

The Provision of Certainty

The Content: The assurance that we possess the knowledge of God.

I. The Basis of Certainty in the Nature of God Himself.

A. The True and the living God - the Person that He is.

1. The principle: The object of our faith, love and hope is a PERSON! He is the infinite God - the Creator of all things and worthy of all our trust and affection.
2. The illustrations: David in I Samuel 17:45-47.
Daniel in Daniel 6:23.
Asa in II Chronicles 14-16.
Paul in Acts 27.

B. The True and the Living God - as absolute in truth, love and holiness.

1. The principle: God will always remain true to Himself in all of His relationships and actions with us. He will never act out of harmony with the true meaning of truth, love and holiness. God can be trusted.
2. The illustrations: He is the God of truth and thus faithfulness -
I Cor. 1:9; 10:13; I Thess. 5:24

He is the God of love and thus goodness -
Exodus 34:6; Jer. 31:3; Romans 8:38,39.

He is the God of holiness and thus righteousness -
Leviticus 11:44,45; Hebrews 7:26; I Peter 1:15,16.

II. The Basis of Certainty in the Written Word of God.

A. The Word of God is Truth and therefore trustworthy.

1. The principle: The Bible is God's Word. He stands behind His Word. He maintains His Word. The Word of God cannot fail because God cannot fail. God is true to Himself and to His Word.
2. The illustrations: Psalm 11:6:5,6 - God upholds His Word.
Romans 4:21 - true faith believes the Word of God.
Hebrews 2:1-3 - the Word of God cannot fail.

B. The Word of God is Living and therefore powerful.

1. The principle: The power of God accompanies the Word of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. God "speaks" His power into our lives through His Word. To the degree the believer knows and practices the Word of God - to that degree we have the experience of the power of God.
2. The illustrations: Matthew 12:10-13 -- the power of God came through the spoken Word of God.
I Thess. 2:13 -- the Word of God brings enablement.
Hebrews 4:12 -- the Word of God is living and powerful.

III. The Basis of Certainty in the Witness of the Holy Spirit.

A. The principle: The Lord Jesus promised that when the Holy Spirit would come He would lead the believer into a knowledge of the truth, John 14-16. We recognize this ministry to be inseparably related to salvation and to have the great goal of bringing glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The Illustrations:

John 3:33 - the true believer has certainty.

Romans 8:15,16 - the Holy Spirit leads us into the understanding of adoption.

Galatians 4:4-6 - the ministry of the Holy Spirit is inseparably related to personal redemption and the assurance of sonship.

I John 5:9-13 - the witness of the Holy Spirit is related to the "record" (Scripture) given by God and which forms a basis for the certainty promised to the believer.

Conclusion: Summary Quotations Related to the Witness of the Holy Spirit.

He who believeth then the Divine Scriptures with sure judgment, receives in the voice of God, who bestowed the Scripture; a demonstration that cannot be impugned. Faith, then is not established by demonstration. Clement of Alexandria (155-216; Stromata, Book II, Chapter III.

Let it be considered, then, as an undeniable truth, that they who have been inwardly taught by the Spirit, feel an entire acquiescence in the Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason; but it obtains the credit which it deserves with us by the testimony of the Spirit. John Calvin (1509-1564), Institutes of the Christian Religion, I,7,5

With Calvin, we admit two principles, one external, the other internal. The external and objective principle is the fact assured to and perceived by the soul that God reveals Himself and speaks in Scripture. The internal principle, interior to the subject, is the persuasion of the Holy Spirit which raises this knowledge to the height of a certainty of divine faith, a certainty distinct from sensorial and rational evidence, and entirely supernatural. Auguste LeCerf, An Introduction to Reformed Dogmatics, p. 370.

The problem of authority may be formulated thus . . . This revelation was given in history . . . Authority derives from this revelation. What God says to man and does for man in the present is no more than a particular application of what He said to the world and did for the world once for all through the man Christ Jesus. It is God speaking in Christ and God's Word spoken through Christ, that is ultimately authoritative; it is the Bible that bears authoritative witness to the speaking of that Word; and it is the Holy Spirit Who, in every age, mediates that authoritative Word to the individual Christian and the Church. J. I. Packer, 'Fundamentalism' and the Word of God, p. 46.

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit, Who caused it to be written, has been given to the Church to cause believers to recognize it for the divine Word that it is, and to enable them to interpret it rightly and understand its meaning. Ibid, p. 47.

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