



Article of Faith IV: The Holy Scriptures

“We believe in the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by which we understand the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, inerrantly revealing the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation, so that whatever is not contained therein is not to be enjoined as an article of faith.”

(Luke 24:44-47; John 10:35; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:20-21)

Excerpt of discussion by Robert L. Hahn, dean of the faculty and professor of New Testament at Nazarene Theological Seminary, on Article of Faith IV from *Articles of Faith: What Nazarenes Believe and Why*, compiled by Gay Leonard, 2005, Beacon Hill Press:

“One of the results of this inspiration is Scripture that ‘inerrantly reveal[s] the will of God concerning us in all things necessary to our salvation’ (*Manuel*, Article 4). Nazarenes affirm that Scripture contains no error at all when it comes to communicating to us everything we need to know to be saved. In the past 120 years, others have often used the word ‘inerrant’ to describe a view of Scripture affirming no errors of any kind. For several reasons our article of faith does not make that claim.

“First we believe that the subject and purpose of the Bible is to communicate to us the great message of the gospel, the word of salvation. The purpose is not to teach manners or culture or history or science. The purpose of Scripture is to bring us into right relationship with God and each other. This does not mean we necessarily think the Bible contains errors in history or science. Rather, we recognize that science and history represent the best human understanding available at any given time. Science and history develop and change as research continues. To spend energy showing how the Bible ‘fits’ with science or history can easily distract us from the Bible’s main purpose: to bring people into right relationship with God and each other.

“Another reason Nazarenes have not devoted energy to defending the inerrancy of the Bible in all matters is that traditional defenders of that doctrine have affirmed only the inerrancy of the ‘autographs’ of Scriptures, that is, the original writings before copies were made. No autographs are known to exist, and there is no prospect of finding any. It’s better to focus on the purpose of the Scriptures we *do* have than to speculate about what must have been true in the autographs we *do not* have.”