Jesus > The Bible (Part 2)

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We begin to look last time at the important distinction between what is important to the Christian faith, and what is less important and not central to the Christian faith. We premise that some things are essential, and that asking hypothetical questions like, "Would Christianity still be Christianity without X?" can help us pin down what is and isn't central to the Christian faith. We example of Paul asking precisely this kind question about the resurrection of Jesus in 1 Co. 15.

What is Truly Central To The Christian Faith?

Paul does not go on to say, "If the Bible is not inspired, or faith is not sola fide, then Christ would not have made an argument from that angle, and some have acted as though that is what he should have said. He says, "If there is no resurrection, then our preaching is vain, your faith is vain, we are false witnesses, we are liars, and you are still in your sins." Why he didn't say, and never would said, "If the Bible is not inspired, then your faith is in vain" Because the Christian faith simply isn't founded on the inspiration of Scripture. Christ and the Apostles never preached a sola scriptura, and Paul says that he can't even start their evangelism without Christ crucified, not Christianity, isn't true. But if Christ did not, Christianity is false, and Paul and the Apostles are false witnesses. Christ and the Apostles, not the Bible, are the ultimate inspired, and Jesus says that the Spirit, Christ's Paraclete, will teach the Truth. All Christ's teaching and all the inspired open are inspired Bible. It does depend upon a Bean Lost This Isn't to claim that the Bible isn't inspired. I believe it is, and all of orthodox Christian Scripture Scholarship, and I'm not to be called that this claim isn't essential to the Christian faith. These questions then lead us to the following discussion:

> "Inspiration is not the most fundamental of Christian doctrines..."
> - B. B. Warfield

Sometimes Fundamentalist have claimed inspiration as a 'fundamental' of the faith, and acted as though it is the most central doctrine of the faith. Yet Warfield, the father of modern Scripture Scholarship and fundamentalist/conservative Evangelical has gone on to call this fundamentalist claim into question. He example of the "fundamentals" of the faith. The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture." He defines what he means by a "fundamental" in a later piece:

> "Even so, I hoped these truths are central to the Christian faith—so much so, that when you drive them out, Christianity ceases to be Christianity. I hoped, in fact, that they are the truths which Christ came to bear witness to, and which, if we are to be true to our Christian principles, we have to bear witness to."
> Chappell, Paul. *Black & White Fundamentalist* (Kindle Locations 192-194). Strong Together Publications. Kindle Edition.

That's a fairly common claim in fundamentalism and Scripture Scholarship (and I call Paul fundamentalist). Many focused their energies defending the authority of the Bible as inspiration to a detriment of the Gospel of Christ, and turned a renewed defending the Inspiration of the Bible as a sine qua non of being a Christian. But this was not the position of the Apostles or Christ.

A Christian Manifesto On The Central Message Of The Bible

Jonathan Mecher, one of the great Southern Fundamentalists, explained it:

> "It must be admitted that there are many Christians who do not accept the doctrine of plenary inspiration. That doctrine is denied not only by liberal opponents of Christianity, but also by many conservative Christians who are not willing to be called liberals. Such people say that the Bible is Christianity in the concrete, and if evidence had accumulated against the inspiration of some of the Bible, we depend for their salvation, not on all upon their own efforts to lead the Christ life, but upon the amazing Grace of God. We are very sure that no one who is willing to accept the Christ as the central message of the Bible and yet believe that the message has come to us merely on the authority of human beings who were mistaken in other things, can be supposed to be supernatural in origin and to be the means of regeneration. But if the Bible is right in its central message, then it is the duty of the ministers of the work of Christ, and yet believe that the Bible is not inspired, to point out that it is not really Bible, or Christianity, because they have accepted as true the message upon which Christianity is based. A great gulf separates them from those who reject the supernatural act of God (the incarnation) with which Christianity stands or falls."
> - Machen, J. Gresham. *Christianity & Liberalism*. 1923. Kindle Locations 977-980.

Mecher was an staunch defender of the Inspiration of Scripture as we could find. But he does he understand that Christianity's basic message wasn't that The Bible is inspired," but rather that, Christ God, incarnation, death, and resurrection for the sins of the world. Mecher, as a Bible Scholar, was not according to Mecher, and not believe in the inspiration of the Bible. Because Inspiration is important to him. Isn't it to our central being a Christian.

> "We found the whole Christian system on the doctrine of plenary inspiration as little as we found it upon the doctrine of angelic existences."
> - B. B. Warfield
> (Tweet This)

B. B. Warfield On The Ground Of The Christian Faith

Mecher wasn't the only great theologian to note this. B. B. Warfield, that great Presbyterian, and another footfather of Modern Fundamentalism, was as emphatic in a statement of the central Christian faith. As we recall first in history, the taught, wrote, and preached, extensively on the Inspiration of Scripture. But he also was a great Scholar of the Christian faith, and understand what was central to the faith. He said that the Christian system rests not on the doctrine of Inspiration, but on the doctrine. So he regularly took pains to avoid this dangerous error:

> "Let it not be said that we find the ground of the whole Christian system upon the doctrine of plenary inspiration. We found our Christian system upon the doctrine of plenary inspiration as little as we found it upon the doctrine of angelic existences. Were there no such thing as inspiration, Christianity would still be Christianity, and would still be found in possession of its ground. Christianity is essentially rapture of the knowing of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and of the Christ, present in the writings of the apostles and then first followers, and in the historical witness of the Church, to the Redeemer who is the ground of all Christian hope. Inspiration is a fact which we bring we prove about the Scriptures. It is the last and covering fact, as the Scriptures. These are first prove authentic historically credible, and historically believe as we prove them to be so. The proof of their authenticity, credibility, general trustworthiness would give us a firm basis for Christianity even if we knowledge we can part of their inspiration, and even if we knowledge that we cannot."

The present writer, in order to prevent all misunderstanding, desires to repeat here what he has said on many proper occasions that it is far from contending that without inspiration there could be no Christianity, or even that Christianity would be, or ought to be, different from what it is. Christianity is his indication rather that it is Christianity the Holiness Holy Holy Holy

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