (ibid., n. 57), Pinnock specifically rejects Dewey Beegle's proposition that "a truly Biblical formulation of inspiration must give equal weight to the teaching and to the facts of Scripture" (Beegle, 14). Pinnock concludes that the "facts" (i.e., the current critical consensus) do not deserve "equal weight" alongside the "teaching of Holy Scripture." For further details, see Pinnock's "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" (1974), 151, 153.

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 175. For example, in his <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 19, Pinnock claims that "the phenomena of Scripture can help us determine more precisely the exact nature of the text which inspiration has secured."

<sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 175. He observes, "God has given us neither a docetic Christ, nor a docetic Scripture, whose humanity is unreal and intangible. We wish to affirm the true and real humanity of Christ and the Bible" (ibid., 176). Further discussion of the "dual authorship" or "confluent" nature of biblical inspiration can be found in ibid., 92-95. Here, Pinnock comments that "by confluency is meant the dual authorship of Scripture, the fact that the Bible is at one and the same time the product of the divine breath and a human pen." Again, he describes the process in terms of the Spirit working "concursively alongside the activity of the writers" (p. 92). In his "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" (1974), Pinnock remarked that the Bible is "the Word of God in the words of men" (p. 150).

human--Scripture is human--therefore, Scripture errs." What kind of evidence of "humanity" can be seen in the Bible? Pinnock replies that the Holy Spirit used "significant human authors," "men in particular cultures," to communicate the divine revelation.<sup>2</sup>

The basis of belief in "confluence," so Pinnock held in his early period, was biblical theism. He emphasized that it was consistent for God and man to "both be significant agents simultaneously" in the inspiration process. God is described as "the principal cause," while the writers were "the free instrumental cause." Pinnock complains that "men seem unable to conceive of a divine providence which can infallibly reach its ends without dehumanizing the human agents it employs." The common objection that such a belief leads to a theory of "mechanical dictation," is due, according to Pinnock, to "the sad eclipse of biblical theism."

¹Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 176. A better maxim, according to Pinnock, is: "To err is human-<u>ergo</u>, God gave Scripture by inspiration-so that, it does not err." Rather than the fact of human sin obviating the existence of infallible Scripture, Pinnock claims that it points to "the <u>need</u> for it," since, without it, "sinful men twist revelation to their liking and bend God's Word to coincide with their own" (ibid.; emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. Note Pinnock's claim that "at the present time," it is more likely that the divinity of the Bible would be ignored than its humanity (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 92. In Pinnock's perspective, the human writers could be described as "free and spontaneous," yet "divinely elicited and controlled" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 93. In support of his position that the Bible portrays the sovereignty of God as not nullifying the significance of man, Pinnock (in ibid.) cites Warfield's comment: "If God wished to give his people a series of letters like Paul's, he prepared a Paul to write them, and the Paul he brought to the task was Paul who spontaneously would write just such letters" (Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, 155).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 93. Pinnock asserts that only a deist would object to "the biblical concept of confluence," and that "we can only conclude that the purpose behind the attempt to smear the evangelical doctrine is to deny the divinity of the scriptural word and identify it totally with the word of man" (ibid.). For further details of Pinnock's doctrine of God, see our discussion in chap. 2, above, pp. 107-120.

Such characteristics as biblical history and language, 1 literary forms and parallel accounts, 2 inexact quotations and

It is no error, according to Pinnock, that biblical language employs "popular" and "phenomenal" expressions and descriptions of the natural order. For example, the fact that the moon appeared bigger than the stars to the writer of Genesis (Gen 1:16), should not be taken literally. Such expressions were useful to convey meaning rather than scientific information, and inerrancy "is unaffected by them" (Biblical Revelation (1971), 186-87). For further study, see Pinnock's A Defense (1967), 20.

<sup>2</sup>Scripture is free, so the early Pinnock held, to employ figurative, symbolic, and mythological language "in its expression of doctrine. Such literary forms as allegory, fable, proverb, and parable are freely used in a manner which is "not deceitful." He cites as examples, the mythological allusions in Job 3:8; Isa 27:1; 34:14; and Job 9:13, and explains that "in no case is it apparent that the biblical writer wishes to indicate his personal endorsement of the existence of these creatures or, even if he did believe in them, that he desires all of his readers to be bound to believe them. The mythical element is an incidental allusion, a piece of the clothing of the doctrine, a figure of speech, and part of the cultural texture of the Scripture. Poetic description, needless to say, is as respectable a literary form as prose, and both are capable in their different ways of yielding the freight of divine revelation" (Pinnock, Biblical Revelation [1971], 187 (emphasis Pinnock); see also A Defense [1967], 21).

Pinnock acknowledges that Scripture contains parallel accounts of the same event or sermon in which different details occur, different standpoints are adopted, or different descriptive modes are employed. The creation accounts of Gen 1, Gen 2, and Job 38, as well as the divergencies in the Synoptics, are cited as examples of this phenomenon. His stance on this is that "inerrancy does not require standardization of all such accounts, and there is no reason why we should jump to the conclusion that the truth has been violated simply because differences exist. For it may well be, if everything were known, that all the apparent discrepancies would disappear" (Pinnock, Biblical Revelation [1971], 187-88). Similar material is to be had in Pinnock's A Defense (1967), 21.

¹In Pinnock's perspective, biblical history, "like all history," is presented in a manner that exhibits "careful selection and elimination of detail." The biblical writers used various ways of writing history. For instance, Matthew orders his material on a "catechetical plan," while Moses wrote a religious history of the exodus. However, "in both cases the facts are neither distorted nor invented. Hence, "biblical history is truthful in the matters it wishes to convey, not in all the details we might like to know." Pinnock maintains that "there is nothing that requires every biblical sentence to be meticulously precise. Pedantic precision is an artificial standard of infallibility" imposed by critics to discredit biblical inerrancy. He concludes that the "perspective and genre of biblical history need to be taken into account when measuring its accuracy" (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 186; see also his <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 20).

non-uniform literary style<sup>1</sup> are seen by the early Pinnock as marking off the Bible as an "ancient"<sup>2</sup> and "truly human" book, without in any way impairing its claim to infallibility or its ability to transmit God's will to his people.<sup>3</sup> However, Pinnock also pointed out that there are some "critical hypotheses" which charge the Bible with error or deception. These he regards as "the <u>real difficulties</u> of infallibility."<sup>4</sup>

### Difficulties in Scripture

It is claimed by Pinnock that the careful Bible reader is "faced unavoidably with problems of form and content." While skeptics and negative critics have raised difficulties such as literary deceptions, historical blunders, moral blemishes, and scientific

<sup>1&</sup>quot;There is nothing," writes Pinnock, "which says that quotations from the Old Testament or elsewhere must in all cases conform to the original with verbal exactness." The New Testament writer could use, according to his particular purpose, the substance of the text, part of its wording, or a paraphrase of its thought. While acknowledging the right of the sacred writers to use the Old Testament freely and creatively, Pinnock appears to hold that they conveyed the "general sense," but not the precise wording. "The New Testament teachers," for instance, sought to indicate the true, Messianic import of the Old Testament. In a sense they not only cite an old text but create a new one through their inspired, Christocentric approach. . . . The very liberty of their use of Scripture indicates their confidence in the new revelation they were bearing to the world. The writer is at liberty to use the Old Testament text freely or strictly according to his requirement" (Pinnock, Biblical Revelation [1971], 183; emphasis Pinnock. A shorter account is found in A Defense [1967], 21).

shorter account is found in <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 21).

In Pinnock's view, the "literary quality and polish" of the biblical material is uneven. "It varies with the literary style of the author and his stylistic purposes." For instance, the fact that the writer of Revelation conforms his Greek "to the style of Old Testament translation Greek," that the Greek of Matthew does not follow classical Attic grammar, that Paul could allow a lapse of grammar while describing some "thrilling spiritual truth," or that a writer leaves normal syntax "in order to heighten an emphasis or alter the tone," is not to be taken as a threat to the inerrancy of Scripture (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 188-89; see also <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 21).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 185.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 189, and Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 189 (emphasis Pinnock). The same stand is taken in Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> (1957), 21-22.

mistakes in order to "overthrow the reliability of the Bible," theologians "have always recognized them and attempted to resolve them." The Christian approach, in Pinnock's perspective, has been to "offer a plausible explanation" or "leave the matter in temporary abeyance." This strategy is based on the conviction that the "apparent falsehoods and contradictions" do not originate with the God of truth and "are not ultimately real."

Even while claiming that the difficulties are not "real,"

Pinnock maintains that it is the Christian's "duty to look such

difficulties squarely in the eye and not pretend they do not exist."

The Bible must be defended, or else the "opponents of inspiration"

will be allowed to conclude that "our faith in it is irrational or

that the doctrine itself is foolish, or both." Again, he affirms

that it "is our conviction that eventually all tension will be

eliminated and all problems solved." 3

Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 189. Pinnock maintains that "perfectly reasonable solutions" have been proposed for most of the difficulties and that, in view of the antiquity of Scripture, it is most surprising that "the difficulties are no more and the solutions less." If a reasonable explanation of the data can be provided, "the discrepancy is unreal," and even if none can be provided, "it does not mean no one can."

Although he claims that the discrepancies "did not come from the God of truth," Pinnock submits that "God permitted discrepancies to appear in Scripture," while not allowing them to "dull the force or obscure the clarity of its message" (ibid., 190). In His <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> (1967), 103, Pinnock argues that "errors are inconsistent with an infallible Bible, but difficulties are <u>not</u>" (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 190. For Pinnock "we must ever seek to close the gap between the doctrine of inspiration deductively formulated from the teaching of Christ and the apostles, and the phenomena of Scripture inductively examined by reverent study" (ibid.). At this point, Pinnock remarks that he uses the words "deductive-inductive" in the "common" way, although, "strictly speaking, both poles involve induction: the doctrine of inspiration is formed by a process of induction from the doctrinal passages" (ibid., 190, n. 14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 190. In this conclusion, Pinnock is reacting against Dewey Beegle's list of "errors" by which he sought to show that belief in inerrancy was impossible (see Beegle, <u>The Inspiration of Scripture</u>, 41-69). Pinnock notes that David P. Livingston, "The Inerrancy of Scripture: A Critique of Dewey Beegle's Book, <u>The Inspiration of</u>

In reference to "literary deception" within Scripture, Pinnock contends that where "a myth is dressed up to look like plain history, or an epistle makes claim to an author falsely," the inspiration, truthfulness, and even the morality of the Scriptures are called into question. The problm arises, says Pinnock, when the reader is deceived in reading the Bible "in its natural sense." While confirming, on the one hand, that "we will accept any literary form Scripture uses," Pinnock argues, on the other hand, that "the question whether Scripture uses myth or not can only be answered at an earlier point" (i.e., that inspiration "requires us to accept as historical fact all that Scripture presents as fact"). Such a position is a conscious rejection of Orr's and Ramm's proposal that one should not "balk" at accepting whatever literary form Scripture presents to us. 4

For Pinnock, a "retreat to the autographs" is not sufficient to clear Scripture of the accusation of "irreducible error" in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;u>Scripture</u>" (Master's thesis, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1969), has shown all of Beegle's difficulties to be capable of solution (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 190, n. 15).

¹Ibid., 190. Pinnock, approving, cites Robert Preus' "Biblical Hermeneutics and the Lutheran Church Today," in <u>Crisis in Lutheran Theology</u>, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1967), 2:42, where Preus dismisses the possibility of not only "purely salacious literary forms" (e.g., myth, etiological tale, midrash, legend, or saga), but also "purely scientific" and "purely historical" materials appearing in Scripture (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 191).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. Parable and proverb do not create difficulties, according to Pinnock. But, 2 Peter's claim to Petrine authorship, if false, would mean that "we have no right to consider the book inspired and canonical" (ibid.). He also opts for a "historical interpretation" of Daniel and Jonah (ibid., 192).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 192-93 (emphasis Pinnock). Here, Pinnock specifically rejects the attempts to mythologize the fall of Adam and the theory that Mattnew and Luke employ nativity saga and midrash in their accounts of the birth of Christ (ibid., 193; also <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 28-29).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 192. See Ramm, <u>Special Revelation and the Word of God</u>, 63-69, and Orr's <u>Revelation and Inspiration</u>, 169-74.

historical writings of the Bible. He contends that evangelicals have an obligation to "friend and foe alike" to provide some theory as to the reason for the biblical "slips." This is especially so if, as Pinnock maintains, the "difficulties" are to be considered as "apparent and not real." Some of the difficulties, Pinnock believes, are merely due to negative criticism's "cavalier" approach to Scripture, while others are due to "a vast oversimplification."

Another form of biblical difficulty discussed by Pinnock is the matter of "moral blemishes." He dismisses as inadequate C. H. Dodd's idea of "progressive revelation" by which he views divinely sanctioned cases of cruelty and "postures of hatred and vengeance towards one's enemies" as evidencing a certain primitiveness on the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971, 195. Nevertheless, he does claim that a "good number" of the historical discrepancies are due to "transcriptional slips and mistakes" (ibid.). Numbers are seen as particularly vulnerable to corruption" in transmission, and "unless we wish to blame God for man's mistakes, we have an obligation to try to show that these discrepancies are not original errors" (ibid., 196; see also <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 22-23).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 196. Pinnock accepts that Warfield was right in refusing to admit difficulties as "surd errors," but he contests the idea that evangelical Christians have no responsibility "to vindicate Scripture in a study of the phenomena themselves" (ibid.). He commends E. J. Young's attempt to grapple with the "difficulties" in his <u>Thy Word Is Truth: Some Thoughts on the Biblical Doctrine of Inspiration</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For instance, Conzelmann's and Haenchen's conclusions that Luke was less than historically accurate in Acts 5:36-37 (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 196-97; <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 22-23).

<sup>4&</sup>quot;More often than not," concludes Pinnock, "the charges result from a Western ignorance of ancient Near-Eastern life rather than from an error in reality." He cites, here, the work of Thiele on the Hebrew king-lists (second-hand through R. K. Harrison's <u>Introduction to the Old Testament</u>, 474), as confirming that the Old Testament historians were "very concerned to be accurate in their work and that, in fact, the precision they achieved is amazing as compared with comparable ancient sources" (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 197-98).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>That is, those actions and attitudes recorded in Scripture which "at first glance shock and even outrage" the conscience of the sensitive reader (ibid., 198). For his earlier discussion of the problem, see Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 25-27.

part of the sacred authors. Such an approach, Pinnock believes, "piously" clears God's character while indicting Scripture. Instead, Pinnock offers mitigating factors to explain the harshness of the practice of herem (the holy war conducted by the Israelites at God's command), a "proleptic" interpretation of the psalms of imprecation (Pss 55, 59, 69, 79, 109, 137), and an explanation of the Old Testament teaching on marriage (divorce and polygamy) that is "not self-contradictory."

The last category of biblical difficulties addressed by Pinnock in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971) is that of "scientific

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971) 198. See C. H. Dodd's <u>The Authority of the Bible</u> (Glasgow: Collins, 1929), 13.

These include the cruelty of the ancient peoples, the limitation of the extent of the massacre, and the close identification of God and people in Semitic religion. However, he maintains, that "herem was definitely and repeatedly ascribed to the will of the Lord" (Pinnock, Biblical Revelation [1971], 199). Two other factors must also be taken into account, in Pinnock's view. These are the fact of judgment in the New Testament (which is very little different from the temporal punishment of sinners in the Old Testament), and the Canaanite depravity in the Old. The principle to be kept in mind is that "gracious sayings and hard words are to be found on every strata and by every author of Scripture," despite the "consciences of modern liberals" (ibid., 199-200).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Rather than viewing the imprecatory psalms as indicative of a "sub-Christian spirit of revenge and vindictiveness contrary to the teachings of Christ in Matt 5:43-48, Pinnock regards them as "proleptic of the fate of all the godless when the final reckoning comes" (ibid., 200). Although acknowledging that some allowance must be made for Semitic hyperbole and the agonized cries of those in distress, he maintains that "God's holy anger rightly rests on those who obey not the truth. . . . Biblical imprecations are to be understood in terms of God's ultimate vindication of His people" (ibid., 200-1).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 201 (emphasis Pinnock). Pinnock points out that Christ's withdrawal of the divine permission for divorce (Matt 19:8) was not so much a "reversal and contradiction" as a return to the original standard (ibid., 201). Polygamy, too, in Pinnock's perspective, is to be seen as something that was allowed or tolerated for a time, but as now no longer permitted by God. Pinnock's position is summarized in his statement that "the notion that further revelation contradicts and corrects earlier revelation is a confusing and mistaken assumption. Revelation is a cumulative, organic disclosure of God to men in history; it is progressive and unfolding" (ibid., 201-2; emphasis Pinnock). Thus, it is clear that "progressive revelation" did not hold the same meaning for Pinnock as it did for Dodd (see above, p. 198).

mistakes." Even allowing that the Bible describes the world from the stance of "an ancient Hebrew observer on the earth," he admits that belief in miracles<sup>1</sup> and the existence of demons,<sup>2</sup> as well as the biblical doctrine of creation, "conflict unavoidably with much current opinion." The latter, Pinnock holds, is the battlefield for most of the warfare between religion and science.<sup>4</sup> He accuses both scientists and theologians of speaking "rashly or prematurely." <sup>5</sup>

Concerning the possibility of miracles, Pinnock contends that "biblical miracles occur in the context of the great miracle, the incarnation and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They function in that context as part of God's total discourse." Pinnock regards the incarnation/resurrection miracle as having a high credibility because of the "historical testimony of eyewitnesses." Science which disregards the possibility of miracle is "bad science," since it "is closed to the implications of truly relevant data" (ibid., 202; see also Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 27).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Again, Pinnock believes that the denial of demons and angels "is prejudice, not science." The current "climate of opinion" does not take into account the phenomena of the occult and "persists despite the lack of any substantial reason to think that man is the highest intelligent life there is." He argues that even from a naturalistic standpoint, "there is no reason to scoff at the idea that there are creatures which transcend man in the hierarchy of being" (Biblical Revelation [1971], 203; also A Defense [1967], 27-28).

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 202, and <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 28.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, Biblical Revelation (1971), 203.

Theologians, because they have been too ready to drop belief in <a href="ex nihilo">ex nihilo</a> creation and the fall, and have "clambered aboard the neo-Darwinian bandwagon" (ibid.; see also <a href="https://docs.org/no.com/ADEfense">ADEfense</a> [1967], 28)
--this, despite the fact that New Testament soteriology is based on the truth of the Genesis narrative (<a href="mailto:Biblical Revelation">Biblical Revelation</a> [1971], 203-4)--and scientists, because of their timidity in acknowledging that evolution is "a working hypothesis, not a proven theory" (ibid., 205).

Evolution, contends Pinnock, assumes a uniformity which can be extrapolated backward in time. Yet, if creation occurred 50,000 years ago, it would still be possible to extrapolate back millions of years because we stand "within creation." So, "wherever we start, that which is created will seem to have existed before!" That fact means that the "date and manner of creation are, in principle, hidden from us" (ibid., 205-6; emphasis Pinnock).

According to the early Pinnock, "most" of the difficulties regarding creation-evolution would disappear if scientists would openly admit the problems inherent to the evolutionary cosmogony and "recognize the danger of confusing evolution as religious philosophy with evolution as a possible biological hypothesis," and if theologians would acknowledge the importance of science as "a fact-gathering and generalizing activity which can serve Scripture well, much like archeology is a meaningful commentary upon the

Whatever the difficulties, Pinnock emphasizes that one cannot allow that any subject is biblically irrelevant "just because it happens to fall within the field of the profane sciences." He regards "existential" interpretations of difficult biblical passages (although guaranteeing that science poses no threat to the Bible<sup>2</sup>) as invalid in that everything Scripture teaches is significant, and "where the teaching penetrates into a realm treated by some branch of science, it is proper to expect validation from that quarter."

Overall, the early Pinnock maintained that the biblical difficulties were not as numerous, novel, or recalcitrant as the critics alleged. He regarded all of them as surmountable and completely unable to overthrow the basis of belief in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. With that kind of confidence in the Bible, it is little wonder that Pinnock wanted to protect the gospel contained therein by principles of hermeneutics arising from within the Bible itself.

text." Science and the Bible are "not on the same plane." Science is "an empirical investigation of the natural world," while Scripture is "a divinely given language revelation" (ibid., 206; further details regarding science and the Bible are to be found in Pinnock's <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> [1967], 114-16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 206. The "authority and competence" of the Bible is not to be "artificially restricted," but is, in Pinnock's perspective, "self-determined" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This approach, he characterizes as belonging to dialectical theology (ibid).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 206-7. In the same vein, Pinnock remarks, "We are open to all facts and threatened by none; but, as Evangelicals, we are still unconvinced that the evidence has yet been fairly set forth which undermines belief in the total trustworthiness of the Bible" (ibid., 207). For further study, see Pinnock's <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 29; Set Forth Your Case (1967), 102-6; and "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" (1974), 153-54.

#### Biblical Criticism's Limited Role

The early Pinnock affirmed that the "historically mediated Scripture" makes criticism "inevitable and desirable." Critical study has resulted in an opening up of knowledge about the Bible and its origin, but because Scripture is "historical revelation," it should be approached "reverently." Too often, according to Pinnock, "negative criticism" ignores the "context of the Christian truth claim" in which the biblical phenomena stand, thereby promoting conclusions which are completely inconsistent with the Christian message. 3

As far as Pinnock is concerned, negative criticism belongs "outside" the church because it rejects the Christian attitude of "total trust" in the Bible. While "evangelical criticism" accepts the Scriptures as a "divinely inspired human record," the modern critical approach to Scripture is that it is simply a human record. The

¹Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 180-81. In fact, it "invites critical questions" concerning date, text, authorship, meaning, and composition (Pinnock, "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" [1974], 150). Pinnock affirms that liberal and conservative critics, "with exceptions," are honest and scholarly, and that "none of us are [sic] as free of prejudice or as objective as we imagine" (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 181). Pinnock's discussion of "negative biblical criticism" in ibid., 180-84 is paralleled in his <u>A Defense</u> (1967), 29-31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 181 (emphasis Pinnock). In the same place, our author also notes that because it is "<u>historical</u> revelation," the Bible needs to be studied critically. Observe here that Pinnock considers textual criticism vital because of his interest in the original text (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 80-83).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 181. Such anti-Christian theories include the rejection of miracles, biblical contradictions, historical fallacies, and deceptions (ibid., 193).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 182. For Pinnock's specific critique of Old Testament form- and source-criticism, as well as for his opinion of the state of New Testament criticism (in his early period), see ibid., 194-95 and his <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> [1967], 79-82. For a fuller account of his attitude to form criticism, see Pinnock's "The Case Against Form Criticism" (1965), 12-13. See also his "Limited Inerrancy: A Critical Appraisal and Constructive Alternative" (1974), 144-45.

"preunderstanding" with which one comes to the Scriptures is determinative of the results of biblical criticism. Hence, what the negative critic calls "errors," the early Pinnock and his kin call "difficulties." In his view, such a distinction was vital, since any acknowledgement of actual error within Scripture would mean that its authority was also placed in question.

### Hermeneutics for an Inerrant Bible

Sound hermeneutics<sup>4</sup> is considered "imperative" by Pinnock because a "loose hermeneutic" is capable of destroying the meaning of inspiration altogether.<sup>5</sup> He views the field of biblical interpretation as encompassing exegesis of the text and theologizing (or assessment of the results of exegesis), as well as its application.<sup>6</sup>

Basic to hermeneutics, for the early Pinnock, is a "preunderstanding" of the divine authorship of the Bible. Such an approach is in line with the way Christ and the New Testament writers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 183. In other words, "whatever the complexities are which arise in the discussion of inspiration and criticism, the root issue is . . . : do we acknowledge in our criticism the divine authorship of the Bible or not?" (ibid., 182).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. In this context, note Pinnock's accusation that "negative biblical criticism has conducted a wide campaign of brainwashing" (Pinnock, <u>Set Forth Your Case</u> [1967], 102).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Defined by Pinnock as "the science of correctly interpreting God's Word, of observing principles whereby the Scriptures are devoutly and profoundly read. It is a process of meaning-extraction, of bringing out the sense of the Bible by means of principles Scripture itself supplies" (ibid., 209).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 208.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., 209.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Ibid. Pinnock maintains that "the decision about the nature of Scripture ought to be made before interpretation even begins" (ibid., 210; see also Pinnock's discussion of "A Theology of Criticism," in his <u>A Defense</u> [1967], 29-31).

believed the Old Testament to be authoritative, historically reliable, and doctrinally unified. Pinnock claims that where the Bible is regarded as "a merely human document," interpretation follows accordingly, while if it is considered divinely authored, "complete reliability" is implied, with the assurance that it "will not ultimately contradict itself."

The principle that Scripture is to be read "in its natural sense and proper context" is considered the "backbone of Reformation hermeneutics." It is imperative that Christian theology rest on what the biblical writers "meant to teach"; the alternative being "nonsense." Nevertheless, because the literal sense involves consideration of the context, it does not require a "literalistic interpretation."

Belief in the unity of the Bible is, for Pinnock, a consequence of the fact "that God is the principal Author of it," and infers that the Scriptures are not a collection of assorted religious writings from many periods, but "a single book with a single Author." Therefore, "Scripture is its own interpreter" and "one passage

<sup>1</sup>Idem, Biblical Revelation (1971), 209-210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. In "Southern Baptists and the Bible" [news item], <u>Christianity Today</u> (1969), 34, Pinnock identifies the <u>sensus literalis</u> with the "historical-grammatical sense."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 210. Pinnock holds that all "nonliteral methods of interpretation" (e.g., the Alexandrian allegorical or the Bultmannian demythologizing approaches) result in the suppression or denial of the teachings of Scripture (ibid., 211).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid. A high view of Scripture is less likely, in Pinnock's opinion, to lead to a sidestepping of biblical teaching than the low view (ibid., 211-12). He impugns the liberal appeal to the <u>Schriftganze</u> (totality of Scripture) for its ability to silence actual biblical teaching "on the strength of a standpoint not explicitly sanctioned by Scripture" (ibid., 212).

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

illumines the sense of another." Still, Pinnock does not argue for the theological uniformity of Scripture. Rather, he contends that it is necessary to recognize the progressive-revelation process in the biblical writings, and its "completion in the Christ event."

Pinnock prefers to describe this idea of "progressive revelation" as "cumulative revelation" because the former term has been "tainted" with conceptions of the evolution of biblical religion from primitive beginnings to advanced forms.<sup>3</sup> "That which is patent in the New Testament lies latent in the Old."<sup>4</sup> Revelation is seen as increasing chronologically until the "climax" is reached with Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> Scripture is read properly when the time and place of a particular passage in the "revelation process" is taken into consideration, but Pinnock reminds his readers that the "mode of revelation which is Christ" never contradicts "the mode of revelation that is Scripture."<sup>6</sup>

This is possible because God does not contradict himself (ibid., 213). Pinnock considers Marcion and Bultmann as guilty of "an unchristian reduction of the Old Testament and a breaking up of the unity of Scripture" in their seeing only law and not gospel in the Old Testament. In Origen, Barth, and Vischer, however, he detects "a slurring over of the differences" (an "overaffirmation of unity") which has led to a revival of fanciful typology (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 213-14. Pinnock notes that "all the diverse strands of teaching weave together in testimony to Christ" (ibid., 214). For further study of Pinnock's view of the unity of Scripture, see his Truth on Fire: The Message of Galatians (1972), 46-49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 214. The latter term is "better," Pinnock holds, because "it signifies the <u>teleological</u> direction of revelation with the emphasis on the building up of the total truth picture" (ibid.). In his <u>A Defense</u> (1967), Pinnock argues that revelation is "an organic disclosure in history of the mind of God; it is progressive and unfolding, but it is not self-contradictory" (p. 27).

<sup>4</sup>Idem, Biblical Revelation (1971), 214.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 214-15. Thus, the Bible is "Christocentric." But, this principle is not to be taken as a warrant for the rejection of any portion of Scripture (ibid., 215, 37, 103).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., 215 (emphasis Pinnock).

The "best Interpreter" of Scripture, in Pinnock's view, is the Holy Spirit, for he is its Author. Rather than subtracting from the importance of philological and exegetical endeavors, the Spirit creates an "inner receptivity" which allows the Word to be truly "heard." It was the early Pinnock's strong conviction that the "subjective disposition" had an effect on the results of exegesis, since without the Spirit's "witness," the Scriptures are confusing. The Word and the Spirit work in tandem. Pinnock remarks that any appeal to the Spirit apart from the Bible is "sub-Christian fanaticism," while an appeal to the Bible apart from dependence on the Spirit is "presumption." Although he holds that the theory has been abused that would have the Bible "become" the Word of God for us through the ministrations of the Spirit, Pinnock notes that there is a sense in which this is true. Truth available (Scripture) becomes

¹Ibid. Pinnock considers that an unbeliever is capable of understanding the "letter" of the Scriptures, but he is not "inclined to commit himself to the appropriation of its truth for his life, until the Spirit creates a new disposition within, rendering the Word of God effective in men's lives (2 Co 3:14-16)" (ibid.). This view of the role of the Spirit in the believer's life is in line with Pinnock's perspective in his "The Concept of Spirit in the Epistles of Paul" (1963), 145-46, particularly.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 216. Pinnock elaborates by adding that the Holy Spirit is responsible for two miracles in regard to the Bible: "the miracle of inspiration by which revelation was infallibly recorded, and the miracle of illumination by which the book is understood and believed" (ibid.). In this, Pinnock follows Ramm who states that the Protestant principle of authority is that divine objective revelation (the external principle) is accompanied by an interior divine witness (the internal principle). See Ramm's <u>The Pattern of Religious Authority</u>, 28-29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 216. Liberalism is perceived by Pinnock to be a form of "sub-Christian mysticism," in that it promotes a conflation of inspiration and illumination "in order to make revelation an immanent, evolving entity" (ibid., 216-17).

truth personal, but only because the Bible is already the Word of God, in itself.

Sacred hermeneutics, as far as the early Pinnock was concerned, included such principles as a correct understanding of the inspiration of Scripture (plenary, verbal, inerrant), the <u>sensus</u> <u>literalis</u>, the unity of Scripture, cumulative revelation, and the illumination of the Spirit. These factors were part of what he labeled "traditional hermeneutics." As opposed to this method of interpretation, Pinnock recognized a "new hermeneutic" which had as its aim the espousal of "the anti-metaphysical program of liberal theology" through an existential interpretation of Scripture. Also seen as opposed to the proper use of the Bible is what the early Pinnock prefers to call "negative biblical criticism."

¹Ibid., 217. "The Spirit," writes Pinnock, "takes the text, infallible and true, and prepares our hearts to receive its message. It is the recipients, and not the Word, which need to be criticized and corrected!" (ibid.). It is significant that while Pinnock emphasized what he considered to be sound hermeneutical principles, he did not consider that the task of interpretation would ever be finished. He remarks, "The task is never done, for God always has yet more light and truth to give from His Holy Word. Our hermeneutic is never exhaustive and never infallible" (ibid., 209).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 208.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 217. This approach is exemplified, for Pinnock, by Rudolf Bultmann. Pinnock's criticisms of the "new hermeneutic" are as follows: (1) Its program is "essentially pietistic," in that its concern is with "personal involvement in the text, with my existence and my self-understanding." The result is that the message of the Bible is "sacrificed to what modern man can experience today" (ibid., 220; emphasis, Pinnock). (2) Bultmann's reliance on an "alien" philosophy is a "serious liability" in that it turns the "terminology and ideology of the Bible" into an existentialist philosophy. (3) The existentialist approach is directly opposed to the explicit message of the Scriptures (ibid., 220-27). See also, Pinnock's "Theology and Myth: An Evangelical Response to Demythologizing" (1971), 222. Of particular interest, here, is Pinnock's six-point critique of Bultmann's endeavors (pp. 218-25) and his constructive alternative (pp. 225-26).

<sup>4</sup>Idem, Biblical Revelation (1971), 180.

#### Summary

In summary, Pinnock, in his first stage of theological development, considered Scripture to be "infallible" and "inerrant." Divine inspiration is seen as adhering particularly to the original autographs, while our present Bibles should be regarded as "virtually infallible." While holding God to be the ultimate Author of the Bible, he also believed that such aspects as biblical history, language, literary forms, parallel accounts, inexact quotations, and non-uniform literary quality within Scripture were indicative of the fact that it was a "truly human product." The divine-human "confluence" exhibited in the inspiration process is "based," according to Pinnock, in a particular view of biblical theism.

Inerrancy, however, does not guarantee that there are no "difficulties"; it does mean that the apparent contradictions and falsehoods contained within the Bible are "not ultimately real." In Pinnock's view, all of the problems eventually will be solved, and it is his plea that evangelicals work to "close the gap" between the doctrine of inspiration and the phenomena of Scripture. Undoubtedly, it was the early Pinnock's view of inerrancy as nuanced by the "intention" of the text that he believed would provide the key towards closing at least some of that "gap."

Proper principles of hermeneutics are important since a "loose hermeneutic" can "short-circuit" the truth of the Word. Basic to such principles, Pinnock claims, must be a "preunderstanding" concerning the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible. Both the "new hermeneutic" and "negative biblical criticism" are seen by the early Pinnock as endangering the ability of the Scriptures to rule human lives. Yet, textual criticism, in particular, is essential in order to recover a text as close to the original autographs as possible.

# The Biblical Authority/Reliability Relationship

It appears that Pinnock held to a view of the relationship between biblical authority and biblical reliability that involved movement in both directions. First, Pinnock advocates a movement from biblical authority to reliability. He remarks that inerrancy is "a necessary inference drawn from the fact that scripture is <u>God's</u> Word. "2 In other words, the Bible is authoritative because God has spoken within its pages, and since it is God who has spoken we can be sure that what he has said is completely trustworthy. Pinnock argues that "if one believes the Scripture to be God's Word, he cannot fail to believe it inerrant."

Still, whereas the early Pinnock acknowledged the "inference" status of the argument from biblical authority to inerrancy, he also maintained that "inerrancy is not . . . a claim for Scripture which is constructed more rationalistically than biblically." On the contrary, in his view, "it is the conclusion reached by inductive examination of the evidence" of the biblical doctrine of Scripture. This was not to say that there are no "difficulties" within Scripture. In fact, the early Pinnock was more than willing to concede the presence of biblical difficulties, but he suggested that when we meet "a biblical

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>This conclusion was confirmed with Pinnock in a telephone conversation with me on July 12, 1990. See also Pinnock's <u>Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way Through Modern Theology From an Evangelical Perspective</u> (1990), 52, n. 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 73 (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 70. For a pertinent discussion of the two modes of the biblical authority/inerrancy relationship, see J. Terry Young's "The Relationship Between Biblical Inerrancy and Biblical Authority," in The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy, 1987 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1987), 391-409.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid. The Bible's own doctrine of its inspiration is, to Pinnock's mind, "the truly relevant data for our knowledge of what Scripture is," rather than "an assortment of problem passages" (ibid., 74-75).

difficulty . . . we need most to know what the Bible is and how we should handle it." In his case, knowing that the Bible was divinely authoritative carried with it knowledge that it was also inerrantly reliable in respect to the intentions of the text. This was the early Pinnock's primary argument concerning the biblical authority/reliability relationship.

Secondarily, in the early Pinnock's view, it is possible to argue from biblical reliability to biblical authority. As has already been indicated, Pinnock takes a position in line with Warfield and other "revelation-empiricists" that reason is capable of testing religious claims. He contends, against the "fideists," that the credibility of Scripture's claim to authority as (inscripturated) divine revelation rests on the historical reliability of the Bible. While such historical evidence is "probable" rather than "certain," tit is enough, so Pinnock maintains, to validate Scripture's claims to authority.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 75. In the same place, Pinnock comments that "inerrancy is the standpoint for a Christian to adopt in his examination of Scripture. This <u>Gestalt</u> is inductively derived and provides the framework for understanding what kind of book the Bible is."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 76. See our discussion of the intentionality qualification for inerrancy (above, pp. 186-90).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Although Pinnock deals with this aspect earlier rather than later in his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), especially, pp. 44-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See above, p. 159.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 44-45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., 44-47. Here, Pinnock maintains that belief in the gospel (p. 45), Christian theism (p. 45), inspiration (p. 47), and revelation (p. 47), depend on "a number of historical and logical evidences" for their validity (p. 47).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Ibid., 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>One must ask, however, whether "probable" evidence is really enough to validate biblical authority. Is there not a rather larger "gap" between the evidence and authority than the early Pinnock imagined?

In other words, Pinnock attempts to answer the question: What proof is there that the Bible is authoritative? For him, it was not enough to say that Scripture claimed authority or that the Holy Spirit accredited its authority. It is Pinnock's contention that faith in God, revelation, the gospel, and Scripture must rest in part "upon a number of historical and logical evidences." Against Neo-orthodoxy's claim that faith was destroyed by having a historical ground, Pinnock asserted that "faith is not destroyed by having a historical ground, but by not having one!" It is not difficult to see, then, the reason why Pinnock held belief in the inerrancy of the original autographs to be so important. If, for instance, one could actually prove the existence of a single error in Scripture, the whole house of biblical authority would thereby collapse.

Even "limited inerrancy," in Pinnock's view, was not an option to be entertained because it "is a slope, not a platform." The result of denying biblical inerrancy is that it leaves us with "a Bible which is a compound of truth and error, with no one to tell us which is which." Again, Pinnock puts it even more bluntly: "What is lost when errors are admitted is divine truthfulness" and, in addition, infallibility of human opinion (in determining what is inerrant and what is errant) usurps the place of biblical infallibility.

This is basically the same question put by J. Terry Young in his "The Relationship Between Biblical Inerrancy and Biblical Authority," 401, although he answers it differently to Pinnock.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 47. In the same place, following Kenneth Kantzer's "The Authority of the Bible" (in <u>The Word for This Century</u>, ed. Merrill C. Tenney [New York: Oxford University Press, 1960]), 42, Pinnock remarks that "divine revelation by means of events in objective history is verifiable in principle and in fact."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 48 (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 80 (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 81.

### Conclusion

The early Pinnock held the view that Scripture stood within a pattern of authority that also included reason, tradition, and experience. For him, none of the three latter sources of authority, either separately or together, was capable of supplying "reliable revelation data." Each of them had to be "checked and measured by Scripture," which alone possessed "final authority." Only one other authority could hold a higher place for Christians, and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, for Pinnock, the gospel could not be opposed to the Bible, since, although the Bible was not a "necessary rational postulate required for the gospel," it has Christ as "the hub of its message, and the fulfillment of its hope."

The Christological or soteric focus of Scripture should not, in Pinnock's view, be misconstrued to mean that the Bible is anything less than inerrant. He argues that just as Christ's attitude toward the Scriptures was one of "total trust," so too, the Bible testifies to Christ precisely by its truthfulness in "every part." This sort of biblical reliability, according to Pinnock, is only qualified by its limitation to the original manuscripts and the intention of the text. As to the latter, he holds that "by careful and responsible exegesis we are to determine the boundaries of teaching binding upon us."

Thus, while Pinnock suggests, for instance, that the genre of some passages of Scripture may indicate that they are to be taken as less than literal, he still holds that their essential truthfulness is left

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 133. Pinnock's complete discussion of multiple-source theories is relevant here (see ibid., 121-33). For the early Pinnock, Scripture represents the Christian authority, but it also presents an explicit doctrine of its own inspiration and authority (see ibid., 54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 36. Pinnock explains that "there could be a gospel without inspired Scripture" (ibid.).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 37.

unimpaired because the basic historicity of the events described is not in doubt. 1

The inerrancy of the autographs is, in Pinnock's perspective, not only required to clear the character of God of charges of willful deceit but also necessitates a strong view of divine control over the human writers. Pinnock asserts that "the control exercised by the Spirit was so complete that human proneness to error was overcome and the writers were the perfect mouthpieces of infallible revelation."3 Only in this way would it be possible to quarantee the human recognition of the authority of Scripture, for it is, argues Pinnock, the reliability of the biblical data, rather than subjective evidence such as the witness of the Spirit, that provides sufficient proof of the Bible's divine origin. In fact, it may be that Pinnock's view of the divine-human "confluence" is the controlling factor in his early doctrine of Scripture, particularly as it related to biblical reliability and authority. That, however, is a matter that is discussed in our final chapter. Meanwhile, we turn to an analysis of the later Pinnock's doctrine of Scripture.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 76-79. For instance, "belief in inerrancy" does not close the question as to whether the serpent really spoke, but it does affirmatively answer whether there was an historical fall into sin (ibid., 76).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 70.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 37-38. The proof is sufficient in spite of the fact that "difficulties" (not errors) still remain in our extant manuscripts. In these matters, Pinnock observes, "though they touch only the margins of Scripture" and "remain troublesome," we "prefer to walk by faith and not by sight, a faith not at all blind or unjustified but deeply settled in the person and doctrine of our divine and risen Lord" (Pinnock, "How Trustworthy?" [a review of Dewey M. Beegle's Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility], Christianity Today, April 26, 1974, 38).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See chap. 5, below, pp. 350-360.

#### CHAPTER IV

# BIBLICAL AUTHORITY/RELIABILITY: PINNOCK'S LATER VIEW (1975-1984)<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Up until about 1974, Clark Pinnock held to his early view of Scripture which, as we have seen, included a necessarily close connection between biblical reliability and authority. Following his move to Regent College, his writings reveal a considerably different perspective which culminated in his The Scripture Principle (1984).<sup>2</sup>

Just as his Biblical Revelation (1971) represented the peak of his writings regarding the Bible in his early period, The Scripture Principle is the pinnacle of Pinnock's later period. This work provides the cornerstone for this chapter, although his other writings on Scripture certainly are taken into account since they prepare the ground prior to publication of The Scripture Principle and attempt to

While the focus of study in this chapter is on Pinnock's The Scripture Principle (1984) (see above, p. 2), attention is also given to his more recent works. However, especially in Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way Through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective (1990), Pinnock does introduce some new elements into his system (e.g., his admiration for Gabriel Fackre's version of narrative theology [p. 180, n. 1]). It is still unclear what direction this trend will take him, but it seems that his view of biblical authority has not evolved since 1984. While emphasizing four "sources" of theology (Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience), Pinnock still maintains that the Bible is the "unique" source and "funds" the other three (p. 71). This conclusion was confirmed in a telephone conversation with Pinnock (December 4, 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Some of the material in <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), Pinnock presented at Fuller Theological Seminary in the Payton Lectures for 1982 (<u>The Scripture Principle</u>, viii).

clear up some of the questions that have arisen since the publication of that work. 1

That <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984) was not an easy book to write has been acknowledged by Pinnock himself.<sup>2</sup> In it he makes no claim to uncover new data or to offer expertise, he aims rather to "produce a better understanding of what we know already."<sup>3</sup> Instead of revising his earlier <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971),<sup>4</sup> Pinnock decided that

These writings include Pinnock's "The Inerrancy Debate Among the Evangelicals" (1976), 11-13; "Inspiration and Authority: A Truce Proposal," The Other Side, May 1976, 61-65; "Fruits Worthy of Repentance: The True Weight of Biblical Authority" (1977), 29; "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology," in Biblical Authority, ed. Jack Rogers (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1977), 47-73; "Evangelicals and Inerrancy: The Current Debate" (1978), 65-69; "The Ongoing Struggle over Biblical Inerrancy," Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation 31 (1979): 69-74; "The Inspiration and Interpretation of the Bible" (1980), 4-6; "'. . . This Treasure in Earthen Vessels': The Inspiration and Interpretation of the Bible" (1980), 16-19 (this article is very similar to the one immediately preceding); "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 153-55; "Hermeneutics: A Neglected Area," TSF Bulletin, May-June 1982, 2-5; "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" (1985), 13-34; "Biblical Authority and the Issues in Question," in Women, Authority, and the Bible, ed. A. Mickelsen (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 51-58; "Catholic, Protestant, and Anabaptist: Principles of Biblical Interpretation in Selected Communities," Brethren in Christ, Ristory and Life 9 (1986): 264-75; "Reflections on The Scripture Principle" (1986), 8-11; "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy" (1987), 73-80; "Peril with Promise" (1987), 53-69; Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way Through Modern Theology from an Evangelical Perspective (1990); and (with Delwin Brown), Theological Crossfire (to be published at the end of 1990 or the beginning of 1991. Pinnock has given me a copy of his sections of the book).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock confesses to having written and rewritten the work several times (<u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], viii). He agrees with James Orr that the subject of revelation and inspiration is probably the most difficult, at the present time, to "write upon wisely" (cited from Orr's <u>Revelation and Inspiration</u>, 1), and likens such writing (including his own) to trying to smooth down a large rug, only to find that a wrinkle reappears "somewhere else" (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], viii).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. That is, it seems that it is not Pinnock's intention to produce previously unthought of evidence in the way of "fresh" exegesis of the biblical passages which discuss Scripture, or new discrepancies among the scriptural phenomena. Rather, his purpose is to reinterpret the data already before us.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>In my personal interview with Pinnock (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990) at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario, April 11-12, 1990, Pinnock mentioned that he had been tempted to revise his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), but then decided that the

the need existed to present a positive, systematic, and contemporary understanding of "the Scripture principle and the authority of the Bible"; that a "defense of the full authority and trustworthiness" of the Scriptures was essential in a landscape in which the Scripture principle is in "crisis"; and that "classical Christians" who hold to the full authority of the Bible required assistance "to move ahead in the understanding of their conviction."

This threefold aim is paralleled by a tri-dimensional "paradigm"<sup>2</sup> for understanding such matters as biblical inspiration, authority, and reliability: (1) the divine inspiration of Scripture "that arises organically out of the Christian pattern of revelation"; (2) the "human character" of the text as the "form in which the Word of God was communicated to us"; and (3) the Holy Spirit's ministry "in relation to the Bible and the dynamic interaction between the two."<sup>3</sup>

subject needed an entirely fresh approach.

Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], vi-vii. Observe that Pinnock nowhere in his The Scripture Principle (1984) defines exactly what he means by the "Scripture principle." However, he appears to have in mind the idea of subjection by Christian believers to the authority of the Bible as the "written Word of God" (see The Scripture Principle, ix). Barry Harvey, in his "Hard at Work in the Fields of the Lord," Books and Religion, September 1986, 11, comments that "Pinnock uses the term 'Scripture principle' to designate the willing subjection of believers to the proposition that in the Christian Bible there is a text that, while produced by human means, is a locus of God's own authoritative communications on those doctrinal, ethical or spiritual matters about which Scripture teaches."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This is Pinnock's own expression in <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), xviii, 222. See my own discussion in chap. 5, below, pp. 350-360).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], xviii. Such a paradigm is, according to Pinnock, "sufficiently broad to capture the major themes and specific enough, when opened up, to introduce the reader to a large number of issues without losing his or her attention" (ibid.).

The importance of these three dimensions of "the Scripture principle" are brought out in Pinnock's observation that "if we do not embrace the divine inspiration of Scripture, we will run the risk of losing our apostolic norm and truth standard." However, Pinnock does not believe that holding to the divinity of the Scriptures is enough, for "if we neglect the human character of the Bible, we will not be able to grasp what it is saying and will give it misplaced respect." Finally, even while holding to the divinity and humanity of Scripture,

I plan to follow this threefold outline as we explore Pinnock's recent thinking on the subject of biblical authority and reliability.

What were the factors which brought about Pinnock's new look at the Scriptures? Rex Koivisto speculates that the shift from Trinity to the "more 'free' doctrinal atmosphere" at Regent College, 1 coupled with the publication of Berkouwer's English translation of Holy Scripture in 1975, were "influential" in Pinnock's transition.<sup>2</sup>

it is Pinnock's conviction that "if we forget about the Spirit, we run the risk of falling into legalism and losing the freshness of scriptural purity" (ibid., 222).

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Koivisto, 147. Pinnock admits that the "free," nonthreatening atmosphere at Regent College enabled him to do some rethinking after the polemical days in the SBC. Nonetheless, he also credits Stephen T. Davis' The Debate about the Bible: Inerrancy versus Infallibility (Philadelphia: PA: Westminster Press, 1977) as having had a large effect on his doctrine of Scripture (Pinnock Interview [1990]). That Davis' views had an impact on his thinking is evident in Pinnock's "Foreword" to Davis' work. There, while declaring his own allegiance to "the position of Biblical inerrancy," Pinnock admits that he believes "that there are many more ways than one to defend a high view of Biblical inspiration and authority, and all of them should be tried; "that "this unassuming book" will push inerrantists to "greater honesty and explicitness in their exposition of the concept;" and that Davis' thesis "will provide a pastoral service to those who are troubled with marginal difficulties in the Bible" (Pinnock, "Foreword," in Stephen T. Davis, <u>The Debate about the Bible:</u> <u>Inerrancy versus Infallibility</u> [1977], 11-12). This is not to say that Pinnock did not feel some "uneasiness" regarding Davis' proposals (ibid., 12-13). For further study of Pinnock's evolution to a new perspective, see his call for charity toward those whose hesitation over inerrancy "is due to their honest judgment and not to any weakness of their evangelical convictions" (Pinnock, "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology" [1977], 68). A early response to this article is to be found in James I. Packer's "Encountering Present-day Views of Scripture," in The Foundation of Biblical Authority, ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1978), 63-80. Further evidence of Pinnock's changing perspective is found in his admissions that inerrancy is a conviction of recent origin and that it is inappropriate to express the full evangelical conviction regarding Scripture (Pinnock, "Fruits Worthy of Repentance: The True Weight of Biblical Authority" [1977], 29; compare his militancy of just a couple of years previously. See my discussion in chap. 1, above [pp. 75-78]). Still, Pinnock makes it clear that, at this stage, he continued to hold the Bible to be "inerrantly true" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Koivisto, 147. G. C. Berkouwer's <u>De Heilige Schrift</u>, vols. 1 and 2 (Kampen, Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1966-67), was translated and edited by Jack B. Rogers and published as <u>Holy Scripture</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1975). Koivisto remarks on Pinnock's changing view of Berkouwer's doctrine of Scripture which he claims can be observed when Pinnock's <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 103, is

Pinnock, <u>contra</u> Koivisto, contends that there has been a "basic continuity accompanied by minor adjustments in style and emphasis" rather than a reversal in his doctrine of Scripture. These "adjustments" have to do with all three facets of Pinnock's paradigm.

# Authority: The Continuing Crisis of Modern Theology

Just as Pinnock's earlier writing on Scripture emerged from a conviction that biblical authority (as with all theological authority) was in a state of contemporary crisis, 4 so too in his later period. In his view, proponents of "the new theology" have, ever since Schleiermacher, "deliberately and repeatedly" called into question the

compared with his "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology" (1977), 62, and "The Ongoing Struggle over Biblical Inerrancy" (1979), 71. However, that Pinnock does not presently consider Berkouwer's view of Scripture beyond reproach is evident in his observation that "one becomes very suspicious . . . when Berkouwer wants to correlate the Bible with the faith of the church, seeming to deny its objective truthfulness" (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 159).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 153. The "continuity" Pinnock refers to probably points to his argument that both <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971) and <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984) espouse that "the Scripture principle belongs to the essence of Christianity and constitutes a crucial component in its pattern of authority and revelation" (<u>The Scripture Principle</u>, 222).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>That is, concerning the Bible's own claims to its inspiration; what to do with the phenomena of Scripture; and the interaction of the Spirit and the Word (ibid., 154-55).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>The factors already mentioned as important in understanding Pinnock's shift in perspective regarding the Scriptures, as well as other underlying reasons, are discussed more fully in chap. 5, below (pp. 343-360).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See our discussion regarding Pinnock's earlier view of the crisis in authority in chap. 3, above, (pp. 147-150). Pinnock's use of the expression "The Crisis of the Scripture Principle" in his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), xii, seems to be a conscious echoing of Wolfhart Pannenberg's chap. 1, in <u>Basic Questions in Theology:</u> <u>Collected Essays</u>, 1:1-14.

"normative authority" of the Bible. Such factors as the cultural shift to "secular modernity," the rise of biblical fiticism "of the kind that treats Scriptume as a merely human document and frequently debunks its claims on various levels," and the feeling that orthodoxy "silences God" by "locking him up in a book" and creates a petrified," rigid style of faith that is "false to the dynamic transcendence of the Bible," have, in Pinnock's view, been responsible for the rise of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>Scripture Principle</u> (1984), xiii. Pinnock argues here that a "flat denial of the Scripture principle in the classical sense," the collapse of the "house of authority based upon it," and the "subsequent disintegration of the orthodox creed" have all proceeded from the "liberal theological revision." Such denials, so Pinnock holds, can be "direct" (e.g., Edward Farley, C. F. Evans, James Barr, and Gordon D. Kaufman), or "indirect" (e.g., Langdon Gilkey, Bultmann, Tillich, and Barth). See ibid., 228, n. 14, 15.

This is, according to Pinnock, the "most important" reason. He envisions it as beginning with the Renaissance, but being extended by "the rationalist modernity and having been brought on by the Enlightenment" in addition to the "liberal response" to it (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], xiii). In the same place, he notes that "the modern mind dislikes traditional authorities such as the Bible" and insists on subjecting to rational scrutiny such premodern categories as sovereign God, subject man, resurrection, atonement, grace, wrath, incarnation, and cognitive revelation. This attitude is seen by Pinnock as a form of "rebelliousness" which, by silencing the Bible as "divinely authoritative," "seeks to edge God out of the world and leave humanity autonomous in it" (ibid.). For further explanation, see Pinnock's "Our Audience: Atheist or Alienated?" (1986), 44. In the same work, he distinguishes between "secularity" and "secularism" (see ibid., 39-40).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock holds that biblical criticism functioned in such a way that it first discredited the "literary nature" of the scriptural books and then "exposed difficulties" in the Bible's truth claims. While "pretending to be a key to the elucidation of the text," criticism instead placed the Scriptures so much in the human context that it became "well nigh impossible to consider its authority as anything more than human." The situation was made even more difficult for conservative believers, according to Pinnock, since they had "erred" by exaggerating the "absolute perfection of the text" and downgrading its "genuine, humble humanity" (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], xiv).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>This, contends Pinnock, is a "theological" reason for the crisis of biblical authority. A "rigid" Scripture principle is seen as an inhibition to the development of Christianity (ibid.). In ibid., 212, Pinnock poses some of the questions which seem to demand other than biblical answers (e.g., the fatherhood of God in an age of women's rights, salvation in Christ in a pluralistic world, Jewish conversion to Christianity, judgment, homosexuality, fall of Adam, vicarious atonement, the nature of God, and the existence of Satan).

a "neo-Christianity without a Scripture principle" and the reaction of conservatives in exaggerating the perfection of Scripture. 2

Although the liberal wing of Christianity, in Pinnock's view, stands indited for its part in the destruction of the Scripture principle, he also recognizes that part of the crisis is due to the inability of conservative Christians to present a united front. From a distance, while it seems that "everyone dwells in the same house of biblical authority," Pinnock remarks that it is "apparent" that "the house contains various rooms and closets in which one or another of

¹Ibid., xiii-xiv. Theology without the Scripture principle is, in Pinnock's perspective, out of control. It can only degenerate into "open-ended pluralism" and will face "unlimited revision." Such is the gulf between "classical Christianity based upon the Scripture principle" and "neo-Christianity without a Scripture principle," that Pinnock doubts that reconciliation between the two is really possible since the well-being of the church and the proclamation of its message is at stake (ibid., xv). This comment is of interest, especially when one takes into account Pinnock's forthcoming <a href="Theological Crossfire">Theological Crossfire</a> (an evangelical-liberal discussion with Delwin Brown). For further study of Pinnock's view of the liberal contribution to the crisis of authority, see his "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology" (1977), 50-54, and <a href="Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology">Theology</a>"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Pinnock's contribution in <u>Theological Crossfire</u>, chap. 2, p. 8 (Typescript).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), xvi-xvii. observes that this is true in spite of the fact that the "liberals are scrambling to find a viable alternative to it" and that the conservative position is deeply rooted in the Bible and Christian tradition. The "very tough questions" raised by biblical criticism such as literary problems, biblical diversity, defective copies and translations, canonicity, New Testament "correction" of the Old, and the claims made by the Bible for itself have all served to exacerbate the problem of evangelical disunity (ibid., xvi). This is in addition to the fact that Pinnock characterizes conservatives as exaggerating what they can prove from the Bible about its own inerrancy; as being selective regarding the doctrinal verses while ignoring how the New Testament writers actually handled the Old; and as exhibiting confusion regarding Christ and the Scriptures (Pinnock, "Reflections on <u>The Scripture Principle</u>" [1986], 9). See also Pinnock's "Fruits Worthy of Repentance: The True Weight of Biblical Authority" (1977), 29, and "A Call for the Liberation of North American Christians" (1976), 23, where he maintains that true belief in biblical authority is shown in hearing and obeying, not in inerrancy.

this mixed multitude resides." The "problem is aggravated by the success of the evangelicals." They have now, Pinnock maintains, moved out of their subculture where "disagreements went unnoticed," into the limelight "where their differences are given attention and subjected to some analysis." In summary, then, it is clear that Pinnock holds that liberalism is responsible for the present crisis of biblical authority, but that the situation is only exacerbated by the failure of conservative Christians to provide unified solutions to the problems posed.

<sup>1</sup>Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), xvii. These include those who take their stand with the inerrancy of the King James Version or the original autographs, those who find "infallible" and "inerrant" to be quite flexible terms, those who apply inerrancy only to the "purpose of a biblical writer," and those who hold a view of biblical authority that encompasses scriptural pluralism or an appeal to ecclesiastical authority in order to buttress biblical authority (ibid.). Here, Pinnock recommends Robert M. Price's "The Crisis of Biblical Authority: The Setting and Range of the Current Evangelical Crisis," as the "best taxonomy" of evangelical diversity regarding this question (The Scripture Principle [1984], 228, n. 27).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., xvii. Thus, the need for a systematic treatment of the Scripture principle that "faces all the questions squarely and supplies a model for understanding that will help us transcend the current impasse" (ibid., xvii-xviii. This is reminiscent of Robert K. Johnston's Evangelicals at an Impasse (see especially pp. 5-7, 15-35). Pinnock maintains that there are almost no "balanced," "full-scale expositions" of the evangelical position (The Scripture Principle [1984], xviii). An exception to this, for Pinnock, is Henry's God, Revelation and Authority (see ibid., 228, n. 28, where Pinnock also claims that Barth and Berkouwer do not speak for the evangelicals in the English-speaking world, partly because of their European context, and partly because they emphasize event rather than content). It is worthy of notice that Pinnock does not appear to take into account the diversity among evangelicals in his earlier work as much as he does in his later.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>In an article in reaction to Lindsell's <u>Battle for the Bible</u>, Pinnock commented that what is "so unfortunate" about the inerrancy debate among evangelicals is that it is taking place between scholars who should be pitting themselves, instead, against such <u>bona fide</u> opponents of biblical authority as Barr, Nineham, or Evans ("The Inerrancy Debate among Evangelicals" [1976], 11). See also <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 223-4. For further discussion of the evangelical side of the authority crisis, see Pinnock's "Reflections on <u>The Scripture Principle</u>" (1986), 8-9; <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), 22; "Evangelicals and Inerrancy: The Current Debate" (1978), 67-69.

Observe that Pinnock aims to steer a path in his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> that avoids "an unnecessarily low view on the one hand and an inflated view on the other" ("Reflections on <u>The Scripture</u>

# The Word of God: The Issue of Authority

In line with his earlier view, Pinnock sees revelation, which he defines as "the self-disclosure of God," as operating within a "pattern." In The Scripture Principle (1984), Pinnock seems to understand the overall category of revelation as functioning through two major aspects—"general" and "special" revelation. The former, he regards as truly "revelational of God," and even salvational in that in it "the whole of nature declares the glory of God" and "God offers himself to everyone in the secret of each person's heart." "Special" revelation, on the other hand, Pinnock views as making clear what is

Principle" [1986], 8). In his "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?" (1987), Pinnock proposes "simple biblicism" as the <u>via media</u> between liberalism and "elaborate biblicism" (pp. 75-76) That Pinnock is sensitive that his present understanding of Scripture could be perceived as similar to that held by those he calls "liberal" is accented in his "Reflections on <u>The Scripture Principle</u>" (1986), 10-11. There he notes that the difference is plain and lies in the fact that he holds "fast to the content of Scripture as infallibly normative" while "trying to be honest about how it works." See also Pinnock's "Response to Delwin Brown" (1989), 75, where he confirms that his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984) was both a defense and a thorough criticism of the traditional evangelical doctrine of Scripture.

<sup>1</sup> See our discussion in chap. 3, above, pp. 150-165.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock now defines 'revelation' as "the self-disclosure of God." This term he sees as a central biblical category; maybe even having "a certain logical priority" over salvation since "God's way of salvation still has to be disclosed" (ibid., 1). One's definition of revelation, contends Pinnock, is of vital importance, since it defines one's view of Christianity. For example, if revelation is defined as personal encounter, Christianity can only consist of fallible apostolic teachings; if universal intuition, then Christianity is a mere human construct; if historical acts of God, Christianity must be "divined" (i.e., guessed at) from meanings of events; and if cognitive and substantive, Christianity is determined by the information delivered by revelation (ibid., 4). See also ibid., 24, where Pinnock argues that we cannot afford to be vague about the meaning of revelation since "nothing less than the clarity of the gospel is at stake here."

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 6-7.

"rather hidden and unclear" in general revelation. 1 Just as he views revelation in general as working within a pattern, so too with special revelation. 2 The complex structure of the latter, he recognizes in the fact that God discloses himself by acting in human history, by giving "some understanding of his will" to prophets and apostles, by becoming flesh in Jesus Christ, by the movings of his Spirit, and by providing written Scriptures. Each facet, Pinnock argues, contributes something vital, and "we ought to view each complementary relationship with the others." 3

### The Pattern of Special Revelation

Pinnock does not equate "special revelation" with the Bible.

Rather, the Scriptures are the "medium" of "Christian revelation."

Revelation in the Old Testament is considered by him as occurring in the "context of establishing a covenant with Israel," and consists of

Ibid., 7. In relating these two facets of revelation, Pinnock remarks that "the world and its history was made by him [God] and for him [i.e., general revelation], and fitted to become the stage of his incarnation. He who loves the world and presents himself to every soul has communicated himself without reservation for the salvation of all believers [i.e., special revelation]" (ibid.).

 $<sup>^{2}</sup>$ This is the subject of the major portion of his first chapter (see ibid., 8-20).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Tbid., 4-5. Pinnock remarks that the temptation is to select just one aspect (e.g., experience, event, or oracle) and "make it the whole" (ibid., 5). Included, here, is a discussion of "general" and "special" revelation. Pinnock holds that the former refers to "a cosmic revelation accessible to all peoples," while the latter deals with "a more focused and specific revelation of the will of God to Israel" and constitutes the "main emphasis of the Bible" (ibid.). Still, he does not discount the soteric nature of "general" revelation. Rather, he states that he "cannot see how any revelation from the God of the gospel can be other than saving in its basic significance if it is truly a revelation of him. If we grant such a revelation to all peoples, such as Scripture describes, then it must be the disclosure of the gracious God from whom our creaturely existence flows" (ibid., 7).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 8. In the same place Pinnock contends that the "Christian revelation" drew sinners to the mercy seat of God "before there even was a Bible." In <u>Theological Crossfire</u>, he remarks that "Scripture alone gives Christians access to the original revelation" (chap. 2, p. 6 [Typescript]).

God both acting ("to achieve redemption") and speaking ("in order to communicate his plan in detail"). So too, with revelation in the New Testament. The Christ-event is viewed as the "centerpiece" of the Christian revelation as well as "the center of the claim to revelation in the New Testament, "2" while the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost is seen as the "second crucial feature of the New Testament revelation claim." Nevertheless, Pinnock maintains that the Spirit is not seen in Scripture as canceling the truth given in Jesus, but rather "freshly focusing that truth for the current situation."

Where does Scripture fit into the pattern of revelation present in both Testaments?<sup>5</sup> Pinnock claims that at the very least

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 9. Act and word, "content and confirmation," and "history and language" are all seen as equally important (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 10-11. Luther, "quite properly," according to Pinnock, pointed to Jesus Christ as the material center of the Christian message "and inquired of every book of the Bible how it preached Christ, the Word of God" (ibid., 10). To emphasize, Pinnock claims that "Christology, not Bibliology, occupies center stage in Christianity" (ibid., 16).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 12. The coming of the Spirit is viewed as filling in the "subjective" side of revelation in the Christian understanding by balancing the "objective pole" (ibid.). While the objective pole has to do with the "content" of what is revealed, the subjective has reference to the "way" it is "received and appropriated." Both, according to Pinnock, need emphasis. He comments that orthodoxy too often highlights the "propositional nature of revelation at the expense of the existential," while liberalism scresses the "inner, subjective dimension" (see ibid., 5).

Pinnock's perspective on the objective and subjective facets of revelation is clarified in his comment that "revelation surely

Pinnock's perspective on the objective and subjective facets of revelation is clarified in his comment that "revelation surely involves more than propositional truth." He observes that divine activity, a way of life and existential involvement are vital as well. However, for him "it is impossible to deny that doctrine is part of divine revelation." Still, in order to retain this conviction, it is not necessary, argues Pinnock, to "exaggerate" the place of biblical content in Christian theology (Pinnock, "Building the Bridge from Academic Theology to Christian Mission," Themelios, April 1984, 4).

<sup>4</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>In ibid., 4, Pinnock summarizes the pattern of special revelation as a combination of experience, event, and oracle.

"it has a place as documentation." Yet such "thought experiments," which ask whether Christianity would still be true without Scripture, 2 ignore the fact that God spoke in the past and that "the Scriptures are seen to be an extension of this modality of divine speech." Thus, for Pinnock, the Bible also functions as the "medium of the Christian message" of salvation, 4 as "a witness to the saving deeds of God and their significance for us, "5 as "a deposit of revelational

¹Ibid., 15. Pinnock is quick to observe, though, that if Scripture is merely "documentation" and not "revelation," then "the Bible could still be prized as the unique medium of revelation, but we would not have to be worried by the presence in it of slips and errors" (ibid.). James Barr appears to hold that the Bible ranks primarily as documentation. He opines that "it is not at all clear from the New Testament itself that Jesus or the earliest Christians intended Christianity to be a scriptural religion, a faith bound and controlled by its own scriptures and one in which such scriptures would have ultimate authoritative status" (Barr, Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1983], 13).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>As Warfield affirmed in his <u>The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible</u>, 210. For the same view, see James Barr's <u>Holy Scripture</u>: <u>Canon</u>, <u>Authority</u>, <u>Criticism</u>, 19. Pinnock admits that the necessity of the Scripture principle is practical rather than absolute, "but a practical necessity of the greatest importance" (here [in <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, xv], Pinnock cites J. I. Packer's "The Necessity of the Revealed Word," in <u>The Bible</u>: <u>The Living Word of Revelation</u>, ed. Merrill C. Tenney [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1968], 31-49). See also Pinnock's <u>Tracking the Maze</u> (1990), 173-74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 16. See also ibid., 3, where Pinnock remarks that the Bible is an integral provision of the "divine self-disclosure and cannot be put aside." In his "Three Views of the Bible" (1977), Pinnock comments that "essential to evangelical spirituality and theology is the attitude to Scripture which regards it as the Word of God written" (p. 60).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 17. The Scriptures are likened, here, to a telescope which "summons us to look through, not at, it and see the starry heavens." Again, Pinnock remarks that "the Bible is a means to an end, not an end in itself" (ibid.), or the "context to stand in when you want to encounter God and have him address you" (ibid., 18).

Jibid., 18. Pinnock in the same place, however, quickly points out that "when we say that the Bible is a witness (as Barth also stresses), we do not deny that it is part of the revelation it witnesses to but simply make it clear what the burden of the Bible as witness is" (Pinnock cites Klaas Runia's Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962], 18-56, as critiquing and correcting Barth's tendency to exclude the scriptural text from the revelation it attests [The Scripture Principle, 230, n. 34]). In Theological Crossfire, Pinnock observes that "revelation and

truth,"1 and as "the religious classic of Christianity."2

Still, the Scriptures are, from Pinnock's point of view, a "provisional revelation" in that they themselves point forward to "a full revelation" at the coming of Christ's kingdom. This is not to say that the Bible is not "valid and true," but that at present there are "many questions" that must remain unanswered, even though we "have the norms of Scripture." Pinnock summarizes his position by stating that "if revelation has not been exhausted, even though normatively outlined in the Scriptures, then it is possible to hope that our understanding of the truth will grow and mature over the years."<sup>3</sup>

the Bible are distinct and not just identical ideas. Revelation refers to the divine self-disclosure in history and in every human heart, particularly in the Christ event bringing salvation to sinners. Revelation is that to which the Bible bears testimony. It cannot just be lifted off the surface of the Bible as from a flat plane. We have to seek God's revelation on the basis of the Scripture's witness which sets forth the progressive unfolding of God's saving purposes still awaiting completion at the coming Christ and the kingdom of God" (chap. 2, p. 51 [Typescript]). See also our discussion of Neo-orthodoxy's doctrine of Scripture, above (chap. 1, pp. 47-50).

¹Thereby providing the church with "a kind of charter or constitution by which to measure her doctrine and practice" (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 18). To explain, Pinnock observes that the Scriptures "draw a circle around us, indicating the ground where it is spiritually and theologically safe to walk and the field where it is nourishing to feed. They do not answer every question we may wish to put to them, by any means, but they do establish a fundamental orientation and direction for the community" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 19. Not, however, that "religious classic" is to be construed as a "merely human text" having power to illumine experience (as in David Tracy, <u>The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism</u> [New York: Crossroad, 1981], chaps. 3-5). Rather, Pinnock views Scripture as a "religious classic" in that "it uniquely embodies the style of faith and experience that characterizes Christians" and because it "enjoys pride of place in witnessing to the experience of the risen Lord, and as such, it illumines and transforms the lives of those who place themselves under its authority" (<u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 19). See also Pinnock's <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), 34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 20. To illustrate, Pinnock observes that since we are in touch with the world religions, we are now in a position to "learn what is true in their experience of God who addresses everyone." It may, he contends, also "be possible to sharpen our understanding of what God is intending in the Bible. In the mutual struggle and competition of religions we can all be stimulated and challenged to learn more of the divine mystery. This need not relativize the absolute truth given in Jesus Christ that is,

Having placed Scripture within the pattern of revelation as a "product" and component of revelation, Pinnock is ready to address the inspiration and authority of the Bible as the "Word of God." 3

we believe, the definitive revelation of God" (ibid.). For further study, see Pinnock's "Acts 4:12: No Other Name under Heaven" (forthcoming 1990-91); "Toward an Evangelical Theology of Religions" (forthcoming); and "Inclusive Finality of Universally Accessible Salvation" (an unpublished paper presented at a panel discussion based on Pinnock's "The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions" [1988], 152-68), at the Annual Meetings of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Diego, November 17, 1989. An indication of the negative reception to Pinnock's views can be found in the responses by Marc T. Mueller ("A Response to 'The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions' by Clark H. Pinnock," presented at the ETS Meetings,
November 17, 1989 [typescript]); David J. Hesselgrave ("Reply to Clark
Pinnock's 'The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions,'"
presented at the ETS Meetings, November 17, 1989 [typescript]; and Roger Nicole (according to Pinnock (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990], Nicole did not present a printed copy of his remarks). Mueller's objections to Pinnock's views are based on his own Calvinistic perspective. For instance, Mueller objects that Pinnock's paper is a "robust compendium of 'favourite ideas'" that does not reflect "a truly biblical understanding of the awesomeness of God's sovereignty over history, the nations and the world of men" (Mueller, 2). In addition, Mueller argues that Pinnock's views regarding general revelation and world religions are "incomprehensible in the light of Romans 1:18-23 and 3:10-18" (ibid., 3-5); and that his interpretation of 1 Pet 3:19-4:6 is not faithful to biblical eschatology (ibid., 9-10). Hesselgrave contends that Pinnock "seems to misunderstand non-Christian religions" (Hesselgrave, 1), that his "treatment bristles with textual problems" (ibid., 2-3), that his "approach is deficient from a Great Commission point of view" (ibid., 3), and that Pinnock's view may "muffle" the call for world evangelization (ibid., 3-4). Observe that Pinnock intends that his next book should address the issue of religious pluralism (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990).

Other "products" of revelation include historical events, verbal communication, the incarnation, and the outpouring of the Spirit (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 19).

<sup>2</sup>That is, Pinnock views Scripture as "revelation cast into written form," not just a witness to past revelation (ibid., 16).

Notice that Pinnock is somewhat cautious about using the term "the Word of God." He sees this expression as not limited to the Bible and as having positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, it "secures" for the Scriptures a place under the category "Word of God," but on the negative side it can tend to "hamper and inhibit" our use of the phrase for the contemporary proclaiming of the gospel since, in his view, "when a person testifies to the saving grace of God, he or she is indeed speaking the word of God." In Pinnock's mind, "content [i.e., objective truths about the gospel and ourselves] is an important facet of this phrase" (ibid., 14).

### Scripture's Own Witness to Its Authority

In his earlier period, Pinnock was very sure that the Bible explicitly taught a doctrine of its own inspiration; 1 now he asks, "What sort of doctrine of inspiration is supported by the Bible's own witness, fairly assessed?" 2 This question, Pinnock believes, encompasses two important considerations: (1) the church's decision to accept the bipartite canon, and (2) the kind of Scripture principle to which the Bible commits us. 3 Pinnock's own approach to his question is to examine, in turn, the evidence from the Old Testament's witness to itself, the New Testament witness to the Old Testament, and the New Testament witness to the Old Testament, and the New Testament witness to pursue, not only via the explicit doctrine of Scripture contained therein, but also in the way the biblical writers used other biblical writings. 4

# The Witness of the Old Testament to Itself

Pinnock understands the Old Testament as revealing evidence of a "canonical process in motion." Illustrative of this process is the way "the figure of Moses" is presented in the Pentateuch as God's prophet and the mediator of his law; his writing down the word of the

<sup>1</sup>See our discussion in chap. 3, above, pp. 168-175.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 29.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ Ibid., 29-30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 29-30. Pinnock argues (<u>contra</u> his early view; see chap. 5, above, pp. 309-310) that "too often the valuable evidence contained in the way the New Testament writers handle the Old Testament is passed over . . . as if all that needed to be consulted were the so-called doctrinal verses." "The evidence of use must not be passed over in this kind of study," he argues, "because it fills out what the direct claims themselves were taken to mean by those who made them" (<u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 30). Pinnock approvingly cites here (see ibid., 230, n. 2) James D. G. Dunn's "The Authority of Scripture According to Scripture," <u>The Churchman</u> 96 [1982]: 222, n. 62).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 30-31. Yet, Pinnock considers that questions like which books? which text? what kind of authority? why anonymous? are not answered by the Old Testament (ibid., 31).

Lord being seen as "an integral part of his office." According to Pinnock, the pre-exilic historical books (Joshua, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings) rarely refer to Moses' literary activity and the pre-exilic prophets never refer to it explicitly, whereas the post-exilic books (Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah) often refer to Moses as the "author" of authoritative, inscripturated revelation. It is evident, from Pinnock's perspective, that the Pentateuch was "formed over many centuries," Moses, being the "instigator" of the literary activity that produced it. The point is that Moses is "seen to have mediated a revelation" that emerged as "an authoritative document." Israel's consciousness of that fact is evidence that the Scripture principle is "native" (not alien) to "the basic nature of Israel's relationship with God." While Pinnock does not hold that the document produced by

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock (see ibid., 230, n. 5) appears to have derived his view of the literary role of Moses from William S. La Sor, David A. Hubbard, and Fredric Wm. Bush, <u>Old Testament Survey: The Message</u>, <u>Form, and Background of the Old Testament</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 61-65 (hereinafter referred to as La Sor).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 31. Observe that, in this context, Pinnock does not consider it necessary to declare an opinion on the authorship of the Pentateuch; something that remains a "matter of debate among Scripture specialists" (ibid.). Rather, Pinnock seems to infer that since the post-exilic books refer most often to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, he was the "author" mainly in the sense of "instigator," while other anonymous writers and editors continued the process of penning the first five biblical books. Pinnock explains that "the popular idea that biblical books were normally the work of a single author writing under the inspiration of God does not fit the complexity of many biblical books, which seems to have multiple authorship" (ibid., 33).

La Sor et al. (who, in Pinnock's view, offer a "moderate, sensible theory" [The Scripture Principle, 230, n. 5]) suggest that "the tradition [of Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch] is a growing one, with the connection to Moses extended to some laws, to Deuteronomy, to all laws, to the whole Pentateuch" (La Sor, 62; at this point La Sor cites R. J. Thompson, Moses and the Law in a Century of Criticism Since Graf, in Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, vol. 19 [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970], 2ff.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 31-32.

this process was held to be "immutable and inflexible," he maintains that the data from the Old Testament definitely support "a very strong claim to verbal revelation in human language."

The community is also seen as playing an active role in the process. Pinnock comments that "it is impossible to avoid the conclusion" that others than the prophets played a hand in shaping the biblical documents. Their role included decisions as to ordering of material, working to bring out the essential thrust of the prophetic messages, and adaptation of the oracles to new situations. The "complexity of many biblical books," Pinnock contends, undermines the popular idea that the writing was "normally" the work of an individual author writing under the inspiration of God.<sup>3</sup>

¹Ibid., 32. In the same place, he postulates that ancient treaty documents, although authoritative for the particular circumstances, could be altered at the will of the sovereign. He recognizes updating, revision, and filling out in the two versions of the Decalogue, in the expansion of the Pentateuch, and in the way the classical prophets interpreted the Mosaic materials in new ways. Thus, he concludes that the Old Testament does not entirely support the Judaic Scripture principle which involved "rigid immutability," but rather favors a view which looks at the Old Testament as "a forward-looking and revisable trajectory open to the future, not a closed text complete and sufficient in itself" (ibid.). Pinnock also remarks that "the prophets did not have so divine a viewpoint as to make their words absolute" (ibid., 33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 34. Lest one be "carried away" by this fact, Pinnock qualifies his position by warning that conservative scholars sometimes irresponsibly use the strong claims referring to the prophetic oracles in reference to other texts (to which they do not apply); that "even though the prophets claim divine authority for their messages, a certain human element often appears in them as well" making their words less than absolute; and that the prophetic claims refer principally to their "preached oracles," rather than to the texts we have. Pinnock explains that the prophets were "preachers rather than writers," and that "references to their written work are rare." In fact, he submits that people other than the prophets themselves took responsibility for the writing of their messages (ibid., 32-33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 33. Our minds can be rid of this notion, states Pinnock, if we dismiss the idea that "the scriptural writers wanted to make a name for themselves and wrote as individual authors rather than representatives and servants of the community. Divine inspiration marshals more than a short list of famous writers we can name. It calls into service a whole company of gifted persons who contribute in different ways to the ultimate product and do so anonymously for the most part. Although it would make it easier for us apologetically if the anonymity were raised and we could say that only these

In addition, Pinnock notes that the Old Testament collection contains "different kinds of literature," some of which "stand on [the] high ground of revelation and others that occupy a lower position." Such books as Ecclesiastes, for instance, are to be properly regarded as "God-given Scripture," but, argues Pinnock, one should not pretend that they are like Amos or Deuteronomy. Instead, he appeals to his readers to "distinguish between kinds and degrees of inspiration." To recapitulate, Pinnock views the Old Testament process of Scripture formation and collection as strongly supporting the opinion that the later Scripture principle was not a "misdevelopment." He also stresses that the community played a definite role in the shaping of that Testament; this being indicative, as far as he is concerned, of the fact of the inspiration of the text cannot be thought of in "simplistic terms."

acknowledged prophetic persons had anything to do with the Scriptures we now read, we are not able to say that" (ibid., 33-34). It is no surprise, then, to find that Pinnock refers to the "social character of inspiration" (ibid., 64). This stance is very similar to that of Paul J. Achtemeier in his The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals, 114-18. For more information, see Pinnock's review of The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals, by Paul J. Achtemeier, 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock,. The Scripture Principle (1984), 34. In the same place, Pinnock observes that "many texts express the Word of God, but some are content to perform lowlier tasks, such as giving utterance to a spiritual struggle or expressing an honest doubt."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 35. The "kinds" of inspiration, Pinnock appears to equate with the "many kinds of [biblical] writing" (e.g., poetry, proverb, law, oracle, story, parable, and prayer), whereas, it appears that he finds "degrees" of inspiration in the fact that "in one text God may be the speaker; [and] in another text human advice seems to be offered." Pinnock attempts to clarify the situation by an analogy with the church. In his view, "the biblical books perform different functions, some humbler, some nobler. Our aim should be to take the record in its entirety, comparing one part with another, so as to come up with the truth in its fullness" (ibid., 35-36).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 34. That is, Pinnock contends that it is a "distortion" to suppose that the Bible is comprised of merely "ancient documents" and is not the "normative Scriptures of Israel" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 35.

# The Witness of the New Testament to the Old

As in his earlier stance, Pinnock regards Jesus' view of the Old Testament as highly significant. Still, those early conclusions are not completely duplicated. Although the originators of the New Testament (including Jesus) cite the Old Testament hundreds of times, Pinnock thinks that he can discern a "common pattern" in their usage. There is, he maintains, a "clearly dialectical attitude," since, whereas they endorsed it as the written Word of God, they also read and interpreted it as a "premessianic text coming to fulfillment in their time."

Pinnock does not see how anyone could deny that Jesus and the apostles believed in the divine authority of the Hebrew Scriptures as the written Word of God, although they used the Old Testament in various ways. He does, however, caution against misusing the evidence. For instance, Pinnock considers that Christ's usage of Scripture did not reveal a concern for the original manuscripts. On the contrary, he argues that Jesus' use of the Old Testament ranged "widely over the available texts," suggesting that "for Jesus it was the message conveyed rather than the precise wording that concerned him." Although "grateful" for God's speaking in the past, Jesus was

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 40. Here, Pinnock comments that "if Jesus' authority means anything to us, then it means something here" (i.e., on the authority of Scripture). Compare our discussion of Pinnock's earlier view of Christ's doctrine of Scripture, above (chap. 3, pp. 171-75).

Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 36-37. Jesus, for Pinnock, is perhaps best described as a "progressive-conservative." Hence, care should be taken not to use Jesus to pitch the doctrine of inspiration too high (e.g., Warfield) or too low (e.g., Käsemann) (ibid., 37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>According to Pinnock, it "seems clear" that Jesus did not just feign respect for the Scriptures because the people of his day believed it. Instead, "it was an intimate conviction that he cherished" (ibid., 37).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock lists allusive, confirmatory, argumentative, and polemical uses (ibid., 37-38).

"particularly excited" about what God was doing and saying in the present. While holding that Jesus did not break the law, Pinnock argues that he was more concerned to be loving than "to be seen as strictly adhering to the letter of it." Neither, for the later Pinnock, does the available evidence permit an appeal to Jesus' usage "to settle the debates over biblical inerrancy, " for Jesus' authority cannot be captured by the conservative party in disputes concerning biblical criticism. On the contrary, Pinnock maintains that the Scriptures principally witness to Christ, rather than the other way around.

The other side of the dialectic--the messianic qualification of the Old Testament--meant that the New Testament writers viewed the Hebrew Bible as "a stage in God's revelation moving toward the coming

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. According to Pinnock, healing or picking a few ears of corn to eat on the Sabbath was not considered Sabbath-breaking by Jesus, although he knew that it did for others. "For him the Word of God was gospel, not legalistic code, and he resisted handling it in any other way" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>It is "stretching the evidence," in Pinnock's view, to appeal to Jesus in order to solve such questions as the original autographs, authorial intention, and the status of the New Testament. In fact, such appeals are "anachronistic" (ibid., 38-39).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>To illustrate, Pinnock observes that just because Jesus cites a psalm of David or a prophecy of Isaiah, it does not follow that "he is placing his divine authority on the line for the precise literary authorship of those texts." On the contrary, "in quoting them, Jesus always calls attention to what the Scriptures teach and not how they got to be written in the final redaction" (ibid., 39).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid. In the same place, Pinnock contends that Christ's view of the Bible is important because it testifies to what our view should be, but at the same time, we are not justified in using the Bible "as an independent proof to establish objectively the authority of the Scriptures apart from faith in Jesus" (Pinnock cites here [ibid., 231, n. 10] James Barr's protest against such a practice in his <u>Fundamentalism</u>, 72-85).

Of interest, here, is Pinnock's observation that although the term 'evangelical' refers to those who are committed to "the gospel as it is biblically defined," evangelicalism's "basic concern is with the gospel, not with the Bible per se, but we are convinced that the one will not remain pure for very long without the other" (The Scripture Principle [1984], xi).

of the Messiah and the kingdom." Therefore, from Pinnock's perspective, the Old Testament "was in every respect infallible and valid" for its own period, but has to be "thought out as the Word of God" at the present time. This conclusion, he observes, should give religious liberals cause to question why they take a lower view of the Old Testament than that taken by Jesus and his apostles, while conservatives "will need to explain" their handling of the Hebrew Scriptures in the light of the messianic qualification. In addition, he argues that "it must be proper to use the text the way the New Testament does," which means that we can interpret the Old Testament Christologically and not always according to the original meaning.

It is worthy of notice that Pinnock's discussion of the New Testament view of the Old Testament does not include a detailed exposition of texts such as 2 Tim 3:15-17 or 2 Pet 1:19-21, but that his focus is on the way Christ and the apostles actually used the Old

¹Ibid., 40. Hence, in Pinnock's view, Jesus and the New Testament writers identified "themes of continuity, areas of fulfillment, and even points of negation" (ibid.). Examples of this latter category in Jesus' teaching, Pinnock finds in the nullification of the Mosaic permission of divorce (Deut 24, Matt 19:3-9); in Christ's dropping the judgment element of Isa 61 in his Nazareth sermon (Luke 4:18); Jesus' certainty that he knew what God's intention was in ordaining the Sabbath (Mark 2:27); the prohibition concerning oaths; and Christ's seeming critique of the tradition of clean and unclean food. Still, Jesus, from Finnock's perspective, cannot be depicted as "anti-Torah in the slightest." How can the seeming contradiction be tied together? Pinnock considers that Jesus, "without ever denying that the Scriptures were the word of God when they were given, . . . could [also] say they were not the word of God to the present stiuation [sic], in which the kingdom of God was coming near" (ibid., 41). For comparable illustrations from the Pauline corpus, see ibid., 42-43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 43-44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 44. Pinnock is quick to offer two exceptions to this rule, however. First, he regards rabbinic exegetical methods as historically relative, not normative. Although Paul is seen as using such a method in Gal 3:16, this should not be taken as a proof for detailed inerrancy or as a precedent for twentieth-century Christians to adopt the whole gamut of rabbinic techniques. Second, it should be kept in mind that Jesus and the apostles "enjoyed an authority and position in divine revelation that gave them a freedom to declare in what respects the Old Testament was or was not valid and relevant" (ibid.).

Testament.<sup>1</sup> Their use of it is seen by the later Pinnock as indicative of their utmost trust in it as the written Word of God as well as its being a part of God's "unfolding revelation."<sup>2</sup> For Pinnock, the Old Testament Word is not to be viewed in any other way than through the light shining from the Incarnate Word. Anything less runs the risk of "Judaizing the church and her message."<sup>3</sup>

# The Witness of the New Testament to Itself

In his early view of Scripture, Pinnock proposed that the analogy of the Old Testament writings, the authority of Jesus and the apostolic structure he put in place, as well as the natural way in which the early Christians accepted the new writings, all support the legitimacy of the decision of the early church to receive the

¹Pinnock's most detailed discussion of 2 Tim 3:15-17 in The Scripture Principle (1984) is found in his "Introduction" (p. xviii). There, he remarks that the emphasis of the passage is "practical" and "evangelical." He explains that "in this wonderful text Paul places his emphasis on the plenary profitability of the Scriptures in the matter of conveying a saving and an equipping knowledge of God. He does not present a theory about a perfect Bible given long ago but now lost, but declares the Bible in Timothy's possession to be alive with the breath of God and full of the transforming information the young disciple would need in the life of faith and obedience" (ibid). For other similar allusions to the same passage, see ibid., 39, 40, 45, 55, 63, 69, 80, 127, and 150. On p. 40, Pinnock specifically denies that Paul discusses "the nature of inspiration or the degree to which the Scriptures are reliable in order to achieve their practical goal. He is simply not interested in our modern debates about inerrancy and sticks to the profitability of the Scriptures in the practical realm. The only way 2 Timothy 3:16 can be used as a proof text for the modern discussion is by first reading a modern view back into it."

While not actually mentioning the reference, Pinnock alludes to 2 Pet 1:21 in his comment that "when Peter affirms that no prophecy originated in the human mind but from the impulse of the Spirit, he is referring to the prophecies uttered and then to the prophetic Scriptures, but not to Scripture in general, much of which is not prophetic." Peter, so Pinnock holds, is "not making a judgment about the entire Old Testament here, and we have no right to twist his words to apply to the whole Christian Bible" (ibid., 40).

<sup>2&</sup>quot;Progressive revelation," says Pinnock, is "too simple" a term
to describe what happened. Rather it was an "unfolding" and a
"deepening" (ibid., 175-77).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 42.

apostolic scriptures into the canon. This pattern still stands in Pinnock's more recent writings concerning Scripture. 2

Paul, on the basis of such passages as 1 Cor 7:25, 40, is presented as a case study to show how apostolic authority worked. He, according to Pinnock, was conscious of "an eschatological proviso" over himself. He only knew in part; "exhaustive knowledge and comprehensive infallibility" did not belong to him.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, Paul was frank regarding his human weaknesses, rather than trying to hide them behind his apostolic office. Thus, his writings "do not resemble Scriptures sent directly from heaven but are more human than that." Again, Pinnock maintains that Paul preferred to exhort rather than exercise his authority in an "authoritarian manner." This is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See chap. 3, above (pp. 175-78).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 45-48. Pinnock's stance here is opposed to Rosemary Ruether's opinion (in her <u>The Church Against Itself</u> [New York: Herder and Herder, 1967], 96-121) that the whole concept of apostolic authority is an invention of the subapostolic church to protect itself against Gnosticism (<u>The Scripture Principle</u>, 48, 231, n. 18). For another recent portrayal of the New Testament canonical process, see Pinnock's <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), 15-16. See also his <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980) for Pinnock's affirmations concerning the authenticity of the New Testament documents (p. 76).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 48-49. Such texts as 1 Cor 7:25, 40, Pinnock believes, indicate that Paul was very conscious that on some matters he had "no word of the Lord," but could only offer advice. Thus, Pinnock concludes that "his [Paul's] modest attitude allows us, his readers, to argue controversial matters with him and not feel guilty. I think he would welcome that, as long as our attitude is modest and respectful" (ibid., 49).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 49. Pinnock understands Paul's "human weakness" as meaning that we "have to think hard to figure out what Paul is teaching, and what, in our context, we should be learning." Such questions as to whether or not Paul's teaching on hairstyles should always be considered a sign of the male-female distinction (1 Cor 11:4) or if he meant that a woman could never be the main pastoral leader (1 Tim 2:12) come to Pinnock's mind here (ibid.). Further discussion of biblical authority and feminism can be found in Pinnock's "Biblical Authority and the Issues in Question" (1986), 51-58. He concludes that "feminism has a problem of biblical authority" (p. 58). See also Stanley N. Gundry's "Response to Pinnock, Nicole and Johnston" in the same work (Women, Authority, and the Bible, ed. A. Mickelsen [Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986], 59-64). Observe that pp. 59-63 deal specifically with Pinnock's view of feminism and the Bible.

seen as indicative that there was a certain liberty in Christ that the believers needed to experience. 1

A similar paucity of direct claims to apostolic authority in at least half of the New Testament is noted by Pinnock.<sup>2</sup> This, he explains, is suggestive that the New Testament writers were concerned to allow the authority of Jesus to shine out, rather than to make large authority claims for themselves.<sup>3</sup> The gathering of their writings into a canon is viewed by Pinnock as "a natural and gradual process" by which the church confirmed and gave it communal backing as led by the Spirit.<sup>5</sup> Having surveyed the evidence for the authority

¹Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 50. In line with this conclusion, Pinnock contends that Paul would be more pleased for believers to engage him in dialogue than to interpret him legalistically (ibid.). Is this, however, what Paul actually had in mind? A coherent explanation of Paul's remarks in 1 Cor 7:25 can be found in The Expositor's Bible Commentary, 12 vols., ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1976), 10:235. Rather than construing Paul's words to mean that he was merely offering Christian "opinion" (see, for instance, The Interpreter's Bible, 12 vols., ed. George A. Buttrick [Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1953], 10:84), it is proposed that "he [Paul] is not suggesting that his command is any less inspired [that a direct command of Christ] but is only calling attention to the fact that what he is presenting is not derived from a direct teaching of Jesus himself." Such a view seems to account for all the parts of the text, for Paul's own idea of his apostleship, and for the context of the passage.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock particularly mentions the four Gospels and the Book of Acts (The Scripture Principle [1984], 50).

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ Ibid., 50-51. Still, Pinnock holds that the writers would not have had any trouble defending their own authority had they been forced to by controversy (ibid., 51-53).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Although hastened by the rise of heresies (e.g., Marcion) in the second century (ibid., 53, 54).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid. As well as the objective factors already referred to (the analogy of the Old Testament, the authority of Christ, and the pattern of authority set in place by him), Pinnock now argues (contrathe earlier Pinnock) for a subjective aspect in the process as well (ibid.; see also our discussion of Pinnock's early view of the witness of the Spirit in chaps. 2 and 3, above [pp. 135 and 162-65]). In his Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), Pinnock observes that the acceptance of the New Testament canon was less an official action of the bishops in council than "an instinctive recognition of God's authority resident in these books" (p. 15). Further data on the New Testament canonical process is available in Pinnock's Tracking the Maze (1990), 6-7.

of inscripturated revelation, Pinnock now turns to the relationship between the inspiration phenomenon and biblical authority.

#### Inspiration and Authority

Pinnock's discussion of biblical authority has already raised some of the issues closely connected with the subject of biblical inspiration. These include his convictions that the Bible does not supply a doctrine of its own inspiration and authority that answers all of our questions; that the Bible has the "practical purpose" of testifying to salvation in Christ; that the Scriptures exhibit a complexity which includes many kinds of literature and several levels of claim to authority; that the New Testament shows, in its use of the Old, marks of both utmost respect for the smallest detail as well

¹See Pinnock's conclusions regarding inspiration and authority (The Scripture Principle [1984], 54-60). Of significance here is Pinnock's remark that when the New Testament writings were produced, "it was the authority of Jesus people were concerned with," whereas the authority of the four Gospels were not a subject of controversy. But, with the circulation of false gospels in the second century, Pinnock maintains that both issues became crucial (ibid., 50-51).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Although, for the later Pinnock, there is no question that the Bible views itself as the product of divine revelation (ibid., 54), by 1977 he had begun to question whether human beings are in a position to judge how God ought to have given his Word (Pinnock, "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology" [1977], 64) See also his remark in <a href="The Scripture Principle">The Scripture Principle</a> (1984), 75, that the Scriptures do "not really inform us how we ought to handle the perplexing features in the text."

This is of great importance for hermeneutics, since any book must be interpreted in line with the kind of book it is (ibid., 55). Such a concentration on the saving truth of the Bible does not mean that one ought to depreciate the "cognitive substance" of biblical teaching. Rather, so Pinnock believes, "it means that we should focus our attention on the transforming message of the Bible, which comes across with tremendous power from the texts we now possess, and place the great bulk of our concern upon heeding and digesting that glorious and liberating Word" (ibid., xx). For further information, see Pinnock's "'. . . This Treasure in Earthen Vessels'" (1980), 19, and The Scripture Principle (1984), 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>The truth of a particular text is discerned by reference to the genre in question. Pinnock states it as follows: "Although God is the ultimate origin, we might say author, of the whole Bible, he is not the speaker of every line in it except in an ultimate sense, so that we must give thought to what he is saying to us in each place" (ibid., 56).

as a desire to read the text contemporarily; 1 and that the case for biblical errorlessness is "not as good as it looks." 2 How, then, does he define 'inspiration'?

#### Pinnock's View of Inspiration

While agreeing with Warfield that 'inspiration' means "breathed out by God," Pinnock considers that the context of its only use in Scripture (2 Tim 3:16) "also suggests" that the biblical text possesses a "spiritual power" that makes it so effective. The character of inspiration is seen most gainfully, he believes, in the products of the inspiration process. The diverse kinds of literature found in the Scriptures would indicate, so Pinnock holds, that "many kinds of divine activity seem to have been involved" in their production. Thus, he argues that it is "probably best" to view inspiration "as a divine activity accompanying the preparation and production of the Scriptures," which, although we are unable to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock proposes that both Word (the objective factor) and Spirit (the subjective factor) be allowed to function together (ibid., 57).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This conclusion is due to considerations such as the fact that God gave the Bible through "all manner of secondary authors," and that we "cannot determine ahead of time what kind of text God would give in this way" (ibid., 57). Specifically rejected here is the inerrancy syllogism (see chap. 3, above [p. 169]. Pinnock gibes, "Of course God cannot lie, but that is not the issue" (The Scripture Principle [1994], 57).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See Warfield's chapter entitled "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration," in his <u>The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible</u>, 131-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 63. In the same place, Pinnock observes that "the obvious lesson to learn about inspiration from seeing what it produced is that inspiration is not one single activity but a broader superintendence over the process of Scripture making that is not simple but complex" (ibid.). He also defines inspiration as the "dynamic work of God" by which he works in the writers "in such a way that they make full use of their own skills and vocabulary while giving expression to the divinely inspired message being communicated to them and through them" (ibid., 105).

observe how the Spirit worked alongside the human "agents," we can examine what was done.

The inspiration category means, for Pinnock, that God "gave us the Scriptures," but it does not dictate to us just how we must think of the production of the individual sacred writings. Rather, Scripture, though having God as its ultimate cause, came into existence through "many gifts of prophecy, insight, imagination, and wisdom that the Spirit gives as he wills." Inspiration means, too, that everything taught within the Bible is to be "heard and heeded, because it is divinely intended." Yet, as Pinnock stresses again, while "every segment is inspired," not all are inspired in the same way; the differences enabling the Bible to speak powerfully to different people in different settings.<sup>2</sup>

### Inspiration's Implications

The inspiration of Scripture, so Pinnock believes, has important implications in several areas. In the field of hermeneutics, for instance, he proposes that a conviction regarding inspiration will produce "a spirit of openness to the text." The Bible will not be looked at as a merely human book, but as the Word of

¹Ibid., 63. For example, Pinnock maintains that Genesis refers to sources, that the book of Jeremiah contains the oracles of his preaching as well as narrative which stitches it together, and that the final redactions of the anonymous historical books were probably the work of a large number of scribes and historians. This latter observation leads Pinnock to the conclusion that "inspiration cannot be reserved for the final redactor" but should be seen as "a charism of the people of God" (as has been suggested by Bruce Vawter's Biblical Inspiration [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1972], 162-66) and extending even to the "selection" of the canon (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 66). Rather than being individualistic and "punctilinear" [punctiliar?], Pinnock recognizes the "social character of inspiration" operating "within the whole history of revelation" (ibid., 63-64).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 64. See also Pinnock's "The Inerrancy Debate among the Evangelicals" (1976), 13, regarding his view that inerrancy relates to "the intended assertions of the Biblical documents."

God which draws the reader to accept the "discipline" of its teaching. Such an approach to Scripture is deemed by Pinnock to bring one into conflict "with the pretensions of a good deal of biblical criticism," which very often operates under a suspicion of the veracity of the biblical text as well as a willingness to overthrow it. Openness to the text also means, as far as Pinnock is concerned, interest in the text both during its stages of production and in its final form as well. However, the "greatest attention" should be given to the "final shape of the Bible."

The fact that the products of divine inspiration exhibit complexity and diversity should also alert us to the difficulty of how to appeal to the Bible. Pinnock takes the stand that since biblical revelation is progressive in character (e.g., it moves from

¹Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 64. Since Scripture is the inspired Word of God, says Pinnock, "it ought to be approached in a spirit of faith, in the context of the believing community, and received as a reliable witness to God and his relationship to us" (ibid., 65). This, comments Pinnock, is the "major theological preunderstanding" which underlies his approach and use of the Bible. He confesses: "I understand my task to be an explication of the deposit of faith in the Bible leading on to a serious attempt to communicate it in a relevant way to the people of my generation. The quest for relevance, important in itself, can never assume the influential role which only the Bible should have [i.e., as 'the one and only normative pole of theological information']" (Pinnock, "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" [1985], 18). Thus, can be explained, maintains Pinnock, his continued acceptance of the reality of Satan, the existence of angels, bodily resurrection, the sacrificial atonement of Christ, the historical fall, the deity and humanity of Christ, the second coming, and the judgment of the wicked (ibid., 19).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 65. In Pinnock's view, criticism is "useful" when it illumines the meaning of the Scriptures, but is "harmful and useless" when it attempts to overthrow the text given to us. "No one can be wiser than the Bible" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>A study of the pre-canonical form could shed some light on the meaning of the final redaction, asserts Pinnock (ibid., 65).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 65. This constitutes, on Pinnock's part, a rejection of the work of scholars like Ogden and Marxsen who have tried to find a "more primitive layer of tradition than the New Testament itself." Pinnock objects that such a reconstruction disowns biblical authority and enthrones the human expert (ibid., 66). However, Pinnock's stand here also undermines the evangelical stress on the original autographs (as espoused by the early Pinnock as well).

premessianic to messianic), the reader should take careful note of where a particular passage occurs. An additional level of complexity demands that we recognize that "there are various levels of authority from one passage to another." And, as well, the reader needs to avoid taking a biblical passage out of its "canonical context."

Moving from the hermeneutical implications of divine inspiration, Pinnock passes to the theological. Belief in the inspiration of Scripture guarantees that "the data for theology will be sought in the vehicle of revelation first of all." Theological thinking based on "free inquiry" is invalid; it must continually consult Scripture.<sup>3</sup> In this, theology differs vastly from the other

¹Ibid., 67. Pinnock observes that there are commands and exhortations, parables and poetry, pieces of advice and expressions of ecstasy. While some passages aim to instruct in doctrine, others want to transform lives, and still others challenge to discipleship. In each case, states Pinnock, the Bible "tells the truth . . . but not the same kind of truth." Therefore, in his view, "we must be alert to picking out the kind of truth claim each passage makes on us."

Pinnock illustrates his point by "provocative" examples from protology and eschatology. Thus, he does not consider it necessary to understand the story of the fall of Adam as an historical, eyewitness account. Rather, the form of the story seems "saga like" and is "probably an etiological inference drawn from human experience of guilt and salvation in history and presented in the form of what must have happened in the beginning to bring this about. The visual appearance of the incident need not be thought of as the heart of what is being asserted in the passage." Likewise, concerning biblical eschatological assertions, Pinnock remarks that "belief in their absolute authority does not commit the reader to the interpretation of them as anticipatory, eyewitness accounts of what the future shall be. This, in fact, lands us in the nest of problems we associate with date setting and prophetic crystal ball-gazing in premillennialism today. Rather, these assertions about the future are oriented to the present as well and are designed to bring out the opening up of the future in a symbolic way." From this perspective, for example, "sitting at table" in the kingdom of God has "a much more than literal meaning," and statements about hell say more about the "dread possibility" of rejecting God than high temperature (ibid., 67-68).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 68. Too much biblical study is, to Pinnock's mind, focused on small units in the text and fails to examine the meaning in relation to the broader perspective. While admitting that passages need to be first studied "in their own right," he pleads that they be eventually placed "in the framework of the whole revelation of God" (ibid.).

Jibid., 68-69. Still, Pinnock holds that human reason has a large role in the initial decision to appeal to Scripture, in evaluation of what Scripture teaches, and in conveying the truth of

sciences. He explains that we do not "come to the Bible wondering if it will tell the truth. We already trust it to tell the truth, and we come to discover what the truth is." Thus, if the Bible asserts as fact or truth, something controverted by science, "the believer will have no choice but to side with the Scriptures."

A further major implication of inspiration, recognized by Pinnock, is that it warrants a "basic coherence in the Bible's teaching and a solid reliability in the Bible's narrative."

"Focused" as Scripture's purpose is (according to 2 Tim 3:15-17), he believes coherence and reliability pertains particularly to the covenant purposes of God and to the history of salvation as it is "germane to the purpose in view."

Such issues as the diversity or unity of Scripture, the situational orientation of much of the biblical material, and the factual reliability of the Scriptures all

Scripture to others. Yet, for Pinnock, "it [i.e., reason] does not have the competence to overthrow biblical teachings once they have been established" (ibid., 68; see also ibid., 196, 213,). For instance, Pinnock observes that Christians who believe the Bible "are confident that this book understands the audience we face better than it [i.e., our audience] understands itself and better than we can hope to understand it" ("Our Audience: Atheist or Alienated?" [1986], 37). Occasionally, Pinnock maintains, reason rises up to challenge Scripture, and "when it does we ought to put it in its place, its place being a supportive, ministerial, non-legislative one. But for the most part reason serves us well" (Pinnock, "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" [1985], 33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 69. See also Pinnock's "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" (1985), 18-19. Notice particularly his confession: "I take Scripture to be, on what I think to be good and sufficient evidence, the prescriptive norm and paradigm tradition, the canon and rule of faith and practice" (pp. 18-19).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 69. Pinnock observes that Scripture's authority would be broken if it could not "rule" and that we have "a right to expect coherence and reliability." In fact, "the Scripture principle would be overthrown should the Bible turn out to be self-contradictory and fallacious" (ibid.). See also "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" (1985), 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 69-70. For further study of this facet of Pinnock's views, see ibid., 58, where he suggests that the Bible does not claim inerrancy but divine inspiration and a general reliability (also, Pinnock's "Erickson's Three-Volume <u>Magnum Opus</u>" (1986), 30, and "Peril with Promise" (1987), 56).

come to the surface in Pinnock's discussion of biblical reliability. 
These are discussed further in the next major section of the present chapter. 
2

The final category discussed by Pinnock as an implication of inspiration is that of church authority. He considers that the same impulse which led the early church to recognize the scriptural canon also resulted in belief in the creeds and the authority of the church. In Pinnock's view, it is "good and scriptural" that God provided Scripture to convey his Word and then raised up church leaders to "protect and define the message. "A Nevertheless, the very fact that the church has accepted the biblical canon is seen by Pinnock as evidence of the church's recognition that "the criteria of truth lay outside herself in a text that stood over her and at times even against her."

See idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 70-79.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See below, pp. 249-54.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 79. Pinnock explains, in the same place, that "underlying the logic of the Scripture principle is the belief that God will see to it that his truth will not perish but be reliably transmitted." For his remarks on the place of dogma within the church (particularly Protestantism), see ibid., 80. See also Pinnock's discussion of the "catholicizing" of evangelicalism and the validity of creeds and tradition in his "Tradition Can Keep Theologians on Track" (1982), 25-27, and his "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" (1985), 33-34, for his perspective on the role of tradition.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 80. Pinnock cites, here, such biblical evidence as 1 Tim 3:15; Act 20:28-30; 2 Tim 1:14; and 4:1-6. His conclusion is that "the Bible needs the church as its bulwark. How else will it be preserved, translated, interpreted, and proclaimed? How else will its message be protected against attempts to distort it? There is a link between the authority of the Bible and the work of the Spirit in the community" (ibid.). For further study of Pinnock's view of the value of tradition, see his contribution to <u>Theological Crossfire</u>, chap 2 (typescript, pp. 8-9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 81. See also, in the same place, Pinnock's discussion of the Protestant Reformation interpreted as a protest against an unbalanced alliance of "the threefold structure of authority" (Bible, church, and tradition). He observes that the Roman Catholic tendency to tie up "the package of authority" so tightly "binds the Word of God more to the creaturely realm than it wants to be and permits the message to come under too

### Summary

For the later Pinnock, the Scriptures are held to be authoritative because they provide documentation of the Christ-event. Even so, the Bible is also still seen as "provisional" in a certain sense, since Scripture itself looks forward to an eschatologically full revelation of Christ. While the later Pinnock views the canonical process as divinely ordained, he maintains that the evidence suggests that the community had a greater role in the inspiration process than is usually thought, and that the different kinds of literature included within the biblical canon must lead us to distinguish between kinds and degrees of inspiration.

While not undertaking a detailed exposition of such texts as 2 Tim 3:15-17 and 2 Pet 1:19-21, Pinnock asserts that the Bible's view of its inspiration stresses its practical purpose rather than pointing to a strict doctrine of inerrancy. According to the later Pinnock, the fact that the Scriptures are inspired by God (and so, authoritative) means that our theological endeavors will find their epistemological foundations in the Scriptures, that the Scriptures can be approached with the expectation that they will be found to be coherent and reliable, and that the Bible must be maintained as the primary factor in the three-dimensional structure of theological authority. 1

great a degree of human control." Luther, on the other hand, "saw that we must give Scripture the focus of our greatest attention and let it have a free ministry and the primary authority." For Pinnock's view of other "revered writings" (whether from Heidegger, Whitehead, Marx, Freud, the Mormons, Christian Scientists, or the Jehovah's Witnesses), see "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" (1985), 30. See also similar comments on the part of Pinnock on the authority of Ellen White in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in his "Rice's Reign of God: An SDA Theology for the Masses?" (Spectrum, February 1988, 57).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock mentions the Bible, the church, and tradition (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 81). More recently, in his <u>Tracking the Maze</u> (1990), 71, 171-80, Pinnock has advocated Thomas C. Oden's Wesleyan "quadrilateral" of sources--Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason--as "most instructive" (see ibid., 180, n. 1;

In that Pinnock's <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984) appears to take a cumulative, integrating approach, some of these facets of Pinnock's views are expanded considerably in the following two major sections of this chapter. This is particularly true for his insights regarding the reliability of the Bible in relation to its humanity. It is to that aspect that we now turn.

### In Human Language: The Issue of Reliability

Our first duty in regard to the Bible, claims Pinnock, is "to treat it as the written Word of God given to the church." A second duty follows: "the responsibility of accepting that God gave his word in human language." It is Pinnock's contention that if we would understand what God is saying to us in the Bible, then, we have to take note of its vocabulary, literary forms, propositions, and cultural background, for it was God who has "willed the human characteristics of the text."

and Oden's <u>Systematic Theology</u>, vol. 1, <u>The Living God</u> [San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1987], 330-39). The "quadrilateral" also features in Pinnock's contributions to <u>Theological Crossfire</u>, chap. 2, pp. 5-6 (Typescript).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 85. Pinnock explains that "veneration for the divine authority of Scripture," particularly in opposition to liberalism, has "made it difficult to do justice to the human side of Scripture" (Pinnock, "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology" [1977], 61).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 85. In the same place, Pinnock explains that our examination of the "humanity of the Scriptures" should not be cause for anxiety because it has already proven "its effectiveness in carrying out its religious purpose in Christian experience." After all, he observes, "the Bible was not given as an end in itself but as a medium through which one can come to know and love God, just as eyeglasses are not purchased to be an object of examination but to help us see better." This same "spectacles" illustration is used by Calvin in his Institutes, 1.6.1. According to Pinnock, the Christian who has already come to know and love God "through the good news of the Bible" is not likely to be threatened by some "supposed flaw on the periphery of the medium through which this knowledge has come (unless, of course, some rationalistic theologian comes along and suggest [sic] that he or she ought to!)" (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 86).

For Pinnock, it is "unbelief" to be afraid of the divinely chosen human form of Scripture. He remarks that "we are a little"

Faithfulness to the text, the later Pinnock argues, resists the tendency to interpret the Bible aside from its historical context. Thus, for him, although the Scriptures are the Word of God, there is a danger reflected in the expression "What the Bible says, God says," because the vehicle of revelation is thereby dehistoricized, progressive revelation is lost sight of, and each text is made into an "immutable and inerrant proposition." The only remedy to such "precarious deductions" is to give due attention to the humanity of Scripture.

# Human Scripture as Divine Accommodation

There are, emphasizes Pinnock, at least three categories that can be used to explain the humanity of God's Scriptures. These are accommodation, incarnation, and human weakness. It was necessary for God to employ accommodation in order for us to understand anything he wanted to communicate. In fact, Pinnock stresses that for the infinite God to reveal himself to finite humankind, God is "compelled"

reluctant to face up fully to the reality of the human in the case of Christ and the Bible, for fear of obscuring the divine authority, and even the divine essence, of them both" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>This expression is credited, by Pinnock, to Augustine in ibid., 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. Pinnock explains further that in spite of the fact that God obviously does command one thing for one group and something else for another (e.g., the Jewish and Christian communities), there is an impulse at work in the doctrine of Scripture to "minimize" such features of the text (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. Pinnock agrees with Bromiley and Berkouwer against Rogers and McKim that the early church fathers did not appreciate the Bible's humanity and tended towards a docetic view of Scripture (ibid., xii). In his "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" (1985), Pinnock observes that the evangelical preoccupation with the divine side of Scripture has persuaded conservatives that they have grasped everything in the Bible. This, he suggests, has resulted in a failure to produce creative work (p. 24).

to produce creative work (p. 24).

Even more important, from Pinnock's perspective, is the fact that neglect of the human side of Scripture has resulted in its authority being construed in a too authoritarian manner and its text being used merely as a source of doctrinal propositions (see Pinnock's Theological Crossfire, chap. 2, pp. 3-4 [Typescript]).

to employ the symbols of earthly speech and experience." What this means is that God selected "analogies from our universe of discourse" and framed "his message in the cultural forms we understand," in order to effectively communicate himself to us. It also suggests that the readers of Scripture need to inquire what the text meant in the cultural world in which it was first given "before deciding what it ought to mean in our own."

Some, according to Pinnock, are "very uneasy" about the whole category of accommodation. They pose the question, "If revelation is not above the human and the Bible is not unmistakably divine, how far is it free from human taint, and how far can it be trusted?" 3

Pinnock's answer is that such uneasiness is "surely overreaction," in that God "gives his Word to us authentically in ways that we understand, in ways that are culturally specific and able to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 96. Pinnock proposes that we should perhaps think of earthly speech and experience as having been "created" by God "in order to make his self-communication possible" (ibid.).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. This uneasiness is such that some would want to avoid any use of the category of accommodation. For instance, Wayne A. Grudem (in his "Scripture's Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture," in Scripture and Truth, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1983]) offers six reasons why it is impossible to believe that God "intentionally" accommodated his speech in Scripture to make "incidental affirmations of popularly held false beliefs in order to 'enhance communication'": (1) accommodation would be contrary to the "unanimous witness" of the authors of both Testaments regarding the Holy Scriptures; (2) accommodation would imply a denial of God's "lordship over human language;" (3) accommodation would imply that God had acted contrary to his character as an unlying God; (4) accommodation would make Scripture an "eternal witness" to a lack of perfect truthfulness in God's speech; (5) accommodation would create a serious moral problem for us who are to be imitators of God's moral character; and (6) accommodation would misuse a summary statement about Scripture (2 Tim 3:16-17) to deny that it is part of God's purpose to tell us about minor historical details, and some aspects of astronomy, geography, etc. (pp. 54-57).

be understood by those who come later." Although acknowledging that God has not allowed "the forms of culture" to swallow up his revelation, Pinnock submits that "apparent errors" have been allowed to stand in the text. Yet, whether the biblical "flaws" have been permitted to exist by God's "inspiration or in his providence," Pinnock assures his readers that they "are not meant to make us stumble or divide the body."

The second category of explanation for the humanness of Scripture proposed by Pinnock is that of "incarnation." This, he holds, is "the prime example of accommodation in revelation." God, rather than being the One who stays far from humankind and everything creaturely, actually communicates to us, in Christ, through a "human life not protected against weakness and death." To Pinnock's mind it is "natural" to see the analogy between the incarnational character of God's revelation in Christ and the Bible. He explains that as the Logos "was enfleshed in the life of Jesus, so God's Word is enlettered in the script of the Bible." In each case, Pinnock contends, "the divine and human are truly present."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>In the same place, Pinnock offers the illustration of Jesus' use of the mustard seed as the smallest seed, although it is not "scientifically" the smallest seed in existence (<u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 96).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. Pinnock argues that it may help some (i.e., those believing in the inerrancy of the original autographs) to believe that the Bible was once free of these "apparent errors," but it cannot be proved that such a Bible ever existed, and the fact remains that our present Scriptures do not exhibit that kind of character (ibid., 96-97).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 97.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid. In the same place, Pinnock observes that in both Christ and the Scriptures there is "some kind of mysterious union of the divine and human, though of course not the same kind." The Christ-Bible analogy, he considers of importance in that it defends the true humanity of the Bible against "Docetism" (e.g., conservatism's pitching of the doctrine of Scripture too high) and its divine authority against "Ebionitism" (e.g., liberalism's pitching it too low). See also Pinnock's "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy"

The relation between the nature of Christ and the nature of Scripture leads Pinnock to the observation that just as Jesus' sonship was both hidden and revealed, so too with the Scriptures. Thus, he portrays the Scriptures as showing themselves to us as "ordinary writings," to be interpreted in "ordinary ways," but shining with glory to "the eye of faith." Nevertheless, Pinnock does not want the analogy between Christ and the Bible to be pushed to the point of univocity. While some argue that just as Jesus though human was free from sin, so the Bible though human is free from error, in Pinnock's perspective "sin and error need not be equated so closely."

Pinnock's third category explaining the relation of the divine and the human within Scripture is that of "human weakness." He holds that "revelation has not come to us in the unmistakable forms of glory but in the midst of human weakness." From his perspective, such

<sup>(1987), 101.</sup> 

¹Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 97. In a significant comment, Pinnock explains that "we must take care in our defense of the Scriptures not to give the impression that we are able to prove" their perfection in such a way as to make belief in them inescapable. God's revelation, he believes, "leaves room for cognitive freedom and does not welcome such apologetics as might try to rip away the veil" (ibid., 98). While, in his earlier years, Pinnock would not have wanted to give the impression that he thought to "prove the perfection" of the Scriptures, he appears to have softened his stance somewhat (see our discussion in chap. 3, above, pp. 191-92).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 98. In the same place Pinnock notes that Jesus, by his own admission, did not know everything, but spoke in first-century terms. "In this he did not sin, but acted as a man of his times." Pinnock considers that such texts as Mark 13:22 and John 12:49 suggest that he claimed "truth" for what he taught, but made no such claim for what he had not received from his Father. In other words, by analogy, "we cannot conclude that the Bible never makes any mistakes at all, should these not affect what the Bible was truly teaching us."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. For him, this is something to exult in rather than to be ashamed about. Pinnock observes that it is an "exaggerated concern" that is afraid that people will not believe in Jesus Christ unless all "trace of weakness" is removed from the biblical record. It is a matter of "disordered priorities," he believes, that makes the "quest for an errorless Bible that once was but is no longer" more important than the recognition that "the message of the Bible bring[s] human beings to Christ" (ibid.).

things as the fact that propositions fall short of expressing just what a speaker would wish<sup>1</sup> and that the Bible does not attempt to give the impression that it is flawless in historical or scientific ways are both evidences that "God uses writers with weaknesses and still teaches the truth of revelation through them." Inspiration, according to Pinnock, "did not make the writers superhuman." He does not see inspiration as cancelling out the writers' historicity or weaknesses, but rather as guaranteeing "that through them the true testimony to Jesus Christ should come that would have lasting normativity and authority in the church." This brings us to the place where we must unwrap Pinnock's view of the union of the divine and human in the process of biblical revelation.

communicates the truth about God's saving plan (ibid.).

Ibid., 98-99. Here, Pinnock mentions certain characteristics of language that make for misunderstanding and the need for further clarification. He mentions, for instance, the variety of meanings possessed by some words; the difficulty of carrying over a meaning from one language to another; and the mobility of language.

Pinnock points out that he has no desire to "malign" the Bible, but wants to show that God accepted a "definite limitation" upon himself in his willingness to speak to us "within the limits of human language" and to accept the risks of such a decision. In Pinnock's view, Barth was "right to speak about a distance between the Word of God and the text of the Bible," yet (contra Barth) the message given in "imperfect" language, Pinnock is convinced, effectively

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 99-100. In reaction to the Roman Catholic claim of infallibility and out of fear of secularism, suggests Pinnock, the perfection of the Scriptures has been exaggerated to make it appear that "God were the real author and the human writers mere phantoms and penmen." The fear is that the "slightest flaw" would bring down the authority of the Bible. Pinnock argues that "it is high time that we stopped denying the humanity of Scripture in this way." While explanations can be devised for the divergences between Mark 2:26 and 1 Sam 21:1-6 as well as between Matt 27:9 and Zech 11:12, Pinnock proposes that "it is not necessary or proper to seek them." Rather, what needs to be perceived is that God "uses writers with weaknesses and still teaches the truth of revelation through them." In this God cannot be charged with making a mistake, for "what God aims to do through inspiration is to stir up faith in the gospel through the word of Scripture" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 100. Again, Pinnock stresses that "we place our trust ultimately in Jesus Christ, not in the Bible." From his point of view, the Scriptures "present a sound and reliable testimony to who he is and what God has done for us. The marvel of it is that he has done it, not through angels, but through ordinary human beings, with all their limitations" (ibid.).

### The Interplay Between Human and Divine

The categories of accommodation and incarnation both emphasize the divine origin of the Scriptures without denying their humanness. The issue of human weakness, however, has brought Pinnock to the point where he must explain the relationship between the divine and human authors of the Bible. This may even be the very center of his present view of Scripture, for if (as he suggests) the Bible is to be counted as authoritative because it came from God, then one would want to know how the human writers were employed without their words becoming totally unreliable. Pinnock himself admits that this question involves a "great mystery," and though a speculative question, it also has practical implications. 1

What are the options available? Pinnock observes that the traditional doctrine of inspiration has regularly employed images of inspiration reflecting "total divine control" where God is thought of as "the author of the text," and the human writers as his "instruments." This view, Pinnock maintains, naturally fits the theory that God dictated the biblical text word for word, although it does not satisfy one who cares about "free human authorship." Whereas contemporary conservatives do not wish to admit the idea that God dictated the biblical text in a word-for-word fashion, Pinnock

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. Pinnock states the implications thus: "Were we to think of God dictating the Bible, we would certainly fall into the docetic error of denying its true humanity; if we put all the emphasis upon the literary freedom of human authorship, we might end up denying inspiration entirely, except in a nominal sense" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 100-101. Pinnock observes that recognition of the biblical writers as "truly authors themselves" rarely surfaces in the Fathers (Jerome is cited as an example of one who admitted the reality of the human authorship), while in regard to Scholastic theology he comments that the Aristotelian category of efficient causality was brought into use whereby "God effects his goal of an inspired Scripture by employing human beings as one might use a piece of chalk" (ibid). For further discussion of the patristic and medieval images of inspiration, he recommends Bruce Vawter's <u>Biblical Inspiration</u>, chaps. 2-3.

claims that "they still want to hold on to the results of such dictation."

To Pinnock's mind, "inerrancy thinking is deductive thinking rooted in the assumption of total divine control." After all, a text that is "word for word what God wanted in the first place" might just as well have been dictated for all the room it leaves for the human agents.<sup>2</sup> Such a position means that the human authors are controlled in a way that guarantees God as the real Author of the Bible. But, it also means that if the human authors made any kind of a "slip in the smallest detail," such would have to be attributed to God, which, according to Pinnock, is "impossible."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 101. To illustrate, Pinnock cites Wayne A. Grudem's "Scripture's Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture," 54-55: "Whether God speaks directly to people, through the lips of His spokesmen, or through written words, He is viewed as the sovereign Lord of human language who is able to use it however He wills to accomplish His purposes."

While few modern conservatives would admit to believing in the mechanical dictation of the Bible, Pinnock considers that they usually talk as if they did. "Materially they believe in it, but not formally." To Pinnock, for one to hold that "God predestined and controlled every detail of the text makes nonsense of human authorship and is tantamount to saying God dictated the text." To say anything else is, to his mind, "quibbling over words" (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 101).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 101. Any such slips, writes Pinnock, would have to be judged as unreal, and an explanation would have to be sought "to prove that no slip occurred." Pinnock argues that this approach holds a great attraction for ordinary believers who have not looked closely at the human dimension of the text, and who see it as a simple way of preventing all sorts of biblical denials. However, as he also points out, it forces one into difficulties with the phenomena of the text and stakes the whole truth of the Bible on not finding any real slips (ibid.) In ibid., 234, n. 29, Pinnock observes that Gleason L. Archer "thinks along these lines and has the ingenuity and the scholarship to make it seem to work." Nevertheless, Pinnock also contends that "if he [Archer] is to succeed, he will need to expand his Encyclopedia of Biblical Difficulties [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1982] to several additional volumes." On the other hand, he quips, "the first one may be sufficient to convince many not to approach things this way." Compare, here, our discussion of Pinnock's own early approach to the "unreal" biblical "difficulties," in chap. 3, above (pp. 192-202).

He sees the tendency of so many modern conservatives to think in terms of "total divine control" as stemming from contemporary evangelicalism's dependence on Calvinistic orthodoxy. The theology of Warfield or Packer posits, according to Pinnock, "a firm divine control over everything that happens in the world" and is "very well suited to explain a verbally inspired Bible. Such a view, Pinnock regards as monergistic, since "God's actions are the only ones that really count." Unless one allows a degree of "creaturely autonomy and divine self-limitation," it makes nonsense, or so Pinnock holds,

¹Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 101. Jinnock later qualifies this assertion by stating that some in the Reformed tradition (e.g., Barth and Berkouwer) would not endorse the high Calvinism he describes. Their view, so Pinnock believes, holds to divine sovereignty without denying human freedom "as rationality would invite one to do." Instead, they "leave the two in tension and unresolved." Similarly, states Pinnock, "there are many who do not think systematically and limit their Calvinism to this one subject" while having little "taste for other implications of predestinarian thinking." His difficulty with both these groups is "that they think opportunistically. They want to appeal to strong divine causality when it suits them (e.g., to secure a perfect Bible) but not when it doesn't (e.g., when a madman blows up an airplane). But one can only be permitted to do this if one admits that thinking consistently is not very important" (ibid., 102).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 101. But, Pinnock continues, not only the words of the Bible, "but those of the New York Times as well, are predestined in God's immutable decrees and cannot be other than they are." Here, he cites the Westminster Confession (chap. 3) as indicating that God ordains "whatever comes to pass" (ibid., 101-2; emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 102. In ibid., 234, n. 31, Pinnock refers to his Biblical Revelation (1971), 92, where he called this kind of thinking "biblical theism." He remarks that he "would now be inclined to call it 'Calvinistic theism'" (The Scripture Principle [1984], 243, n. 31). Notice also that in the same place he disapprovingly cites Warfield's argument that if God wanted to give his people a series of epistles like Paul's, he prepared a Paul who would "spontaneously" write them (Warfield, The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, 155 [quoted in chap. 3, above, p. 194]). This same quotation was used by the early Pinnock in his Biblical Revelation (1971) to argue for the idea that the "sovereignty of God does not nullify the significance of man" (p. 93). Notice, however, that the earlier Pinnock did not use the whole of Warfield's argument that "God could make a Paul to write exactly what he did write just as a builder could get rose-colored light in his church by installing rose-colored panes of glass" (as Pinnock [in The Scripture Principle, 102] puts Warfield's case from his The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible, 155-56). Probably this sounded too much like divine manipulation even for the early Clark Pinnock!

to speak of Scripture's "genuine human authorship." To say that God is in total control of the Bible's composition, Pinnock contends, leads "directly to Docetism, which reduces the human aspect to merely nominal."

The alternative to the "Calvinistic way," Pinnock proposes, is to be found in a dual approach. First, at the level of world view, he considers that "we ought to conceive of God's will as including all things within its scope but not determining all things." Second, in relation to the inspiration of the Bible, he broaches the idea of a via media between "the view that the Bible is the product of mere human genius and the idea it came about through mechanical dictation." More specifically, this means a "dynamic personal model" which would uphold "both the divine initiative and the human response." As far as the composition of Scripture is concerned, this means that God (by his Spirit) had a strong role to play in ensuring that "the truth was not distorted by the human receptors," while "human beings are active

¹Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 102-3. In regard to his The Scripture Principle, Pinnock writes that he has "suggested that we construe the Spirit's work in and through human writers in more dynamic terms than is possible in Reformed theology" (Pinnock, "Reflections on The Scripture Principle" [1986], 9). Still, it is important to consider that while an overemphasis on divine control leads to "Docetism," neglect of that same aspect can lead to a kind of scriptural "Ebionitism" (see our discussion in chap. 5, below, pp. 332-35).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 103. Rather than seeing God as predestining everything to happen just as it does, Pinnock views God as "able to overrule negative factors that come against his will and bring about a good result." To emphasize: "God does not take away freedom from the creature in order to force and enforce his will and gain his ends. On the contrary, God is everywhere at work in the creation upholding the structures of created causality, not working to undo them" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 103. In regard to the "dynamic" nature of inspiration, Pinnock remarks that God does not decide every word that will be used, but "works in the writers in such a way that they make full use of their own skills and vocabulary while giving expression to the divinely inspired message being communicated to them and through them" (ibid., 105).

and alive in responding to his initiative." Nevertheless, according to Pinnock, the fact that "variety and multiplicity characterizes [sic] the results" would indicate that the influence of the Spirit was not the same on each writer. 2

What does this mean for biblical reliability? Pinnock admits that if "we were after a perfectly errorless Bible," what he has proposed would not be enough. Such a text would have to be more strongly determined, the mental activity of the writers would have to be overruled, and Calvinistic cosmology would be required. Yet, from Pinnock's perspective, even the Bible itself does not aspire to that kind of perfection. And, as he puts it, even most evangelical believers do not feel the need for "the rationalistic ideal of a perfect Book," but rather "the trustworthiness of a Bible with truth where it counts, truth that is not so easily threatened by scholarly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 103-4. Nevertheless, Pinnock is certainly not speaking of the "truth" of the "historical" details of the biblical narratives. As we have already indicated (p. 243, n. 1, above), Pinnock maintains the legitimacy of interpreting the story of the fall of Adam as "saga."

Prinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 104. For instance, Pinnock remarks that while the prophet feels a fire in his bones and has to declare the message, the writer of wisdom and narrative feels "no such action of the Spirit but proceeds to work under a quieter influence of the Spirit." Thus, one writer comes across as an intellectual, another as emotional, yet another as a traditionalist, while others are literary artists or nonconformists. "In all these dynamically different ways, the Spirit is active, inciting and superintending and drawing out the work. God is present, not normally in the mode of control, but in the way of stimulation and guidance." The writers, Pinnock considers, are "what they seem, truly human beings expressing themselves. God did not negate the gift of freedom when he inspired the Bible but worked alongside human beings in order to achieve by wisdom and patience the goal of a Bible that expresses his will for our salvation" (ibid.).

What the Bible claims to be, so Pinnock holds, is to be an "adequate and sufficient testimony" to God's saving revelation which culminated in Jesus Christ. From this stance, "the authority of the Bible in faith and practice" does not preclude such possibilities as the occasional uncertain text, differences in details in parallel accounts, various genres, perplexing features, and different intents. Overall, it will mean that "we can be more open to the human factors in the text" (ibid.).

problems." Therefore, Pinnock proposes that since the Bible is "trustworthy in the fundamental sense," we need to be more careful and less dogmatic about the question of inerrancy, and should, perhaps, "adopt an inerrancy expectation as an operational policy." This, combined with a recognition that revelation does not simply come from above, but is "mediated through the human," would result in us finding fewer difficulties and being less defensive about the biblical phenomena.

Pinnock's contention that the inerrancy category is incompatible within anything less than a Calvinistic view of divine sovereignty seems to rank, in his <a href="The Scripture Principle">The Scripture Principle</a> (1984), as one argument among many. However, it should be observed, that if his argument here is correct, it calls into question his own early view of Scripture, as well as that of many other contemporary evangelicals. Therefore, we must, a little later, examine more closely the significance of this aspect of the later Pinnock's views. However, it is now time to turn to his opinions regarding the phenomena of Scripture.

#### The Phenomena of Scripture

So far we have examined the later Pinnock's overall view of the Bible as God's Word, mediated through human agents. What lies ahead of us is to fill in some of the specifics involved in "confessing the humanity of the Scriptures." Pinnock suggests that the doctrine of Scripture must be approached both "from above" and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 75-78. It seems clear that Pinnock's later view revolves very much around the issue of inerrancy. See our discussion in chap. 5, below (pp. 340-41) regarding the legitimacy of his recent redefinition of inerrancy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See chap. 5, below (pp. 350-361).

"from below." The former refers to the claims of Scripture, while the latter points to the phenomena. A proper view of the Bible's cwn claims should mean that we are more open to allowing the text "to declare itself" without us seeking to "change the literary vehicle to suit our own expectations."

Nevertheless, Pinnock is quick to acknowledge that any inquiry into the "difficulties" of the text requires pastoral and apologetic sensitivity. For Christian believers, the biblical difficulties may be disturbing to faith, whereas the non-Christian finds them a barrier to faith. While not denying by any means the reality of the biblical difficulties, Pinnock opines that "to quite a large extent," the difficulties exist in the mind of the reader. Therefore, it is important to consider if "a given difficulty exists in the Bible itself, or whether--possibly--it is created in the field of vision of

Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 106. In Pinnock's view, the claims of Scripture "give us a framework in which to operate," while the phenomena add "specificity to our understanding." To approach Pinnock's doctrine of Scripture only through his view of the phenomena is to misunderstand him. He contends that "to ignore the claims leaves us without any overall perspective, and to bypass the phenomena leaves the doctrine of Scripture empty of detail and in danger of distortion by the observer, who will add his or her own expectations derived from modernity to fill the gap" (ibid.). See also ibid., 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Tbid. In the same place, Pinnock comments significantly that "we will not try to be more biblical than the Bible!" He confesses that he has been brought to the point of facing up to the "realities of the text" more by liberal scholars like Farley and Barr than by his cwn evangelical colleagues (Pinnock, "Response to Delwin Brown" [1989], 75).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock notes that in order to assure believers, we often offer "answers of a strict and safe kind," whereas to the unbelievers we may try "creative solutions." His appeal is that "believers deserve the same kind of solid and honest answers that unbelievers may demand" (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 106-7).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For instance, a person with a modern worldview might take exception to premodern Hebraic expressions, a person with a Roman Catholic or Calvinistic perspective will see other problems, and someone who believes in the absolute perfection of the Bible will stumble at the smallest slip while another person will take it in his or her stride. After all, Pinnock remarks, "the Calvinist's proof texts are the difficulties of the Wesleyan, and the other way around" (ibid.).

a reader who balks at something in the text." He then moves on to discuss, first of all, those difficulties that are due to human modes of thought and expression as well as those due to human modes of literary and historical composition.

## <u>Human\_Modes of Thought and Expression</u>

According to Pinnock, it can be readily observed that the biblical writers employed "the linguistic resources available to them.<sup>2</sup> To illustrate this point, he refers to the actual language used (Koine Greek in the New Testament), to the style of teaching and argument used by Jesus and Paul,<sup>3</sup> to the way the writers' personalities shine through,<sup>4</sup> and to the way words change their meaning over time.<sup>5</sup> Of "slightly greater difficulty" is the fact that the biblical writers brought to their work cultural assumptions that create difficulties for readers of other times and places.<sup>6</sup> These problems, Pinnock proposes, can be resolved by observing that the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 107.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This means that they made use of their own vocabulary range as well as the available scope of semantic meaning, the idioms, the conventions, and the styles of thinking and argument found in their particular context. Such phenomena are characterized by Pinnock as being "at the level of minimum difficulty" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For example, Jesus used Semitic hyperboles (e.g., Matt 5:30), and Paul could write about Mount Sinai and Hagar in an allegorical way (Gal 4:21-31) (ibid., 108).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>So, we are able to gain "quite a vivid impression" of what Jeremiah, Amos, or Paul must have been like, "by the way they choose freely to write" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>This, Pinnock suggests, serves to emphasize the importance of using the tools and media of communication, and promotes modesty in judging the hermeneutical endeavors of others (ibid., 108).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Such include the biblical measurement of time (by the monthly cycles of the moon and the yearly turn of the seasons), psychophysical remarks (e.g., the Bible's references to the heart, the bowels, or the liver), references to the physical universe, quotations from the Septuagint, less than precise citation of texts and reporting of events, use of traditional beliefs (e.g., Job 3:8; Ps 74:14; Isa 27:1), and Jude's reference to the pseudepigraphal (Pinnock refers to it as "apocryphal") Book of Enoch (ibid., 108-9).

"detail in question enters into the formulation of the text but does not constitute the burden of its teaching." Thus, he asserts that "it would be wrong" to classify such phenomena as errors. They are, Pinnock says, "merely the means by which God gave his truth to us."

Pinnock recognizes that it is the theological and ethical assumptions that are linked to language and culture that present the "greatest difficulty" in the area of human thought and expression.<sup>2</sup> Included in his discussion here are such things as the destruction of the Canaanites, polygamy, slavery, the imprecatory psalms, and capital punishment for various crimes.<sup>3</sup> To his mind, these difficulties are "much more sensitive" in that they seem to enter right into what the Bible desires to teach. Pinnock, himself, poses the basic question here: "Should matter in the actual teaching content of the Scriptures be taken as fallible, is that not the end of the Scripture principle?" How, then, should such phenomena be understood?

<sup>&</sup>quot;Ibid., 109. This raises the hermeneutical question: How are we to "distinguish between what is normative in the text and what is only cultural"? In answer, Pinnock cites Bernard Ramm's comment that it is an "art, and a skill developed from . . . learning" (Ramm, The Christian View of Science and Scripture [London: Paternoster Press, 1954], 54). Pinnock's rule is that one should "go after the intended teaching of the passage in question, noting what is incidental to that meaning, and also to consider the matter in the light of the purpose of the Bible as a whole." Given the approach of religious liberalism which desires to eliminate some feature or another from the text (e.g., the Pauline teaching regarding substitutionary atonement), Pinnock submits that "the question must always be, Is this truly incidental to the text, or simply objectionable to the reader?" From his point of view "we have no right to exaggerate the quantity of what is cultural merely to accommodate our own hermeneutical difficulties," especially when those difficulties are not really biblical, but in our own minds (The Scripture Principle [1984], 109-10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>It is significant that these items appear in Pinnock's <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984) in the section entitled "Human Modes of Thought and Expression." See our discussion of Pinnock's earlier opinions regarding these biblical difficulties in chap. 3, above, pp. 197-202.

Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 110.

Fundamental to the issue, as far as Pinnock is concerned, is the fact that God took Israel "where he found them" and engaged them in "a process of education." To Israel, God revealed his will progressively. In the same way, Pinnock sees that the old covenant was replaced with the new, values were "sharpened and deepened" in the New Testament, Jesus introduced changes in the Old Testament Sabbath law, and Paul declared circumcision no longer binding on Christians. However, Pinnock asks whether it is possible for progressive revelation to go "from false to true, from fallibility to infallibility." His answer is that while certain difficulties would tempt us to think so, "the implications for the Scripture principle would be very serious."

The solution to such difficulties, Pinnock proposes, is to be found in Jesus' pronouncements on the subject of divorce in Matt 19.

First, Pinnock holds, it is clear that God actually granted permission to divorce, and that it was not a mistake or merely a human idea.

Second, Jesus identified it as a "subideal" commandment given "for the hardness of their hearts," thus indicating that "the New Testament must be taken as the key for interpreting the Old Testament." Pinnock then applies this "paradigm" to three of the theological or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 110-11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 111. In the same place, Pinnock argues that "Jesus did not see the command as a mistake or an error but as a culturally directed and subideal value that had validity when it was given but now was being transcended in the gospel." This brings Pinnock to the conclusion that there are texts in the Scriptures that are not "as relevant and adequate as others for Christian purposes, and we need to be alert in reading them." This, he suggests, is "in a certain sense," a "canon within the canon, insofar as the Bible inself [sic] indicates a certain weighting of the material by messianically directed revelation" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 112. Pinnock cites here Edward J. Carnell's <u>The Case</u> for Orthodox Theology, chap. 4.

ethical difficulties of the Bible<sup>1</sup> and concludes that "we are not in a position superior to the Bible" although it may come to us in "human language." His conviction is that while the Bible may exhibit "features that are incidental to its teaching purposes," in "everything that the Bible wishes to teach us it is true and coherent and possesses the wisdom of God."<sup>2</sup>

#### <u>Human Modes of Literary and</u> <u>Historical Composition</u>

It is Pinnock's contention that inspiration not only makes use of human modes of thought and expression, but also of "human modes of literary and historical composition." In regard to the latter category, he maintains that "we have to put aside modern inhibitions and alien expectations and permit Scripture to employ whatever forms of literary composition it chooses." Many of the forms used by the

¹That is, the divine command to destroy the Canaanites, the imprecatory psalms, and capital punishment. Regarding the "holy war," Pinnock notes that this command was directed to the destruction of "an exceedingly wicked people, that this was the "only time God used his people in this way," and that Jesus also warned of a divine judgment to come that "would be more universal and terrible than any before it" (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 112-13).

<sup>(</sup>Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 112-13).

Concerning the "so-called imprecatory psalms," Pinnock observes that blessings and curses are a basic part of God's covenant with Israel, that the biblical writers are crying out for vindication from within a situation of very real oppression ("Perhaps if we had faced a Stalin or a Hitler we would find it easier to read these texts"), and that judgment is "part of revelation from beginning to end and cannot be got rid of" (ibid., 113-14).

The matter of the Old Testament "death penalty" laws, Pinnock

The matter of the Old Testament "death penalty" laws, Pinnock maintains, brings us "up against a real difference between the Old Testament and modern ideas." Although he does not address the issue as to whether modern society should adopt the death penalty for such infractions as murder, adultery, homosexuality, witchcraft, and incorrigibility, Pinnock does offer mitigating circumstances for the biblical stance and remarks that "even in the hardest cases we ought not to be hasty in judging the Bible, which has a tendency to prove wiser than all its critics" (ibid., 114-15).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 115.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ This is also a subheading in Pinnock's <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 115. Pinnock comments here that such permission only acknowledges the sovereignty of God and the freedom of the text to determine its own emphasis and form.

Bible present little problem to modern man, but Pinnock notes that suggestions that some of the Old Testament historical narratives, for instance, are less than literal quickly touches a sore point in most conservatives.

This problem only underlines, for Pinnock, the fact that "we must be open" to the right of Scripture to use whatever literary form it chooses "even if it shocks us and contravenes our standards of writing." He suggests that once we allow Jesus the right to use fictional stories called parables, we will be on the right track. Many of the biblical difficulties in this area are due, Pinnock believes, to the fact that Western education has trained us to look for precise information and factual accuracy, and we bring that mindset over into our reading of the Bible. To illustrate, Pinnock points out that when we read the Old Testament creation story, we immediately think about evolutionary biology rather than the issues

Because they (e.g., proverb, parable, and lament) have been made familiar to us through the great influence the Bible has exercised in Western culture (ibid., 115). Others that Pinnock considers we are able to take "in stride" without too much difficulty include Jesus' use of hyperbole and picturesque speech, allegory, apocalyptic, and Hebrew poetry (ibid., 115-16). With these, Pinnock observes, "we have become familiar . . . from our long use of the Bible and are happily resigned to them" (ibid., 116).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 116. Pinnock offers example after example here. Included are the historicity of the Genesis narrative of the fall of Adam, the literary characteristics that indicate the evolutionary rise of Israel's religion, serious differences in parallel accounts, questions as to whether or not the book of Jonah might be a didactic fiction, a second-century dating of the book of Daniel, that Solomon may not have written Ecclesiastes although its words are put into his mouth, the Synoptic problem, the possible inclusion of midrashlike materials in Matthew, non-Pauline features in the Pastoral Epistles, and Jude's use of a legendary incident in the life of Moses (ibid., 116-18).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 118. According to Pinnock, Jesus did not use parables to deceive or to "dehistorize" the gospel. On the contrary, "it was just a matter of him deciding that this was a good way to teach these people at the time." Thus, Pinnock suggests that we should not be too hard on Jesus or the scholars who point this out, since their expertise is needed to determine literary practices unfamiliar to us. "We have our literary ideals in the Western world and must take care not to impose them upon the Bible, which has its own" (ibid., 118).

that concerned the ancient writer.<sup>1</sup> In other words, "we simply tend to assume without thinking about it that the narrative that looks descriptive to us is necessarily what it appears," thus creating for ourselves a large number of problems.<sup>2</sup> Pinnock intimates that there may be solutions to some of the difficulties that would "bring them closer to factual truth," but that his overall impression is "of a style of historical narration different from ours and not to be twisted against its will into conformity with ours."<sup>3</sup>

The really controversial issue regarding the biblical phenomena is, from Pinnock's perspective, that of whether there is

¹Ibid., 118. See also ibid., 119, in which Pinnock again uses the creation story to illustrate "the special character of the Bible's historical writing." He specifically points to the short span of time involved in creation, the parallelism of the days, the theological motive behind the story, and the numerous symbolic features. Pinnock sees other difficulties in the Pentateuch, including the symbolism associated with the narratives of the fall, the long life spans of the antediluvians, the great flood, the genealogy of Exodus 6, and the abnormally high numbers in Num 1:45-46 (ibid., 119-20). For further study, see Pinnock's more recent "Climbing out of a Swamp: The Evangelical Struggle to Understand the Creation Texts" (1989), 149-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 118. Continuing, Pinnock writes that "we have to grant the Bible its freedom to employ the styles of historical writing it wants to. In this, he claims to follow the Chicago Statement's concession: "We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar and spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of the material, variant selection of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations" (Article xiii; as quoted in <a href="The Scripture Principle">The Scripture Principle</a> (1984), 119). Pinnock comments in <a href="The Scripture Principle">The Scripture Principle</a> (1984), 234, n. 10, that this Chicago Statement concession "is so generous, in fact, that some strict inerrantists will live to regret it simply because it allows a large degree of critical freedom. It is difficult to think of a liberal critical opinion that could not be worded to fit into this specification."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 120. It is Pinnock's contention that the same phenomena that are present in the Old Testament are also to be found in the New, but on a smaller scale. Such include different wordings and settings for the same logia of Jesus. Pinnock's recommendation is that the texts not be forced into an unnatural harmony, but that we admit that they were "not written to satisfy modern historians . . . [but] were written to lead people to know and love God and on historiographical principles native to the ancient world" (ibid. 121).

legend in the Bible. He contends that "to admit legend" is to touch two sensitive issues: the factuality of biblical history and the reality of the miraculous. The problem is, according to Pinnock, that there does not seem to be any stopping place between an initial admission of legend and a wholesale program of demythologization that would reduce the gospel to anthropology. Despite the dangers, he does not think that legend can be ruled out a priori. After all, he observes, it is a valid literary form and it does turn up in the Bible "in at least some form."

From Pinnock's point of view, this subject is even more difficult because there are no "purely literary" criteria by which one can identify legends without involving a judgment about the supernatural. Rather, "what makes something seem legendary is precisely its abnormality." The solution is to be found, so Pinnock feels, in the acknowledgement that the Bible being much more than a series of propositional truths or a plain historical record is "the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. To illustrate, Pinnock asks, "Where can you stop turning the mighty acts of God in the Bible into fables?" once it is admitted that Lot's wife did not turn into stone (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>In Job's reference to Leviathan and Jotham's fable (Judg 9:7-15). In addition, he intimates that "Jesus' parables present something of the same form," so that "there is no good reason why we should from the outset deny the possibility of legends in the Bible, apart from our own anxieties about admitting it" (ibid., 121-22). Notice here, Pinnock's comment that his suggestion "that Scripture ought to be permitted to employ whatever forms of literary composition it chooses encountered a cool response." No doubt this comment refers primarily to his suggestions regarding legend and myth (Pinnock, "Climbing out of a Swamp: The Evangelical Struggle to Understand the Creation Texts" [1989], 151, n. 27). However, Pinnock is undeterred. He remarks that "our exegesis ought to let the text speak and the chips fall where they may" (ibid., 155).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 122. For example, Pinnock points out that people do not turn into malt; they do not emerge unsinged from burning fiery furnaces; they do not live a thousand years. "When we read of such things outside the Bible we do not hesitate to regard them as legend, because we prefer to think in terms of ordinary causation rather than special divine action (even though we would not rule that out in principle). Not being atheists, we know God can do anything; being reasonable, we try to discern what he does" (ibid.).

disclosure of a mystery that can be understood up to a point but that goes beyond understanding." In order to communicate that mystery, the Bible may use myth or legend. Nonetheless, Pinnock assures us that it is clear that Scripture "is not radically mythical." In fact, in regard to the New Testament, he states that "there is no mythology to speak of," and "the gospel is simply not a mythical message and should not be treated as if it were one."

¹This sounds quite "fideistic," and quite unlike the earlier Pinnock. Yet, he has more recently affirmed that the New lestament narrative (in particular, the resurrection) is viewed as verifiable by the New Testament and thus in "not fideistic in nature, as though the story functioned only as myth in creating an intratextual world in relation to a voluntarist decision of faith" (Pinnock, Tracking the Maze [1990], 161). However, the extent of verification available in New Testament times is not available to us today.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 123. In the same place, he suggests that there is evidence of the influence of myth in the Old Testament, but in the form of "broken myths." By this he means that the stories of creation, fall, flood, and tower are all there in pagan texts, but that these myths are "worked over in Genesis from the angle of Israel's knowledge of God" so the "framework is no longer mythical." Yet, "the traces are still there, and need not be denied." Further details of this feature of Pinnock's thought are available in his "Climbing out of a Swamp: The Evangelical Struggle to Understand the Creation Texts" (1989), 148-50. He cites here (p. 149, n. 18) Gerhard F. Hasel's "The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology, " Evangelical Quarterly 46 (1974), 81-102, to show that the writer of Genesis wanted to combat the errors contained in the creation myths of the ancient world (e.g., the Babylonian Enuma Elish). Observe, though, that while Pinnock supposes that there may be mythical fragments in Gen 1, Hasel concludes that the chapter represents a "complete break" with Near Eastern mythological cosmologies (ibid., 91). Thus, the issue revolves around whether the writer of Genesis wrote a literal, non-scientific account of creation, or whether he wrote a (slightly) mythologized account of an actual happening. For further discussion, see chap. 5, below (pp. 333-35).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 124. The "fragments" identified by Pinnock include the "strange allusion" to the bodies of the saints being raised on Good Friday (Matt 27:52), and the sick being healed through contact with pieces of cloth (Act 19:11-12), but, says Pinnock, "these are not typical of the New Testament story" (ibid.). Instead of myth we find "the emphasis on the bodily resurrection of Jesus as the factual occurrence that grounds the message of salvation" as well as passages denouncing myth (e.g., ! Tim 1:4; 4:6; 2 Tim 4:4; Titus 1:14; and 2 Pet 1:16) (ibid.).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. As if ready for the question, "Why not?" Pinnock replies that "only distortion can result from doing so." Still, he does allow that one should feel free to inquire about any individual detail as to whether it is "simple fact" or "legendary embellishment" (ibid., 124). How are we to determine what is legendary and what is

Pinnock considers that unnecessary polarization has occurred regarding the presence of myth or legend in Scripture. Whereas "some liberals" insist that biblical history is nonfactual and that its real nature is existential, conservatives, on the other hand, have reacted by defending its factuality to the last detail. For Pinnock there is no need to hold historicity and existential significance in opposition. On the contrary, he holds that "history and theology are closely intertwined," and "little is gained from trying to pull them apart."

Whether or not Scripture contains legendary or mythical material is not really Pinnock's point here.<sup>2</sup> Rather, he wants to emphasize, first, that Scripture itself, not the reader, "has the right to determine its own literary forms," and that we must face the facts of the Bible's human marks honestly.<sup>3</sup> Second, from his

not? Pinnock replies that "the important thing is to note carefully what the text says and implies." For example, he is disinclined to characterize the miraculous conception of Jesus as legend because of its location "in the context of the great miracle of the incarnation that so excites the entire New Testament" (ibid., 124-25). On the other hand, the temptation of Jesus "sounds" mythical to Pinnock, although he wants to affirm that "there is no reason for us to deny the demonic supernatural any more than the divine." He also mentions the incident of the coin in the fish's mouth (Matt 17:24-27) and Paul's escape from poisoning in Malta (Act 27:1-6) as cases "in which the possibility of legend seems quite real" (ibid., 125). For all of these examples and the conclusions regarding them, Pinnock seems indebted to Bruce Kaye's The Supernatural in the New Testament (1977). This work is now available as the Part Two of Bruce Kaye and John Rogerson's Miracles and Mysteries in the Bible (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1978). See particularly pp. 84-89, 99-101, and 138-140.

¹Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 125. The result of the struggle between historicity and existential meaning has resulted, Pinnock considers, in the inability of conservatives to be relaxed "in the face of the Bible where history is concerned" (ibid.). On the biblical joining of fact and symbol, see Pinnock's review of <u>Creationism on Trial</u>. <u>Evolution and God at Little Rock</u>, by Langdon Gilkey, in <u>Theodolite</u> 7, ro. 7 (1986): 56.

 $<sup>^{2}</sup>$ Even though he does consider that such forms are evident there.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 126. Therefore, he advises that although the modern reader will have difficulties with the text of Scripture, he or she must eschew the skirting of issues,

perspective, the "kind and number" of biblical difficulties definitely varies according to the "expectations brought to the text by the reader." Difficulties arise where the Bible fails to meet expectations, and hence are "self-imposed" rather than "'in' the Bible per se." One of those expectations, held particularly by those Pinnock terms "classical Christians" is the conviction that "one ought to expect the Bible to be reliable and true because it claims to be God's written Word and carries the message of salvation to the world."

# The Biblical Phenomena and Biblical Reliability

The conservative debate about the nature and extent of the reliability or inerrancy of the Scriptures, Pinnock views as arising quite naturally from the desire "to believe the Bible without reservation." The language many evangelicals use, he describes as

ingenious harmonizations, tampering with the text, and "epistemological tricks that offer to ease the pain of religious doubt." Pinnock pleads for an honest dealing with the text, although he recognizes that "because religion touches the deepest emotions, believers may not care much about honesty when their whole worldview seems to be threatened" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid. What Pinnock seems to suggest here is that if, for instance, one held that legend was an unworthy literary form for Scripture to use, any evidence of that form within the Bible would constitute a "difficulty." The implication is that if one were to change one's initial presupposition, the difficulty would disappear. This aspect of Pinnock's later views is discussed in chap. 5, below (see pp. 333-35).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 125. For Pinnock, this means that "the burden of expecting the Bible to prove reliable ought to be accepted as part of the revelation package of authentic Christianity." As far as he is concerned, that burden "should be gladly borne" (ibid.). See our discussion of reliability as an implication of biblical authority, above (p. 245).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 126. According to Pinnock, conservatives feel "instinctively" that since their faith rests on the "authoritative information and instruction" of the Word, it must be "totally trustworthy and not unreliable in any respect, down to the smallest detail." Frequently, it is argued that "God's own reputation is . . . at stake in the matter" (ibid.).

"absolute and uncompromising."<sup>1</sup> It "sounds as if," writes Pinnock, that "the slightest slip or flaw" would bring the whole house of biblical authority down. Pinnock's proposes that it is possible to move beyond this evangelical "impasse"<sup>2</sup> by an an extension of his "intentionality" qualification of inerrancy.<sup>3</sup>

Having dropped his earlier "original autographs"

qualification, Pinnock's emphasis is now on the "focused inerrancy of the Scriptures." He understands the Bible's reliability claim as relating to its ability to "bring us to know and love God in Jesus Christ and to nurture us in that saving relationship," rather than to matters of grammar, literary conventions, or proper historiography. Such an approach is consistent with his recent admiration for "narrative" or "story" theology which emphasizes the accuracy of the overall story rather than the details of Scripture. The Scriptures, Pinnock contends, know nothing about inerrant original autographs; instead, they show evidence of free and creative citation of texts. He concludes from this that we should not try to be "more evangelical" than the New Testament by "drawing up a too-tight standard of orthodox belief" regarding the reliability of the Bible.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>As an illustration, here, he quotes from the Chicago Statement preamble: "The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own" (ibid., 127).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See our discussion in chap. 3, above, pp. 185-190.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See, for instance, Pinnock's <u>Tracking the Maze</u> (1990), 153-167 (also Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990). For a convenient summary of the presuppositions (e.g., arising from literary analysis, psychosocial factors, and community tradition) and types (e.g., canonical story, life story, and community story) of "narrative theology," see Gabriel Fackre, "Narrative Theology: An Overview," <u>Interpretation</u> 37 (1983): 340-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 127. If we used 2 Tim 3:15-17 as a "guide" rather that "a scholastic conception deduced from it," says Pinnock, we would neither pitch our doctrine of

Although he considers soteric reliability to be the emphasis of the Scriptures, Pinnock claims to have no desire "to pick and choose in the Scriptures" on the basis of this macropurpose. After all, he argues, how could we decide "which of the assertions of the text we would deem worthy to stand in the privileged circle of revealed salvational truth"? In his view, such a decision would involve placing the reader in a position of authority over the text. Instead, Pinnock believes that since the Christian is convinced, in "large part," by the fact the "it has achieved its goal" in his or her experience, the difficulties encountered in the text can be faced "calmly." Such an outlook is held to be possible because "if we have come to know God in the Bible, they will appear as unimportant."

Scripture too high nor use it to "shut" other people out (ibid.). In his "Reflections on The Scripture Principle" (1986), 9, Pinnock comments that the Bible "is not a flat book which talks about everything in general." On the contrary, "Jesus Christ is the material center of the Bible according to the Bible. Scripture exists to bear witness to him and not for itself in its own right." He concludes, here, that "it is high time we evangelicals read Luther as well as Calvin!" For further study of Pinnock's view of the Christological center of gravity in the Scriptures, see his Tracking the Maze (1990), 154-55, 172-73.

¹Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 127-28. The danger would be, Pinnock rightly perceives, that if the reader were to find something personally "displeasing," such would be declared non-revelational and even unreliable because it was not soteric. Thus it would be possible to ignore the biblical teaching on homosexuality—Pinnock cites this as an example—by saying that "it does not matter" because it does not constitute "salvational truth." He says, "No, it is up to the writer and text to decide that. If the Bible asserts it, it must be part of its purpose or else it would have been omitted" (ibid., 128). See also Pinnock's comments regarding the disadvantages of accepting a scriptural macropurpose ("Peril with Promise" [1987], 57), and his remark that any system should be "drawn loosely" ("How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" [1985], 27).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>"After all," he observes here, "the Bible is the medium of the gospel, and we have come to know God by reading and hearing the gospel in and through it. This is by far the most important thing" (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 128).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. Here, Pinnock remarks that just as "precritical Christians" are able to "shelve" the biblical difficulties because God still speaks to them in the Bible, so "postcritical believers," while knowing more about the problems, can "tolerate" even unsolved problems since they "know where the real authority lies and can turn a wise hand to the difficulties themselves" (ibid.). Pinnock supposes that

One can almost hear the early Pinnock asking the later: Are you saying "that no difficulty could successfully shake the Christian's confidence in the Bible, because it is grounded in religious experience and not in . . . empirical matters?" Pinnock's present stand is that questions such as whether or not Methuselah lived 969 years or not "cannot bring the house of authority down." Rather, what could "truly" falsify the Bible, in his opinion, would have to be nothing less than a difficulty "that would radically call into question the truth of Jesus and his message of good news."

In summary, then, Pinnock's position regarding biblical reliability is that our present Scriptures do make "a strong claim to

<sup>&</sup>quot;the real problem" is the "backslid Christian who is shaky in his or her assurance about the living God and loses all security if a single difficulty appears unresolved." The solution, he proposes, is not found in "clever solutions" (since they will not be able to put the mind at rest), but a fresh encounter with Jesus Christ "through the Spirit in the Bible." "Once that happens," Pinnock affirms, "the difficulties will resume their relatively unimportant position" (ibid.). This can only happen, he claims, because the emphasis is shifted from "errors as such" to the "nature and purpose of each biblical passage" (Pinnock, "The Inerrancy Debate among the Evangelicals" [1976], 13). See also The Scripture Principle (1984), 76-77, where Pinnock remarks on the fruitlessness of focusing on biblical errors.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See our discussion of the early Pinnock's acceptance of revelation empiricism (as opposed to revelation fideism) in chap. 3, above (pp. 157-162). The later Pinnock puts the same question in another way: "Could nothing falsify one's confidence in the reliability of the Bible, then?" (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 128).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 128-29. Here, somewhat punnishly, Pinnock notes that "there is relief from (Thomas) Paine" (ibid., 129).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. Pinnock's plea is that we should not put the church in a position where "tiny" difficulties "loom so large as to threaten her fundamental confidence in the message the Bible exists to declare" (ibid.). See also ibid., 136, where Pinnock confesses his conviction that "our confidence" in the Scriptures is not impervious to empirical data. In a personal note he states that "the Scripture principle could be overturned for me, as it has been for others, if it came to seem contradicted by the facts, broadly speaking. In particular, if its central message should prove to be unreliable and incredible and fail to mediate to me the presence of the absolute Savior, I would have to sadly abandon my confidence in the Bible." Thus, he asserts, "Our approach to the Bible, then, is not unfalsifiable in principle or in fact."

be true in a particular way." In the light of that claim we have "no basis for being dogmatic" when we encounter "perplexing" phenomena in the text. This means, for Pinnock, that we cannot label such features as "apparent" errors that will be resolved by further knowledge and future scholarship. Nor, he insists, does it mean that we can say "this is a flaw for which there can never be a solution." Instead, "we have to take the evidence as it comes, and not rush to judgment." In addition, it seems that the later Pinnock's discussion of the biblical phenomena has now included some of the results of biblical criticism. It is to his view of the role of biblical criticism and its effects on belief in biblical reliability that we now turn our attention.

# Biblical Criticism and Biblical Reliability

In his early period Pinnock held a mainly negative stance regarding the value and role of biblical criticism.<sup>3</sup> Presently, while certainly not entirely enamored of criticism,<sup>4</sup> he holds a much more positive view of its ability to help us "intelligently" receive the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 129. Pinnock further claims (p. 76) that belief in the inerrancy of the original manuscripts is not a "high" view of Scripture, since we cannot really trust the only Bible we have (i.e., a Bible that is flawed by apparent errors introduced by copyists and translators).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 129. Compare Pinnock's early view on "apparent errors" in chap. 3, above (pp. 196-202).

See our discussion in chap. 3, above (pp. 203-4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>In fact, for Pinnock, "a hearty suspicion is entirely in order (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 131) since it is "all too easy" to slide from critical methodology into critical theology" (ibid., 130). As well, he still sees criticism as the "chief means" by which the Scripture principle has been overturned. Criticism is "a child of the Enlightenment" which secularizes the Bible by treating it just like any other source (ibid., 131). The seriousness with which he views what he calls "negative criticism" is brought out in his comment that "there is no part of the biblical treasure that cannot be placed in doubt" by its consistent application (ibid., 132). For further study of the later Pinnock's view of biblical criticism, see his <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980), 77-78, and his "Tradition Can Keep Theologians on Track" (1982), 26.

Word of God in faith. However, Pinnock categorically rejects criticism's "supposedly neutral" approach to the text as "totally out of keeping with the nature and claims of the text" because it is already predisposed to reject the scriptural message. From his point of view, the "presupposition that the Bible invites us to embrace" is more rational ("in the broad sense") than the modern "attempt at playing atheist" in the matter of biblical criticism. The adoption

Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 130-31. In ibid., 89, Pinnock proposes that biblical criticism is legitimated by the "human character" of the Bible. Pinnock comments that "a reasoned approach" to the biblical text can uncover "vast stores of historical, linguistic, and literary insight and information that in turn shed vast light upon the text" (ibid., 131). Pinnock approvingly cites (ibid., 90, 130) G. E. Ladd's The New Testament and Criticism (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967) as an example of "evangelical criticism."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 133. For further details of Pinnock's view of what he calls "negative" criticism, see ibid., 143-50. Although assenting to the idea that the Bible can be studied as literature or history, Pinnock is convinced that "we must take into account how the Bible wishes us to approach it and for what purpose." For him, it "obviously" desires that we come to know God in Jesus Christ, and thus, "we are within our epistemic rights as Christians when we insist on approaching the Bible in the spirit of faith" (ibid., 133).

Additionally, according to Pinnock, a neutral or "value-free" strategy in regard to biblical study is an "illusion" whether or not those who espouse such a method admit it (ibid., 133-34). In his perspective, it makes a great difference whether one believes in the God of the biblical story. If, for instance, one does not believe in the God of the Bible, it makes the whole of Scripture "implausible and irrelevant." Pinnock remarks that "the Bible makes it clear that in order to understand its message one must be personally involved with the God of the gospel. The issues cannot be effectively bracketed. Not to decide is to decide" (ibid., 134). Of course, as far a Pinnock is concerned, this topic opens up the whole area of apologetics and epistemology again. While acknowledging that one is "within one's epistemic rights to believe without having to give reasons for it," he believes that "this answer to the modern question rings hollow. It gives an answer that is not an answer. For the person who asks why he or she should believe in God, we ought to try to do more than repeat the demand for faith. What can he or she think except that bracketing God in criticism was probably the right thing to do after all?" (ibid.; see also ibid., 134-35, for Pinnock's arguments for belief in God).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 135. Here, Pinnock recommends his own Reason Enough (1980) as representative of his philosophy of religion (ibid., 215, n. 12). For Pinnock, criticism is "useful" when it illumines the biblical meaning, but is "harmful and useless" when it seeks to overthrow what the text was given to tell us (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 65). See also ibid., 150-51, for Pinnock's

of this presupposition of trust in the Bible is for Pinnock the starting point for what he terms "positive" criticism. 1

While the early Pinnock considered that the most positive contribution of biblical criticism was in the textual area, he now propounds that "positive work can be done in all the familiar fields."2 Therefore, he views form criticism as able to "distinguish and help elucidate" the genres of the New Testament; redaction criticism as valuable assistance for detecting "in the small changes made in the common material shared by the four Gospels the motives and concerns lying behind them"; textual criticism as helping to recover the original text of the Bible; literary or source criticism can be used cautiously to determine the sources used by the biblical writers; tradition criticism, employed even more cautiously, can explain (for instance) some of the variants in the Synoptics; historical criticism provides historical background to the biblical text; structural criticism can give clarity to the way "mental structures of human thinking" are expressed in the biblical texts and symbols; and rhetorical criticism allows the text "to speak and inform us of the intention of the writer and the expected impact upon readers."3

Still, Pinnock's attitude to these forms of biblical criticism is clearly ambivalent. As well as being able to provide "positive"

discussion of the benefits and perils of criticism.

<sup>1</sup>Did., 136-37. Pinnock holds that it is the "attitude" of listening for God's Word in the Bible that characterizes "positive scholarship in the Christian context," rather than "a set of specific opinions about biblical problems." Although, he admits, that it would be easier to just employ a "checklist of approved opinions regarding Daniel or the Pastorals" in order to determine the positiveness or negativeness of criticism, such an approach could "only show whether it is traditional or not" rather than whether it is "respectful" of God's Word. For instance, he remarks that "how one looks at John or Isaiah is not a reliable test for the spirit of faith." Rather, we must look for "integrity in the total operation" (ibid., 139).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 139-42.

tools for the Bible student, it is all too easy, in his view, to use the same tools for a "negative" purpose. For instance, form criticism is "beset by a "historically skeptical and anti[-]supernaturalist attitude" which leads to minimal usable conclusions; redaction criticism "often displays a condemning attitude that pronounces on the tendentiousness of one book or another and the risk of heeding what it says"; textual criticism "can be the basis for arguing that the textual shape of the canonical Scriptures is hopeless, makes slightly absurd any claim to believe in the 'Bible'"; literary and source criticism can rip the content of the text apart; and tradition-history criticism "often poses direct challenges to the validity of biblical teaching." 1

#### <u>Criticism and Theological</u> Reliability

For all the negative potential of these various forms of criticism, Pinnock contends that it is criticism of the "theological content and historical substance" of the Scriptures that has been most hurtful to the Scripture principle. For instance, he notes that "disunity has become a principle of New Testament criticism." This destroys, Pinnock perceives, the basis of orthodoxy by removing the possibility of constructing a systematic or dogmatic theology.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 145. See also Finnock's negative assessments of the various forms of biblical criticism interspersed with his positive comments (ibid., 139-42).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 146. In other words, along with the denial of inspiration, unity of biblical teaching is no longer assumed, and critics now "often take the view that it is hopelessly confused" (ibid., 146).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. The result, says Pinnock, is that one is left free to "take any direction one likes in theology and ethics." He cites, here, several examples: Jesus is held to teach a different message to that preached by the early church; the New Testament can be seen to teach half a dozen different doctrines of Christ which cannot and should not be harmonized; and Paul is seen to have internal contradictions (e.g., on his view of women). The result of seeing the Bible as a "network of contradictions" is either, states Pinnock, that one is forced to "select those themes one finds appealing (a theology

What should be the response to biblical disunity by those who believe in the authority of Scripture? Pinnock maintains that "we must be forthright and admit that contradiction is not something we can consistently allow and that if contradiction exists our doctrine of Scripture is overthrown." Such is the seriousness with which he views the denial of the unity of the Bible that he insists that, if proven, it would "shake the foundations of our faith." Pinnock adds, however, that no such situation exists at the present time and that critics have a tendency to "find differences where there are none and contradictions where there are only differences." Rather than expecting to find contradiction, the believer expects unity, and Pinnock offers the assurance that "it is not difficult to do so." In fact, he insists that "it takes effort to see why the various Christologies of the New Testament cannot participate in a unified whole model of Christ."<sup>2</sup>

reflecting one's own culture and prejudices), or, more consistently, to select none at all, since none of the viewpoints in the Bible is truer or more valid than any other. Why should a theology critically deemed to be earlier be more authoritative than one thought to be later?" (ibid.).

¹Ibid., 147. For instance, argues Pinnock, scholars delight to set James against Paul, Matthew against Mark, J against E, "when it is not necessary to do so." He points out that "one can see how the contrast is seen where the will to see it is present, but in every case there would follow a different result if similarities rather than differences were stressed" (ibid.). Notice Pinnock's reaction to James Dunn's view that the New Testament teaches a variety of contradictory theologies: "We must take up the challenge and show that the message is more unified than he allows" (Pinnock, "Tradition Can Keep Theologians on Track" [1982], 27; see also his "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" [1985], 25).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 147. Further illustrations are not presented in his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> because Pinnock does not consider it his task to answer objections in detail, but rather to present "what negative criticism is according to sound evangelical principles and how it must be handled" (ibid.).

# <u>Criticism and Historical</u> Reliability

In Pinnock's view, the "negative" critic is not committed to upholding either the Bible's theological reliability or its historical veracity. The place where criticism of the latter is most harmful, Pinnock holds, is the historicity of the career of Jesus. This, he observes, is "where the Christian message is rooted and where it assumes its most supernatural form." The problem is made all the more difficult by the fact that while one "wants to investigate the life of Jesus using historical methods," these very methods are found to be "unsuited to deal with this phenomenon" and are instead capable of producing conclusions that can "overturn our Christian faith."

In spite of the problems involved in taking an historical approach to the Christ-event, Pinnock suggests that "it is necessary" to inquire whether faith has an historical or a mythical basis. He claims that the difficulty that Christianity has experienced at the hands of the historical critics is due to the world view that dominates intellectual life in the Western world. The secular mentality will not grant room for such events as miracles within scientifically intelligible reality. However, for Pinnock, a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock proposes rather than ranging widely over the whole field of historical denials to "take hold of" this "all-important problem in historical criticism" (ibid., 147).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. The life of Jesus, Pinnock considers, is both the narrative of a "thoroughly human life" and "the portrayal of an episode in the life of God." Hence, he views it as profoundly supernatural (ibid.).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. According to Pinnock, it is ironic that "it is our theology that gets us into this historical problem" since we "cannot assent to the claims of church Christology (i.e., the church's theologizing regarding the Christ-event) if these claims have no basis in the life and teachings of Jesus" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Although, there are some signs (e.g., belief in the paranormal) that may indicate "we are moving out of it" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., 148. This approach Pinnock terms "the surprise-free

recognition that "contingent events" do not occur within a system of tight causality can indicate, even for modern man, the falsity of the "dogma of modernity that holds that the world is closed to God and the miraculous."

Yet, such an admission of the supernatural should not, in Pinnock's view, make us "gullible and allergic to any analysis at all."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, he believes it no denial of the miraculous (or the demonic) to ask whether the Markan descriptions of demon possessions could be explained in any other way, any more than is the asking if the feeding of the four thousand is a variant of the "more famous feeding of the five thousand." In Pinnock's perspective, the question is "not whether God can affect the physical world, but when and how he has done so in each given case."<sup>3</sup> He holds that it is possible for one to be "metaphysically open and historically tough-minded at the same time"<sup>4</sup> since criticism is "negative" only when it closes itself

method of historical criticism" (ibid., 149).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 148. Such a dogma is made even more untenable if we believe that God created the world or in the existence of human freedom. Regarding the latter, Pinnock observes that "it is a mystery how Bultmann can deny miracles on the basis of a closed scientific world and then champion existential freedom as if freedom somehow escapes from scientific determinism" (ibid. 148-49).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 149. There were "prescientific views" around in the first century, and these, Pinnock says, "may have found their way into the biblical formulations and narratives." To rule out that possibility would be as "antiempirical" as ruling out the miracles themselves" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid. For Pinnock, should it be true that Matthew tells the story of the birth of Christ in a midrashlike way (as Robert H. Gundry suggests in his Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982], especially p. 37), it would have nothing to do "with being antisupernaturalistic" (The Scripture Principle [1984], 149). Further examples are found in Pinnock's Tracking the Maze (1990), 161-62.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 149. In the same place, Pinnock contends that "just because we are open to it [i.e., the miraculous] does not mean that we should uncritically accept appearances." Instead, he regards it as "only natural" to ask, for instance, what kind of star shone over Bethlehem; what caused the Egyptian plagues; and how universal the Great Flood really was (ibid.).

completely to "the wonderful deeds of God," not when it asks specific, "reasonable" questions about those things "to which it is fundamentally sympathetic."

#### Summary

The later Pinnock believes just as strongly as the earlier that the Bible is the Word of God, but he is decidedly more willing to allow that God has accommodated his Word to humankind. His present view of the biblical phenomena demands that any theory of divine biblical inspiration must take into account human modes of thought and expression as well as human modes of literary and historical composition. In the light of these conclusions, Pinnock asks that the reader be open to whatever literary forms Scripture presents even if such should prove to be legendary or mythological.

It is clear that such a conclusion has had an effect on the way that Pinnock relates to the theory of biblical inerrancy. He no longer holds to the strict inerrancy of Scripture with its corollary that the biblical difficulties are "apparent" and "not real," but points rather to the "focused inerrancy" of the Scriptures. By this

lbid., 150. Pinnock's observation that the debate over biblical criticism "seems to be easing" is significant. He maintains that it is now common to hear liberals warning of the dangers of criticism, and conservatives promoting "a more scholarly study of the Bible." In his view, "there is a shared perception that presuppositions have something to do with how criticism operates, and that there has been altogether too much scissors—and—paste criticism done on a test [sic] with theological and literary integrity. We seem to be closer to one another now than previously, and the days of severe polarization may be in the past" (ibid., 152).

Nonetheless, has not the certainty quotient been lowered by all criticism, both positive and negative? Pinnock asks, "Can we return home to the innocence of the simple faith we have now abandoned?" He answers: "If the certainty referred to was really a kind of rational certainty based on equating the words of the Bible with the words of God and not allowing for the human dimension, then there is no going home." Still, he suggests that if the certainty rests ("where it ought to") in the "effectiveness of the Bible to mediate salvation in Christ," then "positive criticism" does not offer a threat, but clarification (ibid., 143). See also Pinnock's "Rosponse to Delwin Brown" (1989), 76-77, for his reply to Brown's suggestion that his later view saves the form of the Scripture principle while sacrificing its substance.

he means that the Bible is completely trustworthy in its claim to "be able to bring us to know and to love God in Jesus Christ and to nurture us in that saving relationship." Still, he does not claim that we should think of Scripture as flawed beyond solution; his emphasis being, instead, a calm acceptance of the "perplexing" features without rushing to judgment.

Into his view of the biblical phenomena, Pinnock has accepted an expanded role for all forms of biblical criticism. However, he refuses to allow the basic presupposition of "negative" criticism that one must bracket out any belief in the supernatural as one approaches Scripture. Such a tactic, he holds, does not take into account the Bible's own view of itself and "we are going to have to take a stand against the kind of criticism" that denies Scripture's place as the "infallible norm in matters of faith and practice."

While affirming that the Bible is "certainly" true, Pinnock admits that the scriptural phenomena must cause us to be "ready to admit how complex the category of truth is." Facts may be reported approximately and Jesus could tell "true" parables which were fictional; hence, "when we look for the Bible to prove true, we must open ourselves to the kind of truth it chooses to deliver and not try to limit its freedom." The concluding facet of Pinnock's later doctrine of Scripture is his introduction of the Holy Spirit into the

<sup>1</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Rather, Pinnock advocates as an operational policy an "inerrancy expectation," meaning that one will come trustingly to the Bible (ibid., 77). See also ibid., 104, where Pinnock observes that "though expecting only truth, we can be open to diversity, to various genres, to perplexing features, to intents of different kinds, all the while keeping our eyes on the basic thrust" of the Bible.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 152. In the same place, Pinnock continues: "We have to let the phenomena of the text guide us. It is enough for us to expect the Bible to be entirely trustworthy for the purposes God had in inspiring it. It only gets us into trouble when we impose further requirements of a deductive nature on the text."

overall picture. This, very likely, has major implications for his view of the relation between biblical authority and biblical reliability. 1

# The Sword of the Spirit: The Issue of the Subjective Pole in Biblical Authority/Reliability

The Spirit has been left out of consideration in both the liberal and the conservative discussions of the doctrine of Scripture, claims Pinnock. From his perspective both sides of the debate are "strongly wedded" to the Enlightenment point of view which places most of the emphasis "upon academic understanding and minimizes the role of the Spirit in recognizing and interpreting God's Word." Pinnock suspects that if we were to do justice to both the Spirit and the Word, "we might get free of some of our cul-de-sacs and find the whole hermeneutic operation loosened up and made exciting." The introduction of the Holy Spirit into the scriptural landscape, Pinnock refers to as the "subjective pole" of revelation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For Pinnock there is also a definite link between the examination of the Bible's humanity and its proper interpretation (see ibid., 86).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 155. Pinnock argues that "rationalistic assumptions" lurk behind the liberal rejection of the Scripture principle, while conservatives react by wanting to "prove the Bible is the Word of God by adducing arguments a liberal might be able to accept" (ibid.).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 157. Notice here that Pinnock is careful to point out the dangers of subjectivity. He opines that "there is a very real threat in the prevalent tendency to downplay the authoritative text and pretend to go with the Spirit, who is in reality equated with the spirit of the times. In this way, the objective requirements of the Scriptures can be twisted and whittled down to suit our own specifications" (ibid.). This danger Pinnock illustrates by reference to Thomas Muntzer (sic), Schleiermacher, the early Karl Barth, William Hordern, Bultmann, Rosemary Ruether, Claude Geffré, and Paul Hanson (ibid., 158-59). Even the evangelicals, "because of the pietist character of their movement," can be easily attracted to a version of the "functional" authority of the Bible. Therefore, says Pinnock, "one becomes very suspicious" about Dooyeweerd's assignment of biblical authority to the "'pistic' level in the scheme of thirteen modalities;" about Berkouwer's seeming denial of the Bible's objective truthfulness by his correlation of Scripture with the faith of the

# The Interaction of Word and Spirit

Pinnock holds that just as revelation is both divine and human, it is also objective and subjective. In other words, "there is an initiative from God, and there is a receiving by human beings."

Not only does God make himself "present to us," he "opens our eyes to help us to receive revelation." The Spirit, Pinnock maintains, is actually active in both the objective and subjective poles of revelation. That is, God's initial giving of the Scriptures by inspiration by which he loaded them "with revelational potential for all generations," as well as his second giving of the Scriptures "in order to activate and actualize this potential in our hearts and minds," were and are accomplished by the Spirit of God.<sup>2</sup>

church; and about Rogers' and McKim's limitation of infallibility to the "soteric realm." While confirming the unlikelihood that any of these evangelicals "had in mind anything like demythologizing," Pinnock suggests that "the temptation is there to fall into" (ibid., 159).

The danger of subjectivity is accentuated, according to Pinnock, by the fact that "modern people find it difficult to believe the Bible intellectually, but they can appreciate it in an existential way." In response to this, he argues, modern theologians tend to "think of the Bible not as a source of objective truths but as an instrument that can function in the transformation of persons" (ibid., 160). Pinnock warns (p. 162) of the danger of deriving content "against" the Bible from the Spirit. For further study regarding the respective values of the objective and subjective poles of revelation and of Scripture, see ibid., 173, and Pinnock's "Reflections on The Scripture Principle" (1986), 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 161. Pinnock cites here, Calvin's statement that "[God] sent down the same Spirit by whose power he had dispensed the Word, to complete his work by the efficacious confirmation of the Word" (from Calvin's <u>Institutes</u>, 1.9.3).

Prinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 161. Pinnock remarks that "the Bible is a deposit of propositions that we should receive as from God, but it is also the living Word when it functions as the sword of the Spirit" (ibid.). While agreeing with Barth that the Spirit occasions fresh events of revelation through the Scriptures, Pinnock claims not to consider the textual elements as merely fallible human words (ibid., 164). See also Pinnock's Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 99, and The Scripture Principle (1984), 13.

#### The Testimony of the Spirit

For Pinnock, "revelation has not ceased." On the contrary, he presents three specific ways by which the Holy Spirit works in relation to the Scriptures. Pinnock points first to the Spirit's role in the human recognition of the Scriptures as the Word of God. While affirming that the growth of faith in the Bible (and the gospel) is, "in a real sense," a mystery "hidden in the depths of the human spirit," Pinnock also considers that "there is a level of ordinary understanding involved in it." Such an understanding is built on both "internal evidence" (e.g., the way the Bible continues to give credible answers to crucial questions) and "external evidence" (e.g., the evidence of God's workmanship in the universe or his action in history). Still, Pinnock contends that it is possible to go "too far

¹Ibid., 163. Although acknowledging that "a phase of it [revelation] has ceased" (the phase that provided the gospel and its scriptural witness), Pinnock maintains that although the canon is complete, the Spirit remains in the church to speak through the Scriptures and in addressing us through each other by gifts like prophecy (ibid.). In ibid., 165, 201, and Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), 99, Pinnock refers to the latter aspect of revelation as illumination.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This, in answer to the question: "What difference does it really make in reading the Bible whether one has the Spirit of not?" (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 165).

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ Pinnock adds the recognition of the gospel to that of the Scriptures (ibid., 165).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 165. In this, Pinnock consciously follows Calvin's view that there are good and sufficient evidences (e.g., fulfilled prophecy, miracles, profundity, antiquity, coherence, etc.) to establish the credibility of the Scriptures (Calvin, <u>Institutes</u>, 1.8.1-13), although confessing that Calvin would not have claimed to be able "by rational argument to bring a person all the way to saving faith" or to faith in the Scriptures (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [198:], 165-66).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 156. This evidence, although valuable, is not sufficient to "conclude that revelation can be infallibly established by such arguments." Nevertheless, according to Pinnock, "it can be maintained that belief in the truth of the Bible and the gospel is rationally preferred over not believing in it, because it economically explains some important data" (ibid.) At this point Pinnock cites Paul Helm's The Divine Revelation (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1982), 71-88.

in this [evidentialist] direction." There is, he says, "a personal certainty only the Spirit can give us that must not be lost sight of." 1 Yet, the Spirit builds on "good evidence" rather than turning poor evidence into something better. 2 Thus, Pinnock holds that "there is nothing to prevent us from thinking in terms of there being evidence for the truth of the Bible as well as a work of God's Spirit that goes beyond it." 3 The earlier Pinnock would have termed this fideistic! 4

The early Pinnock asked the question: "How may a person reach the assurance that revelation is authentic and true, and the Scripture

¹Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 166. In the same place Pinnock warns that "in our desire to prove the Bible true, we can easily locate the basis of faith in human wisdom rather than in the power of God and become more at home defending the Bible than in proclaiming its message with power." In fact, he goes so far as to suggest that "the greater certainty aimed at by the scholars" can damage the faith of "the ordinary Christian, who probably requires less." It was for these reasons, Pinnock believes, that the Reformers "blew hot and cold about the place of philosophy in theology." While holding that revelation held good credentials, they did not want "to lose sight of the work of the Spirit in establishing evangelical certainty" (ibid., 166-67; see also ibid., 161, and Pinnock's "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy" [1987], 100-101). In his "Three Views of the Bible in Contemporary Theology" (1977), Pinnock suggests that "the moving of the Spirit accomplishes more on behalf of biblical authority than all the arguments of conservative evangelicals ever could" (p. 72).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 167. The inner assurance Pinnock speaks of, he holds to be "an inward certainty God himself gives us when we respond to him." It is a "personal knowledge" built "upon the data of ordinary understanding," but going beyond it. "It is not irrational, but transrational. It is a confidence that commitment brings and that God gives" (ibid.). Here, Pinnock refers to the fact that Paul emphasized to the Thessalonians and the Corinthians that the power of his preaching owed little to human skill and rhetoric. He concludes: "There is a personal certainty the Spirit gives that cannot be obtained by reasons and evidence. He enables us to hear the Word and receive it. He takes away the veil and rings the bell of truth. He enables us to live with various kinds of uncertainty, too, on the ordinary level of understanding" (Pinnock cites here [ibid., 236, n. 25] James D. G. Dunn's Jesus and the Spirit [London: SCM Press, 1975], 226-27).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 167.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See our discussion of Pinnock's earlier perspective on the testimony of the Spirit in chap. 3, above (pp. 162-65).

trustworthy and authoritative?" His answer was that while reason was not capable of inaugurating revealed truth, it was most certainly able to test religious claims. Thus, the validity of the Bible (and Christianity) rested, so Pinnock claimed, on its historical credentials. To claim that the witness of the Holy Spirit was necessary for the recognition of the authority of Scripture was tantamount to using his testimony as some sort of "mystical proof of inerrancy." Presently, however, Pinnock is willing to admit that there are some things that are not open to historical investigation and that the witness of the Spirit is necessary for recognition of both the authority and truth of the Scriptures.

# The Spirit's Role in Interpretation and Application

According to Pinnock, the second and third roles of the Holy Spirit in relation to Scripture are in interpretation and application. Although it is not our intention here to present a detailed portrayal of the later Pinnock's hermeneutics, a brief survey is necessary. This is especially so because the way one interprets the Bible demonstrates a good deal about one's view of its authority and reliability.

Pinnock, Biblical Revelation (1971), 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 147.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 167-74.

<sup>6</sup>See Carl F. H. Henry's remark that "the key intellectual issue for the '80s . . . will still be the persistent problem of authority. It will concern especially the problem of hermeneutics" (Henry, "American Evangelicals in a Turning Time," Christian Century 97 [1980]: 1062). J. I. Packer maintains that ever since Karl Barth linked his version of Reformation teaching on biblical authority with a hermeneutic that led away from Reformation beliefs, "hermeneutics has been the real heart of the ongoing debate about Scripture" (Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," in Scripture and Truth, ed. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge [Grand

As with his view of the Spirit's role in the recognition or authentication of Scripture, Pinnock submits that there is an ordinary as well as a spiritual level of comprehension. In his thinking, it should be possible for Christians and others to agree on the "historical meaning of the text," but there is still "a crucial role for the Spirit" to play in biblical interpretation. The Spirit's leading causes one to be receptive to the message of the text as well as to the "surplus of meaning" found therein. Pinnock suggests that "the meaning to a text cannot be equated with its original meaning" because it stands within a "messianically structured canon."

In Pinnock's perspective, the very form and structure of the biblical writings "lend themselves to the Spirit and a dynamic

Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1983], 325). In 1976, Pinnock also observed that the area in which a maturing of evangelical thought was most needed was "the interface between inspiration and interpretation" (Pinnock, "The Inerrancy Debate among the Evangelicals" [1976], 13; see also his "Peril with Promise" [1987], 31, 53, 59). Pinnock also recognizes that the reverse is also true—how one views the Bible definitely effects one's interpretation (see his "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" [1985], 21).

Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 168. He contends that it is obvious that "the truth of the text is not secured merely by possessing historical and linguistic tools." The Spirit-factor in interpretation is, so Pinnock claims, illustrated by the commentaries written before the rise of criticism. Those commentators "did not try to master the text as critics now do but to place themselves under its discipline and taste the goodness of the Lord. They were, in fact, in agreement with the biblical writers themselves as to what was important and were therefore in a better position to grasp what these writers were saying" (ibid.). In his "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), Pinnock comments that "the time is past when we can be naïve realists in hermeneutics; who we are influences what we see" (p. 27). For further data, see Pinnock's "Catholic, Protestant, and Anabaptist" (1986), 270-74, and "Building the Bridge from Academic Theology to Christian Mission," Themelios, April 1984, 3-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 169-70. For Pinnock, biblical texts have a surplus of meaning because of the effect of placing them within a canon, their richness in symbolic and metaphorical language, and "the fullness of meaning that a text can have as a piece of literature (ibid., 187-93).

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ Ibid., 169-70. In ibid., chap. 8, Pinnock develops this theme at length.

interpretation." He believes that conservatives (as well as liberals) should take note of the fact that the Bible writers, in spite of the respect they had for what had been given, did not feel constrained to restrict themselves to the original meaning. Pinnock believes (with Paul Achtemeier) that the sacred authors did not see God locked into the past writings "but free to update his program of salvation and ring out new meaning from what had been given before. For instance, God's offer of grace and salvation is to be viewed as illustrative of the unfolding, deepening character of the biblical story which required interpretation and reinterpretation "in the light of the higher stage of revelation that has dawned."

Therefore, Pinnock stresses that Christians must read the New Testament into the Old. What may have been only hinted at there becomes full-blown in the New. This, he submits, is to be taken into consideration in the weight we give to Old versus New Testament

¹Ibid., 175. In the same place Pinnock observes that the Bible was not given all at once, but over a long period of time. "The truth is given dialectically in a process of conversation and refinement, which makes for a dynamic experience of interpretation. The Bible does not take the form of a systematic theology, but that of a great narrative that presents the grace of God in action for the redemption of the nations. Therefore, the truth it yields is not cut-and-dried but balanced and nuanced" (ibid., 175-76).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 176. See Paul J. Achtemeier, <u>The Inspiration of Scripture</u>, 76-93. Pinnock remarks that there is a "mutuality and a balance" between the Word given through Jesus in history and in the Bible, and "the contemporary witness of the Spirit enabling us to appreciate and penetrate what was given in our own lives" (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 162). Yet, he also points out that the New Testament writers were on a "revelational plateau" which we are not (ibid., 200).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 176-77. Pinnock advises that "we should not limit our conception of salvation history to the relatively recent biblical stories from Abraham to Jesus, but see it as something that encompasses the whole history of the world." In light of his Arminian approach to soteriology, he asserts that "because God is one who desires all to be saved, we can be sure that he reveals himself in one way or another to everyone, and invites them to make a decision for or against him" (ibid., 176; emphasis supplied).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 181.

texts.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, while the New Testament "time span" was really too small to demonstrate theological development, there is enough "diversity" within it to witness to the same hermeneutical dynamic as in the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> Still, Pinnock is by no means ready to argue that the Bible moves from "false to true" and from "discredited earlier insights to later progressive teachings."<sup>3</sup> Whereas, in his view, there may exist "confusion" in the text,<sup>4</sup> that text is "still sufficiently directed and focused to ensure that we not stray too far in this way or that."<sup>5</sup>

As we have seen, Pinnock argues for "a certain amount of flexibility" in interpretation. However, in regard to application, he sees a great deal more room for movement. Once again there is the "ordinary" level of understanding which is defined by the parameters of the biblical text, but "there is also a large role for the Spirit here, in that we need God's guidance in knowing how to put the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 181-82. For example, Pinnock observes that the issues of holy war, Sabbath, and polygamy all depend on the ongoing validity of the Old Testament. His position is that "the Bible we respect is not flat, and how we measure its contours and changes" affects the questions we have (ibid., 182). Thus, for Pinnock, hermeneutics is a "skill" that cannot be reduced to a "set of rules" (ibid., 198).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 182. For example, the different perspectives of the four gospels, the various theological styles (e.g., those of Paul, Hebrews, Peter, and Luke), and the diversity due to the circumstantial nature of many New Testament writings, all contribute to the fact that the Bible is a "wonderfully complex library." Pinnock thinks that this should be instructive of the illegitimacy of reading texts out of their context within the canon and of trying to harmonize their meaning "all on the same level" (ibid., 182-85).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 186.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 170.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 187. For further details of Pinnock's view of hermeneutics, see ibid., 197-221. Here, he proposes that the "basic key to the art of interpretation" is two-sided: (1) "We listen to the text as God's Word in human language given to us," and (2) "we open ourselves to God's Spirit to reveal the particular significance the text has for the present situation" (ibid., 197). Pinnock, himself, describes his own theological work as "hermeneutical theology" (Pinnock, "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" [1985], 29).

Scriptures into effect in our situation today." Pinnock holds that "over and above" what the Bible says, "we need the direction and discernment that the Spirit gives" because the "possible applications" of even the most straightforward texts are "multiple." Still, his emphasis is that "what the text originally meant provides the fixed point of reference for everything else." Contemporary applications of the text, although having "discernment into the will of the Lord for us" and having been "received in connection with the reading of the Bible," so Pinnock contends, "should not be equated with the text as canonical."

# The Biblical Authority/Reliability Relationship

We are now ready to draw together the various strands of the later Pinnock's thought that go to make up his view of the connection

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 170-71. See also ibid., 216.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 171. Such questions as the following, Pinnock suggests, give an idea of the range of possibilities not addressed by the texts themselves, but which call for us to apply (and reapply) Scripture to them: What should Christians do in Poland or El Salvador? What about the finality of Jesus Christ in the sphere of world religions? What should be done to defend freedom? Ought women be elders in the church? Is Sunday the day for public worship? How can we achieve a greater measure of economic justice? What does creation mean in relation to scientific theory? Such problems, remarks Pinnock, urgently demand answers, "yet the Bible does not tell us exactly what answers to give" (ibid.). For further examples, see his "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" (1985), 26, and "Hermeneutics: A Neglected Area" (1982), 3-5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 172. Rather, Pinnock continues, "It should be held forth as a contemporary conviction of ours into the way God seems to be leading us. Such convictions are, of course, to be evaluated in the light of reason, tradition, and the instincts of the people of God around us" (ibid., 172-73). After all, argues Pinnock, "we do not have two sources of information here, the Word and the Spirit. It is not as if we can explore the truth of the Spirit apart from and beyond the content of the Word--or take the Spirit for granted, as if he were always present in the text" (ibid., 200; see also his "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology [1985], 29). Pinnock maintains also that some of the current tendencies to relate Scriptura to the struggles of the present day (e.g., Bultmann's existential categories and Cobb's process thought) only result in "Scripture-twisting on a grand scale" (ibid.).

between biblical authority and biblical reliability. It is our intention, here, to describe and analyze in its various connections, the later Pinnock's view of the relationship between biblical authority and reliability. Differences between his recent perspective and that of his early period are pointed out, but the actual evaluation of his two views of biblical authority and reliability are addressed in chapter 5.1

As we have discovered, Pinnock still holds to a strong view of the authority or normativity of the Scriptures. He holds that one of the implications of belief in the authority of the Bible is a belief in its reliability. 2 Therefore, he still holds in common with the early Pinnock that one can argue from biblical authority to reliability. Despite this similarity, there is a great difference between the kind of reliability espoused by the early and the later Pinnock. In his early period, Pinnock believed in the inerrancy (albeit nuanced) of the original biblical manuscripts. This was held to be the actual teaching of Scripture as well as a deduction from what could be expected from the God who had revealed himself in the Bible. For him, inerrancy meant that whatever Scripture "asserts as true and free from error is to be received as such."5 This inerrancy of the "intention" of the Bible extended to such things as historical and scientific facts, although the early Pinnock was quick to acknowledge that the Scriptures were not designed as a textbook of science or history. Whatever difficulties were evident in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See below, pp. 301-342.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See p. 244, above.

 $<sup>^3</sup>$ The basis of this argument is that since Scripture is the inspired Word of God, God would want the revelation of himself to be trustworthy.

<sup>4</sup>See chap. 3, above (pp. 168-170).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 79.

phenomena of Scripture were classified as "apparent" rather than "real," for Pinnock was optimistic that given sufficient time and knowledge they could be cleared away.

The later Pinnock still believes in the reliability, even "inerrancy," of the Scriptures, but he now wishes to define the term in relation to the "purpose of the Bible" and the "phenomena it displays." He is now willing to call the biblical difficulties "real" and does not expect that all of them will be resolved by further study. Although reticent to speak of biblical "errors," Pinnock now believes that both the original manuscripts and our present copies and translations were and are "not perfect" and "not inerrant." Still, he does not consider that this imperfection is able to prevent the Bible from accomplishing "exactly what is claimed for it." The "difficulties there are" cannot conceal the "good news and do not prevent the Spirit from using the text in human lives."

<sup>1</sup>See our discussion in chap. 3, above (p. 202).

Prinnock declares his willingness to retain and continue to speak of "biblical inerrancy." Although he does not consider the term ideal, he contends that "it does possess the strength of conviction concerning the truthfulness of the Bible that we need to maintain at the present time, while offering a good deal of flexibility to honest biblical study" (ibid., 224). For an earlier, somewhat contrasting view, see Pinnock's "Inspiration and Authority: A Truce Proposal" (1976), 65, where he comments: "It seems to me, in view of the serious disadvantages of the term, that we ought to suspend inerrancy from the preferred terminology for stating the evangelical doctrine of Scripture and let it appear only in the midst of working out the details." Notice that this article is presented in a unique "biblical style," with chapter and verse divisions, and that it is adapted from ideas presented by Pinnock to the Theological Students Fellowship (p. 61).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 224. It is significant that Pinnock finds it difficult to speak of biblical "errors" even though he can say the Scripture is "not inerrant" ("error" is not even listed in the index of his The Scripture Principle [1984]). Probably this is part of his determination to hold to an inerrancy expectation as well as his desire to present a positive doctrine of Scripture. This stance should be compared with that of Dewey Beegle in his The Inspiration of Scripture, 63, 67, 81, 181, and with that of Paul Achtemeier, The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals, 59-61.

For Pinnock, the biblical difficulties are relatively unimportant within the larger picture of what the Bible was meant to do and is doing. Even "in its present [imperfect] condition the Bible is proving reliable, nourishing, and precious" in bringing humankind to a saving knowledge of God through Jesus Christ. This is what Pinnock means by the "focused inerrancy" of the Scriptures. 2

Pinnock's previous arguments from the empirical reliability of the Bible to its authority he now views as evidence that evangelicals were "tricked" into defending the Bible in the wrong way. He contends that the liberals, having their roots in the modern Enlightenment, look at the Bible "from a human and academic point of view." They pose "difficult academic" questions which the conservative tries to answer "on the basis of scholarly considerations divorced from the life context of proving the Bible true." This, in turn, Pinnock claims, "requires us to tighten up the intellectual side and nearly bracket the spiritual side of this question." The result, he asserts, is that it is seen as essential to use "all sorts of scholarly

<sup>1</sup>Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 224.

While Pinnock makes it clear that the Bible is eminently trustworthy "to make us wise unto salvation and to teach us all things needful" (ibid.), one wonders whether such reliability extends to all the doctrinal declarations of Scripture. In regard to this very issue, Pinnock remarks that "focused as its purpose is according to 2 Timothy 3:15-17," we can expect "a coherence in the teachings pertaining to the covenant purposes of God and a reliability in the narration of the history of salvation germane to the purpose in view" (ibid., 69-70). It would seem (since he does not actually state it), then, that Pinnock is not proposing a strict reliability in biblical teachings except as they impinge on soteric matters, just as he does not see the necessity of the complete historical reliability of the biblical narratives except as they relate to the Christ-event. Where he actually stands on this question will probably become clearer when he writes his sytematic volume in 1993-94 (Pinnock, letter to Mary High, April 4, 1990).

This topic is, of course, of considerable importance, since determining just what relates to salvation and what does not can become quite subjective. For instance, does the Bible speak reliably concerning the nature of man, last things, or even of itself? I am of the opinion that all scriptural teaching can be, and should be, related to soteriology. Therefore to impugn any part of biblical doctrine is to denigrate, to some extent, the reliability of the doctrine of salvation.

apparatus" to defend a Bible "more perfect than the one that exists," and Christians find themselves too embarrassed to admit that they have "always found the existing Bible, with its difficulties, quite sufficient in authority and truth."

Clark Pinnock does not now find it necessary to argue from reliability to authority. He has, as he himself says, now "recovered" from the "bug" of "apologetic certainty." It is at this point that he has undergone a major shift. Pinnock has come to place greater confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit "to make the Bible come alive for believers" than he did before. While, as far as Pinnock is concerned, there is evidence for the credibility of Scripture, the ultimate confirmation of the authority of the Bible is subjective rather than objective. It is now the testimony of the Spirit rather than reliable phenomena that "proves" the Bible to be both true and authoritative as the Word of God for the believer. Because of this,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 224. This is not to mention the fact that such arguments have caused bitter in-fighting among some evangelicals (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 154. Nonetheless, it is not, Pinnock explains, that he no longer wishes "to argue for the faith," but rather that he now feels "less desperate" and sounds "less dogmatic" (ibid., 154-55).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 154. In a significant remark Pinnock has observed his surprise at "how seldom the militant inerrantists mention his [i.e., the Spirit's] vital ministry." He suggests, further, that inerrantists probably do not "wish to sound like Barth, so they avoid sounding like Paul either. Whatever the reason, stress on the Spirit is noticeably lacking in the literature of inerrancy" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>In this he agrees with Calvin (<u>Institutes</u>, 1.8.1-13). The specific evidence, Pinnock recites in his <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 166. According to Pinnock himself, a balanced view of the Spirit's ministry in relation to Scripture can help ease problems in all three aspects of his overall paradigm: (1) With the Spirit bearing witness to the authority of the Bible, it would not be seen as necessary to inflate inspiration and exaggerate the evidence for it; (2) the vulnerability associated with the humanity of the text would be easier to accept; and (3) confidence in the reality of the Spirit would help us move away from legalistic ways of appealing to the Bible which are often inappropriate to the text and destructive of human beings (Pinnock, "Reflections on <u>The Scripture Principle</u>" [1986], 10).

Pinnock now claims: "I would no longer argue as I did before that one cannot be certain of anything if his or her Bible is not errorless, simply because it is a fatal argument: No available Bible is." It seems that he no longer needs that kind of assurance to accept the authority of Scripture!

Briefly put, then, Pinnock still accepts that with biblical authority comes the implication of biblical reliability. That reliability which focuses on the soteric rather than on details is of a different nature than that emphasized in his early period. As for arguing from reliability to authority, the later Pinnock has introduced a subjective element in the form of the Spirit which has somewhat replaced the need for empirical evidence for the authority of the Scriptures. True, there is still a place for evidence, as Pinnock points out in his latest apologetical writings, but it is supportive rather than constitutive.<sup>2</sup>

### Conclusion

The later Pinnock's writing on the doctrine of Scripture has been done amid what he perceives to be a crisis regarding the

<sup>1</sup>Idem, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 155.

Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), xix. Notice here, a similar pattern in Calvin's Institutes. His basic stance is that "illumined by his [the Spirit's] power, we believe neither by our own nor by anyone else's judgment that Scripture is from God; but above human judgment we affirm with utter certainty (just as if we were gazing upon the majesty of God himself) that it has flowed to us from the very mouth of God by the ministry of men. We seek no proofs, no marks of genuineness upon which our judgment may lean; but we subject our judgment and wit to it as to a thing far beyond any guesswork!"

(Institutes, 1.7.5). It is only after this that Calvin admits the other "reasonable" proofs of the Bible's authority. He states that "unless this certainty, higher and stronger than any human judgment, be present, it will be vain to fortify the authority of Scripture by arguments, to establish it by common agreement of the church, or to confirm it with other helps. For unless this foundation is laid, its authority will always remain in doubt. Conversely, once we have embraced it devoutly as its dignity deserves, and have recognized it to be above the common sort of things, those arguments—not strong enough before to engraft and fix the certainty of Scripture in our minds—become very useful aids" (Institutes, 1.8.1).

acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God. The major foe Pinnock has in his sight is still liberalism, which he sees as denying biblical authority. On the other side, Pinnock engages in some "jousting" with his fellow evangelicals. He sees them as having been pushed to extremes by the polemical atmosphere "caused by our reaction to religious liberalism." Such is the evangelical nervousness about the Bible that, in Pinnock's opinion, they have become "afraid" to see what is in the text, and have a feeling that they have to "force" the Scriptures to meet requirements established "out of our concern to preserve a high doctrine of inspiration."

The threefold paradigm proposed by Pinnock in <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984) is: belief in the normativeness and truthfulness of Scripture because of its divine inspiration; respect for the human character of the Bible; and receptiveness to the Holy Spirit's authentication of the Word. By this approach, he hopes to move liberals toward an acceptance of the Bible as the authoritative Word of God, conservatives toward a recognition of the Scripture's right to present the divine Word clothed in whatever human form it desires, and both toward a faithful hearing of that Word through the power of the Spirit. The shift to a greater emphasis on the humanness of Scripture, on Pinnock's part, acknowledges a much more meaningful

<sup>1</sup>Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 223.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 222.

<sup>4</sup>Regarding his attempt at a <u>via media</u>, Pinnock remarks: "I would not try to pretend that my effort . . . is the only show in town. Many have been trying for the same thing: Barth, Rogers, Childs, maybe even Gadamer and Ricoeur. I just think mine is better" (Pinnock, "Reflections on <u>The Scripture Principle</u>" (1986), 10). As to the fulfillment of his irenical hopes, Pinnock admits his pessimism and takes comfort "in the fact that it would not be the first time a peacemaker got trampled under foot by armies lusting for battle" (ibid., 9).

interplay between the divine and human biblical writers with a consequent greater freedom for the human.

Pinnock claims not to have changed his view of biblical authority. Writing in 1981, he remarks that when he reads <u>Biblical</u> <u>Revelation</u> which he wrote in 1971, he can identify "very much with the clear stand it takes on Biblical authority" and is "not aware of having changed this in any vital respect." However, some of the changes in his arguments may cause suspicion in the minds of some of his fellow-evangelicals that he has in fact forsaken the house of authority. As for his perspective on biblical inerrancy, Pinnock's changes are much more obvious. While still holding to "inerrancy in the sense of Biblical truthfulness—and that in a nuanced way," Pinnock now advocates that biblical veracity is focused on soteric matters rather than on the details given in of Scripture.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 100-105. Whether or not this facet of Pinnock's present view is crucial to his overall perspective needs greater attention (see chap. 5, below [pp. 350-361]).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 155. In 1985, Pinnock remarked on his commitment "to the infallibility of the Bible as the norm and canon for our message" (Pinnock, <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> [1985], 11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, himself, sees the changes as corrections of "omissions and distortions" which he has detected in his earlier argument (Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" [1981], 155). In his "Reflections on The Scripture Principle" (1986), 11, Pinnock categorizes his Biblical Revelation (1971) as presenting more of a "black and white" case for the Bible, while he regards his The Scripture Principle (1984) as presenting a theory which has moved closer to "evangelical practice."

<sup>4</sup>Idem, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 154.

For instance, Pinnock admits that in 1967, he would "probably have thought that an apparent inconsistency in Matthew must be explained (away)," whereas now he "would let it stand and not twist the text as conservatives like to do" (ibid.). See also his "Reflections on The Scripture Principle (1986), 11. For a similar evangelical perspective, see Louglas Farrow's The Word of Truth and Disputes about Words (Winona Lake, IN: Carpenter Books, 1987). For Farrow's discussion of Pinnock's views, see pp. 72-73.

Although Pinnock's view of the relationship between biblical authority and reliability has also undergone subtle changes—he still argues from authority to reliability, but not vice versa as he did in his earlier period—he wants to retain the term inerrancy as a "metaphor for the determination to trust God's Word completely." Pinnock confesses that he has been tempted to give up the term because of its narrowness of definition and the crudity of the polemics surrounding its use, but he states that "in the end, I have had to bow to the wisdom that says we need to be unmistakably clear in our convictions about biblical authority," and in the North American situation, "that means to employ strong language." He will hold to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 225. See also Pinnock's "The Inerrancy Debate among the Evangelicals" (1976), 12, and "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy" (1987), 95. In the latter Pinnock remarks that "trustworthy," "inerrant," "inspired," and "infallible" all do the same job by testifying to our "complete openness to God speaking to us through the Scriptures."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 225. It is significant, though, that Pinnock does not mention "inerrancy" as such in his "New Baptist Confession." This confession which has engendered a degree of controversy in the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec affirms under the heading "God has spoken":

<sup>&</sup>quot;We rejoice that God has revealed himself and spoken savingly to us in the events and words of redemptive history recorded in Scripture. This history reached fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, who makes himself known to us through the Spirit and by means of the Bible.

<sup>&</sup>quot;We believe that the Bible as the Scripture of the churches, is an essential part and trustworthy record of the gracious divine self-disclosure. We believe that all the books of the Old and New Testaments, having been given by inspiration of God, are the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Scripture is the criterion of our beliefs interpreted according to the original context and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. We wholeheartedly acknowledge the full authority of the Bible" (Pinnock, Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal [1985], 31. The full confession is found in the same place, pp. 31-33).

For a brief portrayal of Pinnock's attempt to have a confession of faith drafted by the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, the background to the above-mentioned "New Baptist Confession" (approved by the Baptist Renewal Fellowship of Canada in May, 1981), and the ultimate outvoting of the confession proposal by the Convention, see Alan S. Orser, "An Interpretation of Dr. Clark H. Pinnock and His Contribution to the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, 1977-1985" (Acadia Divinity College, unpublished term paper, November 1985), 12-16.

inerrancy, he observes, if it means "that the Bible can be trusted to teach the truth in all it affirms." It seems clear that Pinnock's major shift in his doctrine of Scripture has been in regard to his definition of inerrancy. In fact, the nature and extent of biblical inerrancy appears to be the basic issue in his The Scripture Principle (1984). He rejects his earlier view as inadequately supported by the explicit statements of Scripture, as unfaithful to the biblical phenomena, and as unnecessary in the light of the Spirit's role in the recognition, interpretation, and application of the Bible. 2 As if to clinch his case, the later Pinnock proposes that inerrancy is incompatible with anything less than a deterministic doctrine of God, since, in his view, a strict doctrine of biblical inerrancy, while supportive of divine sovereignty, denies genuine human freedom to the biblical writers. 3 Has Pinnock's Arminianism filtered down into his "reflections" on the Scripture principle, even to the point of becoming his basic presupposition? This and other questions as to the inner consistency of his two positions and the underlying reasons for his shift regarding Scripture are some of the matters that are addressed in the following chapter.

¹Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 225. For further study see Pinnock's "Reflections on The Scripture Principle" (1986), 11, and "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?" (1987), 74. Notice that Pinnock claims that he does not want to restrict "the degree of trust we accord the Bible," but rather to promote openness "in an unlimited way to all of its assertions, even when they are perplexing" (The Scripture Principle [1984], xx).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Refer to our discussion, above (pp. 286-290).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For our treatment of this aspect of Pinnock's views, see above, pp. 254-58, and chap. 5, below, pp. 350-61.

#### CHAPTER V

# CRITIQUE AND CONCLUSIONS

# Introduction

While there is currently little doubt as to the importance of Pinnock's work in the doctrine of Scripture, there is no agreement among theologians as to his theological contribution. For instance, J. I. Packer counts Pinnock's earlier reflections on Scripture as "more cogent" than his later endeavors; Gordon E. Barnes considers that the later Pinnock has produced "a self-consistent view of scriptural authority that does justice to both the human and the divine elements in Scripture"; while John Carmody remarks of The Scripture Principle (1984) that it does not "escape bibliolatry and so is not classically Christian." It seems that the evaluation of theological opinions is not simple and, in fact, probably reveals more about the critic than the one criticized.

Just as the descriptive and analytical sections of this study have concentrated on Pinnock's views as expressed in his two major

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Even Roger Nicole, who vehemently disagrees with Pinnock's latest view, considers that "any work" by Pinnock "deserves the attention of the theological world" and that his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> "is certainly to be much attended" (Nicole, "<u>The Scripture Principle</u>: Clark Pinnock's Precarious Balance Between Openmindedness and Doctrinal Instability," <u>Christianity Today</u>, February 1, 1985, 68).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Packer, "Foreword," 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Barnes, review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Faith and Thought</u> 113 (1987): 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>John Carmody, a review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Horizons</u> 13 (1986): 162. One can imagine what Carmody's view of Pinnock's <u>Biblical Revolation</u> (1971) would have been!

works, 1 so also with the following evaluation. In order for this critique to be as balanced as possible, it is my intention to point out the strengths and weaknesses of both the early and the later Pinnock's views, particularly in regard to their inner consistency or inconsistency.<sup>2</sup> In addition, his opinions are evaluated in regard to their faithfulness to the scriptural data. This latter aspect is approached from the perspective of whether or not Pinnock has used all of the pertinent biblical evidence, and that consistently. The middle section of this concluding chapter addresses the possible reasons for Pinnock's shift from a strict view of inerrancy with its complementary close relationship between biblical reliability and authority to a more lenient approach. Was Pinnock's change due to some psychological traits, to his having reexamined and rethought the evidence, as a result of a natural development stemming from his early "nuanced" strategy in regard to inerrancy, or as the consequence of a larger movement from one theological paradigm to another? Our final task is to focus on the implications of the present study.

### A Critique of Pinnock's Early View

Pinnock's <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), alone, would probably have guaranteed him a place of prominence among conservative students of the doctrines of revelation, inspiration, and authority. In general, it was favorably reviewed in the evangelical press, while

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See above, p. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>While the critique offered in this chapter is based on my own analysis of the views of the early and later Pinnock, secondary sources are used where available in order to present as well-rounded a picture as is possible.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>In that this dissertation is not in the field of biblical studies, the reader should not expect an in-depth study of the relevant biblical passages. Still, it is impossible to omit at least some consideration of the biblical materials. I make no apology for the fact that my theological reflections proceed from within my own context in the Seventh-day Adventist tradition.

being mainly ignored by the liberals. Such views as espoused by Pinnock in his early years regarding biblical reliability (in particular) have come under increasing fire in more recent times even among "card-carrying" evangelicals who continue to debate the meaning and extent of the biblical inerrancy category<sup>2</sup> as well as the arguments in its support. Part of that critique, of course, has been carried out by the later Pinnock on the earlier.

<sup>1</sup>See, for instance, Harold Lindsell, review of Biblical Revelation, by Clark H. Pinnock, Christianity Today, December 3, 1971, 22-23; Alan F. Johnson, review of Biblical Revelation, by Clark H. Pinnock, Moody Monthly, November 1971, 52-54; H. Kent, Jr., review of Biblical Revelation, by Clark H. Pinnock, Grace Journal, Fall 1972, 38-40; G. R. Lewis, review of Biblical Revelation, by Clark H. Pinnock, Eternity, January 1972, 50; Dallas M. Roark, review of Biblical Revelation, by Clark H. Pinnock, Southwestern Journal of Theology, Fall 1972, 105-6; Robert L. Saucy, review of Biblical Revelation, by Clark H. Pinnock, Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 15 (1972): 122-24; J. A. Witmer, review of Biblical Revelation, by Clark H. Pinnock, Bibliotheca Sacra 129 (1972): 147-48; and Daniel Fuller, "On Revelation and Biblical Authority" (review of Biblical Revelation, by Clark H. Pinnock), Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 16 (1973): 67-69 (the same review is also in Christian Scholar's Review 2 [1973]: 330-33).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See, for instance, Price's "Inerrant the Wind: The Troubled House of North American Evangelicals," 133-43.

<sup>3</sup>Michael Bauman, for instance, lists six "tactical errors" committed by evangelicals which fail to persuade noninerrantists: (1) the "slippery-slope argument" which asserts that if one takes a stand against "full Biblical authority" (i.e., inerrancy), one has stepped upon a slope that leads to theological and spiritual shipwreck; (2) the "theological-deduction argument" that since God inspired the Bible, and God does not lie, then the Bible must be without error; (3) the "Christological argument" whereby Jesus' bibliological teachings and his divine-human nature are used to support the doctrine of an inerrant Bible; (4) the "definition-of-error argument" by which one's definition of "error" is qualified or nuanced; (5) the "bursting-balloon argument" which proposes that one admitted error would undo the whole package of biblical authority; and (6) the "expectation argument" which assumes that because answers have been found to some of the problems, we can expect to find satisfactory solutions to all of them (Bauman, "Why the Noninerrantists Are Not Listening: Six Tactical Errors Evangelicals Commit," 317-24). Observe that the early Pinnock used all of these arguments in Biblical Revelation (1971): the first, p. 80; second, p. 79; third, pp. 59, 176; fourth, pp. 71, 75; fifth, p. 80; and sixth, pp. 71, 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Although Pinnock claims not to be refuting anyone, let alone himself in his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (Pinnock, "Reflections on <u>The Scripture Principle</u>" [1986], 11).

# Strengths of Pinnock's Early Position

Despite the contemporary lampooning of belief in biblical inerrancy by theological liberals, 1 such a position is not without its strengths. Certainly, the carefully nuanced version of inerrancy espoused by the early Pinnock had some solid advantages which prompted Alan F. Johnson to remark of Pinnock's <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971) that "this volume will be a sad disappointment to many who thought that the doctrine of verbal, plenary inspiration, and propositional truth revelation was outdated, dead and buried in scholarly circles." The following comprise some of the most effective arguments of the early Pinnock.

# A High View of Biblical Authority

Possibly, the early Pinnock's strongest point is his unambiguous argument for the authority of the Bible. Robert Saucy observes that "in a day almost completely dominated by theological skepticism it is refreshing to read someone convinced that there is a sure foundation for faith." The point is well made by Pinnock that if one does not accept the Scriptures as the authoritative source for theology, the theological endeavor becomes nothing more than "innovation" and "speculation," and is thrown into a state of "crisis."

Of course, this opens up the whole issue as to whether or not God actually intended that the revelation of himself should be written down in the form of Scriptures. In fact, an excellent case can be made for Pinnock's contention that the inscripturation process was

<sup>1</sup>So, James Barr's <u>Fundamentalism</u>, 72-85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Alan F. Johnson's review of <u>Biblical Revelation</u>, 54.

<sup>3</sup>Saucy, review of Biblical Revelation, 122.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 9.

divinely approved. While it is possible to argue that God only occasionally gave specific instructions to commit his message to writing, and hence that such injunctions were not intended as a precedent for the writing of the Bible as a whole, such reasoning has to ignore the force of 2 Tim 3:16 which remarks on the divine inspiration (even authorship) of the graphe. While not denying the role of the human authors, the evidence appears to justify Pinnock's assertion that "God is the ultimate Author of Scripture" and that the Bible can be "identified" with "God's Word."

### Jesus Christ: The Focus of Scripture

Another positive contribution made by the early Pinnock was his emphasis on Jesus Christ as the focus of Scripture. Although it could be argued that God, not Christ, is the locus of biblical revelation, such a view does not seem to take adequate cognizance of the fact that Christ is the "image of the invisible God." Pinnock correctly states that "the <u>purpose</u> of Scripture is identical with the purpose of revelation itself: to witness to Jesus as the Christ." 5

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For instance, Exod 17:14; Jer 30:1, 2; 36:1, 2. For Pinnock's discussion of inspiration as "verbal," see his <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 89-92.

That this is impossible of denial is acknowledged by G. W. H. Lampe, who, while holding that "'inspiration' is a quality of persons rather than of writings as such," also admits that "God has in some manner breathed into these writings his own creative Spirit" (Lampe, "Inspiration and Revelation," in The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. G. A. Buttrick (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962), 2:713. That inspiration has to do with graphs is corroborated by such passages as Act 4:25 where Peter and John attribute the words of the Psalmist (Ps 2:1-2) to God; Heb 5:5; and 3:7 which cite the words of Scripture as the direct utterances of God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 55-56.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Col 1:15. See also Heb 1:1-3, which indicates that the revelation of God reaches its culmination in Christ, the "exact representation of his being" (all Scripture references are from the New International Version [International Bible Society, 1973, 1978, 1983]).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 36 (emphasis Pinnock). See, for example, 2 Tim 3:15; Luke 24:27; 24:44-45; and Act 28:23.

Thus, Christ is seen by Pinnock as the "hermeneutical <u>Guide</u>" to the meaning of the Bible, yet, without becoming a "critical scalpel."

Scripture passages cannot be deleted on the grounds that they do not seem to be essential to Christological or soteriological concerns. On the contrary, the Christian's attitude to the Scriptures is to be that of Christ--"one of total trust." Such an approach does appear to guard against the possibility of the doctrine of salvation becoming a canon within the canon.<sup>2</sup>

# The Credibility of Revelation

His emphasis on the "credibility of revelation" is another strong point in Pinnock's first case for biblical authority and reliability. Against the Neo-orthodox claim that Christianity is not to be authenticated by history or apologetics, but by a divine-human encounter, Pinnock explains that "faith is grounded in the reality and validity of the revelation of God in Jesus." Surely, Pinnock is correct in his view that a valid authority must present "credentials" for its authority claim or else one is left open to deception by personal experience or demons. Both cultural and evidentialist apologetics appear to be a necessary part of Christian evangelism, by yet one must ask whether the early Pinnock has not been just a little too optimistic regarding their power.

<sup>1</sup>Pinnock, Biblical Revelation (1971), 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See my discussion of this subject in reference to Martin Luther (chap. 1, pp. 15-17).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 40. This seems to be the accent of the New Testament as well. See, for instance, Paul's argument from "historical" evidence for the resurrection of Christ in 1 Cor 15:1-19. For Paul the resurrection of Jesus must be open to investigation, for if Christ has not been raised, the validity of the gospel itself would be cast into question.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>For instance, Act 17:22-31 and 1 Cor 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>See my discussion below (pp. 314-15).

# The Argument from Biblical Authority to Reliability

Pinnock's defense of biblical authority and reliability is a well-reasoned case. He argues from the Bible's own doctrine of inspiration, the view of Christ and the apostles concerning Scripture, as well as from the historic position of the Christian church. It is difficult to gainsay such a position if it is thoroughly biblically based. Pinnock's strategy is to demonstrate that the Bible presents an explicit doctrine of its own authority and reliability in such texts as 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21; Matt 5:17-18; and John 10:35. Although one may not accept his early opinion that these texts teach a doctrine of inerrancy. the unmistakable impression received is that the Bible explicitly supports a high view of itself, that Christ viewed Scripture as eminently authoritative and trustworthy, and that the church was justified in its reverence of the biblical text. 4

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 53-106, 147-74

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Barr exemplifies the liberal opposition to such an approach. He contends that "for Christians generally it is probably not necessary to offer this grotesque argument [i.e., that the authority of Jesus settles questions of authority and reliability] the dignity of a refutation" (James Barr, Fundamentalism, 74). In fact, Barr offers very little in the way of rebuttal to the fundamentalist position (his "strongest" argument is that fundamentalists themselves "do not depend upon it" [ibid., 75]). See below (pp. 311-21), for some of the weak links or omissions in Pinnock's defense.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 55-62.

So argues Kirsopp Lake, in his <u>The Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow</u> (London: Christophers, 1925), 61-62. Lake remarks that "it is a mistake, often made by educated persons who happen to have but little knowledge of historical theology, to suppose that Fundamentalism is a new and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the kind: it is the partial and uneducated survival of a theology which was once universally held by all Christians. How many were there, for instance, in Christian churches in the eighteenth century who doubted the infallible inspiration of all Scripture? A few, perhaps, but very few. No, the Fundamentalist may be wrong; I think that he is. But is we who have departed from the tradition, not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who tries to argue with a Fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and the corpus theologicum of the Church is on the Fundamentalist side." The truth of Lake's view is accented by the later Pinnock's remark that John Woodbridge's <u>Biblical Authority</u>: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim <u>Proposal</u> "effectively refutes the view that classical theologians

## The Case for the Authority of the New Testament

A compelling case is also presented by Pinnock for the authority of the New Testament. He correctly observes that Christ's doctrine of Scripture could not authenticate the Christian writings in the same way as the Old Testament. According to Pinnock, Christ "establishes the <u>nature</u>, though not the full extent, of Scripture." Still, from his perspective the production of what came to be known as the New Testament came as no surprise to the fledgling church. Rather, it was "entirely predictable by analogy with the Old Testament experience," and found its "historical" basis in the authority of Christ and his delegation of that authority to the apostles. The strength of this argument is indicated by the fact that the later Pinnock continued its employment.

### Resolvable Biblical Difficulties

Pinnock's early approach to the "difficulties" of Scripture is also worthy of commendation. Whereas he was convinced that "God permitted discrepancies to appear in Scripture," he stated that our Christian duty is to "look such difficulties squarely in the eye" and attempt to clear the Bible of "reproach." One may disagree with the

limited the inerrancy of the Bible to matters of faith and practice" (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 227, n. 11). This is in spite of the fact that a finding in favor of Rogers and McKim could be deemed to be supportive of Pinnock's more recent position. For McKim's reaction to the later Pinnock's failure to accept the Rogers/McKim thesis, see McKim's "Pinnock's Major Work on the Doctrine of Scripture," 27-28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>By this, Pinnock did not mean that Christ gave the Old Testament its authority. On the contrary, "he simply recognized and received it" (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 62).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 45-46.

<sup>5</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 190.

early Pinnock's expectation that "eventually all tension will be eliminated and all problems solved," but it must be admitted that this very expectation has been at the root of all such creative efforts which can be exemplified by Edwin R. Thiele's efforts to sort out the complicated Hebrew royal chronologies. 2

Pinnock also offers plausible explanations for the so-called "moral blemishes" of Scripture. It is difficult to escape the persuasiveness of his argument that revelation is "a cumulative, organic disclosure of God to men in history" which is "progressive and unfolding" rather than self-contradictory. It seems to me that the admission of "progressive revelation," in the sense of a movement from falsity to truthfulness, would ring the death knell for the divine authority of Scripture.

### Warnings Regarding Biblical Criticism

Finally, the early Pinnock's warnings about the dangers of biblical criticism are still deserving of attention. He does not consider it contradictory to "Christian criticism" to approach Scripture through a belief in its divine authority and reliability. 5 One has only to survey the results of the "agnostic" method of

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Thiele, <u>The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings</u>, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1983). Notice, however, that the same assumption also lies behind some forced harmonizations (so, Harold Lindsell's acceptance of J. M. Cheney's six-denial scenario to account for difficulties in the several accounts of Peter's denial of Christ [Lindsell, <u>The Battle for the Bible</u>, 174-76]).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 201-2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock contends that such a tactic clears God of blame while impugning the truthfulness of Scripture (ibid., 198).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 177.

historical-criticism to be convinced of the wisdom of maintaining such a presupposition.

### Weaknesses of Pinnock's Early Position

Despite the considerable strengths of Pinnock's early view of biblical authority and reliability, it seems not to have been without its weaknesses. Some of these are brought into view here.

### Doctrine versus Biblical Phenomena

Pinnock's advocacy of the view that one must define one's doctrine of Scripture from its explicit statements,<sup>2</sup> and then understand the "phenomena" and "difficulties" from within that context, appears to prejudge many biblical passages as secondary. While, in 1971, Pinnock declared the amount of biblical material which clearly taught the infallibility or inerrancy of Scripture to be of "avalanche" proportions,<sup>3</sup> the later Pinnock has recently criticized his earlier position. He now concludes that the explicit evidence "is unsystematic and somewhat fragmentary," enabling us to reach "important but modest conclusions."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Edgar Krentz' discussion of the presuppositions and achievements of the historical-critical method, in his <u>The Historical Critical Method</u>, 55-72. Krentz actually recommends some modifications to the method (pp. 67-72), but it is debatable whether it can in fact be modified to fit the presuppositions of "Christian criticism."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Consider the fact that after his discussion of the doctrinal texts (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21; Matt 5:17-18; and John 10:35), and before he attends to the phenomena of Scripture, Pinnock believes himself ready to "construct a doctrinal model of inspiration which is at once adequate (able to do justice to the data) and judicious (cautious not to overstep the bounds of evidence)" (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 66). See also ibid., 16, where he maintains that "evangelical theology operates on the basis of a doctrine of Scripture inductively constructed out of the materials of redemptive revelation" (emphasis Pinnock). We must ask: Does not the biblical phenomena also constitute part of those materials?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>4</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 54.

Would it not be more fruitful to take both the explicit statements of Scripture and the implicit evidence of the biblical phenomena together and allow them to function in tandem to inform us of how God inspired his Word? After all, 2 Tim 3:16, for instance, does seem to speak more about the <u>function</u> of Scripture than the <u>method</u> by which God gave it. Such a strategy would seem to be a more consistent approach in the light of the early Pinnock's belief in the plenary inspiration (and authority) of Scripture.

### Minimal Human Role in Inscripturation

Closely connected with the early Pinnock's refusal to allow the biblical phenomena to function as fully informative in the process of building a doctrine of Scripture is his downgrading of the human role in the writing of the Bible. There can be no doubt about the strength of Pinnock's affirmations concerning the divine authorship of Scripture, but he is much more ambiguous regarding the part played by the human authors. His view of the humanity of Scripture, rather than being worked out on a positive basis, seems actually to find its roots in his opposition to the liberal stance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>So, <u>The Interpreter's Bible</u>, 11:507 (on 2 Tim 3:16-17). The commentators assert that while "inspiration" means that "God speaks to man through the book" (i.e., the intrinsic aspect), the main point is that "the writer is concerned to emphasize the fact that the Christian faith is guaranteed by its inspired scriptures" (i.e., the functional aspect). It is worthy of notice that Pinnock does not really provide exegesis of the key New Testament texts, but accepts the work already done primarily by Warfield (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 55).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>This is, in fact, the approach adopted by the later Pinnock in his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), chap. 2. Compare Dewey Beegle's attempt to allow the biblical phenomena a role in the formulation of a doctrine of inspiration. Probably he tilts in the opposite direction to the early Pinnock, in that he appears to allow the phenomena the dominant place (see Beegle's <u>The Inspiration of Scripture</u>, 41-69).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 175-76. Here, while denying that God has given either a docetic Christ or a docetic Scripture, Pinnock observes that "at the present time, it is more likely that men will mistake the Bible for a merely human book than that they would overlook its humanity" (ibid., 176).

This fact is brought out even more strengly by Pinnock's statement that the Bible was written "by men in the style, vocabulary and modes of their day." The Spirit is said to have "controlled" the human writers, but not obliterated them. Peter is portrayed as making it "abundantly clear" (in 2 Pet 1:20-21) that "the initiative lay with Gcd, and the literary product was divinely authored." 1 Yet, he is quick to deny that Scripture arose as a result of "human research,"2 since such an admission would seem to deny its divine origin. This position seems to promote the view that all of Scripture was given in a "prophetic" fashion3 and fails to take into account other possibilities; for instance, Luke's experience as recorded in Luke 1:1-4.4 Why was it that Pinnock seemed unable to allow for any more human input in the writing of Scripture than such things as vocabulary and style by which the sacred writers retained their "individuality"?5 As we have intimated, anything more would have allowed biblical error, which, in turn, would have negated, for the early Pinnock, the Bible's divine authority and reliability. This opinion raises an additional problem of consistency. How can one speak of a truly human Scripture when the human agents were so divinely controlled?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 57 (emphasis Pinnock). Pinnock continues: "Their work has a divine stamp upon it. For they were moved by the Spirit, and their word was endowed with singular power and truthfulness" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>That is, a "prophetic" model of inspiration. Achtemeier points out that such a view is based on Old Testament passages in which the words that the prophet was to speak to Israel are said to have been put into his mouth by God himself (e.g., Jer 1:9; 2:1), and the words which were to be written were dictated to the prophet by God (Jer 36:1-4, 32). Achtemeier describes and enumerates the weaknesses of such a model of inspiration (<u>The Inspiration of Scripture: Problems and Proposals</u>, 29-31, 74-75, 99-100).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See George E. Rice's discussion of the "Lucan model" of inspiration (<u>Luke, A Plagiarist?</u>, 19-29). The later Pinnock is more inclined to take other models of inspiration into account (see his "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" [1981], 155). For his specific comments regarding the Gospel of Luke, see <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 52.

<sup>5</sup>Idem, Biblical Revelation (1971), 94.

### Coercive Divine Control

The early Pinnock could assert that "the control exercised by the Spirit was so complete that human proneness to error was overcome and the writers were the perfect mouthpieces of infallible revelation." Such a position of divine-human "confluence" seems to have rested firmly on a particular view of "biblical theism"2--that of Calvinism. Pinnock complained that "men seem unable to conceive of a divine providence which can infallibly reach its ends without dehumanizing the human agents it employs."

Pinnock admitted that such an approach seems, to many people, like a "mechanical," even a "dictation," view of inspiration. His response was to cite Warfield's comment that since God wanted to give his people a series of letters like Paul's, the "Paul he brought to the task was a Paul who spontaneously would write just such letters." One wonders, however, whether such a solution actually does more than move the problem one step back. The brothers Basinger have quite recently proposed that evangelicals can consistently use the free will defence in order to absolve God from the responsibility for evil, only if they are also willing to deny that "God could perfectly control what the biblical writers uttered without removing their freedom."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 88.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. (emphasis Pinnock). The citation is from Warfield's <u>The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible</u>, 158.

 $<sup>^{5}\</sup>mathrm{That}$  is, from human freedom in written expression to overall human freedom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Randall and David Basinger, "Inerrancy, Dictation and the Free Will Defence," <u>The Evangelical Quarterly</u> 55 (1983): 180. The Basingers conclude that "if the free will defence is used, some form of divine dictation theory logically follows" and "the proponent of inerrancy, it appears, must make a choice" (ibid.).

The later Pinnock has detected similar problems in his early view of human "freedom" and divine sovereignty. 1

### <u>Unwarranted Optimism Regarding</u> <u>Human Reason</u>

A major weakness of Pinnock's early view relates to his apologetics. Whereas his emphasis on the credibility of revelation is commendable and necessary, he tended to ask too much of his apologetic and was too optimistic about the powers of human reason. Pinnock was correct in his assertion (following Warfield) that reason is competent to test religious claims, but not of "inaugurating revealed truth." However, he also seems to believe that "lost" human reason is capable of arriving at belief in the authority of the Scriptures through an examination of the empirical evidence (i.e., through their reliability). This is in spite of the fact that he admits that the "historical evidences for Christianity" can only possess probability rather than certainty.

¹See his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 100-105. This facet of Pinnock's shift is discussed again a little later (below, pp. 350-60). It is obvious that it is difficult to completely bracket out one's own theological perspective when evaluating the work of a theologian. This is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the classic contention between Calvinism and Arminianism in contemporary evancelicalism. While I see the scriptural evidence favoring an Arminian approach to soteriology and theology proper, Norman L. Geisler would regard the early Pinnock's Calvinism as a definite strength. See, for instance, Geisler's review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Bibliotheca Sacra</u> 143 (1986): 77, where he criticizes Pinnock's change of view on this issue as indicative of his shift toward process theology.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock claims that it is "our task" to present evidence to the "lost" (ibid., 46). While it could be argued that the early Pinnock does not place too much confidence on reason because his argument from reliability to authority only complements a position already based on authority, such is not the case with the non-Christian. The already convinced may not even need evidence from biblical reliability, while the unconvinced needs more than evidence (see below, pp. 313-14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 46. In the same place, Pinnock argues that as "probability is the guide to life; it is the guide to religious truth too."

While not wanting to denigrate Pinnock's desire to provide proof for the authority and truthfulness of the Bible, his early view seems to leave a wide chasm between probability and certainty. What can close that gap? The solution would appear to lie in the testimonium of the Holy Spirit, but the early Pinnock was quick to point out that "Scripture mentions this witness in connection with Christ and the gospel, not inspiration per se." The Spirit's witness, according to Pinnock, terminates upon "the evidence for the truth of revelation," not on some subjective conviction. Rather, certitude is created by the Spirit, "on the basis of good and sufficient evidence."

We do not want to deny the value of "good and sufficient evidence" or the dangers of subjectivism, but are desirous of stressing the balance of the subjective aspect with the objective. It seems that Pinnock's fear of any taint of fideism has closed off a very biblical emphasis that there are things that are not able to be discerned by the "unspiritual" person (1 Cor 2:14). Empirical evidence is never enough to actually "prove" the Scriptures to be either true or authoritative. Rather, as John Calvin argued, "full conviction" regarding Scripture is only due "to the testimony of the Spirit." Henry very aptly observed that Pinnock's over-reliance on evidentialism required "a herculean burden of demonstration that no

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 51 (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>2</sup>Thid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>In fact, the early Pinnock actually knows this. In connection with his discussion of the illumination of the Spirit, he writes of the Spirit's role in causing Scripture to become the Word of God "for us because it is the Word of God in itself" (ibid., 217; emphasis Pinnock). Is this not a form of accreditation of the authority of the Word?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Institutes, 1.7.5. It is my opinion that the early Pinnock has misunderstood Calvin to be a fideist, for while emphasizing the testimony of the Spirit as the ultimate confirmation of Scripture as the Word of God, Calvin did not deny the role of empirical evidences (see ibid., 1.8.1-13).

evangelical theologian, however devout or brilliant, can successfully carry." Whether or not that was the case, the fact remains that the later Pinnock places much greater confidence in the power of the Spirit "to make the Bible come to life" than he did previously.<sup>2</sup>

### <u>Lack of Controls for the Intentionality</u> Qualification

The "intentionality" qualification which Pinnock attaches to the inerrancy category constitutes another problem area for his early view. His point is well taken that the "degree of precision is determined by the cultural milieu, "4 but one is left wondering what the controls are for the use of such a principle. Pinnock takes the fall of Adam as an example. In his view, there can be no disputing the fact that the Genesis narrative requires "a time-space rebellion against God on the part of the first man," since the New Testament treats the passage as historical truth. Nevertheless, he regards it as "far less obvious" whether or not details such as the serpent's speaking are to be understood literally or figuratively. 5 The answer to the dilemma can only be discovered, according to the early Pinnock, through "a determination of the precise literary genre that lies before us, "6 yet he does not propose any means by which it would be possible to determine the genre and the level of literalness required. In addition, just which intention of Scripture should have

Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, 1:220.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 154-55.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See chap. 3, above, pp. 162-65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 75. In the same place, Pinnock contends that the Hebrew expression for "son" can refer to a descendent in an indefinite sense, or even to an unrelated person. In the same vein are the inexact New Testament citations of the Old and differences in wording in the gospel accounts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

preeminence? Should it be the intention of the original human writer or the overall intention of Scripture (which is to present Jesus Christ)?

It appears that Pinnock opts for the intention of the sacred writers, since he offers the following as a "safe" rule: "Where the sacred writer records data in such a way that it is apparent he regards it to be true and expects us to take it as such, we must assume that it is." But, does this help us determine whether what Pinnock considers subsidiary aspects of the Fall narrative are to be interpreted as literal or figurative? Probably not, if Meir Sternberg is correct in his view that "nothing on the surface . . . infallibly marks off" historical from fictional writing.<sup>2</sup>

This issue raises the whole problem as to what Pinnock and other inerrantists mean by "error." Bauman contends that noninerrantists find the inerrantist definitions of error to be "exasperating" because "error" is used in one sense in reference to the Bible and another in everyday life. He concludes that until inerrantists can establish and consistently apply "a definition for error that holds inside the Bible and out," they will not convince

¹Ibid., 78. Again, he remarks the "whatsoever it [Scripture] asserts as true and free from error is to be received as such" (ibid., 79). In fact, it is hard to harmonize Pinnock's suggestion that the Fall account could contain material that is non-factual with his statement that Christ "regarded the entire Scripture as trustworthy, the commonplace as well as the extraordinary. Criticism is often leveled at the Bible for the trivialities (levicula) it is said to contain. Inspiration should not be blamed for nonessential details which seem unworthy of the Spirit's breath. Scripture does not . . recognize this dichotomy either. No doubt some things in Scripture are more essential than others, but this fact does not justify critical surgery and the discarding of what we deem unimportant. Certainly the New Testament does not recognize trivialities in the Old Testament (Ro 15:4). The Bible is a unitary product. Who is the judge capable of differentiating between matters of great weight and those of none at all" (ibid., 87; emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Sternberg, <u>The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading</u> (Blcomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 30.

dissenters to join them. 1 It is little wonder, then, that the later Pinnock points out that by the time inerrancy is qualified it varies little from the view held by other evangelicals "who differ from us [i.e., inerrantists] chiefly in their desire to avoid the term inerrancy."<sup>2</sup>

### The Original Autographs Qualification

Pinnock's early doctrine of Scripture included the affirmation that "divine inspiration" had immediate reference to the original autographs.<sup>3</sup> While this notion provided an impenetrable defense for biblical reliability—one could not prove the presence of error in Scripture because the original manuscripts no longer existed—it also held some inherent weaknesses. The early Pinnock, himself, listed several of his own theory's difficulties, but concluded that his opinion was "quite sound" in that "few are prepared to claim inspiration for the copyists and translators of Scripture" and hence what the sacred penmen set down is of "great interest."<sup>4</sup>

In fact, this argument actually begs the question, since the issue is not whether the copyists and translators were inspired. The real point is what Bible it was that is called graphe and theopneustos in 2 Tim 3:16. It was almost certain that it was not the original autographs, and at times it was very definitely the Bible-in-hand,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Bauman, 322. Bauman also argues that "we cannot dogmatically assert that Paul's shipwreck of grammar in portions of Galatians is any more or less appealing or appalling to God than the unusual numbers in Kings or Chronicles" (ibid., 320).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "The Inerrancy Debate among Evangelicals" (1976), 13. See also Fisher Humphreys' "Biblical Inerrancy: A Guide for the Perplexed," 6-7, 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 81.

which was often the Septuagint. If that is the case, it would appear that Paul did not have the same interest in the original manuscripts that modern inerrantists have.

The later Pinnock, of course, emphasizes that belief in the inerrancy of the biblical autographs is "a logical deduction" which is not supported exegetically.<sup>2</sup> In answer to his own earlier argument—that because God is the author of Scripture, and since God cannot lie, therefore Scripture as originally given must have been inerrant—Pinnock now says that "of course God cannot lie," and "God gave the Bible," but we "cannot determine ahead of time what kind of text God would give in this way." In his later view, neither exegesis nor the phenomena of Scripture explicitly support biblical inerrancy and, after all, "we all work with an imperfect Bible, whatever translation we use, and we do not forsake our confidence in it because of some implausible number in the Chronicles."<sup>4</sup>

# The Argument from Biblical Reliability to Authority

Finally (but not least by any means), Pinnock's early view of the biblical reliability/authority relationship must be called into question. As has been already intimated, he held to a view that involved movement from biblical authority to reliability as well as from reliability to authority. The former would seem to rest upon a strong foundation. After all, if biblical authority is, for the early

Often the New Testament quotes the LXX translation of the Old Testament, specifically calling it "Scripture." See, for instance, Matt 21:42/Mark 12:10 and Psa 118:22, 23; and John 13:18 and Ps 41:10. Further details can be found in Edward W. Goodrick's "Let's Put 2 Timothy 3:16 Back in the Bible," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 25 (1982): 482.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 57.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>See above, chap. 3, pp. 210-212.

Pinnock, the primary category, while biblical reliability is a secondary concept, it is reasonable to argue in the authority to reliability direction.

The early Pinnock, however, argues also for a connection between biblical reliability and biblical authority that entails a movement from biblical inerrancy to authority. Young observes that this invokes biblical inerrancy as the primary question and biblical authority as the secondary question. This, in turn, means that "authority which is an important biblical teaching, is made dependent upon inerrancy which at most is only an implication drawn from Scripture." Pinnock does appear to hold that inerrancy is a secondary matter when compared with biblical authority, in which case it is not completely consistent to argue as tightly as he does in the direction from inerrancy to authority.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For Pinnock, Scripture has authority because its basis is in divine revelation (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 113-121).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>J. Terry Young puts the argument this way: "Biblical authority is the primary question and biblical inerrancy is the secondary question. Biblical authority is much more forcefully established in Scripture and furnishes a secure foundation upon which a case for inerrancy can be made" (Young, "The Relationship between Biblical Inerrancy and Biblical Authority," 407).

<sup>3</sup>See the discussion in chap. 3, pp. 210-212.

<sup>4</sup>Young, "The Relationship between Biblical Inerrancy and Biblical Authority," 407. Observe that Young also lists two other possible positions regarding the biblical reliability/authority relationship: (1) that the "question of authority and the question of inerrancy are identical questions; they only use different terminology to signify the same concept"; and (2) that "the question of authority and the question of inerrancy are totally unrelated questions. Neither depends upon the other, and neither necessarily leads to the other" (ibid., 407).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>He asserts that "inerrancy is to be regarded as an essential concomitant of the doctrine of inspiration, a necessary inference drawn from the fact that Scripture is <u>God's</u> Word [i.e., divinely authoritative]" (Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 73; emphasis Pinnock).

#### Summary

Although Pinnock's early view of biblical reliability and authority had several major strengths, the most important of which was probably his strong conviction that the Scriptures were to be defended as the very Word of God, and thus as being authoritative, his stance also carried with it some serious weaknesses. These deficiencies appear to stem from his Reformed view of divine sovereignty, which, of course, causes him to downgrade the human role in the inspiration of the Bible. This position could only be sustained by disallowing the biblical phenomena an equal rank with the explicit bibliological statements of Scripture. 1

The result was that the early Pinnock took an all-or-nothing stance regarding biblical reliability and authority. As far as he was concerned, "if the biblical writers erred in one particular, we have no assurance they did not err in many more." Such a position, as well as placing an enormous burden of proof on apologists, has also placed the Bible's authority in danger from the critics. Pinnock has recently claimed that such an approach incorrectly directs attention to the small difficulties of the text rather than to the infallible truth of its intended focus. That was just one of the aspects of his earlier view that Pinnock determined to correct in his later position.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>This was Dewey Beegle's point in his <u>Scripture</u>, <u>Tradition</u>, and <u>Infallibility</u>, 268.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>Biblical Revelation</u> (1971), 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>As has been already intimated above (pp. 15-17).

<sup>\*</sup>Pinnock, "Inspiration and Authority: A Truce Proposal" (1976), 65. Henry also hints at this in his remark that Clark Pinnock, "doubtless unwittingly, colipses the personal Logos by concluding that Scripture has exclusive right to command obedience because 'it alone is the Word of God'" (Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, 3:166).

### A Critique of Pinnock's Later View

Clark Pinnock's recent view of biblical authority and reliability, as exemplified in his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), has received much greater attention from a wider spectrum of scholars than did his previous position. This is most likely due to the fact that Pinnock's purpose was to provide not just a rebuttal of the liberal view of the Bible but also a "defense of the traditional evangelical doctrine and Scripture and at the same time a thorough criticism of

<sup>1</sup> The later Pinnock's work has been reviewed in a number of response articles and many book reviews. These include: Darcy Taplin, "Clark H. Pinnock: Growing out of the Weakness of a Fundamentalist Past" (unpublished term paper presented at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, December 3, 1980); Robert M. Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 157-83; Rex A. Koivisto, "Clark Pinnock and Inerrancy: A Change in Truth Theory?," 139-51; Roger Nicole, "The Scripture Principle: Clark Pinnock's Precarious Balance," 68-71; Glenn Nielsen, "Clark Pinnock" (unpublished term paper presented at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Winter 1982); David P. Scaer, "The Rise and Fall of Clark H. Pinnock," Concordia Theological Quarterly 46 (1982): 40-42; Gabriel Fackre, review of The Scripture Principle, by Clark H. Pinnock, Christian
Century 102 (1985): 685-86; Kevin Vanhoozer, review of The Scripture
Principle, by Clark H. Pinnock, Westminster Theological Journal 48
(1986): 192-98; Donald K. McKim, "Pinnock's Major Work on the Doctrine of Scripture," <u>TSF Bulletin</u>, January-February, 1986: 26-28; Randy L. Maddox, review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, Wesleyan Theological Journal, Spring-Fall, 1986, 204-7; T. C. Smith, review of The Scripture Principle, by Clark H. Pinnock, Faith and Mission, Spring 1986, 88-89; Douglas Webster, review of The Scripture Principle, by Clark H. Pinnock, Theodolite 7, 7 (1986): 7-9; Robison James, "Pinnock's Discovery: A Way Out," SBC Today, May 1986, 1; Henry W. Holloman, review of The <u>Scripture Principle</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</u> 29 (1986): 95-97; N[orman] L. Geisler, review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Bibliotheca Sacra</u> 143 (1986): 76-77; Trent C. Butler, review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Journal of Biblical Literature</u> 105 (1986): 700-701; L. Russels, review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Southwestern Journal of The Scripture Principle</u>, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Southwestern Journal of The Scripture</u> Summer 1986, 64-65; Douglas F. Ottati, review of The Scripture Principle, by Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Journal of Religion</u> 67 (1987): 366-67; the "Response" articles by William E. Hull, Paige Patterson, Adrian Rogers, and John Lewis, in <u>The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy 1987</u> (pp. 81-85, 86-94, 101-6, 106-110, respectively); Delwin Brown, "Rethinking Authority from the Right: A Critical Review of Clark Pinnock's Scripture Principle, " 66-72; Robert W. Yarbrough, "Retreating Authority: Evangelical-Liberal Rapprochement?" 49-62; and Robert V. Rakestraw, "Clark H. Pinnock: A Theological Odyssey," 252-70 (a slightly expanded version of this article with a bibliography of Pinnock's works is also in Baptist Theologians, ed. Timothy George and David Dockery [Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, forthcoming 1990]).

it." The result has been condemnation and criticism from conservatives and liberals alike.<sup>2</sup>

Strengths of Pinnock's Later Position

In the thirteen years which elapsed between the printing of Biblical Revelation (1971) and The Scripture Principle (1984), Pinnock had the opportunity to correct some of the major weaknesses of his earlier view and to present a new perspective on the doctrine of Scripture. The following are some of the major strengths of that position that particularly relate to biblical authority and reliability.

## A Strong Affirmation of Biblical Authority

Once again, Pinnock can be commended for his strong affirmation of biblical authority. One of his stated aims in writing The Scripture Principle was to speak out "in the context of the crisis of the Scripture principle" for the "full authority" of the Bible. In this connection, Roger Nicole compliments Pinnock on his recognition that "the Bible . . . is the inscripturation of God's Word, " for his defense of the unity of Scripture and his protest

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "Response to Delwin Brown" (1989), 75.

The polarization regarding Pinnock's views is illustrated by Thomas C. Oden's remark that Pinnock and others (G. Wainwright, G. Lindbeck, David Wells, Bernard Ramm, Donald Guthrie, G. E. Ladd, and I. H. Marshall) bear the "marks of pariahs" among "certain self-contained elites" (Oden, Systematic Theology, vol. 2, The Word of Life [San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1989], 228), and by Pinnock's remark concerning Delwin Brown's review of The Scripture Principle (see Brown, "Rethinking Authority from the Right: A Critical Review of Clark Pinnock's Scripture Principle," 66-72): "Why would a leading liberal theologian like my book? For his liking it places me at risk among my evangelical colleagues. One cannot afford to have one's book liked by liberals too much or too often to avoid suspicion!" (Pinnock, "Response to Delwin Brown" (1989), 73).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), vii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>In a review which Pinnock felt "panned" his book and "warned evangelicals away from reading it" (Pinnock, "Response to Delwin Brown" [1989], 73).

against an excessive emphasis on biblical diversity, on his attempt to resolve some of the major difficulties in the Bible, for his giving the biblical canon an "unparalleled place" above every other authority, and for his careful articulation of the strengths and weaknesses of biblical criticism. 1

Of course, our positive evaluation of the later Pinnock's spirited defense of the Bible as the normative Christian authority depends, itself, on a conservative view of Scripture. Douglas F. Ottati, of Union Theological Seminary, takes the opposite view. In a generally negative review of The Scripture Principle, he asks whether Pinnock's project "is not beside the point." In his view, if the Bible's "primary subject matter" concerns God as creator, governor, and redeemer "who is implicated in the workings of all things," then mankind should be interested in everything in nature and history that "is potentially relevant for our knowledge of God and God's purposes." For Ottati, the Bible is seen as a "charter document that furnishes a distinctive apprehension of God's reign that, in turn, directs our inquiries into our sources of insight as well."2 Thus, in his perspective, the Bible is merely one source among many. This is the very idea that is the object of the later Pinnock's attacks. Who is correct here? Pinnock or Ottati? Certainly, Pinnock has set up a coherent case for what he prefers to call "the Scripture principle" from the witness of the Old Testament to itself, the witness of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Nicole, "The Scripture Principle: Clark Pinnock's Precarious Balance," 68-69. Nicole also commends Pinnock's refusal to drop the use of the term "inerrancy" from the evangelical vocabulary (ibid., 69). Pinnock's unmitigated stance regarding biblical authority has also been favorably commented on by other reviewers (see, for instance, the reviews of The Scripture Principle by Geisler, 76; Bush, 64; and Maddox, 206).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ottati, 366-67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>This is Pinnock's point in <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), xiv-xv.

New Testament to the Old, and the witness of the New Testament to itself.  $^1$ 

## Inclusion of the Human in the Inspiration Process

Admirable, also, is Pinnock's emphasis on the humanity of the Scriptures. This aspect of his doctrine of Scripture, for instance, is applauded from a liberal perspective by Barry Harvey as a marked contrast to the "docetic" view held by much of contemporary evangelicalism.<sup>2</sup> Pinnock attempts to draw categories from Scripture itself that can be used to explain its humanness. For example, while admitting that the category of divine accommodation could be misused to the extent that Scripture could be characterized as untrustworthy because it is totally human, Pinnock maintains a balance in his statement that "revelation comes to us as an earthly event, bearing the marks of humanity, in the forms of culture, without being swallowed up by them."<sup>3</sup>

The fact that Pinnock attempts a resolution of some of the major biblical difficulties gives an indication of his approach to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., chap. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Harvey, 11. It should be taken into account, though, that Harvey takes Pinnock to task for his linking of the humanness of Scripture with a "qualified acceptance of a modified or 'soft' position of Biblical inerrancy as a general hermeneutical definition of the Scripture principle." Such a connection, for Harvey, constitutes an attempted harmonization of antagonistic ideas; and in Pinnock's case, at least, seems to be indicative of "a classic case of wanting to 'have his cake and eat it too'" (ibid.). Other reviewers who consider this a strength in the later Pinnock include Fackre, 685; Vanhoozer, 195; and Rakestraw, 265.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 96. Also laudable is his explanation of the humanity of Scripture in terms of incarnation and human weakness. See, for instance, Pinnock's comment that "inspiration did not make the writers superhuman. It did not cancel out their historicity and weaknesses, but guaranteed that through them the true testimony of Jesus Christ should come that would have lasting normativity and authority in the church" (ibid., 100). It should not be assumed, however, that the later Pinnock's view of the humanity of Scripture is completely beyond criticism. Holloman (p. 96), for one, believes that he has overemphasized this aspect. See also my own discussion, below (pp. 333-36).

humanness of Scripture. Even though his appeal is that we accept the Bible as it comes to us, his basic conservatism shows through here. Nicole comments that "one gets the impression that Pinnock has not avoided any known difficulty but has faced squarely the most puzzling and anguish producing problems." Of course, this is not to say that he has discussed all of the difficulties or that he has covered them in sufficient depth, or even that all of them can be resolved, but he, at the very least, reveals an attitude of trust that "the Bible will seem reliable enough in terms of its soteric purpose" whether the difficulties are resolved now, later, or never.

The later Pinnock attempts to take more account of what is a biblical emphasis on God's desire for free human response, rather than one coerced or predestined.<sup>6</sup> This position adequately explains some of the biblical phenomena without indicting God for the difficulties in Scripture by conceiving of God's will as "including all things within its scope but not determining all things," thereby allowing for a <u>via media</u> between a merely human book and mechanical dictation.<sup>8</sup> This stance, according to Pinnock, allows for the human element in the composition of Scripture as well as for a strong role for the Spirit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Nicole, "The Scripture Principle: Clark Pinnock's Precarious Balance," 68. See also, Maddox, 204.

 $<sup>^{2}</sup>$ That would be impossible in a book of less than 300 pages (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock speaks of the possibility of "intractable difficulty" in <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 104.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>We may observe a consistency in Pinnock's position that it is better to allow a difficulty to stand than to allow oneself to be "stampeded into specious logic" (ibid., 128).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., 100-105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Ibid., 103.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

"to ensure that the truth is not distorted by the human receptors." Whether or not one grants the basic strength of this proposal (as I do<sup>2</sup>), one should not ignore the danger of slipping from a position of total divine control into a posture of total human control. In regard to Scripture, Pinnock has recognized the danger, but whether or not he has avoided it remains open to question.

## The Ongoing Role of the Spirit

Another strong point in Pinnock's recent position on biblical authority and reliability is his discussion of the part played by the Holy Spirit in the recognition, interpretation, and application of Scripture. Douglas Webster remarks that the final section in Pinnock's The Scripture Principle (1984) constitutes a "brilliant"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 103-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Of course, one's evaluation of this point of the later Pinnock's doctrine of Scripture depends somewhat on where one's theological sympathies lie.

Robert Morey certainly believes that Pinnock has not maintained the necessary balance. He remarks, particularly in regard to Pinnock's view of divine omniscience, that "given the kind of god that Pinnock now believes in, he is forced to abandon not only the Christian God but also the Christian Scriptures. Let Pinnock's apostasy serve as a warning to all those who in their zeal to exalt the Greek view of man's freedom are willing to reject the Christian God" (Morey, Battle of the Gods: The Gathering Storm in Modern Evangelicalism [Southbridge, MA: Crown Pub., 1989], 116-17). For our discussion of Pinnock's doctrine of God, see chap. 2, above (pp. 108-119). The relation of the later Pinnock's Arminianism and his doctrine of Scripture is discussed in further detail, below (pp. 351-361).

Although a side-issue in this study, Pinnock's point is well taken that there is a "crucial" place for the Spirit's working in the interpretation and application of the Bible, since the "truth of the text is not secured merely by possessing historical and linguistic tools." Still, he will probably be called into question by many of his fellow evangelicals for his proposal that the wisdom of the Spirit is essential, here, because "the meaning of the text cannot be equated with its original meaning" (Pinnock, The Scripture Principle [1984], 168-169). Although some may wonder if Pinnock has indeed fallen prey to the very subjectivism that he so trenchantly warns against (or to his charismatic predilections), one cannot help but agree that the conspiracy by both religious liberals and conservative evangelicals "to leave the Spirit out of hermeneutics . . . must come to an end" (ibid., 174).

exposition" of the "power and wisdom of the Spirit of God to make the biblical text grip our lives, change our thinking, and empower us for service."

Although acknowledging the danger that the subjective pole of revelation (i.e., the "transformative") could overwhelm and replace the objective pole (i.e., the "informative"), Pinnock now believes with Calvin that it is the witness of the Spirit alone which can bring the person to "the kind of personal certitude that faith implies and that results from a decision to trust God and believe his Word." This, of course, has removed a heavy burden of proof from his apologetics without denying the usefulness of the evidence for biblical reliability. Pinnock now admits to holding to a position somewhere in between revelation empiricism and fideism.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Webster, 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 157 (emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 167; see also 53. Not, of course, that Pinnock now discounts the value of evidences (see ibid., 165-66), but rather, he would stress that "there is a personal certainty only the Spirit can give us" (ibid., 166). In recent correspondence, Pinnock observes that "biblical claims are impressive if, and only if, the message they are part of is impressive intellectually and factually. So there is no basic change in my mentality—only a shift to a softer form of the apologetic orientation" (Pinnock, letter to Ray Roennfeldt, July 16, 1990). Maddox, in his comment that Pinnock "never takes seriously the witness of the Spirit that is the ground of the authority of Scripture," seems to have misunderstood Pinnock's meaning (Maddox, 206).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>As is evident from Pinnock's Reason Enough (1980).

During a lecture at New College, Berkeley, July 23, 1979, Pinnock is reported to have remarked, "Now I'm halfway between where I used to be and the Reformed fideists" (see Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 181; also Rakestraw, 261). Still, Pinnock objects that "just because a person sees more importance in experience than he used to, does not make him/her a liberal" (in a letter to Diane De Smidt, Bethel Theological Seminary, November 11, 1988; as cited in Rakestraw, 253, n. 8). This remark was in reaction to Robert Price's comparison of Pinnock's perspective with that of Schleiermacher (Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 182).

Has Pinnock merely replaced a pre- and during-graphe miracle of God's providence with a post-graphe miracle that is just as unclear and problematic as the former? Such may be the case, but the fact remains that we do not presently have a "inerrant" Bible (whether or not the original autographs were inerrant) and there remains a considerable gap between probability and certainty which is filled by a certainty of faith born of the Holy Spirit. 1

### The Focused Inerrancy of Scripture

Pinnock's view regarding the "focused inerrancy" of the Scriptures is also deserving of positive attention.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, he is correct that the emphasis of 2 Tim 3:16 is on the practical benefits of the Scripture, particularly in regard to salvation,<sup>3</sup> although the text should not be construed to mean that Scripture is unreliable in other areas. His remark that "Christians believe the Bible because it has been able to do for them exactly what Paul promised it would: introduce them to a saving and transforming knowledge of Christ,"<sup>4</sup> is insightful and true to Christian experience.<sup>5</sup>

This view of inerrancy, regarded by Pinnock as a return to the "simple biblicism" traditionally espoused by Baptists as well as most evangelicals, 6 and hailed by Robison James as "Pinnock's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>John 16:13-15 seems to infer a similar post-graphē miracle.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Pinnock's discussion of "focused inerrancy," ibid., 69, 127-29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), xviii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. xix.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>As well as being appealing to one who comes from a tradition that does not espouse inerrancy (nor, errancy either).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Pinnock, "What Is Siblical Inerrancy" (1987), 75-76, as compared to the "elaborate biblicism" of inerrancy (ibid., 76-77). Of course, there is no unanimity among Baptists that their traditional view of Scripture can be described as "simple biblicism." In fact, Paige Patterson (Patterson, 86-94) and Adrian Rogers (Rogers, 101-6) argue to the contrary.

discovery," is condemned by Vanhoozer as nothing more or less than a rediscovery of "limited inerrancy." However, Pinnock attempts to defuse fear that such a view of Scripture's "macropurpose" could be used to "pick and choose" which "assertions of the text we would deem worthy to stand in the privileged circle of revealed salvational truth." He correctly cautions that any such activity would place the reader in a position of "control" over the Scriptures, especially "where they were displeasing in their thrust." Whether or not Pinnock has, in actual practice, been able to consistently maintain this kind of conservative spirit is open to question. For instance, is not Pinnock himself in a position of "control" over Scripture when he proposes that as one focuses on "the actual Christian message," a "distinction can be made" between "history-like" and "historical" things in the Bible? Still, the fact remains that he has presented a

<sup>1</sup> James, "Pinnock's Discovery: A Way Out," 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Vanhoozer, 195. According to Vanhoozer, Pinnock is trying to "redescribe" this notion in a positive light "in the hope of serving up a compromise palatable both to conservative and liberal evangelicals." For Vanhoozer, this "mediating attempt is perhaps the chief contribution of the book [i.e., The Scripture Principle]" (ibid., 195-96). Observe that Robert Price also categorizes Pinnock (with Daniel Fuller) as a "limited inerrantist," although he does point out distinct differences between the views of Pinnock and those of Fuller (Price, "Inerrant the Wind: The Troubled House," 133-36).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 128. See also Pinnock, "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?" 75-76. Pinnock is obviously sensitive to accusations that his view constitutes a 'canon within the canon' stance.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Idem, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 128. In the same place Pinnock asserts, for instance, that it is not up to the reader to decide whether or not to follow Paul in his teaching regarding homosexuality. Rather, in Pinnock's view, it is the writer and the text which should decide the issue.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way Through Modern</u> Theology from an Evangelical Perspective (1990), 162.

strong case which allows the minor difficulties within Scripture to remain just that--minor!

## An Inerrancy Expectation

As has just been intimated, the later Pinnock considers that his notion of the "focused inerrancy" of the Scriptures should not be used as an endorsement for picking and choosing a body of inspired material from within the Bible. On the contrary, one should approach Scripture with an "inerrancy expectation as an operational policy." While such a strategy could be viewed as invalid in the light of Pinnock's statement that "the case for biblical errorlessness is not as good as it looks," it is consistent with his strong conviction that Scripture "might be said to encourage a trusting attitude" and with his refusal to presume to call the "difficulties" of Scripture, errors. In other words, when one comes upon a biblical difficulty, the response is surprise because only inerrancy was expected, yet one is not dismayed because the Bible does not claim errorlessness in the modern sense.

Above all (and this is one of his real strengths),<sup>5</sup> Pinnock believes that divine inspiration<sup>6</sup> has guaranteed the Bible's theological reliability. In fact, for him, a lack of "basic coherence" in the Bible's teachings would mean that its authority is

<sup>10</sup>r, as Pinnock says, "relatively unimportant" (The Scripture Principle [1984], 128). For further critiques of Pinnock's view of focused inerrancy, see Ashcraft, "Revelation and Biblical Authority in Eclipse," Faith and Mission, Spring 1987, 13; Nielsen, 38; and Fackre's review of The Scripture Principle, 685.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 57. This, because the "New Testament does not teach a strict doctrine of inerrancy" (ibid., 77).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Commented on in Bush's review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, 64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>For the later Pinnock's view of inspiration, see chap. 4, above, pp. 241-46.

broken. This is not to say, however, that Pinnock ignores the "rich diversity in biblical teaching." Rather, within the diversity which resulted from the "progressive account of revelation given bit by bit over a long period of time" and the "situational orientation of much of the material," he can discern differences between the various authors which are not contradictory but complementary. Why is this approach important? Not only does belief in the theological unity and reliability of the Scriptures follow from a high view of biblical authority, but it also provides a most influential presupposition for the task of interpretation.

#### Weaknesses of Pinnock's Later Position

While the later Pinnock's perspectives on the authority and reliability of Scripture reveal some important strengths, they also include within them some problematic areas which could be considered inconsistent with Pinnock's strong affirmations regarding biblical authority and trustworthiness. The following are representative:

### A Complex "Simple Biblicism"

Our first question cuts right to the heart of the later Pinnock's proposal and has to do with his own comment regarding the increased recognition of the humanity of Scripture: "I would admit that it is not as easy as once it was to appeal to the Bible as our authority." If this be true, then Pinnock's characterization of his current thinking as "simple biblicism" is actually a misnomer. Even more importantly, Scripture itself does not appear to give the impression that it regards itself as difficult to appeal to as the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 71. For Pinnock, such diversity only adds to the sible's "profundity" (ibid.).

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ Ibid., 72-73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, "Response to Delwin Brown" (1989), 77.

Christian's norm. Maybe Pinnock has not taken his own conviction regarding the testimonium of the Holy Spirit in the recognition of Scripture quite as seriously or as consistently as he thinks. Or, would his hesitation actually be born of an over-emphasis on the human role in the inspiration phenomenon?

## An Overemphasis on the Human Role and the Problem of Biblical History

In fact, Pinnock emphasizes the role of the human in Scripture production to such an extent that one may wonder what the actual role of the Spirit was.<sup>2</sup> He recognizes within the Bible the human in modes of thought and expression as well as in literary and historical composition. If it is true, as he admits, that there are things within Scripture that are "historylike but not likely to be historical" and even "playful legend," one is led to wonder whether or not such were in God's purpose or were the result of merely human invention, at some stage in an extended inscripturation process. In other words, where is there any evidence of the divine contribution? <sup>5</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Christ seemed not to have displayed any embarrassment or difficulty in appealing to Scripture (for instance, in Matt 4:4, 6, 10). Was it, perhaps, because he knew less about the humanity of the Bible than we moderns?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Although Pinnock is eminently clear regarding the triple role of the Spirit in the recognition, interpretation, and application of Scripture (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 165-74). See Holloman, 96.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ Pinnock, <u>Tracking the Maze</u> (1990), 161 (e.g., the Samson and Elisha stories).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. In the same place, Pinnock explains: "We are not bound to deny the Bible the possibility of playful legend just because the central claim is historical, as if to admit a few mythical elements into the biblical story as a whole would automatically classify the Christian story itself as myth. Unquestionably, Jesus' Resurrection had to happen for the gospel story to be true; but the same does not hold for Elisha's axehead or the fate of Lot's wife."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Yarbrough contends that Pinnock has not done enough to show just how the cognitive aspect of revelation can be satisfactorily preserved given the human participation in revelation's reception, transmission, and ongoing appropriation (Yarbrough, 157).

Is Pinnock's admission of "the possibility of legend" in the incident of the coin the fish's mouth, Paul's escape from poisoning in Malta, the allusion to the resurrection of the bodies of the saints being raised on Good Friday, and the sick being healed through contact with pieces of cloth, for instance, actually required by the text or by contemporary presuppositions? This issue, of course, raises a number of other questions. For instance: Did God direct the writers in a particular way in order to ensure the reliability of the B;ble? Certainly, in some instances, there was quite a degree of divine control. Yet Pinnock contends that while "we are not privileged to observe how in hidden and mysterious ways the Spirit worked alongside the human agents in the creative literary work, . . . we can plainly see what was done."

What was done? For Pinnock, it was commonly the use of sources, narrative stitching, redaction over a long period of time, and, perhaps, even the inclusion of playful legend as the Spirit gave gifts of "prophecy, insight, imagination, and wisdom." Again, we must ask whether Pinnock's view takes enough account of the Spirit's influence. This is especially so in relation to the possibility of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 124-25. Observe that, in this place, Pinnock only raises the issue as a "possibility," whereas he has become more forthright in his <u>Tracking the Maze</u> (1990), 161-62.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See, for example, 2 Pet 1:21. While the later Pinnock would interpret this text as having primary reference to the prophetic sections of Scripture (in <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 63, and "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" [1981], 155) his earlier argument that "Peter does not intend to restrict his meaning to the prophetic portions of Scripture alone" was probably more cogent. Pinnock maintained that "for a Jew, the prophets would not have precedence over law. It is a case of <u>pars pro tota</u> (one part standing for the whole). All Scripture is prophetic in that it is a divine Word. It is clear from Peter's epistles and his speeches in Acts that he regarded the whole extent of Scripture to be divinely authoritative" (<u>Biblical Revelation</u> [1971], 57).

<sup>3</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 63.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 63-64, 116-18.

the presence of legendary material within Scripture. He seems to take the position that the biblical message is not compromised just so long as the gospel itself is not dismissed as legendary, yet he recognizes that there may be "fragments" of myth within the New Testament as well. But, if there are fragments, why not more? If the only test for legendary events is their very "abnormality" and the fact that they have "the feel of a legendary feature, "2 the New Testament can then be seen as full of legend and myth, and Bultmann's approach is more than justified. Where is the stopping point and where are the controls? Pinnock is correct, of course, in his assertion that "historicity and existential significance are in no kind of opposition to each other, and there is no reason to create the chasm between them that we have, "5 but has not his allowance of legend in Scripture

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 122, 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Price concurs with James Barr that "whenever interest shifts . . . to the 'intention' of the writer, the focus is no longer on an external, <u>factual</u> referent but on an internal, <u>mental</u> one. Thus inerrancy winds up concerning, potentially, only the theological point the writer or redactor wished to make, regardless of the accuracy of his 'assumptions'" (Price, "Inerrant the Wind: The Troubled House," 136; emphasis Price [Price cites, here, Barr, <u>The Bible in the Modern World</u> (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 173-74]).

Robert C. Sproul, "Sola Scriptura: Crucial to Evangelicalism," in The Foundation of Biblical Authority, ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1978), 115, points out that it is on the basis of just such a distinction b. ween the text as it is and the intention of the text that Bultmann's demythologizing program is based (see also Price, "Inerrant the Wind: The Troubled House," 136, and our earlier discussion of Pinnock's view of "intentionality" above, pp. 185-190 and 271-74).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Rakestraw remarks that it is not enough for Pinnock to say that particular biblical narratives have the "feel" of legend. On the contrary, he considers that Pinnock must present some criteria for his stance and show how they can be applied without giving the impression that the controlling factor is really a desire to accommodate to modernity (Rakestraw, 265). Webster concurs, stating that "given today's controversy it is not responsible to merely throw out the possibilities without showing why they should be seriously considered" (Webster, 9).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 125.

permitted a gap between them as well? After all, is it so much a matter of our granting the right of the Bible to "determine its own forms" as it is of permitting God the right to reveal himself in events which may to our minds appear strange?

#### Degrees of Inspiration

In trying to counterbalance the common evangelical neglect of the human dimension of Scripture, Pinnock has ended up "overstressing the human element and not giving adequate place to the divine role in producing Scripture." As a result, he espouses the view that one can discern, within the Bible, "kinds and degrees of inspiration." Pinnock's explanation is that the Scriptures contain "many kinds of writing," but there is, in fact, a great difference between "kinds of writing" and "degrees of inspiration." The latter appears to convey the idea that one part of Scripture is more inspired than another part. One may want to ask if this is the impression given by Christ's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Rakestraw observes that Pinnock has gone too far in his allowance for historical untruth in Scripture without giving an adequate basis for determining "playful legend" or scribal blunder (Rakestraw, 265).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>This, especially in view of the fact that Pinnock, himself, admits that even the Genesis narratives are written from an antimythical point of view. Would it be logical to rebut myth with a mythologized history? The idea of legend in the gospel accounts is even more problematic in light of the recent efforts to redate much of it before A.D. 70 (see, for instance, John A. T. Robinson's <u>Redating the New Testament</u> [London: SCM Press, 1976], 336-58; and for a widerranging study, Richard Gregg Walsh, "Dating the New Testament: The Methodological Relevancy of Theological Critique" [Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 1984]).

<sup>4</sup>Holloman, 96.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 35. Pinnock also distinguishes different "levels of authority" (ibid., 67). In one sense, at least, this is probably a valid distinction, since some parts of Scripture appear to have a local application. Nevertheless, in another sense, even these passages have authority for the contemporary Christian in that they are meant to be applied in present-life situations (see, for instance, 1 Cor 10:11).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid., 36.

use of Scripture or by Scripture itself? In addition, would it not be true that the parts of Scripture that exhibit the highest "degrees of inspiration" should be valued most, since they would most likely convey God's thoughts most accurately? Such a view opens the door to picking and choosing among the biblical materials on a quite subjective basis. 1

## A Lack of Distinction in Terms

Pinnock may also have failed to adequately distinguish between revelation, inspiration, and illumination.<sup>2</sup> He maintains, for example, that "revelation has not ceased." Rather, in Pinnock's view, the phase of revelation has ceased "that provided the gospel and its scriptural witness, but not revelation in every sense."<sup>3</sup> Conservative theologians have customarily differentiated between divine revelation, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the illumination of the Bible by the Holy Spirit, in order to protect the uniqueness and normativeness of Scripture as a once-for-all inscripturation of revelation.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock's view here seems suspiciously like Fuller's theory of limited inerrancy. After all, as Price points out, for both Fuller and Pinnock, it is the troublesome factual assumptions rather than the theological one that they wish to exempt from inerrancy (Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 172; see also p. 178).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Scaer, 41-42; Holloman, 97; and Vanhoozer, 194.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 163.

For example, Erickson, Christian Theology, 199-200, 251-53. This is not to deny that God could not continue to reveal himself through contemporary prophetic messages or inspire chosen messengers to communicate his will to humankind today. However, since divine revelation is seen as climaxing in Jesus Christ, the biblical canon is considered to be closed. Thus a genuine word of prophecy would not provide a greater revelation of Jesus than is contained in Scripture, but may shed light on what has already been revealed. Such a view is not incompatible with belief in sola scriptura. Bernard Ramm, for instance, argues that sola scriptura meant that "when it came to decision-making in controversy, the appeal to Scripture was the highest appeal possible, and that, where Scripture spoke on a point, the verdict of Scripture was final" (Ramm, "Is 'Scripture Alone' the Essence of Christianity?" in Biblical Authority, ed. Jack Rogers, 116).

In contrast with Pinnock, Packer, in the space of just a few paragraphs, skillfully portrays the role of the Holy Spirit in "the giving and the receiving of revelation." He contends that five processes "went into producing the Bible as we have it": "the disclosure of wisdom and truth to its writers [i.e., revelation]; then the inspiring, canonizing, preserving, and translating of their text." In addition, Packer affirms the Spirit's activity in another three processes which "go into the effecting of communication through the Bible, namely authentication, illumination, and interpretation." Such a model judiciously differentiates between the various terms in order to preserve the normative authority of the Scriptures.

It is entirely appropriate to stress, as Pinnock does so well, that the words of the Bible "become alive and effective in us through the work of the Spirit," but his failure to use the technical sense of certain terms allows for confusion; especially between the Spirit's revelatory role in the inspiration of Scripture and the Spirit's illumination of Scripture. Such an omission can leave the door open to the Neo-orthodox confusion of revelation and illumination and may allow the mastery of the subjective pole of revelation over the objective—a danger, Pinnock himself admits.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>J. I. Packer, <u>Keep in Step with the Spirit</u> (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1984), 238-39. A succinct summary of the Holy Spirit's activity in the process of interpretation, in particular, is found in Larry Hart, "Hermeneutics, Theology, and the Holy Spirit," <u>Perspectives in Religious Studies</u>, Winter 1987, 53-64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For instance, ibid., 164, and Barth, <u>Church Dogmatics</u>, 1/1, 516. A convenient description and critique of the Neo-orthodox view of revelation-illumination is available in Erickson, <u>Christian Theology</u>, 252-53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>It should be observed that Pinnock does warn against this very danger (The Scripture Principle [1984], 163-65). Notice that in ibid., 165, Pinnock uses the term "illuminating." This, however, just after his statement that "by the Spirit, the Scriptures do occasion fresh events of revelation" (ibid., 164). Holloman (p. 97) contends that it is sometimes difficult to discern whether Pinnock is referring to "new extra-Biblical revelation from the Spirit" (here Holloman

## Use of Historical Sriticism

It is Yarbrough's contention that the later Pinnock exhibits an "uncritical acquiescence" to the findings of critical biblical scholarship. In fact, he submits that Pinnock has "conceded to biblical criticism the final right to determine the meaning of the text for theology." Price contends that it was Pinnock's struggle with biblical criticism that ushered in his recent view of Scripture. Whether or not Price's analysis is correct, it is certainly fair to say that the later Pinnock takes a much more favorable stance on biblical criticism than his previous position allowed. Even so, he could not be accused of taking an uncritical approach.

In his earlier writing Pinnock, saw higher criticism as an unbelieving attack on Scripture which produced 'pseudo-problems' through its 'anti-supernatural bias,' and he dismissed form criticism

cites <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, xiv, 67, 163) or to "different interpretations and fresh or multiple applications from a given and completed revelation" (he cites <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, 175, 193, 195).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Yarbrough, 158. Bush also remarks that Pinnock is more open to the conclusions of the critics "than seems right" (Bush, 64).

<sup>2</sup>yarbrough, 159. In the same place, Yarbrough cites Pinnock's The Scripture Principle (1984), 143: "We have to do the best exegesis in the good company of other scholars. The defenses against deceitful and unscrupulous persons are not impregnable. But we cannot surrender the liberty in interpretation we treasure and must continue to hope [Yarbrough's emphasis] that those hypotheses that truly exalt the truthfulness of the Scriptures will persist and those that denigrate it will become apparent to all. Meanwhile, it is imperative that we not deny to our biblical scholars the freedom they have a right to, the freedom that, in the end, will serve the people of God through the new insights that come out of untrammeled investigation." For Yarbrough, this statement appears to contradict Pinnock's remark that "theological thinking is not done in the context of perfectly free inquiry" (ibid., 68). He appeals for the "real Pinnock" to stand up (Yarbrough, 159, n. 46). Nielsen also parts company with Pinnock because of his suspicion that "Pinnock is beginning to cross-examine the Bible as one would other human literature" (Nielsen, 39).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 174.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>On the underlying reasons for Pinnock's shift in his doctrine of Scripture, see below (pp. 342-361).

with its JEDP Pentateuchal hypothesis. 1 In contrast, according to Holloman, there are at least eleven areas in which Pinnock now espouses, or at least allows the possibility of espousing, conclusions congruent with those of biblical criticism. 2 Although Pinnock could not be accused of ignoring the danger of the "atheistic" methodological presuppositions of critical biblical scholarship, 3 one wonders if he has taken them as seriously as he should. After all, Ernst Troeltsch, the formulator of the principles of the historical-critical method, 4 claimed that one cannot follow part of the method without accepting the rest. 5 It would seem that the later Pinnock has imbibed some of the major features of "negative criticism" 6 into his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 174.

These are: (1) holding that the Bible is flawed because of the human weakness of the biblical writers and the imperfection of biblical language; (2) understanding some of the miracles of the Bible as legendary; (3) viewing portions of Matthew's gospel as fictional embellishment; (4) questioning the divine authority of some of Paul's teaching; (5) classifying the early chapters of Genesis as written in saga form; (6) interpreting Jonah as didactic fiction; (7) dating the final form of Daniel in the Maccabean period; (8) questioning the Pauline authorship of Ephesians and the pastorals; (9) accepting the possibility of inflation of numbers by biblical writers; (10) believing that Paul used rabbinic methods of interpretation; and (11) relying "more upon the relevant conclusions of OT scholars than an appeal to allegedly irrelevant statements of Jesus" (Holloman, 96-98). Most of the above criticisms are discussed in other places in this study (see pp. 260, 267 (n. 2, 3), 268 (n. 1), 279, 332, 362-63, 364-65).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>As Yarbrough acknowledges, Pinnock points this out in his <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 94 (Yarbrough, 158, n. 94). In the same place, Yarbrough cites Eta Linnemann, <u>Wissenschaft oder Meinung?</u> (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hänssler, 1985) and Adolf Schlatter, "Atheistische Methoden in der Theologie," in Schlatter, <u>Zur Theologie des Neuen Testaments und zur Dogmatik</u>, ed. Ulrich Luck (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1969 [1905]), 134-50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See Gerhard F. Hasel, <u>Understanding the Living Word of God</u> (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Pub., 1980), 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Troeltsch wrote: "Wer ihr den kleinen Finger gegeben hat, der muß ihr auch die ganze Hand geben" (Troeltsch, <u>Gesammelte Schriften</u> [Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1962], 734). See also Hasel's critique of the three principles of the historical-critical method (correlation, analogy, and criticism) in his <u>Understanding the Living Word of God</u>, 25-27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Pinnock, The Scripture Principle (1984), 131-132, 143-50.

system of "positive criticism" 1--after all, what is Pinnock's judgment that certain biblical narratives have the "feel" of legend if it is not a use of historical-criticism's principle of analogy? 2

The impact of Pinnock's acceptance of biblical criticism on his view of biblical authority and reliability has been pointed out by Holloman. He believes that Pinnock is forced into holding two views of Scripture which are mutually exclusive and incompatible: (1) "a precritical, pragmatic and virtually fideistic approach to Scripture," and (2) "a post-Enlightenment openness to scientific literary criticism." Holloman is probably correct in his assessment that "Pinnock does not satisfactorily synthesize these two viewpoints, and this unresolved problem creates ambivalence instead of logical coherence in presenting his Scripture principle."

## A Redefined Inerrancy

The later Pinnock's view of "inerrancy" must also be called into question. It is debatable if he is really justified in continuing to hold to the term. Carl Henry remarks that Pinnock "retains inerrancy as a concept, but seems to thin it out almost to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 89-90, 131, 136-43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Larry Hart asks of Pinnock: "If one accepts the greatest miracle of all, the resurrection, why should any other reported miracles be troublesome?" (Hart, 62, n. 29). Hart's question emphasizes that Pinnock must be consistent in his rejection of historical-criticism's principle of analogy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Holloman, 97. The first, Holloman finds in <u>The Scripture</u> <u>Principle</u> (1984), 45. The second is evident in ibid., 151-52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Holloman, 97. In the same vein, Richard Klann remarks that the "incessant flitting back and forth between his academic polemic and the claims of Scripture enlarge the defects of Pinnock's presentation" (Klann, 282). Observe, however, that Mary High ("The Development of Clark Pinnock's Concept of Biblical Authority") downplays Pinnock's increased acceptance of biblical criticism as a natural occurrence in "someone who takes the humanity of the text seriously" (p. 122).

the breaking point." For Pinnock, inerrancy continues to stand as "a metaphor for the determination to trust God's Word completely." In his view, it is still necessary to employ such "strong language" in the North American context.<sup>2</sup> My question is: Can the retention of a particular word be warranted when one has had to redefine it in a way so very different from its contemporary usage?<sup>3</sup>

In regard to the effectiveness of Pinnock's case against a stricter view of inerrancy, Holloman contends that Pinnock has failed (1) to clearly refute the traditional exegesis of scriptural passages which overtly address inspiration; (2) to really establish that the inductive process "by which strict inerrancy is drawn from such exegetical evidence is only pretentious or actually deductive"; and (3) "to adequately justify his capitulation on many points to liberal Biblical criticism." Whether, for these reasons or others, it is true that the strict inerrantists have shown no compulsive urge to

¹Carl F. H. Henry, cited by Roger Nicole in the latter's review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, 68. Geisler considers that in spite of Pinnock's "preference" for the term "inerrancy," he "has gone well beyond the view of inerrancy held by orthodoxy throughout the centuries and by mainline evangelicals today" (Geisler, 77). Observe that, in the view of the present writer, it is also doubtful as to whether inerrantists who qualify the term (in the manner that most of them do) can defend their use of the term either.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 224-25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>T. C. Smith, in his review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, 88, argues that since "throughout his book Pinnock insists that the Bible is a reliable and trustworthy source for our witness to salvation granted us through God," would it not be more consistent to "use the words reliable and trustworthy rather than infallible and inerrant?" While Maddox considers that "Pinnock provides us with the most nuanced and critically aware exposition of Biblical inerrancy available," he also wonders whether, in the light of Pinnock's qualification of the "basic paradigm of inerrancy," the time "has come for a paradigm shift—to a model of truth that deals with personal fidelity rather than scientistic accuracy" (Maddox, 207).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Holloman, 97. Bush is less specific, but concludes that Pinnock has been "overcritical" of the strict inerrantists (Bush, 64-65).

forsake their positions and align themselves with Pinnock. On the contrary, according to Rakestraw, they are "somewhat skeptical, seeing that he has frequently reversed or drastically altered his position in the past."

#### Summary

To recapitulate, the later Pinnock has attempted to maintain a high view of biblical authority and reliability while correcting what he perceives as omissions in his understanding of the humanness of Scripture. However, his perspectives on scriptural authority and reliability are somewhat different from those held in his earlier years. For one thing, the Bible is now much more difficult to use as an authority, and for another, his view of "inerrancy" is more functionalistic than previously held. Scripture is reliable because it conveys what was intended (i.e., the gospel of salvation) in a trustworthy fashion. Despite Pinnock's assurance that such an understanding of the focus of Scripture is not to be employed as a means of picking and choosing among the biblical materials, his acceptance of the probable truthfulness of some of the conclusions of biblical criticism leaves him open to accusations of doing just that.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See, for instance, the negative responses to Pinnock's presentations at the 1987 SBC Conference on Inerrancy by Paige Patterson and Adrian Rogers (in the <u>Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy, 1987</u>, 86-94 and 101-6, respectively).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Rakestraw, 267. At this point, Rakestraw cites Pinnock's own discussion of his changes: "It [Price's article] certainly showed up my propensity to change my mind. Although this is part of life which is dynamic, I do worry that I am too vacillating. I do not always like myself when I think how many changes I have had to make and am still making. I wish I was more stable. Part of that may be the fact that a postfundamentalist like me really has no set tradition and has to find or create one. How nice to be a comfortable Calvinist or Wesleyan or whatever. On the whole, though, as I think about the changes, in the areas of the Spirit, of determinism, of biblical inspiration, of political theology—I feel pretty good about the process. I have learned a lot and some people even say I have helped them" (Letter to Diane De Smidt, November 11, 1988).

Which of Pinnock's two views is the more cogent? Possibly one's answer to such a question depends on the amount of divine control one posits for the inspiration process. The early Pinnock appears to presuppose almost total divine control, while the later holds to a model of biblical authority and reliability that seems to allow a high degree of human freedom.

# Conclusion: Understanding Pinnock's Shift

So far, we have examined the scope of Pinnock's shift in perspective regarding the authority and reliability of the Scriptures, but the reasons for his change have received little attention. How may the differences between the early and the later Pinnock be interpreted? In 1979, Lindsell concluded that "any study of Pinnock's writings brings with it the judgment that his pilgrimage has been inexplicable," and in 1982, Scaer opined that "the real reason for Pinnock's change is still not given, though the date is almost exactly known." In recent years, a number of reviewers and interpreters have addressed this issue, offering a plethora of explanations. For convenience, I have grouped the various interpretations of Pinnock's shift regarding his doctrine of Scripture according to whether it is explained as part of Pinnock's personality, as the result of a natural development of his earlier theology, or as the consequence of his reexamining the evidence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Lindsell, <u>The Bible in the Balance</u>, 36.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Scaer, 42. In the same place Scaer continues: "Without denying that some of his complaints have validity in some way, the more fundamental (pardon the pun) problem in Pinnock's thinking has not been uncovered."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For a sampling of reviews and explanations, see above, pp. 322-23. Pinnock, himself, has also been increasingly forthright regarding his shifts and their reasons (e.g., "From Militancy to Moderation: A Pilgrimage in Theology" [1990], recording).

## A Psychological Explanation?

It is natural that a theologian who has changed as significantly as Pinnock has done is interpreted as unstable. Packer observes that Pinnock has a tendency to "walk by himself," while Nicole maintains that his theological open-mindedness has been "flawed by the instability that has led him to shift his stance repeatedly, even long after he began teaching theology." According to Rakestraw, this tendency has meant that Pinnock has been inclined to "move so passionately" in certain directions that some students of theology are disinclined to follow because of his past reversals and alterations in thinking. In addition, Rakestraw argues that Pinnock's tendency has been "to publish too quickly a debatable viewpoint without developing a fully adequate basis for that position."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>J. I. Packer, as cited in Roger Nicole's "The Scripture Principle: Clark Pinnock's Precarious Balance," 71. In the same place, Nicole reports that Packer finds this "really disconcerting."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid. See also Rakestraw, 267. Paige Patterson, too, infers that Pinnock's changes are due to his instability. He writes: "I must grieve over my professor who has forsaken the prophetic pulpit of Luther for the indecisive desk of Erasmus and the certainty of Paul for the vacillation of the Athenians who must always 'hear some new thing'" (Patterson, "Response" [to Clark Pinnock's "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?"], 93).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Rakestraw, 267. Rakestraw does observe, however, that "to be fair, he [Pinnock] has in recent years expressed himself with less certainty on many debatable issues, but his past will follow him for years to come" (ibid.). Pinnock's allowance for historical errors in Scripture without a method of ascertaining them, and his abandonment of divine foreknowledge without taking predictive prophecy into account are cited by Rakestraw as examples of Pinnock's unwarranted rush to press (ibid.). By this, Rakestraw does not mean that Pinnock has not thought things out, for he observes that Pinnock's book reviews (in particular) have revealed the trends of Pinnock's thinking before his shifts. With particular reference to Pinnock's doctrine of Scripture, Yarbrough recommends a "wait-and-see-approach" because it is as yet unclear "just how far the drift may take him" (Yarbrough, 151).

Pinnock is very sensitive to this issue and worries that he will gain a reputation as a theological gadfly. He remarked to this writer that he feels it necessary that more of his future writing should be devoted to what he considers the "essentials" (as outlined in his <a href="Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal">Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</a>, chap. 1) rather than sidelissues (Pinnock Interview with Roennfeldt, 1990).

Rakestraw's recommendation to Pinnock is that he not go into print with a new position, "especially a controversial one," while key issues have not been resolved. But such an appeal is unlikely to be heeded by Pinnock who finds theology "interesting," has often thrived on the controversial, and exhorts others to take theological risks. In fact, Pinnock finds the four-view genre an important means of opening up discussion on issues that (to his mind) are not completely settled. This is entirely compatible with the "intensely pragmatic nature" of Pinnock's thought. In Rakestraw's opinion, he "seems unable to allow much of a sense of mystery in conservative theological conclusions if such positions are not apologetically palatable." His aim is to provide workable solutions to issues that are of practical importance to contemporary Christians; tending to ignore subjects of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Rakestraw, 267.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "From Militancy to Moderation: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1990). Observe that Pinnock commends Bernard Ramm as one of those "rare theologians" who was prepared to change his mind (Pinnock, "Bernard Ramm: Postfundamentalist Coming to Terms with Modernity," in the <u>Festscrift</u> issue in honor of Bernard Ramm of <u>Perspectives in Religious Studies</u> (forthcoming; typescript, p. 5).

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ See the discussion of Pinnock's role in the SBC, chap. 1, pp. 75-78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, review of <u>A Century of Protestant Theology</u>, by Alasdair I. C. Heron, <u>TSF Bulletin</u>, May-June 1982, 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Such as the one he contributed to in <u>Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom</u>, ed. David Basinger and Randall Basinger.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Pinnock, in books edited by himself, is remarkably comfortable in allowing authors to express views which he himself does not hold (e.g., Bruce R. Reichenbach's "Freedom, Justice, and Moral Responsibility," in <u>The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism</u>, ed. Clark H. Pinnock [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1989], 277-303, takes a different stance on divine foreknowledge to that taken in the same work by Pinnock and Richard Rice).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Rakestraw, 267-68.

merely theoretical interest and explanations that do not mesh with common sense. 1

While Pinnock's personal unpredictability may be a factor in his changing perspectives, Fackre is probably correct in his assessment that one of the factors behind his shift is that Pinnock is emerging as "a kind of 'ecumenical evangelical' . . . who holds firm to central commitments but listens and learns from alternative perspectives," while journeying on "a pilgrimage with a wider Christian company." Pinnock has a genuine desire for peace within evangelical ranks as well as between evangelicals and liberals, having tired of the infighting and wrangling during his time in the SBC.4

Although factors in Pinnock's personality may have played a minor role in bringing about his shift in direction regarding Scripture, they were not the dominant influence. For example, Robison James notes that although Pinnock confesses that his own "moderating opinions are partly due to advancing years," The Scripture Principle "makes something else very clear: Pinnock has learned a great deal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For instance, Pinnock admits that he does not, at this stage at least, find the task of determining the biblical doctrine of the state of man in death of great interest because there seems to be little practical value in determining if human beings are conscious or unconscious in death (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Fackre, review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, 686.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See, for instance, Pinnock's "Response to Delwin Brown" (1989), 74-75, his "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 153-54, and Hull's "Response" [to Clark Pinnock's "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?"], 84-85. This is not to say, however, that Pinnock wants peace with liberals at any price (consider his contributions in his forthcoming [with Delwin Brown] Theological Crossfire).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>He still remembers his relief on his transfer to Trinity and then to Regent (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990).

about the Bible." There are, indeed, other factors which must be taken into consideration.

#### Another Look at the Evidence?

In regard to his earlier stance, the later Pinnock maintains that he held to the view that the Bible taught "total inerrancy," because he "hoped it did." What was it that made him change his mind? In his own account of his shift, Pinnock remarks that "looking at the actual biblical evidence today, I have to conclude the case for inerrancy just isn't there." In actuality, his The Scripture

Principle (1984) constitutes Pinnock's later reflections on the biblical evidence as he sees it now. Still, his recent perspectives did not arise in a vacuum. Pinnock's theological surroundings also played their part in bringing him to the point where it was possible for him to reexamine the evidence.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>James, "Pinnock's Discovery: A Way Out," 1 (James is a "moderate" Southern Baptist). The same point is made by Delwin Brown, a process theologian (Brown, "Rethinking Authority from the Right," 67-68).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 58. Contemporary context was, according to Pinnock, a decisive factor in building his hope the Scripture was totally inerrant. The later Pinnock portrays the early Pinnock as asking: "How would it be possible to maintain a firm stand against religious liberalism unless one held firmly to total inerrancy?" (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 58. In his "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), Pinnock maintains (1) that Warfield's portrayal of inspiration was distorted in that he omitted from the discussion "the data concerning Jesus and the apostles' messianic interpretation of the OT and its bearing on inerrancy" in favor of regarding all of Scripture "on the level of prophetic type inspiration"; (2) that conservatives actually practice biblical criticism on the text in order to save the Bible from its own phenomena; and (3) that his former view did not take sufficient account of the ministry of the Spirit, preferring inatead apologetic certainty (p. 154-55). See also Pinnock's "Response to Delwin Brown" (1989), 75, and "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy" (1987), 96-100.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock comments: "I must confess that context has a great effect on me, as I suppose it does on others too" (Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" [1981], 153.

"I also see my work mirroring theological changes in the evangelical movement as a whole and not just the ideas of an individual working alone," admits Pinnock.<sup>1</sup> Yet, Pinnock has been working within a context outside of evangelicalism as well. He admits that he was "personally compelled to face up to these realities of the text more by liberal scholars" of the likes of Edward Farley and James Barr than by his "evangelical colleagues."<sup>2</sup> This new openness has resulted in new traveling companions<sup>3</sup> and ā subtle shift as to whom Pinnock perceives as his primary theological opponents. The early Pinnock's enemy was Neo-orthodoxy or any other group which separated faith from its historical basis, while for the later Pinnock, it is anyone who holds a position that threatens the gospel.<sup>4</sup>

Still, although Pinnock's shift regarding biblical authority and reliability can be legitimately interpreted as a relooking at and a rethinking about the biblical evidence regarding inerrancy, it can also be classified as a "course correction" which resulted from that examination.<sup>5</sup>

## A Natural Development of Nuanced Inerrancy?

Yet another way of interpreting Pinnock's shift regarding biblical authority and reliability has been proposed by Koivisto. He

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, letter to Mary High, April 4, 1990. In the same place he mentions, particularly, the changes addressed by James D. Hunter in his <u>Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation</u>, chaps. 2, 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "Response to Delwin Brown" (1989), 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Fackre notes, with special reference to Pinnock, that "we are moving into a period when some the most interesting dialogue may be between those new companions on the journey: ecumenical evangelicals and 'evangelical ecumenicals'" (Fackre, review of <a href="https://doi.org/10.1001/journey:10.1001/j

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See Nielsen, 2, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 155. In the same place, Pinnock remarks: "I have had to listen more carefully to what the Scriptures actually say and teach. I have had to reduce certain emphases and experiment with others."

argues that the early Pinnock's "use of intentionality as a limitation for inerrancy has been the sloping platform on which he slipped away from his earlier theory of truth." Whether or not Koivisto is correct in his assessment, it is certain that Pinnock does not see himself as having changed radically. He observes that his "impression of the relation of the early Pinnock and myself [i.e., the later Pinnock] is that of basic continuity accompanied by minor adjustments in style and emphasis" and that "I have always argued for a nuanced definition of inerrancy that allows give and take."

Koivisto is probably also correct in his assertion that Pinnock's change has something to do with his epistemology. While Koivisto claims that the later Pinnock has replaced his earlier correspondence theory of truth with pragmatic theory, 5 Pinnock himself countered that he has now incorporated such items as pragmatism into his "model of rationality," but that he is not aware of having dropped out his earlier concerns for logic and evidence. 6 More recently, Pinnock has stated that what helped him "most" to become "more honest"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Koivisto, 150. In the same place, Koivisto explains that this "early weakness formed the subtle factor that led to a shift in his truth theory and hence to a shift in his entire epistemological approach to the Bible." See also Rakestraw, 255.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See, for instance, Pinnock's "What Is Biblical Inerrancy?" (1987), 74. Nyquist may be correct when he writes that the later Pinnock "denies any theological drift" (Nyquist, 162, n. 2). Pinnock, however, has not denied a theological shift.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 153. This remark is in response to what Pinnock considers an "alarmist" depiction of his shift as a departure from his earlier convictions (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid. Pinnock admits, though, that he takes greater liberty with this category than he did previously, but, to his mind, that does not prove him inconsistent or to have reversed himself (ibid.).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Koivisto, 150. Koivisto states that Pinnock "has changed his entire epistemological approach to the Bible in the face of his own dire warnings" (ibid., 151).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 155. See my own discussion of Pinnock's epistemology in chap. 2, pp. 93-95.

in the face of the realities of Scripture was simply the realization that absolute rational certainty was not something which I could have or even needed to have." Rather, Pinnock now remarks that "the witness of the Spirit to the saving gospel of God was all I really needed then and now."

Pinnock sees his doctrine of Scripture as having "evolved," not "reversed," and his present position as "truer to itself now than earlier." In that it explains some of the reasons for Pinnock's recent thinking in regard to Scripture, there is real merit in such an interpretation. However, there are clues of a larger dimension than even the later Pinnock was aware of in the early years of his pilgrimage from one view of Scripture to another.

## A Paradigm Shift?

I would like to submit that the later Pinnock seems to have become increasingly aware of the fact that he is doing his theological reflection in the context of a different "model" or "paradigm" than the one he operated under in his early years.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy" (1987), 96. This is a significant comment for the reason that Pinnock also remarks that it was the contributions of scholars such as Farley and Barr which helped him face the phenomena of Scripture (see above, pp. 258-273). It is not so much that Pinnock is contradicting Pinnock, but that different contexts bring forth different reasons for his change.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy" (1987), 96. See also Finnock's <u>Tracking the Maze</u> (1990), 47-48, 53 (ns. 20-21). This is not to say that Pinnock now ignores the strength of apologetics (see the discussion, above, p. 329). Rakestraw writes that the later Pinnock "wisely admits that reason does not operate independently of history and culture, but is always embedded in it. Reason for him is not an autonomous, omnicompetent, or final judge of truth. While faith seeks to understand its rational expression, it also respects mystery and is aware of its limited ability to understand divine truth" (Rakestraw, 264).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "A Response to Rex A. Koivisto" (1981), 154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock uses the terms "model" and "paradigm" interchange=bly in reference to the work of Wittgenstein (<u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 222).

The concept of theological "paradigm change" has been popularized by Hans Küng, in particular, who applied Thomas S. Kuhn's theory to theology that "radically new [scientific] theories arise neither by verification nor by falsification but by replacement . . . of a hitherto accepted explanatory model (paradigm) by a new one." Küng has proposed that theological "progress" occurs as a "crisis" is unleashed by historical and sociopolitical developments as well as by means of a "breakthrough" to "an immediate, altogether personal experience of the original Christian message." In regard to his own pilgrimage, Küng portrays his theological shifts as indicative of a movement from a "paradigm of Catholic traditionalism" to a "critical ecumenical" paradigm which is at once "Catholic" and "Protestant," "traditional" and contemporary," "Christocentric" and "ecumenical," in addition to being "theoretical-scholarly" and "practical-pastoral."

¹This is Küng's explanation of Kuhn's theory (Küng, <u>Does God Exist?</u> An Answer for Today, trans. Edward Quinn (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1980), 107). Kuhn presents his own case (but not nearly so succinctly) in his <u>The Structure of Scientific Revolutions</u> (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962). Other essays by Kuhn are available in Frederick Suppe, ed., <u>The Structure of Scientific Theories</u> (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1971-72).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Küng has recently denied that theological "progress" always means higher development. He observes that a theological "paradigm change does not simply mean progress and only progress. In religion, too, much is gained in the paradigm change, but much that was true and good in the earlier paradigm is lost, forgotten, or repressed" (Küng, Theology for the Third Millennium: An Ecumenical View, trans. Peter Heinegg [New York: Doubleday, 1988], 220). For Küng's extended discussion, see ibid., 122-284.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Ibid., 157. Küng maintains that in this latter respect, theological "paradigm change" is different from shifts in the scientific realm (pp. 155-61).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Ibid., 182-206. For further details regarding theological "paradigm change" theory, see Hans Küng and David Tracy, eds., Paradigm Change in Theology: A Symposium for the Future (New York: Crossroad, 1989), and C. Enrique Espinosa, "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Hans Küng: An Analysis and Critique of His Criteria and Norms of Christian Truth and Error" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1988), 339-56, 406-417.

Pinnock's early work on the doctrine of Scripture was done within the confines of the Calvinian system, while the later Pinnock admits to construing "the Spirit's work in and through human writers in more dynamic terms than is possible in Reformed theology." This should not be taken to mean that Pinnock rejects Calvin's perspectives completely, but rather that he now takes a more Arminian stance in regard to the doctrines of God and salvation.

This shift in regard to his soteriology and theism, Pinnock regards as a "paradigm shift in . . . [his] biblical hermeneutics" which has resulted in his engaging himself in "the process of learning to read the Bible from a new point of view" which he believes to be "more truly evangelical and less rationalistic." Pinnock's new

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 16-18, 21, and "From Militancy to Moderation: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1990). See also Packer, "Foreword," 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "Reflections on <u>The Scripture Principle</u>" (1986), 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Notice his positive assessment of Calvin's theology in "How I Use the Bible in Doing Theology" (1985), 22, and his current tendency to accept a political theology of the Reformed type (see chap. 2, above, pp. 125-30). It should be observed, however, that Pinnock does see the human freedom implied in Calvin's political theology as incongruous with his view of predestination or predeterminism (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>See our discussion in chap. 2, above (pp. 97-119). Pinnock contends that his reason for promoting Arminianism is not sectarian, but missiological: "The world needs to hear the unconditional goodness of Jesus Christ which is the proclamation of God's desire to save and transform the world. But we will not be able to carry out our great commission among thinking people unless and until we sweep away the dark shadows which the Augustinian-Calvinist tradition has cast over the purpose and character of God. God is not an evil-doer, but wills the salvation of the human race. We evangelicals have a lot of theological revision to do" (Pinnock, "A Comment on 'Is There Anything Which God Does Not Do?' by George Mavrodes," Christian Scholar's Review 16 [1987], 393).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 21. Pinnock makes this comment within the context of his discussion of predestination (ibid., 20-21). See also, Rakestraw, 257.

hermeneutical approach to Scripture, which he traces back to 1970, 1 has been gradually seeping down through his theology ever since.

According to Pinnock, his personal "pilgrimage" from Augustine to Arminius has not been undertaken alone. It is his impression that "Augustinian thinking is losing its hold on present-day Christians,"2 and he believes that what Robert Brow has recently described as the "evangelical megashift" or "new model" thinking in regard to hell, faith, judgment, wrath, sin, the church, and the Son of God<sup>3</sup> is nothing more or less than "the old Arminian or non-Augustinian thinking."4 In Pinnock's view, "the Reformed impulse continues to carry great weight in the leadership of the evangelical denominations"; 5 a fact which prompted him, out of a "sense of frustration," to edit Grace Unlimited (1975) and The Grace of God, The Will of Man (1989) in order "to give a louder voice to the silent majority of Arminian evangelicals, to help them understand the route they are traveling, and to encourage others to speak up theologically."6 In attempting to explain the current evangelical dissatisfaction with the Augustinian or Calvinistic perspectives, Pinnock argues that just as Augustine devised his system in response to the intersection of the biblical symbols with Hellenistic culture,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 17. Certainly, it can be well documented by 1975 with the publication of <u>Grace Unlimited</u>, ed. Pinnock.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Brow, "Evangelical Megashift," <u>Christianity Today</u>, February 19, 1990, 12-14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, "The Arminian Option," <u>Christianity Today</u>, February 19, 1990, 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Idem, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 27. See also Pinnock's "The Arminian Option" (1990), 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid.

we moderns, in "making peace with modernity," are "seeing things in the Bible we never saw before."

In <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), Pinnock does not explicitly acknowledge that Arminianism constitutes his new paradigm for understanding the doctrine of Scripture. Instead, his argument that "inerrancy thinking is deductive thinking rooted in the assumption of total divine control" appears to be presented by Pinnock as one argument among others (albeit, an important one), rather than as the center of gravity for his current view of Scripture. Even Pinnock's "pilgrimage" piece, which describes his shift from "Augustine to Arminius," does not mention his change in regard to Scripture. Nevertheless, the later Pinnock's proposal that biblical inspiration should be viewed in a more dynamic way which takes into account both the divine initiative and the human response has been suggested as

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ibid., 27; see also p. 15. Not to mention that there has long been a body of conservative Christians holding non-Augustinian views regarding the doctrines of God and salvation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Idem, The Scripture Principle (1984), 101. In fact, the "paradigm" Pinnock seems to have in mind in this book is his three-dimensional model: the divine inspiration of Scripture, the human character of the Bible, and the role of the Spirit since the completion of the Scriptures (ibid., 222). Observe that in his Reason Enough (1980), Pinnock uses the idea of "paradigm shift" in another connection. He appeals to his readers to make a "paradigm shift" by beginning "to view reality from a new perspective, from the position of a faith commitment to Jesus Christ" (p. 121). Thus, it appears that in the above references Pinnock is using the term "paradigm" in the non-technical sense of "an example, model, or pattern" (Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language (Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1961], 1770). High also appears to present Pinnock's Arminianism as one of the factors behind his shift in regard to Scripture, although she does acknowledge that SBC disagreements may be between two aspects of their heritage; Calvinism and Arminianism (High, 122-23). Observe that recently Pinnock has been more explicit in acknowledging the effect of his shift to Arminianism on his doctrine of Scripture (see below, p. 358).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>In a personal interview, Pinnock acknowledges that this was a major omission on his part, possibly resulting from the fact that his Arminianism has only seeped gradually into his overall theological system (Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990).

See my discussion in chap. 4, pp. 252-57.

the vital clue to understanding his stance regarding biblical authority and reliability by Packer, Geisler, Price, and others.

Packer considers that Pinnock's later position "may be linked" to his view of divine sovereignty; 1 Geisler surmises that "all this" [i.e., Pinnock's current view] is based "on process theology's view that God does not completely know (or control) the future"; 2 and Price remarks that Pinnock's "rejection of the Warfield 'divine human confluence' model of inspiration . . . may be seen as a stage of his systematic purging out of Calvinism." Morey reasons that "once God is viewed as finite, fallible, imperfect, and mutable (as he claims Pinnock believes), how could such a god give us an an infallible Bible which is perfect?", 4 while Holloman argues that the "weakened view of the divine origin of Scripture along with Pinnock's inclination to Arminianism undoubtedly helps account for his dissatisfaction with the strong emphasis on divine authority" in the doctrine of inspiration held by such Calvinists as B. B. Warfield and J. I. Packer. 5

The above views seem to offer several possibilities of interpreting Pinnock's shift in his doctrine of biblical authority and reliability. Should it be understood in terms of Pinnock's acceptance

<sup>1</sup>Packer, "Foreword," 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Geisler, review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, 77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 180-81.

<sup>4</sup>Morey, 116. See also p. 117.

<sup>5</sup>Holloman, 96. Vanhoozer also asserts that "Pinnock links the notion of 'militant inerrancy' with a Calvinist theology of divine sovereignty" (Vanhoozer, 195), while Nyquist clims that "concessions to process thought both doctrines [sic] of God and doctrine of Scripture" are evident in the writings of Pinnock (Nyquist, 2). In regard to the latter author, I should note that I find unfortunate typographical errors (e.g., p. 160), partial citation of Pinnock's writings which change his fundamental meaning (e.g., p. 161), unconvincing arguments (e.g., that Pinnock stands guilty of a process perspective because of his association with process thinkers, p. 212, n. 2), and anachronisms in regard to Nyquist's view of when Pinnock shifted in regard to "foundational issues (e.g., p. 205).

of portions of process theology's critique of classical theology or as a part of his turn to a more Arminian perspective in his doctrines of God and salvation? In regard to the latter possibility, the situation is complicated by the fact that in some areas Pinnock now appears to accept some previously rejected areas of Calvinistic theology (e.g., political theology and the inner witness of the Spirit<sup>1</sup>). In addition, Pinnock has also moved somewhat beyond the confines of Arminianism with his rejection of divine foreknowledge.<sup>2</sup> To put the question simply: Is Pinnock now working from within a process view, an Arminian model, or a partially modified Calvinistic system?

Pinnock, in common with process theology, accepts the necessity of criticism of the classical doctrine of God. However, his doctrines of creation and eschatology appear to have prevented him from following the "panentheistic" view of God common to process theologians and philosophers. In fact, rather than working from a process perspective, Pinnock's rejection of some of the classical ideas concerning divine immutability, impassibility, and timelessness, appears to proceed from a serious attempt to understand the scriptural teaching in regard to the nature of God.

Still, does not Pinnock's stance regarding divine omniscience seem to indicate an important abdication to process presuppositions?<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, I believe that his opinion of foreknowledge arises primarily from a desire to understand the biblical materials and secondarily from a philosophical conviction that divine foreknowledge of human action is necessarily predeterministic of human action.

Hence, even though I consider that this aspect of Pinnock's theology

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See chap. 2, pp. 124-27 (on political theology), and chap. 4, pp. 283-85 (on the testimony of the Spirit).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See above, pp. 113-14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>As indicated above (pp. 115-18).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>As Geisler obviously holds (see above).

seems to pose problems for belief in the detailed reliability of biblical predictive prophecy<sup>1</sup> and appears to equate divine foreknowledge with divine determinism in an unwarranted manner,<sup>2</sup> I do not believe that Pinnock's position on divine foreknowledge is to be construed as indicative of his following a process model.

The situation regarding Arminianism and Calvinism is more complex. If the term "Arminian" means that one accepts all the teachings of Arminius, then Pinnock has moved outside of Arminianism at least with his doctrine of divine foreknowledge. Arminius believed in "conditional predestination" which meant that "the predetermination of the destiny of individuals is based on God's foreknowledge of the way in which they will either freely reject Christ or freely accept him." However, if by the term "Arminian" one has in mind a conviction that "those who believe in Christ are saved and those who do not are damned, and that neither is the result of divine predestination," then the later Pinnock is undoubtedly an Arminian in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See below, p. 364-66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>I consider that Bruce Reichenbach presents a strong defense of the traditional view of omniscience from an Arminian perspective. To argue as Pinnock does is, in Reichenbach's perspective, "to confuse the order of causes (what brings something about) with the order of knowledge (the basis on which we know something)." Put in another way, this means that "knowing something to be true does not make the event occur" (Reichenbach, "God Limits His Power," in <u>Predestination and Free Will</u>, 110). Pinnock observes that he agrees with Reichenbach except in one matter; that of omniscience (Pinnock, "Clark Pinnock's Response" [to Bruce Reichenbach], in <u>Predestination and Free Will</u> [1986], 137-38).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>J. K. Grider, "Arminianism," in <u>Evangelical Dictionary of Theology</u>, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 79. See also Grider, "Arminianism," in <u>Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia</u>, ed. Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 1:143.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>L. J. van Holk, "From Arminius to Arminianism in Dutch Theology," in Man's Faith and Freedom: The Theological Influence of Jacobus Arminius, ed. Gerald O. McCulloh (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962), 28. See also George E. Failing, <u>Did Christ Die for All? The Five Points</u> (Marion, IN: Presence, 1980), 4. Observe that Failing recommends Pinnock's (ed.) <u>Grace Unlimited</u> (1975) "without qualification" (ibid.).

a general sense.

There is "a vast distance" between Arminius (1560-1609) and contemporary Arminianism. This should not be surprising since Arminius is, especially in the North American context, read through the eyes of John Wesley and Methodism. In addition, Arminius himself appears to have proposed a modified Calvinism rather than a wholesale rejection of Calvin's thought. Carl Bangs remarks that "some Calvinists" find that Arminius' writings "do not produce the heresies they expected, while "many Arminians" find their theological forefather "too Calvinistic" and write him off "as a transitional thinker." Perhaps it was inevitable that Arminius' introduction of a human response into Calvin's soteriology would lead eventually to some major alterations in the doctrine of God as well.

All of Pinnock's recent theological thinking appears to have been done within the general landscape of Arminianism. At times he acknowledges this explicitly, while in other cases the evidence is of an implicit nature. As can be expected, Pinnock's current thinking on the doctrine of salvation clearly reveals his movement from Calvin (or Augustine) to Arminius. Pinnock's early shifts in this direction were due, in fact, to a reconsideration of several facets of Calvinian soteriology. He became convinced in turn that the scriptural exhortations to persevere and the warnings against falling away "could

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Van Holk, 27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Gerald O. McCulloh, "The Influence of Arminius on American Theology," in Man's Faith and Freedom: The Theological Influence of Jacobus Arminius, ed. G. O. McCulloh (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962), 73-87.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Bangs, <u>Arminius: A Study in the Dutch Reformation</u>, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Pub., 1985), 18. Arminius' writings are available in a reprint edition as <u>The Writings of James Arminius</u>, 3 vols., trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1956).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>In the notions of divine impassibility and immutability, for instance.

only signify that continuing in the grace of God was something that depended at least in part on the human partner," that double predestination was not scriptural, that divine election "encompasses . . . all potentially," that predestination meant that "God predestines us to be conformed to the image of his Son," that "Scripture appeals to people as those who are able and responsible to answer to God," and that the Bible required that Christ's substitutionary atonement would have to be defined in order to take into account the human response. 1

In the same manner, the later Pinnock's basic views concerning the doctrine of God rest firmly on his Arminian perspective. As a result of his conclusions regarding soteriology, he moved on to consider Augustinian theism. He first felt it necessary to clarify "what we meant by the divine immutability" in the light of his conviction that classical theology has been overly influenced by Plato's "idea that a perfect being would not change." Then, he came to reject the idea of the timelessness of God as incompatible with the biblical notion of God "as operating from within time and history." Even Pinnock's controversial stand on the doctrine of a non-eternally burning hell needs to be understood from the vantage point of his Arminian doctrine of God. In addition, Pinnock's rejection of the classical view of divine omniscience—in which he parts company with most Arminians—may be seen as a reaction to what he considers to be an inconsistency in Arminianism as it is usually stated.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1989), 17-13. See also the previous discussion in chap. 2, pp. 109-113.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 24-26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>For instance, Pinnock's "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent" (1990), typescript, 4-5. Observe Pinnock's query in this connection: "Does our interpretation depend upon larger paradigms?" (ibid., 26, [Typescript]). See my discussion in chap. 2, pp. 105-6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, "From Augustine to Arminius: A Pilgrimage in

What of Pinnock's other major theological interests? His entire apologetical perspective is implicitly based on the Arminian view that Christ, by dying on the cross, "has done everything appropriate and sufficient to make it unnecessary for anyone to find himself in hell." Additionally, he believes that the "greatest difficulty" to the acceptance of Christianity is "a mistaken impression of who God is." After all, why should "they believe in a God they see to be remote, arbitrary, unemotional, . . . and so forth?" In fact, even the early Pinnock's evidentialist apologetics could be categorized as Arminian, just as Warfield's appeared to some scholars as an Arminian quirk.

Even the calls for spiritual renewal which Pinnock offers within the context of his interest in the Charismatic Movement may be understood from the perspective of his Arminianism since such appeals presuppose a degree of human freedom that is hardly compatible with

Theology" (1989), 25-26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Idem, <u>Reason Enough</u> (1980), 117. Calvin's idea of God's consigning some to damnation is nowhere in sight here.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., 118. In the same place, Pinnock remarks that "misunderstanding the nature of God is the greatest all-time hindrance to becoming a Christian, and understanding him correctly the greatest incentive."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock asserts that "God has given man sufficient evidence of His existence and reality on the basis of which he can come to know Him by an act of spiritual intuition. Yet the evidence which inclines us to believe does not determine us to do so. Faith then is not a compulsory perception. It is so, simply because God seeks from us our unforced love and willing allegiance to His loving purposes" (Pinnock, "Faith and Reason" [1974], 310; emphasis Pinnock).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For instance, Cornelius Van Til (<u>The Defense of the Faith</u> [Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1955) argues that Warfield followed Butler's Arminian views (pp. 96-107, 357-58). We find the same author attacking Pinnock for his Butlerian views in the "Response by C. Van Til," in <u>Jerusalem and Athens: Critical Discussions on the Theology and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til, ed. E. R. Geehan (n.p: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), 426-27. For a short summary of Van Til's view of Warfield's apologetics, see Jack B. Rogers' "Van Til and Warfield on Scripture in the Westminster Confession," also in <u>Jerusalem and Athens</u>, 154-55.</u>

Calvinist soteriology. Then, Pinnock's return to a Calvinistic perspective regarding political theology he counts as congruent with his Arminianism, because he believes that Calvin was less than consistent in allowing the implications of his soteriology and theology proper to flow down into his public theology. 2

Finally, in regard to his later doctrine of Scripture, Pinnock has recently acknowledged the effect of his Arminianism. He says that it took about ten years for the results of the shift that is exemplified in <u>Grace Unlimited</u> (1975; edited by Pinnock) to completely filter into his work on Scripture.<sup>3</sup>

Was it legitimate for him to allow his Arminianism to influence his view of Scripture; its reliability, in particular? Is it true, as the Basingers believe, that human activities such as penning a book cannot be totally controlled without violating human freedom?<sup>4</sup> Geisler argues that such is not the case since "there is no logical contradiction between divine determination (infallible guarantee) and free choice" because "contradictions appear only when we speak of God as forcing a free act."<sup>5</sup>

¹See Pinnock, Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal (1985), chap. 2. The first "key" to spiritual renewal, which Pinnock calls "Loving the Truth" (ibid., chap. 1), lays the foundation for "Walking in the Spirit" (chap. 2). His emphasis in the former chapter is on faithfulness to Scripture and to the gospel of Jesus Christ while his perspective on the gospel is decidedly Arminian: "God is engaged in reconciling the world. God so loved the whole world that he sent his Son to save it. I have no interest in a pseudo-gospel which leaves out most of the human race" (ibid., 26). Observe also that Pinnock notes that his charismatic perspective is in opposition to Calvin's (Augustine's and Luther's, too) view that the age of miracles is past (Pinnock, "Baptists and the 'Latter Rain': A Contemporary Challenge and Hope for Tomorrow" (1988), 262-63 (see also Pinnock, Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal [1985], 39-40).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, "From Militancy to Moderation: A Pilgrimage in Theology" (1990), recording.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>This is the way that the Basinger brothers (Randall and David) argue in "Inerrancy, Dictation and the Free Will Debate," 177-80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Norman L. Geisler, "Inerrancy and Free Will: A Reply to the

Whether or not Pinnock and the Basingers are correct in their conclusions concerning inerrancy and free will (and I think they are), is not really the point here. Rather, what is important to observe is that Pinnock's later view of biblical authority and reliability appears to have been worked out in the context of an Augustine to Arminius paradigm shift which allows much less divine control and an increased role for the human agents in the inspiration process. While Pinnock's recent writing on Scripture may be partially understood as issuing from various psychological factors, as a consequence of his reexamination of the evidence, or as the outcome of a natural development of elements already present, it is most helpful to comprehend it as the aftermath of the adoption of a new hermeneutic. Yarbrough is probably more correct than he knew in his statement that the "debate about Scripture is ultimately, in fact, a debate about the nature of God."<sup>2</sup>

Brothers Basinger, "Evangelical Quarterly 57 (1985): 352 (for a similar point of view, see D. Clair Davis, "Inerrancy and Westminster Calvinism," in Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, A Challenge, A Debate, 38). I admit some difficulty in harmonizing divine determination and free choice. After all, is not Geisler rather begging the question in his remark that "neither moderate Calvinists nor Arminians believe God coerces (forces) free acts which he has predetermined"? See also the Basingers' response to Geisler, "Inerrancy and Free Will: Some Further Thoughts," Evangelical Quarterly 58 (1986): 351-54.

<sup>1</sup>Such is the connection between Calvinism and Arminianism that the shift from one to the other, regarded by some evangelicals as a "megashift" (see above, pp. 354-55) could be construed as a "microparadigm" change when viewed from Küng's perspective (see Küng's classification of paradigms as "macroparadigms" which encompass the great "epochal" or "basic models"; "mesoparadigms" which include the "different sections of theology" [e.g., the two-natures doctrine for Christology]; and "microparadigms" which include "many different questions, over which the various theologies have to grapple" [Küng, Theology for the Third Millennium, 125; emphasis Küng]).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Yarbrough, 154, n. 25. This remark by Yarbrough is not made in the context of Pinnock's Arminianism, but in relation to whether or not Christ's view of Scripture is prescriptive for us today.

## Summary of Findings

It only remains for us to briefly summarize our findings and suggest implications which arise from this research.

The purpose of this study was to set forth, analyze, and evaluate Clark Pinnock's theological views in regard to biblical authority and reliability, with the ultimate objective of discovering the reason(s) behind his shift in perspective. In order to reach these goals, these matters had to be studied within the total picture of Pinnock's personal and theological background, certain broad aspects of his theological system, as well as various facets of his doctrine of Scripture.

We have found that the early Pinnock held to a high view of both biblical authority and biblical reliability. There was no equivocation regarding the identity of Scripture with the Word of God. Since the Spirit of God had inspired the Bible, it was authoritative, and because it was of divine origin, it could also be regarded as inerrant. However, Pinnock "nuanced" his notion of inerrancy by applying it only to the original autographs and the intentionality of Scripture. This meant that inspiration adhered primarily to the original manuscripts and that difficulties outside of the intention of Scripture were not to be counted as "real" errors.

It was Pinnock's conviction during his early period that, given enough time, all of the difficulties of Scripture could be satisfactorily resolved. Therefore, he not only argued from biblical authority to reliability, but in the opposite direction as well. An empirical examination of the Bible's inerrancy was sufficient to produce a conviction of scriptural authoritativeness. The later Pinnock realized that such a position placed an enormous burden on apologetics and he has since deemphasized the importance of this latter argument in his overall system.

In his later work, our author still continues to argue strongly for the divine authority of the Bible. Scripture holds the predominant place among such other authorities as tradition, experience, and reason; and it continues as authoritative because of its divine source. However, the later Pinnock, now convinced that his earlier view neglected the human dimension in the inspiration process, has tried to balance matters by emphasizing this aspect. Showing reliance on the findings of biblical criticism, Pinnock now argues for the recognition, for instance, of the role of redactors and editors in Scripture-making and for the possibility of legendary materials within the biblical canon. Although Pinnock still holds to a connection between biblical authority and reliability--the Bible is reliable in regard to its purpose of revealing the gospel of Jesus Christ--his recent view of the human role in the inscripturation phenomenon prohibits him from arguing too strongly from inerrancy to authority. In fact, in place of his previously held evidentialist apologetic, Pinnock appears to have largely substituted Calvin's notion of the witness of the Spirit. "Inerrancy" has become a metaphor for his willingness to trust Scripture "completely" and the role of the Spirit in the inspiration of Scripture seems to have been somewhat compromised.

What were the reasons for Pinnock's shift (or drift, as some of Pinnock's opponents call it)? We have found that it can be legitimately interpreted as the result of certain of Pinnock's personality traits; as the consequence of him being obliged by biblical criticism and developments within evangelicalism to relook at the biblical evidence for the doctrine of strict inerrancy; and as the outcome of a quite natural development of his principle of intentionality as expressed in his earlier view.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Especially in regard to its soteriological purpose (see the discussion, above [pp. 329-330]).

Still, the differences between the early and late Pinnock can probably be most profitably and accurately explained as a paradigm shift in his theological system. In the formulation of his early view of Scripture, Pinnock used the presuppositions of Reformed theism, whereas the later Pinnock consciously works from a more Arminian model without rejecting all aspects of Calvinism. He now considers that Scripture should be understood as the result of both divine initiative and human response. It is his contention that a strict belief in biblical inerrancy is incompatible with anything less than belief in Calvinistic determinism. The Arminian paradigm, which took about ten years to affect Pinnock's doctrine of Scripture, has been gradually filtering down into all of his theological reflections.

How far will Pinnock go? Obviously, Delwin Brown considers that he must move further towards liberalism in order to be consistent. Thus, Brown believes that Pinnock's declaration that Paul expects us to argue with him<sup>2</sup> should not apply just to the Pauline corpus, but to all of Scripture;<sup>3</sup> and we have to ask, why not? It is necessary that Pinnock take seriously his own declaration that he would be both conservative and contemporary,<sup>4</sup> and perhaps as he himself admits,<sup>5</sup> it is time for his conservative colors to be flown again.

Pinnock's move from an "intrinsicalist" inerrancy to a more "functional" inerrancy exemplifies his ability to "set forth his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See above, chap. 4, pp. 255-59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 49-50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Brown, "Rethinking Authority from the Right: A Critical Review of Clark Pinnock's <u>Scripture Principle</u>, 71-72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, <u>Three Keys to Spiritual Renewal</u> (1985), appendix (pp. 85-100).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>Pinnock, Letter to Mary High, April 4, 1990.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>These are Packer's terms ("Foreword," 7).

case" in positions that are uncongenial to those on the theological left and right, and even to those in the middle. Rakestraw correctly concludes that we can expect more surprises in regard to Pinnock, both in his returning to greater orthodoxy in matters where he has moved too far from the center of biblical faith, and in his further questioning of cherished conservative beliefs" that are not well grounded in his Scripture-dominated "quadrilateral of theological authority."

In my opinion, Pinnock has not put together disparate theological concepts in allowing his soteriology and doctrine of God to impinge on his view of Scripture. Rather, a truly systematic theology does not allow one area of theology to be segregated from another. Therefore, it is all the more important that care be exercised when bringing even minor changes to individual doctrinal formulations since the introduction of nonscriptural data into one doctrine have consequences for the whole system.

I consider that the Arminian paradigm not only provides an adequate interpretation of the divine initiative-human response in soteriology, but can also have a legitimate place as an explanatory model for the divine initiative-human response in a view of biblical authority and reliability which is expressed in terms other than inerrancy. However, just as care is necessary to avoid the extremes of antinomianism and legalism in one's doctrine of salvation, the same attention seems imperative in regard to Scripture if one is to escape the twin dangers of the denigration of either the human or the divine role in the inscripturation process.

It may be well for Pinnock to consider making some "running repairs" to his doctrine of Scripture which will enable him to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Price, "Clark H. Pinnock: Conservative and Contemporary," 183.

<sup>2</sup>Rakestraw, 269.

maintain a balanced perspective in regard to the divine-human character of the Bible as well as a strong stand on biblical authority and reliability. For instance, the later Pinnock seems to have carefully bracketed soteric matters so that they are little affected by biblical criticism. Yet, the acceptance of the liberal presuppositions implicit in biblical criticism (which I believe emphasize the human role to the detriment of the divine in the making of Scripture) may eventually trickle into other facets of his system, including his doctrines of soteriology and God. Would it not be ironic if Pinnock's doctrine of Scripture, which seems to have been influenced by a paradigmatic shift in soteriology and theism, were to inspire future shifts in regard to his doctrines of salvation and God?

## Implications

At this stage it seems appropriate to address some of the practical and theological implications which arise from our pilgrimage through Pinnock's perspectives in regard to biblical authority and reliability. These are directed not only to Pinnock himself but also to those who show interest in his views.

First, although the later Pinnock's affirmations regarding biblical authority appear to be similar to those of his earlier stance, the same is not true for his view of biblical reliability. While still preferring the term "inerrancy," it is no longer defined in terms of original autographs or historical accuracy, but is used metaphorically "for the determination to trust God's Word completely." He is currently a member of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) and signs his agreement to its stated "doctrinal basis": "The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written, and is therefore inerrant in the autographs." Scaer rightly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 225.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>As found in every volume of the <u>Journal of the Evangelical</u>

asks, "If Pinnock's position is really embraced by that statement, what does that statement mean?"

This matter may not appear as particularly important unless one takes into account the value Pinnock personally places on his evangelical credentials. In his view, he is first and foremost an evangelical, and then a Baptist. How long he will remain prominent within North American evangelicalism is open to question, particularly in the light of Robert Gundry's removal from the ETS for his opinion that the Gospel according to Matthew contains midrashic material, something Pinnock also grants as probable. Whatever happens regarding his status within evangelicalism, Rakestraw is probably correct in his assessment that unless Pinnock significantly modifies his views on Scripture and theism, he is not likely to become Carl F. H. Henry's successor.

Second, the subject of Pinnock's doctrine of God brings another implication to the fore. What are the ramifications for evangelicalism if belief in a strict view of inerrancy really is incompatible with a doctrine of free will theism? This question is particularly relevant if, as Pinnock contends, evangelicalism is presently controlled by Calvinists at a time when rank-and-file evangelicals have drifted towards Arminianism. How long will inerrancy of the originals continue as mainline evangelical belief? Is Pinnock a harbinger of things to come?

Theological Society, from 1958 to the present.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Scaer, 42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Pinnock-Roennfeldt Interview, 1990.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> (1984), 118. For a perspective on Gundry's removal from the ETS, see Leslie R. Keylock's "Evangelical Scholars Remove Gundry for His Views on Matthew," <u>Christianity Today</u>, February 3, 1984, 36-38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Rakestraw, 269.

Third, in a vital respect Pinnock seems to have gone beyond Arminianism with his rejection of the usual view of divine omniscience. As has already been indicated, Pinnock rejects the idea of divine omniscience, because, in his view it impinges on human freedom. 1 One cannot help but wonder just how much room is left for the influence of the divine in the production of Scripture. His current stance radically alters the usual meaning of predictive prophecy since, if Pinnock is correct, God could not have possessed the reliable, detailed pre-knowledge which seems to be assumed in many biblical prophecies. 3 One must also ask: Could God have even known ahead of time what kind of Scripture would be produced by the writers inspired by his Spirit? Pinnock replies that "God's ability to know the future remains very considerable even if not exhaustive and God can still exercise the option of refusal if he dislikes what comes forth."4 The "option of refusal" seems, however, quite different to Peter's view that "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."5 Rakestraw's advice that Pinnock consider the viability of "alternative positions" is timely here. 6 While he

<sup>1</sup>See the discussion in chap. 2, above (pp. 113-14).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>A small indication that Pinnock has accepted that God does not know the future in detail is evident in his comment that although the Book of Daniel "seems to be made up of prophecies given to a man named Daniel in the sixth century B.C.[,] there are also good indications that it is somehow tied in with events in the second century and the Maccabean revolt (Daniel 10-12)" (Pinnock, <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 117).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Rakestraw asks how Pinnock's views of omniscience can accord with Deut 31:14-29; Ps 139:4; Isa 40-48; 2 Thess 2; and the Olivet Discourse. He maintains that "the language of Scriptures such as these is intended to convey a certain knowledge of the future on God's part, not a highly probable knowledge" (Rakestraw, 266).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Pinnock, personal letter to Ray Roennfeldt, July 16, 1990.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>2 Pet 1:21 (NIV).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Ibid. One <u>via media</u> solution is the "middle knowledge" perspective of William L. Craig's "Middle Knowledge, A Calvinist-Arminian Rapprochement?" in <u>The Grace of God, the Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism</u>, ed. Clark H. Pinnock (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

continues to hold to his present stance on divine omniscience, Pinnock will continue to be accused of not taking all the biblical materials into account, of being unduly influenced by process theology, and of limiting the divine role in the production of Scripture.

Fourth, Pinnock's conclusions concerning scriptural authority and reliability may not find ready acceptance among a large number of conservative Christians because of his lack of controls in regard to biblical criticism. While he is correct in his recent view that too tight a connection in the direction from biblical reliability to authority places a heavy burden on apologetics, Pinnock may find that loosening up the connection too much tends to downgrade biblical authority. After all, the theological meaning of Scripture is very much based on biblical history, and Pinnock has not provided controls other than declaring that it is not permissible to see the gospel of Jesus Christ as legendary or mythical. One wonders what there is to prevent his following the path of Barth and others for whom the doctrine of Christ seems to have subsumed every other doctrine.

Pub., 1989, 141-64, and The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987); and David Basinger, "Divine Omniscience and Human Freedom: A 'Middle Knowledge' Perspective," Faith and Philosophy 1 (1984): 291-302. Observe, here, Pinnock's comment regarding "middle knowledge": "Maybe I'm missing the point, but it feels like a trick to me, a scholastic ruse" (Pinnock, personal letter to Ray Roennfeldt, July 16, 1990).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For example, Nicole, review of <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Nyquist, 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>See, for instance, Holloman, 96. Although a side issue in this study, the doctrine of divine foreknowledge is one aspect of Pinnock's theism that demands increased consideration. In a search of <u>Dissertation Abstracts on Disc</u>, CD-ROM (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1989-90), I found no entries under either "foreknowledge" or "omniscience" from 1861 to December 1989.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Price ("The Crisis of Biblical Authority: The Setting and Range of the Current Evangelical Crisis," 118-19) observes that Pinnock cannot ultimately keep "a hold of any inerrant assertions of historical facts." Therefore, Price maintains that "if Scripture is still to be the epistemological channel of access to God's saving acts, they must be dehistoricized," and one must ask, "Can Evangelical

Fifth, along with his theological pilgrimage from Calvinism to Arminianism, Pinnock seems also to have shifted philosophically.

Although this study concentrates on matters theological, it should be observed that Pinnock presently rejects many of the classical philosophical presuppositions in which Calvinism (and much of Christian theology) is rooted. For instance, his rejection of divine timelessness in favor of the scriptural idea of God operating within time and history places him squarely in the contemporary scene which, following Heidegger, emphasizes temporality. It is, of course, still too early to determine whether Pinnock will, with his acceptance of a temporal "primordial presupposition," continue to develop a truly biblical rather than a philosophically based theology.

Sixth, the views expressed by both the early and later Pinnock regarding Scripture are of interest to Christians within my own tradition. Seventh-day Adventists, although holding to a high view of biblical authority and reliability, have not chosen to express their doctrine of Scripture in terms of inerrancy.<sup>4</sup> Yet, the biblical

theology survive such major surgery?" Such a course, in Price's view "would mean a decided step in the direction of Bultmann. Indeed it would mean reaching that destination in a single giant step."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 112-13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>For a convenient summary of this recent philosophical trend, see Canale, 115-30.

 $<sup>^{3}</sup>$ This is Canale's appeal to contemporary theologians (Canale, 408-9).

<sup>4</sup>See the Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual (Washington, DC: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, rev. 1986), 23. For further study see Raoul Dederen, "Toward a Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Revelation-Inspiration," in North American Bible Conference, 1974, ed. Biblical Research Committee ([Washington, DC.]: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974), paper no. 3; and Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines (Washington, DC: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 5-15. Observe, however, that Donald Bloesch characterizes Seventh-day Adventists (with Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, Mormons, and Unitarian [Oneness] Pentecostals) as inerrantists (Bloesch, Essentials of Evangelical Theology, 1:83, n. 64).

narratives have always been held by Seventh-day Adventists to be accurate portrayals of actual historical events, and any move away from that position (e.g., the later Pinnock's view that the Genesis narratives may contain legendary material) would jeopardize, among others, such doctrines as creation, the nature of man, Christian stewardship, and the seventh-day sabbath.

Finally, due to the delimitations placed on this study, 2 no attempt has been made to adequately treat certain areas of Pinnock's thought. An important and productive topic for research concerns Pinnock's biblical hermeneutics, especially the role played by the Holy Spirit in interpretation. 3 Not only is it significant to examine what Pinnock has to say about the nature of Scripture and how it is to be interpreted, but it is also vital to observe just how he uses the Bible. In fact, that may be even more meaningful than his direct statements about revelation and inspiration. Evangelicals, in particular, also need to pay further attention to Pinnock's assertion that a strict view of inerrancy is inconsistent with the doctrine of human free will. 4 If such is the case, Pinnock may indeed be just

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>For instance, the six-day creation week (which Pinnock questions in <u>The Scripture Principle</u> [1984], 119) seems to be regarded as factual in Exod 20:8-11. Or, must we also discount the divine origin of the Decalogue (Exod 20:1) in favor of the "wide consensus that the present form of the Decalogue is the product of a long historical development"? (Brevard S. Childs, <u>The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary</u>, Old Testament Library series [Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1974], 391).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See above (pp. 9-10).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Although this subject has been briefly alluded to where it has intersected with Pinnock's views regarding biblical authority and reliability (see above; chap. 3, pp. 207-8, and chap. 4, pp. 287-291).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Maddox states the matter succinctly: "Perhaps the most interesting point for Wesleyans, that Pinnock makes in this section [i.e., <u>The Scripture Principle</u>, part 2] is the claim that a dictation approach to inspiration—which he argues is implicit to a detailed inerrancy viewpoint—is a logical, if not necessary outgrowth of the tendency of Calvinistic orthodoxy to construe all God's actions in terms of total divine control" (Maddox, 205).

ahead of the evangelical "wave" not only in his rejection of Calvinian soteriology and theism, 1 but in his doctrine of Scripture as well.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>See Steven P. Vitrano's comment in his review of <u>The Grace of God, The Will of Man: A Case for Arminianism</u>, ed. Clark H. Pinnock, <u>Andrews University Seminary Studies</u> 27 (1989): 242.

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In order that readers may easily trace Pinnock's development through his writings, his works are arranged in chronological sequence (but alphabetically within each particular year). Secondary sources are presented in an alphabetical format.

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