

Evidence for Inerrancy: The Christological Argument - Part 2

Volume 4 - Unit 6

(2. Was the primary witness willing to tell the truth? – cont.)

c. Intended hearers. Desire to please, displease. Political rallies, war dispatches, etc. No evidence of this in N. T. writings. Take Luke, again. Did he try to please Theophilus? Tried to show him the real nature of Christianity, but did not trim the message. Luke-Acts hardly designed to "please" either Jews or Romans. Christ as Lord (kurios), not Caesar, etc.

d. Literary style. Cliches, slogans, "picturesque speech" may distort facts. Most N. T. documents written in the very plainest of speech. Cf. Mark, - short, terse, to the point. Paul, no "excellency of speech", etc.

e. Laws and conventions. Fear of libel, courtesy, tact, diplomacy, etc. Hardly the case with N. T. Cf. Jesus' and Paul's denunciation of Jews, pagan gods, etc. "Narrowness" of Christianity - hardly tactful. John 14:6.

3. Is the primary witness accurately reported with regard to the detail under examination?

Basically, this has to do with the transmission of information to secondary sources when there is no eyewitness testimony. Much of N.T. witness is eyewitness testimony. Even Mark reported Peter's eyewitness testimony (per Papias, et al -generally accepted as true). No problem here.

4. Is there independent corroboration? Historian prefers independent testimony of at least 2 witnesses, but frequently not available, so other tests are made:

a. What of author's reputation for veracity? Cf. Ramsay's evaluation of Luke, etc.

b. Independent witnesses? Synoptic problem makes this complicated, but all agree that some of the material is independent.

c. Lack of self-contradiction. Many authors contradict themselves. N. T. writers do not.

d. No contradiction from other sources. Secular sources, when available, have corroborated N. T. documents. Cf. F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents - Are They Reliable ?*

Per Gottschalk, conditions which are particularly favorable to truthful reporting:

1. Indifferent witness, or, better still, information which is prejudicial to the witness. N. T. writers are not indifferent to their material, but they are frequently prejudicial to themselves and the other primary witnesses. Cf. accounts of Peter's denial (even in Mark, "Peter's gospel"), Paul's persecution of disciples, disciples' inability to comprehend Jesus's message, their selfishness, etc. Strong historical evidence.

2. The incidental and the probable. Information incidental to the main point is likely true, since writer is not emphasizing it. Cf. Jesus's statement in John 10:35 concerning the truthfulness of scripture - one of our key passages re His attitude toward scripture, yet not His major point in the passage.

3. That which is common knowledge at the time is probably true, because could be easily contradicted. Paul to Agrippa: ". . . these things were not done in a corner. " (Acts 26:26) Over 500 witnesses to resurrection, most still alive 25 years later (I Corinthians 15:6).

One final test, per Gottschalk: Is the testimony in conformity with known historical and scientific facts? Historically, no problem. But scientific facts? Herein lies the whole problem. We now "know" that miracles do not happen, that there are no evil spirits, etc., i. e. the supernatural cannot be considered as a source of phenomena. Therefore, regardless of the historical, unimpeachable testimony of the N. T., the unbelieving historian

must attempt some alternate interpretation in order to avoid the supernatural. The problem is not historical - but philosophical. Here is where the convicting work of the Holy Spirit is essential to break through the naturalistic a priori stance.

Additional note: With regard to the matter of Jesus's attitude toward scripture (apart from the truthfulness of Christianity generally) the historical evidence is clear and compelling. This is our present point.

III. The Christological Problem

A. The Historical Evidence

B. The Scholarly Agreement

1. H. J. Cadbury
2. F. C. Grant
3. John Knox
4. Adolph Harnack
5. Rudolph Bultmann

C. The Inevitable Question

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE - John 14:26 – “But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”