

thing to say to each of us. Nobody crystallizes this message more distinctly and compellingly than does Beckmann.

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RUSSELL STAPLES

Beegle, Dewey M. *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1973. 312 pp. Paperback, \$4.95.

Dewey M. Beegle's *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility* is not just a revision of his *The Inspiration of Scripture* (1963). As even the new title might suggest, the present work is a thoroughly revised and expanded presentation of the same basic thesis, but with important inclusions. Seven of his original twelve chapters show major expansion, bringing the discussions up to date and filling out their coverage. Two original chapters are combined in the 1973 work. An entirely new chapter has been added (chap. 4), which deals with recognizable traditions in the biblical period. The remaining original chapters have been worked over to one degree or another.

In the main, the newly added material in *Scripture, Tradition, and Infallibility* addresses Roman Catholic discussions of inerrancy, tradition, and infallibility since Vatican II, in addition to the Protestant views. For readers not familiar with Beegle's earlier work, the purpose of both volumes is to bring evidence from many relevant areas to bear on the nature and operation of inspiration/revelation. Of special concern for him are concepts of biblical inerrancy which he feels are not only untrue to the claims of Scripture for itself, but may virtually block out some of the richness which God's word might otherwise bring to us.

Several points in this worthwhile volume merit probing. Beegle's view of Moses' inspiration seems to suffer from his general ambiguity about the nature of revelation. At Sinai, Moses combines a knowledge of Hittite suzerainty treaties with insight into Yahweh's sovereign care for Israel—and the result is the Ten Commandments (p. 35). A bit later in the book, however, Beegle suggests that the death of a Sabbath-breaker is directly decreed by God (p. 78); Moses is there reduced to a rather passive role. Inspiration is admittedly dynamic, and does in fact operate in a variety of ways in Scripture. But perhaps a more thorough inductive appraisal of those various ways would bring to view a more biblical concept of the divine in Scripture.

The distinction in Beegle between primary and secondary revelation is not altogether clear. Primary revelation appears to enjoy the distinction of superior originality (p. 71), though it is unclear who will judge this relative quality. Secondary revelations, on the other hand, "involve more of the rational activity of the channel of revelation" (p. 71). I am rather sure Beegle does *not* mean to imply that those elements in Scripture that are less rational are more inspired. He and I are both unsure how to distinguish between these two areas of revelation. The problem becomes acute, Beegle admits, if one tries to extract secondary revelation from the fabric of Scripture (p. 118). The subtleties of this admission should perhaps lead Beegle to drop or greatly down-play the distinction in the first place. At any rate,

the purpose of the two categories is not as clear within Scripture as it is in the relation between Scripture and later tradition.

I agree with Beegle that an everlasting suspension of judgment is not a satisfactory answer to some apparent problems posed by certain textual anomalies. However, there is something to be said for the clear realization that human conclusions based on human perception of data are intrinsically tentative.

As controversial as it once may have seemed, Beegle's book is an important contribution to the current discussion of inspiration in many circles. Its message will doubtless speak to many students of the Bible who have had difficulty squaring facts as they perceive them with the presupposition of an inerrant biblical record. His presentation of the nature of God's revelation will eventually constrain thoughtful persons to examine not just the inductive biblical evidence regarding inspiration, but ultimately their fundamental presuppositional stances concerning God's nature and his methods of self-disclosure. For us, often, the proper question is less "How *did* God reveal himself?" than "What method of self-revelation will my presuppositions sanction for God's use?"

Beegle rightly contends that while God could have totally preserved his revelation from error at every stage, by choosing fallible human media he in fact accepted the liabilities inherent in those instruments. God's purposes are presumably served by his choices. In this connection, Beegle's stress on the fact that Scripture does not specifically claim inerrancy for itself is significant. He properly disdains a doctrine of inspiration whose premises would permit apparent problems in the Bible to force the Christian back to unavailable autographs for a false religious security.

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Berkouwer, Gerrit C. *Holy Scripture*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975. 377 pp. \$8.95.

Thirteenth in the widely hailed series of *Studies in Dogmatics* by Amsterdam theologian Gerrit C. Berkouwer, this volume discusses the doctrine of Scripture with the overall scope and penetrating insight into theological issues that readers of earlier volumes have come to expect. It is a Reformed Christian doctrine of Scripture which the author articulates in discussion with a lengthy roster of noted thinkers from times past and present. Behind these theologians and systems stand the creeds and confessions; behind them the Bible itself, looming large as usual in Berkouwer's concern as a vital stream of revealed truth which gives theology its meaning.

As edited as well as translated by Jack B. Rogers, the book addresses itself essentially to non-specialists. The material of the original two-volume work, *De Heilige Schrift*, has been decreased by approximately one third. Berkouwer's central message regarding the nature and authority of Holy Scripture comes out clearly. The first four chapters tend to lay the groundwork for the contemporary interest in the authority and interpretation of the Bible. They