

## BOOK REVIEW

of

Gordon H. Clark, *God's Hammer: The Bible and Its Critics*,  
The Trinity Foundation, 1982, 1987, 1995.

This book is in the Evangel Library,  
and this review is presented by Larry D. Paarmann.

I like the title of this book: *God's Hammer!* We need not be on the defensive, as if the case for confidence in the inerrancy of Scripture was weak. Rather, we stand on solid ground both historically and philosophically. The title refers to Jeremiah 23:29: “‘Is not My word like a fire?’” says the LORD, “‘And like a hammer *that* breaks the rock in pieces?’” (NKJV).

This book is a compilation of essays, papers, book chapters, and presentations previously given by Gordon Clark, all having to do with the Bible as the Word of God. The chapters are as follows. Chapter 1: How May I Know the Bible Is Inspired? Sections in Chapter 1 are The Biblical Claims, The Meaning of Inspiration, Plenary Inspiration, Verbal Inspiration, A Written Revelation, The Proof of Inspiration, The Testimony of the Holy Spirit, and The Factor of Sin.

Chapter 2: The Bible As Truth. Sections in Chapter 2 are The Effect of Sin on Man's Knowledge, Man's Epistemological Limitations, Man's Knowledge in Relation to God's, and Truth Is Propositional.

Chapter 3: Verbal Inspiration Yesterday and Today. Sections in Chapter 3 are The Biblical Claims, The Dictation Objection, and Contemporary Theories.

Chapter 4: The Evangelical Theological Society Tomorrow. Sections in Chapter 4 are The Bible's View of Itself, May We Appeal to the Bible?, The Present Task, The Blows of Battle, Is Infallibility Useless?, Evangelical Doctrines, Biblical Authority, Human Need, The Criterion, and The Evangelical Theological Society.

Chapter 5: Special Divine Revelation as Rational. Sections in Chapter 5 are Inadequacy of General Revelation, Defense of Revelation as Rational, The Medieval Scholastic Attempt, The Renaissance Attack, The Neo-orthodox Compromise, The Reformation Way, and Some Contemporary Problems.

Chapter 6: Revealed Religion. Sections in Chapter 6 are Strict Natural Theology, Less and More, Loose Natural Theology, Encounter, and Verbal Revelation.

Chapter 7: Holy Scripture. Chapter 7 is short and it is not divided into sections.

Chapter 8: The Concept of Biblical Authority. Sections in Chapter 8 are A Little History, What Is Authority?, Inerrancy and Infallibility, Jack Rogers, Bernard Ramm, and David Hubbard.

Chapter 9: Hamilton's Theory of Language and Inspiration. Sections in Chapter 9 are Myth, Human Language, Revelation, John Calvin, Literal Truth, and Parable.

Chapters 10 and 11 in the 1995 edition are not in the 1982 edition and the 1982 edition contains a Chapter 10 titled “Time and Eternity” which is not in the 1995 edition. Chapter 10 in the 1995 edition is titled “What is Truth,” and it has the following Sections: Epistemology, Ideas and Propositions, and The Bible.

Chapter 11 in the 1995 edition is titled “The Reformed Faith and The Westminster Confession,” and it has the following Sections: Atheism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and Arminianism and Calvinism.

It would appear that most differences in theology and doctrine can be traced back to one's view of and approach to the Scriptures. In what sense are they inspired? What does inspiration mean? Answers to these questions have separated Christians over the centuries, and have led to differing doctrines and heresies. Nothing seems more fundamental, and yet each generation, so it seems, needs to fight the same battles over again. In recent decades, the evangelical position owes much to Gordon Clark and his defense of orthodoxy. Clark seems to have an uncanny ability to reduce highly philosophical and theological questions to ones that have almost simple solutions. Why do we make things so complicated? For example, after considering what Biblical writers have to say about the source of their own writings and those of other Biblical writers, Clark questions “Is there any reason to suppose that men who were so uniformly in error as to the source of their message could have had any superior insight and accurate knowledge of man's relation to God? Why should we today believe that God so loved the world or that a sinner is justified by faith, if it was not God who gave John and Paul this information? . . . one is limited to a very narrow choice. Either the Bible is a worthless fraud and Jesus was a deluded martyr, or the Bible is in truth the Word of God written.” To me, such simple questions as that have an amazing ability to clarify things. One, indeed, is “limited to a very narrow choice.” Clark, obviously, doesn't stop there, but goes on to provide much intellectual material in defense of the proposition that “The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs.”