

Danger in Preunderstandings

ARTICLE XIX Danger in Preunderstandings

We affirm that any preunderstandings which the interpreter brings to Scripture should be in harmony with scriptural teaching and subject to correction by it.

We deny that Scripture should be required to fit alien preunderstandings, inconsistent with itself, such as naturalism, evolutionism, scientism, secular humanism, and relativism.

The question of preunderstanding is a crucial one in contemporary hermeneutics. The careful wording of the Affirmation does not discuss the issue of whether one should approach Scripture with a particular preunderstanding, but simply which kinds of preunderstanding one has are legitimate. This question is answered by affirming that only those preunderstandings which are compatible with the teaching of Scripture are legitimate. In fact, the statement goes further and demands that all preunderstanding be subject to “correction” by the teaching of Scripture.

The point of this article is to avoid interpreting Scripture through an alien grid or filter which obscures or negates its true message. For it acknowledges that one’s preunderstanding will affect his understanding of a text. Hence to avoid misinterpreting Scripture one must be careful to examine his own presuppositions in the light of Scripture.

(Explaining Biblical Inerrancy: The Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy, Hermeneutics, and Application with Official ICBI Commentary - The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy by R.C. Sproul and Norman L. Geisler, Arlington, Texas: Bastion Books, Kindle, 2013, Page 142 of 158)