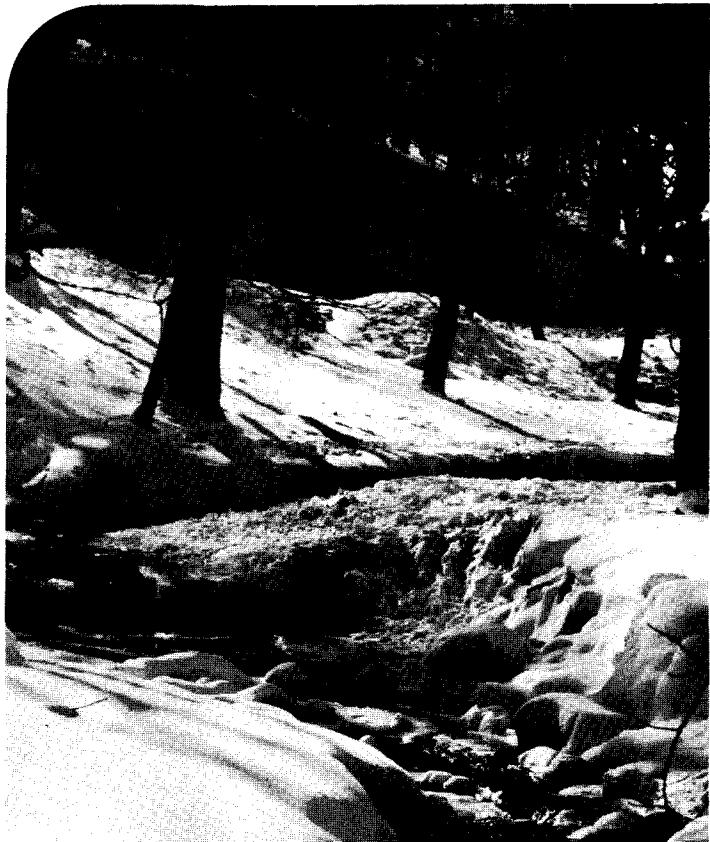
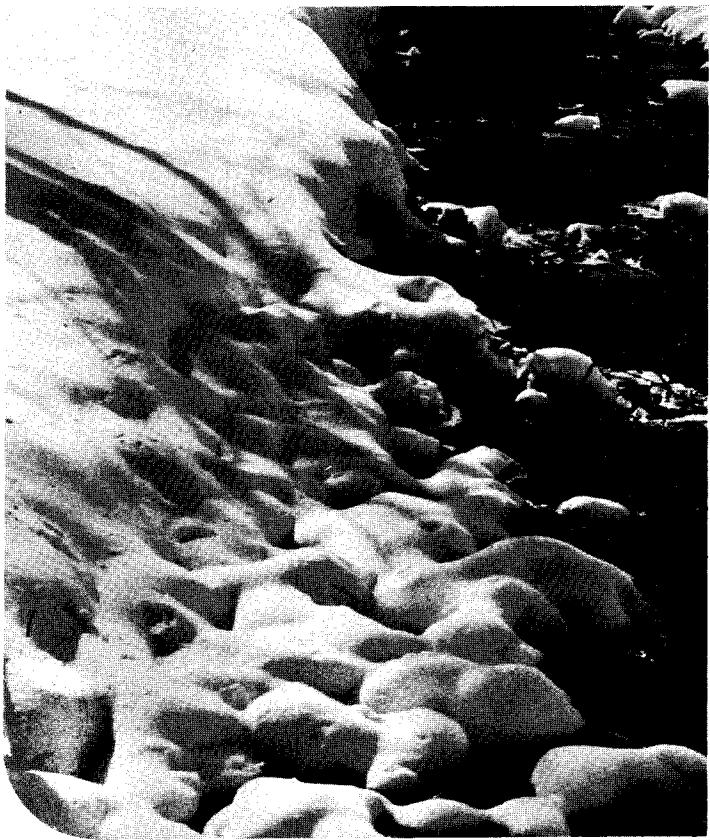


# The Presbyterian Guardian



**IN THIS ISSUE:**

**ALSO . . .**



# Letters

## Duty to Vote Challenged

I'm writing concerning your editorial "Let's Vote!" in the October issue of the *Guardian*. You stated that to vote "is part of what is required of us in subjection to 'the powers that be.'" This implies that those who don't vote aren't, at that point, in subjection to the civil authorities. It's true that Christians are to be in subjection to the powers that be, unless of course such subjection conflicts with their obedience to the commands of God. But that such subjection *requires* that one vote seems to me difficult to defend.

I'm not against voting. I believe that one should vote, under certain conditions. The whole subject seems to revolve around whether or not one should vote for persons who are required to uphold a constitution that doesn't recognize Christ. I believe that a constitution that doesn't recognize the crown rights of Christ over the nations isn't neutral but is really anti-Christian.

And the U.S. Constitution doesn't recognize Christ as the king of the nations. And further, by the time the Constitution was written the influence of John Locke and Scottish Realism was in evidence. This gave it a humanistic coloring. So I believe that those who don't vote in the U.S. elections, because of the Constitution's humanistic flavor and its failure to acknowledge Christ, are on valid ground.

James A. Hughes  
Scarborough, Ontario

*Editor's response:* I fully agree with Dr. Hughes that the U.S. Constitution is a humanistic, or at best deistic, document. Those who argue that the United States is a Christian nation in any constitutional sense are engaged in wishful thinking.

Failure to recognize the kingship of Christ, however, is not a valid ground for refusal to participate in a government, either as an office-holder or voting citizen. There is no evidence in Scripture that Christian converts were required to withdraw from participation in governmental affairs under pagan Rome. Cornelius, Sergius Paulus, the Philippian jailer, all became Christians; there is no suggestion that they were required to abandon their

\*Correction: The U.S. Postal Service lost this issue on its way to the printer--another ten-day delay!

service in the Roman system.

The U.S. system involves every citizen in the obligation of participation at least through the ballot. For those who cannot conscientiously vote, on grounds like those mentioned by Dr. Hughes, the present system has no coercive penalties -- for which we may be grateful. But we do not believe that this conscientious refusal to hold office or vote has any valid ground in Scripture.

- J. J. M.

## Correcting "mistakes"

Mr. Edwards E. Elliott's letter in the November *Guardian* titled "McIntire's Mistakes" prompts me to make a comment, for whatever historical footnote value it may have.

He says that Dr. Carl McIntire refused over the years to retract falsehoods in "a particularly vicious attack on Westminster Theological Seminary," presumably carried in the *Christian Beacon*.

One of my earliest and unfortunately most unforgettable lessons in authoritarian journalism--the brand Dr. McIntire uses, in my opinion--came shortly after I joined the *Christian Beacon* as managing editor in 1964.

I made an error in an article for which I was responsible, and when the error was brought to my attention, I promptly published a correction in the following edition. Dr. McIntire subsequently informed me that the *Christian Beacon* does not publish corrections, a policy I found unbelievable in any publication with the name "Christian" attached to it. What seems equally unbelievable now, so much so that I have to attribute it to my youth at the time, is that despite my knowledge that this silently-implied infallibility was totally inconsistent with any code of journalistic ethics, I continued as an editor with the *Beacon* for another four years.

Jon R. Kennedy  
Stanford, California

*Ed. note:* Mr. Kennedy is editor of *Whole Body Christian Journal* which serves many Christian groups in the San Francisco Bay area and is a project of Christianity on Campus, Inc., centered at Stanford.

The Presbyterian *Guardian* is published eleven times each year, every month except for a combined issue in July-August, by the Presbyterian *Guardian* Publishing Corporation, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, PA 19126, at the following rates, payable in advance, postage prepaid: \$4.25 per year (\$3.75 in clubs of ten or more; special rate for "every-family churches" on request). Second class mail privileges authorized at the Post Office, Philadelphia, Pa.

## A BLESSING of the Lord

If your January *Guardian* seems even later than usual, don't blame it this time on the postal service.\* Blame it on the editor. Or, perhaps the editor's wife. On December 20 was born Sarah Ann Mitchell, all of 6 pounds, 13 ounces--and somewhat earlier than expected. What a delightful Christmas present, as mother and daughter came home the day before, in time to enjoy and be enjoyed by all the cousins and relations.

But the birth of babies is a marvelous thing. It upsets the otherwise cool domain of the editor. It upsets his schedule of getting out the *Guardian*. It upsets his normally placid existence. And it is a delight, a blessing of the Lord.

So, if you were wondering what happened, that's the story. We don't expect to have another good excuse like this. But we hope you will understand and rejoice with us in this blessing from the Lord.

-John Mitchell

## Elisabeth who?

Although this has probably been pointed out to you already [Ed.—Many times!], I hasten to correct the error that appeared in the recent report about the conference on women held at Westminster Seminary. The speaker's name is Elisabeth Elliot Leitch, not Scott, as appeared twice in the article. Her second husband was the late Dr. Addison Leitch of Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary and Gordon-Conwell Seminary.

I leap to her "defense" here because she is one of my best heroes. There are very few clearer voices than hers—at least in these parts—when it comes to speaking for orthodox faith and practice. I might add that she was greatly encouraged to meet Mrs. Van Halsema and the many at Westminster who agree with her on this issue.

Kenneth A. Ironside, pastor  
S. Hamilton, Mass.

P.S.: I must now correct my own correction. The error appeared three times, not two!

## Inerrancy Conflict (Continued)

### Two "Strange Cases . . ."

#### *An editorial lamentation*

"The bombshell of the year among evangelical Christians"—that's what we called it when we reviewed Dr. Harold Lindsell's *The Battle for the Bible* in the June 1976 issue of the *Guardian*. Now that 1976 is well over, we still believe this book was the bombshell—in spite of such things as Bill Bright's "Here's Life, America!" campaign or Jimmy Carter's open profession of an evangelical faith.

As Lindsell sees it, the "battle for the Bible" is still going on—not between "Modernists" and "Fundamentalists"—but within the ranks of Evangelicals. Will the Evangelical churches and institutions accept the Bible as the infallible, inerrant Word of God in all that it proclaims? Lindsell was warning the Evangelicals of the erosions in a once solid commitment to inerrancy on the part of many of their churches and organizations.

In fact, the shrapnel is still flying, counter barrages have been launched, and a good deal of smoke generated. Discussion of infallibility/inerrancy was a major topic at the meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society held at Westminster Seminary on December 28. (The ETS requires members to profess inerrancy; Lindsell says that many of them do not really believe it.) The National Association of Evangelicals, to meet in late February, has for its convention theme: "God's Word: Our Infallible Guide"—which will undoubtedly generate more strong discussion.

Though we hope to report on some of these developments later, our interest now is with two reactions to Lindsell's book, one by Fuller Seminary (a major target in the book) and one by the editor of *The Banner*.

#### **... of Fuller Seminary**

As a founding faculty member and later acting administrative head of the institution, Lindsell speaks with intimate knowledge in his chapter, "The Strange Case of Fuller Theological Seminary." Basically, Lindsell charges that Fuller has openly abandoned its earlier commitment to biblical inerrancy and, moreover, did so while assuring its constituency that there were no such changes being made.

Now there comes from Fuller a rebuttal. The alumni publication, *Theology, News and Notes* (Special Issue, 1976), devotes 32 pages to a beautifully orchestrated defense of Fuller's present position on Scripture. We can only note some highlights here; interested readers—who want to know how this current "battle for the Bible" will be fought—may secure a copy of *TN & N* from: Alumni Office, Fuller Theological Seminary, 135 N. Oakland Ave., Pasadena, CA 91101.

Certainly a major theme is given in the article on "What We Believe and Teach" by Fuller's president, David Allan Hubbard. Dr. Hubbard insists that the change in Fuller's position was due to a desire to be more biblical, even in the institution's doctrine of Scripture. "We have only one aim: to believe and to teach precisely what the Bible teaches about itself." Whether Fuller has understood what the Bible teaches about itself is doubtful; but the sincerity of motive seems genuine.

Hubbard is concerned to distinguish Fuller's view from that of neoorthodoxy, and there is indeed a clear distinction. He also says Fuller's view might be distinguished "from that of some of our brothers who perceive their view of

Scripture as more orthodox than ours" in the following points:

"1) We would stress the need to be aware of the historical process by which God brought the word to us.

"2) We would emphasize the careful attention that might be given to the historical and cultural contexts in which the various authors lived and wrote, as well as to the purposes which each had in mind—convinced as we are that the Spirit of God used the human abilities and circumstances of the writers in such a way that the word which results is truly divine.

"3) We are convinced that this investigation of the context and purpose is essential to a correct understanding of any portion of God's word.

"4) We would urge that the emphasis be placed where the Bible itself places it—on its message of salvation and its instruction for living, not on its details of geography or science, though we acknowledge the wonderful reliability of the Bible as a historical source book.

"5) We would strive to develop our doctrine of Scripture by hearing all that the Bible says, rather than by imposing on the Bible a philosophical judgment of our own as to how God ought to have inspired the word" (*TN & N*, p. 4).

Since it is evident that Hubbard and other professors at Fuller see their own view as a "corrective" to the traditional inerrancy position of B. B. Warfield (and men like Machen, Young, or Murray who followed him), it seems fair to ask what Warfield might have thought of these five points. Certainly he would likely have wanted to strengthen them here and there, but it seems clear enough that he would have agreed to all of them, except for part of the fourth one. All this concern with historical process and context has also been a concern for the abler defenders of biblical inerrancy.

Even the fourth point states a truth—we should be concerned to place our emphasis where the Bible places it. But when the Bible mentions "details of geography and science," they always—without exception—have something to do with the context in which our "salvation and instruction for living" are revealed. Fuller has clearly abandoned a position on inerrancy, at least in "details of geography

(Continued on page 8.)

# SCRIPTURE'S Inspiration and Authority

*John Murray*

*The following discussion is part of a series of articles on the doctrines of Scripture by the late Professor John Murray. This part appeared in the April 10 and 25, 1941, issues of the Guardian. What is said here by Professor Murray is as true today as it was over thirty-five years ago.*

## THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

When we speak of the inspiration of Scripture, we are not thinking of any effect that is produced in us by Scripture. Sometimes, no doubt, in common speech we use the word "inspiration" to express the intellectual, moral or spiritual stimulus which we derive from our reading of the masterpieces of literature or even from the example of great and good men. In such cases the inspiration is something that is effected in us by the quality or character of that by which we have been inspired.

At other times in common speech we do speak, in literary fashion, of the inspiration of works of human genius. For example, men speak of the inspiration of Shakespeare. This may mean several things. Sometimes it may refer to the genius of Shakespeare by reason of which he was able to write such masterpieces of literature. Or it may refer to the peculiar quality residing in the works of Shake-

speare because they are the products of his master genius.

But this is not what we mean by the inspiration of Scripture. It is true that we derive from Scripture the very highest kind of stimulus. It is also true that some of the writers of holy Scripture were men of great natural genius, and this very genius was used by God so that the mark of it is left on what they wrote. The inspiration of Scripture, however, is something very different and something absolutely unique. Scripture is unique. It does not belong to a class of writings, all of which are characterized by inspiration. Scripture stands alone, or, as we often say, it stands in a class by itself. And it occupies this unique position just because of its inspiration.

### Meaning of "inspiration"

The word "inspiration" when applied to Scripture refers to one of two things: (1) It may refer to the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit exerted upon the writers of Scripture, or (2) It may refer to the quality residing in Scripture as a result of that supernatural influence exerted by the Holy Spirit.

In the first case, we are thinking of the divine activity by which Scripture was produced—in a word, of its divine origin and authorship. In the second case, we are thinking of the result of this divine authorship—in a word, of its divine character and authority. In either case we are led to the conclusion that Scripture is the Word of God and, therefore, infallible and inerrant. It is in the supreme sense God's Word, not man's.

An objection may very readily be urged against this latter conclusion. For have we not said that there were human writers? And if human writers, how can Scripture escape the fallibility that attaches to infirm and erring men? It is this objection that has led many to make a distinction between the human elements and the divine elements of Scripture, or, as sometimes stated, the distinction between the human element and the divine element in inspiration. And so it is held that, attaching to the human element, there is error and fallibility, while to the divine element there is attached inerrancy and infallibility.

It must, of course, be granted that there

were human writers, and that is just saying that the Scripture has come to us through human instrumentality. But if that fact argues for the fallibility of Scripture, then we shall have to conclude that fallibility attaches to the whole of Scripture. For let it be remembered that there is not one word from Genesis to Revelation that has come to us apart from human instrumentality. So far as *Scripture* is concerned, and it is with Scripture we are now dealing, every part has come to us through some human writer.

The distinction, then, between the human element and the divine element will not give us any basis for the discovery of the divine and infallible element as distinguished from the human and fallible element. We must face the issue squarely. If the human instrumentality renders inerrancy or infallibility impossible, then we do not have an infallible word from Genesis to Revelation.

We must fully recognize the fact that Scripture came through human writers. But what we must also recognize is that the Holy Spirit used human writers in such a way that what they wrote they wrote under an all-pervasive supernatural influence, so that Scripture is wholly the Word of God. There are, therefore, no exceptions to, or degrees of, the influence we call inspiration.

Whence do we derive this notion of inspiration? The answer to that question is just the asking of another: Whence do we derive our notion of, or authority for, any doctrine? The answer is plain. From the Scripture itself. And so we derive our doctrine of inspiration from the Scripture.

We might quite properly say that we derive our doctrine of inspiration from Christ and his apostles. The attitude exemplified and inculcated by our Lord and his apostles must be our attitude. No

***Scripture occupies a unique position just because of its inspiration.***

one may dare to deviate one whit from what Christ, who is the truth, and the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, taught and commended. But our knowledge of what Christ and his apostles taught comes to us through Scripture, and so ultimately we must say that we derive our doctrine of inspiration from Scripture.

## 2 Peter 1:16-21

We shall have to limit ourselves to one or two of the high points of Bible teaching on this question. We shall take up, first of all, 2 Peter 1:16-21. In this passage Peter says that "no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but as borne by the Holy Spirit men spake from God" (verses 20, 21).

Here Peter fully acknowledges the human authorship. Speaking of Scripture he does say "men spake." This fact makes all the more significant what he says in addition. We may be inclined to argue that human authorship impairs the stability of Scripture and that it detracts from the divine authorship and character. It was not so with this apostle, who learned of him who said to his disciples, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). For while, on the one hand, Peter says "men spake," he on the other hand makes three very astounding statements—"no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation," "no prophecy ever came by the will of man," "as borne by the Holy Spirit men spake from God."

When Peter says that Scripture is not of private interpretation, he does not refer to our interpretation of Scripture but rather to Scripture as product. It is not the mere product of human reflection or imagination. Again, when he says that it was not brought by the will of man, he

excludes mere human volition and determination. And finally, when he says "borne by the Holy Spirit," he becomes quite positive in affirming, in Dr. B. B. Warfield's words, that "the men who spake from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were therefore His things, not theirs. And that is the reason which is assigned why the 'prophetic word' is so sure."

Perhaps the most amazing features of this passage in 2 Peter is what he says in verse 19: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy." The more sure word of prophecy is the Scripture with which he deals in the following verses. That with which it is compared as being more sure or steadfast is the word that Peter, together with James and John, heard spoken from heaven on the Mount of Transfiguration when the Father gave witness to the Son, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." There could not possibly be any question in Peter's mind as to the stability and infallibility of that word that Peter with the others received on the holy mount. It was the voice of the eternal Father. And Peter was profoundly aware of all the solemn implications of the privilege and responsibility that was his. In virtue of all this he introduces the subject by telling his readers, "We did not follow cunningly devised fables."

But the astounding fact is that Peter also says, "We have a more steadfast word of prophecy." The written Word gives ground for stronger and more stable assurance than the very word spoken on that occasion on the mountain. He is affirming the absolute trustworthiness of Scripture. In Scripture, Peter and his readers have not simply a word spoken on a particular occasion, but the Word of God that has received, because it is Scripture, permanent form and authentication. Could anything more emphatically express the security, trustworthiness and infallibility of Scripture? May anyone question the infallibility of the Father's witness to his well-beloved Son? Scripture possesses similar infallibility, and only on such a basis could Peter say, "And we have the

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***Scripture is breathed out by God.  
It is God's mouth, God's breath,  
God's oracle.***

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word of prophecy made more sure."

## 2 Timothy 3:16

The next passage we shall study is 2 Timothy 3:16, where Paul says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." Our English phrase, "given by inspiration of God," quite properly conveys the thought of the Greek word, namely, that Scripture owes its existence to a *divine* activity. That is the main emphasis and it is borne out by our English phrase. But there is also something in the Greek word that is not fully expressed in our English version. The Greek word means, literally, "God-breathed." "All Scripture is God-breathed"—it is breathed out by God.

Paul is not speaking of an inbreathing on the part of God into Scripture. Nor is he speaking of any influence which is breathed into us through the medium of holy Scripture. Indeed, Paul is not even speaking of an inbreathing on the part of God into the human writers of Scripture. But what he is saying, in the most emphatic and terse way, is that Scripture is breathed by God. It is God's mouth, God's breath, God's oracle. Paul could not have adopted a word that more simply and directly affirms that Scripture is spoken by God, that it is the speech or word of God.

In speaking thus of Scripture he makes no reservations and no qualifications. He does not say that Scripture is the vehicle by which such words of God are conveyed to us. He does not speak of degrees of inspiration. No, what he affirms is that all Scripture is God-breathed. It may very well be that we should translate it thus, "Every Scripture is God-breathed." But this rendering makes no difference in the effect. For if every particular part of Scripture is thus inspired, then the sum-total of Scripture partakes of the same character.

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***Ultimately we must say that  
we derive our doctrine of  
inspiration from Scripture.***

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The whole will not have less of this character of inspiration than do the individual parts that compose that whole.

We must not fail to grasp the force of this testimony of the apostle. Breath is a very direct expression of the life that is in us. Scripture stands in as close a relation to the truth and will of God as does breath to us.

It might be asked, What is the scope of that Scripture of which Paul says that it is God-breathed? In the preceding context Paul speaks of the holy scriptures which Timothy knew from a child. These must, of course, be the Old Testament scriptures. We know the scope of the canon of Scripture accepted and approved by our Lord and the apostles. It was the Jewish canon, coextensive with our Old Testament. Of nothing less than that does Paul say that it is given by inspiration of God.

But Paul may also be thinking of all that could properly be embraced in the category of Scripture, even though all of the New Testament scriptures were not yet written. In any case, he speaks thus of the Old Testament. And that establishes a principle; it fixes a doctrine, namely, the doctrine of Scripture.

If the Old Testament could be thus characterized by an apostle, can we believe that the scriptures of the New Testament, which are the embodiment of the revelation God gave to men through the incarnation of the eternal Son and the pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit, belong to a lower category? Can we believe that the New Testament economy, characterized as it is by the more abundant effusion and operation of the Holy Spirit, does not possess that which the older economy had, namely, an influence of the Spirit that provides us with a God-breathed and infallible Scripture?

The questions carry their own answers. We can surely say of the whole Bible that it is "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good words" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

## THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

The authority of Scripture is that characteristic whereby there is required of us unquestioning faith and instant obedience. On what does this authority depend? The informed Christian will very readily reply that the authority of

Scripture resides in the fact that it is God's Word.

Other answers have, however, been given to the question, and so it is necessary to deal with some of these in order that the full meaning of the answer given above may be appreciated and its truth guarded against misapprehension and error.

The Romish Church formally acknowledges that the authority of Scripture resides in the fact that God is its author. But it is characteristic of Rome to give with one hand and take away with the other. One of the cardinal errors of the Romish communion is that it intrudes the church in the place that belongs to God. The church, according to Romanists, is the infallible and living voice of God. And so Protestants have contended that the position of Rome is virtually that the church, called by Rome "holy mother Church," determines what reverence is due to the Scripture. When we remember that Rome pleads the authority of "tradition" and of the church, as well as the authority of Scripture, we can readily perceive how necessary it is that the church should determine the extent of the authority that is inherent in holy Scripture.

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### *Inspiration makes Scripture authoritative; the inward testimony of the Spirit brings that authority home to us.*

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Now, it is true, as the Westminster Confession says, that "we may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scripture." We must appreciate the fact that the church, when properly conceived, is a divine institution, and that God has used it as his instrument for the preservation and vindication of his Word. It is a fact not to be minimized or despised that *we* do not have the Scriptures in our possession apart from the function the church has performed and the testimony it has borne. It is through the medium of this witness that the Scripture has been brought to us, and it is in the context of that testimony that our faith in Scripture as the Word of God received its birth.

But just as we fully accord to the church the place that God has given it in his wise ordination and providence, we

must not allow the church to usurp a place that does not belong to it. The authority of Scripture does not proceed from any decision or proclamation of the church. It is the duty of the church to proclaim the authority that belongs to Scripture, but we must not ground the authority of Scripture in any prerogative that is vested in the church. Surely nothing should be more obvious than that the Word of God needs no intermediary to invest it with authority, nor any decision on the part of men to determine what reverence is due to it.

To teach or insinuate that the Word of God needs human authentication before it can wield authority over us is to oust God from his place of supremacy, and it is to make man more absolute than God. God is truth itself, and there can be nothing addressed to us more absolute than his Word. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater" (1 John 5:9).

### The Spirit's inward testimony

There is another view held today with respect to the authority of Scripture that might appear at first to be eminently correct and honoring to the Holy Spirit. It is that the authority of Scripture proceeds from what we call the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit, and so Scripture, it is said, is authoritative only as it is borne home to our hearts and minds by this inward work of the Holy Spirit.

The truth of the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts is, of course, a very important and precious one, for it is by this testimony alone that we can properly recognize the authority of Scripture and have that full persuasion of its infallible truth and divine authority. Yet it is a great perversion of the truth to say that the inward work of the Holy Spirit makes Scripture authoritative. The function of the inward testimony of the Spirit is not by any means to invest Scripture with authority; it is rather to bring to our hearts conviction of that authority. The Holy Spirit when he operates in our hearts does not do anything to Scripture; rather, he does something in us.

When we are dealing with any fact, our conviction with respect to that fact does not cause that fact to be, nor does the testimony by which we are convinced of that fact cause that fact to be. The existence of the fact is one thing, the evidence by which it is evinced to be a fact is another, and the conviction we may have on the basis of that evidence is still another.

# Exodus 4:11 and Inerrancy

A Bible study

And Moses said unto the Lord, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before now, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant. But I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." And the Lord said unto him, "Who has made man's mouth? or who makes the dumb or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" (Exodus 4:10, 11).

How is it that a sinful human being, even the most nearly perfect one, could ever have written an infallible sentence, much less a whole book? How is it that God can so use a man, with his personal talents and gifts, so that the man writes his own composition, characterized by his own personality and gifts, and yet the result can still be the infallible, inerrant Word of God?

Moses had a problem with this question. Whether Moses was fully honest in his estimate of his own abilities, even so he had reason to wonder how a mere man

could faithfully serve as God's spokesman. And this passage, dealing with the first writer of Scripture, tells us a great deal about how God revealed himself through men.

God had no problem with the question. "Who has made man's mouth? . . . have not I the Lord?" The creator God is fully capable of using his creature man to accomplish his own purposes. Not only is this true in the abstract, but God goes on to give some clue to how the whole process would work.

When Moses continued to argue with God, "modestly" suggesting that God go and find someone else, the Lord became angry and said,

"Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? . . . Thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth. And I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, he shall be to thee instead of a mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God" (verses 14-16).

What a remarkable statement! God would so control the mouths of both Moses and Aaron that they would speak whatever God taught them. Here we see the basic pattern of biblical inspiration: Aaron would be spokesman for Moses, Moses would be as God to Aaron. It was not mere dictation; Aaron was still Aaron. But behind it all the active power of God was present—"I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you [both] what you shall do."

With God in such control, is there any possibility of error creeping in? Can we doubt that when Moses wrote Genesis, for example, he was writing anything less than the inerrant words of God? If the maker of Moses' mouth was "with his mouth," is it conceivable that an error got by?

Even so, it was Moses who spoke and Moses who wrote. And when we read the books of Moses we need to look at them through the eyes of Moses. We need to understand these scriptures as Moses would have understood them. At the same time, we have the added advantage of seeing the full significance of many things that Moses could only glimpse dimly. After all, though it's important to read through Moses' eyes, it is also important to read through the Spirit's "eyes," for he is the ultimate author.

When we read Moses, we read God. That is the assurance we have from these words of God addressed to Moses in the wilderness. Perhaps no other passage in Scripture comes as close to revealing the mysterious work of inspiration by which God gave his infallible truth.

That God meant the people then to receive the message from Moses as indeed the message from God is abundantly clear. And that the people then—and ever since—should understand that the message was from God, the Lord authenticated his spokesman and his revelation through miraculous signs:

"And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, with which thou shalt do signs" (verse 17).

—J. J. M.

So is it with the authority of Scripture. The inward testimony of the Holy Spirit presupposes the authority of Scripture; it does not produce this authority. Our conviction on the basis of that testimony respects an authority that is inherent in the Scripture itself.

It is indeed true that the authority resident in Scripture owes its very existence to the operation of the Holy Spirit. But this operation of the Holy Spirit is not that of the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, as he bears witness by and with the Word, but that once-for-all completed operation which we know as *inspiration*. In a word, it is the fact of inspiration that makes Scripture authoritative and it is the inward testimony of the Spirit that brings home to us that authority.

This view with which we have now been dealing, the view that rests the authority of Scripture on the inward testimony, in reality denies the objective and intrinsic authority of Scripture. If it is the work of the Spirit in our hearts that accords Scripture its authority, then Scripture is not authoritative in itself, and it is not authoritative for those who do not enjoy the inward testimony of the Spirit. It becomes apparent how devastating for the authority of Scripture this view becomes.

Furthermore, it must be said that the resort to the inward testimony as the basis of authority, though it appears to do honor to the Holy Spirit, rests upon the abandonment of another activity of the Spirit, namely, the plenary inspiration of the Bible. We must, on the contrary, do honor to the whole work of the Spirit and

realize that without the intrinsic authority of Scripture, resting upon its plenary inspiration, we cannot have even the inward testimony of the Spirit. For it is only to the Word that is intrinsically and in its own right divinely authoritative that the Holy Spirit can bear witness as the Word of God.

## Authority and obedience

Finally, what does the authority of Scripture involve for us? The word "authority" always suggests binding force. It demands acquiescence and obedience. To the binding force of Scripture as the Word of God there attaches an ultimacy and finality that belongs to no other standard. And so the only attitude in us that is appropriate to the authority of Scripture is that of unreserved acceptance.

and wholehearted subjection.

The authority of Scripture is the authority of God, for it is God who speaks in it. To God we are responsible, on him we are dependent, and that not in one compartment of life but in all of life. As we can never move outside the sphere of responsibility to God or of dependence on him, so we can never at any time or in any department of life pass beyond the bounds of subjection to his Word.

It is this principle of the supremacy of the Word of God that makes the authority of Scripture an intensely practical matter. We are prone to think that the Bible concerns merely the sphere of what is called "religion," and does not bear upon the "secular" activities. How dwarfed and warped is such a conception of the Word of God! It is worse than that; it is godless!

The authority of the Bible releases its grip at no point, and if we think otherwise or conduct our life on the basis of another supposition, it is because we have excluded God from his domain. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up

into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. . . . How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!" (Psalm 139:7, 8, 17). "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad" (Psalm 119:96).

The authority of Scripture is a binding force. But it is also the condition and guarantee of liberty. It is the perfect law of liberty. It was Jesus who said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Authority always relates itself very directly to conscience and it is God alone who is Lord of the conscience. Conscience never performs its function truly nor does it enjoy its liberty except as it is the bondservant of an authority that is absolute, bondservant too in willing and intelligent subservience to judgment from which there is no appeal.

The authority of Scripture is the very guarantor of liberty of conscience. In the eloquent words of the Westminster Confession, "God alone is Lord of the con-

science, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to His Word; or beside it, if matters of faith or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also" (XX, 2).

#### SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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#### TWO STRANGE CASES . . .

(Continued from page 3.)

and science."

Now Warfield might also question the fifth point. As it reads, he could agree to it. But it might be interpreted in practice as something else. And when we see how one Fuller professor "hears all that the Bible says" about itself, we can see the problem clearly. The article by William Sanford LaSor, "Life under Tension—Fuller Theological Seminary and 'The Battle for the Bible,'" is a lengthy reminiscence of the history of Fuller's "strange case."

But when LaSor comes to explain his own approach to inerrancy, and what the Bible teaches about itself, we find him examining—not such texts as 2 Timothy 3:16—but all the supposed inaccuracies and contradictions to be found in Scripture. Having found all these "problems," particularly in areas of history, science, and the like, LaSor concludes that the Bible can be said to be inerrant only in the area of faith and practice, not in the more technical or scientific areas.

Fuller's present position is that "all the books of the Old and New Testament, given by divine inspiration, are the written word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice." These words

are adapted from the first ordination vow of most Presbyterian churches (not from the Westminster Confession as LaSor says). And countless Presbyterian office-bearers have affirmed such words, fully satisfied that they were affirming a fully infallible Scripture. But Fuller understands these words as applying only to the area of "faith and practice."

But perhaps the saddest note in this special issue of *TN & N* is the report on the seminary's decision with respect to Paul King Jewett, whose book *Man as Male and Female* has generated quite a stir. Professor Jewett, frankly admitting that Paul teaches the subordination of women in the church, puts this teaching neatly aside as a product of Paul's Jewish background and not of his better Christian thinking. That is to hold that these Scripture teachings are erroneous, even though they clearly have to do with an area of "faith and practice" in the church.

The committee that dealt with this problem did not want to endorse Jewett's conclusions, but neither did they want to condemn the man. They got around the problem by criticizing Jewett's methods of interpretation but granting that he had a full right to use them. This neat trick was accomplished by asserting that what Jewett was doing was to use the "analogy of faith" in his interpretation, or as it is sometimes stated, letting Scripture interpret Scripture.

Now that is certainly a valid approach used by all sober students of Scripture. But never before has one scripture been used to find some other scripture in clear error as Jewett has done. For Fuller, not only is the Bible infallible only in areas of faith and practice, but it may be fallible even there if someone is sharp enough to find some apparent contradiction; then you are free to choose whichever side you prefer.

All of this, no matter how sincere Fuller's desire to be taught by Scripture, amounts to a simple dethroning of God's authority in Scripture and replacing it by a human and error-prone judge of what is true and what is not. Lindsell is right; from here the road is downhill all the way to the bottom.

#### ... of editor De Koster

The other "strange case" is a long series of editorials in *The Banner*, official organ of the Christian Reformed Church. The editor, Dr. Lester De Koster, devotes all this space to a rambling discussion of Lindsell's book and two recent "cases" within the Christian Reformed Church.

De Koster has little use for Lindsell's book. "It is a highly incompetent work, at most a reservoir of unseemly gossip. Unfortunately it has secured some hasty endorsement by Reformed writers who, on reflection, will have occasion to reconsider, I think, their enthusiasm" (*Banner*,

August 20, 1976). Well, I trust I am Reformed. I gave Lindsell's book lengthy study before writing a review of it. And on further reconsideration, I can only wonder whether (1) De Koster really read the book, or (2) De Koster really understands the Reformed doctrine of Scripture.

For example: In commenting on the views of Dr. Edwin Walhout, views that even to De Koster seem to have gotten onto the "wrong track" so far as Scripture's unique infallibility is concerned, the *Banner* editor says: "As . . . Dr. Henry Stob likes to say, in echo of Calvin (and Karl Barth), we Christians stand in the world with a Book in our hands. And that Book is *sui generis*, a Latin phrase meaning 'of its own kind.' Unique!" (September 17).

I don't know if Dr. Stob wants to be an echo of Karl Barth or not. But does De Koster not realize that Calvin's Bible and Barth's Bible may both be *sui generis*, but they are not of the same genus. For Barth the Bible was unique because somehow God manages to bring his Word to men through it. For Calvin the Bible was unique because it was, in its very nature, the Word of God, fully authoritative and fully infallible—whether or not the reader or hearer actually accepted it as such.

Then De Koster, who never really gives any analysis of Lindsell's book at all, faults Lindsell for failing to appreciate the Reformed doctrine of the inward testimony of the Spirit to the Scriptures as God's Word. It's true that Lindsell is not all that clear on this point. But then, neither is De Koster, and that is sad to see.

Lindsell's concern is with how we know that the Bible is inerrantly the Word of God. And, as Lindsell says, there are only two answers: If God is the author, and God cannot lie, then Scripture cannot lie (the theological argument, if you will). The second answer is that Scripture itself claims to be inerrant (the biblical argument, we may call it). Then Lindsell does confuse the issue by suggesting that the inner witness of the Spirit to the hearts of believers may be a "third possibility." But that is not the purpose of the inner testimony, and De Koster fails to see the point even as Lindsell failed to keep it clear.

The believer accepts Scripture as the authoritative Word of God because the Spirit has indeed exercised an inward testimony in his heart affirming that fact. The inner witness of the Spirit does not create the authority of Scripture (as the Barthians tend to see it); neither does it do anything else to the already existing nature of Scripture as fully authoritative

in its own right. All the inner witness of the Spirit does is to affirm to our hearts that Scripture is indeed the authoritative Word of God.

But if it is indeed the Word of God, of which we have been convinced by the Spirit's inward testimony, then it is also authoritative in what it teaches about itself. And it is here that we learn, from Scripture (as well as from the "theological argument" perhaps), that God's written word is indeed inerrant in all that it proclaims.

In his final editorial on the subject, De Koster notes that many evangelical leaders are "deplored the division among evangelicals being caused by Lindsell's book." And he adds, "Let us take care that such division does not invade us" (in the November 26 issue). But it already has. Dr. Walhout's views of Scripture are not those of the great Reformed theologians of the past. Neither are Dr. Allen Verhey's. Neither, apparently, are the views of the synodical committee that De Koster mentions whose report on women in church office was rejected by Synod.

The division is already there—between those who believe the Scriptures to be the very word of God, infallible and inerrant in all that they teach, and those who say many fine things about Scripture but are willing to find errors in it. It is sad that this is so. But it is even sadder if the leaders of once sound churches are no longer willing to make a "battle for the Bible" in our day.

—John J. Mitchell

## NAE to focus on Scripture authority

The 1977 convention of the National Association of Evangelicals will have as its theme: "God's Word: Our Infallible Guide." This choice of theme is particularly sensitive due to the stir generated by Dr. Harold Lindsell's *The Battle for the Bible*. The NAE convention will meet on February 22-24 in Arlington Heights, Illinois.

The NAE was organized in the 1940s as a counter to the National Council of Churches and to provide evangelicals with greater fellowship and mutual help. Its service agencies are frequently used by smaller denominations in preference to establishing their own. Many of the founding figures of the NAE and still largely influential in its counsels are also intimately involved in the current debate on Scripture inerrancy (for which see the various articles elsewhere in this issue).

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# What God Has JOINED

Stephen L. Phillips

In every age the church of the Lord Jesus Christ faces issues that test her commitment to her sovereign Head and his Word. One such issue is the challenge of present-day views and practices concerning marriage and divorce. This is by no means the only place where Scripture and society are in conflict, nor is it necessarily the area of greatest deviation and sin within the visible church. But this is one battlefield of the faith that has been, is being, and no doubt will continue to be under attack.

One must expect that the sinful world will not be in agreement with the teachings of Scripture in true discipleship. Jesus said no less in John 15:18-25. Exchanging the truth of God for a lie is the natural inclination (Romans 1:25). So, the philosophy expressed on a current TV show, "One Day at a Time," is to be expected: "Divorce is against everything I was ever taught, but it's better to have two relatively calm, intelligent [divorced persons living separately] than two screaming maniacs living together."

But to read the same philosophy, though put more critically, by a professor of theology is shaking to the Christian conscience: "To maintain a destructive marriage on the basis of being loyal to a Christian ethic of no divorce is hardly justifiable" (Dr. Bernard L. Ramm of Eastern Baptist Seminary in his book, *The Right, the Good, and the Happy*). The heart of the issue is brought to us in the words of Dr. Howard Hart (in *Hope for the Family*, pp. 46f.): "There are no concrete rules or ways; . . . the laws of Moses, the teachings of Christ, and the letters of Paul all give different responses to the principle of fidelity in marriage. . . A change in our most honored, most time-established and most sacred institutions should not be resisted but

welcomed. . . ."

The heart matter is whether God has spoken, whether the Scriptures are God's Word written, and whether God's Word is binding.

## Permanency of marriage

Marriage is God-ordained. Jehovah said that it was not good for Adam to be alone and that he would make a helper suitable for him. After forming Eve from Adam's rib, the Lord God brought her to him (Genesis 2:18-22).

The responsibility in this marriage and all marriages is for the husband to cleave (stick like glue) to his wife (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31). Both God the Father and God the Son designed marriage to be a commitment of a male and female that is of necessity broken only by death (Matthew 19:3-6).

One reason for denying the permanency of marriage may come from viewing it as based on love—by which is often meant also an unbiblical concept of love as emotional feelings of affection or sexual attraction. Certainly the Scripture knows of this concept, but frequently in relation to disastrous effects (David and Bathsheba; Amnon and Tamar).

But even a proper biblical understanding of love as "giving" rather than "feeling"—"as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25)—is not the basis for marriage. (Actually, this giving love is required in all our relationships.) The basis for marriage, and therefore the key to its permanence, is the commitment that is made.

A marriage is the coming together of one man and one woman so that what were two is now one, and that oneness in Scripture is repeatedly called "one flesh." It is the physical, sexual union of a man and a woman that is the essence of marriage. That is so important that Paul sees the casual union with a prostitute in the same terms (1 Corinthians 6:15, 16). Yet that physical union, "one flesh" though it is at least for the moment, is not a marriage. There is no lasting commitment.

## Marriage in covenant

The commitment that makes a marriage real is called a "covenant" in Scripture (Malachi 2:14). It is the bond that joins two people who were not naturally related. To break this covenant-bond, regardless of spiritual carelessness, wrong motives, immaturity, or any other foibles that may enter the picture is to break not only that covenant but also one's covenant with God (Proverbs 2:17). (See Dr. Jay E. Adams's discussion of this in

*Christian Living in the Home*, p. 45.)

It is only in the face of a life-long commitment that a true relationship of biblical love-giving can develop properly. With this covenant commitment as the foundation, a statement like "I don't love him/her anymore" is shown for what it truly is—a "feeling," an emotion that must be labelled as a sinful attitude contrary to God's own designs for human relations in general and for marriage in particular.

We need to instill in our young people this covenant concept of marriage and the biblical reasons for it. Only so will they approach marriage with all the seriousness of our Lord's requirements for that blessed state.

## Ruptures in marriage

Scripture permits only two circumstances under which this covenant bond of marriage may be broken, and even then only by allowance and not by necessity.

Physical adultery is the one ground for divorce of which our Lord made mention (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). By restricting permissible divorce to this one cause, Jesus negated the liberal interpretations of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 under which the scribes allowed almost anything as a reason for divorce, by the man at least.

The other ground for divorce is stated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:12-15. If an unbeliever insists on leaving a believing husband or wife, then the believer is no longer bound.

This passage in no way allows a believer to contract marriage with an unbeliever. The situation in view is where one partner, by God's grace, is brought to conversion after the marriage was begun, or perhaps a previously professing believer has now openly repudiated the faith.

Nor does this passage give the believing partner any freedom to seek dissolution of the marriage. The Christian is always under obligation to seek reconciliation. But if the unbeliever persists in wanting out, the believer is permitted to be released from the marriage bond. (For a discussion of the significance of the words "depart" and "not bound" see John

***The basis for marriage, and the key to its permanence, is the commitment that is made.***

## The Giving Plan With Two Aims

Murray's *Divorce*, pp. 72ff.)

Divorce on any other ground than one of these must be called what it is: sin. And our definitions of and attitudes toward sin must be determined by Scripture, not by our cultural conditioning.

### Approaching problems

Frequently the church, including her elders, is unaware that there are marital difficulties of such a nature that divorce is being seriously considered. It may be that the church has simply neglected or failed to see various signals for help. It may also be true that there never was any signal for help. Both situations are wrong.

We are commanded to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Romans 15:1) as well as persistently call on our brethren for help (James 5:14; Acts 6:1; 16:9). Believers must be encouraged to put aside pride and responsibly seek help from others in bringing God's Word to bear on the problems. Believers must be encouraged also to help, comfort, and advise one another with love, patience, and wisdom from above.

**Reconciliation is the only true sign of repentance.**

pre-marriage counseling for those wishing to be joined in covenant bonds. Mutual biblical counsel and the continuing ministry of the Word and prayer are also to be part of the church's program.

Such preventive measures are most desirable. But the reality of the stubbornness of sin and the hardness of heart must be also faced. When there is a breakdown in a covenant household, the elders must ascertain the problem, urge and pray for reconciliation, and as necessary enter into the proper exercise of church discipline. Because of the personal stress usually associated with separation and divorce, and for the honor of Christ and his church, it may be necessary to suspend such persons from leadership in the church even before it is clear what the degree of guilt may be.

Reconciliation, or the honest seeking of reconciliation, is the only true sign of obedience and repentance. Repentance is not limited to sorrow and tears and apologies, but will seek to reverse the effects of sin (Luke 19:8; Ephesians 4:28). To insist that reconciliation is impossible, because of "incompatibility," "mental cruelty," or "irreconcilable differences," is to deny the justifying work of Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:11).

To express forgiveness without intending to reconstruct broken bonds and restore broken vows is presumptive; it is "cheap grace." Paul forcefully condemns this in Romans 6 when he answers the question, "Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" Through our union with Christ we are dead to sin and alive to God. We cannot, therefore, let sin reign in us but must rather present ourselves to God so that we are instruments of righteousness in our mortal bodies.

Dedication to obedient service to Christ is our life-long goal. That is true not only in the divinely ordained state of marriage but in every facet of our lives. God demands no less; we owe him much more.

*The Rev. Mr. Phillips is pastor of Memorial Orthodox Presbyterian Church and prepared this article for use with his session and congregation.*



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# Baptism unto DEATH

Edwards E. Elliott

The Ganges is a river of death. Yet thousands bathe in its waters to gain some immunity from death. The Styx is the mythical river of death. Did a bath in that stream give Achilles immunity from death? Yet his mother had immersed him — all but his heel. He was a champion, of sorts, but in the Trojan war a heel wound was his undoing.

"There is a river . . ." says Psalm 46. There is a "river of the water of life," says Revelation 22. Could this stream of living water, flowing forth from the throne of God, also be viewed as a stream of fire, issuing forth as an expression of the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness? Could the crystal sea of glass, the scene of godly triumph, also be seen as the lake of fire? Could Jordan be viewed at once as the river of judgment sweeping all sin away, and as the refreshing brook by which the Messiah lifts up his head?

## A two-sided sign

The Christian doctrine of baptism has been the subject of ongoing study. Some scholars are firmly convinced that its primary meaning is not that of cleansing, though this aspect is not to be omitted. But the primary significance is seen as that of *ordeal*, or trial. The ordeal of Jesus Christ at the cross, the victory and the vindication that followed, and the union of the Christian with the Christ of that ordeal and victory—that is what baptism symbolizes.

The stream of fire issuing from the throne (Daniel 7:10) constitutes a bar-

rier, a gulf, a hazard, that must be addressed by all who would enter the Messianic kingdom. For this fiery flood carries away all things that offend (Psalm 90:5). No Canute can command this wave to recede. No dictator-beast can "horn" his way through. The fury of this baptism is too much of an ordeal.

Noah, in the years before the flood, preached of this. Those who found grace in the eyes of the Lord would survive the coming world-baptism, and pass through it as heirs of the world to come. Those who rejected the "preacher of righteousness" and despised the God-ordained ark of salvation, passed under the destroying flood of judgment. The great flood was a two-edged sword—for salvation and for judgment.

So also it was this two-sided ordeal that was shown at the Red Sea, in a baptism that vindicated God's chosen people Israel and that condemned Pharaoh's army to destruction. It was this ordeal that gave point to the preaching of Jonah, who had himself come through a mighty baptism-ordeal. The escape of the acid-bleached prophet from the sea provided reason enough for Nineveh to seek its own escape and to join in crying, "Salvation is of the Lord."

## The baptism of John

When our Lord asked, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men?" he indicated his approval of that baptism as "from heaven." In that baptism, the wrath of heaven was revealed against a generation of vipers. The flood of wrath could sweep them away. In fact, Daniel had prophesied of that rebellious Jerusalem, "Its end shall come with a flood" (Daniel 9:26).

The favorite and most frequent self-designation of our Lord was the title, "Son of Man." This Messianic title must be seen as originating in Daniel 7:13. The kingdoms of beasts must give way to the kingdom of "one like a son of man." To him would be given a kingdom that could meet the demands of the divine ordeal, and then endure forever. He would salt that kingdom, and each one entering it, with the salt of heavenly fire (Mark 9:49). He would baptize each citizen in the river of divine judgment.

The true meaning of the baptism at Jordan was to be sought beyond the mere idea of cleansing in water. "I bap-

tize you with water," said the Baptist, "but he who is coming after me is mightier; . . . he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit *and with fire*" (Matthew 3:11).

For the Messiah himself to appear humbly as a candidate for John's baptism was to John something astounding. "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" But to our Lord, it was of great significance. "Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:13, 14). The Messiah and his people with him would come through this test or ordeal, as those who met the requirements of kingdom righteousness.

## The baptism of wrath

As Jesus went through this water baptism, it was to him not merely a symbol of undergoing the fiery stream of divine judgment, but also a pre-enactment of the actual "baptism" into the wrath and curse of God that would take place at Golgotha. And so we read that, as he entered upon this preview baptism, he was praying (Luke 3:21). This prayer was of the same orientation as that pouring out of his soul in the anguish of Gethsemane.

The psalms contain many references to the agony of the Messiah as he faced the prospect of the suffering to be endured in such deep waters. "Let not the flood sweep over me, or the deep swallow me up, or the pit close its mouth over me" (Psalm 69:15). The closing verses of this psalm portray the vindication of the Messiah and his people as heirs of the kingdom, in contrast to those who fail the test and are therefore not "enrolled among the righteous."

The valley of Baca with its sweat and tears has become instead a well of overflowing blessing and power. And so at Jordan, the voice of the Father's good pleasure, and the visible coming of the Spirit as a dove, were to the Christ a

***Christian baptism should be viewed primarily as an ordeal sign.***

promise of what awaited him on that coming day when he would be "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, and by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4).

Meanwhile, during his earthly ministry, our Lord was straitened, disciplined, and prepared, that he might be the qualified sprinkler and sanctifier of his people. He who would send fire on the earth must himself first be baptized (Luke 12:49, 50).

So it was that the Christ entered into the stream of God's wrath and curse, the stream of separation from all creature comforts, or even of heavenly comforts. Others would walk in the fire with the Lord at their side. He went through it alone.

The world that would crucify the Son of God afresh, if it could, is a world facing the overwhelming flood of judgment. A world that killed the Prince of Life is a world that will be baptized in "blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke," with "the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood." It will be a baptism in the very elements of the divine presence. It is a world that should cry out for a way of escape, saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

The answer comes loud and clear: "Repent and be baptized every one of you into the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). The man joined to Christ in his baptism need fear no other.

Christ's baptism was a baptism for those dead in sin, to bring his elect people through the ordeal, from death to life, by the power of his resurrection. "Because I live, ye shall live also." The kingdom, prepared from the foundation of the world, is given to those who are Christ's, united to him in baptism.

Christian baptism should be viewed primarily as an ordeal sign. We are baptized into his death, and we are forever united to his victory.

*The Rev. Mr. Elliott is pastor of the Garden Grove (Calif.) Orthodox Presbyterian Church. This article, and its view of baptism as a sign of ordeal, grew out of discussions within the Orthodox Presbyterian Church concerning the words of institution and explanation of baptism in the Directory for Worship.*

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Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow (Isaiah 1:18).

---

## SNOW

I look upon a winter's day;  
The earth and sky climb gray  
on gray.  
I walk and watch the lightened  
lines  
Of snow against the darkened  
pines.  
But it is when I see the crow,  
I know the whiteness of the snow!



Winter snow has a cleaner, purer, and more beautiful whiteness than almost anything else we call white. Yet we do not always see the snow in that purity. Its whiteness seems to change according to its environment. It becomes gray in tone beneath the gray sky. It appears lighter against the trunks and boughs of winter trees. But when it is seen in contrast to true blackness, snow's whiteness is fully appreciated.

The forgiveness that Christ accomplished on the cross is like the white snow upon the land. It is pure and complete. But many time we do not appreciate that forgiveness. We see it



against the background of gray sins. It is only when we realize the blackness of sin that we can truly comprehend the whiteness of forgiveness. That forgiveness then becomes both beautiful and amazing to our sight.

This truth is illustrated in the parable Jesus told to Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7:36-48. As Simon watched the prostitute woman anoint Jesus' feet, he was told by the Lord: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (verse 47).

Jesus was helping Simon to understand that while his forgiveness would provide for the one who sins much as well as for the one whose sins seem less, it would be more appreciated by the one who realizes how much has been forgiven. Knowing the blackness of sin, the forgiven sinner would be overwhelmed by the whiteness of forgiveness. In accepting that grace of sins wiped away, the sinner would love the Forgiver with a zeal understood by few others.

May we come to comprehend fully that powerful contrast of which God speaks in Isaiah 1:18, when he says,

---

Though your sins be as scarlet,  
they shall be as white as snow;  
Though they be red like crimson,  
they shall be as wool.

---

— Ellen Bryan Obed

# *Genesis* 2:22

## "WE EAT together a lot!"

*Dorothy Stukey*

I held in my hand a letter from Sandy Snavely, president of the Women's Presbyterial of the Northwest (OPC). A president who is working hard at her job, Sandy had sent each church a letter requesting that four or five items be taken

care of before we met together late in September. One of these items had to do with the activities of each group.

"What have we been doing?" I wondered out loud, for the summer months in western Montana could be called "Tourist Entertainment Time." The first year we lived in Polson, I was informed that all organizations ceased their activities with the May meeting. "Why?" I queried. "You'll find out after you've lived here a while."

And so I have. Although we ourselves have not had too many visitors (our former home in Denver being a little too far away for weekend guests), most of the people in the Mission Valley end the summer feeling as though they have maintained "open house" for three months. As a result, church activities sometimes slow down to a crawl.

### "Tell them we eat!"

JoAnne Ross laughed at my question. "Tell them we eat together a lot!" And we all laughed. You could put "a lot" in several places in that sentence and it would be true in every case.

Twice a month we have a potluck dinner. The first Sunday in each month we travel to Kalispell, sixty miles to the north, for an afternoon service; and the Andersens and the Rosses are too hospitable to allow us to return home hungry. Then on the second Sunday of each month they travel the seventy-three miles south to the Mission Valley Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Ronan for services; and since we do not like the thought of their going home hungry, we have another dinner together. This worked out so well that when we began to plan for a missionary outreach, it was decided to have it on this second Sunday of the month so that they could participate in it.

Now maybe not every church is blessed with an outreach sixty miles or more away. But maybe it would be well to consider having one. Why? What are the advantages of "eating together a lot"?

The first one is that you get acquainted. You become real sisters and brothers in Christ. You become so well acquainted that you become aware of one another's needs, and you know how and what to pray for concerning each other, and you share in one another's joys. For example, Bob and Maria Ross have just become the proud parents of Paul Robert Ross, born October 7; and we rejoice with the whole family as though they were our own son or daughter—which in Christ they actually are.

And a second blessing equal to the first: Church-sponsored activities are shared activities, and no one person or group feels that they must carry the "whole load." For example, it was suggested that we have a family camp over the Fourth of July. The Cornerstone O. P. Church from Missoula joined with us and we had a perfectly delightful time—sharing cooking and dishwashing and deep philosophical discussions.

And I guess the moral of this story is: If your church is not eating together a lot, and you are not getting acquainted, and you are not sharing in the work of

## Remember the HYMNS?

*Audrey Van Dyk*

"Do you remember the hymns you sang in worship last week?"

A searching question! It came from Mary Ellen Godfrey as she confronted her audience on a Saturday night fellowship dinner at our church. (Mrs. Godfrey, wife of Dr. Robert Godfrey of Westminster Seminary, is a writer of Sunday school materials for Great Commission Publications).

Sunday morning I woke in a state of apprehension. Two weeks earlier the doctor had found high pressure in my eyes and had used the term "glaucoma." I suppressed the idea until that Sunday morning—two days before the final diagnosis. I shared my anxiety with my husband on the way to church that morning.

"Hymn number four," our pastor announced at the beginning of the service.

"All praise to God, who reigns above,  
The God of all creation.  
The God of wonders, pow'r, and love,  
The God of our salvation!"

The congregation responded with words of praise.

"With healing balm my soul he fills.  
The God who ev'ry sorrow stills,  
To God all praise and glory!"

Yes, I thought, *all* praise and glory to God. As the stanzas unfolded the poetry and meaning of that hymn, I felt myself becoming totally involved. I knew what the psalmist meant when he said, "All that is within me, praise the Lord!"

"His watchful eye ne'er sleepeth . . .  
He kept my feet from falling . . .  
The Lord forsaketh not his flock . . .  
He is their Refuge and their Rock . . ."

God used that hymn in a quick, direct way to calm my fears and refocus my emotions. He promised strength for each day and I have found that he continues to give me what I need.

"For this my thanks shall endless be;  
O, thank him, thank our God, with me,  
To God all praise and glory!"

*Mrs. John W. Van Dyk is a member of Emmanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Del. This note of thanks and praise first appeared in the congregation's newsletter.*

the church, maybe, just maybe, you ought to try it.

*From the small beginnings in Ronan, Montana, which the Stukeys helped start, a second congregation is now formed in Missoula, together with a prospect for the future in Kalispell.*

## Margaret I. Duff

On Friday, November 19, 1976, the Lord took the soul of his humble servant, Miss Margaret I. Duff, into his glorious presence. Her body was laid to rest until the resurrection. A memorial service, conducted by the Rev. Larry G. Mininger, was held at the Lake Sherwood Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Orlando, Florida; the funeral service, conducted by the Rev. Henry P. Tavares, pastor of Covenant O. P. Church in Grove City, Pa., was held in the Nashua O. P. Church, Edinburg, Pa., of which Miss Duff was a charter member.

Before the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had come into existence, Miss Duff worked for five years in connection with the Presbyterian Church at Avella, Pa., as a presbyterian missionary in the mining communities of Washington County, Pennsylvania. In the 1940s she assisted in the work of Christian education, canvassing, and general church work in several Orthodox Presbyterian congregations including those in Middletown, Pa., West Collingswood, N.J., Silver Spring, Md., and the chapel in Oak Creek, Col. In 1946 she was asked to write a Primary Department Manual for Summer Bible Schools, which was published by the Committee on Christian Education.

Her loyalty to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church was very deep. She was valiant in defense of the truth. Her influence for good was notable in the lives of members of her own family, of many of the students who studied under her in high schools and at Westminster and Thiel Colleges, and of a wide circle of friends. She sought to give her whole life to God's glory and the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

## CONTACTS DESIRED

Anyone living in the Syracuse, New York area desiring to join a Bible study group with the prayerful hope of establishing an Orthodox Presbyterian Church, please contact:

Dr. & Mrs. Quinton J. Bianchine  
P. O. Box H  
De Witt, NY 13214  
315-445-1769

or

Rev. Theodore J. Georgian  
65 Hoover Dr.  
Rochester, NY 14615  
716-865-9168

If you know of people living in or near Missoula, Montana who might like to be a part of our fellowship, please send their names, addresses, telephone numbers and—if possible—their degree of interest to Glen Junckert, 2828 S. 7th Street West, Missoula, MT 59801. All replies greatly appreciated.

If you know anyone in the vicinities of Medford, Grants Pass, or Roseburg, Oregon; Pocatello, Idaho; or Kalispell, Montana, who may be interested in worshipping an Orthodox Presbyterian Church, please notify the Northwest Presbytery Missions Committee, 118 N.W. Newport, Bend, OR 97701. Phone: 503-389-7040.

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## News and Views

### Reformed Seminary in France

The Reformed Seminary in Aix-en-Provence began its third year of operation in mid-October with a record 47 full-time students. The previous fall, there had been only 33! (With part-time students included, the enrollment is well over 50.) The large student body has led to serious overcrowding in the seminary building, designed for a school of 25 students; various expansion possibilities are under consideration.

The faculty has been strengthened this year by the arrival of Gerald and Eleanor Boyer, who are beginning to develop a School of Doxological Music at Aix. They hope to see a musical revival in the French Reformed churches aiding and abetting the current spiritual revival. Gerald is the younger brother of the Rev. Eugene Boyer, director of the Seminary. He and Eleanor serve as bilingual (French and English) missionaries of the Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship.

The Seminary continues to build a world-wide student body, with students coming from Lebanon, Switzerland, the British Isles, and French-speaking Africa, as well as France. The potential of the Seminary in Aix is immense; it is the only confessionally Reformed seminary in the French-speaking world, which numbers almost 200 million world-wide.

(This report comes by courtesy of Tom Reid who has an abiding interest in the Reformed Seminary in Aix.)

### Reformed Bible Institute opens

The Reformed Bible Institute of Delaware Valley began classes on January 10; it meets on Monday evenings for three hours on instruction. The program is divided into trimesters, the first ending on March 28; the second running from April 11 to June 27; and the third from September 12 to November 28.

"Convinced that the Christian community can profit from the ministry of a Bible institute whose teaching is distinctively reformed in its perspective, . . . the Reformed Bible Institute has been established for the building up of the body of Christ on . . . a biblical and reformed foundation faithful to the teachings of the apostles and the prophets, . . ." (from the brochure). Courses are given in basic Bible study, doctrine, church history, and various special electives.

The Institute, committed to the Westminster Confession of Faith, was organized by several interested persons from various Reformed and Presbyterian churches in the Delaware Valley. Readers interested in further information may write to: Mr. Robert Koehler, Box 21, Gibbsboro, NJ 08026. Classes are being held in the Camden County (N.J.) Christian School, Haddon Heights.

### Professor Knight received by RPCES

Dr. George W. Knight, III, was received into the Midwestern Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, at its October 8 meeting. Dr. Knight was ordained by the Presbytery of Philadelphia of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and has been a ministerial member of that communion for several years. His transfer to the RPCES came following several years of faculty service at that denomination's Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis.

### Dunahoo new PCA Christian Ed. coordinator

The Rev. Charles H. Dunahoo has been named Coordinator (i.e., General Secretary) of the PCA's Committee for Christian Education and Publications, succeeding the Rev. Paul G. Settle who recently became pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Greenville, S. C.

Mr. Dunahoo has been pastor of the Smyrna (Ga.) Presbyterian Church and was active in the formation of the Presbyterian Church in America. He served as Chairman of the General Assembly's Constitutional Documents Committee, guiding the new church in the adoption of its constitutional standards of doctrine, government, discipline, and worship.

The PCA's Committee for Christian Education and Publications is engaged with the corresponding committee of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Great Commission Publications, Inc., a joint publishing venture of the two churches. Mr. Dunahoo takes up his new duties in Montgomery, Ala., this January, and is the first replacement for such a leadership post among the PCA's major committees.

(In other changes, the Rev. Kennedy Smartt of Hopewell, Va., replaces the Rev. Donald C. Patterson of Jackson, Miss., as chairman of the Committee on Mission to the World. The Rev. Frank Barker of Birmingham, Ala., replaces the Rev. Cecil Williamson of Selma, Ala., as chairman of the Committee on Mission to the U.S. For the Committee for Christian Education, the Rev. Harold Borchert of Miami, Fla., has been succeeded by ruling elder Ed Robeson of Chester, S. C. The Rev. Harold Patten of Columbia, S. C., succeeds the Rev. Gordon Reed as chairman of the Committee on Administration. The PCA requires that service on these major committees be limited to three years at a time, thus involving a frequent change of faces in the elected committees.)