

Adequacy of Language and Accommodation (Paper No.6)

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Can communication be adequate, fully true and wholly without error in what it affirms?

I Objections based on language

1. Human language is inadequate to speak about God
2. Human language can never be wholly true, or infallibly true
3. Human language from a "primitive" culture cannot be wholly true

II A Biblical View of Language

Any problem lies with us, not with God's ability. We can't explain God's ability.

III Difficulties Confronting People who object

IV Can Language be wholly true?

John Frame on language being imprecise but true

V Biblical discourse as a selection from a limited system

Meaning arises from relationships of words to one another.

VI Limitations on communication due to words

Types of imprecision

- 1) A word is capable of being applied to a whole range of situations and contexts
- 2) The boundaries of the range of meaning of a word are themselves not fixed with infinite precision.
- 3) Dictionary words with a whole range of possible meanings do not take on or retain all these possible meanings when embedded in a sentence context. The word "green" does not mean both "unripe" and "of the color green" ~~both~~ simultaneously.

VII The influence of Lexical stocks on the powers of Language: ~~The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis~~

Sapir-Whorf theory: the vocabulary stock of a language together with its grammar influences and constrains the worldview of the speakers of the language.

This part has some fairly technical points of comparative linguistics

VIII Divine Speech and verbal inspiration: Can Words be inspired?

God works freely within the constraints on language since he ordained them in the first place.

These restraints are in fact the instrument of communication rather than opponents to communication. (Illustration of wheels on a vehicle) (6-15)

What verbal inspiration means (6-16)

Abuses of the doctrine (6-17)

Improper use of etymologies and word-studies

IX Limitations on communication at the level of sentences: Grammatical limitations

The tendency of Bible interpreters to be much too precise in their deductions from grammatical phenomena. Viz. the aorist tense. (6-19)