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ADVENTIST THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

By C. Raymond Holmes

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Andrews University

Introduction

H. M. S. Richards, considered the dean of Adventist preachers, once said: "Whether some of us believe it or not, preaching is the most important function of the Christian church and of the Advent message."¹ Enlarging on that thought he added:

To take the position that the preacher's chief work is preaching will take courage and faith, I'll tell you. Why? Because in some conferences it is the man who does these other things [raise money, meet goals, promote projects, entertain, curry favor, seek promotion] who is wanted more than a preacher.²

By 1957 Richards had a national reputation as a radio preacher, and enjoyed the kind of stature within the Seventh-day Adventist Church that allowed him to speak such words without fear of censure, words that could never be spoken by a recent seminary graduate swaddled in his gown. But Richards knew what Sangster knew: "Being a religion of revelation, Christianity can only be known as it is proclaimed."³

If Richards was right, if preaching is the most important function of the Advent message, and if preaching is the Adventist minister's chief work, the following questions pose themselves: (1) By what authority do we preach, and wherein lies the power of preaching? (2) What is the proper role of language in preaching? (3) What posture must the preacher take before a biblical text?

Authority and Power

When the Master Minister finished His course in ministerial

training, He called the twelve apostles together for a concluding session. The Bible tells us, "He gave them power and authority" to "preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:1-2, NIV).^{*} The apostle Paul, who received his divine empowering and authority later, said in defense of his ministry that the weapons he used were

not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor 10:4-5).

Throughout his ministry Paul demonstrated the power and authority of Christian proclamation. Some referred to his letters as "weighty and forceful" (2 Cor 10:10).

The powerful weapons to which Paul referred are both defensive and offensive. The five defensive weapons are truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, and salvation, which empower the believer to "stand against the devil's schemes. . . against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph 6:11-12). The one offensive weapon is "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (vs 17).

"Sharper than any double-edged sword," the Word of God exercises divine power as it *penetrates* even to *dividing* soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it *judges* the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is *uncovered* and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account (Heb 4:12-13, emphasis mine.)

Christianity would be but a human religion if the preaching of the kingdom of God depended upon the power of human talent, intellect, charisma, or persuasion.

The authority and power is in the Word not in the preacher. A vivid example of this is found in the dramatic story of Ezekiel preaching to the dead (Eze 37:1-14). God took Ezekiel to a valley covered with the bones of what may have been a vast army slain in battle, and asked: "Can these bones live?" It's hard to know if Ezekiel's answer reflected faith or skepticism, or perhaps some of both: "Only you know, God." In response came the divine directive,

Prophecy to these bones and say to them, "Dry bones, hear the word

of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord" (vss 4-6).

What did Ezekiel do? He preached. What did he say? He said exactly what God told him to say. He didn't try to persuade the dead that they were not really dead! He preached the message revealed, which met the need for restoration of life as seen from God's perspective.

And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them. . . and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army (vss 7-9).

Life was given not because Ezekiel preached, but because he preached God's Word. The power, the authority, is in the Word! The empowering authority to say what he said was in the Word of God. It declared a promise, and the power to bring the promise to pass was in the Word of God.

The Word of God is always a creative word. It not only says something, it does something. At creation, when God said "Let there be light," there was light! When Jesus cried, "Lazarus come out!"—Lazarus came out! Jesus disarmed the Devil with "It is written." And when Jesus returns, He will speak the Word of resurrection, calling His people from their graves!

Paul's hearers experienced that same power and authority, for which he was careful to thank God, "because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe" (1 Thess 2:13).

Centuries later an accomplished London physician experienced that same power and authority, and became one of England's greatest evangelical preachers. In telling the story of his conversion he makes this observation:

What I needed was preaching that would convict me of sin and make me see my need, and bring me to repentance and tell me something about regeneration. But I never heard that. The preaching we had was always based on the assumption that we were all Chris-

tians, that we would not have been there in the congregation unless we were Christians. . . . Although I had heard the best-known preachers. . . of every denomination. . . I cannot recall that a single one of them touched my conscience. . . . We used to go to the services for enjoyment and eloquence, and if we got these we considered that the object of worship had been attained. But. . . the majority of the popular preachers did not aim at convicting anybody so much as at discussing the subject in a masterly and eloquent manner and having a 'goodtime.'⁴

When the Word of God is preached with power and conviction, the Church grows spiritually and numerically. The history of Christianity testifies to that truth. It happened when God made the world, when Ezekiel preached, when Jesus raised Lazarus. It will happen when we preach too, as long as we believe that the power and authority is in the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

Paul told a young preacher to "Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you" (Titus 2:15). The authority is the Word of God. When that authority is exercised in faith, it accomplishes a mighty, divine work, demolishing strongholds and arguments. That authority is not to be despised, in contradiction to all who scorn the Word of God preferring human wisdom and speculative reason instead. The exaltation of human reason has always been in opposition to the wisdom and knowledge that comes from God through His revealed Word. The preacher will be despised—even by an unbelieving world—if he fails to proclaim the Word of God, for he has no authority in himself.

The centuries demonstrate the struggle to maintain faith in the authority and power of God's Word. In the nineteenth century the focus of preaching shifted to the power of human oratory and rhetoric. Many preachers adopted a pulpit style that did not always represent their true selves. However, during that same century a welcome change commenced. Preaching style began to lose a great deal of its coldness and formality. A major strength became the renewed concern for exegesis, exposition, and the practical application of the biblical text to daily life.

In the secular context the most vivid example of this dramatic change was Abraham Lincoln's three-minute speech at Gettysburg. Its brevity, common language, and direct phrases, were characteris-

tic of the man himself. It became the most famous speech in American history, a powerful example of truth through personality.

Relative to preaching, the change toward a more honest and authentic personality in the pulpit was a wholesome development. However, in our time, the rhetoric and oratory of the past is often replaced by the charisma or crudity, linguistically and stylistically, of the twentieth century. Once again we are faced with unauthentic pulpit personalities, and what was initially a welcome improvement has become a deterioration.

In spite of the homiletical improvement, there arose major theological problems in the nineteenth century that impacted on preaching. The present shift away from preaching the great doctrines and themes of Scripture to therapeutic preaching—due to the development and spread of materialistic evolution, rationalism's criticism of the Bible, and scientific hostility to traditional religion—is directly related to the steady erosion of belief in the authority of the Bible as revelation of the mind and will of God.

What distresses many contemporary interpreters of the Bible are biblical teachings that run counter to the demands and desires of culture. Which no doubt motivated our colleague Kenneth Strand, in 1974, to ask:

In endeavoring to communicate God's Word to 20th century man, are we reliable transmitters of that Word, or is there a danger that we may tend to transform the Word instead? Or stated in another way, Do we proclaim the Word in such a way that it speaks its own message—God's message—or may we unwittingly at times allow 20th century culture and our own preconceptions to modify the gospel we proclaim?⁵

Twenty years later, however, such transformation and modification is in many instances deliberate rather than unwitting. To be sure, the Bible carries the mark of humanity as well as divinity. Yet when the preacher's primary focus is on its human dimension, it is easily concluded that the Bible is as unreliable as any other human product. Such a conclusion has a devastating impact on the pulpit. While the preacher still earns wages, and preaching is conceived to be a major function of ministry, the focus of preaching is less on doctrine and more on therapy. The goal is not

conviction of sin and transformation of life, but feeling good about oneself and about human relationships.

Moises Silva says, "It is now claimed that a full acceptance of the historical-critical method, with its assumption of biblical fallibility, is the only approach that does justice to the humanity of Scripture." He then continues, "Once we abandon the doctrine of infallibility, there is no meaningful way in which we can speak of the divine character of the Bible."⁶ If the preacher has no faith in the infallibility of Scripture, by what authority does he preach? Where does he get his message? Furthermore, from whence comes the power for preaching? Can the preacher be assured that the power of the Holy Spirit accompanies a message that does not have the infallible authority of God's Word? Can he hope to have anything near the experience of Ezekiel?

Historically the Seventh-day Adventist Church has been united in one body. It is a world church, not a loosely organized federation of independent conferences. Unity of doctrine and biblical interpretation have been essential to the dynamism of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's mission and the consistency of its message. Historically Adventism has claimed an understanding of the unified biblical message in its reference to "the truth" and "the message."

Today some critics say that it is not possible to understand a complete and unified message of the Bible, that the Bible writers contradict each other, that even the apostle Paul contradicts himself. If, as the critics say, there is no longer any unity of doctrine and interpretation, then truth becomes whatever any group confesses it to be (a congregation, a division, a conference, a group of theologians, a special interest group, etc.), and the reason for our existence collapses. Furthermore, the preacher's confessional responsibility becomes nonexistent. The prophetic element in Adventist preaching would disappear, as would enthusiastic evangelism.

If there is no certain, authoritative and infallible message, the very act of proclamation would be problematic and redundant. It has been the certainty of the Adventist witness to biblical authority that has empowered its evangelism and mission. This is also the

reason why the Church has not been content with minimal conditions for membership.

Role of Language

Literary expression must never take the place of the truth of the message. When belief in the authority of the Bible is lost, oratory, charisma, and therapy are ready substitutes. One may be entertained by the preacher's language, and pleased by his style. But if, after the worship service is over, one has to inquire if anything was said that was biblical—without finding a clear answer—then preaching is in serious trouble.

There are those today who say we need to create a new language that would better come to grips with the horrendous problems and struggles faced by the contemporary world. True, communication that has meaning must always be cognizant of those problems and struggles. But for Christians to use words from which biblical meaning has been leached out, is to misrepresent and to distort the mind of God, which always happens when greater confidence is placed in human philosophy and cleverness than in the Word of God and in the power of biblical truth. Such language does not contribute to the solutions we so crave, but becomes part of the problem. Such language on the part of professed Christians is actually a secular approach to religion and life.

To paraphrase Gerhard Ebeling: The ability to understand is undermined when language takes on an existence of its own and is isolated from its basis in reality. Consequently words are spoken into a void.⁷ They are no longer in touch with Scripture, do not reflect the mind of God, and even treat Scripture with hostility. Perhaps one reason so many professed Christians fail to verbalize their faith is that they no longer know what the language means. Faith can only live by the words it receives; consequently, that life can be strangled by words from which biblical meanings have been sucked out. Preaching loses touch with its purpose if it is cut loose from Scripture as the primary source of its thought.

The preacher/theologian is expected to be an expert on the mind of God as revealed in Scripture. Theology, like any discipline, requires its own language. But when the preacher/theologian speaks, whether to the world or to the church, the obligation is to

speak so as to be understood. The task should be an affirming one, not one that causes doubt and skepticism. The goal is to build, not to wreck, faith. Biblical answers must be provided for the questions and problems posed by contemporary life and philosophy. And the preacher/theologian must be brave enough and courageous enough to confront culture and society. Preaching, while always cognizant of a changing world, must be occupied with that which changes the world: negatively, sin, and positively the power of the Word of God.

As far as preaching and evangelism are concerned, theological pluralism contributes to the death of language. Yes, language establishes and maintains relationships, as the Orientals have taught us. But dependable relationships are possible only on the basis of truth. The function of language is also to convey truthful information. But if the language used has many meanings, can it be truthful language?

What image comes to mind when the word "Christ" is heard? Is it that of the crucified, suffering, Christ who took the sinner's place? Or is it of the sublime Christ who taught us how to face and overcome adversity? Or is it both? And the word "sin"? Does it speak of the morally responsible creature who has rejected and denied that responsibility? Or does it speak of the helpless creature who only needs sympathy, understanding, and love in order to be what he/she is capable of being? Some of what the Bible calls "sin" is now called "socially acceptable alternatives." But biblically understood, sin is much more than "dysfunction."

Attempting to combat sexism by eliminating all masculine references to God is actually a form of idolatry, as it recreates God according to a cultural image. When the Bible is read through the glasses of culture, sociology, or psychology, meanings are given to words that are not biblical, that do not represent the mind of God—the biblical perspective. Attempting to preach in language that takes into account every cultural sensitivity, for political reasons, makes preaching problematic.

The words used may be those of traditional Christianity, but they may not be representative of biblical reality. Thus while one may speak the same words, they can become untrue and therefore misleading. The specificity of the biblical word must not be replaced by banality, pious phrases, or inflated nothingness. What might be

admired as examples of charismatic preaching may be nothing more than "pseudo-dramatization" and "rhetorical explosions." Such language has the odor of death, the homiletical convulsions of a dying church.

If language is supposed to represent reality, what happens to preaching when the words used themselves become untrue, when they no longer embody and communicate biblical reality, when the preacher not only allows but contributes to the reshaping of those words by culture and society? The words become innocuous, they arouse neither the fervent passion of faith nor the antagonistic passion of hate.

Paul tells us that our language should be "full of grace" yet "seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone" (Col 4:6). Our language must not be insensitive to multicultural concerns, but it must primarily proclaim the supremacy of the Word of God. There are, after all, Bible teachings that are nonnegotiable in spite of all pressure to the contrary. Not all opinions are equally valid. Many early Christians were made brutal sport of in the arena because they would not accept some Roman "alternative lifestyles."

Luther, always a preacher, said "The devil forced me to become a theologian." If preaching is a God-ordained method of communicating the gospel, and if the function of theology is to inform preaching, what kind of theology best informs preaching? The answer, of course, is biblical theology. All sound, trustworthy, theology must be biblical. When theology exists for its own sake, when it no longer is biblical theology that informs preaching, it becomes diabolical. Teachers of theology must be aware that the mind of the young preaching student is very impressionable. It can often be compared to the eager and zealous football player who catches the forward pass and races across the field only to discover he has run the wrong way!

Submission to the Text

While we do not accept the idea of dictation/verbal inspiration of the Bible, we cannot abandon belief in its infallibility. We must maintain our belief that, as the very first article of our *Fundamental Beliefs* states, the Bible is "the infallible revelation of His [God's] will." Though it is written by God's "penmen," it is authored by

God, thus assuring its infallibility. Therefore, the only safe posture before the biblical text is submission. The preacher falls under the critical examination of the text, not the other way around. Wise counsel says, "Take the Bible, and on your knees plead with God to enlighten your mind."⁸

Preachers fall into one of two categories: tradesmen or artists. A tradesman masters the use of certain tools and by the application of those tools can effectively perform a specific task. A skilled carpenter, following the blueprints created by an architect, can successfully build a house. The preacher who is primarily a tradesman has mastered a certain homiletical technique, applies it to a Bible text and produces a sermon.

However, the preacher who is an artist, while he may have mastered the use of homiletical tools, will take a different approach altogether. Interested in design as well as in technique, this preacher wants to design the house as well as build it. In this instance, text determines technique. Technique is in the service of the text. It is the text that will show the preacher what is the best thing to do homiletically. The preacher who is an artist is an instrument motivated, moved, by the text. The preacher's will is not imposed on the text. The text is allowed to use the preacher, to draw the preacher into its influence. The preacher does not dictate to the text, but is the text's slave. This preacher will sit before the text, like an artist sits before a scene, until the message in the text, eager to be preached, reaches out and grabs hold of heart and mind.

When a sermon is very difficult to prepare, it may be that the text is fighting with the preacher's method, struggling to get said in its own way. But when the preacher submits to the text, the sermon is born. This approach is most in harmony with the belief that the power is in the Word and not in the preacher or in homiletical technique. Homiletical technique must always be subordinate to the text. The preacher can be guilty of aborting the sermon if he does not sit long enough before the text, if he cuts off the process too soon. As Roy Allen Anderson has said, the preacher "not only possesses a message, but is himself possessed by the message. And to the degree that the truth is reproduced in the personality of the preacher—to that degree will the sermon be a power. It is the message possessing the man that makes him

dynamic. He then becomes a living witness, for his personality vanishes in the virtue of the Almighty."⁹ This is a preacher who listens through Scripture, who "sees" into the text. This is called "insight." And Ellen G. White said, "You must learn to see with your brain as well as your eyes."¹⁰

In order to be truly helpful the preacher needs to "see" the human needs, problems, or issues to which the text addresses itself, to see more deeply and profoundly the purpose for which the text was written.

Conclusion

With passion H. M. S. Richards said "O my friends, preach the great themes of Scripture. Don't fool around on the fringes, away on the circumference of things. Preach the great truths. You don't have time in this world for anything else."¹¹

Confession of faith in the authority of the Bible is not lacking among us. But the way in which the Bible is read, interpreted, and preached will produce either a right or wrong faith, ethic, and morality. Does our preaching demonstrate full or limited biblical authority? Does our preaching demonstrate the authority and power inherent in the creative Word of God? In the denomination in which I once served things are being taught and done that were unthinkable thirty years ago. It was an almost imperceptible change in presuppositions about the Bible, filtering down through the classroom and then the pulpit, that made possible the liberalization of faith and piety during those thirty years. This sad development is termed "progressive" by advocates, but the Bible calls it licentiousness and ungodliness, fruit of the unregenerate life.

In 1986 I was invited to attend the 75th anniversary of the congregation in which I interned as a Lutheran seminary student. I was hosted by a family I knew while serving as their student pastor 27 years before. In 1959 the wife was a devout church member, but in spite of my efforts, as well as those of my immediate successors, the husband did not become a member. Imagine my surprise to discover in 1986, after almost three decades, he was not only a member of that congregation but the chairman of the church board! Nevertheless, during my stay in their home, I observed that he was still the same man I had known 27 years before. The absence of

regeneration and transformation was evident in many obvious ways. He had not changed. The church had changed to the point where he felt comfortable as a member, yet living the same old ungodly life. What is believed about the Bible by teachers and preachers, eventually filters down to church members.

The question that we all, theologians, administrators, preachers, church members, must ask is: Are we interested in being changed by the biblical message, or are we more interested in changing the biblical message by conforming it to the modern spirit?

If one is to preach well, one must submit to the Word and preach often. Homiletical muscles will atrophy and become useless unless exercised on a regular and consistent basis. To perfect a specific skill that skill must be consistently practiced. It takes far less time to lose homiletical skills than to recover them.

If the only authority for preaching is the Word of God, and if the power for preaching is in the Word, then the only appropriate homiletical response is exposition. This is the only method that "preserves the purity of Scripture and accomplishes the purpose for which God gave us His Word."¹²

If the Bible is infallible, why bother with anything else whose truthfulness is uncertain? In terms of evangelism and church growth, who can be expected to commit life and means to the religiously tentative?

If we fail in our duty we will be guilty of a great tragedy: the destruction of the only safe ground upon which our children and grandchildren can safely stand in the years before the return of the Lord. If the race is to be lost it will not be over ground that has already been covered, but over ground that is yet ahead.

Fearless preachers are needed today! If preachers only echo popular contemporary views, they will not speak redemptively to the world. How can preaching be imbued with authority and power if the message preached is other than that given by revelation? Yes, contemporary relevance is essential, but the preacher's authority must rest on something far more substantial and reliable than the latest theological or cultural fad. Dietrich Ritschl was right when he wrote: "First, we must be concerned with the content of the sermon, and only secondly can we deal with the situation of the

Church and its people."¹³ Because the call of the Word of God has priority over human response.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom" (Col 3:16).

We are to receive God's Word as supreme authority. . . . Then, as we make God's Word the guide of our lives, for us is answered the prayer of Christ: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; the word is truth." John 17:17. The acknowledgment of the truth in word and deed is our confession of faith. Only thus can others know that we believe the Bible.¹⁴

Endnotes

* Scripture citations are from the *New International Version*.

1 *Feed My Sheep* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), p. 34.

2 *Ibid*, p. 68.

3 W. E. Sangster, *Power in Preaching* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 21.

4 David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, quoted in *D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty Years* by Iain H. Murray (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), pp. 58-59.

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7 Gerhard Ebeling, *Introduction to a Theological Theory of Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), p. 77.

8 Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Sabbath School Work* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1938), p. 23.

9 Roy Allen Anderson, *Shepherd-Evangelist* (Washington, D. C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1950), pp. 316-17.

10 Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Association, 1923), p. 302.

11 *Ibid*, p. 33.

12 John MacArthur, Jr., *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), p. 24.

13 Dietrich Ritschl, *A Theology of Proclamation* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1960), p. 129.

14 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948 reprint), pp. 402-403, emphasis mine.

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NEW TESTAMENT USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

By Richard M. Davidson

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Andrews University

Introduction

One of the most crucial issues involved in the inspiration of Holy Scripture is the question of the relation between the Old and New Testaments, and in particular, the use of OT quotations by NT writers.¹ Those who maintain a high view of the inspiration of Scripture recognize the Bible's self-testimony affirming the fundamental unity and harmony among its various parts.² Accepting this affirmation leads to the assumption that the NT writers remain faithful to the original OT contexts in their citation of OT passages. This has been the consistent position of Christian scholarship until the rise of the historical-critical method in the wake of the Enlightenment.

The rationalistic presuppositions and procedures of historical criticism have led to an entirely different view of both inspiration and the relationship between the Testaments. A corollary of the historical-critical method posits a fundamental disunity among and between the Testaments, since they are seen as the products of a long development of oral tradition and various written sources redacted by fallible human writers with differing theological agendas.³ According to the prevailing view of current critical scholarship, Jesus and the NT writers often took OT passages out of context, reinterpreted and reapplied them in light of the Christ-event, and thus imposed a NT meaning upon the OT that was foreign to the original meaning.

Raymond Brown summarizes the liberal, historical-critical

perspective with regard to OT materials cited by NT writers as predictions of the Messiah as follows: "This conception of prophecy as prediction of the distant future has disappeared from most serious scholarship today, and it is widely recognized that the NT 'fulfillment' of the OT involved much that the OT writers did not foresee at all." He continues, "There is no evidence that they [the OT prophets] foresaw with precision even a single detail in the life of Jesus of Nazareth."⁴

Even among evangelical scholars, it is frequently asserted that the NT methods of interpreting the OT passages often do not incorporate sound exegesis, but rather utilize Christological reapplication based upon first-century interpretational techniques such as rabbinic midrash, Hellenistic allegory, and/or Qumran-style *raz pasher* ("mystery interpretation.")⁵ It is further suggested that since the NT writers (and Jesus) were inspired, they had the right and authority under the Holy Spirit's guidance to reinterpret and reapply to Jesus what originally in the OT did not refer to Him.⁶ The implication of these modern claims argues for the necessity of modifying the traditional view of inspiration in order to accommodate the apparent distortions of the OT passages by the NT writers.⁷

But is it necessary to dilute the historic high view of the inspiration of Scripture? Is it true that the NT writers have followed a common first-century Jewish practice of reapplying, and thus distorting, the contextual meaning of the OT passages they have cited?

A recently published Cambridge dissertation by David I. Brewer may be destined to rock the presuppositions, and even topple the "assured results," of current critical scholarship regarding first-century Jewish exegetical methods. Brewer summarizes the conclusions of his research: "the predecessors of the rabbis before 70 CE did not interpret Scripture out of context, did not look for any meaning in Scripture other than the plain sense, and did not change the text to fit their interpretation, though the later rabbis did all these things."⁸

Brewer then throws down a challenge: "If the conclusions of this work are correct it demands a fresh examination of the New

Testament, which may yet provide a model for the modern exegete."⁹

This "fresh examination" of NT exegetical methods has already begun in recent decades. A growing number of studies reexamining NT citations of OT passages have concluded that NT writers (and Jesus Himself) were careful exegetes, faithfully representing the original plain contextual meaning of the OT texts for the NT readers.

From my own research I likewise have become increasingly convinced—contrary to my previous understanding—that the NT writers did not take OT Scriptures out of context in their citations, did not read back into the OT what was not originally there, but rather consistently remained faithful to the OT intention, and consistently engaged in solid exegesis of the OT passages using sound hermeneutical principles.

This conclusion has gradually emerged as I have reexamined the major examples of NT citations of OT passages where it has been claimed that the NT has not remained faithful to the OT meaning in its original context.¹⁰ The passages most frequently referred to include the following: (1) Matt 1:23, citing Isa 7:14; (2) Matt 2:15, citing Hos 11:1; (3) Matt 2:18, citing Jer 31:15; (4) Matt 2:23, citing "the prophets"; (5) the various NT citations of Ps 22 (Matt 27:35, 36; John 19:24, 37; etc.); (6) Acts 2:25-33, citing Ps 16:8-11; (7) 1 Cor 9:8-10, citing Deut 25:4; (8) Jesus' reference to the sign of Jonah (Matt 12:40 referring to Jonah 1:17); (9) Paul's reference to Christ as the seed of Abraham in Gal 3:16 (citing Gen 22:17-18); and (10) Paul's "allegory" of the two covenants in Galatians 4 (citing Gen 21:10). These passages we will discuss in some detail.

Other NT examples of supposed distortions of OT Scripture, less frequently employed in the discussion, include such passages as: (1) Paul's citations of Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:21; (2) his quotation of Lev 18:5 and Deut 30:12-14 in Rom 10:5-8; (3) the citation of Ps 40:6-8 in Heb 10:5-10; and (4) the citation of Ps 95:11 in Hebrews 3-4. The conclusions of recent research on these latter passages will be indicated in a brief final section of the article.

Alleged NT Distortions of OT Passages

The Virgin Birth (Matt 1:23, citing Isa 7:14)

Isaiah 7:14 has been called "the most difficult of all Messianic prophecies"¹¹ and is perhaps the most studied text in biblical scholarship.¹² It is not possible to delve into all the exegetical issues in this passage.¹³ Rather, our focus is upon the question: Does Matthew remain faithful to the OT context of this passage when he cites it as a prediction of the virgin birth of the Messiah (Matt 1:23)?

The interpretations of the prophecy fall into three major categories: (1) those which maintain only a local fulfillment in the time of Isaiah; (2) those which posit a reference in the text only to the virgin birth of the Messiah; and (3) those which argue for both.

A careful look at the immediate context does seem to reveal a local dimension to the fulfillment of the prophecy. The historical setting is the time of the Syro-Ephraimite War (ca. 734 B.C.). The northern kingdoms of Syria and Israel have banded together to attack their southern neighbor of Judah (Isa 7:1, 4-6). Ahaz, king of Judah, is terrified of the impending invasion, but God sends Isaiah with the comforting word that the northern coalition will not succeed in their plans to overthrow Ahaz (Isa 7:2, 3, 7-9). In this situation God gives Ahaz a sign through Isaiah: "Behold, the virgin [*almah*] shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (vs. 14, literal translation).

The succeeding verses give the time frame of the local fulfillment of this sign: "For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted" (vs. 16, RSV). Obviously, the child would be born in the time of Ahaz, and before it reached the age of accountability, the Syro-Ephraimite coalition would be dissolved.

This local interpretation is confirmed in the succeeding chapter. Isaiah goes in to "the prophetess," she conceives, and bears a son (Isa 8:3). The link between this son and the prophecy is made in vs. 4 by a statement that clearly parallels with 7:16: "For before the child knows how to cry 'my father' and 'my mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria" (RSV). The time elements implied in Isaiah 7:16 and 8:4 were fulfilled precisely: in 732 B.C. (within two years of the prophecy of 7:14, before the child could say "father" or

“mother”) Damascus fell, and in 722 B.C. (before the child was twelve and had reached the age of accountability) Samaria fell.

Thus, Isaiah 7:14 does have a local dimension of fulfillment. But is this all that is implied in the text, and in the larger context? Let us look more closely. We note, first of all, that the prophecy is not addressed only to Ahaz, but to the “house of David” (vs. 13). When Isaiah records that “The Lord Himself will give *you* a sign” (*italics mine*), the word “you” is in the plural, not the singular, implying a wider application than just to Ahaz.

Furthermore, in 7:14 the Hebrew word *‘almāh* (“virgin, young woman”), translated in the LXX (Septuagint) and Matthew 1:23 by *parthenos* or “virgin,” means more than just “virgin.” There is another Hebrew word which means “virgin,” namely *betūlāh*. But *betūlāh* does not specify the age of the virgin or whether or not she is married. The word *‘almāh*, however, means “young woman of marriageable age, sexually ripe,” who in OT usage normally is unmarried, and therefore a virgin.¹⁴ Thus *‘almāh*, much like the English term “maiden,” has “overtones of virginity about it”¹⁵ even though this is not the main focus. In the prophecy Isaiah utilizes a term that does not stress the virginity, and thus could have significance for Ahaz’ situation with a local, partial fulfillment;¹⁶ at the same time the term has connotations of virginity, thereby pointing beyond the local setting to the ultimate sign in the virgin birth of the Messiah.

What is hinted at in the text is made explicit in the larger context. Scholars generally agree that 7:14 is part of a larger literary unit of Isaiah encompassing Isaiah 7-12, which is often called the “Volume of Immanuel.” While scholars recognize this larger unit of Isaiah, they have often failed to view 7:14 within this larger setting. When Isaiah’s son was born, he was not named “Immanuel” as the prophecy of predicted. God told Isaiah to name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz, “Speed the spoil, hasten the booty.” The name Immanuel is used later in chapter 8 in a context that seems to move from the local to the cosmic and Messianic level (see vs. 8-10).

Also in chapter 8 Isaiah and his sons are said to be “signs” in Israel (vs. 18) for future events to be brought about by God. These events move from the local level at the end of Isaiah 8 to the

eschatological Messianic level in Isaiah 9. The land which was in gloom and darkness (8:22) will become a land where the gloom is removed (9:1) and “the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light” (9:2). Most significantly, Isaiah’s son was a sign to Israel, but in the Messianic age Isaiah predicts that the greater Son, the ultimate fulfillment of 7:14, will appear: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called ‘Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace’” (Isa 9:6, RSV). This Messianic motif is further expanded in 11:1-9, with the description of the coming and work of the Messiah.

Thus within the wider context of 7:14, Isaiah himself, under divine inspiration, indicates that although the prediction will have local fulfillment in the birth of a son in the time of Ahaz, yet this local fulfillment is a type of the ultimate Messianic fulfillment in the divine Son, Immanuel. We may diagram the typological relationships in Isaiah’s volume of Immanuel as follows:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 1. Type | Isa 7:14 (Immanuel prophecy) |
| | Isa 8:1-4 (local fulfillment of Isa 7:14) |
| 2. Antitype | Isa 9:1-7 (ultimate fulfillment in the Messiah) |
| | Isa 11:1-9 (further description of the Messiah) |

Matthew, therefore, far from taking Isaiah 7:14 out of context, has recognized the larger Messianic context of Isaiah 7-12, which critical scholarship has usually ignored.

“Out of Egypt Have I Called My Son” (Matt 2:15, RSV, citing Hos 11:1)

Matthew 2:15 represents another instance in which the critical scholars, who have charged Matthew with unfaithfulness to the OT context,¹⁷ have themselves failed to discern the larger context of Hosea 11:1.

It is true that Hosea 11:1 in its immediate historical context refers to the past historical Exodus of ancient Israel from Egypt. The verse reads: “When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son” (RSV). The next verse describes the historical circumstances of national Israel’s turning away from Yahweh to serve the Baals.

However, it is crucial to see not only the immediate context but

also the wider context of this verse. C. H. Dodd, in his book *According to the Scriptures*, has demonstrated how the NT writers often cite a single OT passage as a pointer for the reader to consider the larger context of that passage. Dodd has shown that the larger context of 11:1—both in the book of Hosea itself and in other contemporary eighth-century prophets—describes a future New Exodus connected with Israel's return from exile and the coming of the Messiah.¹⁸ (Note especially the following passages: Hos 2:14-15; 12:9, 13; 13:4-5; Isa 11:15-16; 35; 40:3-5; 41:17-20; 42:14-16; 43:1-3, 14-21; 48:20-21; 49:3-5, 8-12; 51:9-11; 52:3-6, 11-12; 55:12-13; Amos 9:7-15; Mic 7:8-20. Cf. Jer 23:4-8; 16:14-15; 31:32).

In fact, the typological interconnection between ancient Israel's Exodus and the Messiah's Exodus from Egypt is already indicated in the Pentateuch. In the oracles of Balaam in Numbers 23-24, there is an explicit shift from the historical Exodus to the Messianic Exodus. In Num 23:22 Balaam proclaims, "God brings *them* out of Egypt; He [God] has strength like a wild ox." In the next oracle, Balaam shifts to the singular, "God brings *him* out of Egypt" (Num 24:8), and in the next and final oracle, referring to the "latter days" (24:14), Balaam indicates the Messianic identification of the "him": "I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not nigh; a star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel; it shall crush the forehead of Moab, and break down all the sons of Sheth" (24:17, RSV).¹⁹

Thus the Pentateuch and the latter prophets (especially Hosea and Isaiah) clearly recognized that Israel's Exodus from Egypt was a type of the new Exodus, centering in the New Israel, the Messiah. Matthew remains faithful to this larger OT context in his citation of Hosea 11:1. In harmony with the OT predictions, Matthew depicts Jesus as the New Israel, recapitulating in His life the experience of ancient Israel, but succeeding where the first Israel failed.

The first five chapters of Matthew describe in detail Jesus as the New Israel experiencing a New Exodus: coming out of Egypt after a death decree (Matt 2:15), and going through His antitypical Red Sea experience in His baptism (Matthew 3; cf. 1 Cor 10:1, 2). This is followed by His wilderness experience of 40 days paralleling the 40 years of ancient Israel in the wilderness. During this time

Jesus indicates His own awareness of His role as the New Israel in the New Exodus by consistently meeting the devil's temptations with quotations from Deuteronomy 6-8 (where ancient Israel's temptations in the wilderness are summarized). Finally, Jesus appears on the Mount as a new Moses, with His 12 disciples representing the tribes of Israel, and repeats the Law as Moses did at the end of the wilderness sojourn. Matthew and the other Synoptic Gospels also depict the death and resurrection of Jesus as a New Exodus.²⁰

Thus, far from distorting the original OT context of Hosea, Matthew "quoted a single verse not as a proof text, but a pointer to his source's larger context. Instead of interrupting the flow of his argument with a lengthy digression, he let the words of Hosea 11:1 introduce that whole context in Hosea."²¹ Matthew faithfully captured the wider eschatological, Messianic context of this passage as portrayed by Hosea and his prophetic contemporaries.

"Rachel Weeping for Her Children" (Matt 2:18, RSV, citing Jer 31:15)

L. S. Edgar considers Matthew 2:18 to be "the most striking case of disregard of context in the NT."²² What does Rachel's weeping for her children killed by the Babylonians or gone into Babylonian captivity have to do with the slaughter of the Bethlehem babies at the time of Jesus' birth?

Again, it is true that the local historical context of Jeremiah 31:15 has to do with the inhabitants of Judah at the time of their going into exile in Babylon: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not" (Jer 31:15, RSV). It was in Ramah that Nebuzaradan, the captain of the Babylonian guard, assembled the Judean captives, before taking them in chains to Babylon (Jer 40:1). Rachel, a "mother" of Israel (see Ruth 4:11), is portrayed as weeping for her descendants, especially the children who were "no more" (Jer 31:15), apparently put to death by the Babylonians near her tomb at Ramah (see Ps 137:8, 9; cf. Isa 13:16), or ready to be taken into exile.

But while the immediate local context of Jeremiah's statement is the Babylonian exile, the larger context in this very chapter involves the eschatological gathering of Israel from exile (vss. 7-8)

in the setting of the Messianic New Covenant (vss. 31-34). Walter Kaiser details the larger context:

Even though Jeremiah clearly says that the Babylonian Exile will last for seventy years (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10), it is just as clear that he knows that the Exile will not end until the coming of the new David. The whole book of comfort (Jer. 30-33) offers not only the renewal of the ancient covenant with the inhabitants of Judah and Israel, but a new David who will sit on the throne of Israel once again (30:8-9; 33:14-15, 17). . . . Clearly, the context of Rachel's weeping lies within the bounds of the ultimate hope of God's final eschatological act. . . . The whole context of the book of comfort must be brought to bear on the total understanding of this passage. Thus, Rachel must weep yet once more in Herod's time before that grand day of God's new David and new Israel.²³

Kaiser's conclusion with regard to Matthew's use of Jeremiah and Hosea in the second chapter of his Gospel is on the mark: "Matthew displayed a sensitivity for the whole context of Hosea and Jeremiah—one that involved an awareness of their canonical, theological, and eschatological contexts in addition to their historical context."²⁴

"He Shall Be Called a Nazarene" (Matt 2:23, RSV, citing "the prophets")

Matthew 2:23 reads: "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets it might be fulfilled, 'He shall be called a Nazarene'" (RSV). In the case of this citation, no specific OT passage is cited. Many scholars have seen here a reference to the law of the Nazirite in Numbers 6 (cf. Judg 13:4-5), and they have pointed out how the context simply does not fit the situation of Jesus.

It is true that Jesus was not a Nazirite. He did not refrain from drinking the juice of the grape nor from shaving His head. But the problem is not with Matthew mistakingly connecting Nazareth with the Nazirites; it is rather with those scholars who mistakenly see Matthew making such a connection.

What needs to be recognized is that the Greek letter *zeta* or "z" is used to transliterate two Hebrew letters, *zayin* (or "z") and *sade* (or "s"). The Hebrew for the town Nazareth comes the Hebrew root *nsr*, not *nzr*. The OT noun built on this stem is *neser*, which means "sprout, shoot, branch." This Hebrew word is the technical term

for the Messiah utilized in the prediction of Isaiah 11:1: "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch [*nēšer*] out of his roots" (NKJV).

Matthew, far from positing a false connection between Jesus and the Nazirite, is recognizing the connection between the name of the town "Nazareth" and the title of the Messiah! Messiah, the Branch [*nēšer*], grows up [*nšr*] in the City of the Branch [*nēšāret*]! Again, Matthew is remaining faithful to the original Messianic context of the Volume of Immanuel, Isaiah 7-12, in his allusion to Isa 11:1.

Thus far, we have concentrated upon passages in the book of Matthew, which scholars have insisted represent a twisting of the OT Scriptures.²⁵ Far from substantiating charges by scholars like McCasland that "Matthew felt free in changing and distorting the Scriptures,"²⁶ we find Matthew (and Jesus) remaining faithful to the OT context, and upholding a unity and harmony between the Testaments.

The "Psalm of the Cross" (NT references to Psalm 22)

Numerous NT passages cite Psalm 22 as being fulfilled in the various events surrounding the death and resurrection of the Messiah: Matthew 27:45 and Mark 15:34, Jesus citing vs. 1; Matthew 27:39 and Mark 15:29, gospel narrators citing vs. 7; Matthew 27:43, citing vs. 8; Matthew 27:35 and parallels (Mark 15:24, Luke 23:34, John 19:24), citing vs. 18; and Hebrews 2:12, citing vs. 22. The problem arises because the Psalm itself does not explicitly indicate that it is referring to the Messiah. Psalm 22 is written by David²⁷ in the first person, and, therefore, apparently describes David's own personal experience. How then can the NT writers and Jesus Himself see this psalm as pointing to the Messiah? Many scholars simply assume that the NT is again engaging in reinterpretation, reading back into the OT something which is not there.

However, there is a crucial key overlooked in much of the study of the Messianic psalms: the OT itself provides verbal indicators that identify the typological nature of these psalms.

In Psalm 22, despite the Davidic authorship and use of first person description, various commentators have recognized that "the features of this psalm far transcend the actual experiences of David."²⁸ "David's language overflows all its natural banks."²⁹ As

A. Bentzen accurately notes, Psalm 22 presents “not a description of illness, but of an *execution*.”³⁰ The executed one is actually brought “to the dust of death” in vs. 15; and yet in vss. 22ff. he is again alive and well, declaring Yahweh’s name to His brethren! As Franz Delitzsch has observed, “In Psalm 22 David descends, with his complaint into a depth that lies beyond the depth of his affliction, and rises, with his hopes to a height that lies far beyond the height of the reward of his affliction.”³¹

How the language of Psalm 22 can be written by David in the first person and yet move beyond his own personal experience, is clarified in connection with the first Messianic psalm of the Psalter. In Psalm 2, also written by David (Acts 4:25), there is striking evidence that the anointed Davidic king is to be regarded as a type of the future Messiah. Psalm 2 moves from the local level of the earthly installation of the Davidic king as Yahweh’s “son,” to the cosmic level of the divine Son, the Messiah. The final verse indicates this typological movement: “Kiss the Son, lest He [the Son³²] be angry, And you perish in the way, When His [the Son’s] wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him [the Son]” (vs. 12, NKJV). The expression “put trust in” (Hebrew *hasah*), elsewhere in the Psalms (over two dozen occurrences) is always reserved for the deity; the Son of vs. 12, therefore, is none other than the divine Son of God.³³ This internal, typological indicator in Psalm 2 sets the tone for the remainder of the Davidic psalter: the Davidic *mešiah* or “anointed one” is a type of the eschatological divine Messiah.

What is implicit in the Psalms becomes explicit in the prophets. Numerous OT prophets, under inspiration, predicted that the Messiah would come as the new antitypical David, recapitulating in His life the experience of the first David. Note the following passages: Jer 23:5; Ezek 34:23; 37:24; Isa 9:6-7, 6; 11:1-5; Hos 3:5; Amos 9:11; Zech 8:3; etc. Thus the Davidic psalms relating to David’s experience as the anointed one—namely, his suffering and his royal reign—already in the OT are announced as types of the coming Davidic Messiah. The NT writers and Jesus Himself, in citing from Davidic psalms denoting the suffering and royalty of the anointed one, are simply announcing the fulfillment of what was already indicated in the OT.³⁴

With regard to Psalm 22 in particular, the prophet Daniel gives specific evidence of its Messianic import. In Dan 9:26, referring to the death of the Messiah, the angel Gabriel alludes to this psalm. Jacques Doukhan points out³⁵ how the expression *’ên lô* “he has no . . .” is a contracted form of *’ên ’ôzer lô* “he has no help” of Dan 11:45, and alludes to the abbreviated form of this phrase in Psalm 22:11 (Heb 12): *’ên ’ôzer* “no help.” Doukhan shows how Daniel 9:26 thus indicates that the Messiah would fulfill the words of Psalm 22. This typological indicator points to Psalm 22 as the special psalm of the Messiah at His death.

Jesus, as a careful exegete of the Messianic prophecy of Daniel 9, apparently understood that His death would be linked in fulfillment with Psalm 22. In fact, it is very possible that Jesus faced the experience of Calvary fortified by the words of Psalm 22, perhaps even mentally moving through the Psalm as the events of His crucifixion unfolded.

It seems no coincidence that as His unity with the Father is breaking up, separated by the sins of the world which He bore, Jesus cries out using the opening words of Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?” As He hangs on the cross, He cannot see through the portals of the tomb, but by naked faith, perhaps He holds on to the assurances of this Psalm and sees the events described in Psalm 22 transpiring before Him.

All around Him are those mocking in the very words of Ps 22:8: “He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!” (NKJV), (see Matt 27:43; Luke 23:35). All His disciples have forsaken Him, as vs. 11 depicts: “there is none to help.” In his thirst, He experiences vs. 15: “My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws.” In the pain coming from the nail-pierced hands and feet, He is reminded of vs. 16: “they have pierced My hands and My feet.” As the soldiers cast lots for His garment, vs. 18 comes true before His eyes: “They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”

Jesus’ faith may well have pierced the gloom as He recalled the words that come in the second half of the psalm, starting with the abrupt affirmation in vss. 21-22: “You have answered me! I will declare Your name to My brethren.” Here is the assurance of the resurrection from the “dust of death” (NKJV) described in vs. 15.

Is it only a coincidence that Jesus' first instructions to the women—near the tomb after His resurrection—were echoing the words of Psalm 22? "Go and tell my brethren . . ." (Matt 28:10).

Perhaps Jesus' faith was fortified in those last minutes on the cross by the encouragement of the final verses of Psalm 22, describing the future spread and acceptance of His testimony in "all the ends of the world" and succeeding generations (vss. 27-31, NKJV). The final words of Psalm 22 may be translated either as "He has done [it]" or "It is done!" If we accept the latter translation, then Jesus dies in triumph with the closing message of the Psalm on his lips!

Whether Jesus consciously worked His way through Psalm 22 in His crucifixion, it is clear that the fulfillment of this Psalm in His death and resurrection is no reapplication of a Psalm in the light of the Christ-event. The OT has already indicated that the ultimate meaning of the Psalm moves beyond David to the antitypical David, the Messiah, in His suffering and death.

OT Prediction of the Resurrection (Acts 2:29-33; 13:31-37, citing Ps 16)

In his Pentecost sermon of Acts 2, Peter quotes Psalms 16:8-11 to show that the OT predicted Christ's resurrection from the dead. To prove the same point, Paul cites Psalms 16:10 in his sermon at Antioch (Pisidia) in Acts 13.

In the case of this OT citation, Peter leaves no doubt about how much the OT prophet David actually understood. He states emphatically (Acts 2:30-31): "Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption" (NKJV). Thus Peter is convinced that David consciously gave an explicit prediction of the resurrection of Christ.

Modern critical scholarship, on the other hand, contends that Peter is here reading into the OT psalm a meaning imported from his NT faith, thus doing violence to the psalm in its original OT context.

Let's take a closer look. Note in particular the two arguments of both Peter and Paul supporting their conclusion.

The first concerns the language of Psalm 16 itself. Peter and

Paul argue that the description of the Psalm goes beyond the historical experience of OT David. The psalm asserts that God will not leave His Holy One in Hades nor let Him see corruption. This simply did not happen to David. He died and was buried, and his tomb was still in Jerusalem in the first century. He was left in the grave and as Paul points out, his body did see corruption.

This argument illustrates what we have already seen with regard to Psalms 2 and 22—the experiences of the historical David may have a partial, local fulfillment in the time of David, but the language ultimately points beyond OT David to the New David, the Messiah.

The second argument of both Paul and Peter points to the wider OT context of the passage. Peter refers to Psalms 89 and 132, and God's oath to David concerning his posterity, while Paul points to the larger canonical context of Isa 55:3, and God's promise to give Israel "the sure mercies of David." Both Peter and Paul see in these broader contexts evidence that David himself understood the predictive, Messianic character of God's oath and promise to him.

Walter Kaiser has done a careful study of the relation of these latter passages to Psalm 16.³⁶ He has pointed in particular to the pregnant meaning of the Hebrew *ḥasîd* ("Holy One") in Psalm 16 and parallel passages.

In Psalm 4:3 (vs. 4, Heb) David claims that He is Yahweh's *ḥasîd* or "favored one." Then in Psalm 89, one of the psalms to which Peter alludes in Acts 2, David connects this term with others that are technical Messianic terms elsewhere in Scripture. In vss. 18-20 (19-21, Heb) of the Psalm David is called not only *ḥasîd*, but also "horn," "king," "my servant," and the "anointed."

Already in Deuteronomy 33:8 the term *ḥasîd* moves beyond the local human level. Moses in his last blessing upon the tribe of Levi, speaks of the "man of your *ḥasîd* whom you [Israel] tested at Massah." Exodus 17:7 indicates that the One tested at Massah was none other than the Lord Himself. The "man of your *ḥasîd*" is thus a divine personage.

In the OT there is an oscillation between the plural *ḥ^asiḏim*, referring to faithful Israelites, and the singular *ḥasîd*—the same oscillation that we find between corporate and individual in the terms "seed"³⁷ and "servant."³⁸ The corporate Israelite *ḥ^asiḏim*

find their individual representative in the Davidic *hasîd*, and the Davidic “favored one” typifies or foreshadows the ultimate antitypical “Favored One,” the Messiah.

Paul’s reference to Isaiah 55:3 and the “sure mercies [*hasdê*] of God to David” captures the whole covenant context of 2 Samuel 7, which Kaiser has elsewhere shown to contain the Messianic allusion to the ultimate descendant of David who would bear the “charter for all mankind.”³⁹

Both Peter and Paul, therefore, have rightly discerned the Messianic allusions in the wider context of OT passages echoing Psalm 16, as well as in the language of the psalm itself.

The ultimate reference to the Messiah as the only One who could totally fulfill the language of Psalm 16, does not eliminate the partial local fulfillment in David, the type of the Messiah. Peter recognizes this as he “carefully introduces the quotation from Ps 16:8-11 with the phrase, ‘David says with reference (*eis*) him’ (vs. 25), rather than ‘concerning (*peri*) him’ (which would have meant that the total reference was to the Messiah alone).”⁴⁰ At the same time Peter and Paul are both insistent—as the OT contextual evidence bears out—that David himself knew the resurrection of the Messiah was ultimately in view. As we have seen with regard to Psalm 22, David’s experience was a type of the New Antitypical David, Jesus Christ, and this typological connection is already indicated in the OT.

“You Shall Not Muzzle an Ox” (1 Cor 9:8-10, NKJV, citing Deut 25:4)

It is often claimed that Paul utilized an allegorical approach to Scripture when he cites Deuteronomy 25:4: “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” This is seen as a prime example of biblical writers’ “interpreting a text in a sense which completely ignores its original meaning, or in a sense whose connection with its original meaning is purely arbitrary.”⁴¹

But a careful study of this Pauline passage⁴² reveals quite the contrary. Here is a model approach showing Christians how to recognize the underlying principles in the Israelite civil law and apply them in a modern situation. The approach is in harmony with Paul’s assertion that “Whatever things were written before [OT Scripture] were written for our learning, that we through the

patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Rom 15:4, NKJV).

Paul does not depart from the literal sense of Deuteronomy 25:4 by means of allegory, rabbinic argument, or Hellenistic Jewish exegesis, as some have suggested. Rather, he engages in what Kaiser calls “literal theological exegesis.”⁴³ Once more, Paul has captured the broader context of Deuteronomy 24-25 which has escaped many critical scholars. The laws in these chapters all concern the basic principles of mercy and equity. Paul takes the basic principle with regard to the treatment of oxen, and applies the same principle to the Christian minister. In the case of the oxen, even they deserved to eat from the object of their labor. How much more is it true of the Christian laborer, the minister, that he deserves to eat from the object of his labor, namely, the Christian church he ministers to.

As the commentator F. Godet puts it:

Paul does not, therefore, in the least suppress the historical and natural meaning of the precept. . . . He recognizes it fully, and it is precisely by starting from this sense that he rises to a higher application. . . . Far from arbitrarily allegorizing, he applies, by a well-founded *a fortiori*, to a higher relation what God had prescribed with reference to a lower relation. . . . It is difficult to suppress a smile when listening to the declamations of our moderns against the allegorizing mania of the Apostle Paul. . . . Paul does not in the least allegorize. . . . From the literal and natural meaning of the precept he disentangles a profound truth, a law of humanity and equity.⁴⁴

The Sign of Jonah (Matt 12:40, citing Jonah 2)

Elsewhere⁴⁵ we have pointed out how various persons, events, and institutions regarded as types in the NT have already been indicated as such in the OT, and how this is true also in the case of Jonah. Let us look more closely at the typology of Jonah referred to by Jesus.

Already in Jonah’s prayer during the three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, the language the prophet employs goes beyond his own literal experience. What he describes is a virtual death-resurrection experience: “out of the belly of Sheol [the grave] I cried”; “the earth with its bars closed behind me forever; yet You have brought up my life from the pit [the grave]” (Jonah 2:2, 6, NKJV).

Only a few short years after Jonah's experience, while the memory of his "death-resurrection" was still vivid in Israel, the contemporary eighth-century prophet Hosea seems to make allusion to this event. Hosea 6:1-3 clearly refers to Israel's captivity and restoration as a "death" and "resurrection" on the "third day,"⁴⁶ parallel to the experience of Jonah.⁴⁷ From this allusion it appears that Hosea envisions Israel as recapitulating the experience of Jonah in their "death-resurrection" experience.

In the same eighth-century B.C. context Isaiah clearly describes the Messiah as a New Israel, as we have already seen.⁴⁸ Isaiah reveals that the Messianic Servant will represent and recapitulate the experience of the first Israel, especially with regard to His death and resurrection.⁴⁹

Thus, to summarize, Hosea seems to indicate that Israel is like Jonah, experiencing a "death-resurrection" on the third day, and Isaiah shows that the Messiah is a new Israel, undergoing a death-resurrection like the first Israel. It remains for Jesus, the Master Exegete, to call attention to these OT connections between God's "servant" Jonah (2 Kgs 14:25), the servant Israel, and the Messianic Servant. Based upon these typological relationships already set forth in the OT, Jesus can confidently proclaim the sign of Jonah: as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for "three days and three nights,"⁵⁰ so the new Jonah/Israel would be in the heart of the earth and rise after three days.

Also, apparently based upon these OT typological connections between Jonah, Israel, and Jesus, it is possible for Paul to say that Christ "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:4).⁵¹ Both Jesus and Paul remain faithful to the wider OT context of Jonah's experience, and accurately announce the fulfillment of the Jonah/Israel typology indicated by the OT prophets.

Christ as Abraham's "Seed" (Gal 3:16, citing Gen 22:17-18)

In a previous *JATS*⁵² article we briefly discussed how Paul in Galatians 3:16 cites Genesis 22:17-18.⁵³ Paul's argument indicates that he understands how the use of the Hebrew word *zera'* ("seed") in Genesis 22:17 moves from a collective (plural) idea to a single "Seed." Then a few verses later (Gal 3:29) Paul correctly points to the collective plural aspect of this same term in the wider context of Genesis 22:18.

We noted how in Genesis 22:17a the word *zera'* ("seed") clearly has a plural idea in the context of "the stars of heaven" and "the sand which is on the seashore." However, in vs. 17b the *zera'* (seed) narrows to a singular Messianic "Seed" who would "possess the gate of His [singular] enemies." This phrasing is parallel to Genesis 3:15, where we find the same narrowing of the word "seed" from a collective to Messianic singular.⁵⁴

Since penning that brief treatment in *JATS*, my attention has been called to a recent dissertation by Dale Wheeler, devoted entirely to the issue of Paul's citation of the OT in Galatians 3:16.⁵⁵ A number of other lines of evidence are adduced in this study which confirm my own assessment of Paul's respect for OT context. Wheeler concludes: "rather than twisting the Old Testament to prove a point Paul is using the passage in exactly the way it was intended, following its original sense and understanding the nature of who might be its referents."⁵⁶

Paul's "Allegory" of the Two Covenants (Gal 4:21-31; citing Gen 21:10)

Paul has been frequently charged with allegorizing in his discussion of the two covenants in Galatians 4. However, several recent studies of Galatians 4 have concluded that despite Paul's use of the term *allegoreo* in vs. 24, he does not engage in what the modern term "allegory" implies, but rather recognizes the *typological* framework of the OT accounts to which he refers.⁵⁷

In this passage, Paul seems to grasp the heart of parallel historical experiences that centered around salvation by works. Israel at Sinai entered into a covenant with God which (at least initially) they thought they could fulfill by their own efforts. Abraham's union with Hagar was an attempt to fulfill God's promise by human means. These two historical occurrences typified the experience of "Jerusalem and her children," contemporary with Paul, who were seeking a righteousness by works.

By contrast, Paul presents the account of the birth of Isaac, accomplished not by the prowess of man, but by the miracle of God in faithfulness to His promise. The birth of Isaac, the promised "seed," embodies the principle of righteousness by faith, and is a type of Abraham's future spiritual "seed" symbolized by the true, heavenly Jerusalem and her children. All believers in Christ are the children of promise, Abraham's seed (Gal 3:29). These conclusions

are based upon the realization of the Christocentric nature of the "seed" promises already indicated in the OT, as we have noted in our discussion of Galatians 3:16.

Paul is not assigning arbitrary, fanciful meanings to the participants in his "allegory," as was the case in the Jewish allegorism of Philo (and the later Christian allegorical method of the Alexandrian school). Rather, he is pointing to the rich historical-typological correspondences that illustrate the principles of righteousness by works versus righteousness by faith. By so doing, he provides a clear designation of the Christian church as the seed of Abraham, the children of promise.

One should remember that the Greek verb *allegoreo*, which Paul employs, can merely indicate that "the obvious meaning is not the basic one,"⁵⁸ and not involve the Platonic-Philonic mode of allegorism. It seems that in Galatians 4:21-31, Paul is saying in effect: the experiences of Sarah and Hagar have a deeper meaning than just telling a story. The two women's experiences are representative of two rival systems for attaining righteousness—righteousness by faith and righteousness by works. Hagar's experience (Abraham's attempting to fulfill the divine promise of a son within her by taking things into his own hands instead of trusting God) parallels the (initial) experience of the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai (legalistic response to God), and both find a correspondence in contemporary (first-century) Judaism. It is the way of bondage—of righteousness by works. The experience of Sarah, on the other hand (trusting God to fulfill the promise of a son even when it seemed humanly impossible, Rom 4:13-25), presents a type of the way of "heavenly Jerusalem," of freedom—the way of righteousness by faith.

Thus Paul is not taking the OT accounts out of context, but rather pointing up their inherent deeper meaning and their typological referents.

Integrity of NT Writers Affirmed

A number of recent studies have dealt with various other passages utilized by critical scholars to support the claim that NT writers have "twisted" the OT Scriptures. The studies demonstrate

these claims to be unfounded. We will survey briefly the conclusions of some of this research dealing with several OT citations in the NT.

Habakkuk 2:14 cited in Romans 1:17. Despite alleged Pauline disregard for OT context, recent study has produced strong evidence of Paul's faithfulness to the context of the Habakkuk passage he cites. Contrary to the claims of "the commentators who say Paul stretched, misunderstood, reused Habakkuk," R. M. Moody shows that Paul's usage is in harmony with the original context of Habakkuk.⁵⁹

OT citations in Romans 10:5-8. Two noteworthy studies⁶⁰ have analyzed Paul's citations of Leviticus 18:5; Deuteronomy 9:4; and 30:11-14. Raymond Zorn specifically focuses on "the determination of Paul's method of using the Old Testament in the setting forth and establishment of his argument."⁶¹ His conclusion: "Paul, therefore, does not quote the Old Testament in the arbitrary interpretation of the allegorical form, nor simply in the loose fashion of the familiar, suitable, and proverbial language, but effectively, *ad sensum*, in an organic relationship with that of prophecy and promise of the Old Testament which now had found fulfillment in the Christ of the Gospel he so eloquently proclaimed."⁶² Likewise, Mark Seifrid, with the same methodological goal and after even more rigorous analysis, concludes that Paul's use of OT citations in Romans 10:6-8 evidences "both a clear respect for the OT context, and a considerable distance from the techniques of Qumran."⁶³

OT Citations in Hebrews. George Caird has analyzed citations of OT passages in Hebrews with the conclusion that "so far from being an example of fantastic exegesis which can be totally disregarded by modern Christians, Hebrews is one of the earliest and most successful attempts to define the relation between the Old and New Testaments, and that a large part of the value of the book is to be found in the method of exegesis which was formerly dismissed with contempt."⁶⁴

This conclusion has been reaffirmed by two studies of specific OT citations in Hebrews, conducted by Walter Kaiser.⁶⁵ Regarding the citation of Psalms 40:6-8 in Hebrews 10:5-10, Kaiser points out crucial internal clues within Psalm 40—just before and just after the central Messianic section—"catchwords that signaled that

more was underfoot in this public praise than a testimony to God for a rather private and personal escape. Instead it had communal, indeed, world-wide implications; it was another link in God's promise-plan."⁶⁶

Kaiser argues that the writer to the Hebrews was not "guilty of using homiletical midrash in Psalm 40 where the original setting was either forgotten or considered irrelevant and thus was blithely applied to Jesus," nor was he using a *peshet* type of exegesis, according to which the psalmist delivered a mystery (a *raz*) for which he had no explanation, but which only a much later *peshet* could unlock."⁶⁷ Although he allows that "Psalm 40:6-8 contains fewer messianic clues and less promise phraseology than other messianic passages," yet "patient attendance on the text will reveal that the writer to the Hebrews was on strong exegetical grounds."⁶⁸

Regarding the citation of Ps 95:11 in Hebrews 3-4, Kaiser asks about the hermeneutical approach of the writer to the Hebrews: "Is he guilty of a forced exegesis in which he is merely accommodating the old threats and promises formerly addressed to Israel for Christian readers? Is this piece of text in Hebrews a sample of the writer's fanciful misapplication of OT texts for Christian ears and eyes? Or has he just plain allegorized the Canaan rest into some spiritual dimension or into a symbol of heaven?" His answer: "Each of these charges fails to sustain its case in light of the OT context of Psalm 95, the OT usage of 'rest,' and the total message of Hebrews."⁶⁹ My own analysis of the Joshua typology in Scripture confirms that there are strong indicators of this typological motif already in the OT, and the writer to the Hebrews is simply announcing what had already been indicated in the OT.⁷⁰

Conclusion

In light of the evidence examined in research for this article, my understanding has grown into a settled conviction that the NT citations of OT passages do not involve "Christological re-interpretation," Hellenistic allegory, rabbinic midrash, Qumran-type *peshet*, or other methods of interpretation that distort the original meaning of the OT citations. Rather, the NT writers consistently remain faithful to the original passages in their immediate and wider OT contexts.

This is not to say that there is no further work to be done in examining NT citations of the OT. We have not looked at every alleged instance of NT distortion of the OT, and the ones we have treated call for more detailed analysis. But enough evidence has been surveyed to allow our basic conclusion to emerge.

If this conclusion is sound, it is therefore not necessary to modify the historic understanding of inspiration in order to accommodate supposed NT distortions of the OT. The same Spirit who inspired the truths set forth in OT passages has inspired or "carried along" (*phero*, 2 Pet 1:21) the NT writers to reflect faithfully and accurately the deep meaning inherent in these passages when viewed in the light of their broader OT contexts.

Endnotes

1 That the relationship between the OT and the NT is one of the major, if not the major, issue in biblical theology, is recognized by many. See, e.g., Henning Graf Reventlow, *Problems of Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), p. 11, citing and translating N. H. Ridderbos, "De verhouding van het Oude en het Nieuwe Testament," *Gereformeerde theologisch Tijdschrift* 68 (1968): 97: "The relationship between Old and New Testaments: that is just about the whole story; the whole of theology is involved in that." Likewise, Walter Kaiser, Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985), p. 2, writes, "the relationship between the OT and the NT stands as one of the foremost, if not the leading, problems in biblical research of this century."

2 There are of course many areas of concern in the study of the relationship of the Testaments. We have limited ourselves in this article to the explicit citations of OT passages in the NT. Here, again our study could go in many directions, such as examining the text types underlying the various citations. In this article we limit our discussion to the central question we are addressing: do the NT citations of OT Scripture remain faithful to the original OT contexts, or do they reinterpret these passages by reading back into the OT a meaning that is imported from the NT?

3 See my discussion of the unity of Scripture according to the Bible writers' self-testimony in "Interpreting Scripture: An Hermeneutical Decalogue," *JATS* 4/2 (Autumn 1993): 99-100.

4 See my discussion of this development in "The Authority of Scripture: A Personal Pilgrimage," *JATS* 1/1 (Spring 1990): 43, 51-52.

5 Raymond Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), p. 147.

6 See, e.g., Richard Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 218: "I suggest that we cannot reproduce their [the NT writers'] *peshet* exegesis. . . . Likewise, I suggest that we should not attempt to reproduce their midrashic handling of the text, their allegorical explications, or much of their Jewish manner of argumentation. All of this is strictly part of the cultural context through which the transcultural and eternal gospel was expressed." Cf. E. Earle Ellis, "How the New Testament Uses the Old," in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), pp. 201-208.

7 See, e.g., Norman Hillyer, "Matthew's Use of the Old Testament," *Evangelical Quarterly* 36 (1964): 25; E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 83; and Longenecker, p. 207. This view has been taken even further by

some SDA scholars, who claim that such doctrines as the pre-Advent, investigative judgment are not taught in the book of Daniel, and that Ellen White, as an inspired prophet, had the right—as did the NT prophets—to reinterpret the OT prophecies.

7 See, e.g., the view of Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1991), especially pp. 205-213.

8 David Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis before 70 CE* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992), p. 1.

9 Ibid.

10 The number of such examples is actually not large. Of the more than 300 formal OT quotations by NT writers (UBS Greek NT lists 318), the majority are uncontested as representing a literal usage that is faithful to the original context. In this study we are not dealing with the multitude of NT allusions to the OT. The NT writers, steeped in OT language and imagery, often employ Scriptural language in passing without a formal quotation.

11 Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (New York, NY: Phillips and Hunt, 1883), p. 331, cited by J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1973) p. 291.

12 For a representation of the immense bibliography, see John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 24 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), pp. 95-103.

13 For further discussion of this passage, see especially Gleason Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), pp. 266-268; and John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah; Chapters 1-39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 192-248.

14 The eight other occurrences of *'almāh* in the OT are in the following passages: Gen 24:43; Exod 2:8; 1 Chr 15:20; Ps 46:2 (Eng. 1); 68:26 (Eng. 25); Prov 30:19; Cant 1:3; 6:8. Numerous conservative scholars have forcefully argued that in none of these passages does *'almāh* refer to a married woman or one who is no longer a virgin. Even Prov 30:19; "the way of a man with a maiden [*'almāh*]" when viewed in its immediate context of mysteries (vss. 18-19), seems to describe the amazing process of falling in love and courtship, and not the sexual act after marriage. Likewise Cant 6:8, 9 contrasts the Shulamite with all other women present—queens, concubines, and maidens (*'lamōt*, i.e. unmarried young women); she is "first among women" (6:1). For further discussion and bibliography, see especially Oswalt, pp. 208-211.

15 Ibid, p. 210. Oswalt points out how this interpretation best explains the origin of the LXX translation of *'almāh* in Isa 7:14 with the Greek *parthenos*, "virgin."

16 In addition to recognizing that the rich semantic range of *'almāh* is well suited to encompass the dual focus of this prophecy, another plausible explanation has been advanced by Archer, p. 267: "At the time Isaiah 7:14 was given, the 'prophetess' mentioned in 8:3 would have been a virgin and would have been known to King Ahaz and his court as the woman to whom Isaiah (presumably a widower by this time, having lost through death the mother of Shear-jashub mentioned in 7:3) was engaged. Before they married the Lord revealed to Isaiah that the first child he would have by this godly young woman would be a boy. . . ." This latter explanation is far from certain, although some support is found in the fact that Shear-jashub was accompanying his father in his prophetic duties (7:3) which might imply the loss of his mother by this time.

17 See, e.g., S. Marion Smith, "New Testament Writers Use the Old Testament," *Encounter* 26 (1965): 239, who states that in citing Hos 11:1 Matthew employs "a method that can be rejected outright as an untenable use of Scripture. . . ."

18 C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures* (London: Collins, 1952), pp. 74-133.

19 See John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), pp. 407-409, for further discussion.

20 Note, e.g., how at the Transfiguration the first Moses speaks to the New Moses about His "departure" (Greek *exodus*) which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). Jesus' death is His ultimate Red Sea experience. After His resurrection He remains in the wilderness of this earth 40 days (like Israel's 40 years in the wilderness) and then as the New Joshua enters heavenly Canaan as the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. See George Balentine, "Death of Christ as a New Exodus," *Review and Expositor* 59 (1962): 27-41; and

idem, "The Concept of the New Exodus in the Gospels," (Th.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1961).

21 Kaiser, *Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, p. 52.

22 S. L. Edgar, "Respect for Context in Quotations from the Old Testament," *NTS* 9 (1962): 58.

23 Kaiser, *Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, pp. 55-56.

24 Ibid., p. 57.

25 Note the title of S. Vernon McCasland's article, "Matthew Twists the Scriptures," *JBL* 80 (1961): 143-148.

26 Ibid., p. 146.

27 The superscription (Ps 22:1) reads, *mizmōr l' dāwīd*, "A Psalm of David." Many critical scholars refuse to accept at face value the information conveyed in the superscriptions to the Psalms. For evidence supporting the authenticity of the superscriptions in the Psalms and David's authorship of Psalms with this superscription, see, e.g., Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (London: Tyndale Press, 1973), pp. 32-35; H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1959), pp. 5-8.

28 Leupold, p. 21.

29 Kidner, p. 109.

30 A. Bentzen, *King and Messiah* (Lutterworth, 1955), p. 94, n. 40 (italics his).

31 Franz Delitzsch, "Psalms," in *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*, by C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976 [orig. 1867]), 5:306.

32 The most natural antecedent to the pronoun is the nearest noun, the Son, rather than Yahweh in the previous verse.

33 For a rich discussion of the NT Messianic fulfillment of Psalm 22, see especially Hans LaRondelle, *Deliverance in the Psalms* (Berrien Springs, MI: First Impressions, 1983), pp. 53-60.

34 Besides Psalms 2, 16, and 22 (the latter two discussed below), other Davidic psalms thus cited include: Ps 35:19 (John 15:25); Ps 40:6-8 (Heb 10:5-9); Ps 41:9 (John 13:18); Ps 69:4 (John 15:25), 9 (John 2:17; Rom 15:3), 21 (Matt 27:34 and parallels); Ps 109:8 (Acts 1:20). Along with these psalms that are typologically Messianic as they are fulfilled in the New David, there is also David's reference to the "son of man" (Ps 8:3-8) alluding to Adam (Gen 1:26, 28), which in light of other OT references to the Messianic Son of Man (Ps 80:17; Dan 7:13, 14), establishes the typological basis for Adam-Christ typology and the citation in Heb 2:6-9. Another Davidic psalm (Ps 68:18) describes the activity of Yahweh, which in light of the recognition already in the OT that the Angel of Yahweh is also Yahweh (e.g., Gen 16:7-13; 18:1, 2, 33; 19:1; Gen 31:11-13; 32:24, 30; 48:15-16; Exod 3:2-7; Judg 13:17-22) and the NT identification of Yahweh with Christ (e.g., John 8:58), is seen as referring to Christ in Eph 4:8. (Cf. the non-Davidic psalms similarly cited: Ps 97:7 [Heb 1:6] and Ps 102:25-27 [Heb 1:10-12]). Finally, there is the directly Messianic Davidic Psalm of Psalm 110, where the Lord [the Father] spoke unto David's Lord [the Messiah]. This latter passage is faithfully exegeted in Matt 22:41-46 and Heb 5:5-11; 7:11-27.

35 Jacques Doukhan, "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9: An Exegetical Study," *AUSS* 17 (1979): 18-19.

36 See Kaiser, *Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, pp. 25-41. The discussion that follows related to Psalm 16 builds upon Kaiser's research.

37 See below, in our discussion of Gal 3:16.

38 See below, in our discussion of Matt 12:40, and endnote no. 49.

39 See Walter Kaiser, Jr., "The Blessing of David: A Charter for Humanity," in *The Law and the Prophets*, ed. John Skilton (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing House, 1974), pp. 298-318; and idem, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 149-155.

40 Kaiser, *Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, pp. 37-38.

41 A. T. Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 159.

42 See Kaiser, *Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, pp. 212-220.

43 Ibid., p. 215.

44 F. Godet, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, trans. J. W. Leitch (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1975), p. 155, n. 38, cited in Kaiser, *Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, p. 215.

45 See Richard M. Davidson, "Sanctuary Typology," in *Symposium on Revelation—Book I*, ed. Frank Holbrook, Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, vol 6 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992), pp. 106, 128.

46 See Bertrand C. Pryce, "The Resurrection Motif in Hosea 5:8-6:6: An Exegetical Study" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 1989), for examination of the exegetical evidence for the death-resurrection motif in this passage.

47 It may also be more than co-incidental that in the next chapter Hosea says Israel is "like Jonah" (Heb *k'yōnāh*, with *yōnah* the name for Jonah, meaning "dove") who flees from Yahweh and goes to Assyria (Hos 7:11, 13).

48 See above, our discussion of the New Israel/New Exodus theme as it related to the citation of Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15.

49 In the Servant Songs of Isaiah 42-53, what is most striking is the frequent alternation between the corporate and the singular servant, with both individual and corporate servants described in the same language. In this way the prophet indicates that the Messianic Servant would be the New Israel. See H. H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord and Other Essays* (London: Lutterworth, 1952), for further discussion. For treatment of the death-resurrection motif with reference to the Messianic servant in Isaiah, see especially Duane F. Lindsey, *The Servant Songs: A Study in Isaiah* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985).

50 For discussion of the meaning of this phrase, and biblical evidence for inclusive reckoning so that this expression indicates any part of three days, see *SDABC*, 5:248-251.

51 The third-day timing of the Messiah's resurrection is also probably indicated in the typology of the wave sheaf in Leviticus 23. A sheaf of barley was to be waved "on the day after the Sabbath" of Passover week (Lev 23:11). If the Sabbath referred to here is the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15), then the wave sheaf would always be waved on Nisan 16, the third day from Nisan 14 when the Passover was celebrated. Paul recognizes that Jesus in his resurrection is the antitypical wave-sheaf, the first-fruits of the coming harvest (1 Cor 15:20, 23).

52 Davidson, "Interpreting Scripture," pp. 105, 112.

53 For evidence that Paul in Galatians 3 is not simply citing Genesis 12, but in particular had Gen 22:17-18 in mind, see the discussion of Gal 3:8 in Max Wilcox, "Upon the Tree"—Deut 21:22-23 in the New Testament," *JBL* 96 (1977): 94-97.

54 See O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980), pp. 93-100, for excellent discussion of Gen 3:15.

55 Dale M. Wheeler, "Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Gal 3:16" (Th.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1987).

56 Ibid., pp. 332-333.

57 See, e.g., Francis Foulkes, *The Acts of God: A Study of the Basis of Typology in the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1958), pp. 36-37; Ellis, *Paul and the OT*, p. 127; Hanson, pp. 94-95.

58 See Robert M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London: SPCK, 1957), p. 122.

59 R. M. Moody, "The Habakkuk Quotation in Romans 1:17," *The Expository Times* 92 (1981): 205-208; quotation from p. 206.

60 Raymond O. Zorn, "The Apostle Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 10:5-8," *Gordon Review* 5 (1959):29-34; and Mark A. Seifrid, "Paul's Approach to the Old Testament in Rom 10:6-8," *Trinity Journal* 6 (1985): 3-37.

61 Zorn, p. 29.

62 Ibid., p. 34.

63 Seifrid, p. 37. Seifrid is especially helpful in pointing out the wider Deuteronomic context which is presupposed in Paul's use of the Deuteronomy passages.

64 George B. Caird, "The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 5 (1959): 49-51. Regarding Hebrews' use of Jeremiah 31, for example, Caird, p. 47, describes this as "a perfectly sound piece of exegesis."

65 For the exegesis of Ps 40:6-8 in Heb 10:5-7, see especially Kaiser, *Uses of the Old Testament in the New*, pp. 122-141; for the exegesis of Ps 95:7-11 in Hebrews 3-4, see *ibid.*, pp. 153-175.

66 Ibid., p. 132.

67 Ibid., p. 138.

68 Ibid., p. 141.

69 Ibid., p. 169. Kaiser's extended discussion of Romans 9-11 in this context is not as helpful, where he seems to argue for a literal return of Israel to Palestine as part of the fulfillment of God's promise/plan. For a better analysis of Romans 9-11 and this whole issue, see Hans LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy: Principles of Prophetic Interpretation* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1983).

70 See my forthcoming commentary on Joshua published by Review and Herald Publishing Association (in 1995).

INSPIRATION AND THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS

By Angel M. Rodriguez

Biblical Research Institute

Silver Spring, Maryland

Introduction

Christians who have used the Psalter in public worship and for personal devotions have been seriously disturbed by the presence of imprecatory language in some of the psalms. The number of imprecations is significant, and these have led some scholars to refer to certain psalms as "imprecatory psalms." However, since no literary type of psalm appears in the Psalter that could be called "imprecatory,"¹ it is better to say that there are imprecatory passages in some of the psalms.

Another clarification needing to be made is that these imprecations are not primarily curses, but prayers—entreatings God to punish the enemies of the psalmist in a particular way.² It is true that at times we find what could be called a formula of cursing³ (e.g. "may the enemy be destroyed"), but it is used as part of a prayer addressed to God.

Nevertheless, for the Christian, this in no way eliminates the apparent distastefulness of this aspect of the Psalter. A few examples from the psalms will illustrate the point:

Ps 35:4* "May those who seek my life
be disgraced and put to shame;
May those who plot my ruin
be turned back in dismay."

54:5(7)** "Let evil recoil on those who slander me;
in your faithfulness destroy them."

55:15(16) "Let death take my enemies by surprise;
let them go down alive to the grave . . ."

59:13 "Consume them in wrath,
consume them till they are no more."

109:9 "May his children be fatherless
and his wife a widow.

10 "May his children be wandering beggars;
May they be driven from their ruined homes.

15 "May their sins always remain before the Lord,
that he may cut off the memory of them from
the earth."

137:8 "O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction,
happy is he who repays you
for what you have done to us—
he who seizes your infants
and dashes them against the rocks."

The thoughts expressed and the language used seem to suggest an incompatibility with the message and spirit of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Was the psalmist inspired by God when he wrote down those passages? Did God reveal to him that "the righteous will be glad when they are avenged, when they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked?" (58:10)

Imprecations and Inspiration

Proposed Solutions. The issue of the inspiration of such passages has been raised by others;⁴ and different, complimentary, and contradictory answers have been given. Those who deny any inspiration to the imprecations suggest they are the expression of the vindictive spirit of the psalmist.⁵ Others argue that the petitioner, although committed to God, was yet "estranged from

God's spirit," and expressed thoughts that were unworthy and sub-Christian.⁶ Still others have suggested that inspiration was operative in the recording of the imprecation but not in its content.⁷

The concept of progressive revelation is used by some to clarify the perceived unsurmountable differences between imprecatory prayers and the NT. It is stated that "the inspiration of these hopes and prayers indicates that a progress in the revelation was wanting to attain the degree of ethical standards divinely willed for man."⁸ This progress reached its zenith in Christ, making obsolete such prayers.

Dispensationalist interpreters believe that the Psalter belongs to the dispensation of law. Consequently, they consider the ethical concepts expressed in the imprecatory passages incompatible with the new dispensation of grace.¹⁰ The implication is that *what was right* in the OT is no longer right for the believer in Christ.¹¹

Some who believe in the inspiration of the psalmist have tried to downplay the imprecatory force of the prayers, arguing that the petitioner used poetical exaggeration in the expression of his thoughts.¹² Others contend that the enemies are impersonal forces, spiritual ones,¹³ or national enemies of the theocratic kingdom of God.¹⁴ This, supposedly, justifies the use of imprecatory language. A common view is that the imprecations are prophetic descriptions of what will happen to the ungodly at the eschaton.¹⁵

A number of scholars find the imprecatory passages meaningful in terms of their theological content and pedagogical function. Theologically, the key element, some say, is the vindication of God's justice¹⁶ revealed in the vindication of the oppressed. They teach us about Israel's understanding of justice and God's reaction to sin;¹⁷ according to others, we learn about the human tendency to resentment, and also about the need to oppose evil.¹⁸ Ethically, it is argued, it is right to make such prayers because there is a hatred to evil based on love. This hatred is compatible with divine inspiration because "it does not violate the law of love."¹⁹

Inspiration of the Psalter. The Scriptures themselves testify on behalf of the inspiration of the Psalter. David, who wrote many psalms, affirmed that the Lord spoke through him in the composition of his songs. He says:

The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel's singer of songs:

The Spirit of the Lord spoke through me
his word was in my tongue
The God of Israel spoke,
the Rock of Israel said to me . . . (2 Sam 23:1-3).

There is no valid reason to deny that revelation and inspiration were also operative in the composition of his other psalms. We will show that even in the psalms in which there is no explicit reference to revelatory acts, the author bases the composition of the inspired song on a previous act of divine revelation.

It is significant that in some of the psalms where we find imprecatory language we also find divine oracles in which the psalmist quotes God's speech (e.g. Pss 12:3-5; 68:1-2, 22-23). Revelation and inspiration must be operative in both cases. In addition, the NT quotes from some of the so-called imprecatory psalms in order to strengthen the divine authority of the argument being developed (Rom 3:13 [Pss 5:9; 140:3]); and also to uncover the prophetic nature of a particular passage (Rom 15:3 [Ps 69:9]; Rom 11:9-10 [Ps 69:22-23]).²⁰

The problem we confront, therefore, is not whether the imprecations were inspired, but why the biblical writer felt free to use this type of language to express God's thoughts.

The Language of the Imprecations

At this point we will turn to the text of several psalms and explore the origin and purpose of the language used in the imprecatory passages. The most radical imprecations have been selected because they illustrate clearly the purpose and the source of the language used in these kinds of passages.²¹

1. Psalms 5:10 (11)

Declare them guilty [*'āšam*], O God!
Let their intrigues be their down fall.

Banish [*nādah*] them for their many sins [*peša'*],
for they have rebelled [*mārāh*] against you.

This psalm is designated as an Individual Lament in which a falsely accused person is described as seeking protection from the Lord against his enemies. Perhaps, it may be better to call it a psalm of innocence or a psalm of confidence.²² The setting is a legal one in the court of the Lord.²³

The verb *'āšam* = "to declare guilty," or "to punish" expresses in legal language a negative verdict against the enemy. This petition is based on the fact that the worshiper knows, according to Psalms 34:21-22, that "the foes of the righteous will be condemned [*'āšam*]" and that "no one who takes refuge in him will be condemned [*'āšam*]."

The second request is that the enemies may "fall by their own schemes,"²⁴ which is "a picture of misfortune in general."²⁵ The wicked person is often described in the OT, and especially in the Psalms and Proverbs, as brought down by his own wickedness (e.g. Prov 11:5; 28:14, 18; Ps 35:8; 141:10).

The third request is for banishment (*nādah* = "to scatter, disperse"). It implies the removal of the person from his or her place of security and self-confidence. The dispersion of the Israelites is one of the covenant curses announced by the Lord against His rebellious people (Deut 30:1). It is a punishment for sin.

The reason for the imprecations is provided: the petitioner's enemies have committed many sins (*peša'* = "rebellion, crime"), and they are obstinate (*mārāh*) against the Lord. These two terms indicate that the sin of the enemies was premeditated, intentional, an act of rebellion against God. If *peša'* denotes open "rebellion," *mārāh* "denotes callous defiance."²⁶

We should notice that this prayer is based on the manner God said He would deal with the wicked. The psalmist knows that God condemns those who rebel against Him, upsetting the religious and social order established by Him. Secondly, the petitioner is fully acquainted with the concept of divine retribution. It is through God's intervention that the evil plans of the wicked fall back on them. Thirdly, the psalmist is motivated by the fact that God's honor is adversely affected by the defiance of the wicked.

Therefore, we should not read into the passage a spirit of personal vengeance on the part of the psalmist.²⁷ Furthermore, the language used here points to a legal setting in which the enemies are described as violators of the covenant and deserving the covenant curses.

2. Psalm 28:4

Repay [*nāthan*] them for their deeds
and for their evil work;

Repay them for what their hands have done
and bring back [*šûb*] upon them what they deserve
[*g^{em}ûl*].

This psalm places the imprecatory element between a lament (vss. 1-3) and a thanksgiving (vss. 5-9). Apparently the psalmist was falsely accused of a crime by his enemies.²⁸ The imprecation seems to be used in part to disassociate the singer from the wicked.

The thought expressed in the imprecation, using synonymous parallelism, is based on the *lex talionis*. The wicked should be paid (*nathan* + *l^e* = "give to/repay;" e.g. Jer 17:10) according to their crimes. The idea of retribution is clearly expressed by the combination of the verb *šûb* = "to return" and the noun *g^{em}ûl* = "reward."²⁹ The OT testifies again and again that God is in charge of the retribution of the enemies of His people and that He repays them according to their works (e.g. Isa 3:11; 59:18; Jer 17:10; 51:56). This is part of God's self-disclosure to Israel and lies at the very foundation of covenant justice and order.

The imprecation is, therefore, based on the psalmist's knowledge of God as He revealed Himself to him and to Israel. The background of the imprecation is the covenant relationship with its legal system of justice which assures proper punishment for each crime. The imprecation is motivated by the disrespect for God manifested in the conduct of the wicked (vs. 5). It is important to notice that in the thanksgiving the psalmist praises God because He heard his cry for help (vs. 6). God heard and answered this prayer which included an imprecatory element.

3. Psalm 35:4-9 (cf. Pss 40:14; 70:2)

May those who seek my life

be disgraced [*kālam*] and put to shame;

May those who plot my ruin

be turned back [*sûg*] in dismay [*hāphār*].

May they be like chaff [*mōš*] before the wind,

with the angel of the Lord driving them
away [*dāhāh*];

May their path be dark and slippery [*hālāq*]

with the angel of the Lord pursuing [*rādaph*] them.

Since they hid their net for me without cause

and without cause dug a pit for me,

May ruin [*šō'āh*] overtake them by surprise—

May the net they hid entangle them,

May they fall into the pit for their ruin.

Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord

and delight in his salvation.

This psalm is the prayer of a person who is being persecuted by his enemies without any reason. The language suggests that the author was involved “in a legal case and a war with his ‘enemies’.”³⁰ This may very well be a royal psalm.³¹ The main terms used in the imprecation are taken from the context of war and military defeat.

The verb *kālam* = “be disgraced” is used in military contexts to designate the humiliating shame of having to flee from battle in defeat (e.g. 2 Sam 19:3). The OT indicates that it is the Lord who disgraces and puts to shame the enemies of His people in the battlefield (e.g. Ps 44:10-11; Isa 41:11; 45:16-17). God as a warrior fights for them.

This experience of defeat is referred to in the parallel line as a turning back (*sûg* = “draw back”). This is another military term. God had promised His people that He will do that to their enemies (e.g. Isa 42:17; Jer 38:22; 46:5) and the psalmist was aware of that

promise (cf. 129:5). The enemy was to turn back and “be ashamed” (*hāphar*). The primary emphasis of this verb is on suffering “the consequences of one’s own actions,”³² cf. Jer 15:9.

The image of chaff blown away is well known in the Bible and is used to indicate absence of strength and firmness (e.g. Ps 1:4). It is also used in military contexts to describe the defeat inflicted by God on His enemies (Isa 17:13; 29:5).

The verb “to be slippery” (*hālāq* = “to be smooth” from which the noun in the psalm is derived) is not a military term but the concept is used here to describe soldiers trying to escape from a persecuting army while running on slippery ground. In other words, the defeated army will not escape. According to Psalms 73:18 God places the wicked on slippery ground causing their ruin (cf. Jer 23:12).

God’s instrument in defeating the enemies is “the angel of the Lord.” He drives them away (*dāhāh* = “to push down;” cf. Jer 23:12; Prov 14:32), and pursues them (*rādaph* = “to persecute”). The salvation history recorded in the OT provides examples of the military involvement of the angel of the Lord on behalf of Israel (e.g. 2 Kgs 19:35). The enemies will be persecuted because they persecuted the psalmist (vs. 3). This is, once more, the principle of divine retribution, which is further developed in vss. 7-8.

The psalmist wishes the enemies would fall in the traps they prepared for him and that ruin (*šō'āh* = “devastation”) will overtake them. This is exactly what God decreed over Babylon, the enemy of His people (Isa 47:11), and what overtakes the wicked, according to Proverbs 3:25. This term is also used to describe the result of a military defeat (e.g. Isa 10:3). The petitioner knows that God’s justice is revealed when the nations fall into “the pit they have dug” and when “their feet are caught in the net they have hidden” (Ps 9:15-16).

The example of *lex talionis* in these verses “does not vindicate vendettas and revenge but states a law of reality: we become in our heart and facial features as well as in the events of life what we think and do. Violence breeds violence. Liars are caught in the web of their own lies.”³³

Through the imprecations the psalmist is really asking for a

revelation of God's salvific power. Then his "soul will rejoice in the Lord and delight in his salvation" (vs. 9).

We have noticed that the language used by the author is taken from the wars of the Lord. His prayer is based on the firm theological conviction that God is a warrior who fights for His people. He is asking the Lord to reveal Himself again as a divine warrior. The concept of retribution (*lex talionis*) is used to provide a legal basis for God's punitive intervention. The worshiper is not asking God to inflict an arbitrary punishment on his enemies but one commensurate with the crime. The psalmist considers God's intervention to be a revelation of His justice that will restore justice on the land and in society.

4. Psalm 58:6-8, 10 (7-9, 11)

6 Break [*hāraṣ*] the teeth in their mouths, O God;
tear out [*nāthaṣ*], O Lord, the fangs of the lions!

7 Let them vanish like water that flows away;
when they draw the bow, let their
arrows be blunted.

8 Like a slug melting away [*mā'as*] as it moves along,
like a stillborn child, may they not see the sun.

10 The righteous will be glad [*śāmah*] when they are
avenged [*nāqām*]
when they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked.

This psalm is a community lament which condemns, in an almost prophetic style, the corruption of the leaders of the people.³⁴ The language used is colorful, loaded with impressive images. The imprecations ask God to intervene and put an end to the corruption of the rulers.

The enemies are compared to poisonous snakes (vs. 4). The first imprecation addresses that simile and asks God to neutralize the mortal threat of the serpent by breaking its teeth. The verb "to break" (*hāraṣ* = "to destroy, tear down") is used by God in the OT to describe the effects of His judgment on His enemies (e.g. Exo 15:7; Jer 50:15),³⁵ defeating them permanently (cf. Ps 28:5).

The parallel imprecation applies the image of a lion to the enemy. God is asked "to tear out" (*nāthaṣ* = "break up") its jaw bones. This verb is also used in the psalms to describe God's

judgment on the wicked (e.g. Ps 52:5 (7); cf. Jer 4:26). At times the enemies are compared to lions (Ps 35:17; Jer 2:15). The simile seems to have been a common one (cf. Job 4:10). God had promised to destroy the lions (enemies of His people) and the psalmist is asking Him to do it.

Verses 7-8 contain several different figures to describe what the author wishes for his enemies.³⁶ They are compared to the disappearance of the water in a wadi. The verb *mā'as* = "vanish" is probably a variation of *māsas* ("dissolve, melt, become weak") which is also used in the OT to describe the effects of God's presence or power on His enemies (e.g. Josh 5:1). People who hear about God's coming judgment become weak like water (Ezek 21:7 [12]). As the heat evaporates the water in the wadi, the wicked vanishes before the Lord. The Hebrew text in vss. 7b and 8 is not clear, making it difficult to understand the other figures. All we can say is that the psalmist seems to be asking God to put an end to the wicked.³⁷ "Since the wicked are obstinate in their wickedness, they must be rendered powerless or destroyed."³⁸

Verse 10 is not an imprecation but it could be interpreted as revealing the real feelings of the petitioner. It describes the experience of the righteous when their enemies are destroyed. A literal translation of v 10a would be, "the righteous will be glad when/because he sees vengeance." The righteous in the OT experience joy, gladness (*śāmah*) when God delivers them from their enemies (e.g. 1 Sam 2:1; 19:5). God is the source of that joy (Ps 30:12; 2 Chr 20:27); in fact He promises it to them (Isa 65:13; Zech 10:7). The psalmist very often exhorts the worshipers to rejoice in the Lord, that is to say, in the salvation He has brought (e.g. 32:11; 64:10; 97:12; 104:34).

The term "vengeance" (*nāqām*) is used here to indicate that the wicked received what they legally deserved for their crimes. It would be right to translate *nāqām* here as "just recompense."³⁹ The joy of the psalmist is based on his commitment to justice, not on a revengeful spirit.

More difficult to interpret is vs. 10b: "When they bathe their feet in the blood of the wicked." Obviously, this image is taken from the field of military conflict and defeat. It is important to notice that the wicked were not killed by the psalmist but by the Lord. He is

an observer, while God gives them their just reward. The phrase "bathe their feet in the blood" is being used here metaphorically to express the idea of total and absolute victory over the enemy. The psalmist feels free to use this terminology not just because it probably was a common allusion in warfare, but because God Himself has used the concept to describe His total victory over the enemies of His people.

We read in Psalms 68:22-23 (23-24):

The Lord says, "I will bring them [the enemies] from Bashan
I will bring them from the depths of the sea,
that you may plunge your feet in the blood of your foes,
While the tongues of your dogs have their share."

The last part of the verse is evidently a reference to Jezebel's violent death (2 Kings 9:35-37). It is important to observe that this passage contains an oracle from the Lord given to the psalmist. The purpose of the imagery is to assure His people that He will defeat their enemies once and for all.⁴⁰ God does perform blood revenge on the enemies who oppress the righteous. Through the imprecatory language the psalmist is looking forward to the fulfillment of divine promises.

The psalmist is not really cursing the wicked but asking God to exercise His saving and judiciary power by giving them what they deserve. The language is taken primarily from the context of war and is used metaphorically to describe the triumph of the Lord over the wicked. We find, once more, legal terminology used to convey the idea that the punishment corresponds to the magnitude of the crime. The motivating factor is not the satisfaction of personal hatred but the revelation and recognition of God's justice: "Then men will say, 'surely the righteous still are rewarded, surely there is a God who judges the earth'" (vs. 11). "There can be no thought here of a wish for revenge and retribution."⁴¹

5. Psalm 109:6-20

- 6 Appoint an evil man to oppose him;
let an accuser stand at his right hand.
- 7 When he is tried, let him be found guilty,
and may his prayers condemn him.
- 8 May his days be few;
May another take his place of leadership.

- 9 May his children be fatherless
and his wife a widow.
- 10 May his children be wandering beggars;
May they be driven from their ruined homes.
- 11 May a creditor seize all he has;
May strangers plunder the fruits of his labor.
- 12 May no one extend kindness [*hesed*] to him
or take pity on his fatherless children.
- 13 May his descendants be cut off [*kārat*]
their names blotted out from the next generation.
- 14 May the iniquity of his fathers be
remembered [*zākar*] before the Lord;
May the sin of his mother never be blotted out.
- 15 May their sins always remain before the Lord
that he may cut off the memory of them from the
earth.
- 16 For he never thought [*zākar*] of doing a kindness [*hesed*],
but hounded to death the poor
and the needy and the brokenhearted.
- 17 He loved to pronounce a curse—
May it come on him;
He found no pleasure in blessing—
may it be far from him.
- 18 He wore cursing as his garment;
it entered into his body like water,
into his bones like oil.
- 19 May it be like a cloak wrapped about him,
Like a belt tied forever around him.
- 20 May this be the Lord's payment to my accusers,
to those who speak evil of me.

The imprecatory section is long and occupies a central place in the psalm. This has led some to refer to it as an imprecatory psalm.⁴² But, since there are other elements present in the psalm, it is better to classify it as "an individual complaint."⁴³ The petitioner had been unjustly accused by those to whom he was kind (vss. 2-5). In

response he goes before the Lord seeking justice from Him. The background is a legal one.⁴⁴

The court setting is clearly indicated in the first imprecation (vs. 6). In court the petitioner wants the enemy to be without anybody to defend him (cf. Zech 3:1). In essence, he is asking that the enemy be found guilty and that his lack of religiosity be unmasked. The petition is based on the broad legal and theological concept that the Lord will not allow the righteous to be condemned in His court (Ps 37:33).

Once the person is declared guilty, his life should be shortened. The psalmist knows that the wicked live only "half of their days" (55:23; cf. 37:35-39). Because the wickedness of the evildoer was proven in court, he should be removed from his office (*p^equddāh*), that is to say, from his position of authority.⁴⁵ This may have been a common practice in legal procedures. The petitioner also asks that the children of the enemy "be fatherless and his wife a widow" (vs. 9). This phrase is used in the OT to describe a divine punishment over certain individuals (e.g. Exod 22:24 [23]; Isa 9:16-17; Lam 5:3).⁴⁶ Left without the protection of the father, the children are to become homeless and their inheritance taken by creditors (vss. 10-11). However, the covenant law was very much interested in the protection of orphans and widows (e.g. Exod 22:22 [21]; Deut 24:17; 27:19; Isa 10:2; cf. Deut 10:18). God Himself was interested in the rights of the orphan (e.g. Ps 10:14, 18). Yet the psalmist is asking God to show total disregard for the family of his enemy, to treat them as if they were no longer part of the covenant community.

For the author, the descendants of the wicked are no longer part of the covenant family and therefore no one should show them kindness (*ḥesed*) or pity (*ḥānan*), vs. 12. This is terminology associated with the covenant relationship (cf. Jos 2:12, 14; Ps 143:12). There were times when God commanded His servants not to show any mercy to their enemies (Deut 7:2, 16). At other times God Himself is described as not willing to show mercy to the enemies of His people (e.g. Isa 27:11; cf. Ps 59:5; Isa 26:10-11).

The idea of removal from the covenant community is overtly expressed by the use of the extirpation formula: "May his descendants be cut off [*kārat*]." God had stated in the Pentateuch that those who sin defiantly were to be cut off from among His people

(e.g. Num 15:30-31; cf. Exod 12:15; 30:33; 31:14). The Psalter also says that the "offspring of the wicked will be cut off" (37:28, 38); that their names will be blotted out for ever (9:5). This was precisely what God said would happen to those who would say, "I will be safe even though I persist in going my own way" (Deut 29:19-20). Such individuals would be blotted out of the book of life and would not be listed among the righteous (Ps 69:28).

In verse 14 the psalmist seems to have in mind Deuteronomy 29:16-20. He prays that God will remember always the sin of the father and never blot out the sin of the mother (vs. 14). The verb "to remember" (*zākar*) expresses a punitive judgment when associated with terms for sin (here we have *āwōn* = "iniquity").⁴⁷ If God does not remember the sin of a person, that means that forgiveness was granted (Jer 31:34; Isa 43:25; 64:9 [8]). But if He remembers them there is a punitive action (Hos 7:1-2; cf. Ps 25:6-7; 79:8-9).

In verse 15 the psalmist asks God to cut off the memory of the wicked from the earth. Blotting out the memory of someone "refers to death and annihilation."⁴⁸ This is exactly what the Lord said would happen to the wicked (Ps 9:6). God was going to do this particularly to the Amalekites (Exod 17:15; Deut 25:19).

The author proceeds in vss. 16-18 to provide reasons to justify the imprecatory language. The first thing we are told is that the wicked "never thought [*zākar*] about kindness [*ḥesed*]." The verb *zakar* was used in vs. 14 and the noun in vs. 15; the term kindness was used in vs. 12. The imprecatory language is based on the law of retribution (*lex talionis*): he did not show kindness to any one, no one should show kindness to him; he never thought about kindness, God will never stop thinking about his sin. This evildoer broke the covenant relationship, and he is expected to receive the covenant curses.

A person shows kindness (*ḥesed*) by respecting and protecting the widow and the orphan, those who were needy and poor (e.g. Deut 24:12-14; Zech 7:9-10).⁴⁹ According to Exodus 22:22-24 the punishment for those who violated the right of a widow or an orphan was that their "wives would [become] widows" and their "children fatherless." This seems to be a reference to the *lex*

talionis. The imprecation in vs. 9 is based on this covenant violation and is not an expression of the cruelty of the psalmist.⁵⁰

The imprecations listed in vs. 17 are also based on the *lex talionis*: The enemy cursed and never blessed the poor, therefore, the curse should fall on him and blessing should be “far from him.” The concept of cursing the one who curses and blessing those who bless others is found very early in the Bible as a promise from God to Abraham (Gen 12:2-3). The psalmist prays that his enemy may receive exactly what he deserves, based on the way he has acted. This particular enemy was beyond redemption⁵¹ and was to be removed from the covenant community.

The psalmist’s enemy was characterized by a cursing disposition and attitude (vss. 18-19).⁵² “Cursing was his outer fabric. . . . Cursing also became his inner fiber. He drank curses like water, and imprecations healed and soothed his frame like oil.”⁵³ The psalmist describes his enemy here as a person trapped in his own curses, becoming himself a cursed person (cf. 2 Kgs 22:19; Jer 24:9). Accursed persons were cut off [*kārat*] from the land by the Lord (Ps 37:22). This explains why the petitioner requested that the enemy be cut off from the land. These imprecations, the psalmist says, should be the reward or punishment of his enemy (vs. 20).

The imprecations in this psalm should not be interpreted as expressing a spirit of hatred, revenge, and cruelty on the part of the psalmist. He is asking God to punish his enemies, but to do it with justice, basing the judgment on their behavior and attitudes.

The law of retribution provides the legal backbone for these imprecations. The legal language used is taken from the covenant law, and the imprecatory request is based on the penalty stipulated for its violation. The fundamental motivation of the psalmist is an intense thirst for divine justice and for the reestablishment of the social, religious and psychological order created by God’s covenant which the defiant enemy has dared to upset.

6. Psalm 137:7-9

7 Remember [*zākar*], O Lord, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. “Tear it down,” they cried, “Tear it down to its foundation!”

8 O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy [*’ašrê*] is he who repays [*šillam*] you for what you have done to us—

9 He who seizes your infants [*’ôlāl*] and dashes [*nippeš*] them against the rocks.

This psalm has some characteristics of an individual lament⁵⁴ but is probably a song of Zion (vs. 3).⁵⁵ The author is reminiscing his painful experience in exile and the intense pain of knowing that Zion was in ruins. This leads him to express several strong imprecations against the enemies of Zion. For the Edomites he asks God to “remember” (*zākar*) how they encouraged the Babylonian armies in their work of destruction (vs. 7). The implication is that God at some point will punish the Edomites.

The strongest wish is against Babylon. The psalmist knows that Babylon will be destroyed (vs. 8).⁵⁶ The imprecation is somewhat veiled because the petitioner is simply declaring happy (*’ašrê*) the person “who executes God’s judgment against the enemies of His chosen people.”⁵⁷ The punishment is described by him as “repaying” Babylon for what it did to Zion. The verb used expresses the idea of a retributive judgment (*šillam* = “reward, repay”). The *lex talionis* is being invoked in a context of war.

The next image—dashing children against the rocks—is taken from the battlefield and sounds very cruel. It is a common one used to express the idea of military defeat (e.g. 2 Kgs 8:12; Isa 13:18; Hos 10:14). It says more about the insensitivity and cruelty of ancient wars than about the true feelings of the psalmist. Nevertheless, the question to be addressed is to what extent was this inspired writer expressing God’s message or thought through that language.

It is significant that the psalmist is using in these verses concepts and terminology found in the prophetic speeches of Jeremiah and Isaiah against Babylon. This is particularly true in the case of Jeremiah 51. The concept of divine retribution runs throughout that chapter using the same terminology found in the psalm. Notice the linguistic connections:

137:8-9		Jer 51	
8	<i>bath-bābel</i> "daughter of Babylon"	33	<i>bath-bābel</i>
	<i>haššēdūdah</i> "the destroyer"	48	<i>haššōddīm</i> (pl) cf 53, 56
	<i>šillam</i> "to repay"	6	<i>šillam</i>
	<i>gēmūl</i> "reward"	6	<i>gēmūl</i> (cf vs. 56)
9	<i>niphēš</i> "to smash"	20-22	<i>niphēš</i>
	<i>sela'</i> "rock"	25	<i>sela'</i>

We even find in Jeremiah 51:35 the Lord quoting an imprecation from the people: "May the violence done to our flesh be upon Babylon, . . ." And the Lord answers them: "I will defend your cause and avenge you" (vs. 36). Almost every noun and verb used in Psalms 137:8 is found in Jeremiah 51. The psalmist seemed to have been well acquainted with Jeremiah's oracles against Babylon and used that special revelation to phrase, under divine inspiration, his imprecation.

However, Jeremiah does not describe the defeat of Babylon as the dashing of children against the rocks. He comes very close to that language when he writes "I shatter [*nippēš*] young man and maiden" (vs. 22). There are linguistic differences, but the concept seems to be the same.

But it is Isaiah who provides the best parallel to Psalm 137:9. In one of the oracles against Babylon the Lord says, "Their infants [*ōlāl* = "child"] will be dashed to pieces [*raṭaš* = "smash to pieces"] before their eyes" (13:16). The term for "child" use in Isaiah is the same found in the psalm. The verb is a synonym of *nippēš* = "smash," used in the psalm. The psalmist was using a concept and terminology used by God to describe the collapse of Babylon. God's instrument in that task of judgment, not identified in the psalm but in Jeremiah (51:28), is proclaimed happy because he is doing justice by executing the punitive judgment of God on His enemies.

It is clear that the author of Psalm 137 was not venting a spirit of personal vindictiveness and using the cruelest language he could come up with to express his hatred against Babylon. He was simply

expressing thoughts which God had already expressed; he was appropriating divine revelation forecasting the ultimate destruction of Babylon. There is no spirit of a hatred that knows no limits to the damage to be inflicted on an enemy. On the contrary, since this punitive judgment is based on the concept of retribution, it is considered to be a righteous one.

Summary

Our study of the language in the imprecatory passages has brought to light several significant theological elements. These enable our western mind-set to better understand them.

First, it is evident that the imprecations are based on a previous act of divine revelation that provided the theological concepts and the language employed by the inspired psalmist. Some of the language comes from the covenant curses or from the stated punishment for specific sins mentioned in the biblical legislation. In other cases concepts and phraseology seem to be taken from or point to some divine punitive activity within history against sinners (e.g. destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the rebellion of Korah).

In many cases the language is legal and expresses—using different images or similes—the biblical concept of divine retribution. This retribution expresses itself not only in the court of law but also in the battlefield, where God defeats the enemies of His people. The psalmist uses concepts and language from both contexts.

This language of war is used in the OT not only to describe how God dealt with the wicked in the past but also to indicate how He will deal with them in the future. Hence, this language is used by the prophets also.⁵⁸

It is, therefore, proper to conclude that the imprecation passages contain aspects of the biblical concept of God. In fact, they convey in a very peculiar way a revelation of God's saving and punitive power which is also well attested in the rest of God's special revelation to Israel.

Second, the psalmist is not primarily interested in his own honor but in the honor of the Lord. A victory of the wicked over the psalmist would be a victory of wickedness over righteousness, casting a shadow on God's justice. It is God, then, who should

intervene to vindicate His own name and to reveal that He is a righteous God. The imprecations ask God to act once more, as He acted in the past or as He promised He would act, to vindicate His justice and His righteous servant.

Third, the imprecations are pronounced against two types of wicked persons: (1) Those who are redeemable; and (2) those who are beyond redemption and should be cut off from among God's people and from the land. For the first group, the imprecation, if granted by God, may have a positive function and may lead the person to a real knowledge of the Lord. For the second group, the imprecation, if granted, will result in their extermination. In either case God's justice will be revealed, and both groups will come to recognize, in one way or another, that the Most High is Lord over His people and the whole earth.⁵⁹

Finally, we notice that very often the principle of retribution, the *lex talionis*, provides a legal background for the punishment requested by the petitioner. This is very important, because through it the justice of divine vengeance is indicated. The judgment is not arbitrary or unnecessarily cruel, but is based on the principle of a punishment that meets the magnitude of the crime. God judges individuals and nations on the basis of their deeds, and that is what the psalmist is requesting through his imprecatory language.

Hate and Imprecations

The idea of hatred toward the wicked is associated with imprecatory language in Psalm 139:21-22. It is necessary to explore the biblical meaning of this attitude. The Hebrew verb *sānē'* is not the exact equivalent of the English "to hate." The Hebrew term expresses such ideas as "disregard," "despise," "dislike," "love less" as well as malicious hatred. The OT knows about hatred as an "innermost disposition of hostility and enmity" and condemns it (Lev 19:17-18).⁶⁰ The challenge is to "love your neighbor as yourself" (19:18). This attitude of love was also to be extended to the alien (Deut 10:19).

In the psalms the verb "to hate" is used by the psalmist to disassociate himself from the wicked and their evil ways. When he states, "I hate the assembly of the evildoers" he is confessing his

loyalty to the Lord; he is refusing "to sit with the wicked," that is to say, he will not identify himself with them in any way (Ps 26:5). A similar confession of fidelity to the Lord is contained in Psalm 31:6-7 "I abhor [*sānē*, hate] those who cling to worthless idols; I trust in the Lord." This is indeed a very peculiar way of stating that he is not an idolater. At times the psalmist states that he hates the deeds of faithless persons (101:3), which probably means that he does not support them in what they are doing.

The hatred of the righteous psalmist is not indiscriminate or blind, not is it based on an oversensitive ego. His hatred is directed against those who hate God, because God's enemies are also his own enemies (139:21-22). Not to hate them is to be one of them, to identify with their deeds and enmity toward God. Therefore, this hatred is not an emotion of the unregenerate heart but "a passionate disowning in faith of the evil or the evil person whom God Himself has rejected."⁶¹

Perhaps the most important thing about this kind of hatred in the Psalter is that it is not a natural reaction of the human heart. Rather it is based upon and motivated by love for God: "Let those who love the Lord hate evil" (97:10). This type of hate is demanded, required by the Lord. Without love for God it is not possible for the human heart to hate evil (Ps 45:17). This hatred is developed through a study of God's revelation in His Torah. The psalmist says, "I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path (119:104). Because one loves the law one is able to hate double-minded persons (119:113) and falsehood (vs. 163). This kind of hatred is natural only for the righteous person."⁶²

What we have just described does not seem to be significantly different from what we find in the NT. When Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'love your neighbor and hate your enemy' (Matt 5:43), he was not referring to the OT because this command is not found there. He may have been quoting a popular maxim or "the command of the Qumran sect to hate the sons of darkness."⁶³

However, Jesus recognizes that in order to be one of his followers an element of hatred is necessary.⁶⁴ One must be willing to hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even oneself (Luke 14:26). What Jesus is requiring from his followers is "a radical departure of natural ties which could com-

promise their absolute dedication to the Saviour and his saving mission."⁶⁵ This type of repudiation is derived from love, as in the OT, and is an expression of the person's total and absolute commitment to the Lord.⁶⁶

We have, then, to agree with those scholars who have argued that the hatred mentioned in the psalms is not incompatible with the law of love but rather presupposes that one is fully committed to it.⁶⁷ Imprecations do not automatically presuppose a natural spirit of open hostility and anger toward the wicked. This is clearly illustrated in the very strong imprecation pronounced by David against his general Joab after Joab murdered Abner (2 Sam 3:28-29, 38). Even after this incident he continued to serve David, which suggests that the imprecation was not based on David's personal hatred against Joab but against what he did to Abner. Through the imprecation David disassociated himself from the crime of his general and reaffirmed his innocence.

Vengeance and Retribution

The concept of vengeance is used in some of the imprecatory passages in the Psalms (e.g. 58:10). Studies made on the meaning of the root *nāqam* indicate that it is used in two different ways. On the one hand it may designate the "rendering of a just punishment upon a wrongdoer." On the other hand it can refer to "vindictive revenge inflicted by wicked people upon the innocent."⁶⁸ In most cases the meaning of the verb seems to be "avenge, to give recompense," and the noun may be translated "vengeance, recompense, retribution."⁶⁹ This root is used quite often in legal context to express the idea of a just recompense, "a just payment for a crime, and not simply brutal revenge."⁷⁰

Private, vindictive revenge is condemned in the Bible (Deut 32:35; Lev 19:18; Rom 12:19). However, under the theocratic law there was a legal, private revenge which allowed a person to avenge the murder of a relative (Num 35:19-21).⁷¹ In order to limit excessive vengeance "the *lex talionis* established that the punishment was to be in accordance with the crime."⁷²

Of more value and permanency is the theological statement that the Lord is the avenger of His people (Deut 32:43; Ps 18:47). The psalmist has renounced any other type of vengeance except the

divine. In asking the Lord to avenge him, he has given up human vengeance and has decided to rely on the Lord.⁷³ Those cries for vengeance "are cries for redemption, restoration, health, and healing, even though such redemption and healing may involve Yahweh's retributive justice."⁷⁴ The prayers, by associating vengeance with the *lex talionis*, are a request for God to give to the wicked their proper reward.

The *lex talionis* has been considered by some to be primitive and barbaric. By associating it with the imprecatory passages it would be tempting to conclude that this confirms the inhuman attitude of the psalmist toward the wicked. But studies made in the history of this legislation have revealed that it is not a primitive law and that it is concerned with the proper administration of social justice.⁷⁵

It is quite probable that the biblical legislation is phrased in standardized language and that the expression, "an eye for an eye . . ." is a rhetorical formulation used to express a "law of equivalence (Exod 21:23-25; Lev 24:17-21; Deut 19:21).⁷⁶ Leviticus 24:18 suggests that the phrase "a life for a life" could be used to express the idea of monetary compensation.⁷⁷ The *lex talionis* legislates "the principle of punishing a wrongdoer with exactly those injuries or damages he has inflicted upon someone else."⁷⁸

The *lex talionis* was a just law which required a punishment in proportion to the crime. This law affirms also the personal responsibility and accountability of the criminal, limiting the punitive measures only to him or her. It was equally applied to Israelites and foreigners in Israel (Lev 24:22). Therefore, the court of law was responsible to enforce it in an attempt to preserve and/or restore social order.

For the psalmist the enforcement of the *lex talionis* is under the jurisdiction of God. He has no right to enforce it himself. Rather, he must depend on the Lord and on His justice. The law embodies the biblical concept of retribution, the rewarding of people according to their deeds.⁷⁹ In the Psalter retribution is the prerogative of God.⁸⁰ This is also the case in the NT (Rom 12:17-19). The God of the Old and New Testaments is the same; He is going to "render every man according to his works" (e.g. Rom 2:6; Ps 62:12; Rev 22:12). This theme "stands as a constant reminder of the serious-

ness with which the biblical writers understood God's hatred of evil and injustice and His will to overcome them."⁸¹

Divine vengeance and retribution belongs to the biblical concept of God and brings theological unity to both Testaments. The imprecatory passages in the Psalter radicalize the legal enforcement of those elements by removing them from the human court-of-law and placing them exclusively in God's realm of justice. The psalmist, rather than being in opposition to the NT, anticipated it.

Conclusion

We have observed that the language used by the psalmist in the imprecatory passages embodies the revelation God had given to His servants, the prophets. The psalmist does not create his own vocabulary to express himself. The imprecations are placed linguistically and theologically within God's self-revelation to His people. In no way do the imprecations indicate a lack of spiritual maturity on the part of the petitioner. Rather, they express a profound grasp of certain fundamental aspects of God's character as revealed to him and to his people by God Himself.

The phrasing of the Divine revelation in terms of imprecations raises the question of why this form of expression was employed. Some have suggested that the psalmist was influenced by similar imprecations found in Babylonian hymns and prayers.⁸² But the subject of the influence of Babylonian literature on the Psalter is a very debated one, and scholars are now very careful when arguing for possible parallels or influences.⁸³

The best background for the OT imprecatory passages is probably the covenant curses used by God Himself when instituting His covenant with Israel. This provides the legal background found in the imprecations. Some scholars have suggested that there was in Israel a practice of pronouncing curses before the Lord when one was involved in a legal case in order to demonstrate one's innocence.⁸⁴ If this is true, we could argue that in the imprecatory passages we find an example of divine condescension. God is using a common legal practice in Israel to reveal to His people His attitude toward evil and the persistent sinner, His power to save, and the ultimate triumph of His loving justice.

Nevertheless, we still wonder, how else could the psalmist have

asked God to intervene and save him without using imprecatory language? His salvation meant in fact retribution to his enemies. Our analysis of the imprecatory passages suggest that the safest way for the psalmist to express his thought was to use the language God Himself used to describe His attitude toward evil. Then he could petition God to act once more as He acted in the past or as He promised He would do in the future.

We should recognize that the psalmist wants God to defeat, punish, and even destroy his enemies. But what is very significant here is that *he has renounced his spirit of vengeance by asking God to avenge him*. We cannot and should not condemn the psalmist for his dislike of the wicked, because he has not allowed this "hatred" to express itself in private vengeance. Through the imprecation he rejected human vengeance. "These psalms document—contrary to our initial impressions—a decisive step toward a world free of violence."⁸⁵

The final question is to what extent can we or should we pray like the psalmist. Those prayers, we have argued, were written under divine inspiration. We should use them as our prayers as long as we can express through them the spirit of the psalmist: rejection of personal revenge, deep concern for God's honor and justice, a desire for God's justice to be revealed by bringing sin and impenitent sinners to an end, and a strong faith in God's power to save. It may well be that the problem we confront when reading the imprecatory passages is not so much that they seem to be incompatible with the Christian spirit, but that we are not yet ready to pray with the psalmist.

Endnotes

* Biblical citations are from the New International Version

** Figures in parentheses designate verse location in the Hebrew Bible when different from the English numbering.

1 With, Noticer Füglistler, "Vom Mut zur ganzen Schrift," *Stimmen der Zeit* 184(1969):188.

2 Ibid.

3 Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1962), vol 1, p. 202.

4 E.g. J. W. Beardslee, "The Imprecatory Elements in the Psalms," *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 8(1897):490-505; J. L. McKenzie, "The Imprecations of the Psalter," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 111 (1944):81-96; M. D. Tuya, "El problema bíblico de las imprecaciones," *Ciencia Tomista* 78(1951):171-92; 79(1952):3-29; Othmar Schilling, "Noch

einmal die Fluchpsalmen," *Theologie und Glaube* 47(1957):177-85; and J. Blenkinsop, "Can We Pray the Cursing Psalms?" *Clergy Review* 50(1965):534-38.

⁵ For an evaluation of this interpretation see, Beardslee, "Imprecations," p. 492; J. G. Vos, "The Ethical Problem of the Imprecatory Psalms," *Westminster Theological Journal* 4(1942):127; and J. Carl Laney, "A Fresh Look at the Imprecatory Psalms," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138(1981):38.

⁶ John Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1967), p. 238.

⁷ McKenzie, "Imprecations," pp. 87-88, describes this view and evaluates it. He counter argues that it was the psalmist himself who while or soon after experiencing the feelings of hatred was moved by the Spirit to record them. By recording them he is approving of them. We can add that it would have been impossible for the psalmist to know that what he was writing did not have the approval of the Spirit who was inspiring him, particularly when there is no evidence in the text that God rejects the content of the prayer. In fact we find in some psalms clear evidence indicating that the imprecatory prayer was answered by God (e.g. Ps 28:4, 6; cf Jer 51:35-36).

⁸ Leopold Sabourin, *The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning* (New York: Alba House, 1974), p. 152. For a critique of this view see Beardslee, "Imprecatory," pp. 495-97, who, among other things, argues that to suggest "that David's moral eyesight was so defective and the work of God's Spirit in his heart so incomplete that he did not know the difference between blessing and cursing; that he could in one sentence revel in the thought of the divine compassion and in the next utter imprecations so full of bitterness that our tongue almost fears to repeat them, is utterly to confine and pervert the truth" (pp. 495-96). See also McKenzie, "Imprecations," p. 83.

⁹ J. Carl Laney has commented that "this solution to the problem of the imprecatory psalms is inadequate because it underestimates the Old Testament's provision of ethical guidelines. Christians do enjoy the benefits of progressive revelation, but that progress is not from error to truth" ("Fresh Look," p. 39).

¹⁰ This seems to be the position taken by Laney, "Fresh Look," p. 44, when writing, "It would be inappropriate for a church-age believer to call down God's judgment on the wicked." He adds that they are like the ceremonial dietary laws of the Old Testament, not applicable to the church-age.

¹¹ Vos, "Imprecatory," p. 125 criticizes the dispensationalist interpretation on two counts. First, the dispensationalist scheme lacks any biblical foundation; and, second, it "virtually makes Scripture contradict Scripture."

¹² For an evaluation of this argument see McKenzie, "Imprecatory," pp. 83-84. He denies that the poetical exaggerated language does not mean what it says but rather that it does "express the essence of hatred, which is to wish evil to another" (p. 84).

¹³ For reactions to this view see Vos, "Imprecatory," pp. 126-27; and Laney, "Fresh Look," p. 39. This view has been called by George S Gunn, the allegorical interpretation because it makes the foes the spiritual enemies of the soul against which the sufferer wages this deadly polemic (*God in the Psalms* [Edinburgh: Saint Andrews Press, 1956], p. 100). See also, Beardslee, "Imprecatory," pp. 497-98.

¹⁴ McKenzie, "Imprecations," p. 85, describes this view and then comments that it is quite clear that at least in some of the psalms the imprecations are addressed against the worshipper's fellow-citizens; but that, in any case, the ethical problem is not solved.

¹⁵ This was the position taken by Augustine (*Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps 108); see the evaluations of Beardslee, "Imprecatory," pp. 498-501; Vos, "Imprecatory," p. 125; McKenzie, "Imprecations," p. 86; and Laney, "Fresh Look," pp. 39-40. Rudolf Schmid, looking at the imprecations in the Psalter from the perspective of the New Testament, suggests that these psalms should be understood eschatologically as describing God's judgment at the end ("Die Fluchpsalmen im Christlichen Gebet," in *Theologie im Wandel* [München: Erich Wewel Verlag, 1967], p. 389-91). Füglistler takes a similar position. In his study of the imprecatory psalms he uncovers two key soteriological concepts present in them: war and judgment. These theological concepts are also found in the New Testament and they

have there, as well as in the Old Testament, a demonic-eschatological coloring ("Vom Mut," pp. 191-94).

¹⁶ E.g. Chalmers Martin, "Imprecations in the Psalms," in *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation*, edited by W. C. Kaiser, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), p. 121; Blenkinsop, "Pray," pp. 536-37; Vos, "Imprecatory," p. 131; and Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), p. 67.

¹⁷ Page H. Kelley, "Prayers of Troubled Saints," *Review and Expositor* 81(1984):379-80. Gunn states that these psalms "embodied necessary and valuable truth, albeit in a strange and unfortunate way" (*God*, p. 102). They have much to say, according to him, about justice and moral order.

¹⁸ Louis Jacquet, *Les Psaumes e le coeur de l'homme* (Belgique: Duculot, 1975), I:140-43.

¹⁹ McKenzie, "Imprecations," pp. 92-93; see also, J. L. Lille, "The Sacred Duty of Hating and Imprecating," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 115(1946):271-77; Tuya, "Problema," 79(1952):28; and C. M. Cherian, "Attitude to Enemies in the Psalms," *Bible Bhashyam* 8(1982):117. Vos, "Imprecatory," pp. 137-38, suggests that Christians can only pray for the temporal judgment of God's enemies and for the death of the reprobates.

²⁰ On quotations from psalms containing imprecations in the New Testament see, Hans K. LaRondelle, *Deliverance in the Psalms* (Berrien Springs, MI: First Impressions, 1983), p. 20.

²¹ The list of imprecatory passages in the Psalter varies because of translation difficulties. See, e.g., Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, edited by Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervon, 1991), pp. 830-31; Carroll "Psalms," in *Harper's Bible Commentary*, edited by James L. May (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 435; and Luis I. J. Stadelmann, "As Maldicões nos Salmos," *Perspectiva Teológica* 20(1988):317. We consider the following texts to be imprecatory: 5:10; 7:9; 9:19-20; 10:15; 28:4; 31:17-18; 35:4-9, 26; 40:13-14//70:1-3; 54:5; 55:9, 15; 56:7; 58:6-10; 59:5-13; 68:1-2; 69:22-28; 71:13; 74:11; 79:6, 10, 12; 83:9-18; 94:2; 104:35; 109:6-20; 129:5-7; 137:8-9; 139:19-22; 140:9-11; 141:10; 143:12; 144:6; 149:6-9.

²² See, Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), p. 85.

²³ Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 1-59: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1988), p. 153.

²⁴ Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:152.

²⁵ A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, vol I (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1972), p. 85.

²⁶ Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:157.

²⁷ With, Craigie, *Psalms*, p. 88.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 237; and Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:341.

²⁹ K. Seybold, "Gamal," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 3, edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1978), p. 29 (hereafter quoted as *TDOT*).

³⁰ Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:392.

³¹ Craigie, *Psalms*, p. 285.

³² G. J. Botterweck, "Hapar," *TDOT* 5:111.

³³ Stuhlmüller, "Psalms," p. 449.

³⁴ Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1990), p. 84.

³⁵ G. Muderlein, "Hāras," *TDOT* 3:462.

³⁶ See, Tate, *Psalms*, p. 87.

³⁷ Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:536. On the textual problems see Tate, *Psalms*, p. 83.

³⁸ Anderson, *Psalms*, 1:432.

³⁹ Suggested by Wayne T. Pitard, "Amarna *ekemu* and Hebrew *naqam*," *Maarav* 3 (1982):17.

⁴⁰ God very often announces a bloody punishment to the nations (e.g. Jer 46:10; 51:35; Ezek 28:23; Jer 48:10). See, B. Kedar-Kopfstein, "Dam," *TDOT* 3:249.

⁴¹ Kraus, *Psalms*, 1:537

⁴² E.g. Kraus, *Psalms*, 2:337.

- 43 Leslie C. Allen, *Psalms 101-150* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), p. 75.
- 44 Scholars have been debating whether the imprecations are being quoted by the psalmist from those pronounced by his enemies or whether they are his own imprecations. Kraus has argued quite persuasively that in vss. 6-19 the worshiper is quoting his enemies (*Psalms* 2:238; also Allen, *Psalms*, pp. 72-73). Even though the evidence seems to suggest that we may be dealing here with a quotation, I will deal with them as if they were the petitions of the psalmist against his enemies. The main reason for this is that, if they are a quotation, in vs. 20 the psalmist makes them his imprecations and throws them back on the wicked.
- 45 Allen, *Psalms*, p. 73.
- 46 H. Ringgren, "Yatôm," *TDOT* 6:481.
- 47 R. E. Clements, "Zakhar," *TDOT* 4:71.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 76.
- 49 See, H-J Zobel, "Hesed," *TDOT* 5:49.
- 50 Cf. Ringgren, "Yatôm," p. 480.
- 51 Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms III* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1970), p. 106.
- 52 Cf. Anderson, *Psalms*, 2:764.
- 53 Dahood, *Psalms*, 3:106.
- 54 See, *ibid.*, p. 269.
- 55 So, Kraus, *Psalms*, 2:501; cf. Allen, *Psalms*, p. 238.
- 56 Cf. D. N. Freedman, "The Structure of Psalm 137," in *Near Eastern Studies in Honor of W. F. Albright*, edited by Hans Goedicke (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1971), pp. 202-03.
- 57 H. Cazelles, "'ashrê," *TDOT* 1:446. Howard Osgood provided a good list of biblical passages where it is said that God dashes to pieces His enemies, including at times His rebellious people ("Dashing the Little Ones Against the Rock," *Princeton Theological Review* 1 (1903):26-37). He saw some connection between Jeremiah 51 and this psalm but did not develop it (p. 29). Walter C. Kaiser follows Osgood very closely in his interpretation of this psalm (*Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988], pp. 171-75). Both of them point out that the term "child" in Hebrew does not specify age, it could designate a very young or a grown child. According to Kaiser, "The word focuses on a relationship, and not an age; as such, it points to the fact that the sins of the fathers were being repeated in the next generation" (p. 174).
- 58 This was also noticed by Stadelmann, "Maldicões," p. 322.
- 59 There is some evidence in the Old Testament which suggests that a person guilty of a crime deserving capital punishment was asked and expected to give glory to God confessing that the Lord was just in demanding the death penalty (cf. Josh 7:19). See, G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1 (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 358-59.
- 60 G. F. Hasel, "Hate; Hatred," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, edited by G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: W. G. Eerdmans, 1982), p. 630.
- 61 O. Michel, "Miseo," *TDNT* 4:687.
- 62 Hasel, "Hate," p. 630.
- 63 H. Giesen, "Miseö," in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 2, edited by Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1991), p. 431.
- 64 Hasel, "Hate," p. 632.
- 65 F. L-R Stachowiak, "Hatred," in *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), p. 355.
- 66 Michel, "Miseö," p. 693, argues that the New Testament purifies the Old Testament concept of holy hatred by arguing that it is now to be directed against the thing and not against the person. But he overlooks the fact that in the Old Testament hatred is also directed against the sin and not only against the person. After referring to Luke 14:26 he states, "There is in the New Testament a holy repudiation and abnegation (*misein*), but it is embraced and interpreted by love as the power and content of the New World of God." This seems also to be the case of the Old Testament.
- 67 See, McKenzie, "Imprecations," p. 94; and Lilly, "Hating," pp. 271-73.

- 68 Wayne T. Pitard, "Vengeance," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 6, edited by David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), p. 786.
- 69 Pitard, "Amarna," p. 16.
- 70 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 71 Lipinski, "Nāqam" *TWAT* 5(1986):605.
- 72 Pitard, "Vengeance," p. 786.
- 73 See, Walter Brueggemann, *Praying the Psalms* (Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 1986), p. 72.
- 74 W. J. Harrelson, "Vengeance," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 4, edited by G. A. Buttrick (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1962), p. 748.
- 75 See, Nahum M. Sarna, *Exploring Exodus* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 183-85; Maurice Gilbert, "La loi du talion," *Christus* 32 (1984):74; Guillaume Cardascia, "Le place du talion dans l'histoire du droit pénal à la lumière des droits du Proche-Orient ancien," in *Melanges offerts à Jean Dauwillier* (Toulouse, France: Centre d'histoire juridique méridionale, 1979), pp. 169-83; cf. J. M. Renger, "Lex Talionis," in *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume*, edited by Keith Crim (Nashville, TN: Augsburg, 1976), p. 545 (hereafter *IDB Supp.*).
- 76 See, Sarna, *Exploring*, p. 186.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 185; Gilbert, "Loi," pp. 76-78.
- 78 Renger, "Lex," p. 545.
- 79 W. S. Towner, "Retribution," *IDB Supp.*, p. 742.
- 80 See Bernard Hall, "The Problem of Retribution in the Psalms," *Scripture* 7 (1955):84-87.
- 81 Towner, "Retribution," p. 743.
- 82 E.g. G. Widengren, *The Accadian and Hebrew Psalms of Lamentation as Religious Documents: A Comparative Study* (Stockholm: Bokforlags Aktiebolaget Thule, 1937), pp. 292-310.
- 83 See, Klaus Seybold, *Introducing the Psalms* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990), pp. 191-93.
- 84 See, H. C. Brichto, *The Problem of 'Curse' in the Hebrew Bible* (Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1963), pp. 63-71; J. Scharbert, "'alāh," *TDOT* 1:263; Mowinckle, *Psalms*, 2:32; Stadelmann, "Maldices," p. 323.
- 85 Norbert Lohfink, "'Holy War' and the 'Ban' in the Bible," *Theology Digest* 38(1991):110-11.

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DIVINE INSPIRATION AND THE CANON OF THE BIBLE

By Gerhard F. Hasel
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Andrews University

Introduction

An undeniable relationship exists between the divine inspiration of the Bible and the resulting canon of the Bible. Inspiration is historically affirmed among Jews and Christians as the essential, internal quality of Scripture from which its authority derives. While some insistent voices deny any connection between inspiration and canonization,¹ the opposite point of view is even more widely held.²

In this century extensive discussion on the question of the biblical canon has heated up again, particularly since the 1960's.³ Debate has been stimulated in part by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls⁴ and because reinvestigations of canon questions have indicated that the old critical consensus has significant flaws. Discussions continue unabated into the present.⁵ A new consensus on the canon is in the making.

One of the major issues revolves around the idea whether the concept of "canon" and the canonization of the Bible is to be radically separated from the concept of "Scripture"⁶ and not just from the concept of inspiration. In regard to the OT it is said by some scholars that the canon is not fixed until long after the Christian era began some point between A.D. 90 to as late as the fourth century A.D.⁷

For the NT external criteria for canonization such as apos-

tolicity, orthodoxy, antiquity, catholicity, spiritual value and acceptance by the church are increasingly predominant.⁸ These criteria tend to place the process of canonization and its authority into the hands of the Church.

Origin of the Canon: On What Basis?

Human Agencies or Divine Agency? The matter of the forces and/or sources which authorize biblical writings to be canonical are of crucial importance. The issue is whether (1) the Bible is the product of human decisions based on socio-cultural norms and events in the history of the past which can be reactualized in the present, or whether (2) humans came to recognize the authority of Scripture because of an inherent nature and quality of the writings of the Bible as the self-authenticating, self-validating Word of God.

Did human agencies, that is, rabbis, bishops, councils, and/or communities "determine" which of the Bible's books belong to the canon and, thereby, make it into Holy Scripture? The verb "determine" is used in the sense of formal decisions made on the basis of immanent, non-supernatural socio-cultural norms. Alternatively, did individuals, entities and/or communities "recognize" on the basis of the internal nature and quality which writings were canonical?

Historically Protestants have held that the canonization of the Bible of both the Old and New Testaments is the product not of human beings but the work of the Holy Spirit which produced the biblical books. By virtue of their inspiration, and its resultant internal self-authentication and self-validation, biblical books were "recognized" as canonical.

The verb "recognize" is distinctly different from the verb "determine." The former verb affirms the inherent supernatural origin, nature, and authority of the biblical books *as the cause* for their canonical status. Whereas the latter term "determine" is meant to communicate the power of purely human authorization of the canon by whatever religious, sociological and historical forces are considered to have been at work individually and/or collectively. Similarly, was the canonization of the Bible a process of development over many years, even centuries? Was the OT canon formed in three distinct stages as is widely supposed ever since a three-part

canon was proposed by post-New Testament Judaism? Was the OT canon fixed for the first time by vote of a Jewish synod/council in A.D. 90?

Is the Bible the product of the Church?⁹ Did the Roman Catholic council fathers on April 8, 1546, at the Council of Trent, close the biblical canon? In the latter case, the Church could have an "open" canon as well as a "closed" one. The body which "closed" the canon could alter the canon by the inclusion or exclusion of additional books through subsequent decision(s).

Incarnational View of Scripture and Canon. The Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546) speaks of "the Word of God [Scripture]" that "preserves the Church of God,"¹⁰ therewith giving priority to the Bible over the Church. In the Reformation view any authority must be tested by its fidelity to Scripture.

Indeed, the Bible manifests the incarnation of God's Word in written form, "the Holy Scripture is God's Word, written, and so to say 'in-lettered,' just as Christ is the eternal Word of God incarnate in the garment of his humanity. And just as it is with Christ in the world, as he is viewed and dealt with, so it is also with the written Word of God."¹¹ Luther evidently held a high incarnational view of Scripture. The Bible is God's Word "in-lettered." A more recent way of expressing this idea is to speak of the Bible as the "inscripturated" Word of God.

The high incarnational view of Scripture holds that as "the divinity and power of God are embedded in the vessel of Christ's incarnate body, so the same divinity and power of God are embedded in Scripture, a vessel made of letters, . . . In order to grasp the biblical revelation in its fullness it is necessary to conceive of Scripture in terms of the divine-human nature of Christ."¹² Such a high view of Scripture is based and grounded in a high view of the incarnation where the earthly Jesus Christ is a manifestation of the indivisible union of the divine and the human. In analogy with Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, the Bible consists equally of an indivisible union of the divine and the human just as is manifested in the Son of God.

Ellen G. White holds to a high incarnational view of the Bible as well. She speaks of the very "union of the divine and the human" as regards the Bible in analogy to that in the Son of God. She wrote,

"The Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine and the human. Such a union existed in the nature of Christ who was the Son of God and the Son of man. Thus it is true of the Bible, as it was of Christ, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.' John 1:14."¹³ The "union of the divine and the human" of which the Bible is made up also impacts on the understanding of the nature and development of the canon. It follows that the canon cannot be simply perceived to be the result of human action or interest. The canonization process is interwoven with the "union of the divine and the human" of which the Bible partakes.

The Nature of the Canon

The Term "Canon" Defined. The English word "canon" derives from the Greek *ho kanon* via the Latin. It has a Hebrew background and is said to reach back even to ancient Sumerian.¹⁴

The term has a rich history of usage in both non-Christian¹⁵ and Christian circles.¹⁶ A basic meaning is provided with such designations as "measuringrod" or "measuringstick."¹⁷ "The word [*kanon*] came to mean among the Greeks that which is a standard or norm by which all things are judged and evaluated, whether the perfect form to follow in architecture or the infallible criterion (*kritérion*) by which all things are to be measured."¹⁸

In later Christian usage it came to mean the authoritative (canonical) list of books which belong to the Bible.¹⁹

It is important to understand that the later usage of "canon" as a "list" of books is but one definition of a later period for this term. The earlier and more prominent usage of the term "canon" as the "rule," "standard," or "norm" for belief and practice is the more significant one. As such the "canon" is the standard of inspired and holy Scripture by which Christian teaching and action must be regulated.

New Testament Usage. The term "canon" is used in the NT four times (Gal 6:16; 2 Cor 10:13-16; some manuscripts contain the word also in Phil 3:16). Galatians 6:16 reads, "As for those who will follow this rule [*kanon*]²⁰—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God" (NRSV). Here the meaning of "canon" is the "measuring rule" by which all things of the new creation are

measured. It is the "norm" and "standard" or "measure of assessment"²¹ by which one's own action and those of others are measured. In Philippians 3:16 the word is employed in the same sense.

The passage of 2 Corinthians 10:13-16 is linguistically difficult to translate; there is some ambiguity. However, Paul seems to defend his apostolic authority by noting that he has a "canon" "or standard for his work and for the associated claim to apostolic validity which he has not conferred on himself but received from God."²² The "canon" or "standard" is not of his own making but given to him by God.

Post-NT Usage. The designation "canon" is used in post-New Testament writings from the middle of the second century on in the sense of a "measure of judgment" which is determinative for the church in terms of what is true and what is false.²³

By the fourth century A.D. the term "canon" came to be applied to the list of writings that belonged to and formed the body of authoritative Scriptures.²⁴ Thus, the word "canon" has come to be defined within the Christian community as "the list of the writings acknowledged by the Church as documents of divine revelation."²⁵

Historically the term "canon" refers to both the shape (*normens normata*) of the Scriptures and the authoritative function (*norma normens*) of Scripture.²⁶ "Canon" also means the authority with which Scripture is used. The widely quoted Westminster Confession, written in 1647 and one of the most influential creeds of Calvinism, states in its article on Scripture, "All [of the sixty-six books] which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life."²⁷ What role does inspiration play in providing the "canon" as *normens normata*, its essential quality, and its *norma normens*, its norming function which is different from other documents which were not canonized?

The Scope of the Biblical Canon

The scope of the Bible—what books are included in it—is of pivotal interest. There is a radical difference between Roman Catholics (and certain Orthodox communions) and Protestants regarding the books which belong to the OT. On the other hand, there

is full agreement among all Christians regarding the books which belong to the NT.

The Development of the OT Canon. The post-NT three-part division of the OT has been used as the foundation for the widely held view that the canon of the OT developed in three stages over a long period of time. It is claimed that the "law" (Torah) came to be canonized first. Subsequently the "Prophets" (Nebi'im), and in a final and third stage the Writings (Kethubim=Hagiographa) were canonized.

A three-stage development of the OT canon "is completely hypothetical: there is no evidence for it, either in the OT itself or elsewhere."²⁸ This means that the widely held hypothesis or scholarly reconstruction of the supposed development of the OT canon is simply that. There is no historical basis for it. Therefore, it may be prudent not to assume too much as we think about the development of the canon.

As an alternative view we suggest that the canon developed at the very point when the biblical books were written under inspiration. The origin of the biblical books by divine inspiration is the source for the recognition by contemporaries and later communities that these books hold divine authority in themselves. Consequently, divinely inspired writings are canonical from the beginning because of their inherent nature as inspired documents. Thus, the authority of the biblical writings manifested in their divine inspiration is the root cause for the origin of the canon.

Roman Catholic Canon of the OT. The Roman Catholic Church has a larger canon for the OT than the canon of the Hebrew Bible with 39 books taken over by Jesus Christ and the apostles and followed by Protestantism in general.

In April 8, 1546, at the Council of Trent, the Council Fathers determined that the so-called deuterocanonical books such as Tobit, Judith, 1-2 Maccabees, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Baruch, Wisdom, and the Additions to Daniel and Esther were just as canonical as the other OT books. Since that time the designation "protocanonical" has been used for the 39 books of the OT canon which Protestants and Catholics have in common and the designation "deuterocanonical" has been used for the books which only Catholics recognize as canonical.

According to the Council of Trent both proto-canonical and deuterocanonical writings have no distinction in quality, value and importance. All recognized canonical writings are on the same level. Thus the Roman Catholic Church has made a permanent ruling regarding the extent and the qualitative value of the Bible for Catholics.²⁹

The decision of the Council of Trent poses two fundamental questions which continue to divide true Protestantism from Catholicism. (1) On what basis should the so-called deuterocanonical books, the additions to the canon in the Roman Catholic Bible, be honored as Scripture? (2) On what basis is canonical authority granted? Is it Scripture with its internal authority based on divine inspiration? Or, is it the communal entity called the Church? Since the Council Fathers decided what is Scripture, it is a given that they, and with them the prior tradition of the Church, stand above Scripture. Granting Scriptural books their canonical status, places Church authority above Scripture authority.

Should Scripture, on the other hand, manifest an inherent, divine authority based on its divine inspiration, which any later religious community or church recognizes, then Scripture stands above the religious community whether Jewish or Christian. To put it in the words stated by many others: Does the Church create Scripture? Or, does Scripture create and maintain the church? In opposition to historic Reformation Protestantism the Council of Trent maintained, and not surprisingly, that "the canon cannot be derived from Scripture itself."³⁰ This position is nonnegotiable and of essential importance for the superior authority claimed to be vested in the Church, its magisterium and its tradition, as compared to the position held consistently among mainline Protestants that the Scriptures are self-authenticating.

Let us return to the question of the deuterocanonical books which are part of the Roman Catholic Bible. The volume of material contained in Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), Baruch, 1-2 Maccabees, and supplements to Esther and Daniel, is about two-thirds the size of the NT. The debate does not revolve about the usefulness of these writings. The debate focusses on the matter of belonging to the Bible and having full Scriptural

authority. Do these writings deserve a place in the "canon" of the Bible?

In addressing this question we have to inform ourselves on a number of items. First, these writings do not derive from biblical "prophets." This is to say that they are not inspired. Second, there are historical contradictions between 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees. It is generally acknowledged that there is a different level of accuracy between 1 Maccabees and Judith, or even 2 Maccabees. Thus, historical accuracy is compromised in these writings. Third, the additions of Esther are found only in Greek manuscripts. No original Hebrew manuscript or fragment thereof is known and it is usually concluded that it was composed in post-OT times in Greek. The books of Tobit and Judith existed only in the Greek language as well. The recognized canonical OT was written in Hebrew/Aramaic and not in Greek. Fourth, all so-called deuterocanonical books were produced in a period of time subsequent to the "prophetic period" which closed around 400 B.C.³¹ Fifth, the NT does not quote these books as it quotes the OT books.³² The NT recognizes as "prophetic" and inspired only the books which belong to the "law and the prophets," but not the apocrypha to which the so-called deuterocanonical writings are counted.³³ Sixth, the early church fathers, many of whom quote Scripture as Scripture, do not quote these books on par with what they held as Scripture. Seventh, the so-called deuterocanonical books were preserved in the North African metropolis Alexandria, but not in Palestine. These writings breath a different spirit as any reader can easily detect.³⁴ Eighth, the Hebrew canon contains 22 (respectively 24) books, that is, our 39 OT books, and these writings are not among them from the earliest times such numbers are mentioned³⁵ to the post-NT listings.³⁶ In conclusion, the additional writings of the Roman Catholic Bible do not merit to be on par with Scripture if the OT canon is limited to those books which Jesus, the apostles, the Jews, and the early Church recognized as Scripture.

"Biblical Inspiration" and Canon Formation

A sound methodology demands that we listen to what the biblical writings themselves have to say about their origin by divine inspiration. This is essential because biblical authority is based on

inspiration and so is the canon. Since space limitations do not permit a full-fledged study, we will try to make our presentation representative of the Scriptural position.

Inspiration: the Testimony of the OT. The OT does not use the word "inspired" or "God-breathed" (*theopneustos*). This language is only employed by Paul. Nevertheless the OT strongly maintains its divine origin.

The OT has its own way of speaking about its divine origin and divine inspiration, and, thus, of its resultant canonicity. We refer to some high points expressed by its own self-testimony.

1. "Prophet(s)." The Hebrew language used the term *beyad*, "through," literally "by the hand of," to communicate that God spoke "through" his "prophets" (*nebi'im*). Isaiah 20:2 says that "at that time the Lord spoke through [*beyad*] Isaiah the son of Amoz." Jeremiah 37:2 reports that the people did not listen "to the words of the Lord which He spoke through [*beyad*] Jeremiah the prophet [*nabi'*]" (cf. Jer 50:1). The "word of the Lord" came "through [*beyad*]" Haggai (1:1, 3; 2:1) and Malachi (1:1). "The word of the LORD, the God of Israel, which He spoke through [*beyad*] his servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet [*nabi'*], . . ." (2 Kgs 14:25, NASB). Collectively it is stated that Yahweh warned Israel and Judah "through [*beyad*] all his prophets [*nebi'im*]" (2 Kgs 17:13, cf. 23).

By the time of Ezekiel the Lord can speak of "the former days" during which He spoke "through [*beyad*] My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied in those days for many years" (Ezek 38:17, NASB). In the book of Daniel the lamentation is expressed that Israel refused to obey "the voice of the Lord our God" and the "teachings [*toroth*] which He set before us through [*beyad*] His servants the prophets" (Dan 9:10, NASB). This latter passage is informative about what God has provided "through His prophets," namely, the Lords's "voice" and His "teachings." Prophets "prophesy" (Ezek 38:17) and they provide divine "teachings" (Dan 9:10).

Yahweh spoke "through [*beyad*] His servants the prophets" (2 Kgs 21:10, NASB; cf. 2 Kgs 24:2; 2 Chron 29:25). The author of the books of 1-2 Samuel is included among the "prophets" (1 Samuel 3:20) as is the well-known prophet Isaiah (Isa 37:2). In a com-

prehensive summary statement Ezra speaks of the "commandments" of God which Israel had forsaken but which God "commanded by [*beyad*] Thy servants the prophets" (Ezra 9:10-11, NASB).

It is noteworthy that "Thy Spirit" admonishes the people "through [*beyad*] Thy prophets" (Neh 9:30, NASB). What the "prophets" say is what the "Spirit" says.

The same designation *beyad*, "through" in the sense of "by the hand" of, is used for God giving His "law" "through [*beyad*] Moses" (Neh 8:14; 9:14; 10:29[30]). There are numerous passages which simply state that God/Yahweh commanded or spoke "through (*beyad*) Moses" (Josh 14:2; 20:2; 21:8; 22:9; Judg 3:4; 1 Kgs 8:53, 56; 2 Chron 33:8; 35:6) or the "book of the law of the LORD given by [*beyad*] Moses" (2 Chron 34:14, NASB) Both Moses, a "prophet" himself, and the "prophets" are the agents "through (*beyad*)" whom God revealed the "law and the prophets," the OT.

2. "The Word of the LORD." The phrase "the word of the LORD" (*debar Yahweh*) is used 269 times in twenty-eight different books of the OT.³⁷ The parallel expressions, "words of the LORD" (*dibreiy Yahweh*), is used seventeen times in eight books³⁸ and, "words of God" (*dibreiy Elohim*),³⁹ appears three times. The phrase, "word of the Lord God" (*debar Adonay Yahweh*), appears a few times.⁴⁰ So does the phrase, "word of God" (*debar (ha)Elohim*).⁴¹ More than 300 usages of these respective phrases testify to the fact that the OT perceived itself as deriving from God. It is the "Word of God."

An investigation of these phrases reveals that they most frequently refer to visions and prophetic revelations. About 75% of the usages refer to the divine words which came to the prophets, including Abraham, Moses, and all the persons known as "prophets" in the OT. In these instances the expressions mean most often that the "word of Yahweh" is the "word of God" which the prophet proclaims to his contemporaries and has written in his book.

These expressions indicate that what the prophet announces is not simple "a word" from God. Rather, it "is always called *the* word of God."⁴² Ludwig Koehler, the famous lexicographer of the Hebrew language, has noted that in this usage "the real foundation

of the biblical doctrine of inspiration of the Holy Scripture is to be found."⁴³

In approximately 20% of the usages, the phrase, "word[s] of the LORD/God," refers to the divine laws God gave to Israel, including the Decalogue. The Ten Commandments are designated as "the word of Yahweh" (Deut 5:5; 1 Chron 15:15; etc.)⁴⁴ or "the words of Yahweh" (Exod 24:3-4; etc.).⁴⁵

This conspectus of usages reveals that the OT extensively presents itself as deriving from God as the "word of God" which human "prophets" wrote in human languages.

3. "*Declares the Lord.*" A dominant phrase translated as "declares the LORD/Yahweh" or "(thus) says the LORD/Yahweh" is *ne'um Yahweh*. It appears no less than 364 times in the OT.⁴⁶

This phrase is extensively used in the prophetic books of the OT. But it also appears in Genesis 22:16; Numbers 14:28; 1 Samuel 2:30; Psalms 110:1; 2 Kings 9:26; 19:33; 22:19 and 2 Chronicles 34:27.

The usage reveals that it is employed most frequently at the beginning, middle, or end of a saying of Yahweh given by a prophet to support the first person or "I" report of Yahweh. The purpose of this expression is to stress "the origin of the message of the prophets as deriving from divine revelation and to witness to their divine commissioning."⁴⁷ We find here a major OT expression which testifies to the inspiration of the OT.

4. "*(Thus) says Yahweh.*" The phrase, "thus says Yahweh (LORD)" (*koh 'amar Yahweh*), is used 291 times in the OT.⁴⁸ The same phrase without the "thus" (*koh*) is used another 76 times. It is an expression which states in plain language that Yahweh/God speaks in the OT.⁴⁹ It is also an expression which declares that what is said in the OT is of divine origin, the revelation being rooted in God Himself. Furthermore, it communicates that a divine proclamation is being presented by the prophet who is speaking to the people.

These three expressions and their variations are used way over one thousand times in the OT. This abundant usage is overwhelming because it is distributed so extensively. It is the OT's way of saying that it is God-derived and "God-breathed." It uses this language to tell the readers that it is inspired and authoritative.

Inspiration and Canonicity. Canonicity is rooted in inspiration. Only inspired books are the "Word of God" and "Scripture" and only inspired books are canonical. Inspiration brings with itself the canon and canonicity.

Canonicity is not an authority assigned to the Bible from the outside. To the contrary, it is derived from and inherent in the very nature of the documents which belong to the Bible. Inspiration causes the inspired writing to be "Word of God" since inspiration comes from God and the "Word of God" derives from Him. Therefore, the inspired Word of God is by its very nature "Scripture" and is canonical from the moment it is recorded in written form by the hands of the inspired writers.

Inspiration: The NT Testimony About the OT. We turn now to the testimony of the NT about the OT. It makes explicit claims about the OT which are normative in Scripture. It also makes explicit claims about itself. Both areas need to be investigated.

1. "*Prophecy and Prophets.*" The apostle Peter insists that "no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet 1:21, RSV). "Prophecy" is the result of the movement of the Holy Spirit on persons called "prophets."

"Prophecy" in this sense is Holy Spirit originated. The Holy Spirit moved human beings, "prophets," who spoke from God. What they speak is "from God." Since their messages originate from God, what these "spoke from God" is the "word of God."

"Prophecy" is not the fruit of human "impulse." It is not the result of human imagination, thought, or genius. It never came "by the impulse of man," writes Peter, but has its origin in God who by means of the Holy Spirit inspired the prophets with His message.

The phrase "impulse of man" needs further attention. The contrast in this text is between the "impulse of man" and the Holy Spirit's activity on man. The difference is between human impulse and divine activity. The difference is between the horizontal dimension of human thought and experience based on the socio-cultural environments of the human agent and the vertical dimension manifested in the divine inbreaking of God into the historical process by means of the Holy Spirit. The latter actually touches

human beings and provides them with divine revelation in a cognitive manner.

The horizontal dimension, the "impulse of man," is inherent in any human being. It is part of general human experience within the sphere of any person's socio-cultural context and the prior human contexts to which history testifies. All human beings share in this horizontal dimension; it is part and parcel of being a human being.

The vertical dimension is expressed in the phrase, "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." This is the dimension of the supernatural. It is the inbreaking of the divine Spirit into selected human beings, that is to say the "prophets." It is not part and parcel of the universal experience of all human beings. These specially chosen human beings, the "prophets," are touched by the Holy Spirit in a special, revelatory way.

Persons that speak prophetically are "moved" by the Holy Spirit because the divine Spirit gives them actual, cognitive information to which they had no access to before, and which they needed to communicate. What these Holy Spirit-endowed persons communicate, they "spoke from God." They did not speak on their own. The radical separation between what is "spoken from God" and what is of "human impulse" cannot be overemphasized.

"Prophecy," as the term is used in 2 Peter 1:21, is connected with the phrase "prophecy of Scripture" in vs. 20. It is not restricted to the so-called prophetic parts or books of Scripture alone. That is, it is not restricted to the second part of the Hebrew canon, the *Nebi'im* of post-NT times which include the Former and Latter Prophets. It is not restricted either to the second part of the OT of pre-NT times which includes all 34 books aside from the Pentateuch.

The term "prophecy" refers to that which was written by the inspired "prophets who prophesied" (1 Pet 1:10), that is to say, "by men moved by the Holy Spirit [who] spoke from God" (2 Pet 1:21). Who may be included in the term "prophets"? The NT uses such expressions as "law/Moses and the prophets"⁵⁰ with the "prophets" seemingly referring to the entire OT outside the Pentateuch.

The "prophets" are spoken of by themselves as in Luke 1:70, "As He [God] spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old"

(NASB) with a quotation following from the Psalms and a reference to Abraham. The impression is left that in this instance "prophets" is an inclusive term going far beyond the second part of the OT canon, actually including the "Law" and the "Writings."

The inclusive usage of the designation "prophets" for the whole of the OT Scripture may also be intended in Jesus' saying, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!" (Lk 24:25, NASB). This seems likely since Jesus explains to the disciples on the road to Emmaus "all the Scriptures," namely, "Moses and the prophets" (vs. 27). The phrase "all that the prophets have spoken" seems to be identical with the phrase "all the Scriptures,"⁵¹ expressing the totality of the Bible of Jesus' day, the OT.

The phrase "the Scriptures of the prophets" which Jesus employs in Matthew 26:56, and which were to be fulfilled in Him, again seem to include the whole OT.⁵² If this is the case, then the term "prophets" in the phrase "the Scriptures of the prophets" are the persons which produced the OT Scriptures under inspiration. Once more there is an inclusive use of the term "prophets" as the those who produced the whole of the OT under inspiration.

The apostle Paul also speaks in Romans 16:26 of the "Scriptures of the prophets." This expression refers to the entire OT writings and not simply to a part of it.⁵³ It gives testimony to the fact that the writers of all of the Scriptures, the entire OT, are perceived as "prophets."

The opening of the letter to the Hebrews confirms this inclusive usage of the designation "prophets" as the writers who produced the entire OT. The author states that God had spoken to the ancient Hebrew ancestors, that is, the "fathers" who are not simply the patriarchs but the Hebrews of OT times, "in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb 1:1, NRSV). The term "prophets" is a comprehensive designation inclusive of every writer of the OT. "Prophets" in this passage refers to persons in whom "God dwells . . . and speaks forth from them, . . ."⁵⁴ It is a designation expressing the function of divine inspiration since it is "God" who "spoke" through them.

The inspired revelation of the OT given by the "prophets," who

are divinely appointed inspired human writers, has God as its Author just as God "has spoken" now through His own Son who may be seen to be the "Prophet." The inclusive usage of "prophets" is supported by the inclusive usage of "Son."

This introduction to Hebrews, with the revelation through the "prophets" (the entire OT) and now through the "Son," is similar in wording to 2 Peter 3:2: "Remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles." Here too the "words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets" seem to refer to the OT as a whole just as "the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles" refers to what is preserved in the NT as a whole.

God spoke in the OT through the "prophets," and God manifests Himself uniquely through the Son in the NT who "[spoke] by your apostles." Thus, Scripture comes to us through both the "prophets" (the entire OT) and the "apostles" (the entire NT). Both categories of inspired persons, "prophets" and "apostles," are the divinely appointed human agents to speak and to write for God.

This conspectus of key passages using the term "prophets" in an inclusive sense leads to the conclusion that the term "prophets" is used comprehensively for inspired persons who wrote the OT.⁵⁵ The correlation of "holy prophets" and "your apostles" in 2 Peter 3:2 is of significance. Corresponding to the "prophets" as the designation for the inspired writers of the OT is parallel designation "apostles" as the inspired writers of the NT. They are the authoritative spokespersons for Jesus Christ whose "apostles" they are.⁵⁶

Moses was designated a "prophet" (Deut 34:10; 18:15, 18) and thus qualifies as being among the "prophets" who wrote Scripture. Moses is credited with having written the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible (Josh 1:7-9; 24: 25, 26; 1 Kgs 2:2-4; Ezra 7:6, 7, 23-26; etc.) which were considered as authoritative Scripture throughout OT times.⁵⁷

At a time when two men were prophesying and when Moses was asked to restrain them, he said, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num 11:29, NASB). This statement expresses a wish that

all of the Lord's people might be prophets. However, this is not the case. "Prophets" are specially endowed persons. Moses makes the very point that the entire community of Israel does not function in the role of a prophet. There is no community wide prophecy and no community inspiration of all Israel.

Is it different in the NT church, the early Christian community? On the basis of the Divine promise (John 14-16), the Holy Spirit arrived on Pentecost (Acts 2). Those on whom the Holy Spirit fell did not turn out to be "prophets." Rather, they were enabled miraculously to speak foreign languages so as to proclaim the Good News with power as quickly as possible (Acts 2:2-13).⁵⁸ Every true follower of Christ in the community of faith has the gift of the Holy Spirit as Paul insists when he writes to the Romans, "Indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (Rom 8:9, NASB). "This did not mean that all of them received the specific gift of prophecy: the gift of prophecy . . . was but one of several gifts of the Spirit distributed among the members of the church."⁵⁹

The reception of the Holy Spirit by believers is to be distinguished from the role of a "prophet." The role of "prophet" involves a special calling and endowment of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor 12:29).

Bible writers were fully aware that what they wrote was not the product of their own impulse. David expressed the conviction that his words originated from the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue" (2 Sam 23:2, NASB).

Daniel recognized that the book of the Jeremiah was "the word of the LORD" (Dan 9:2, KJV) and the angel Gabriel referred to the "scripture of truth" (Dan 10:21, KJV).

Jesus appealed to the Bible of his day, the OT, as the word of ultimate authority when He met the Devil's temptation in the wilderness. Jesus resisted the Devil by stating, "It is written," quoting Scripture (Matt 4:4, 7, 10). Satan responded by misconstruing Scripture, to which Jesus replied again, "It is written."

Jesus and the apostles repeatedly appealed to "Scripture" as the Word of God which is fulfilled (Lk 4:21; 22: 37; Mk 12:10; Matt 26:54; John 7:38; 10:35; 13:18; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36-37; Acts 1:16;

etc.). Scripture comes by the "prophets" (Matt 26:56; Rom 1:2; 16:26) who speak by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet 1:21).

Jesus Christ himself insists that "all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John [the Baptist]" (Matt 11:13, NASB). The whole of the OT is said to be prophetic in nature. It "prophesied" or "spoke."⁶⁰

The author of the letter to the Hebrews sees the Holy Spirit as the primary Author of both the warning, "Today, when you hear his voice . . ." (Heb 3:7-11, RSV, citing Ps 95:7-11) but also of the meaning and ritual of the Mosaic tabernacle. "The Holy Spirit was showing thereby that while the first tabernacle was still standing, the way into the sanctuary had not yet been revealed" (Heb 9:8, NAB).

When Joel, the "prophet" (Acts 2:16) spoke, it was "God" speaking (vs. 17). Likewise "God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from ancient time" (Acts 3:21, NASB) and Moses is the first one cited (vs. 22). What is written by the "prophets," by Moses and the subsequent inspired prophets of the OT is from God. God "announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that Christ should suffer, . . ." (Acts 3:18, NASB).

The "Holy Spirit [spoke] through the mouth of our father David Thy servant" (Acts 4:25, NASB) quoting from Psalm 2. The idea of God speaking "through" the prophets is repeated several times in the NT.

On a comprehensive level Yahweh had proclaimed His words "through [*beyad*] the former prophets" (Zech 7:7). The designation "former prophets" includes "the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit" (vs. 12, NASB). If by "law [*torah*]" the "law" of Moses is meant, then the designation "former prophets" refers to all prophets from Moses to Zechariah.

God not only used the "prophets" as speakers and preachers, He used them also to write down their words.⁶¹ In Mark 1:2 the writing comes from a "prophet." The NT employs such phrases as "it has been written by the prophet" (Matt 2:5) or "all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man" (Lk 18:31, NASB). Paul speaks of the promise given "through His prophets in the holy Scriptures" (Rom 1:2, NASB). What the prophets wrote is

inspired Scripture. It was the operation of the Holy Spirit which enabled the "prophets" to utter their words.⁶²

Paul affirms that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16). Thus, "all Scripture" is "God-breathed," which is the literal translation of the Greek term *theopneustos*.⁶³ Although "all Scripture" is written by the prophets, its content and message derive from God Himself.

Jesus Christ Himself maintained that "Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35, NASB). Thus, he upheld its unity and coherence because its source and origin was in God. The entire Bible of both Testaments is conceived of as deriving from "prophets"⁶⁴ and thus by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

2. "Scripture" and "Sacred Writings." The view expressed in the NT on the nature of "Scripture" and the usage of "sacred writings" (2 Tim 3:15) is instructive for the origin of Scripture and its authority.

a. "Scripture" as Used by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ referred to "Scripture" in his statement, "Search the Scriptures" (John 5:39).⁶⁵ It is universally acknowledged that "Scripture" as here used by Jesus refers to the Hebrew Bible of the OT as a whole.

Jesus endorsed thereby the understanding that His Bible is inspired Scripture and carries within itself the authority for discovering (a) eternal life and (b) Jesus Christ Himself because they "bear witness of Me."

Jesus Christ refers in a number of instances to the totality of "Scripture" as the authoritative Bible of His day. Such expressions and phrases as "they [disciples] believed the Scripture" (John 2:22), "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), "the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John 17:12), and "they did not understand the Scripture" (John 20:9) give ample evidence for His view of what Scripture is.

The designation "Scripture" does not in every instance mean the entire OT. In specific contexts this designation refers to a passage within the Bible. When used in this restricted sense, it is so qualified in a special way. For example, Jesus in his inaugural address in the synagogue in Nazareth referred to "this Scripture" referring to the passage of Isaiah 61 (Lk 4:21). In John 19:37 Jesus speaks of "another Scripture" and means Zechariah 12:10. In Mark

12:10 Jesus refers to "this Scripture" of Psalm 118:22-23. These instances from the Gospels restrict the meaning of "Scripture" to individual passages within the OT with such terms as "this" and "another." This restricted usage of Scripture is safeguarded by its contexts and special pronouns.

b. "*Scripture*" in *Peter's Writings*. The same unity and totality of OT Scripture is intended by the apostle Peter in his reference to "Scripture" in 1 Peter 2:6 and his famous statement about "no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation" (2 Pet 1:20). These passages emphasize and affirm the "unified totality of Scripture."⁶⁶

c. "*Scripture*" in *Paul's Writings*. The early Christian usage of the term "Scripture" to refer to the totality and unity of the OT is supported in several passages by the apostle Paul also.

The designation "sacred writings" (*hiera grammata*) in 2 Timothy 3:15 which Timothy had known from childhood "refers to the Old Testament as a whole."⁶⁷ This is one way in which the entire Bible of those who lived previous to the time of the full NT (see also 2 Tim 3:16).

Paul writes in Galatians 3:8, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand . . ." (NASB). "Scripture" here is personified to stand for God Himself. This so-called hypostatizing of Scripture shows that "Scripture" is regarded in its "essential unity as a declaration of the divine will."⁶⁸

d. "*Scripture*" in *the Book of Acts*. "Scripture" in Acts 1:16 is that "which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David" (vs. 17, NASB). In Acts 8 we also find the report that "the passage of Scripture" (vs. 32) which the Ethiopian eunuch was reading came from Isa 53:7-8. The distinction here is that the term "passage" is used when a part of the totality of "Scripture" is read. "Scripture" itself is the totality of the Bible.

The consistent picture in the NT is that the OT is "Scripture," the "Word of God" produced by the "prophets" who spoke through the Holy Spirit. The "prophets" wrote it down (Exod 17:14; 24:4; Deut 31:9; Josh 24:26; 1 Kings 2:3; Ezra 3:2; Jer 30:2; cf. Rom 15:15; 1 Cor 4:14; 2 Cor 2:3; 1 Pet 5:12; 2 Pet 3:1; 1 John 1:4, 2:12, 26; Jude

3; etc.). Jesus Christ and the apostles accepted it as authoritative, inspired "Scripture."

Inspiration: The NT Testimony About Itself. What does the NT say about itself? Is it using such designations as "Scripture" and "word of God" for itself?

1. *Scripture(s)*. A brief consideration of 1 Timothy 5:18 is appropriate. "For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing,' and 'The laborer is worthy of his wages'" (NASB). The first quotation derives from Deuteronomy 25:4 and holds it to be "Scripture."

The second quotation consists of a saying of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:7: "The laborer is worthy of his wages" (cf. Matt 10:10). Jesus' own saying is covered by the introductory formula for Scripture quotation, "for the Scripture says."

It has been suggested that Paul refers to the canonical Gospel of Luke as Scripture. We cannot be fully certain about this, but the wording affirms that at least a saying of Jesus (or a collection of his sayings as a Gospel) had the status of "Scripture" when Paul wrote 1 Timothy.⁶⁹ "It is striking that Paul puts this verbatim quote from Luke's gospel on the same level as the OT and calls both citations 'Scripture'."⁷⁰

The second example comes from the book of Acts. The preaching of "the good news" by Philip is designated to be "the word of God" (Acts 8:12, 14). The proclamation of the gospel is repeatedly described as "the word of God" (Acts 11:1; cf. 12:24; 13:46; 17:13; 18:11; 19:20). This reveals that the apostolic preaching and teaching is designated "the word of God."

The third example derives from Peter. The reference to "the rest of the Scriptures" in 2 Peter 3:16—within the argument concerning the letters of Paul "in which are some things hard to understand" (NASB)—indicates that Peter's use of "Scriptures" here "places Paul's writings on a level with other inspired Scripture."⁷¹ Evidently the Pauline corpus of letters are here reckoned as belonging to "the other Scriptures."⁷² This manner of referring to Paul's letters as "Scriptures" alongside the OT indicates that they had been recognized as being on the same level. They were both viewed as being of divine origin and authoritative.

Since the "Scriptures" include Paul's letters, it can be sug-

gested that they have (as do all the other "Scriptures") intrinsic canonicity. They are as canonical as the Scriptures of the OT.

The fourth example derives from Paul. The apostle Paul makes reference to "the mystery of Christ," which was not made known in previous ages, and which "has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets" (Eph 3:4-5, NKJV). This passage gives evidence that the apostolic preaching and writing is Spirit-originated in the sense that it is revelation by the Holy Spirit in the same way as the messages of the "prophets" were revelation in the OT age. This is in harmony with the claim of Paul that "the gospel which was preached by me . . . came through the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:11-12, NKJV).

John the Revelator provides a fifth example. He maintains "I was in the Spirit" (Rev 1:10) when he was given "the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and all the things that he saw" (1:2).

At the conclusion of the book of Revelation there is the repeated emphasis on "the words of the prophecy of this book" (Rev 22:10, 18, 19). "The words of the prophecy of this book" are the very "word of God" (Rev 1:2).

Our review of major statements using the term "Scripture(s)" and "word of God" in the NT reveals that these designations were extended to include the NT writings. F. F. Bruce notes insightfully, "When the New Testament writings were later included with the Old Testament as part of 'all scripture' [2 Tim 3:15-15], it was natural to conclude that they too were 'inspired by God'." ⁷³ This conclusion seems sound. The Word of God made up of both the Old and the New Testaments is "inspired by God." It is authoritative not because humans vested it with any authority. Authority is not assigned to it by the community. It carries authority because Scripture originated through the Holy Spirit by means of inspiration and was written down by inspired prophets and apostles.

2. "All Scripture." We may at this time return to the expression "all Scripture" in the famous passage of 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (NASB).

The phrase "all Scripture" is the most widely used rendering of the original Greek words *pasa graphe* which Paul wrote. ⁷⁴ One

English version translates, "every scripture" (ARV) and recent dynamic renderings read "every inspired scripture" (NEB, REB).

The latter rendering, "every inspired scripture," does not seem to reflect faithfully what Paul wrote. This rendering is syntactically debated. ⁷⁵ The Greek grammarian C. F. D. Moule wrote that the rendering "every inspired scripture" "is most unlikely . . . [and] much more probably [the phrase] means *the whole of scripture [is] inspired.*" ⁷⁶

What difference would it make to say "all Scripture" or "every scripture"? James Barr notes that "if the meaning is 'every scripture', then the word 'scripture' does not designate the entirety of the Bible; rather, it is a word for each individual passage or sentence." ⁷⁷ In other words, the rendering "every scripture" refers distributively to every individual passage in Scripture. It means "every passage of Scripture" ⁷⁸ in a distributive sense and not "Scripture" as a totality and complete unit. The distributive sense means that as one looks at the various parts of the Bible in whatever Scripture passage is considered, it is inspired by God.

Contrariwise, if Paul means "all Scripture," using this expression in the non-distributive, collective sense, then "all Scripture" refers to the Bible in its entirety.

The likelihood that Paul is using *pasa graph* in a collective sense of "all Scripture" is high, because this is the normal usage of the term in the NT and in Paul's letters. The idea that there is a Scripture passage that is not inspired by God is not the viewpoint of Paul or any other biblical writer. ⁷⁹ Scripture is not the result of human impulse, human reason, mere human research, or the like, but of being "breathed [inspired] by God" (*theopneustos*).

The evidence considered above seems to indicate that the NT, as the OT before it, is clearly given by means of the Holy Spirit. It is the word of the "Son" (Heb 1:1-2) or "the Lord's commandment." Paul insists in writing to the Corinthians about their problem, "the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment" (1 Cor 14:37, NASB). The NT originates in the same way as does the OT. It follows that the inspiration of the NT writings gives it canonical status in the same way in which the OT writings have inherent canonical status.

The Closing of the OT Canon: A New Consensus

Recent investigations on the closing of the OT canon have consistently pointed to a closing in pre-Christian times.⁸⁰ This is a significant departure from widely accepted critical thinking which held sway for about 100 years. It opens a new chapter in our understanding of the origin and development of the OT canon. These studies indicate that the nineteenth and twentieth century critical consensus on the canonization of the OT is undermined from studies within the critical camp of scholarship and without it, and must even be replaced.

Due to restrictions in space, we will only mention six major authorities. Four belong to the critical tradition of scholarship, as their views on the book of Daniel will show. Two belong in the camp of evangelical scholarship. Their agreement on basics indicates that this emerging consensus is not a partisan issue.

Sid Z. Leiman. In 1976 Sid Z. Leiman published his massive dissertation which investigates the full range of Rabbinic evidence for the canonization of the Hebrew Bible. He continues to hold to a three-part process of the canonization of the OT. He maintains that the text of Scripture is unequivocal on the canonization of the "Law." Leiman concludes, "The canonization of the Covenant Code, the Decalogue, Deuteronomy, and perhaps the entire Torah is assumed to have occurred during the lifetime of Moses."⁸¹ This implies that the history of the process of canonization did not simply begin in the time of Josiah around 622/21 B.C. when the book of Deuteronomy had been discovered in the Temple (2 Kgs 22=2 Chr 34).

In the view of the rabbis, the Prophets (Nebi'im), Leiman shows, were canonized between 500 and 450 B.C. The Writings (or Hagiographa), the third part of the Jewish canon, was canonized around 200 B.C., or earlier. But since the book of Daniel is claimed by liberal scholars not to have been completed until 164 B.C., according to the Maccabean authorship hypothesis, Leiman claims that final canonization of the Writings took place during the Maccabean crisis. "It is a fair assumption," he writes, "that the present form of Daniel was canonized by the Maccabees ca. 164 B.C. In the light of that probability, and in the light of 2 Macc 2:14-15, we would suggest that the Hagiographa was canonized and closed under the

auspices of Judah Maccabee shortly before the death of Antiochus IV (164/163 B.C.)."⁸²

S. Talmon. Shemaryahu Talmon published in 1987 an important essay, "Holy Writings and Canonical Books in Jewish Perspective—Considerations Concerning the Formation of the Entity 'Scripture' in Judaism."⁸³ He argues for a sequential three-stage development of the canon of the Hebrew Bible.⁸⁴ The Bible was written over a period of ca. 1000 years, "between ca. 1200 and ca. 200 B.C.E."⁸⁵

The "Torah," which is understood to derive from Moses, was promulgated by such kings as Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 17:7-9), Hezekiah (2 Chron 31:21), Josiah (2 Kgs 22:8ff.; 2 Chron 34:16ff.) and such national personalities as Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh 8:2-8).⁸⁶

It is evident that the "holiness" of the Torah is to be equated with being "composed under divine inspiration."⁸⁷

The corpus of Prophets and the Psalms are equally ascribed to "divine inspiration."⁸⁸ In this way these writings were accorded "holiness" which caused them to be counted among the "Holy Writings."⁸⁹ The historical and wisdom literature also manifest inspiration.⁹⁰

Extended family entities together with religious and national communities during OT times received these types of inspired literature in reading and usage, contributing to its ascription as authoritative and canonical literature.⁹¹

Talmon concludes that the canon of Hebrew Scripture was completed by the early Hellenistic period in the middle of second century B.C.⁹²

Evidently, Talmon agrees with Leiman on the closing of the canon and points out that the later rabbinic discussions at Jamnia have haggadic and not halakhic [legal] force. The discussion at Jamnia have but scholastic value and are unrelated to a closing of the canon. The canon was already closed by the times these discussions took place.⁹³

David N. Freedman. David Noel Freedman, a first rate scholar of international reputation, who is called "one of the last of the great Bible generalists,"⁹⁴ argued in a provocative essay published in 1976—(independent of the conclusions reached by Leiman)—

that the Law and the Former Prophets (the historical books of the OT) formed a literary unit which had received canonical status by 550 B.C.

A "second edition" of the canon, which included the Latter Prophets, that is, the prophetic books of the OT, appeared about 500 B.C. The Hagiographa (Writings) were added subsequently. Since the book of Daniel is dated in its final supposed edition to 165 B.C. the canon seems to have been closed at that time.⁹⁵

In 1993 Freedman explained that Ezra and Nehemiah canonized "the whole Bible" in its final form, "all except Daniel."⁹⁶ He will elaborate on this in a future monograph.

Roger Beckwith. Roger Beckwith, lecturer at Oxford University, wrote in 1985 the most massive tome on the canon of the OT written in this century. Beckwith is in essential agreement with Leiman on the closing of the canon. Beckwith suggests that Judas Maccabeus finally gathered the Scriptures together in 164 B.C., and at that time the books of Esther and Daniel were included in the canon.⁹⁷ Thus, the OT canon was closed as early as 164 B.C.⁹⁸ Beckwith holds, however, that the other parts of the canon were recognized as canonical at much earlier times.

Meredith G. Kline. Meredith G. Kline, following new discoveries on ancient Near Eastern treaties, argues that there is an unbroken canonical continuity from the time of Moses to the end of the writing of OT books. He argues for the divine origin of the biblical books based on divine inspiration which guarantees authority and a faithful transmission of text as the Word of God.⁹⁹ He states, "The origin of the Old Testament canon coincided with the founding of the kingdom of Israel by covenant at Sinai."¹⁰⁰ The very covenant made by God at Sinai which "formally established the Israelite theocracy was itself the beginning of the nucleus of the total covenantal structure of writings which constitutes the Old Testament canon."¹⁰¹

For Kline the New Testament's claim "as to its primary divine authorship" means that it is to be "understood as the word of the ascended Lord of the new covenant . . ."¹⁰² "And then the human authors of the New Testament books, authorized by their Lord to speak his word, will be seen to function as his 'ministers of the new covenant' (cf. 2 Cor. 3:6)."¹⁰³ He concludes, "Because the Bible is

the old and new covenants and because canon is inherent in covenant of the biblical type, canonicity is inherent in the very form and identity of Scripture as the Old Testament and the New Testament."¹⁰⁴ Thus, the canon is rooted and grounded for Kline in Scripture as the covenantal Word of God; it is not grounded in any external norming agent(s) which assign canonicity to the biblical books from the outside.

Robert I. Vasholz. A voice complementary to that of Kline is Robert I. Vasholz with his tome, *The Old Testament Canon in the Old Testament Church* (1990). He points to the "internal rationale for Old Testament canonicity."¹⁰⁵ Vasholz holds that OT canonicity is based on the vigorous and repeated assertion that it "is the 'Word of the Lord'."¹⁰⁶ "The whole of the Old Testament always presents the view that canonicity resides in the endowment of authority upon Moses and it is precisely here where we may discern the rationale for canonicity."¹⁰⁷

Vasholz develops "the position that the rationale for accepting writings as authoritative, i.e. canonical, resides in the observation of contemporary eyewitnesses of some kind of manifestation of God's approval of the authors of scripture."¹⁰⁸ Thus, Vasholz makes a distinction between the inherent nature of canonicity which is said to reside in the Old Testament as "the word of the Lord" and the acceptance of that canonicity by the community.

The acceptance aspect of what is inherently canonical resides in the divine manifestation of "God's approval of the authors" to which the contemporaries are witnesses. This means that canonicity is grounded in the divine both with regard (1) to the origin of the books as deriving from God and (2) in the "recognition" on the part of the contemporary community to which God grants confirming, supernatural indications.

In the case of Moses, who produced the Pentateuch, there is ample evidence for God's "approval" of Moses as author.¹⁰⁹ The Israelites were eyewitnesses of what God did and accomplished through Moses.

How is the picture with the prophets and the writers of biblical books after Moses? Vasholz notes that "the Old Testament endorses the fulfilled prediction as the hallmark of canonicity, . . ."¹¹⁰ God would fulfill short-term predictions in order to "reassure the

hearers that God would perform what he had promised [in the long-term prediction and in the other words of the writers of biblical books]."¹¹¹ The role of fulfilled predictions were to function "as proof that the prophet was genuine, and the Old Testament society understood them that way."¹¹² These fulfillments caused "the prophet's work or works . . . [to] be respected and retained. Once a prophet and his contemporaries passed from the scene there would be no way for a prophet to be established. The prophet proved himself by short-term prediction and miracles to his peers."¹¹³

The books of 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings contain numerous accounts of short-term predictions and their corresponding fulfillments.¹¹⁴ This prophecy/fulfillments schema reveals the self-authenticating rationale "to determine canonicity."¹¹⁵ The situation with regard to 1-2 Chronicles is similar to that of 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings. Vasholz concludes that "there is in the Old Testament a record of writing prophets whose authority had been publically attested each in his own generation to write the history of Israel's kings, and that these same prophets were contemporaries of the kings they wrote about."¹¹⁶

The predictions of the prophetic books such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and so on functioned on the same basis of self-authentication.¹¹⁷ "Prediction was the crux of the matter for canonicity just as it was purposed to be and as an avalanche of Old Testament data shows it to be."¹¹⁸ The point Vasholz wishes to make is that the OT not only provides the internal criterion for canonicity in terms of its origin as the "word of the Lord," but it also provides the internal criterion of acceptance and recognition by the community. On that basis, the written product of the prophets was recognized as both authoritative and canonical.

These scholars manifest essential agreement regarding the closing of the OT canon long before the NT period began. Leiman, Talmon, and from some other perspectives Kline and Vasholz, hold that the canon idea is derived from the inherent quality of the inspiration of the books of the Bible. Beckwith is not opposed to it but has a different concern. The various communities in which the OT books function as canonical do either recognize them to be so (Kline, Vasholz) or ascribe in their usage of these books authority to them (Leiman, Talmon). It may be appropriate to conclude that

the respective communities, primarily contemporary with the inspired writers of the Bible, came to recognize the inherent quality of these writings as Holy Scripture on the basis of their inspired character.

An additional conclusion presents itself: the inspiration of the biblical writings was the guiding quality of canonicity. The canon which includes all thirty-nine OT books was in existence around 400 B.C.¹¹⁹ when the last books were written by the last inspired writers.¹²⁰

Ezra, a professional scribe as well as a priest, is not the one who canonized the OT even though he played an important role together with Nehemiah to affirm and popularize the canonized Scripture among the exiles. "Ezra had set his heart to study (*darash*) the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach (it)" (Ezr 7:10, NASB). Later Ezra brought "the Law" to the people and read it to them (Neh 8:2-8).

Those who hold to the Maccabean hypothesis for the book of Daniel¹²¹ suggest a final second century B.C. date for the closing of the OT canon at about 164 B.C. However, if the book of Daniel is dated to the sixth century on internal grounds, and there is no need to date it later than that,¹²² then the closing of the canon of the OT can be dated to about 400 B.C. when the last of the books were written.

The concept of an "increasing canon,"¹²³ that is, a canon which is enlarged, does not mean that the Israelite community on their own simply added books to their canon of Scriptures. Rather as the inspired authors of biblical books finished their products, these inspired writings increased the body of canonical books on the basis of their inherent and internal canonicity based in inspiration.

Ultimately, then, canonicity is not based on human decisions made by various communities, but on divine inspiration. For the biblical books,¹²⁴ inspiration implies canonicity.¹²⁵ Because of inspiration the biblical canon is self-authenticating, self-validating, and self-establishing. This means that the origin of the canon of the OT, and we may respectively add the canon of the NT where the same principles are at work, is not the same as its recognition by the respective faith communities.

These remarks on the inherent nature of canonicity reveal

that a distinction needs to be made between the origin of the canon and its recognition by the religious community. The existence of the canon is grounded and given through the inspired human agent(s) writing the biblical book(s). When a biblical book is completed under inspiration, it is canonical and "increases" the canon of Holy Scripture which began with the writings of Moses (Pentateuch) and ended with the production under inspiration of the last NT book. The subsequent activity of the religious community is that of recognizing what is inherently canonical. The religious community does not bestow canonicity on Scripture; it recognizes canonicity.

The Closing of the NT Canon

Inspiration and the Canon. As is the case for the OT, the origin of canonization is found in the writings of the NT itself. Divine inspiration is once more the key in this process.

Hebrews 1:1 reveals that in the past "God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, . . ." (NRSV). The inspired "prophets" produced the inspired Scripture called the OT (2 Pet 3:15-16). With Jesus Christ a new era breaks into history. "But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (Heb 1:2, NIV). This text maintains that with the speaking of the Son the Divine revelation has reached its fullest disclosure.

It appears that with Jesus Christ, and those who are authorized by Him to speak for Him, biblical revelation has reached its climax and goal. In Luke 10:16 Jesus says to the seventy disciples He sent out, "Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me" (NRSV). Jesus Christ identifies Himself with His disciples.

Apostolicity and the Canon. Apostolicity as a criterion of canonicity, if understood correctly, has a certain degree of importance. Apostolicity means the "apostolic," respectively inspired origin of the NT books.¹²⁶ Apostolicity does not mean that every single NT book is written by an apostle himself. But it means that the NT is written by an inspired "apostle" or a direct, inspired disciple of an apostle, an eyewitness. "Here we may think of Mark and Luke, whose apostolicity was derivative through association with Peter and Paul, respectively."¹²⁷ Jude and James, as brothers

of Jesus, are regarded as having apostolic stature. The letter to the Hebrews was considered to have been written by the apostle Paul.¹²⁸

It is best to understand by apostolicity that all authors of the NT writings were apostles, or one of their immediate associates, who were guided by the Holy Spirit and wrote under inspiration.¹²⁹ If apostolicity means written under inspiration by the apostles of Jesus Christ or their immediate companions associated with them, then "apostolicity implies at the same time inspiration."¹³⁰

Based on these considerations the NT canon was closed at about A.D. 100, whenever the last apostolic writing had been completed.

Reception/Recognition of the Canon. The subsequent lists of NT books such as are found in the so-called Muratorian Fragment¹³¹ and in other lists of NT books,¹³² do not tell us about the canonization of the NT, but about the reception or recognition. The Roman Catholic scholar Hans von Campenhausen has stated incisively "that the canon—from the point of view of its content—has succeeded on its own."¹³³ It is a self-establishing and self-validating entity.

The Continental Lutheran New Testament scholar and church historian, Kurt Aland, maintains that "the established church as such did not create the canon, but she has recognized the created canon."¹³⁴ Bruce M. Metzger, one of the foremost NT scholars in the United States, also concluded that the Church "came to recognize, accept, and confirm the self-authenticating quality of certain documents that imposed themselves as such upon the Church."¹³⁵ The "self-authenticating quality" is the divine revelation inscribed by God through inspiration. The canon was created by God through inspiration and its divine authority and canonicity is inherent in the revelation-inspiration phenomenon.

Canon and Post-canonical Inspiration. Biblical revelation concludes with Christ, the fullest revelation God has given to humanity (Heb 1:1, 2). The apostles and their immediate associates have attested to his identity and significance under inspiration in their writings. Thus, it follows that the NT was canonized and closed when the last NT writing was completed, presumably the book of Revelation by John. No later prophet—even under inspira-

tion—could give a greater revelation than that given by Christ. Hence, the canon of Scripture naturally closes with the apostolic witness about Him.

Inspired Scripture ceased with the end of the first century A.D., the canon is closed, and nothing can be added and nothing can be subtracted.

We have seen above that the “prophets” of the OT and the “apostles” (and their immediate associates) in the NT are the writers who produced Scripture under inspiration. A given of the “prophets/apostles” as inspired writers is that whatever may be written after their time cannot become Scripture. As a corollary to this, any later inspired person who speaks or writes will have to be judged on the basis of the canon of inspired Scripture, and if in harmony with the “law and the testimony” (Isa 8:20), if in harmony with Scripture, be recognized as inspired, but always subject to Scripture.

Conclusion

Divine inspiration provides the internal, self-authenticating and self-validating criterion for canonicity. Bruce Metzger has noted incisively that “the canon is complete when the books which by principle belong to it have been written.”¹³⁶ At the moment when inspired books are written they are canonical. Canonicity is not something ascribed to the Bible whether we speak of the OT or the NT. Canonicity is inherent and indigenous to the books of the Bible themselves. The recognition that inspired Scripture has canonical status is not what makes them canonical. The Bible is canonical before the canonicity is recognized by any community of faith.

The distinction between the canonical writings and later ecclesiastical writings is not based upon arbitrary decisions. It has theological reasons. It is God who was at work in creating the biblical writings by prophetic/apostolic inspiration and His providence. Therefore, it is God who made them canonical. It is also God who caused these writings to be recognized for what they are, based on their inherent inspired nature.

It may be safely concluded that “the Church did not create the canon, but came to recognize, accept, and confirm the self-authen-

tifying quality of certain documents that imposed themselves as such upon the Church. If this fact is obscured, one comes into serious conflict not with dogma but with history.”¹³⁷

Even if a few church fathers claimed some kind of inspiration for themselves, which may be better designated illumination by the Holy Spirit, their claim acknowledges the prior, foundational and definitive prophetic/apostolic inspiration of the Scriptures and their canonical authority.¹³⁸ The inherent, divine authority of the Bible, rooted in its divine origin through inspiration, makes it the continuing canonical norm for the faith and life of the church.

The biblical books became “canonical because no one could stop them doing so.”¹³⁹ Therefore, “the canon—understood on the basis of its content—has succeeded on its own.”¹⁴⁰ Thus, the Bible is not the product of the church.¹⁴¹ “Ultimately, then, canonicity was based not on human decision but on divine inspiration: recognized intrinsic authority precedes canonicity.”¹⁴² We can say that intrinsic authority, given through divine inspiration, both implies and produces canonicity. Through the process of inspiration, God purposed to make the writings of the Bible canonical and authoritative in themselves. The *recognition* of the canon is a secondary act, surely superintended by the Holy Spirit, but it is not an act determinative for the canonical nature of the biblical writings. Canonicity itself is primary. In itself, it is first of all and uniquely grounded in the “prophetic” (for the OT) and “apostolic” (for the NT) inspiration of Scripture as it constitutes the “Word of God” in human form for all time and in every place. Canonization is a divinely appointed inherent process rooted in inspiration. The variety of attempts to explain canonization as a mere human process, as assigning to the biblical writings authority, as giving them a status which they do not have inherently, or as attributing to biblical writings a superior quality on the basis of decisions of religious communities, do not square with the evidence contained in the biblical writings themselves. Canonicity is grounded in the biblical writings themselves and has its origin in their divine inspiration.

Endnotes

¹ Albert C. Sundberg, Jr., “The Bible Canon and the Christian Doctrine of Inspira-

tion," *Interpretation* 29 (1975), p. 352; James Barr, *Holy Scripture. Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), p. 74.

² Typical examples are R. L. Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1957); N. L. Geisler and W. E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), pp. 136-147; Milton C. Fisher, "The Canon of the Old Testament," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. F. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 1:385-392; and many others.

³ The key essays were collected in the book edited by Ernst Käsemann, *Das Neue Testament als Kanon* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970). Note also the following major publications: H. von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972); Kurt Aland, *The Problem of the New Testament Canon* (Oxford: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1962); David L. Dungan, "The New Testament Canon in Recent Study," *Interpretation* 29 (1975), 339-351; David Noel Freedman, "The Canon of the Old Testament," *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), pp. 130-136; Jack N. Lighthouse, "The Formation of the Biblical Canon in Judaism of Late Antiquity: A Prolegomenon to a General Assessment," *Studies in Religion* 8/2 (1978), pp. 135-142; Leander E. Keck, "Scripture and Canon," *Quarterly Review* 3/4 (1983), pp. 8-26; William Farmer and Denis Farkasfalvy, *The Formation of the New Testament Canon* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983); Jean Daniel Kaestli and Otto Wermelinger, *Le Canon de l'Ancien Testament. Sa formation et son histoire*. (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1984); H. P. Rüger, "Der Umfang des alttestamentlichen Kanons in den verschiedenen kirchlichen Traditionen," *Die Apokryphenfrage im ökumenischen Horizont* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1989), pp. 137-145; Odil H. Steck, *Der Abschluss der Prophetie im Alten Testament. Ein Versuch zur Frage der Vorgeschichte des Kanons* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991); C. Dohmen and M. Oeming, *Biblischer Kanon—warum und wozu? Eine Kanontheologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1992); other publications are referred later in this essay.

⁴ See Hartmut Stegemann, "Die 'Mitte der Schrift' aus der Sicht der Gemeinde von Qumran," *Die Mitte der Schrift? Ein jüdisch-christliches Gespräch*, eds. M. Klopfenstein et al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 149-184.

⁵ Such publications as Harry Y. Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985); Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1985); Lee M. MacDonald, *The Formation of the Christian Biblical Canon* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988); F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988); Ingo Baldermann et al. eds., *Zum Problem des biblischen Kanons* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988); and Gerhard Maier, ed., *Der Kanon der Bibel* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus Verlag, 1990) give evidence of this continuing interest.

⁶ A typical example for this view is expressed by A. C. Sundberg, "Canon of the New Testament," *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1976), p. 137: "It is no longer satisfactory to use the terms 'scripture' and 'canon' synonymously. The church received 'scriptures,' that is, religious writings that were in some sense regarded as authoritative from Judaism; but the church did not receive a canon, i.e., a closed collection of scripture to which nothing could be added, nothing subtracted." Sundberg holds to the now rejected view that the OT canon was "closed" in Jamnia at about A.D. 90 (ibid.).

⁷ For example A. Jepsen, "Zur Kanongeschichte des Alten Testaments," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 71 (1959), pp. 114-136; idem, "Kanon und Text des Alten Testaments," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 21 (1965), pp. 358-370; Dominique Barthélemy, "L'État de la Bible juive depuis le début de notre ère jusqu'à la deuxième révolte contre Rome (131-135)," *Le canon de l'Ancien Testament. Sa formation et son histoire*, eds. J.-D. Kaestli et O. Wermelinger (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1984), pp. 9-45; Hartmut Gese, "Die dreifache Gestaltwerdung des Alten Testaments," *Mitte der Schrift? Ein jüdisch-christliches Gespräch*, ed. Martin A. Klopfenstein et al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 299-328; Shemaryahu Talmon, "Heiliges Schrifttum und Kanonische Bücher aus jüdischer Sicht—Überlegungen zur Ausbildung der Grösse 'Die Schrift' im Judentum," *Mitte der Schrift?*, pp. 45-79.

⁸ Every recent tome on the formation of the canon of the New Testament discusses these criteria.

⁹ Stuhlmacher, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 1:2-3 speaks of the "ecclesiastical canon [kirchlicher Kanon]" and states that "the New Testament is the ecclesiastical canon of the early Christian books which are foundational for Christian faith and in whose origin and determination the church has essentially participated" [italics mine] (p. 3). This view is similarly stated by many other liberal Protestant theologians in the latter half of this century.

¹⁰ Martin Luther, *Weimar Ausgabe*, 3.452.

¹¹ Martin Luther, *Weimar Ausgabe*, 48.31.

¹² Martin Luther, *Weimar Ausgabe*, 3.515; pp. 403-404.

¹³ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 8.

¹⁴ It is usually noted that the Greek word *kann* is borrowed from the Hebrew *qaneh*, "reed, rod."

¹⁵ See H. W. Beyer, "kanon," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1982), III:596-598.

¹⁶ See the discussions in Harry Gamble, *The New Testament Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), pp. 15-18; Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, pp. 17-18; Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church*, pp. 1, 13, 63; Theodor Zahn, *Grundriss der Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904), pp. 1-14.

¹⁷ Alexander Sand, *Kanon. Von den Anfängen bis zum Fragment Muratorium* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1974), 8-11.

¹⁸ MacDonald, p. 40.

¹⁹ Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 18.

²⁰ Sand, p. 9.

²¹ Beyer, III:598.

²² Beyer, III:599.

²³ Sand, p. 9.

²⁴ Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 17; Sand, p. 9.

²⁵ R. P. C. Hanson, *Origin's Doctrine of Tradition* (London: SCM Press, 1954), 93.

²⁶ Bruce Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 282-88.

²⁷ Cited by Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 18.

²⁸ Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 36.

²⁹ A. Maichle, *Der Kanon der biblischen Bücher und das Konzil von Trient* (Freiburg: Herder, 1929), 74-99; Ziegenaus, 218-220.

³⁰ Anton Ziegenaus, *Kanon: Von der Väterzeit bis zur Gegenwart* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1991), 220.

³¹ See Josephus, *Contra Apionem*, I, 38-42.

³² Jude 14-15 is an alleged quotation from the apocryphal book of 1 Enoch. However, Jude does not quote a book, he quotes a man, the patriarch Enoch.

³³ Bruce M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York, 1957), p. 177.

³⁴ Metzger, *Introduction to the Apocrypha*, pp. 172, 262.

³⁵ Josephus, *Ant.*, 1.13; 10.63; *Introductio to Ecclesiasticus*; Philo, *Vit Cont.*, pp. 25, 28; 2 Macc 2:13-14; *Baba bathra* 14a-b.

³⁶ See Origen's list of 22 OT books in Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* 1.25.

³⁷ Gillis Gerleman, "dabar Wort," *Theologische Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, eds. E. Jenni and C. Westermann (Munich: Kaiser, 1971), 1:439, lists only 242 usages. Our usage comes from a computer study of the Hebrew Bible.

³⁸ Exod 4:28; 24:3,4; Num 11:24; Jos 3:9; 1 Sam 8:10; 15:1; Jer 36:4, 6, 8, 11; 37:2; 43:1; Ezk 11:25; Amos 8:11; 2 Chron 11:4; 29:15.

³⁹ Jer 23:36; Ezr 9:4; 1 Chron 25:5.

⁴⁰ Ezek 6:3; 25:3; 36:4.

⁴¹ Judg 3:20; 1 Sam 9:27; 2 Sam 16:23; 1 Kgs 12:22; 1 Chron 17:3.

⁴² Ludwig Koehler, *Old Testament Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957), p. 106.

- 43 Ibid., pp. 106-107.
- 44 O. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1934), pp. 71-77, for additional texts.
- 45 Note also the expression of "the ten words" for the Decalogue (Exod 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4).
- 46 Included in this counting are the variations with insertions such as Adonay in 92 usages and other variations. See D. Vetter, "ne'um Ausspruch," *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, 2:1.
- 47 H. Eising, "ne'um," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, eds. G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1984), 5:120.
- 48 It is used 11 times in Exodus (Exod 4:22; etc.), twice in Josh (7:13; 24:2), once in Judges (6:8), eight times in 1-2 Sam, 33 times in 1-2 Kings, 10 times in 1-2 Chron, 27 times in Isaiah, over 150 times in Jeremiah and the remaining times in the other prophetic books.
- 49 W. H. Schmidt, "amar, sagen," *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, 1:214.
- 50 Matt 5:17; 7:12; 11:13 (in reverse order); Lk 16:16, 29; 24:27; John 1:45; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 26:22; 28:23; Rom 3:21.
- 51 So W. Wiefel, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* "Theologischer Handkommentar zum NT" (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1988), p. 411.
- 52 E. Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* "Das Neue Testament Deutsch" (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), p. 324.
- 53 Otto Michel, *Der Brief an die Römer* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), pp. 390-91 n. 4.
- 54 W. Friedrich, "prophetes," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1968), 6:832.
- 55 This may find additional support in the combination of two categories of persons who are the foundation of the Christian church such as are mentioned in the expression "the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph 2:20; cf. 3:5).
- 56 In the NT Jesus' disciples are the "apostles" (Mk 3:16-19; Matt 10:2-4; Lk 6:13-16; Acts 1:13, 23, 26; etc.). Paul is also called an "apostle" (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Rom 1:1; Col 1:1; Eph 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1-2; 2 Tim 1:1, 11; Tit 1:1).
- 57 This is evident from the usage of "(books of) the law of Moses" in Josh 8:31, 32; 23:6; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 23:25; 2 Chron 23:18; 30:16; Ezr 3:2; 7:6; Neh 8:1; Dan 9:1, 13; Mal 4:4.
- 58 See Gerhard F. Hasel, *Speaking in Tongues. Biblical Speaking in Tongues and Modern Glossolalia* (2nd ed.; Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society Publications, 1994).
- 59 Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, p. 264.
- 60 Additional passages are Rom 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; Gal 3:8; 4:30; Jas 2:8; 4:6; 1 Pet 2:6; 2 Pet 1:20.
- 61 Isa 8:1; 30:8; Jer 30:2; 36:2, 28; Hab 2:2; cf. Exod 17:14; 24:4; 34:1, 27; Deut 27:3; 31:19; 24-26; 2 Chron 26:22; Neh 9:38.
- 62 Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, p. 264.
- 63 See the unsurpassed study by Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing House, 1970), pp. 245-296.
- 64 E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (London: Macmillan, 1946), pp. 134, 262-263.
- 65 An alternative translation is the one provided in NASB, "You search in the Scriptures." The difference in translation does not matter for our study of the term "Scripture."
- 66 W. Schrenk, "graphé as Holy Scripture," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1964), 1:755.
- 67 W. Schrenk, "grámma in NT Usage," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1964), 1:765.
- 68 Schrenk, "graphé as Holy Scripture," 1:754.
- 69 This is conceded by Rainer Riesner, "Ansätze zur Kanonbildung im Neuen Testa-

- ment," *Der Kanon der Bibel*, ed. Gerhard Maier (Giessen: Brunnen Verlag, 1990), p. 157, who suggests that with this exception the designation "Scripture" for NT books is found otherwise only in the middle of the second century A.D. (2 Clem 2:4).
- 70 Simon Kistemaker, "The Canon of the New Testament," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 20/1 (1977), p. 8.
- 71 F. D. Nichol, ed., "2 Peter," *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1957), 7:618; Karl Hermann Schelke, *Die Petrusbriefe. Der Judasbrief* "Hthk 13/2" (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1980), pp. 236-238.
- 72 Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, p. 120.
- 73 Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, p. 265.
- 74 So KJV, NASB, TEV, NIV, NRSV, etc.
- 75 The syntactical question relates to the position of the adjective *theopneustos*, "God-breathed." The sentence is said to have the adjective in the attributive position, "inspired Scripture." This would be paralleled in such a phrase as "sacred writings" in vs. 15. The most widely used translation, "all Scripture is inspired by God," takes the adjective in the predicate position. The predicate position seems the more natural. It is for this reason that a scholar such as James Barr "refuses to make a definite decision between these two possibilities" (*Beyond Fundamentalism: Biblical Foundations for Evangelical Christianity* / Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), p. 1).
- 76 C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 95.
- 77 Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, p. 1.
- 78 Schrenk, "grapho," 1:754.
- 79 The claim that Paul used non-canonical literature has been a subject of discussion for about 250 years. An excellent and balanced review of this issue is provided by E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991), pp. 34-37, 76-84.
- 80 The closing date of ca. 200 B.C. is supported by I. H. Eybers, "Some Remarks about the Canon of the Old Testament," *Theologica Evangelica* (Univ. of South Africa) 8 (1975), 111; P. Schäfer, "Die sogenannte Synode von Jamnia," *Judaica* 31 (1975), p. 116.
- 81 Sid Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture. The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence* (Hamden, CT: Almond, 1976), p. 20. This tome is the published version of his 1970 dissertation referred to in the next note.
- 82 Sid Z. Leiman, *The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence for the Canonization of the Hebrew Scripture* (PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1970), p. 48.
- 83 Published in German in *Mitte der Schrift?*, eds. M. Klopfenstein et al. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1987), pp. 45-79.
- 84 Ibid., pp. 50-52.
- 85 Ibid., p. 54.
- 86 Ibid., p. 57.
- 87 Ibid., p. 58.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Ibid., p. 59.
- 91 Ibid., pp. 60-69.
- 92 Ibid., p. 75.
- 93 Ibid., p. 79.
- 94 Hershel Shanks in his introduction to David Noel Freedman in *Bible Review* 9/6 (December 1993), p. 28.
- 95 David Noel Freedman, "Canon of the Old Testament," *Interpreter's Bible Dictionary. Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1976), pp. 130-136.
- 96 David Noel Freedman, "How the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Old Testament Differ," *Bible Review* 9/6 (December 1993), pp. 28-39, esp. p. 39.
- 97 Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church*, p. 312.
- 98 Ibid., p. 406.
- 99 Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids, MI:

Eerdmans, 1972); idem, "The Correlation of the Concepts of Canon and Covenant," *New Perspectives on the Old Testament*, ed. J. Barton Payne (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1970), pp. 265-279.

100 Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, p. 43.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid., p. 71.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid., p. 75.

105 Robert I. Vasholz, *The Old Testament Canon in the Old Testament Church. The Internal Rationale for Old Testament Canonicity*. "Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies, Vol. 7" (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon Press, 1990).

106 Ibid., p. 2.

107 Ibid., p. 9.

108 Ibid., p. 20.

109 Ibid., pp. 20-33.

110 Ibid., p. 47.

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid., p. 49.

113 Ibid.

114 1 Sam 2:34=4:11; 15:1-2=15:7-8; 30:7-8=30:17-20; 2 Sam 3:18=5:17-21=8:1; 7:12-13=1 Kgs 2:24; 2 Sam 12:11-12=16:21-22; 12:14=12:18. For 1-2 Kings see 1 Kgs 11:31-9 and 14:2=12:15-17; 1 Kgs 13:3=13:5; 1 Kgs 13:8, 17, 22=13:26; 1 Kgs 14:7-13=17-18; 16:2-4=16:11-12, and many examples in 1-2 Kings.

115 Vasholz, p. 54.

116 Ibid., p. 57.

117 Ibid., pp. 58-68.

118 Ibid., p. 67.

119 J. W. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (London: Tyndale, 1972), 134, states, "There is no reason to doubt that the canon of the Old Testament is substantially Ezra's canon, just as the Pentateuch was substantially Moses' canon."

120 The statement, "After the death of the last prophets—Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi—(divine or prophetic) inspiration was removed from Israel" (b. San 11a; Tos Sot ed. Zuckerman 318, 21-23; b. Sot 48b; Yom 9a) as cited by Talmon, "Heiliges Schrifttum," 74, may be revealing in this connection.

121 This is the case in Leiman, Freedman, and Beckwith. The latter also includes the acceptance of Esther at that time.

122 See Gerhard F. Hasel, "Establishing a Date for the Book of Daniel," *Symposium on Daniel*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook. "Daniel and Revelation Committee Series, Vol. 2." (Washington, DC: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), pp. 84-164.

123 This expression is used by Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, p. 412.

124 Edward J. Young, "The Canon of the Old Testament," *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1958), p. 162, writes that "it may be asserted confidently that the passages invoked to support the idea that Ezra 'canonized' any portion of the Old Testament Scriptures do not yield the desired result. Neither Ezra nor Nehemiah nor the men of the Great Synagogue nor the council of Jamnia 'canonized' the Old Testament nor any part thereof."

125 A similar conclusion is drawn by Young, p. 162: "All the evidence supports the position that the books of the Old Testament, being of divine inspiration, were consequently authoritative, and were recognized as such from the time of their first appearance."

126 H. K. Ohlig, *Die theologische Begründung des neutestamentlichen Kanons in der alten Kirche* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), pp. 57-156.

127 Gamble, *The New Testament Canon*, p. 68.

128 B. F. Westcott, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (reprint; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), lxiii-lxv, for the evidence which was disputed in Rome.

129 Gerhard Maier, *Biblische Hermeneutik* (2nd ed.; Wuppertal: R. Brockhaus, 1991), p. 134.

130 Ibid.

131 Geoffrey Mark Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) argues, as does Sundberg ("Canon Muratori: A Fourth Century List," *Harvard Theological Review* 66 [1973], pp. 1-41) before him, that the Muratorian Fragment is dated to the fourth century and not to the second. This late dating is not significant once the idea of canonicity is not tightly linked with the lists of canonical books as indicating the process of canonicity. For a contrary opinion on the late dating, see E. Ferguson, "Canon Muratori: Date and Provenance," *Studia Patristica* 18/2 (1982), pp. 677-683.

132 The first list which "names" the 27 New Testament books which make up our New Testament is provided by Athanasius in his so-called Easter Letter, dated to A.D. 367. For the text, see Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, pp. 208-209.

133 Hans von Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel* (Tübingen, 1972), p. 382 n. 12.

134 K. Aland, "Das Problem des neutestamentlichen Kanons," *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie* 4 (1962), p. 147.

135 Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 287.

136 Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 287.

137 Ibid.

138 Tertullian states, "What we are ourselves, that also the Scriptures are from the beginning" (*On Prescr.* 38). The priority of "Scriptures" is the standard for what is later.

139 William Barclay, *The Making of the Bible* (London, 1961), p. 78, speaking of the New Testament.

140 Von Campenhausen, *Die Entstehung der christlichen Bibel*, p. 382 n. 12.

141 D. B. Knox, "Problems of the Canon," *The Reformed Theological Review* 36 (1977), 11: "No decision of church or council, nor growing Christian acceptance, can confer canonicity on a book. What Christian did was to recognize canonicity."

142 Ronald Youngblood, "The Process: How We Got Our Bible," *Christianity Today* 32/2 (Feb. 5, 1988), p. 26.

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REVELATION/INSPIRATION, CHURCH, AND CULTURE

By Jack J. Blanco

Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists

Our study in this essay is confined to the question how revelation/inspiration and culture interrelate within the Adventist community of faith. There is no attempt to define inspiration or culture precisely; we employ only a workable definition. The subject of Christianity and culture has been amply covered by scholars much more qualified than myself, as any cursory glance at a bibliography on the subject will show.¹ Nevertheless, there may be an aspect of inspiration and culture that, to my knowledge, has not been considered within the Adventist community—that is, the impact of culture on the understanding of our eschatological mission. We will first provide a brief definition of revelation/inspiration and culture, then set forth general features of the subject in the religious world, and finally will consider the effect culture may have on the Adventist church and task.

Definitions

Inspiration is “God’s method of influencing and directing the minds of men in the process of making them channels of divine revelation.”² More specifically, as a term, it is “used in the discussion of the nature of the canon of Scripture that concerns the influence of the Spirit of God upon the biblical writers to produce a divinely authoritative Scripture.”³ It is “the action of the Spirit of God in so ‘moving’ its human authors in their work of producing Scripture, that in these Scriptures they speak, not out of themselves, but ‘from God.’ By virtue of the Spirit’s action the Scriptures may be properly called ‘God-breathed.’”⁴ As Peter said, “Men spoke

from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21 NIV). Therefore, when speaking of revelation/inspiration we mean the biblical writings of the Old and New Testaments as we have them today, penned by persons inspired (moved) by the Holy Spirit to write what was divinely revealed to them. And we take these Scriptures at face value without doubting their reliability.

The word “culture” simply means the social environment in which we were reared and in which we live. It includes our social and intellectual heritage, the way we look at things, the way we perceive things. In a general sense, culture results from the lenses through which we look at the world, which make us interpret the same world differently. People who see the world through a set of atheistic or Buddhist glasses will continue to create certain cultural and social environments. People looking at the world through Christian lenses—from their biblical viewpoint—will create a different cultural and social environment. Culture in turn determines values, and values affect behavior.⁵

As any reliable dictionary will point out, the word “culture” is used also in a more narrow sense to refer to cultured people with refined ways of thinking and acting, particularly those who have an interest in the fine arts.

For the purpose of this essay, however, the word “culture” will be understood as the total pattern of a people’s behavior, including “all behavior that is learned and transmitted by the symbols (rites, artifacts, language, etc.) of a particular group and that focuses on certain ideas or assumptions—lenses if you please—that we call a world view.”⁶ And by world view we mean those conceptualizations of reality which lie at the very heart of culture, touching and strongly influencing all its other aspects. It may also be seen as the organizer of, or that which governs, what is taught to and employed by the members of that culture.⁷ Therefore, by culture we mean those conceptualizations of reality, those customs and practices that make up the habits and lifestyle of a people or a nation.

Christianity and Culture

While the Bible has no word for culture as such, nevertheless it is clear that God created men and women as creatures of culture—a culture in which relations with God, human beings, and the earth

play a part. It must not be assumed that after the entrance of sin, it was God's purpose for His people to create, find, or adopt a cultural system totally apart from that common to the peoples and nations around them. Rather, God intended to reveal His will through His people so that institutions and practices already existing could be reformed to become suitable vehicles of and for His glory.⁸ And what was true for His people in ancient times is still true for "believers" today. The oft repeated remark that the NT teaches us to be indifferent to culture is based on a very narrow view of culture. The believers' experience with Christ in New Testament times had great implications for culture.⁹

There are two basic errors regarding religion and culture. One is that culture can be expanded and developed without religion, and the other is that religion—especially a revealed religion such as Christianity—need not concern itself with the preservation of culture.¹⁰ An extreme expression of this latter point of view is found in Watchman Nee, who believed that salvation involved the total severance of a person from this world's culture. The Christian lives in the world as in an alien environment and therefore should maintain an attitude of detachment.¹¹ The tension between Christianity and culture cannot be resolved by an avoidance of culture. It is impossible to commit oneself to Christ and then isolate oneself from the surrounding culture.¹²

Richard Niebuhr in his study of Christianity and culture speaks of the three basic positions: (1) Christ against culture, Christ in culture, and Christ above culture.¹³ Charles Kraft expands these three positions and points to the fact that those who understand God as being opposed to culture have, by their commitment to God, made a choice to oppose it. He believes this to be a radical position often held by fundamentalist groups and by those not in harmony with Scripture. Others, such as the contemporary Hebrews, hold that God is contained within culture, but see Him as only related to their culture.

Some Christian denominations believe God is exclusively relating to them. Such see that there are major differences, for instance, between Christians and non-Christians, but fail to distinguish between the whole of culture and the Christian use of culture to serve its own functions. Unfortunately, many hold that God is

both above and unconcerned with human culture. This is the position of Deism and much popular, western thinking. It is a reaction against the biblical view of the divine relationship of Christ to God and sees Christianity as a hindrance to progress.¹⁴

Essentially, Kraft aligns himself with the God-above-culture position, but modifies it by proposing what he calls, *The God-above-but-through-culture* view. This model, he says, assumes that, though God exists totally outside of culture and humans exist totally within it, God chooses the cultural milieu in which people are immersed as the arena of His interaction with them. This relationship is not a required relationship (in the sense that God is obligated to culture), yet He has freely chosen to limit Himself to the capacities of human culture in His interaction with people. On occasion He will demonstrate His transcendence by means of "miracles" to show that He is not bound by culture in the same way that humans are.¹⁵

The attempt to define the relationship between Christianity and culture is made still more complex by the fact that the term "culture" has different associations, depending on whether we have in mind an individual, a group, or a whole society. However, the culture of an individual is dependent upon the culture of a group, and the culture of a group is dependent upon the culture of a whole society.¹⁶

Commonality of Cultures

However, as we look at the various regions of the world, we see that at the deepest level, human beings are more biologically similar than culturally diverse. The attempt to classify human populations on the basis of race is now being widely abandoned by knowledgeable scholars and is regarded as a "scientific dead-end" in the explanation of culture. To be sure there are "racial" differences—such as facial features, color, stature, etc.—but these differences are less impressive than the fact that human anatomy and physiology are *generally* the same the world over.¹⁷

It is from this deeper level that we see the commonality of us all. As Ron Browning said in his recent presentation on *The Religion, Culture, and Family Project*, at the University of Chicago, the fact that cultures have different beliefs about the dimensions

of life does not negate the fact that all persons and communities share them. What are these dimensions of life? They all center on human needs. First, we are all bodily creatures. Secondly, human beings have needs rooted in the social aspects of life, and thus have need for law and order. Thirdly, all have needs rooted in the meaning of life—how to deal with human aspirations, suffering, failure, and the value of existence in general.

Does this enable us to make moral judgments about other cultures? It does, insofar as a culture's mores deny and destroy these basic human needs, because these needs are shared by all human beings. By respecting and enhancing the integrities of created life, we are responding in gratitude and reverence to God.¹⁸

If the deeper level of humanity is rooted in the biological commonality of persons and in their common societal needs of law and order and personal dignity, then we have a right to judge cultures in which these basic needs are being eroded or denied. Disregard for others' rights has always existed, but the current rash of violence in a supposed "enlightened" society such as we have in the United States has many people concerned. For instance, John Flynn, the pastor of St. Martin of Tours Roman Catholic Church in the Bronx, recently spoke of our advanced culture as a "culture of violence," because it has even become unsafe for his parishioners to attend midnight mass.¹⁹

From these brief observations it is obvious that the tension between Christianity—with its revelational base—and culture—with its great diversity and universal human need—cannot be resolved by a few strokes of the pen. However, the solution is as old as the first promise made to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden: Through the power of Divine grace men and women may taste a new culture, the culture of God's kingdom to come. Until then, when Christ again breaks personally into history, there will continue to be confrontations in life between Christianity and culture, tensions which believers must resolve in their various situations in their own way. Note how Christ expressed concern for His people to the Father, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:15-17, KJV).

Our focus now turns to the more specific concerns of this essay, namely, the impact of culture on Christian theology. The latter is supposed to provide the guidance needed by men and women to help them taste the "new wine" of a different and better culture.

Impact of Modern Culture on the Theological World

Thomas Oden, in the Preface to *Agenda for Theology*, contrasts what he calls the majority report within Christian theology which says: Keep on trying to accommodate to "modernity" with the minority report which says: It is just this accommodation to modernity that has brought us to the brink of disaster. By "modernity" Oden means the overarching idolatry of our times, which assumes that recent modes of knowing truth are vastly superior to all older ways. It is this view—characterized by individualism, secularization, naturalistic reductionism, and narcissistic hedonism—that has presided over the deterioration of social structures. There needs to be a renewed grasp of Christian orthodoxy to bring about some civility and stability to our society.²⁰

The last thing we need, says Oden, is another new program of theology. He tells of a curious dream in which he was in the New Haven Cemetery only to stumble across his own tombstone with the astonishing epitaph: He made no new contribution to theology. When he awoke, he was marvelously pleased and relieved for of late he had been trying to follow the conviction of the great ecumenical councils of the past which deplored the notion that theology's task was to create some new addition to the apostolic teaching of "the received doctrine."

As Oden points out, there seems to be no lack of a certain kind of brilliance among some who view themselves as innovative theologians. Theology has even managed to gain a modest status in the world—a chair here or there in an enormous tax-supported university. It has developed professional societies that are neat carbon copies of other professional societies, and it has even undergone a dramatic name change: from theology to religious studies. Its subject matter is no longer confined to God or revelation, but embraces the phenomena of religious experience.²¹

Much of the recent teaching of theology has gone into an effort to achieve a predictive expertise about what new cultural wave is

coming, and then having spotted an emergent movement cresting in the distance—to see if it might get a foothold for theology on that rolling tide so that some notoriety might be enjoyed as long as it lasts. Process theology and existential theology are just two examples of where vast theological programs have emerged to bend Scripture to accommodate to a Whitehead or a Heidegger.

And when Scripture does not bend to a Bultmannian interpretation, or to Tillich's concept of correlation with the *kairos* of our times, it is said to be irrelevant to the modern man, adrift from the intellectual momentum of our age. However, the actual audience out there is one that is preeminently characterized by hunger for continuity, stability, the freedom to sustain Scriptural values, and historical identifications with what they believe is right.²²

Oden speaks of his own theological pilgrimage as addictive accommodationism in pursuit of the latest social movement in order to learn from it, baptize it, and then treat it as if it were identical with the Christian center. He lists the various "movements" he espoused on his theological "roller-coaster" ride beginning in the early 1950's before realizing, as he did, thirty years later, the value of doctrinal stability. Why, he asks, did it take me so long to discover the marvelous depth of historical and moral awareness? Why had my liberal Christian tradition, which spoke so often about tolerance, proven so intolerant of those who held different positions?²³

While Oden expresses his concerns about liberal tradition, Scott Hafemann expresses a similar concern regarding Evangelicals. In his article, *Seminary, Subjectivity, and the Centrality of Scripture*, he asks why the church and its seminaries seem to lack the courage to confront the prevailing culture prophetically. Given the power and dominance of our culture's false reading of reality we are, he says, in a crisis situation in which the reading of reality entrusted to the community of faith is in profound contradiction to the reading of reality found in society. Without sound exegesis and the authority of Scripture we cannot but be overwhelmed by it.²⁴

He goes on to say that Evangelicals are participating more than ever in all aspects of the prevailing culture of modernity. Most seminaries have already been overwhelmed by it. While liberalism

is a self-conscious accommodation to modern values and cultural norms, and while Evangelicals have tried to resist such accommodations, they are nevertheless in the process of change. They are going the way of culture's de-objectivization with its flip side of subjectivization. And although neo-orthodoxy as a movement has played itself out, there are indications that as a mode of theological discourse, it is gaining credibility and popular support. While Evangelicals say that the neo-orthodoxy position is wrong, in practice their position on certain points of doctrine illustrates that they are in fact subjectivists. They believe that the meaning of a text necessarily varies for each believer since each person approaches the Bible from a different life situation. Therefore, we cannot speak of ultimate truth, but only of ultimate truth for each believer.

With this approach, Hafemann says, the emphasis shifts from a concern with the proclamation of an objective and universal truth to a concern with the subjective applicability of truth, that is, from what the Bible states to what God is telling us individually.²⁵ What one "feels" about the Bible and God is now culturally acceptable, and is easily wedded with one's subjective experience as the primary source of certitude. Thus, the Bible itself becomes marginalized,²⁶ and "I know that Christ lives in my heart" becomes equated with "I know about God and Christ by looking into my heart."²⁷

Others also are concerned about the subtle shift from the objective to the subjective among Evangelicals. Osborne says that the "casebook" approach to understanding Scripture ceases to hold to a revealed set of doctrines that must be believed. Instead the method provides Scriptural models from which the reader may construct his own Christianity. Thus the locus shifts from an authoritative Scripture to the needs of the person or community in the same way that modern biblical hermeneutics has shifted from the biblical text to the reader, for the construction of meaning.²⁸

McQuilkin also expresses concern and says that many left-wing Evangelicals have been so influenced by radical biblical criticism and behavioral scientific presuppositions, that biblical authority no longer controls ethical thinking. Some reject all ethical authority in Scripture, using it as a casebook of past religious experiences, if at all; whereas others are selective in recognizing some biblical standards as universally normative. Both elements

tend toward relativism, and in that sense are not far from being situation ethicists for whom the only thing that matters is love.²⁹

According to Hafemann, Evangelicals are also being influenced by the "movements" within theology such as Process theology's emphasis on the present rather than on God's self-disclosure in the past. If the character of God can only be known as it develops in interaction with history and humankind today, then the focus of attention is no longer on what God revealed about Himself in the Scriptures, but on how God is adapting to current events. In other words, God Himself is at the center of a great evolution. Nothing is yet fully fixed. Everything is changing—even God. And the inconsistencies that we experience are but natural effects of living in a universe with a God whose temperament is still evolving.

As Hafemann says, the paradigm of revelation is thus no longer the Bible as a fixed canon but the experiences of various movements within the theological world or within society. As a result, the Bible is no longer felt to be as relevant as our own theological focus, which will give us the paradigms we need to understand Scripture.³⁰

Thus, when the Scriptures are interpreted subjectively, either by our own experience or by our own chosen theological focus, they are divested of their authority to command obedience.³¹ With this statement, Hafemann has placed his finger on the nerve of the issue of revelation and culture, especially in the light of the gospel's eschatological emphasis, "Fear God and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment has come" (Rev 14:6).

Impact of Shifting Theological Culture on Adventism

In the mid-1950's, Horton Davies, in *Christian Deviations*, challenged his colleagues at Princeton and other such universities to bring into mainstream Christianity what he called the New Spiritual Movements or sidestream Christianity—such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-day Adventists, Mormons, and Christian Scientists. He contended that there were social factors which hampered reunion as much as theological factors do. Snob-bish patronage on our part, he said to his colleagues, can do incalculable harm to the delicate relations between separated brethren. This will demand patience and involvement, but it will

shatter prejudices, and there will be interchange of grace and gifts.³² These gifts—such as witnessing, preaching the Second Advent, family values, health and healing—is what mainstream Christianity has neglected and needs to reintegrate into the larger community of faith.

What Davis says in his Epilogue regarding a more positive approach to dialogue is quite relevant to the purpose of this essay. His colleagues, he says, must look for signs of change in these developing denominations *from* the centrifugal movement *away* from mainstream Christianity *to* signs of a centripetal stepping *toward* the center of the historic churches. Furthermore, they must adopt a new attitude and do whatever they can to accelerate these centripetal movements.³³ What are the signs in these New Spiritual Movements, he asks, which mark the change from hostility to growing appreciation of the historic churches?

First, he suggests, the mainline churches need to realize there were social, as well as theological factors, that accounted for the original hostility between the older denominations and these new emerging ones. This means: As the social differences diminish so will the theological hostility. The growing appreciation of culture and education by these movements—as their men and women attend older seminaries and universities—will begin to change the way they view the historic churches. Soon, their vocabularies will change and become indistinguishable from mainstream Christianity; their store-front churches and tin tabernacles will give way to brick structures and neo-Gothic or neo-colonial churches. When they see these signs, the older churches should hang out their flags instead of muttering against these emerging denominations as is so often done. Endless opportunities also exist for dialogue in various associations and professional societies.³⁴

Secondly, there is the process of numerical growth and denominational maturation which will inevitably take place within these movements. The enthusiasm of the first generation of Bible-based movements is seen as notoriously difficult to preserve in the second and third generations. Success brings in numbers, and numbers require a complex organization. The close-knit fellowship of the pioneers, despite the organization of gigantic conventions, tends to move towards a remoteness from the local congregation.

The organization at regional and national levels further complicates the situation by training specialists and developing institutions where evangelistic, educational, and medical training may be offered. As a result, fellowship diminishes and tends to become less spontaneous and more formal.³⁵

Thirdly, as a result of the social and organizational changes mentioned above, there will be a demand for a more educated ministry. Bible institutes are not adequate and sophisticated enough for training ministers. Consequently, colleges and seminaries must be established. But if these institutions are to receive accreditation, their teachers must have doctoral degrees. Thus, the most able and ambitious of them will feel the need to attend various universities or university-related seminaries such as Harvard, Yale, or Berkeley. The result of this free encounter will contribute to the fracturing of stereotypes and prejudices the groups have held. Personal friendships will be formed. A Presbyterian will make a life-long friend of a Pentecostalist, or a Baptist will see a Seventh-day Adventist as a comrade instead of a competitor. Slowly but surely, a more sophisticated theology will begin to emerge.³⁶

Fourthly, there will be a subtle transformation of emphasis in belief and practice. Christianity will be recognized as world-affirming as well as world-denying. As a result, there will be less emphasis, for example, on the immediacy of the Second Coming of Christ, and less interest in the predictions of the Apocalypse. The hope will not be denied, but will be delayed.³⁷ In other words, the distinctive doctrines of Adventists will become less important to them, and their special mission—as seen in the light of the proclamation of the three angels in Revelation 14—will recede into the background.

Parenthetically, it should also be said that in spite of some of the adverse cultural and theological influences found in non-Adventist institutions of higher learning, and the fact that Adventists have their own colleges and universities, it is not the position of the church that learning at other institutions should be shunned. In fact, young men and women, rooted and grounded in the Adventist faith, who have a living connection with God, could, if so counseled by church leaders, attend other institutions of higher learning where they would have a wider field for study. They would associate with different minds, would become acquainted with the results of

the popular methods of education, and would gain a knowledge of the theology as taught in various leading institutions. What they learned would be of great value, for it would prepare them to labor for the educated classes and to meet the prevailing theological errors of our time, all the while living their faith and sowing seeds of truth in the minds of men and women as the ancient Waldenses did.³⁸

One example of such theological errors which Adventism must guard against is a modified form of the "moral-influence" theory of the atonement. Popularized by Horace Bushnell in the 19th century, the theory says that since God's nature is essentially love, man need not be concerned about God's justice. Man's problem is not that he has violated God's law; his problem is that his own attitudes keep him apart from God. Man does not realize that his disobedience is a source of pain to God and that God still loves him.

If man would repent and turn to God in trust and faith, there would be reconciliation, for the difficulty certainly does not lie with God's ability to forgive. There is nothing in His nature requiring satisfaction for or rectification of our sins. The difficulty is with man. Sin is a type of sickness from which men and women must be healed. It is to correct this defect in us that Christ came. This is His real work. His death was not the purpose of His coming, it was the consequence of His coming.³⁹

Adventists believe the Scriptures teach that Christ's death is both substitutionary and expiatory, as well as reconciling and transforming.⁴⁰

As man's substitute and surety, the iniquity of men was laid on Christ. He was counted a transgressor that He might redeem them from the curse of the law. The guilt of every descendant of Adam of every age was pressing upon His heart, . . . [He] who raised the dead to life and opened the eyes of the blind, offers Himself upon the cross as the last sacrifice for man. He, the sin-bearer, endures judicial punishment for iniquity and becomes sin itself for man.⁴¹

It should be said that while the teachers of Scripture are extremely important to Adventists, these teachings should not so absorb the attention of the church that it ignores the needs of people. Those who have had great spiritual privileges, but who refuse to carry their share of responsibility in this world, are in

greater condemnation before God than those who may be in error upon some doctrinal points, but who live to do good to others.⁴² When Christ on the Mount of Olives spoke to His disciples concerning the great judgment day, He represented its decision as turning upon one point. When the nations are gathered before Him, there will be only two classes of people. Their eternal destiny will be determined by what they have done or have neglected to do for Him in the person of the poor and suffering.⁴³

John Stott, in *Decisive Issues Facing Christians Today*, underscores the necessity for genuine Christian compassion as he tells of a homeless woman who turned to her vicar for help, and who, because *he* was too busy, promised to pray for her. She later wrote about her experience in this poem:

I was hungry, and you formed a humanities group to discuss my hunger.

I was imprisoned, and you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for my release.

I was naked, and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick, and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I was homeless, and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

I was lonely, and you left me alone to pray for me.

You seem so holy, so close to God but I am still very hungry—and lonely—and cold.⁴⁴

Whether serving Christ in the person of the poor and suffering is of greater importance than theological accuracy it is not an "either-or" question. Correct beliefs and heartfelt service are both essential for the Christian faith. Teaching biblical truths in a right spirit will lead men and women to Christ and contribute to unselfish living. It is for this reason, among others, that the importance of the authority of Scripture must not be overlooked.

It is still true that when young men and women are counseled to attend other institutions of higher learning, they need to understand the issues at stake. They need to realize the danger of allowing their minds to be diverted from their heritage of faith. No doubt can be safely entertained about the truths God has given for this time. For whatever weakens faith in God, and whoever gives

the impression (learned teachers are often admired by their students and thought to be right) that the Bible is no more than a good book of moral instructions and cannot possibly be correct, robs men and women of the only real safeguard against sin.⁴⁵

We must not forget:

The warnings of the word of God regarding the perils surrounding the Christian church belong to us to-day. As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so to-day, by the pleasing sentiments of "higher-criticism," evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths. To many, the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of "higher-criticism," in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God's word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives.⁴⁶

It is one thing to treat the Bible as a book of good moral instruction, to be heeded so far as is consistent with the spirit of the times; it is another thing to regard it as it really is,—the word of the living God,—the word that is our life, the word that is to mold our thoughts, our words, and our actions. To hold God's word as anything less than this is to reject it. It is this rejection by those who profess to believe it, that is foremost among the causes of skepticism and infidelity in the youth.⁴⁷

As C. S. Lewis points out in *God in the Dock*, each generation is taught by an earlier generation, and the beliefs which boys from school now hold are largely the beliefs of the previous generation. The mental world also has its time-bombs. No generation, he says, can bequeath to its successor what it has not got. You may frame the syllabus as you please, but when you have planned and reported *ad nauseam*, if you are skeptical you will teach only skepticism to your pupils. Nothing which is not in the teachers can flow from them into the pupils.⁴⁸

A Lesson from History

Another facet of western culture in which the authority of Scripture is easily set aside, is the emphasis on the rights of

individuals and groups that have such ethnic or nationalistic concerns for identity that these interests and concerns overshadow basic Scriptural principles. One example from recent history occurred on a national level in Germany in the 1930's when Catholics and Protestants saw nothing wrong with cooperating with the Nazi party.

On "July 20, 1933, the Catholic Center Party in Germany was formally dissolved and a concordat between Pope Pius XI and the German Nazis announced. In October of that year German bishops celebrated the 450th anniversary of Luther's birth by pledging fealty to 'our Leader Adolf Hitler as a gift from God's hand.'"⁴⁹ In 1934 the Barmen Declaration was drawn up by Evangelical leaders such as Karl Barth to define the mission of the church in the face of the liberal Nazi Christians. "The foundation of the Church was held [by these Evangelicals] to be in the Revelation of God in Jesus Christ and not in any subordinate revelation in nature or history, and her primary mission was defined as to preach the Gospel of the free Grace of God."⁵⁰

Barth—who had a decided influence on drafting this declaration and who afterward was expelled from Germany and went to live in Switzerland—points out that the logic of the German Christians was that side by side with its attestation in Jesus Christ in Scripture, the church should also proclaim God's revelation in reason, in conscience, in the emotions, in history, in nature, and in culture and its achievements and developments. However, as Barth warns, even if we only lend our little finger to natural theology, there naturally follows the denial of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. What happened with humanism in the 18th century, scholarship and nationalism in the 19th century, and a little later with socialism, was happening again. They all tried to have a say in the Church. For them it was admissible and right, and perhaps even orthodox, to combine the knowability of God in Jesus Christ with His knowability in nature, reason, and history, and with all other kinds of proclamations.⁵¹

If there is no genuine, no unique, revelation from God, men can gather everything they need to know on their own, and then natural, humanistic, and political forms of organization are all that we need. But if a "church" is to be formed, it must be founded on

divine revelation. Unless it can be established that God has actually made some disclosure, churches are unnecessary organizations.⁵² But if it is established that God has spoken, and that revelation from Him is believed, then it must be adhered to above all other revelations, natural and political alike.

While in the 1930's the German church saw nothing contradictory with Christianity by placing nationalism and racial interests above the authority of Scripture, it led to the greatest atrocity that the 20th Century had seen: the Jewish holocaust. Yet, somehow our hindsight deceives us when we fail to recognize that one of the causes of these terrible deeds was placing loyalty to the Nazi government above loyalty to the revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture. Their actions simply echoed the words of Caiaphas, "It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (cf. John 11:50).

In more subtle ways, rights movements of any kind, no matter how right they are—when allowed to subordinate Scripture to their own interests on either an individual, group, or national level—are taking the same path. Believers often quote the text, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28, NIV) as a basis for legitimate rights, but then this text becomes a pretext for actions that do despite to the primacy of Scripture in areas of essentials truths.

Christians are citizens of two worlds and live in the "now" of the kingdom of grace as well in the "not yet" of the kingdom of glory. In that sense we are strangers and pilgrims looking for a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb 11:8-16). We are not first of all Americans, Germans, French, Japanese, Africans or Argentinians—and then Christians. We are first and foremost Seventh-day Adventist Christians, and then, whatever else our heritage has passed on to us. Unfortunately, too often this priority has been reversed, and we have so strongly supported a given "rights" movement (of whatever kind) we may have inadvertently undermined the principles of the kingdom to which we have promised to give our first allegiance.

We are first of all members of the body of Christ and each individual part is in need of the other parts. As persons, we function as part of the whole of which we have chosen to be a part. It is in

this relationship—our relationship with Christ—that we find our true identity, and not by searching for and then finding it somehow within ourselves. When the support of social, racial, or nationalistic concerns, as legitimate as they may be, becomes more important to us than the authority of Scripture regarding the Sabbath or any other of the 27 Fundamental Beliefs, we are then Seventh-day Adventist Christians only in name.

By God's grace we are all brought into one body. Some have said,

'You do not understand the French people; you do not understand the Germans. They have to be met in just such a way.' But I inquire: Does not God understand them? Is it not He who gives His servants a message for the people? He knows just what they need; and if the message comes directly from Him through His servants to the people, it will accomplish the work whereunto it is sent; it will make all one in Christ. Though some are decidedly French, others decidedly German, and others decidedly American, they will be just as decidedly Christlike.⁵³

The power to make us all one in Christ can only come when divine revelation is given its rightful place, balanced by belief and practice as given to us in Scripture.

The Coming Cultural Shift

Seventh-day Adventists hold Scripture as supreme and believe that separation of church and state is what made our nation great and our culture unique.⁵⁴ However, they also believe that in spite of the historic and present separation of church and state, religion will eventually be brought into government by popular demand in order to save society. Furthermore it will be brought into government so strongly, the principles of the first amendment to the Constitution—which guarantees freedom of religion to all—will disappear.⁵⁵ Political corruption continues to destroy love of justice and regard for truth; and in free America, in order for legislators to maintain favor with the public, they will yield to the popular demand to save the country by enforcing religion.⁵⁶

Stephen Carter, a Harvard law professor, in his recent book, *The Culture of Disbelief*, comes to the defense of religion in government. He believes that American law, with its undue emphasis on

separation of church and state, has trivialized religion. He urges lawmakers to make a careful distinction between what is acceptable societal behavior and religious convictions—instead of immediately holding suspect anything highly motivated by religion.⁵⁷ He says that the state rightly recognizes that some things must be superior to others in order to maintain law and order, but when this concept was wedded to the idea that the African race was inferior, it was rightly challenged by the abolitionist movement in the 19th century, and the civil rights movement in the 20th century—both of which had their origins in religion.⁵⁸

He also mentions Sakharov's admiration for the strength of Seventh-day Adventists in Russia as an example when they refused to allow state policy to step on their religious conscience. This example, he says, involves much more than the rights of individual conscience. The Adventist willingness to serve in the military, but not fight, is a by-product of their search for ultimate meaning. This is what government must not trivialize.⁵⁹ In essence this means that government must allow religious convictions to speak to whatever is depriving men and women of their rights and is destroying the fabric of society.

As admirable as Stephen Carter's defense of religion is—including his cautions—the time will come when government will not only cease to place emphasis on the separation of church and state that we see today, but will also institute a false worship and compel all to comply (Rev 13). As we have mentioned, it will be believed that the fast-spreading corruption of society must be corrected and that united worship, even if enforced, would greatly improve the morals of the nation. But though the electorate will advocate moral reforms based on biblical principles, one requirement will be contrary to God's Word: worshiping on Sunday.⁶⁰

As Louis Veillot says in his *Liberal Illusion*, published by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, "When the time comes and men realize that the social edifice must be rebuilt according to eternal standards, be it to-morrow, or be it centuries from now, the Catholics will arrange things to suit said standards. . . . They will make obligatory the religious observance of Sunday on behalf of the whole of society and for its own good."⁶¹

Already the media portrays the current United States of

America as the most crime-ridden nation in the world, and men and women are demanding that something be done about the violence that is ruining our nation. This mutual concern of religion and society sees the need for cooperation to preserve the nation. It argues that the "wall of separation" of the first amendment was erected to keep government out of religion; it was not meant to keep religion out of government.⁶²

Educators, for instance, are beginning to recognize that something must be done to preserve the values which have made us great. Allan Bloom, a professor at the University of Chicago, in *The Closing of the American Mind*, decries what higher education has done to impoverish the souls of today's students. There was a time, he says, when most students beginning their higher education could be counted on to know the Bible, that ubiquitous source of the older traditions filtered through early Protestantism in which every man was his own interpreter. Most students also had a unified and explicit political tradition based on the Declaration of Independence. Today, students arrive at the university ignorant of the most basic biblical principles, devoid of traditional family values and cynical about America's political heritage.

A knowledge of the Bible which permeated most of our households and constituted a large part of the family bond, giving it content, has largely disappeared. Moses and the Tables of the Law, Jesus and His preaching of brotherly love, gave our lives meaning and provided us with a modeled existence. Passages from the Psalms and the Gospels echoed in children's heads. Attending church, praying at the table, were a way of life, inseparable from the moral education that was part of the family's special responsibility in a democracy. The things one was supposed to do, the sense that the world supported them and punished disobedience, were all incarnated in the biblical stories. But today the dreariness of the family's spiritual landscape passes belief. The delicate fabric of the civilization into which successive generations are woven has unraveled, and children are raised, not educated.⁶³

Others have expressed the same concern, pointing out that the education given to the young molds the whole social fabric. Many educators suppose that better educational facilities, greater skill, and more recent methods will transform society and set things

right, yet they refuse to make the Word of God the foundation of education, as indeed it should be.⁶⁴

As Bloom rightly points out, every educational system has a moral goal that informs its curriculum. It wants to produce a certain kind of human being. Today, the purpose of education is not to make young people thinkers who can defend their convictions, but to provide them with a single, supposedly moral virtue—openness to everything.⁶⁵ The moral goal seems to be that whatever we do, let us not teach our students to have convictions and make moral judgments, because that would make someone else be wrong. Cultural relativism is what is destroying our culture, making it one of many in a republic of world cultures. But the study of history and cultures does not prove that cultures are relative. To the contrary, that is a philosophical premise we bring to our study of them. History and culture are interpreted in the light of relativism, and then it is said that history and culture prove the premise. This is the same as saying that the diversity of points of view in a college bull session proves there is no truth.⁶⁶ We pride ourselves on our tolerance and openness and in the process rob our culture of the very "stuff" it needs to survive.

One of the tasks of philosophy is to identify the nature of religious language, since religious utterances are the language of the individual believer. That is, it is spoken out of a specific paradigm. But individual choices among paradigms are not matters of truth, because the believer's choice to speak of God cannot be called objective truth in a universal sense. This relativistic view of religion caught fire in the more popularized work of Thomas Kuhn's, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, which is now the dominating theory in most of the academic disciplines. So a religion is simply one perspective among others of viewing one's world.⁶⁷

Norskov Olsen, former president of Loma Linda University, expresses his concern over what has happened to this country's past values. In his recent book, *The New Relatedness*, he says that Darwinism, Marxism, and Freudianism have made man the measure of all things, and the belief in evolution and the survival of the fittest led many to consider moral standards to be relative. Consequently, there is the breakdown of the family which is the basic building block of society.⁶⁸

Jacques Ellul sees our technical culture fast becoming the all-embracing norm. The promoters of technical culture, he says, have three fundamental goals. One is the acquisition of knowledge; two, adapting the young to the technical environment; and finally, the creation of a psychological mood that is favorable to technique, and an openness to everything pertaining to it. For such, culture is simply the transmitting and organizing of information, and since everything else is changing, there must also be a change of culture. The visionaries of this new culture, he points out, have only scorn for what has thus far been regarded as culture: a dusty university collection of outdated knowledge. Everything that has thus far been produced in the form of culture must be scrapped. The technocrats want not only technical efficiency but also the glory that centuries of spiritual life have fashioned around Christian culture.⁶⁹

Karl Menninger, well-known psychiatrist and founder of the Menninger Foundation, says that sin is the transgression of the law of God. It is disobedience of the divine will. It is moral failure. The disappearance of the word "sin," he says, involves a shift in the allocation of responsibility for evil. Some people are convinced of the validity of the Skinnerian thesis that neither they nor anyone else is answerable for any evil. We project the blame on to others, and ascribe the responsibility to a group. Adultery may technically be a crime, yet we hesitate to call it a sin. But I believe that sin is still very much with us, by us, and in us.⁷⁰

Carl Henry expresses his concern for the loss of recognition of objective universal truth when he says that many theologians shy away from the biblical identification of the will of God with its specific commandments and precepts. There is a tendency to limit the revealed content of the divine will to the basic love for God and neighbor. Based on such passages as "love fulfills the law," they set aside all positive and applied commandments as legalistic, and accept as ethical norms only what love dictates. There is much talk about love and faith as tests of obedience, but there is a lack of detail in defining the *content* of obedience.

The assumption that undefined love is the law of the Christian finds no basis in the teaching of Jesus, nor in the teaching of the apostles. The historic Christian view is that revelation provides a content of moral principles and precepts that give specific, practical

direction. The Christian revelation of the good as obedience-in-love to the revealed will of God provides form and content to the word "love". Christ gave this definition: "If you love Me, keep My commandments." And on the verge of eternity, the Apocalypse closes the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem to liars. This means that the eternal destiny of men is based upon what their disposition toward the divine commandments has been. It says, "Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."⁷¹

The liberty of the Christian man is not a freedom from the obedience of the Law, but from the disobedience of it. To be free from obedience is to be servants of sin. The Law is needed as a rule because of the reality of the believer's freedom, that is, freedom to do what is right, which right he can only know from what is written in the Law.⁷²

Conclusion

It is important to realize what a difference a people's world view makes in their strength as they are exposed to the pressure of life. It was the early Christians with their commitment to what was written who were able to resist religious mixtures, syncretism, and the effects of Roman culture. This strength rested on God's being an infinite-personal God and His speaking in Scripture. This is what gave the early Christians universal values by which to live and by which to judge the society and the political state in which they lived.⁷³

The society in which we live is rapidly changing. It is no longer business as usual. All who value their eternal interests should be on guard against the inroads of skepticism for the very pillars of truth will be attacked. It is impossible to keep beyond the reach of the sarcasms and the insidious teachings of modern culture and infidelity. Even youth with little experience presume to insinuate doubts concerning the Word of God. Many jest at the faith of their fathers and insult the Spirit of grace. All who trust to human reason and arrive at supposed truth unaided by the wisdom of God, are entangled in the snare of Satan. Soon the testing time will come and those who have made God's Word their rule of life will be revealed. The false-hearted professor may not now be distinguished

from the real Christian, but the time is just upon us when the difference between those who worship at the shrine of a morally bankrupt culture and those who are committed to the timeless moral principles of Scripture will forever be seen.⁷⁴

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INSPIRATION, THE NATURAL SCIENCES, AND A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

By John T. Baldwin

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Andrews University

The most important change in the understanding of religious truth in the last centuries . . . has been caused more by the work of science than by any other factor religious or cultural. Langdon Gilkey¹

True science and Inspiration are in perfect harmony. Ellen White²

Introduction

What does inspiration guarantee?³ As hidden in Langdon Gilkey's thesis mentioned above, have advances in historical critical study of the Bible, evolutionary theories in biology, geology, and paleontology compelled Christian scholars and theologians to interpret the six days of creation week as nonliteral,⁴ the talking snake of Genesis 3 as figurative, the fall of Adam and Eve as nonhistorical, the flood as limited, the phenomenon of rain as something experienced continually before the flood,⁵ Joshua's long day as legendary,⁶ and so on⁷—thereby radically redefining traditional views of the reliability and intent of inspiration? Is inspiration, therefore, trustworthy only in matters of faith and practice as claimed by many Roman Catholic and evangelical Protestant theologians so that the narratives of Genesis 1 and 2, for example, are "merely phenomenological descriptions which have no scientific intent?"⁸

On the other hand, as stated by Ellen White, are true science and inspiration in perfect harmony? Does the reliability of biblical

inspiration extend to the natural sciences? If so, to what extent and in what fashion does inspiration extend to these topics? Furthermore, when such queries are seriously addressed in this age, is the endeavor anachronistic in the extreme, an act exhibiting pitiable academic naïveté? Before turning directly to the central issue of this essay, namely, whether and in what sense biblical inspiration extends to the natural sciences, an additional word concerning its importance and timeliness may be helpful.

Writing in the 1912 edition of the famous *The Fundamentals*, an unnamed "Occupant of the Pew" astutely reverses a famous phrase associated with Galileo in the following way: "We cannot depend on the Bible to show us 'how to go to heaven' if it misleads us as to 'how the heavens go' regarding the origin, nature, descent and destiny of brutes and man."⁹ Here the truths of biblical soteriology and eschatology are linked to the truthfulness of biblical protology, and thus by implication, to the reliability of biblical inspiration as it extends to matters of science.¹⁰ The unnamed writer expresses a legitimate concern if inspiration is indeed in some sense supernatural and extends to the natural sciences. The real meaning of any position on inspiration is not fully known until its advocates apply their position to the six-day creation, the Fall, and the flood narratives because even high views of inspiration tend to dissolve before these texts.

The topic is timely in view of the recent publication of academic works which are turning the attention of the academic community to the creationist question and thus upon the issue of the authority of biblical inspiration in scientific matters. Two landmark volumes have just appeared, representing the liberal perspective on this question. *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education* (1993) carries two major articles addressing the creation science issue.¹¹ Ron Numbers' award-winning book, *The Creationists* (1992), traces the development of groups holding a literal interpretation of the Genesis creation texts, and culminates in a study of the Seventh-day Adventist Geoscience Research Institute.

Two recent studies critical of naturalistic Darwinian theory have literally stunned the academic community: *Darwin on Trial* (1991) by Phillip E. Johnson, an eminent trial lawyer teaching at

the University of California, Berkeley, and the landmark 1991 article by world-class philosopher of religion, Alvin Plantinga, entitled, "When Faith and Reason Clash: Evolution and the Bible."¹²

Representing a confessional-specific perspective, Alden Thompson's thought-provoking book *Inspiration*¹³ is also important. Thompson, however, centers largely upon the laudable task of harmonizing apparently conflicting biblical passages rather than upon the issue of inspiration and the natural sciences *per se*.¹⁴ The combined impact of these publications is causing vigorous exchanges within the academic community as many scholars reinvestigate, among other questions, the issue of the authority of inspiration in relation to science.

This essay will proceed in three steps. First, it briefly addresses the matter of defining the nature and extent of inspiration. Second, it describes and evaluates in historical perspective three contemporary postures toward the Genesis creation texts—each approach reflecting a distinctive understanding of inspiration. Third, the essay concludes by discussing a scholarly window of opportunity which has recently opened for a fresh academic hearing of a concordist¹⁵ position concerning the authority of biblical inspiration and science.

The Nature and Extent of Biblical Inspiration

Parallel Mystery of the Incarnation. A few comments will suffice concerning the meaning of the term inspiration so that it does not function in this essay as a sort of "tribal totem-pole" as James Barr characterizes the evangelical use of the term.¹⁶ According to Barr, "inspiration" too frequently functions in evangelical circles as a sacred word that must be employed even if there is no clarity as to its meaning, and which if used often enough is likely to be accepted within the tribe.¹⁷

In his dissertation on inspiration Kern Trembath distinguishes between revelation and inspiration. The latter refers in general to the transformational process whereby divinely received concepts take written form.¹⁸ He also distinguishes between deductive and inductive definitions of inspiration, i.e., between *a priori* and *a posteriori* definitions. The former, represented by Hodge,

Warfield, Montgomery, and Carnell, deduce the character of inspiration from principles found from within the Scriptures. Inductivists such as Strong, Ramm, Abraham, and the liberal tradition in general, work back from "effects which the Bible has among those who call it inspired."¹⁹ Thus, for the latter scholars, inspiration is not limited to the process of producing the Bible but, like Barth,²⁰ refers to the inspiration of the readers of biblical material.²¹

Because of their high view of Scripture, an emphasis upon the supernatural aspect of inspiration, and a faith acceptance of the Bible as the normative source, discussions on the nature of inspiration among Adventist scholars may be subsumed appropriately under the general rubric of the deductive approach. For example, the biblical *loci classici* of the doctrine of inspiration, namely the "God-breathed" activity of 2 Tim 3:16 respecting the *graphe*, the moving of the prophets by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21), and Jesus' affirmation that the "Scriptures cannot be broken" (John 10:35) point both to the nature and extent of inspiration in scientific matters. For example, in regard to creation, Adventist scholars tend to suggest that the "God-breathing" or inspiration should be viewed as the mysterious divine work of the Holy Spirit upon the prophet writing the creation texts, rendering the contents a "factual history of the origin of Planet Earth and of all life upon it."²²

A word of caution is appropriate at this point. Because the Bible associates inspiration with the work of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, attempts at detailed ontological definitional specificity concerning the process of inspiration seem well advised to employ the term *mystery*.²³ Just as Jesus taught Nicodemus that the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind is like the mysterious process of the wind as far as human comprehension is concerned, so the process of biblical inspiration is analogous to the working of the Holy Spirit in human conversion. This implies that inspiration itself is a profound mystery, although its effects are empirically evident.²⁴ Thus, the use of the term *mystery* in definitions is strength, and not weakness.

If this is true, then definitions of inspiration may well be constructed according to *quia est* (that a thing is) discourse rather than *quid est* (what a thing is) discourse. In other words, the Bible

may caution, by implication, against constructing definitions of inspiration that attempt to define in scientific terms precisely the ontological nature of the process of the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the biblical writer.²⁵ The Bible suggests in effect that one is well advised simply to affirm, in *quia est* discourse, that inspiration occurs. However, the Bible invites us to understand the *effects* of inspiration, namely the end product—the written Word of God—which (like the incarnation of Christ) stands as a divine human work.²⁶ We now discuss whether the reliability of biblical inspiration extends to the natural sciences in light of Jesus' attitude toward the creation texts.

Jesus and the Extent of Biblical Inspiration. Adopting a high view of Scripture²⁷ permits regulative value to accrue to Christ's attitude toward the historicity of several events in Genesis 1-11. For example, Jesus' attitude toward the murder of Abel as well as several other Old Testament stories,²⁸ seems to indicate²⁹ His thinking concerning the extent of the reliability of inspiration. In the woes pronounced against the Pharisees (Luke 11:50-51) Jesus states that the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world would be charged against His generation. Jesus explains that "the blood of all the prophets" means the blood shed "from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zachariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary" (RSV). New Testament scholars have identified Zechariah as the son of Jehoiada the high priest, who was stoned to death in the courts of the Temple upon order from King Joash (2 Chron 24:20-22).³⁰ In this statement Jesus places in parallel relationship an historical occurrence, the murder of Zechariah (which left a profound impression upon the nation),³¹ with Cain's murder of Abel recorded in Genesis (chap. 4). This parallel implies that Jesus considered the Genesis narrative to be as strictly historical as the murder of Zechariah is a historical fact.

This indicates that Jesus regarded the reliability of inspiration to extend to the historicity of this narrative of Genesis, and, by extension, to the historical accuracy of the narratives of Genesis 1 and 2 concerning the miraculous origin of the parents of Cain and Abel, namely Adam and Eve, and to the historicity of the Fall recorded in Genesis 3. Since this is the case, then Jesus considered

biblical inspiration to give literal, historically factual details in the creation and fall texts of Genesis 1-3. In other words, Luke 11:50-51 implies, using contemporary terms, that Jesus was a strict concordist, meaning that the Bible and nature are complementary in the sense that when properly understood each endorses the claims and findings of the other.

With these guiding bench marks in mind concerning the nature and extent of biblical inspiration, we now review three contemporary approaches to the creation texts, each driven by a distinctive theory of biblical inspiration.

Approaches to Inspiration and the Creation Texts

Three distinct, scholarly views of biblical inspiration in relation to the natural sciences can be characterized as follows. First, most historical-critical scholars understand inspiration to represent a fallible, natural phenomenon displaying no concordism between science and the creation texts.³² Second, evangelical scholars generally endorse a position on of inspiration which in my view may be characterized as equivocal (restricted) infallible divine inspiration, resulting in either no concordism or a broad concordism. Third, fundamentalist evangelical thinkers endorse a view of inspiration that can be described as unequivocal (unrestricted) infallible divine inspiration of the biblical writer, resulting in a strict concordism.

The Higher Critical Approach. John Cobb captures the essence of the historical-critical approach to inspiration and science: "Having abandoned supernaturalism, we cannot explain the superiority of the Bible in terms of the contrast of Word of God and word of man."³³ In effect this position means, in the famous words of Rudolph Bultmann, that

[H]istory is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers and that therefore there is no 'miracle' in this sense of the word. . . . It is in accordance with such a method as this that the science of history goes to work on all historical documents. And there cannot be any exceptions in the case of biblical texts.³⁴

This naturalistic characterization of the biblical texts and

their accommodation to the natural sciences are presaged as early as the fifth century A.D. by Augustine in his *Literal Interpretation of Genesis*, and are later confirmed by Friedrich Schleiermacher. In his illuminating second letter to Dr. Lücke in 1827, Schleiermacher pinpoints the central motive which drove him, in his writing of the *Glaubenslehre*, to shift religious authority from the written documents of the Bible to the subjective, human experience of piety:

I thought I should show as best I could that every dogma that truly represents an element of our Christian consciousness can be so formulated that it remains free from entanglements with science. I set this task for myself especially in my treatment of the doctrines of creation and preservation. . . [so that] science need not declare war against us.³⁵

Schleiermacher's revealing words "so that science need not declare war against us" show that the weight of the findings and theories of the natural sciences of his day caused him to reinterpret the Genesis narratives to avoid the attacks of science. This demonstrates the accuracy of Gilkey's statement quoted at the beginning of this study concerning the strong influence of science upon theology.

Adolph von Harnack radically applies this understanding to the relevance of the OT. In the concluding paragraph in his book about Marcion, von Harnack writes:

To reject the Old Testament in the second century was a mistake which the Church rightly repudiated; to retain it in the sixteenth century was a fate which the Reformation could not yet avoid; but to continue to keep it in Protestantism as a canonical document after the nineteenth century is the consequence of religious and ecclesiastical paralysis. To sweep the table clean . . . is the action required of Protestantism today. . . . And it is almost too late.³⁶

However, it has not been too late for leading higher critical practitioners to articulate with a vengeance some profound theological implications of their nonconcordistic understanding of Genesis 1-11.³⁷ In his latest book entitled *Credo* (1993), Hans Küng implies that the idea of an original sin is effete because "there never was this human couple who sinned for all humankind."³⁸ Driving the point home Küng quotes with approval Karl Schmitz-Moormann, theologian and Teilhard specialist, as follows:

The classical theory of redemption is imprisoned in a static view of the world in which to begin with everything was good, and in which evil first came into the world through human beings. The notion of this traditional view of redemption as reconciliation and ransom from the consequences of Adam's fall is nonsense for anyone who knows about the evolutionary background to human existence in the modern world.³⁹

How then should the contemporary Christian characterize redemption? Schmitz-Moormann answers that salvation "cannot mean returning to an original state, but must be conceived as perfecting through the process of evolution."⁴⁰

It is little wonder that leading scholars who accept these far-reaching theological conclusions engage in strident rejection of the traditional views of inspiration and in cavalier dismissal of the efforts of concordism by conservative scholars. Two examples of this understandable, but challenging, phenomenon bring to a close our discussion of the critical approach to inspiration and the natural sciences.

Harvard theologian Gordon Kaufmann asserts that the Bible no longer has unique authority for Western man. It has become a great but archaic monument in our midst. . . . It contains glorious literature, important historical documents, exalted ethical teachings, but it is no longer the word of God. . . . Only in rare and isolated pockets--and surely these are rapidly disappearing forever--has the Bible anything like the kind of existential authority and significance which it once enjoyed.⁴¹

As noted below, however, Kaufmann's "rare and isolated pockets" of belief are not disappearing, but are rapidly gaining in strength, perhaps to his wonderment, in terms of new possibilities for a rapprochement between inspiration and science.

One of the most bold liberal voices attempting to discredit the effort of concordism is that of the Roman Catholic scientist-theologian Stanley Jaki. His 1993 pronouncements swell nearly to magisterial dimension. After referring to concordism as a total fallacy, a trap, and a lure, he offers the following conclusion:

[C]oncordism is a radical misunderstanding and as such it can only bring discredit to very sound philosophical and theological doctrines set forth, or intimated, in Genesis 1.⁴²

In view of this alleged bankruptcy of concordism Jaki says that the proper approach to the creation texts and inspiration is to join the lead of Basil, Augustine, and Aquinas by adopting their principle of accommodation, which he describes as follows:

Whenever well-established scientific evidence stands in contradiction to this or that statement of the Bible about the physical world, it is the Bible that should be given an appropriate reinterpretation.⁴³

These quotations show that for adherents of the higher critical approach there is neither a conflict between science and inspiration nor a need for rapprochement, because a special creation of biological forms in this world is consistently denied.⁴⁴ Thus, the contemporary exegete does not read the Bible in order to be informed about matters of natural science.⁴⁵ Elements of the evangelical approach to inspiration and its relation to the creation texts, to which we now turn, echo the higher critical position.

Three Evangelical Approaches. In his recent article entitled, "Climbing Out of a Swamp: The Evangelical Struggle to Understand the Creation Texts,"⁴⁶ Clark Pinnock, who may succeed Carl F. H. Henry as the new "dean of Evangelical theologians,"⁴⁷ divides the evangelical approaches to the creation texts into three groups: nonconcordists, broad concordists, and narrow concordists. Remarkably, all three groups retain some form of supernatural inspiration. Pinnock's theological essay, together with a major scientific work by evangelical geologist, Davis E. Young, entitled, "The Bible in the Hands of Geologists,"⁴⁸ deftly articulates the leading contemporary position of evangelicals on inspiration and the creation texts. We now consider evangelical nonconcordism.

Evangelical Nonconcordism. Contemporary, evangelical nonconcordists such as N. H. Ridderbos,⁴⁹ Howard J. Van Till,⁵⁰ Henri Blocher,⁵¹ J. I. Packer,⁵² and Clark H. Pinnock,⁵³ do not consult the Scriptures for scientific matters, or as Pinnock says, "to discover history as it really was."⁵⁴ Rather, they read the creation texts as restricted to theological concerns,⁵⁵ believing that it is a mistake to assume that scientific questions can be answered by using biblical data.⁵⁶ For them, this claim means that it is a serious blunder to construe the interpretation of Genesis 1 in terms of the debate over Darwin.⁵⁷

This can be called an equivocal view of inerrant plenary inspiration, because of the restricted compass of inspiration imposed by science. Their position links these scholars solidly with liberal thinkers advocating theistic evolution. In fact, Van Till et al. explicitly advocate theistic evolution as the proper view for evangelicals to adopt.⁵⁸ Another coterie of evangelical scholars practice broad concordism, to which we now turn.

Evangelical Broad Concordism. In the section "Geology and the Bible" in his famous *Systematic Theology* (1871), Charles Hodge articulates what may be considered the ideological foundation principle⁵⁹ for a large segment of subsequent evangelical broad concordist thought concerning the nature of inerrant inspiration and its relation to the natural sciences:

It is of course admitted that, taking this account by itself [the Genesis creation week], it would be most natural to understand the word [day, i.e., the days of the creation week] in its ordinary sense [i.e., a 24 hour literal day]; but if that sense brings the Mosaic account into conflict with facts, and another sense [of the word day] avoids such conflict, then it is obligatory on us to adopt that other [sense].⁶⁰

Important theological consequences follow Hodge's approach. Because he accepts the accuracy of the geological teaching that the creation of this world has been in "progress through periods of time which cannot be computed,"⁶¹ the literal or most natural interpretation of Genesis 1 is, for him, contradicted by science. Undaunted, Hodge follows the lead of Augustine et al. by suggesting that the way out of this serious dilemma is to reinterpret Scripture to harmonize with the findings of science. In this case, as noted above, Hodge tells us that the saving method is to adopt another sense for the word, namely, that "the word 'day' be taken in the sense of 'an indefinite period of time.'"⁶² Thus, for Hodge, the word day as used throughout Genesis 1 and 2 represents geological periods which he describes as "of indefinite duration."⁶³

A surprise and a difficulty attend Hodge's approach to the creation texts. First, this scientifically-driven reinterpretation of the admitted natural interpretation of the creation texts comes, astonishingly, not from a liberal voice, but from a conservative, evangelical theologian given to a high view of inspiration.

Second, Hodge's free reinterpretation of the intent of divine

inspiration in the narrative of Genesis 1 carries far-reaching theological consequences in its impact upon other biblical doctrines. For example, according to Exodus 20:8-11, God directed the Israelites to observe the literal seventh-day Sabbath following his example of resting on the seventh day of creation week. However, according to Hodge's "indefinite period" sense of the term "day," God is made in the Decalogue to command the Israelites to labor a week of six literal days and to observe the seventh as the Sabbath in commemoration of seven indefinite periods. Interpreted in this fashion, this divine action would severely undermine the credibility of God's instructions to the Israelites by obscuring what is definite and very plain in the creation narrative, thereby distorting the character of God. The interpretation renders the fourth precept senseless.⁶⁴ In this case a stated belief in the creation account seems to be a cloak to cover disbelief in its literal nature. Current expressions of broad concordism, follow the course articulated by Hodge.

Contemporary broad concordists include such scholars as Bernard Ramm,⁶⁵ Pattle P. T. Pun,⁶⁶ Robert C. Newman and Herman J. Eckelmann.⁶⁷ Broad concordists maintain some form of concordism between biblical claims and evolution by rejecting theistic evolution and accepting the notion of progressive creation that requires periodic acts of special creation during the claimed 4.4 billion years of earth's deep time history.⁶⁸ In this fashion broad concordists retain the biblical concept of special creation, but in a reinterpreted form. For example, Ramm speaks for the position in these classic words:

In progressive creationism there may be much horizontal radiation [micro-evolution]. . . . But there is no vertical radiation [macro-evolution]. Vertical radiation is only by fiat creation. A root-species may give rise to several species by horizontal radiation, through the process of the unraveling of gene potentialities or recombination. Horizontal radiation could account for much which now passes as evidence for the theory of evolution. The gaps in the geological record are gaps because vertical progress takes place only by creation.⁶⁹

By this method, Ramm retains numerous, necessary interventive special creative acts of God within secular history in order to create new root species, including human beings.

Thus, an inerrantist view of inspiration does not necessarily guarantee a historical approach to the creation texts, as might be initially expected. In addition to the nonconcordists and the broad concordists, there are, finally, the narrow concordists to which we now turn.

Evangelical Narrow Concordism. Narrow, strict, or consistent concordists include scholars such as Norman L. Geisler, J. Kerby Anderson,⁷⁰ Henry M. Morris, Francis A. Schaeffer, and many scholars within the Seventh-day Adventist community. Some of these individuals are at times associated with terms such as fundamentalist, bibliolatrism and other pejorative labels. Probably narrow concordism represents the "rare and isolated pockets" of thought which Kaufmann claims are rapidly disappearing forever. Strict concordists tend to treat the creation texts of Genesis as presenting literal, accurate, scientific and historical information which is open for investigation by the natural sciences. Thus, for example, strict concordists still believe that the Noachian flood was wet, wild and universal, and that there really was a first couple who literally and historically initiated sin into a perfect order.

In this approach the Bible is not considered to be a textbook on science in the sense that its main purpose is to deliver scientific facts. However, the Bible can be considered to be a scientific textbook, as Francis A. Schaeffer suggests, in the sense that "where it touches the cosmos it is true, propositionally true."⁷¹ He expands this concept as follows:

What the Bible teaches where it touches history and the cosmos and what science teaches where it touches the same areas do not stand in a discontinuity.⁷²

This understanding of the extent and nature of inspiration and its relationship to science is the basis for the ongoing institutional academic efforts concerning concordism within these communities of faith. The scientific institutes comprised of university-trained scientists who are also Christians are found only in strict concordist communities. Neither nonconcordists nor broad concordists need these institutes because, according to their understanding, the purpose of biblical inspiration is not to specify in scientific fashion literally how life arose on the planet.

This situation raises two questions. Are strict concordists'

endeavors misguided, anachronistic enterprises, which should rapidly disappear, and be referenced only in textbooks on the history of science and religion? Or, are scientific research projects which are concerned with concordism, such as those conducted by the Geoscience Research Institute, even more relevant, vital, and theologically and scientifically probative than ever before? Our essay concludes by discussing a remarkable window of opportunity recently opened for a fresh academic hearing of basic concordism concerning the authority of biblical inspiration and science which indicates that the most significant story of full concordism may lie just ahead.

An Academic Window of Opportunity

The General Situation. Fresh winds are blowing in the academic community. Serious scholarly questions about Darwinian theories of origin are being raised in journals of distinction. Here are a few examples: Writing in the December 1992 issue of the *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Kenneth T. Gallagher⁷³ shows convincingly that Richard Dawkins' attempt, in his book *The Blind Watchmaker*, to overthrow the argument from perfection fails miserably. Dawkins mistakenly assumes that the first small incipient stages of a future eye on the way to completion might have vision.⁷⁴ However, Gallagher points out that incomplete stages of a future eye could not have vision, thereby fatally undermining Darwin's theory of origin. No Darwinian biologist has yet adequately addressed this critique.⁷⁵

Michael Polanyi insists that life and human consciousness are irreducible to the laws of physics and chemistry.⁷⁶ John B. Cobb, Jr. cogently argues that subjectivity cannot arise from objectivity, thus indicating that from its own materialistic resources and without help from a divine power Darwinian evolution cannot occur.⁷⁷ After subjecting Darwinian theory to the principles of probability theory, mathematicians Sir Fred Holye and Chandra Wickramasinghe offer this startling conclusion:

It must be judged of some considerable social significance that so simple and so decisive a disproof of the "Darwinian" theory as that given above has escaped the attention of scientists for so long. There can, we think, be no explanation other than intellectual perversity.⁷⁸

Contemporary German advocate of polymeric chemistry Bruno Vollmert writes:

The stricter my argumentation takes place in the frame of the exact sciences by treating the biological evolution in the sense of Neodarwinism as a process by chance, that is to say (the terminology of polymeric chemistry) as a statistical copolycondensation, the less I am afraid to understand the world as the creation of an almighty creator as an alternative to Darwinism.⁷⁹

Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould challenges the rate of Darwinian developmental theory with these epoch-making words:

The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology. The evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips . . . of their branches; the rest is inference, . . . not the evidence of fossils. . . . In any local area, a species does not arise gradually by the steady transformation of its ancestors; it appears all at once and "fully formed."⁸⁰

Gould, of course, remains an evolutionist, but faithfully reports his findings, as problematic as they may be to traditional Darwinian developmental theory.

Pierre Grassé of the University of Paris comments on the implications of the lack of transitional forms as follows:

From the almost total absence of fossil evidence relative to the origin of the phyla, it follows that any explanation of the mechanism in the creative evolution of the fundamental structural plans is heavily burdened with hypotheses. . . . We do not even have a basis to determine the extent to which these opinions are correct.⁸¹

The hypotheses noted in this quotation may reveal some form of mechanism of change, but concerning the causes of the orientations of lineages and of the causes of living functions Grassé significantly confesses that "[p]erhaps in this area biology can go no farther: the rest is metaphysics."⁸² By these words Grassé suggests the following possible point of beautiful concordism between science and religion. On its own terms biology surveys all its causal options and concludes that they inadequately account fully for the biological forms studied, implying the need for some form of causality other than the Darwinian paradigm. Faith can supply the

needed transempirical causality, the Divine Creator of heaven and earth.

These illustrations could be multiplied,⁸³ but this sampling of opinions indicates that a fresh scholarly skepticism of evolutionary theory is growing in academic circles. Of even greater interest is the fact that current developments are now opening a window of opportunity for a serious academic hearing of traditional concordism, provided its principles are presented in a scholarly, accountable fashion in light of the most recent concordist research.

A Specific Window of Opportunity. Just as Karl Barth's *Römerbrief* is said to have fallen "like a bomb on the playground of the theologians" in 1918,⁸⁴ so Plantinga's "When Faith and Reason Clash: Evolution and the Bible" and Johnson's *Darwin on Trial* have fallen like two bombs into university departments of religion in 1991. Stunned scholars are scrambling to respond. Strikingly, both studies claim that the biological facts are best interpreted from an empirical standpoint that fatally undermines Darwinian theory.

Evoking the probative argument from perfection concerning the development of the eye *de novo*, Plantinga asks, How, biologically, can one properly "envisage a series of mutations which is such that each member of the series has adaptive value, is also a step on the way to the eye, and is such that the last member is an animal with such an eye[?]"⁸⁵ His point is that on "Darwinian assumptions, none of [these steps] could be the path in fact taken . . . so how could have the eye have evolved in this way?"⁸⁶ The answer is that its eye could not have developed in this fashion. Plantinga insists that these considerations suggest that the Christian needs a scientific account of life that is not restricted by "methodological naturalism."⁸⁷ No wonder the academic community is reeling.

Johnson offers an evaluation of Darwin's theory from the perspective of a teaching, trial lawyer at Berkeley. After critically, carefully, and thoroughly surveying the evidence for Darwinian naturalistic biological evolution, he concludes that viewed strictly from the point of view of logic and the principles of scientific research, the Darwinian theory of origins "is not supported by impartially evaluated empirical evidence."⁸⁸ Therefore, Johnson asks, "Why not consider the possibility that life is what it so evidently seems to be, the product of creative intelligence."⁸⁹ Be-

cause of the cogently expressed skepticism of Darwinian theory by Plantinga and Johnson, evangelical scholars supporting theistic evolution such as Van Till and Hasker are understandably on the defensive. However, in the several exchanges which have been published among the latter three scholars, two significant developments⁹⁰ have occurred which open a new window of opportunity for a serious academic hearing of strict concordism.

Perhaps, for the first time in recent history, proponents of some form of special creation are being treated with respect rather than with the usual opprobrium. This is an important new development. For example, Ernan McMullin, director of the Program in History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Notre Dame, and a colleague but outspoken critic of Plantinga, admits in a *Zygon* article (September 1993) that it is worthwhile to consider Plantinga's argument, because he [standing in the Calvinistic tradition] is not only a well-known philosopher of religion, but also presents a very "sophisticated sort of defense of special creation."⁹¹

Van Till salutes Johnson and Plantinga by saying that when compared to traditional scientific creationists, their cases are "more persuasively formulated,"⁹² rendering them worthy of being addressed. In a lecture delivered in February 1993, Michael Ruse, Darwinian philosopher of science, surprised an audience of evolutionists when he complimented Johnson by saying that he correctly shows in [Ruse's words], that "evolution akin to religion involves making certain *a priori* or metaphysical assumptions which at some level cannot be proven empirically."⁹³

These illustrations indicate that the Berlin Wall of defiance against serious consideration of creationist points of view may be cracking in segments of academia. However, the most significant current development is that occasioned by the comments of William Hasker, which in effect open a window of opportunity for conservative concordist Christian scholars.

In his response to Johnson, appearing in a 1993 issue of the *Christian Scholar's Review*,⁹⁴ Hasker, a severe critic of Johnson until now, welcomes his proposal for a new research agenda which includes, among other things, a call to "paleontologists to interpret their evidence without Darwinist prejudice."⁹⁵ Hasker magnanimously allows that Johnson's research proposal "could

produce a genuinely viable special creationist alternative."⁹⁶ Then Hasker articulates a window-opening challenge: "I hope [Johnson] will find scientists who are willing and able to undertake the research he has in mind."

There it is, a window of opportunity flung wide open by the scholarly community itself to be informed by the latest concordist research.⁹⁷ This means that a time of unequalled possibilities lies open before the Geoscience Research Institute, Seventh-day Adventist colleges, and M.A. and Ph.D. degree-granting institutions to rise to the sole glory of God in making major contributions, some perhaps of epoch-making significance, concerning issues of origins and neo-catastrophism indicating that true science and inspiration are harmonious after all.

In this volatile environment of contemporary biblical and theological reexamination of the role of inspiration and the natural sciences, responsible strict concordist scholars willing to risk the whitewater ride through the spray-filled canyons of the creation texts and nature itself will surely discover additional new harmonies between Scripture and science about which to write, not only as it were with breathless excitement but above all with deeply compelling academic power.⁹⁸ This effort can continue to show that concordism is not an anachronistic effort, but is very relevant indeed in the post-Darwinian age.

In view of these possibilities, John Woodbridge is so right when he observes: "It is ironic that some evangelical scholars are discounting the Bible statements about nature and history at the very time evolutionary thought is in such flux."⁹⁹ Now is the time to tremble at the words of the God of Israel, particularly in the creation and flood narratives,¹⁰⁰ and not to tremble at the words of Darwin whose theory is in crisis.¹⁰¹ Strict concordism's day in court may have come. At least the academic ball is in its court. What will the Adventist scholarly societies and organs of communication such as *Adventist Society for Religious Studies*, *Adventist Theological Society*, *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, *Origins*,¹⁰² the *Adventist Review*, and *Spectrum*,¹⁰³ et al. publish and speak in response? The general academic community, for the time being at least, is listening.

Endnotes

- 1 Langdon Gilkey, *Religion and the Scientific Future: Reflection on Myth, Science, and Theology* (NY: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 4.
- 2 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1948) Vol. 4, p. 584.
- 3 This is the issue as framed by Adventist theologian Peter van Bemmelen in recent conversations with the author. See Peter van Bemmelen, *Issues in Biblical Inspiration: Sandy and Warfield* (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1987), p. 66.
- 4 This position is widely held by evangelicals sympathetic to the theistic evolutionary perspective. For example, in *The Meaning of Creation*, Hyers writes: "The weight of scientific evidence is too great, and scientific arguments too persuasive, for one to hold any longer to the literal six-day creationism" (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), p. 86.
- 5 For a counter view see Gerhard F. Hasel, "Watering the Antediluvian World: Mist, River, Flood, High Water, or Rain," Paper presented at the SBL conference, in Washington D.C., November 1993.
- 6 James Barr makes this suggestion in *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), p. 245.
- 7 For a partial list of these alternatives see Clark Pinnock, "Bernard Ramm: Postfundamentalism Coming to Terms with Modernity," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 17:4 (Winter 1990): 22.
- 8 For this quote see Kurt A. Wood, "The Scientific Exegesis of the Qur'an: A Case Study in Relating Science and Scripture," *Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith* 45:2 (June 1993): 92. For a somewhat contrary view see John D. Woodbridge, "Does the Bible Teach Science?," *Bibliotheca Sacra* (July-September 1985): 195. For the position of the Vatican see Walter M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966), p. 119, n. 31.
- John Calvin states that God adapts His language in the creation narrative to common usage, but this does not mean that the narratives support historical error. For comment and sources on the former point see, G. B. Deason, "The Protestant Reformation and the Rise of Modern Science," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 38 (1985): 221-240, particularly, p. 223.
- 9 Louis Meyer, ed., *The Fundamentals*, vol. 7 [1911]; quoted in Tom McIver, *Anti-Evolution: A Reader's Guide to Writings Before and After Darwin* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p. 170.
- 10 In an insightful question, George McCready Price also argues that eschatology is negatively affected by a faulty protology as follows: "[H]ow can we hope to impress such a person with the imminence of the events predicted in the last chapters of the Bible, when he has lost all confidence in the history recorded in its first chapters?" George McCready Price, *Science and Religion in a Nutshell* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publishing Association, n.d.), 15.
- 11 See, Everett Mendelssohn, "Religious Fundamentalism and the Sciences," pp. 23-41; and James Moore, "The Creationist Cosmos of Protestant Fundamentalism," pp. 42-72 in: Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *The Fundamentalism Project*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Vol. 2: *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education*, 1993.
- 12 Alvin Plantinga, "When Faith and Reason Clash: Evolution and the Bible," 21:1 *Christian Scholar's Review*, 1991, pp. 8-32.
- 13 Alden Thompson, *Inspiration: Hard Questions, Honest Answers* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1991).
- 14 Thompson occasionally touches on the issue of inspiration and the natural sciences. For example, he argues for a supernatural element in the Noachian flood, but seems to look with favor upon recent perspectives which treat the flood as limited in scope. For a response to this particular point see Randall Younker: "A Few Thoughts on Alden Thompson's Chapter: Numbers, Genealogies, Dates," *Issues in Revelation and Inspiration* (Berrien Springs, MI: Adventist Theological Society, 1992), pp. 187-193.
- I would welcome an additional scholarly study by Thompson in which he would

- address at length the reliability of biblical inspiration in relation to the natural sciences concerning issues such as the six-day creation, the Fall, et al., in particular, and the question of strict concordism in general.
- 15 The term concordism here refers to the scholarly endeavor of harmonizing the findings of science with a historical reading of the creation texts.
 - 16 James Barr, review of *Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration, A Review and Proposal*, by Kern Robert Trembath, in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 41 Part 1 (April 1990): 322-323.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, p. 323.
 - 18 Kern Robert Trembath, "Evangelical Theories of Biblical Inspiration: A Review and Proposal" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1984), p. 100.
 - 19 See, for example, Trembath, p. 95.
 - 20 Cf. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley, vol. I/2: *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1970), p. 532.
 - 21 Trembath, p. 140.
 - 22 "Study Documents on Inspiration and Creation," section entitled "Creation and Re-Creation," *Adventist Review*, January 17, 1980, p. 11.
 - 23 Specificity beyond what is revealed by the experience of prophets concerning the nature of inspiration may well be avoided. In a classic sentence, Ellen White states, "Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation," (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 37, quoted in, Arthur L. White, *Inspiration and the Ellen G. White Writings*, Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1978), p. 6. This description indicates "thought" inspiration rather than "word" inspiration, and gives the prophet a more active role in the inspiration process—an active instrumental role, not a passive role. This position distinguishes an Adventist infallible inspiration notion from the inerrantist verbal position where every word is God-breathed, even though the prophet retains his own personality of expression in the process.
 - 24 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), p. 585.
 - 25 See footnote #23.
 - 26 The powerful incarnational model of Scripture illustrating the union of the mysterious divine influence upon the biblical prophet writing the Bible does not, however, imply syllogistically that since all things human are imperfect, and because the Bible has human authors, therefore the Bible is imperfect in theology, science, and history. Rather, Jesus' remark that the Scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35) seems to limit, by implication, biblical imperfection to matters of little or no consequence, and thus to instrumental, not substantive categories. For example, an imperfect mode of expression does not make the truth of what is said imperfect.
 - 27 For a conservative but scholarly presentation of the traditional position concerning the historical trustworthiness of Daniel which shows a high view of Scripture see Edward J. Young, "The Bible and History," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 122 (January-March 1965): 16-22.
 - 28 Concerning Jesus' attitude to the historicity of the creation of Adam and the historicity of Genesis 1 and 2 in terms of the creation of Adam and Eve, see Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1972), pp. 39-43.
 - 29 For a discussion of Jesus on John 10:35 ("the Scripture cannot be broken,") as viewed by Warfield and Dunn, see Roger Nichole, "The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture," *Churchman* 97:3 (1983): pp. 198-215.
 - 30 John Chapman stands at the head of a line of scholars who argue for this identity. See John Chapman, "Zacharias, Slain Between the Temple and the Altar," *Journal of Theological Studies* 13 (1911-12): 398-410, note particularly p. 407; J. Barton Payne, "Zechariah Who Perished," *Grace Journal* 8 (1967): 33-35; G. H. P. Thompson, *The Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 3 in *The New Clarendon Bible* ed. by H. F. D. Sparks, (Oxford:

Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 182; *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1956), p. 492.

For a sampling of critical scholarship which argue for a Q redaction source of this pericope see R. J. Miller, "The Rejection of the Prophets in Q," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988): 223-240. Miller states that the material represents the "risen Jesus spoken by the Q prophets," p. 225. E. S. Steele, "Luke 11:37-54: A Modified Hellenistic Symposium?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 103 (1984): 379-94. Steele suggests that this pericope represents the work of a redactor shaping his narrative along the lines of a modified Hellenistic symposium, p. 394.

31 Steele, *ibid.*

32 For an overview of contemporary critical scholarship on this question see the introduction in Claus Westermann, *Creation*, trans. by John J. Scullion (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 1-15.

33 John B. Cobb, Jr., "The Authority of the Bible," *The Drew Gateway* 45 (1974): 200.

34 Rudolph Bultmann, *Existence and Faith: The Fontana Library of Theology and Philosophy* (London: Collins, 1964), p. 345.

35 Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, *On the Glaubenslehre: Two Letters To Dr. Lücke*, transl. James Duke and Francis Fiorenza (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Edwards Brothers, 1981, for the American Academy of Religion), p. 64.

36 Adolph von Harnack, *Marcion: das Evangelium vom fremden Gott, eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche. Neue Studien zu Marcion* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1960); quoted in James Barr, "The Old Testament and the New Crisis of Biblical Authority," *Interpretation* 25:1 (January 1971): 33-34.

37 As noted earlier in this paper, concordism is the effort by some evangelical scholars to harmonize scientific findings with scriptural statements concerning, for example, cosmology and the origin of human beings by divine special creation. Concordism is discussed subsequently in this paper.

38 Hans Küng, *Credo* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), p. 21.

39 Karl Schmitz-Moormann ed., *Neue Ansätze zum Dialog zwischen Theologie und Naturwissenschaft* (Düsseldorf, 1992); quoted in Küng, *Credo*, p. 22.

The seriousness of the theological implications outlined by Schmitz-Moormann in this citation is not being lost by scholars holding a high view of inspiration. For example, Marco Terreros is currently completing an Andrews University doctoral dissertation entitled, "Death Before the Sin of Adam: A Fundamental Concept in Theistic Evolution and Its Implications for Evangelical Theology," in which Terreros convincingly studies the biblical self-understanding of theories of sin and death, then offers a critical analysis of selected theological implications which follow from the theistic evangelical affirmation of death before the sin of Adam.

40 Karl Schmitz-Moormann, "Evolution and Redemption: What Is the Meaning of Christians Proclaiming Salvation in an Evolving World?" *Progress In Theology* 1:2 (June 1993): 7.

George McCready Price anticipates this kind of conclusion concerning the nature of salvation if scholars adopt theistic evolution. He argues that theistic evolution results in "redemption by development," or in a "doctrine of salvation by development." See George McCready Price, *Evolution and the Sabbath* (Warburton, Victoria, Australia: Signs Publishing Assn., n.d.), pp. 5, 14-15.

41 Gordon D. Kaufman, "What Shall We Do With the Bible?" *Interpretation* 25:1 (January 1971): 96.

42 Stanley L. Jaki, "Genesis 1: A Cosmogogenesis?" *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* 93:11-12 (August-September 1993): 29.

43 *Ibid.*

44 The most authoritative recent collection of articles representing the current thinking of critical scholarship concerning the interface between science and religion is Ernan McMullin, ed., *Evolution and Creation* (Notre Dame, ID: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985).

45 For a sampling of opinions of scholars who endorse and illustrate this perspective, see Philip Hefner, "Biological Perspectives on the Fall and Original Sin," *Zygon* 28:1 (March 1993): 77-101; William Hordern, "Creationism. . . A Problem in Biblical Authority," *Touchstone* 3:1 (January 1985): 22-28; Bernard Ramm, "The Fall and Natural Evil," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 5:2 (April 1963): 21-32; Howard J. Van Till, "Evolutionary Science and the Forgotten Doctrine of Creation's Functional Integrity," *Progress in Theology* 1:1 (March 1993): 6. For a history of the struggles with this modern point of view at Princeton Theological Seminary, see Darryl G. Hart, "The Princeton Mind in the Modern World and the Common Sense of J. Gresham Machen," *The Westminster Theological Journal* 46:1 (Spring 1984): 1-25.

46 Clark H. Pinnock, 43:2 (April 1989): 143-155.

47 Robert W. Yarbrough, "Retreating Authority: Evangelical-Liberal Rapprochement?" *Christian Scholar's Review* 19:2 (1990): 149-162.

48 Davis A. Young, "Scripture in the Hands of Geologists," Part One, *The Westminster Theological Journal* 49 (Spring 1987): 1-34; and Part Two, *Ibid.*, 49 (Fall 1987): 257-304. Part One surveys the history of literalism in the interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis by Christian geologists, while Part Two focuses on the concordist tradition.

Also see Davis A. Young, "Nineteenth-Century Christian Geologists and the Doctrine of Scripture," *Christian Scholar's Review* 11:3 (1982): 212-228.

49 H. H. Ridderbos, *Is There a Conflict Between Genesis 1 and Natural Science?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Co., 1957). In this and the other sources concerning the figures in the three groups of evangelical scholars, I am informed originally by Pinnock's article.

50 Howard J. Van Till, *The Fourth Day: What the Bible and the Heavens Are Telling Us About the Creation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1986).

51 Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984).

52 J. I. Packer, "The Challenge of Biblical Interpretation: Creation" in *The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Interpretation 1988* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1988), pp. 21-33.

53 In addition to his article cited above, see Clark H. Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984) for a crisp but carefully nuanced exposition of a softened view of inerrancy—see particularly p. 224.

54 Pinnock, "Climbing Out of a Swamp," p. 145.

55 Pinnock quotes Gerhard F. Hasel's "The Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology" [*Evangelical Quarterly* 46 (1974): 81-102] in support of his claim that the creation narratives do not have a scientific intent in the modern sense. However, it seems to me that Pinnock may be misusing Hasel's article. On the one hand, Hasel clearly shows that the creation texts do indeed critique mythical religious beliefs. On the other hand, Hasel's point in the article is not to limit the intent of the creation narratives only to these important theological critiques. Therefore, Pinnock can only properly use Hasel's material by using the raw data in making his own point about a narrowed focus in Genesis 1. Pinnock misuses Hasel's material if he is implying that Hasel is making the same point Pinnock is making, because Hasel is not suggesting that the anti-myth theme of Genesis 1 is the exclusive interest of the creation narrative.

56 Pinnock, "Climbing Out of a Swamp," p. 145.

57 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

58 The classic collection of recent, cutting-edge scholarly discussions by leading evangelical scholars concerning the relation of science to the creation texts is Howard J. Van Till, ed., *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World's Formation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990).

59 For a detailed discussion of nineteenth-century broad concordism, see David N. Livingstone, *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders: The Encounter Between Evangelical Theology and Evolutionary Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Scottish Academic Press, 1987).

60 Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), 571.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 570.

62 *Ibid.*, p. 571.

- 63 Ibid., p. 570.
- 64 Cf. the language of Ellen G. White supporting this point in *Spiritual Gifts* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Seventh-day Adventist Publishing Association, 1864), 3: 91-92
- 65 Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954; reprint ed., 1984).
- 66 Pattle P. T. Pun, *Evolution: Nature and Scripture in Conflict?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982).
- 67 Robert C. Newmann and Herman J. Eckelmann, *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* (Downers Grove, Ill: Inter-Varsity Press, 1977).
- 68 Stephen Jay Gould coined the term "deep time" to refer to the 4.4 billion years of earth history posited by contemporary geological and evolutionary theory. See particularly chapter one, entitled "The Discovery of Deep Time," in Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987).
- 69 Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, p. 191.
- 70 Norman L. Geisler and J. Kerby Anderson, *Origin Science: A Proposal for the Creation-Evolution Controversy* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987).
- 71 Francis A. Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time: The Flow of Biblical History* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1972), pp. 35-36.
- 72 Ibid., p. 166.
- 73 Kenneth T. Gallagher, "Dawkins in Biomorph Land," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 32:4, (December 1992): 501-513.
- 74 Ibid., p. 512.
- 75 For a discussion of the argument from perfection, its history and cogency, see John T. Baldwin, "God and the World: William Paley's Argument from Perfection Tradition--A Continuing Influence," *Harvard Theological Review* 85:1 (1992): 109-120.
- 76 Michael Polanyi, "Life's Irreducible Structure," *Science* 160: (June 21, 1968): 1308-1312.
- 77 Cobb made this point in a lecture delivered at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago in 1982.
- 78 Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe, *Why Neo-Darwinism Does Not Work* (Cardiff, Wales: University College Cardiff Press, 1982), pp. 32-33.
- 79 Bruno Vollmert, *Das Molekül und das Leben: vom makromolekularen Ursprung des Lebens und der Arten: Was Darwin nicht wissen konnte und Darwinisten nicht wissen wollen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1965; reprint 1985), p. 26 in early edition quoted in Kurt Hübner, "Genesis and Modern Theories of Evolution," *Man and World* 25 (1992): 406.
- 80 Stephen Jay Gould, "Evolution's Erratic Pace," *Natural History* 86:5 (May 1977): 14.
- 81 Pierre Grassé, *Evolution of Living Organisms* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), 31.
- 82 Ibid., p. 246.
- 83 In his book entitled *The Evolution and Classification of Flowering Plants*, 2nd ed. (Bronx: New York Botanical Garden, 1988), A. Cronquist says that the origin of the angiosperms remains an "abominable mystery" to modern students of evolution as it did to Darwin, quoted in Dennis Woodland, *Contemporary Plant Systematics* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1991), p. 423.
- In addition, see for example the excellent collections of studies in support of transempirical causality in the design and origin of biological forms, Leo R. Van Dolson, ed., *Our Real Roots* (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publishing Association, 1979). In this collection see particularly the report of research by G. E. Snow and G. T. Javor entitled "Atmospheric Oxygen Rules Out Biochemical Evolution," pp. 155-161.
- Renewed interest in the theory of intelligent design is being expressed on several fronts. The December 1993 *Newsletter* (35:6):1 of the American Scientific Affiliation and Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation describes the Intelligent Design Symposium at the 1993 ASA Annual Meeting chaired by Dr. David Willis of Oregon State University and organized by ASA's Committee for Integrity in Science Education.

- Dean Kenyon, biology professor at San Francisco State University, opens another direction concerning intelligent design theory in the book by Percival Davis and Dean H. Kenyon, *Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins*, 2nd ed. (Dallas: Houghton Publishing Co., 1993).
- Evidence from the natural sciences for an intelligent creator of the universe is presented in a forthcoming work available March 1994: J. P. Moreland, ed., *The Creation Hypothesis: Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1994).
- 84 Attributed to Catholic Theologian Karl Adam, quoted by John McConnachie, *The Significance of Karl Barth* (New York: R. R. Smith, 1931), p. 43.
- 85 Alvin Plantinga, "When Faith and Reason Clash: Evolution and the Bible," *Christian Scholar's Review* 21:1 (1991): 25.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid., p. 29.
- 88 Howard J. Van Till and Phillip E. Johnson, "God and Evolution: An Exchange," *First Things* 34 (June/July 1993): 39.
- 89 Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin On Trial*, p. 110.
- 90 See, for example, William Hasker, "Mr. Johnson for the Prosecution," *Christian Scholar's Review* 22:2 (1992): 177-186; Phillip E. Johnson, "Response to Hasker," *Christian Scholar's Review* 22:3 (1993): 297-304, and in the same issue, William Hasker, "Reply to Johnson," 305-308; Howard J. Van Till and Phillip E. Johnson, "God and Evolution: An Exchange," *First Things* 34 (June/July 1993): 32-41; Howard J. Van Till, "Is Special Creationism a Heresy?" *Christian Scholar's Review* 22:4 (1993): 380-395.
- 91 Ernan McMullin, "Evolution and Special Creation," *Zygon* 28:3 (September 1993): 300.
- 92 Van Till, "Is Special Creationism a Heresy?": 381.
- 93 Michael Ruse in a Boston lecture delivered before the AAAS in February, 1993, entitled, "Non Literalist Evolution," which was one presentation in a series of speakers focusing on the theme, "The New Antievolutionism."
- 94 William Hasker, "Reply to Johnson," *Christian Scholar's Review* 22:3 (1993): 305-308.
- 95 Phillip E. Johnson, "Response to Hasker," *Christian Scholar's Review* 22:3 (1993): 303, n. 7.
- 96 Hasker, "Reply to Johnson," p. 308.
- 97 As a footnote to this, in the latest issue of *Christian Scholar's Review* 22:4 (1993): 395 the editors call for a paper for a special theme issue on Creation/Evolution scheduled for publication in March 1995.
- 98 For aspects of the portrayal of this challenge, I am informed instrumentally in part by language employed by Thomas G. Long, Princeton Professor of Preaching and Worship, in his article, "The Use of Scripture in Contemporary Preaching," *Interpretation* 44:2 (April 1990): 352.
- 99 John D. Woodbridge, "Does the Bible Teach Science?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 142 (July-September 1985): 205.
- 100 Ezra 9:4.
- 101 Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, Maryland: Adler and Adler, 1986).
- 102 *Origins* is the journal of the Geoscience Research Institute. All its articles are peer reviewed and written by scientists, biblical scholars, and/or theologians with earned doctorates at leading universities. Here is a sampling of its articles: Niels-Erik Andreasen, "The Word 'Earth' in Genesis 1:1," *Origins* (1981): 13-19; John T. Baldwin, "Progressive Creation and Biblical Revelation: Some Theological Implications," *Origins* 18 (1991): 53-65; Robert H. Brown, "Radiometric Age and the Traditional Hebraic-Christian View of Time," *Origins* 4 (1977): 68-75; Robert H. Brown, "Geo and Cosmic Chronology," *Origins* 8 (1981): 20-45; Robert H. Brown, "How Solid Is a Radioisotope Age of a Rock?" *Origins* 10 (1983): 93-95; Arthur V. Chadwick, "Precambrian Pollen in the Grand Canyon—A Reexamination," *Origins* 8 (1981): 7-12; Harold G. Coffin, "Burgess Shale Re-examined," *Origins* 17 (1990):

33-37; Mart de Groot, "Cosmology and Genesis: The Road to Harmony and the Need for Cosmological Alternatives," *Origins* 19 (1992): 8-32; Gerhard F. Hasel, "Genesis 5 and 11: Chronogenealogies in the a Biblical History of Beginnings," *Origins* 7 (1980): 53-70; George T. Javor, "A New Attempt to Understand the Origin of Life: The Theory of Surface-Metabolism," *Origins* 16 (1989): 40-44; Ariel A. Roth, "Those Gaps in the Sedimentary Layers," *Origins* 13 (1988): 75-92; Ariel A. Roth, "Life in the Deep Rocks and the Deep Fossil Record," *Origins* 19 (1992): 80; William H. Shea, "Literary Structural Parallels Between Genesis 1 and 2," *Origins* 16 (1989): 49-68; William H. Shea, "The Antediluvian," *Origins* 18 (1991): 10-26; G. E. Snow and G. T. Javor, "Oxygen and Evolution," *Origins* 2 (1975): 59-63; Clyde L. Webster, "The Implications of the Oklo Phenomenon on the Constancy of Radiometric Decay Rates," *Origins* (1990): 86-92.

103 *Spectrum* is a freelance journal by Adventists whose articles may at times reflect sympathy for a broad concordist perspective. A sampling of its pieces relevant to this essay follows: Ross O. Barnes, "Biblical Creationism After a Century of Scientific Investigation," *Spectrum* 10:1 (1979): 2-11; Roy Benton, "Odyssey of an Adventist Creationist," *Spectrum* 15:2 (1984): 46-53; Molleurus Couperus, "Tensions Between Religion and Science," *Spectrum* 10:4 (1980): 74-88; Lawrence T. Geraty, "Beyond Fundamentalism: A Short History of Adventist Old Testament Scholarship," *Spectrum* 13:2 (1982): 44-49; Fritz Guy, "Negotiating the Creation-Evolution Wars," *Spectrum* 20:1 (1989): 40-45; F. E. J. Harder, "Beyond Arithmetic: The Truth of Creation," *Spectrum* 15:2 (1984): 54-59; cf. Richard Rice, "Dominant Themes in Adventist Theology," *Origins* 10:4 (1980): 58-73.

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THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G. WHITE

By P. Gerard Damsteegt
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Andrews University

Recently the subject of inspiration has received increased attention among Seventh-day Adventists. A growing number of believers are beginning to realize that one's view of the inspiration of the Bible has far reaching implications for one's daily decisions and lifestyle.

All Seventh-day Adventists believe the Biblical teaching on the Sabbath and what happens when one dies. All believe that they have a special mission in calling people to the true worship of God. All believe that the body is the temple of God. All believe women should serve God.

But beyond the general themes there is not as much consensus. It is here that the specific view of the inspiration of the Bible makes a significant difference in how its directives are applied to the life. When confronted with the biblical text that addresses specifics not many Seventh-day Adventists would say, "I don't believe what Scripture says there!"

Instead, there is a reason, a context, a cultural/or "for those times" consideration cited. It is not so much that there is a *base disbelief in Scripture*, but an interpretive difference at the root of all Christian controversy. It is precisely here where deep hermeneutical differences divide all Christian groups. As some Seventh-day Adventists seem increasingly uncertain about which hermeneutical tools are appropriate, there is the potential for an

ever-increasing number of tensions and conflicts among us. Fundamental to all schism is the question of inspiration, the age-old: "How Readest Thou?"

Ellen White, largely regarded by Adventists as a prophetess, has provided important insights on the value and interpretation of Scripture throughout her life. In this article I investigate Ellen White's views of inspiration. She had very definite ideas on the inspiration of the Bible and its implications for everyday living. My research has analyzed all her references to inspiration as retrieved by a CD-ROM from all her published works.

I will deal with questions like "What is the relationship between the Bible and inspiration?" "What is the nature of inspiration?" "How does Biblical inspiration function?" "What are the unique characteristics of inspiration?" "What are its functions?" "What are the evidences of Biblical inspiration?" "How does doubt effect one's view of inspiration?" "What are erroneous views and attitudes on inspiration, and how should we study the subject of inspiration?"

The Bible and Inspiration

The inspiration of human beings by God made the Bible what God intended it to be—*His* unique Word. Towards the end of her life, commenting on the efficacy of Scripture, Ellen White calls the inspiration of the Word: God's great work. Says she, God "does not design to add a new element of efficiency to his Word; He has done His great work in giving His inspiration to the Word."¹

Throughout her life she saw an intimate relation between the Bible and inspiration. She equates the Bible with "inspiration,"² the "Word of inspiration,"³ "words of inspiration,"⁴ the "volume of inspiration,"⁵ the "testimony of inspiration,"⁶ the "great treasure house of inspired truth,"⁷ and the "test of all inspiration."⁸

We will now investigate her views on the nature of inspiration.

The Nature of Inspiration

What is the nature of inspiration? How does it affect different people and what is the process by which it operates? Seventh-day Adventists believe that the Bible writers were inspired when they wrote. Consequently, they reject the idea of degrees of inspiration

which implies that some parts of Scripture are less inspired than others. They hold that the whole Bible is fully inspired. In this they have accepted the position that Ellen White took in opposition to the theory of degrees of inspiration when it was introduced among Adventists in the 1880's.

However, Ellen White makes a distinction between biblical prophets who spoke by "direct inspiration" and teachers in the schools of the prophets who were not directly inspired. She comments: "In the highest sense the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God. But the name [prophet] was given also to those who, though not so directly inspired, were divinely called to instruct the people in the works and ways of God. For the training of such a class of teachers, Samuel, by the Lord's direction, established the schools of the prophets."⁹

Bible writers who spoke by "direct inspiration" are inspired in the "fullest sense of the word." When asked whether the Adventist pioneers were inspired by God, she answered, "I dare not say they were not led of God, for Christ leads into all truth; but when it comes to inspiration in the fullest sense of the word, I answer, No."¹⁰

Today, Bible students frequently classify these two groups under the categories of inspiration and illumination. Following this arrangement, Bible writers fall under the category of inspiration, all others under illumination. Ellen White does not use this terminology but employs "inspiration" and "illumination" as synonyms.¹¹ In most cases when she applies the word "illumination" to Bible writers, she describes them not simply as having "illumination" but "special illumination."¹²

Since our concern is with the nature of biblical inspiration, we move now to address these questions: How did Ellen White view inspiration as it worked in the divinely qualified writers of Scripture?

The Process of Biblical Inspiration. Ellen White describes the inspiration of the Bible as a process by which the utterances of humans become the word of God. Key elements in this process are God's inspiration of all Scripture, the incarnation of the Word, the

role of the Holy Spirit and the transformation of human words into the Word of God.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Ellen White frequently asserts that the Scriptures are "given by inspiration of God". She writes: "The Bible points to God as its author; yet it was written by human hands; and in the varied style of its different books it presents the characteristics of the several writers. The truths revealed are all 'given by inspiration of God' (2 Tim 3:16); yet they are expressed in the words of men."¹³

In contrast to common practice today, she avoids calling the writers of the various Bible books "authors." Her focus remains on God as the sole Author of the Scriptures while the humans involved without exception are described as writers, not authors. This is fully in harmony with her general purpose to present the Bible as the inspired Word of God.

The Word was made flesh. Ellen White perceives from the incarnate nature of Christ, ("the Word was made flesh," John 1:14) far-reaching theological implications for the written Word. She reasons that, as Christ's nature is made up of a union of the divine and the human, so also is the nature of the Bible. The rationale for this divine-human nature is God's attempt to adapt the Word of God to human needs. The following comment succinctly expresses her view:

The union of the divine and the human, manifest in Christ, exists also in the Bible. The truths revealed are all "given by inspiration of God;" yet they are expressed in the words of men and are adapted to human needs. Thus it may be said of the Book of God, as it was of Christ, that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And this fact, so far from being an argument against the Bible, should strengthen faith in it as the word of God."¹⁴

This is why she can describe the Bible as the embodiment of divine thought in "human language."¹⁵

What impact did this divine-human union have on the language of the Bible? Was it written in superhuman language? Ellen White denies this, because "the Bible was written for practical purposes." She explains: "Jesus, in order to reach man where he is, took humanity. The Bible must be given in the language of men. Everything that is human is imperfect. Different meanings are

expressed by the same word; there is not one word for each distinct idea."¹⁶

Is the language of Scripture God's mode of thought and expression? Again Ellen White would answer "No." Its language is "that of humanity. God, as a writer, is not represented. Men will often say such an expression is not like God. But God has not put Himself in words, in logic, in rhetoric, on trial in the Bible. The writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen."¹⁷

In spite of the limitations and the imperfections of the human writers and language, God accomplished His purpose. "The Lord," she remarks, "gave His word in just the way He wanted it to come." Using an illustration from nature, she says, "There is variety in a tree, there are scarcely two leaves just alike. Yet this variety adds to the perfection of the tree as a whole."¹⁸

The role of the Holy Spirit. The process of inspiration involves the Godhead and especially the Holy Spirit. In describing the inspiration of Bible writers Ellen White states, "They were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). She does not limit this moving by the Spirit solely to the giving of prophecy as has been suggested recently,¹⁹ but applies it to the impartation of the whole Bible. She writes, "The Bible was written by men who were moved by the Holy Ghost."²⁰ "The Infinite One by his Holy Spirit has shed light into the minds and hearts of his servants. He has given dreams and visions, symbols and figures."²¹

Angels of God are closely associated with the Holy Spirit in the process of inspiration. Their function is to shed light on the person who is under inspiration.²²

The role of the Spirit in inspiring the Bible writers can be described as follows: He is responsible for communicating specific messages to the writers as well as how they are to express it. In this process His purpose is to so hide the writer in Christ that he recedes into the background and God and His message are exalted. Says she: "The Holy Spirit has so shaped matters, both in the giving of the prophecy, and in the events portrayed, as to teach that the human agent is to be kept out of sight, hid in Christ, and the Lord God of heaven and His law are to be exalted."²³

In communicating truth there is a fine balance between the actions of the Holy Spirit and human freedom. Ellen White says,

the Holy Spirit expresses truth "according to the development" of the writer's mind but without the mind being "cramped, as if forced into a certain mold."²⁴

Human words transformed into the Word of God. Although it is abundantly clear that Ellen White considers the Bible the inspired Word of God, she points out that it is "not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired." "Inspiration," she says, "acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind." The end product is amazing: "The divine mind is diffused. The divine mind and will is combined with the human mind and will; thus the utterances of the man are the word of God."²⁵ Thus human words become God's Word.

Lifestyle and Inspiration. What kind of persons were directly inspired? What was their lifestyle? How perfect were they?

Bible characters were not infallible. Throughout the Scripture the uniform testimony is that its writers were not infallible persons. They had weaknesses inherent with fallen human nature. For example, Peter revealed a hypocritical attitude for which Paul strongly rebuked him (Gal 2:11, 12). In another instance James gave Paul the unfortunate advice that was largely responsible for bringing about Paul's first Roman imprisonment (Acts 21:20-26).²⁶ David committed adultery and murder, and God would not even allow him to build His temple. Solomon had his years of blatant backsliding. Yet these were Bible writers. But because their opinions and lifestyle proved at times to be biased or immoral should their writings be disqualified?

What were the circumstances under which they sometimes erred or sinned? It is possible that their failures occurred when they were not under the direct influence of the Spirit's inspiration.

Inspiration guarantees trustworthy Scripture. A very natural question is: How human beings, who by nature are fallible, could possibly speak or write things that would be considered the infallible word of God? One might address this question in another way: Are there circumstances under which fallible Bible characters could speak or write truth without error? Ellen White replies with a resounding "Yes"!

The circumstance under which a Bible writer could present messages without error was when he was under the direct influence of the Spirit of the Lord. When the otherwise fallible Jacob came to the end of his life, he prophesied under "the spirit of inspiration." The result was, Ellen White says, that he disclosed with amazing accuracy before his sons "their past life, and their future history, revealing the purposes of God in regard to them."²⁷

It is, therefore, clear that Bible writers themselves were not infallible but subject to the inherent weaknesses of their fallen human nature. Yet when under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they presented a message that was fully trustworthy and without error.

The Importance of Understanding Inspiration

As discussed earlier, the day to day decisions most believers make on the basis of the Bible depends, to a great extent, on their view of inspiration and more particular on their ability or failure to understand inspiration's unique characteristics and function. We will first focus on Ellen White's views of the characteristics of inspiration, then its function.

Characteristics of Biblical Inspiration. What are the specific characteristics of "direct inspiration"? What is the effect of inspiration on the Bible? How does it affect the Bible's accuracy and trustworthiness? How does inspiration communicate God's voice?

It is accurate and fully trustworthy. To what extent can the Bible be trusted? Is it accurate? Did the writers make mistakes or errors? These are questions that occupy the minds of many. The measure of assurance they have about these questions determines some people's ability to believe in God; some have rejected Christianity altogether over such issues. Beyond basic belief, a person's commitment to following specific counsels and requirements of Scriptures is affected by his/her perception of trustworthiness. We could say that believers' confidence in God is in direct proportion to their confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible.

Ellen White gives resounding assurance that the Scriptures can be *fully* trusted. Her message is clear: The Bible is the *infallible* Word of God. She wholeheartedly endorses "the grand principle" held by the Waldenses, Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, Zwingli, and other

reformers on "the infallible authority of the Holy Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice."²⁸

In response to the question about the possibility of mistakes by copyists or translators, she says: "This is all probable, and the mind that is so narrow that it will hesitate and stumble over this possibility or probability would be just as ready to stumble over the mysteries of the Inspired Word, because their feeble minds cannot see through the purposes of God." "Yes," she adds, "they would just as easily stumble over plain facts that the common mind will accept." She assures believers that "all the mistakes will not cause trouble to one soul, or cause any feet to stumble, that would not manufacture difficulties from the plainest revealed truth."²⁹

Ellen White points out that in the transmission of the text, attempts were made at times to improve the text, but these changes were not for the better: "When copies of it [Bible] were few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition."³⁰ In her remarks Ellen White does not clearly state that the Bible contains mistakes, she only refers to the "possibility or probability" of mistakes through copying and translating, and indicates that in some cases the obvious meaning of the text through changes has become more difficult to understand. Never, however, in her writings does she make the slightest allusion to the idea that the Bible writers themselves made mistakes.

In assuring the total trustworthiness of the biblical record, Ellen White affirms that it is a product of "the unerring pen of inspiration."³¹ Consequently "it never makes a mistake."³² The Bible "is infallible," she says, "for God cannot err."³³ Believers, therefore, can be fully confident that "in the Bible we have the unerring counsel of God."³⁴

At a time when more and more people feel that everything they read is biased and that objectivity is impossible, it is refreshing to know that an accurate and unbiased source of information is available in the Bible.

Often biographies of Christians portray practically faultless characters. Such shine as examples of immaculate piety and fail to

reveal that these are, in fact, erring human beings subject to our common temptations. The inherent weakness of these biographies or autobiographies is that "it is next to a human impossibility to lay open our faults for the possible inspection of our friends."³⁵ Minds "are so subject to prejudice that it is not possible for human histories to be absolutely impartial."³⁶ Thus such histories always reveal human biases.

By contrast, Ellen White assures us that the histories in the Bible have the unique quality of being "absolutely impartial." She writes that through inspiration we have a faithful record of "the faults of good men, those who were distinguished by the favor of God; indeed, their faults are more fully presented than their virtues." How did the inspired writers obtain these accurate historical records? Says she, "The scribes of God wrote as they were dictated by the Holy Spirit, having no control of the work themselves."³⁷ No wonder that she could write that in the Bible "only can we find a history of our race unsullied by human prejudice or human pride."³⁸

"One of the best evidences of the authority of the Scriptures," Ellen White says, is that "the truth is not glossed over, nor the sins of its chief characters suppressed."³⁹ She adds that "had the Bible been written by uninspired persons, it would no doubt have presented the character of its honored men in a more flattering light. But as it is, we have a correct record of their experiences."⁴⁰

The question inevitably arises, How is it humanly possible to be absolutely impartial? It is here where the unique character of inspiration plays such a crucial role. She points out that through divine inspiration the Bible writer, "lifted above the weaknesses of humanity, tells the simple, naked truth."⁴¹ From a human perspective it is impossible to reach this level of precision. It is only those who experience divine inspiration in the "fullest sense of the word"⁴² who are able to produce unbiased, unerring accounts. It is this quality of reporting under the full control of the Holy Spirit that validates the Scriptures.

Divine inspiration forms the basis for the assuring promise: "the Word of God is given as a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path" (Ps 119:105). Ellen White cites its relevance for discovering prehistoric mysteries as well as the future. "Inspiration," she

states, "in giving us the history of the Flood, has explained wonderful mysteries, that geology, independent of inspiration, never could."⁴³ At the same time Bible prophecy accurately portrays the future, often in great detail.⁴⁴

Inspiration is one key that leads to the discovery of harmony between science and the Bible. Science, independent of God, she says is "pretentious ignorance" which has a "deceptive power" that "has captivated and enslaved the minds of many." But "true science and inspiration are in perfect harmony."⁴⁵

Her personal testimony on the absolute trustworthiness of the Bible is simple and straightforward: "I take the Bible just as it is, as the Inspired Word. I believe its utterances in an entire Bible."⁴⁶ "The Word of God is infallible, accept it as it reads."⁴⁷

It is God's voice speaking to the soul. The testimony of inspired writings has the unique characteristic of being the voice of God. This quality makes Scripture of vital importance for believers who desire to discover God's will for their lives. "Search the Scriptures," she says, "for therein is the counsel of God, the voice of God speaking to the soul."⁴⁸ Daily we need to learn "from the word of God, which is the man of our counsel."⁴⁹ Through the Bible God leads us to our full potential. "The word of God is like a treasure house, containing everything that is essential to perfect the man of God."⁵⁰

Inspired Scripture provides a sufficient rule of faith and practice under all circumstances. "The teaching of this Word is exactly that needed in all circumstances in which we may be placed. It is a sufficient rule of faith and practise; for it is the voice of God speaking to the soul, giving the members of his family directions for keeping the heart with all diligence."⁵¹

Consequently Scripture, being the voice of God, is the best source of counsel. Instead of depending on church leadership to settle minor and major matters, she encourages believers to carry these things to God. "The Lord can be approached by all" she says. "He is much more accessible than the president of the General Conference." "Lead these men who have ability and talent to look to God, that they may be taught by Him. Teach them to go to the Fountainhead for instruction in righteousness." Because "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," she asks, "What then, is your

excuse for turning for counsel from One who is infinite in wisdom to finite men, who are as weak as yourselves? One has suffered for you, the Just for the unjust."⁵²

It presents the Bible as a self-interpreting book. Inspiration sets Scripture apart from other books, making it a category by itself and containing its own principles of interpretation. "The Bible is its own expositor," Ellen White explains. "One passage will prove to be a key that will unlock other passages, and in this way light will be shed upon the hidden meaning of the word. By comparing different texts treating on the same subject, viewing their bearing on every side, the true meaning of the Scriptures will be made evident."⁵³

This important characteristic of inspiration has made the Bible a book that the uneducated can comprehend as well as the educated. Ellen White writes: "The words of inspiration are so plain that the unlearned may understand them."⁵⁴ "Take the Bible as your study-book. All can understand its instruction."⁵⁵

Functions of Inspiration. Inspiration has several vital functions to perform that are indispensable for believers who are preparing for the return of the Lord. These functions can be grouped into five categories: Revealing God's character, perfecting the character of His people, making every Bible passage profitable, pointing out human limitations and providing a foundation for Christian education.

To reveal God's character. An important purpose of inspiration is to reveal God. Ellen White points out that God has revealed Himself in two ways: "Through the volume of inspiration"—the Scriptures—and through "the book of nature" which is shown in the "works of creation."⁵⁶ It is in the Bible that God's character is most clearly portrayed.

Inspiration is also instrumental in revealing the presence and character of God's Son throughout the OT. This is especially seen in the way NT writers, through inspiration, bring out an abundance of new insights about Christ in the OT prophecies.⁵⁷

To perfect the character of God's people. Ellen White frequently refers to the role of inspired Scripture in the development of a perfect character. She states that "'Given by inspiration of God,' able to make us 'wise unto salvation,' rendering the man of God

'perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works' (2 Tim 3:15-17), the Bible has the highest claim to our reverent attention."⁵⁸

Commenting on 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, "All Scripture 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, throughly furnished unto all good works," she says: "In the Word of God is contained everything essential to the perfecting of the man of God. It is like a treasure-house, full of valuable and precious stores; but we do not appreciate its riches, nor realize the necessity of equipping ourselves with the treasures of truth."⁵⁹ "Its teaching will perfect in each individual a character that God can approve."⁶⁰ "Those who are defective in character, in conduct, in habits and practices, are to take heed to counsel and reproof."⁶¹

To make the Bible profitable. As the whole Bible is given by inspiration of God, every part of it is profitable. This implies that "the Old Testament no less than the New should receive attention. As we study the Old Testament we shall find living springs bubbling up where the careless reader discerns only a desert."⁶²

How profitable are the accounts of Noah, Lot, Moses, Abraham, David, Solomon, Elijah, Jonah, Peter, Paul, Barnabas and others when all their faults and follies are recorded by "the pen of Inspiration"? The faithful portrayal of their failures and victories is given for our encouragement. Their experiences are intended as "a lesson to all the generations following them." Without this record of their weaknesses these heroes of faith "would have been more than human, and our sinful natures would despair of ever reaching such a point of excellence. But seeing where they struggled and fell, where they took heart again and conquered through the grace of God, we are encouraged, and led to press over the obstacles that degenerate nature places in our way."⁶³

So profitable and far-reaching does she see the Bible's inspired teachings that, "practically carried out," they "will fit men for any position of duty."⁶⁴ She encourages believers in the daily study of the Scriptures, like the Bereans, to develop competence in using the words of inspiration, so that in confronting opposition we "like Christ," can meet "scripture with scripture."⁶⁵

To provide the foundation for Christian education. Ellen White's interest in Christian education led her to emphasize the

role of the inspired Word of God in schools. In commenting on the usefulness of inspired writings versus secular text books, she says, "To discard many of the worldly text-books will not lower the standard of education, but will raise it to a higher plane." Commenting on 2 Timothy 3:16, 17 she remarks, "If this is the breadth and depth of the Scriptures, shall we not lift the standard by making the word of God the foundation of our system of education?"⁶⁶ She deplored at one time the lack of prominence the Bible received in the church's schools: "The Lord has been greatly dishonored in our institutions of learning when His Word has been made only a book among books. The very Book that contains infallible wisdom has scarcely been opened as a study book. . . ."⁶⁷

Evidences of Divine Inspiration

What is the evidence for the inspiration of the Scriptures? The evidences are seen in the biblical records themselves. Diligent study of the Bible results in the clearest conviction of its inspiration. Ellen White's major references to proofs of inspiration pertain to the mysteries and difficulties of the Bible, the magnificence of its themes, its prophecies and the unity of the Old and New Testaments.

"Divine inspiration" Ellen White writes, "asks many questions which the most profound scholar cannot answer. These questions were not asked that we might answer them, but to call our attention to the deep mysteries of God and to teach us that our wisdom is limited; that in the surroundings of our daily life there are many things beyond the comprehension of finite beings."⁶⁸

Skeptics in their arguments against the inspiration of the Bible frequently point to the difficulties in the Bible. In response Ellen White observes that "the mysteries of the Bible, so far from being an argument against it, are among the strongest evidences of its divine inspiration." She adds that "if it contained no account of God but that which we could comprehend; if His greatness and majesty could be grasped by finite minds, then the Bible would not, as now, bear the unmistakable evidences of divinity."⁶⁹

She refers to Peter's statement that there are in Scripture "things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest . . . unto their own destruction." These difficulties,

she says, "constitute a strong evidence of its divine inspiration."⁷⁰ Thus instead of weakening our faith "the greatness of its themes should inspire faith in it as the word of God."⁷¹

The fulfillment of prophecy she presents as another evidence of the Bible's divine inspiration. Reports of the exact, historical fulfillment of prophecies have been instrumental in convincing skeptics and rationalists of the inspiration of the Bible.⁷²

A careful study of the link between the Old and New Testaments gives additional proof of inspiration. "The more we study the Old and New Testaments," she states, "the more we shall have impressed on our mind the fact that each sustains a very close relation to the other, and the more evidence we shall receive of their divine inspiration. We shall see clearly that they have but one Author."⁷³

Doubting the Inspiration of Scripture

The evidences of divine inspiration are abundant. Yet despite this many have difficulties in accepting the Bible as the true Word of God. Their minds are filled with questions and doubts. Why is there such a lack of conviction about the inspiration of the Bible? What are the deeper reasons for doubting inspiration? What are its results?

Causes for Doubting. Before dealing with the precise reasons for doubting the inspiration of the Bible we should recall that God, in His great love for humans, has given them the freedom of choice. This is a fundamental principle of the Christian faith. Ellen White states clearly the choice that God gives: "Those who think it a virtue to quibble can have plenty of room to disbelieve the inspiration and truths of God's word. God does not compel any to believe. They can choose to rely upon the evidences He has been pleased to give, or doubt, and cavil, and perish."⁷⁴

What are the reasons for doubt? Primarily, she says, they are related to people's relationship with God in terms of their attitudes and lifestyle. The difficulties about inspiration are not so much with the Bible "as with their own hearts." The problem, she says, is that "the requirements of God's word are too close for their un-sanctified natures. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be' [Rom 8:7]."

When the natural heart is not subjected to "the sanctifying influence of the grace of God received through the channel of faith, the thoughts of the heart are not pure and holy."⁷⁵

Foremost responsible for doubt, therefore, is the cherishing of sin in the life. She observes that "those who love sin will turn away from the Bible, will love to doubt, and will become reckless in principle. They will receive and advocate false theories."⁷⁶ "Those who have an evil heart of unbelief, will doubt, and will think it noble and a virtue to doubt the word of God."⁷⁷

The underlying cause that fuels doubt is an unchristian lifestyle. "In almost every case, where persons become unsettled in regard to the inspiration of the word of God, it is on account of their un-sanctified lives, which that word condemns. They will not receive its reproofs and threatenings because these reflect upon their wrong course of action."⁷⁸

Finally she points to the absence of Christian virtues among believers as a cause for doubt. The lack of the grace of God, forbearance, patience, spirit of consecration and sacrifice, devotion, personal piety and holiness is frequently "the only reason why some are doubting the evidences of God's word."⁷⁹

Results of Doubting. Ellen White vividly portrays the baneful consequence of the course of doubt. Doubt results in "lessening faith in the inspiration of the Bible."⁸⁰ It has a devastating influence on the mind and brings the doubter into the presence of evil angels.⁸¹ She warns against expressing even a single word of doubt for it will do its damage. Satan will use it to "encourage skepticism" and turn believers "from the narrow path that leads to heaven." Suggestions of doubt, therefore, "weaken faith" and "confuse the perception of truth."⁸²

Having started on the path of doubt, skeptics substitute the plain authoritative "Thus says the Lord" for "some winding sophistry of error." Instead of "the call of the Good Shepherd" they "follow the voice of strangers." Thus "infidelity has increased in proportion as men have questioned the word and requirements of their Maker."⁸³

Doubters of inspiration are not satisfied to keep their thoughts to themselves. They are caught in an evangelistic zeal to spread their doubts and their questionings that will diminish faith in

inspiration and make "shipwreck of the happiness of their fellow-men." Their zeal is in proportion to the amount of error they have imbibed: "The more they drifted into error, the greater grew their desire to draw other souls into the same channel of darkness."⁸⁴

Protection against Doubts. As in nearly every case an "unsanctified" lifestyle causes people to doubt inspiration, it follows that practicing the biblical lifestyle is the antidote to doubt. Ellen White writes, "Difficulties and doubts which perplex the vicious heart will be cleared away before the one practicing the pure principles of truth."⁸⁵

Purity of lifestyle Ellen White sees as the best way to protect believers against doubting inspiration: "Purity of life imparts refinement, which will lead those possessing it to shrink more and more from coarseness and indulgence in sin. Such will not be led away from the truth or be given up to doubt the inspiration of the word of God." But protection is not the only benefit. As a result of a pure lifestyle, they become a witness to the positive influence of inspiration: "They will engage in the daily study of the sacred word with ever-increasing interest, and the evidences of Christianity and inspiration will stamp their impress on the mind and life."⁸⁶

In demonstrating what the study of the Bible can do to one's views of inspiration, Ellen White refers to William Miller. Here was a deist with no faith in the Scriptures, who, after a thorough study became fully convinced they were divinely inspired. This discovery had such an impact that it influenced the rest of his life, and he became God's special instrument in drawing the attention of the world to Christ's soon return.⁸⁷

As a further protection against views that undermine confidence in inspiration, Ellen White calls for the establishment of denominational schools. "If we do not have schools for our youth," she says, "they will attend other seminaries and colleges, and will be exposed to infidel sentiments, to cavilings and questionings concerning the inspiration of the Bible."⁸⁸ This implies a grave responsibility to guard the Adventist educational system from unbiblical sentiments about inspiration. If this fails, church-related schools will be a danger instead of a blessing.

Finally, she warns against ministers who express doubts about the inspiration of the Bible. "I saw that however strongly men may

have advocated the truth, however pious they may appear to be, when they begin to talk unbelief in regard to some scriptures, claiming that they cause them to doubt the inspiration of the Bible, we should be afraid of them, for God is at a great distance from them."⁸⁹

Erroneous Views on Inspiration

There exist several views of inspiration. Each view, however, has a significant influence on the lifestyle of believers. What kinds of erroneous views and practices regarding inspiration does Ellen White especially warn against? What are the causes for these views? What are their results, and what impact do they have on Scripture?

A mix of inspired and uninspired writings. In 1884 a series of article in the *Review and Herald* advocated the idea that some things in the Scriptures are inspired and some not.⁹⁰ This view was endorsed and promoted by both the Battle Creek church and the college which was responsible for the training of church workers.

Ellen White strongly opposed this new view. Instead of providing new insights on inspiration, it did not have God's approval, because it criticized the Word of God. She explained: "God sets no man to pronounce judgment on His Word, selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired."⁹¹ Supporters of this view were walking on holy ground and "had better fear and tremble and hide their wisdom as foolishness."⁹² Instead of being guided by Jesus, she said, "they have stepped before Jesus to show Him a better way than He has led us."⁹³

Some found evidence for a partial inspiration of the Bible in the text by the translation rendered "All scripture given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim 3:16). This did not mean, she explained, that there is some Scripture that is not inspired. The text refers to the whole Bible. "The apostle means simply 'I present to you the Living Oracles, the Scriptures, all given by inspiration of God, . . .'"⁹⁴

In her defence of the Bible Ellen White places the Word of God above criticism. "In giving the word," she writes, "'holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' The word was not given at the option of men, and the use to be made of it is not left to their option. Men may not dissect or pronounce upon, wrest or

misinterpret, take from or cast aside, any portion of that word according to their own judgment." Calling attention to its divine origin and thought, she says, "Although its compilation, preservation, and transmission have been committed to men, it is wholly divine in its origin and in the thoughts expressed. It may not be demerited and pronounced upon by finite minds, because of its transmission through human agents."⁹⁵

Sources influence the quality of inspiration. Some entertain the idea that a non-inspired source of information from which the inspired writer may derive some information affects the quality of inspiration. This view Ellen White also rejects. The Bible writings are fully inspired no matter from what sources the writers may obtain some of their materials. Referring to Paul's admonitions based on reports from the family of Chloe, she asks, whether Paul who "was to watch for souls as one that must render account to God," should "not take notice of the reports concerning their state of anarchy and division?" She answers "Most assuredly; and the reproof he sent them was written just as much under the inspiration of the Spirit of God as were any of his epistles." Those who refused his testimony "took the position that God had not spoken to them through Paul, that he had merely given them his opinion as a man, and they regarded their own judgment as good as that of Paul."⁹⁶ Thus God's inspired message was made of none effect.

Causes of the erroneous views and attitudes. The problem with those who designate some sections of the Bible as divine and others as human is that they fail to understand its divine nature. Ellen White observes that they neglect to see that "Christ, the divine, partook of our human nature, that He might reach humanity. In the work of God for man's redemption, divinity and humanity are combined."⁹⁷ As it is not possible and profitable to unravel the mystery of the divine-human nature of Christ, so *humans should avoid attempting to distinguish between divine and human aspects in Scripture.*

Low views of inspiration are also caused by exalting human ideas and talents above divine wisdom and "forms and science, so-called, above the power of vital godliness."⁹⁸

The results of the erroneous views. The heretical views on inspiration that were introduced in the Adventist church in the

1880's had a subtle and far reaching, destructive influence. It impacted the 1886 General Conference in Oakland, Ellen White recounts, and "since then has been at work like leaven, and the very same prejudice and irritation of spirit that was upon the Pacific Coast in a degree we find this side of the Rocky Mountains," influencing the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference.⁹⁹ She portrayed the effect as "disastrous, both upon the one engaged in it and upon those who accept it as a work from God" and "scepticism has been aroused in many minds" as to the nature of inspiration. Advocates of these new theories she characterizes as "finite beings, with their narrow, short-sighted views." They are biased because they are "affected in a greater or less degree by surrounding influences, and having hereditary and cultivated tendencies which are far from making them wise or heavenly-minded." The detrimental results of their practice of judging the Scripture on "what is divine and what is human" is seen in a selective use of Scripture which views certain passages as important because they are inspired, while other texts are not so important because they are not inspired.¹⁰⁰

Ellen White very much deplored the publication of these ideas. "These sentiments should never have seen the light of day," she said because they "undermine all inspiration." She is even more distressed about the lack of spiritual discernment among the believers. "Have God's people put out their eyes," she asked, "that they cannot distinguish between truth and error, the sacred and the profane?"¹⁰¹ She foresaw a fearful harvest. Instead of being new light "it will lead many souls astray, and will be a savor of death to some."¹⁰²

Counsels on the Study of Inspiration

What recommendations does Ellen White have on the proper way to approach the subject of inspiration? What are the do's and don'ts? What are the proper methods and sources?

The Don'ts in the Study of Inspiration. A major warning is that humans are not authorized to analyze the Bible to determine what is inspired and what is not. Addressing the Adventist ministry she warns, "My brethren in the ministry. 'Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.'

[Exodus 3:5] There is no finite man that lives, I care not who he is or whatever is his position, that God has authorized to pick and choose in His Word."¹⁰³

In addition she warns not to make a distinction in Scripture between revelation and inspiration: "Do not let any living man come to you and begin to dissect God's Word, telling what is revelation, what is inspiration and what is not, without a rebuke. Tell all such they simply do not know."¹⁰⁴ The reason she gives is that humans "simply are not able to comprehend the things of the mystery of God."¹⁰⁵ Her strong objections are connected to the practical consequences of making such a distinction. It will tend to undermine people's faith in the entire Bible as it reads. She says, "What we want is to inspire faith. We want no one to say, 'This I will reject, and this will I receive,' but we want to have implicit faith in the Bible as a whole and as it is."¹⁰⁶

Finally she cautions against associating with ministers, no matter how godly they seem, who display doubt on the inspiration of Scripture.¹⁰⁷

The Do's in the Study of Inspiration. Christ's followers should approach the study of inspiration with a positive witness. In contrast to the views of low inspiration that exalt human ideas and talents, believers should affirm the divine inspiration of Scripture. "Let every one who believes in Jesus Christ," Ellen White says, "use his talent of voice in exalting Jesus and presenting testimonies that will magnify, honor, and adore the Word of God." The results of such a witness will be clearly visible for "the gospel makes itself known in its power in the consistent, holy, pure lives of those who are believers, hearers, and doers of the Word."¹⁰⁸

To better understand the words of inspiration Ellen White recommends the study of her writings to the church. Addressing believers, she says "you are not familiar with the Scriptures" and "have neglected to acquaint yourselves with God's inspired Book." He "has sought to reach you by simple, direct testimonies, calling your attention to the words of inspiration which you had neglected to obey, and urging you to fashion your lives in accordance with its pure and elevated teachings."¹⁰⁹

As to the role of these testimonies, she states, that they are not intended "to give new light, but to impress vividly upon the heart

the truths of inspiration already revealed." She adds, "Additional truth is not brought out; but God has through the *Testimonies* simplified the great truths already given and in His own chosen way brought them before the people to awaken and impress the mind with them, that all may be left without excuse."¹¹⁰

Conclusion

Ellen White's view of inspiration is in harmony with the high view of inspiration held by the Protestant Reformers who taught that the Bible, as the inspired Word of God, was the only infallible authority for faith and practice.

She saw inspiration as a process in which divine light was communicated to the human recipient and imparted to the people in a trustworthy manner. This process was a dynamic divine-human interaction in which the Holy Spirit moved upon the Bible writers. The style of the various Bible books reflects the individual writers who expressed the divine communications given by thoughts, dictations, visions, or dreams into human language. As weak and imperfect as these human beings and human language were, inspiration in the fullest sense of the word lifted these persons above their frailties so their human utterances became the infallible Word of God.

Biblical inspiration, therefore, makes the Bible God's special instrument for the salvation of humanity. It is His voice speaking to the soul, accurate and fully trustworthy; the infallible, unerring guide and rule for believers to lead them into a saving union with Christ and to assist them in a victorious lifestyle to prepare them to meet the Lord at His return.

It is not surprising that Satan's major target in the last days is the Scriptures. "Satan," she says, "is moving with his power from beneath to inspire men to form alliances and confederacies of evil against light and against the Word of God." One of the signs of the last days is the low views of inspiration and the exaltation of human ideas.¹¹¹

Stressing the seriousness of the situation for Seventh-day Adventists, Ellen White notes that it affects the very foundation of the Bible. She says: "Never was there a stronger combination formed to neutralize the lesson and teachings of Christ, and to sow

the seeds of infidelity in regard to the inspiration of the Scriptures and sap its very foundation."¹¹²

She challenges apathetic believers by saying, "It is time we were endowed with power from on high." Fearing for the ability of believers to resist the darkness that is coming upon the earth, she confronts them with the searching question; "Where is the light and the power which shall withstand this terrible incoming darkness which is covering the world like a funeral pall?"¹¹³

"One of the marked signs of the last days," she asserts, is that "human reasoning and the imaginings of the human heart" are "undermining the inspiration of the Word of God." "There are in many churches skepticism and infidelity in the interpretation of the Scriptures. Many, very many, are questioning the verity and truth of the Scriptures." As a result "that which should be received as granted, is surrounded with a cloud of mysticism. Nothing stands out in clear and distinct lines, upon rock bottom."¹¹⁴

Attempts to unsettle minds regarding the correct view of inspiration will spread, she says, "until we may see the full meaning of the words of Christ, 'When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?'" (Luke 18:8).¹¹⁵

Recent church publications reveal a trend to introduce new approaches to the topic of inspiration. Although written with a noble purpose of assisting perplexed believers and affirming the inspiration of the Scriptures, they seem to add to the confusion. These approaches present concepts or definitions of inspiration and revelation that are not supported by Ellen White. They are simply modifications of the attempts made during the 1880's to distinguish between the divine and human nature of the Bible—an approach she strongly opposed. As long as her views on this subject are not taken seriously, the disunity among believers will continue to grow with all its negative consequences.

An unfortunate by-product of the current confusion is its inevitable negative impact on the believers' confidence in the infallibility of the Bible, which in turn, weakens faith in its doctrines, including that of the assurance of salvation. Ellen White sees an intimate connection between the true view of inspiration, the infallibility of the Scriptures and the absolute confidence in the trustworthiness of its teachings. This, therefore, makes it of

paramount importance for church leaders to strive to uphold the true Biblical teaching of inspiration. It is vital to the believers' possession of the assurance of salvation and the effectiveness of their mission.

Endnotes

- 1 "Accepted in the Beloved," *Review and Herald*, October 15, 1908, p. 7.
- 2 *The Faith I Live By*, p. 116.
- 3 *Manuscript Releases*, 1:52.
- 4 *Gospel Workers*, (1892), p. 123. See also *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 351 on students' health and inspiration.
- 5 *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 596.
- 6 *Great Controversy*, p. 341; *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:211.
- 7 *Great Controversy*, p. 193; *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:152.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Education*, p. 46.
- 10 "Open the Heart to Light," *Review and Herald*, March 25, 1890, p. 177; *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 34; *Evangelism*, p. 297.
- 11 See e.g. *Desire of Ages*, p. 464.
- 12 *Great Controversy*, p. 344; *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 452.
- 13 *Great Controversy*, p. v; *The Faith I Live By*, p. 10; *Selected Messages* 1:25.
- 14 *Testimonies for the Church*, 5:747.
- 15 *Selected Messages*, 1:25.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 1:20.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 1:21. She also writes: "The Lord speaks to human beings in imperfect speech, in order that the degenerate senses, the dull, earthly perception, of earthly beings may comprehend His words. Thus is shown God's condescension. He meets fallen human beings where they are. The Bible, perfect as it is in its simplicity, does not answer to the great ideas of God; for infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought. Instead of the expressions of the Bible being exaggerated, as many people suppose, the strong expressions break down before the magnificence of the thought, though the penman selected the most expressive language through which to convey the truths of higher education. Sinful beings can only bear to look upon a shadow to the brightness of heaven's glory. *Ibid.*, 1:22.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 1:21.
- 19 See George E. Rice, *Luke, a Plagiarist?* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1983).
- 20 "Obedience the Fruit of Union with Christ—No. 1," *Review and Herald*, Aug. 27, 1901, p. 551. See also *SDA Bible Commentary*, 7:945; *Selected Messages*, 1:19, 20; "Christ Revealed the Father," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 7, 1890, p. 1; "The Parable of the Sower," *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, Aug. 19, 1895, p. 239. The Bible, she says, "is the inspiration of One infallible, the divine communication to holy men of old, who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." "The Parable of the Sower," *Review and Herald* 10-03-99/07.
- 21 *Great Controversy*, p. v; *The Faith I Live By*, p. 10; *Selected Messages*, 1:25.
- 22 *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 251.
- 23 *Evangelism*, p. 577.
- 24 *Selected Messages*, 1:22.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 1:21.
- 26 *Sketches from the Life of Paul*, p. 214; *Bible Commentary*, 6:1065.
- 27 *Spiritual Gifts*, 3:170. Other examples are Balaam, David and Solomon.
- 28 *Great Controversy*, p. 249. See also *ibid.* pp. 68, 102, 143, 173, 177, 238.
- 29 *Selected Messages*, 1:16.
- 30 *Early Writings*, p. 220-221.

- 31 "Jacob and Esau," *Signs of the Times*, April 17, 1879, p. 122.
 32 *The Kress Collection*, p. 98.
 33 *My Life Today*, p. 27.
 34 *Testimonies*, 4:441. See also *Messages to Young People*, p. 443.
 35 "Bible Biographies," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 22, 1880, p. 49.
 36 *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 238.
 37 *Testimonies* 4:9. She also comments that the writings of the apostles were "dictated by the Holy Ghost" (*Spiritual Gifts* 1:176).
 38 *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 596.
 39 *Ibid.*, 4:9; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 238.
 40 *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 238.
 41 "Bible Biographies," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 22, 1880, p. 49.
 42 *Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 547; *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, p. 34.
 43 *Lift Him Up*, p. 59. See also *Spirit of Prophecy*, 1:89; *Spiritual Gifts*, 3:94.
 44 *Spirit of Prophecy*, 3:156, 160.
 45 *Testimonies*, 4:584. See also *Messages to Young People*, p. 190.
 46 *Selected Messages*, 1:17.
 47 "The Tasmanian Campmeeting," *Review and Herald*, Feb. 11, 1896, p. 81.
 48 *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 391. See *Kress Collection* 98.
 49 *Kress Collection*, p. 98.
 50 *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 123. In *Heavenly Places*, p. 133.
 51 "The Word of God," *Review and Herald*, August 22, 1907, p. 8. She says, "The Bible is an infallible guide under all circumstances," *My Life Today*, p. 25.
 52 *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 329-330.
 53 "The Science of Salvation The First of Sciences," *Review and Herald*, December 1, 1891, p. 737.
 54 *Gospel Workers*, (1892), p. 123.
 55 *Gospel Workers*, (1915), p. 309.
 56 *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 596.
 57 *Desire of Ages*, p. 413.
 58 *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 139; *Messages to Young People*, p. 284.
 59 "Benefits of Bible Study," *Bible Echo*, October 1, 1892, p. 290.
 60 *Kress Collection*, p. 98.
 61 "Words to the Young," *Youth's Instructor*, August 31, 1893, p. 276.
 62 *Education*, p. 191.
 63 *Testimonies*, 4:12. See also "Bible Biblebiographies," *Review and Herald*, January 22, 1880, p. 49.
 64 *Testimonies*, 4:441.
 65 *Gospel Workers*, pp. 92, 124.
 66 "Instruction Regarding the School Work," *The General Conference Bulletin*, April 24, 1901, pp. 452, 453.
 67 *Manuscript Releases*, 11:171. She says, "The word of God is the most perfect educational book in our world. Yet in our colleges and schools, books produced by human intellect have been presented for the study of our students, and the Book of books, which God has given to men to be an infallible guide, has been made a secondary matter. Human productions have been used as most essential and the word of God has been studied simply to give flavor to other studies." *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 394, 395.
 68 *Ministry of Healing*, p. 431.
 69 *Education*, p. 170.
 70 *Testimonies*, 5:700; *Steps to Christ*, p. 107.
 71 *Education*, p. 170.
 72 *Great Controversy*, p. 364. Here she refers to Gausson's experience with reading the fulfillment of Daniel 2 in Rollin's *Ancient History*.
 73 *Selected Messages*, 3:359.
 74 *Spiritual Gifts*, 4b:123; *Testimonies*, 1:377.

- 75 *Testimonies*, 1:440.
 76 *Ibid.*, 1:441.
 77 *Spiritual Gifts*, 4b:123; *Testimonies*, 1:377.
 78 *Testimonies*, 1:440. She adds: "Difficulties and doubts which perplex the vicious heart will be cleared away before the one practicing the pure principles of truth."
 79 *Testimonies*, 1:383-384.
 80 "The Faith that Will Stand the Test," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 10, 1888, p. 18.
 81 *Testimonies*, 1:427-428.
 82 "The Faith that Will Stand the Test," *Review and Herald*, Jan. 10, 1888, p. 18.
 83 *Ibid.*
 84 *Ibid.*
 85 *Testimonies*, 1:440.
 86 *Ibid.*, 1:441.
 87 *Spirit of Prophecy*, 4:205.
 88 *Special Testimonies on Education*, (1897), pp. 200-201.
 89 *Testimonies*, 1:383-384.
 90 G. I. B., "Inspiration: Its Nature and Manner of Communication," Nos 1-10 in *Review and Herald*, Jan. 8-June 3, 1884.
 91 *Selected Messages*, 1:23. She adds that "the testimonies have been treated in the same way; but God is not in this."
 92 *Ibid.*, 1:23.
 93 *Ibid.*, 1:17.
 94 "The Bible God's Inspired Word," *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, Aug. 26, 1895, p. 268. Emphasis hers.
 95 *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times* 08-26-95/01.
 96 *Testimonies*, 5:684.
 97 *Ibid.*, 5:747.
 98 *Manuscript Releases*, 2:104.
 99 *1988 Materials*, pp. 187-188.
 100 *Testimonies*, 5:709.
 101 *1988 Materials*, p. 258.
 102 *Manuscript Releases*, 7:382; *Manuscript Releases*, 12:367.
 103 *Bible Commentary*, 7:919.
 104 *Ibid.*
 105 *Ibid.*
 106 *Ibid.*
 107 *Testimonies*, 1:383-384.
 108 *That I May Know Him*, p. 345.
 109 *Testimonies*, 2:605; *Ibid.*, 5:665.
 110 *Ibid.*, 2:695; *Ibid.*, 5:665.
 111 *That I May Know Him*, p. 345.
 112 *Manuscript Releases*, 2:163.
 113 *Ibid.*
 114 *Selected Messages*, 1:15. See also *The Faith I Live By*, p. 13.
 115 *Selected Messages*, 1:17.

HISTORY OF INSPIRATION IN THE ADVENTIST CHURCH (1844-1915)

By Alberto R. Timm, Ph.D. Candidate
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Andrews University

Introduction

Seventh-day Adventists form a modern eschatological movement born out of the study of the Holy Scriptures, with the specific mission of proclaiming the Word of God "to every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (Rev 14:6, RSV). In many places around the world Seventh-day Adventists have actually been known as the "people of the Book." As a people Adventists have always held—and presently hold—high respect for the authority of the Bible. However, at times in the denomination's history different views on the nature of the Bible's inspiration have been discussed within its ranks.

In this article we present a general overview of those major trends and challenges that impacted on the development of the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of inspiration between 1844 and 1915. The overview will consider the Adventist understanding of inspiration as related to both the Bible and the writings of Ellen White for two evident reasons: (1) While their basic function differs, Adventists have generally assumed that both sets of writings were produced by the same *modus operandi* of inspiration, and (2) there is an organic overlapping of the views on each in the development of an understanding of the Bible's inspiration.

Terminology employed in discussing the nature of biblical inspiration is often confusing. Such technical expressions as

mechanical inspiration, *verbal* inspiration, *plenary* inspiration, and *thought* inspiration have at times carried different meanings. Because of the various shades of meaning, it is important to be aware of the issues that are involved.

Thus, *mechanical* inspiration is usually associated with the theory that all the words of Scripture, even down to the Hebrew vowels points, were actually dictated by the Holy Spirit. By contrast, *verbal* inspiration normally is understood by its advocates to mean that the Holy Spirit guided the writers not only in receiving a divine message but also in communicating it, without eliminating the personality and the style of the writers. The emphasis, however, is on the end-product of the whole inspiration process, namely, on the words of Scripture.

Sometimes, the term *plenary* inspiration is used synonymously with verbal inspiration. It also points out that Scripture in its entirety is inspired. Some authors prefer the term plenary inspiration in order to distinguish their position from any mechanical understanding of inspiration, which may at times be associated with the term verbal inspiration.

Lastly, *thought* inspiration is proposed by some to indicate that it is the writer who is inspired, the Holy Spirit thereby transmitting God's thoughts to the writer, who then chooses the proper words to express those thoughts under the continued guidance of the Spirit.

It will become obvious from the following discussion that there are instances where some aspects from different categories overlap, and other aspects are clearly excluded.

The Millerite Legacy

Seventh-day Adventists inherited their early views of Scripture from their former denominations and the Millerites. William Miller,¹ the founder and main leader of Millerism, had accepted the views of Deism as a young man in his twenties. Miller actually gave up his faith in "the Scriptures as a revelation from God to man" because of "some inconsistencies and contradictions in the Bible" which he was "unable to harmonize."² Thus, his questioning of the Bible's inspiration was occasioned by alleged discrepancies in the Bible.

After twelve years (1803-1816) in deistic circles, Miller had a conversion experience, after which he began a two-year period (1816-1818) of intensive study of Scripture. His basic assumption was that "if the Bible was the word of God, every thing contained therein might be understood, and all its parts be made to harmonize."³ Miller stated that at the end of his intensive Bible study "all the contradictions and inconsistencies" he "had before found in the Word were gone," and he "felt a delight in studying the Scriptures which" he "had not before supposed could be derived from its teachings."⁴

In his 1822 Statement of Faith, Miller expressed his conviction that "the Bible is given by God to man" as "a revelation of God to man."⁵ In 1836 Miller asserted that "there never was a book written that has a better connection and harmony than the Bible," which has "a general connection through the whole."⁶

While dealing with some difficulties in the Bible, Miller even preferred to blame its translators rather than to admit obscurities and inconsistencies in the original text.⁷ In other words, Miller came to accept the full authority and inspiration of the Bible because he became convinced that there was harmony and unity in its content. For him, inspiration affected the actual text of Scripture and not just the general ideas.

According to Steen Rasmussen, "Miller's basic attitude towards the Bible—that in order to be the word of God it must be wholly clear, consistent, and without contradictions—never changed from his childhood till his death."⁸

Early Seventh-day Adventist View (1844-1883)

Sabbatarian Adventists kept William Miller's high view of Scripture. James White, for instance, stated in *A Word to the "Little Flock"* (1847) that "the [B]ible is a perfect, and complete revelation" and "our only rule of faith and practice."⁹ The third article of the 1872 statement of Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs composed by Uriah Smith asserted similarly that "the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments, were given by inspiration of God, contain a full revelation of his will to man, and are the only infallible rule of faith and practice."¹⁰

Apart from such concise statements about the authority of

Scripture, not much was penned by Seventh-day Adventists on the nature of its inspiration up to the early 1880's. The major Seventh-day Adventist concern on the subject of the Bible during this early period was to defend its divine origin from infidel (deist) attacks.¹¹ Such defenses of the Bible provide, however, insightful evidences of the early Adventist views of infallibility and trustworthiness of Scripture.

Moses Hull made the first significant Seventh-day Adventist response to infidel attacks on Scripture in his 1863 book, *The Bible from Heaven*.¹² Hull advocated the authenticity, integrity, and credibility of the Bible,¹³ insisting that nothing in the Bible contradicts any of the sciences of "physiology, anatomy, hygiene, materia medica, chemistry, astronomy, or geology."¹⁴

In 1867 the *Review* came out with a series of twenty-two responses to the so-called "self contradictions" of the Bible raised by infidels against the Christian religion.¹⁵ Those responses dealt, for example, with such issues as whether one woman or two went to Christ's sepulcher (John 20:1; Matt 28:1);¹⁶ whether Christ ascended from Mount Olivet or from Bethany (Acts 1:9, 12; Luke 24:50, 51);¹⁷ and whether 24,000 or 23,000 Israelites died by the plague in Shittim (Num 25:9; 1 Cor 10:8).¹⁸

Another significant defense of the Bible was A. T. Jones' series, "A Review of Paine's 'Age of Reason,'" which appeared in the *Review* in 1880.¹⁹

That early Seventh-day Adventists regarded the Scriptures as infallible and inerrant is evident from the uncritical reprint in the *Review* of several portions from non-Adventist authors that fostered such a view. In 1859, for example, the *Review* reprinted a large paragraph from Louis Gaussen's *Theopneustia*,²⁰ stating that not "one single error" could ever be found in the more than 31,000 verses of the Bible.²¹ Some paragraphs of John H. Pratt's *Scripture and Science Not at Variance*²² came out in the *Review* in 1880, declaring that the Holy Spirit preserved the writers of the Holy Scriptures "from errors of every kind in the records they made."²³ An entire lecture of H. L. Hastings on inspiration appeared in the *Review* in 1883,²⁴ referring to the Scriptures as "the transcript of the Divine Mind."²⁵

Sparse statements on inspiration can be found also in the

articles and books penned during that period (1844-1883) about the prophetic gift of Ellen White.²⁶ Those statements, however, were more concerned about proving the inspiration of her writings than in discussing the actual nature of inspiration.

Up to the early 1880's no clear discussion of the doctrine of inspiration is found in Seventh-day Adventist literature. While responding to "infidel" attacks against the trustworthiness of the Bible, Seventh-day Adventists demonstrated their commitment to a similar view of Scripture that Miller had. Such responses to infidelity clearly show that early Seventh-day Adventists were convinced that the process of inspiration preserved the actual text of the Scriptures from factual errors and contradictions.

Focus on the Nature of Inspiration (1883-1915)

By 1883, Seventh-day Adventists had for about four decades been mainly concerned with defending the divine inspiration of the Bible from *outside* infidel challenges. However, some *internal* crises regarding the nature and authority of Ellen White's writings pushed Seventh-day Adventists in the 1880's into a more thoughtful discussion of the doctrine. During that period two major questions were raised: (1) Are there *degrees* of inspiration? and (2) did the Holy Spirit dictate the actual *words* of the inspired writings?

Are There Degrees of Inspiration? Administrative problems and conflicts of personality at Battle Creek College led Ellen White to send a few testimonies to Uriah Smith, president of the college board, reproving him for some unwise decisions.²⁷ Resentment against such reproofs was one factor that led Smith to the assumption that not all Ellen White writings were equally inspired. By the spring of 1883 Smith was convinced that while Mrs. White's "visions" were truly inspired, her "testimonies" were not.²⁸

It seems that to harmonize such quarrels about the trustworthiness of Ellen White's testimonies, George I. Butler, General Conference president, wrote for the *Review* a series of ten articles on "Inspiration,"²⁹ in which he sought to provide a biblical rationale for the theory of "degrees of inspiration."³⁰ According to E. K. Vande Vere, if Butler "could show that the Bible contained human elements, then by implication, the Testimonies contained many

more human elements" and could not be regarded as absolutely perfect.³¹

Assuming that inspiration varies according to the various forms of revelation, Butler argued that the Scriptures "are inspired just in the degree that the person is inspired who writes them."³² Since Scripture resulted from different forms of revelation,³³ there had to be likewise, according to Butler, distinct degrees of inspiration, of authority, and of imperfection. For him the Scriptures "are authoritative in proportion to the degrees of inspiration,"³⁴ and are perfect only to the extent necessary for achieving the purpose for which they were given—"to make us wise unto salvation" (2 Tim 3:15).³⁵

Such a theory of inspiration led Butler to suggest a hierarchy within the biblical canon, in which "the books of Moses and the words of Christ" appeared in the first and highest level; "the writings of the prophets and apostles and a portion, at least, of the Psalms" in the second level; "the historical books" in the third level; and "the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, and the book of Job" in the last and lowest level.³⁶ Beyond those levels, Butler pointed out some specific passages (Rom 15:24; 1 Cor 1:16; 4:19; 7:7-40; 16:5-9; 2 Cor 11:21; Phil 2:19, 23; 2 Tim 4:9ff) which he "could hardly call inspired."³⁷

Thus, under the assumption that different forms of revelation implied distinct degrees of inspiration, Butler ended with a hierarchy within the biblical canon, in which some texts could hardly be called inspired.

Although the theory of degrees of inspiration was advocated outside Adventist circles,³⁸ this was the first time that such theory was advanced in an official Seventh-day Adventist publication. That theory of inspiration was influential in leading some people to almost disregard completely Ellen White's testimony at the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis.³⁹

By the late 1880's the theory of degrees of inspiration continued to be fostered in some Seventh-day Adventist circles.⁴⁰ In response to this, Ellen White penned in a letter to R. A. Underwood that it was shown to her that "the Lord did not inspire the articles on inspiration published in the *Review*." Since "to criticize the Word of God" is to "venture on sacred, holy ground," no human being

should ever "pronounce judgment" on God's Word, "selecting some things as inspired and discrediting others as uninspired." She explained also that "the testimonies have been treated in the same way; but God is not in this."⁴¹

In a similar manner, the Senior Sabbath School lesson for January 7, 1893, also denied the possibility of "different degrees of inspiration," for the reason that "such a view destroys the authority of God's word and gives to each one a Bible made by himself."⁴²

Did the Holy Spirit Dictate the Actual Words? Another discussion that engaged Seventh-day Adventists during the period under consideration (1883-1915) concerned whether the Holy Spirit dictated the actual words of inspired writings.

A partial response to this issue came from the 1883 General Conference Session, which suggested a grammatical revision of Ellen White's *Testimonies for the Church*.⁴³ At that time the General Conference appointed a committee of five individuals—W. C. White (chair), Uriah Smith, J. H. Waggoner, S. N. Haskell, and George I. Butler—to supervise that revision. The rationale for such a revision was stated as follows:

Whereas, Many of these testimonies were written under the most unfavorable circumstances, the writer being too heavily pressed with anxiety and labor to devote critical thought to the grammatical perfection of the writings, and they were printed in such haste as to allow these imperfections to pass uncorrected; and—

Whereas, We believe the light given by God to his servants is by the enlightenment of the mind, thus imparting the thoughts, and not (except in rare cases) the very words in which the ideas should be expressed; therefore—

Resolved, That in the republication of these volumes such verbal changes be made as to remove the above-named imperfections, as far as possible, without in any measure changing the thought.⁴⁴

While opposing the theory of mechanical inspiration, the motion did not mention any factual error in the content of the *Testimonies*. Only grammatical "imperfections" should be corrected, without changing "in any measure" the thought.

George W. Morse likewise opposed the theory of mechanical

inspiration when he stated in the *Review* of March 7, 1888, that "by the inspiration of the Scriptures is not meant the inspiration of the words and phrases, but the general purpose and use of the same."⁴⁵

Uriah Smith, who had been a member of the committee for revising the *Testimonies*, proposed, however, a week later (March 13) a *via-media* solution to the tensions between the theories of mechanical inspiration and thought inspiration. In an article in the *Review* he suggested that if the words were "spoken directly by the Lord," then "the words are inspired." If the words did not come directly from the Lord, then "the words may not be inspired," but only "the ideas, the facts, the truth, which those words convey."⁴⁶ I have not been able to locate any specific reaction to this article.

Leaning evidently towards a more mechanical view of inspiration, D. M. Canright began to attack the inspiration of Ellen White's writings after he left the Seventh-day Adventists in early 1887. Already in the 1888 edition of his book, *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*,⁴⁷ Canright stated that Ellen White was "not inspired" because, among other things, (1) she herself changed the wording of previous drafts of her own writings; (2) she incorporated suggestions from her husband and secretaries in the process of correcting the grammar and improving the style of her writings; and (3) she often copied "without credit or sign of quotation" from other non-inspired authors.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, several Seventh-day Adventist authors stressed that the process of inspiration had actually exercised a controlling influence on the whole writing of Scripture. In 1890, for instance, it was stated in the *Signs of the Times* that

the New Testament does not speak of inspiration as being given to men, or of men being inspired. It was the writings which were inspired, or, literally, "God-breathed." The New Testament declares this repeatedly of the Old Testament. See 2 Tim 3:15, 16; Acts 1:16; Heb 3:7; 1 Peter 1:11. Peter classes Paul's writings with the Scriptures, and Paul declares that his words were given by the Spirit of God. 2 Peter 3:16; 1 Cor 2:13.⁴⁹

In 1905 Robert Hare's book *The Beacon Light* came off the press with a quotation from James Hamilton,⁵⁰ stating that "in theopneustic Scripture we have a book, every sentence of which is truly human, and yet every sentence of which is truly divine."⁵¹

While denying the "verbal inspiration of *translations*," the *Signs of the Times* in 1909 emphasized the verbal inspiration of the words of Scripture in the original Hebrew, Chaldaic, [Aramaic] and Greek languages. "These words," it was stated, "were the words inspired by the Spirit of God."⁵²

A more mechanical view of inspiration was stressed by Dr. David Paulson in a letter to Ellen White (1906). Paulson stated in that letter:

I was led to conclude and most firmly believe that every word that you ever spoke in public or private, that every letter you wrote under any and all circumstances, was as inspired as the ten commandments.⁵³

That Ellen White did not endorse such a mechanical view of inspiration is evident from her response to Paulson on June 14, 1906. In that response she clearly stated that neither she nor the other Seventh-day Adventist pioneers "ever made such claims."⁵⁴

Further evidence that Ellen White did not endorse such a view of inspiration was provided in the revisions of her book *The Great Controversy*, for its 1911 edition.⁵⁵ While grammatical revisions of her manuscripts had been previously done, in 1910 she asked the help of W. W. Prescott in checking the historical sections of this book. As an advocate of Gaussen's views of verbal inspiration,⁵⁶ Prescott felt very uneasy about having to suggest revisions to the writings of an inspired prophet.⁵⁷

This experience certainly became a decisive factor in leading Prescott to the assumption that the Scriptures were *verbally* inspired but not Ellen White's writings.⁵⁸ Also in the same context, W. C. White stated in 1911 that his mother (Ellen White) "never claimed to be authority on history" and "never laid claim to verbal inspiration."⁵⁹

By contrast in the same year (1911) Milton C. Wilcox gave evidence of his agreement with Prescott on a verbal concept of inspiration. In his book, *Questions and Answers*, Wilcox stated that "the original words" "by which prophet and apostle spoke" were inspired. "It was not the person," according to Wilcox, "who was inspired; it was the God-breathed Word."⁶⁰

Ellen G. White's View of Inspiration. It was also during the

period under consideration (1883-1915) that Ellen White penned some of her more significant statements on inspiration.⁶¹

For Ellen White the inspiration of Scripture is a mystery that parallels the incarnation of Christ. She declares that as Christ was at the same time divine and human (John 1:14), so "the Bible, with its God-given truths expressed in the language of men, presents a union of the divine with the human."⁶² So organically merged are the two elements throughout Scripture (cf. 2 Tim 3:16) that "the utterances of the man are the word of God,"⁶³ and no one should ever attempt to tell "what is inspired and what is not"⁶⁴ or to point out "degrees of inspiration."⁶⁵

In opposition to the theory of *mechanical* inspiration, Ellen White asserted in 1886 that "the writers of the Bible were God's penmen, not His pen." She explained it further by saying the following:

It is not the words of the Bible that are inspired, but the men that were inspired. Inspiration acts not on the man's words or his expressions but on the man himself, who, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, is imbued with thoughts. But the words receive the impress of the individual mind.⁶⁶

In opposition to the theory of *seminal thought* inspiration, i.e. that only general thoughts were inspired, Ellen White explained that "the scribes of God wrote as they were dictated by the Holy Spirit, having no control of the work themselves,"⁶⁷ and that she herself was "just as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in relating or writing a vision, as in having the vision."⁶⁸

The tension between those statements is harmonized in the following quotation from Ellen White:

Although I am as dependent upon the Spirit of the Lord in writing my views as I am in receiving them, yet the words I employ in describing what I have seen are my own, unless they be those spoken to me by an angel, which I always enclose in marks of quotation.⁶⁹

Although Ellen White recognized the existence of *difficulties* in Scripture, I have been unable to find any instance in which she mentioned specific factual errors in the Scripture. As silent as the writers of the New Testament had been in pointing out factual

errors in the Old Testament, so was Ellen White in regard to the total canon of Scripture.

The difficulties of Scriptures were regarded by her not as "an argument against the Bible" but as "a strong evidence of its divine inspiration." While "the way of salvation" is discernable even to "the humble and uncultured," there are in Scripture mysteries that challenge "the most highly cultivated minds."⁷⁰ Speaking about such mysteries Ellen White warned that

men of ability have devoted a lifetime of study and prayer to the searching of the Scriptures, and yet there are many portions of the Bible that have not been fully explored. Some passages of Scripture will never be perfectly comprehended until in the future life Christ shall explain them. There are mysteries to be unraveled, statements that human minds cannot harmonize. And the enemy will seek to arouse argument upon these points, which might better remain undiscussed.⁷¹

While admitting that the human language of Scripture is "imperfect," she still held that God's Word "is infallible" and should be accepted "as it reads."⁷² She stated, for instance, that in Scripture the history of Israel was traced by "the unerring pen of inspiration" "with exact fidelity."⁷³ She regarded the Bible also as the "unerring standard" by which "men's ideas of science" should be tested.⁷⁴ Therefore, "the Holy Scriptures are to be accepted," according to Ellen White, "as an authoritative, infallible revelation of his will."⁷⁵

The fact that "the finite mind is inadequate to grasp the infinite" should in no way discourage human beings from a thoughtful, reverent study of Scripture.⁷⁶ She even pointed out that

as several writers present a subject under varied aspects and relations, there may appear, to the superficial, careless, or prejudiced reader, to be discrepancy or contradiction, where the thoughtful, reverent student, with clear insight, discerns the underlying harmony.⁷⁷

Noteworthy also is the fact that Ellen White made use of different versions of the Bible in her writings.⁷⁸ The use of different versions was also supported by other contemporary Seventh-day Adventists.⁷⁹ This is a significant point because later on the issue

of the reliability of certain English translations of the Bible would be raised in Seventh-day Adventist circles.⁸⁰

That by the late 19th and early 20th centuries Seventh-day Adventists still regarded the Scriptures as the infallible and trustworthy Word of God is evident from their responses to higher criticism.⁸¹ Charles M. Snow, for example, stated in 1912 that the assumption that

the Word of God is "inspired, but not infallible," is the reiteration on earth of Satan's challenge to God in heaven. When man sets himself up as a judge of the words and works of God, the rebellion in heaven is reproduced in the earth.⁸²

As previously seen, it was during the period under consideration (1883-1915) that Seventh-day Adventists began to face an internal crisis on the nature of inspiration. Significantly, it was during that period that Ellen White penned some of her most deliberate statements on the subject. These would be studied again and again by Seventh-day Adventists as they continued the study of the biblical doctrine of inspiration after her passing on July 16, 1915.

Summary

Different views on the nature of inspiration have been advocated within the Seventh-day Adventist church during the first 70 years of its history, especially in the years 1883-1915.

Sabbatarian Adventists inherited William Miller's high view of Scripture as the infallible and unerring Word of God. That Seventh-day Adventists kept that view of Scriptures during the first four decades of their history (1844-18383) is evident from both their responses to *infidel* challenges against the Bible and their uncritical reprint in the *Review* of several articles by non-Seventh-day Adventist authors who fostered an inerrant view of Scripture.

From the early 1880's up to the time of Ellen White's death (1915) traditional views of inspiration were challenged by individuals who either had been personally reproved by Ellen White or had been shocked by the idea that an inspired writing could be improved by its author.

During that same period Ellen White penned some of her most significant statements on inspiration. Responses to higher criticism

show that Seventh-day Adventists continued to regard the Scriptures as the infallible and trustworthy Word of God.

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- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 168-69.
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THE EFFECTS OF ADAM'S SIN ON THE HUMAN RACE

By Norman R. Gulley

Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists

"Next to the word God, the word sin is the most closely packed with meaning for the human race and for the universe,"¹ wrote Edward Heppenstall. I concur with this assessment. It seems fitting, then, for the Adventist Theological Society to consider the biblical understanding of sin. What did the Fall of Adam do to the human race? How did that one act of sin affect his posterity? Does it affect one's state at birth? Are we born sinners, or do we only become sinners when we sin?

In this article we will explore the historical and biblical dimensions of these questions. We first turn to history, where various schools of thought have grappled with the issue of human nature at birth. Does it receive anything from Adam's sin or not? These are called theories of imputation.

Theories of Imputation

The Pelagian Theory. In 409 the British monk Pelagius presented his theory at Rome in which he argued man's natural innocence. It was condemned at the Council of Carthage in 418. Socinians and Unitarians later came to advocate the same theory. This view teaches that every human soul is immediately created by God innocent, free from depraved tendencies, and with the ability to obey God as was Adam before his sin. So Adam's sin hurt no one besides himself. The only effect of Adam's sin on his posterity was a bad example.

Paradoxically, Pelagius also recognized the power of sin. Man is born unto perdition, the image of God is eclipsed by the Fall, and

humans are in a certain sense corrupt, so that sin is natural. Nevertheless, in spite of human corruption, humans remain basically good.² Thus man is not born with an inclination towards wrong, that comes only after his own acts of sin. Therefore, it is theoretically possible to live above sin, as Adam could have, and thereby get to heaven through living without sinning. This view doesn't see Christ's incarnation and His saving mission as essential for every human.

The Arminian Theory. Arminius (1560-1605), University of Leyden professor in Holland, proposed his theory which is dubbed "semi-Pelagian." The Greek church holds this view. Methodism later adopted it. There are different kinds of Arminians, just as there are different kinds of Protestants. Arminius believed Adam's sin affected the race, so man is born depraved in body and mind, although the will is able to obey Him. Man is born without "righteousness." Therefore, God bestows a special gift of the Holy Spirit at birth to enable the newborn to obey. This is "prevenient grace" (grace sent before conversion) which removes and neutralizes condemnation from Adam's sin.

No baby is born with tendencies to do wrong. These only come from his own sinning. Yet, the gift of the Holy Spirit to overcome depravity from Adam assumes that the Spirit saves man from the results of Adam's sin rather than Christ. Also, each baby is seen as an isolated entity rather than a part of the human race. Salvation for the world (John 3:16), and the implications of this, are not thought through. If man has the ability not to sin, then the universality of sin and the universal need of a Savior are not a reality.

The New School Theory. This theory was propounded by Hopkins, Emmons, Dwight Taylor and Finney. Some Presbyterians and Congregationalists have supported the view. It teaches that newborns enter the world with a predisposition to sin, but do not sin until they arrive at moral consciousness. Thus sin is not a state, but solely an act. Hence, prior to gaining moral consciousness babies do not need Jesus as their Savior.

The Federal Theory. Also called the "theory of the Covenants," Federal theory is linked to Cocceius (1603-1669) and Turretin (1623-1669). (1) Federal and (2) Natural (or Realistic) headship in Adam need to be distinguished. Federal headship traces

physical nature through inheritance back to Adam, but with the soul as separately created for each newborn, the so-called "creationist view for the soul's origin." Natural (Realistic) headship traces man wholistically (including the soul) back to Adam, the Traducianist view for the soul's origin. In different ways Anselm, Aquinas, Calvin and Hodge have advocated these views. The "Federal theory" teaches that God entered into a covenant with Adam as the federal head of the race, stating that if he obeyed God, eternal life would be given to his posterity, but death to all if he disobeyed.

This means that condemnation passed upon all the race through God's covenant and not through Adam's sin. The race is not sinful because of Adam's fall, but because God regards them as such, due to His agreement with Adam; and God immediately (not mediately) creates each soul with a corrupt nature.

The Mediate Imputation Theory. Placeus, a French professor (1606-1655), promulgated this theory. It teaches that all are born physically and morally depraved, due to Adam's sin. God creates each individual soul, but it becomes corrupt as soon as it is joined to the body. Man, therefore, is born a sinner, which is the source of his own sins. Yet, only his physical and moral depravity go back to Adam (immediate), for his soul's depravity goes back to his own creation-birth (mediate). Also, man's depravity is the consequence, not the penalty, of Adam's sin.

The Augustinian Theory. Augustine (354-430) taught this view, which has roots back to Tertullian (c.150-220), and was held by the Reformers, except Zwingli. It is basic Catholic teaching and is espoused by A. H. Strong. It teaches that all the race were seminally present in Adam, and share not merely in the effects of his sin but in its guilt as well. It follows that man is born sinful and guilty and needs salvation the moment of birth. All sins issue as fruits from the one sin of Adam. This theory is also known as Realism. Realists W. G. T. Shedd, S. Greijdanus and K. Schilder speak of all humans being "co-sinners" with Adam, so that they are responsible for the original sin. Adam's guilt is not an "alien guilt," but their own. Texts such as humans dying for their own sin (Ezek 18:20), and Levi being in the loins of his father (Heb 7:5, 10) and

all sinning in Adam (their interpretation of Rom 5:12) fueled their thinking.³

Whereas Federalists believe humans are condemned because Adam broke the covenant,⁴ Realists reject imputed condemnation. Realist understanding of all humans as co-sinners with Adam views each person as individually responsible for sin. In this way, Realists question the validity of the imputation of "alien guilt" or "alien responsibility for sin," found in Catholic and Protestant theology. Not even Calvin's appeal to a divine decree can absolve God from being understood as capricious.

Summary of the Theories. A. H. Strong has provided a helpful summary of these various schools, indicating that the Pelagian, Arminian and New School do not believe man inherits condemnation from Adam's sin, whereas the Federal, Placean and Augustinian theories believe that man does inherit condemnation from Adam's sin. Note that each theory, except the Augustinian, finds the soul as created immediately by God, and to that extent without any ultimate connection with Adam (Creationism/ Traducianism debate.)⁵ Note the varying views concerning how a person sins; from following Adam's example (Pelagian), by conscious choice in spite of the Spirit's help (Arminian), by voluntary breaking of God's law (New School); and by being accounted sinners in Adam's sin (Federal), by possessing depraved nature (Placean), by having a part in Adam's sin, as seminally present (Augustinian), and by being co-sinners with Adam (Realists).

Although Catholic teaching on original sin is indebted to Augustine, since the 1950's, and particularly following Vatican II Council (1963-1965), there has been an explosion of Catholic literature on this topic, affected largely by the evolutionary world view that dismisses a historical Adam and his Fall. This is because Vatican II encouraged the freedom of science to explore its view of human origins.⁶ George Vandervelde, in a doctoral dissertation at the Free University in Amsterdam, focuses on two major trends: the situationists and the personalists. We will not discuss them in this article, but will note their common concern: "to safeguard the personal responsibility that appears to be jeopardized by the traditional doctrine."⁷ This is because, as Berkouwer pointed out, "the

central problem in the doctrine of original sin is the problem of *peccatum alienum* or alien guilt."⁸

We will see later that the biblical understanding of individual responsibility is crucial to determining the questions before us.

"Original Sin" in Adventist History

Some study into original sin in connection with the Seventh-day Adventist church has been accomplished by students at Andrews University Theological Seminary.⁹ The doctoral research of Edward H. Zackrisson is the most extensive work known to this writer on original sin in the Seventh-day Adventist church up to 1984.¹⁰

Early Adventists considered the first death as due to Adam's sin, the second death because of personal sin. The first death is merely the consequence, not the penalty for Adam's sin. These early Seventh-day Adventists believed Adam and Eve were created with a "middle nature" that could become mortal or immortal, or could become moral or immoral. A "middle nature" is defined as being innocent but without character, like a blank sheet of paper waiting to receive pencil markings. Original sin consisted in a loss of the "middle nature," hence, a gaining of mortality. This concept was worked out largely in defense of conditional immortality, and was a unique Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the state of the dead. Thus, original sin was first studied from an anthropological perspective.

The anthropological focus, in Adventist study of original sin, continued until 1888. In that year, when a new emphasis on righteousness by faith emerged from the Minneapolis General Conference, the focus on original sin shifted from the anthropological to the soteriological,¹¹ from the consequences of Adam's sin as only physical death,¹² to include moral depravity.¹³ This depravity was not properly called sin. By the turn of the century Adventists had come to consider original sin in terms of separation from God. Throughout the Church's history, the idea of each newborn possessing the guilt of Adam's sin has not been normative in its literature, although a depraved nature as consequence, not penalty, came to be the developed understanding.

Sin Defined as an Act

Scripture defines sin as "the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4 KJV), or "lawlessness" (NIV, RSV). "Sin is always *against God*."¹⁴ "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17, KJV).

There are many Hebrew and Greek words translated by the one English word "sin" which emphasize sin as an act. Here are a few examples; *shagah* and *shagag* (Heb.) mean "error," *ta'ah* (Heb.) means "to err" or "wander about," *parakoe* (Gr.) means "disobedience," *chata* (Heb.) and *hamartano* (Gr.) mean "missing the mark," *'abar* (Heb.) means "to cross over" or "to pass by," with *parabaino* as the Greek equivalent. *'Awal* (Heb.) "to act wrongfully," *pasha'* (Heb.) and *marad* (Heb.) mean "to rebel," with *apeitheia*, *aphistemi* and *apostasia* as Greek equivalents. *Ma'al* (Heb.) and *bagad* (Heb.) mean "treachery," *parapipto* (Gr.) means "to fall away," and *shiqquts* (Heb.) means "abomination."¹⁵ However, many of these words also imply or suggest a state of sin.¹⁶

Sin Defined as Internal Condition and Separation

The Bible also speaks of sin as "more than an act." We will consider three aspects, (1) immediate roots, (2) tendency to sin, and (3) sin as separation from God.

Immediate Roots. Romans 14:23 says, "Everything that does not come from faith is sin" (NIV). The context concerns acting without faith. Here, the definition for sin reaches back behind the act to the motive that causes the act. This is the deeper, inner side of sin. These are "the thoughts and attitudes [literally "intentions,"] of the heart" (Heb 4:12, NIV). Jesus said corrupt fruit comes from a corrupt tree (Matt 12:33-35), likewise evil proceeds out of the human heart [mind] (Mark 7:21-23).

This is why the law has more than some external relationship to the believer, for God said "I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts" (Heb 8:10, NIV; cf Hebrews 10:16). This is why Jesus spoke of the inner meaning of law-keeping, or law-breaking (sin), as having to do with thoughts and motives even though no external act ever took place. Thus, a "lustful look" is the same as committing adultery, even though it only transpires in the mind (Matt 5:28). This is why the tenth commandment goes deeper

than external acts, for covetousness is the internal act/state that precedes them.

Tendency to Sin. But, Scripture penetrates beyond the thoughts, motives and feelings to a tendency to sin that is inherent in human nature. David speaks of this when he said, "sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Ps 51:5, NIV). Note, not just sinful from birth, but from conception! David is speaking of the sin-situation into which he was born. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* on Psalm 51:5 says,

David recognized that children inherit natures with propensities to evil (see Job 14:4; Psa 58:3; PP 61, 306; MH 372, 373; GC 533). He did not seek to excuse his sin, but sought to stress the still greater need of God's mercy because of his inborn tendency to do evil (see PP 64).¹⁷

Scripture clearly attests to this sin situation into which humans are born. Of Israel we read, "You were called a rebel from birth" (Isa 48:8, NIV). The psalmist attested, "Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies" (Ps 58:3, NIV). In contrast to these statements, John the Baptist was "filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth" (Luke 1:15, NIV). Leon Morris notes that John the Baptist is the only human spoken of in this way in the New Testament.¹⁸ Except for Christ, maybe John was an exception, being a chosen forerunner to prepare the way for Christ. At least we can say from history that even if the Holy Spirit is with humans from birth, all, except Christ, have given into this tendency to sin in spite of the presence of the Holy Spirit. This is why all humans need to be born again.

In the Ten Commandments God says, "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to thousands who love me and keep my commandments" (Exod 20:5, 6, NIV; cf. chap. 34:7; Num 14:18). This passage seems to teach imputed punishment. It needs to be studied in the light of Ezekiel 18:20, where "The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son" (Ezek 18:20, RSV). What is at stake here is the individual responsibility for sin. Natural consequences can be passed on, but punishment is never imputed.

As the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* states,

A distinction should be made, however, between the natural results of a sinful course of action, and punishment inflicted because of it (PP 306). God does not penalize one individual for the wrong deeds of another (Eze. 18:2-24). Each man stands before God, responsible only for his own acts. At the same time God does not interfere with the laws of heredity in such a way as to protect one generation from the misdeeds of its fathers, as that would be inconsistent with His character. It is only through these laws of heredity, which were of course ordained by the Creator in the beginning (see Gen. 1:21, 24, 25), that divine justice visits the "iniquity" of one generation upon the next.¹⁹

Irrespective of ones parents, all babies are born with a tendency to sin. Thus, humans enter the planet in need of a Savior before they ever commit an act of sin.²⁰ But why is this? To this we now turn as we consider what lies behind mankind's tendency to sin.

Separation from God. Behind the "immediate roots" and "tendency to sin" lies another more fundamental aspect of sin. We need to understand more precisely what Adam's sin was, what it did to him, and what he passes on to the race. God told Adam and Eve not to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden (Gen 2:15-17; 3:1-5). They disobeyed. The resulting Fall was a fall from a trusting relationship with God. The Fall was a rebel step. So the *essence of sin is separation from God*. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from God (Gen 3:8), because sin broke their relationship with Him. Actually, before the overt act of eating the fruit, Eve broke her relationship with God. It was doubt (broken relationship) that led to disobedience (Gen 3:1-7). Ellen White expresses it this way,

It was through the desire for self-exaltation that sin entered into the world, and our first parents lost the dominion over this fair earth.²¹ Satan exulted in his success. He had tempted the woman to distrust God's love, to doubt His wisdom, and to transgress His law, and through her he had caused the overthrow of Adam.²²

As Heppenstall points out, "Original sin is not per se wrong doing, but wrong being. So there is a *causal* connection between the first sin of the first man and the self-centeredness of his posterity. . . . Trying to locate sin or the transmission of sin genetically simply misses the real problem. The issue is a spiritual one and not

something in a gene. Sin is not transmitted genetically from parents to children. Sin must not be reduced to something physical."²³

Apply this to the fallen angels. There is no genetic involvement among those beings. Yet "sin originated in self-seeking. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself."²⁴ So Satan separated himself from God, and then went out to separate the angels from Him. This was his "original sin."

Therefore, because of Adam, man is also in a broken relationship with God. But, thank God, He provided the way back through Jesus (John 14:6). Jesus is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9, KJV)²⁵ This is why each human must be born again (John 3:5-8). Separation is the deepest root of original sin. The very essence of what Adam passes on to the race, "an inherited disposition to sin"²⁶ issues out of a broken relationship with God.

One major problem with many theories of imputation is their failure to penetrate to the essence of sin as a broken relationship with God. *What is imputed to the race is a broken relationship with its tendency to sin.* Humans are born in need of being born again. Furthermore, nowhere in Scripture does it say that sin, punishment, condemnation or guilt is imputed. If these were imputed, then God would be unjust, and this alone would cause Him to fail to answer the great controversy issue against His justice. *Only consequences are imputed*, and so the justice of God is seen in His imputed righteousness through the second Adam that more than makes up for the broken relationship imputed by the first Adam. There is only one place in Scripture where sin is imputed, and that is to Christ as mankind's substitute at Calvary. Human sin was laid upon Him (Isa 53:6), so that He who knew no sin became sin for us (2 Cor 5:21). There are repeated references to righteousness being imputed to humans but never sin or guilt. This insight needs to guide our interpretation of Romans 5.

The essence of inherited sin from Adam is spiritual (broken relationship) and not genetic (physical). Although all humans are physically smaller and live shorter lives than Adam, his original sin impacts us spiritually. The question of God's justice is involved in

the way we look at the effect of Adam's sin. Heppenstall is right when he concludes, "Any position that makes genetically inherited sin or its moral consequences the specific ground for the condemnation of the race, involves God in the responsibility. Once solidarity with Adam is interpreted to mean transmission of sin by a procreated posterity, responsibility gets back to the Creator."²⁷

The Two Adams

In studying Romans 5, Karl Barth reversed the Adam-Christ analogy with a Christ-Adam analogy, and did disservice to history.²⁸ Nevertheless, I agree with G.C. Berkouwer that in Romans 5 "Adam, according to Paul, must stand in the *light of Jesus Christ*. Christ is the *theme* and the *starting-point* in this chapter."²⁹ Romans 5 thinks through the doctrine of justification within a soteriological framework. The super-abounding salvation through Christ is contrasted with the reign of death. The emphasis is on what Christ has done as the typological escalation to what Adam did. The indebtedness of the entire human race to Adam and Christ is spelled out in Romans 5. As the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* notes,

In this passage the main points of comparison that Paul is emphasizing are that as sin and death, as a principle and power, proceeded from Adam to the whole human race, so righteousness and life, as a counteracting and conquering principle and power, proceed from Christ to all mankind.³⁰

The crucial parallelism between what the two Adams brought to the race is not identical. Adam's broken relationship with God caused all his posterity to be born in need of a Savior; whereas only Christ can restore the broken relationship for those who accept what He did in bridging the gulf. Furthermore, what Christ has gained is even more than what the first Adam lost.³¹ The one sin of Adam has opened the gates to a sin-situation, whereas the one act of Christ more than atones for Adam's sin, for it atones for all subsequent sin too.

"Adam was a type of Christ in that both were representatives of the entire human family. He was the representative and author of fallen humanity. Christ was the representative and author of restored humanity"³² (see Rom 5:14). Thus Christ is called "the last

Adam" (1 Cor 15:45), and "the second man" (1 Cor 15:47). Romans 5 does not compare the nature of the two Adams, but their contribution to the race.

Seventh-day Adventists do not believe the guilt³³ of Adam's sin passed on to his posterity as does the Augustinian theory of imputation. For they do not believe the race was seminally present in Adam, and therefore shared in the responsibility for his sin. However there is some confusion among Adventists about what was passed on from Adam to the race. For example, *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* in 1966 stated

SDA's believe that man inherited a sinful nature without a propensity to sin, and their writings either reject the idea that men inherit the guilt of Adam's transgression, or fail to stress it.³⁴

This surprising statement, denying imputed propensities, is a position not supported by a number of Seventh-day Adventist authors (R. F. Cottrell, 1881, G. W. Morse, 1888, E. Heppenstall, 1977, Richard Rice, 1885) who believe human nature was affected by Adam.³⁵ Some believe that sin should be confined to acts and not include nature (e.g. D. E. Priebe).³⁶

The question now before us is: How does Paul's comparison of the two Adams give insight into the human condition at birth? In Romans 5 Paul broadens the definition of sin. "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners, so also by the obedience of the One the many shall be constituted righteous" (Romans 5:19, ABUV*). Clearly Adam's sin affected the race, constituted them sinners. But what does this mean? Some answer this by going to verse 12, "It was through one man that sin entered the world, and through sin death, and thus death pervaded the whole human race, *inasmuch as all men have sinned*" (NEB, emphasis added). They suggest that Adam merely began the process, and each man enters sin through his own sinning. However that view is flawed because babies can die before sinning. Others see Adam as the one who not only began the process but also influenced it.

Consider the contribution of the two Adams to the race. Romans 5:17-19 compares the two gifts to mankind from the two Adams. These gifts are genuine, they come apart from human works. Thus, it is the obedience of Christ that constitutes a person

righteous, and not his own obedience. Likewise the disobedience of Adam constitutes a person a sinner (broken relationship with God), and not his own acts of sin. Here Paul penetrates beyond personal acts of sin³⁷ as the reason for mankind's sin-problem to the first sin of Adam that severed the race from its unbroken relationship with God.

Then, Why did Paul also say "death came to all men, because all sinned"? (vs. 12, NIV). Medieval Catholics used the latin Vulgate translation where this text says "*in quo omnes peccaverunt,*" that is, "*in whom all sinned,*" meaning all sinned *in Adam*. This translation has been abandoned by most scholars, who favor "because all sinned" instead of "in whom all sinned."³⁸ More significant than this difference of translation is the immediate context. The next two verses, following Romans 5:12, speak of death reigning even before the giving of the law at Sinai, from the time of Adam to Moses (vss. 13-14). This death reigned from the first sin of Adam through human history. Clearly, the reign of death is linked to its initiation in Adam rather than to subsequent sin, either of Adam or his posterity. Within this context the words "all sinned" are an ingressive aorist tense, meaning Adam's first sin began the process which has continued throughout history. His first sin began the reign of death. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* suggests that

Paul seeks to show that there is something else at work besides the guilt of individuals for personal sins. That something is the result and effect of Adam's fall. All of the descendants of Adam share in the effect of Adam's fall, because death and the tendency to sin are inherited evils.³⁹

The fact that Paul singles out one period of human history, from Adam to Moses, indicates that he was not concerned with hereditary sin, a central problem in most imputation theories. His focus is on the super-abounding grace of Christ in spite of the reign of sin. Adam initiated the sin situation from which depravity and death result. Although death is not a punishment for Adam's sin, it is a consequence of his sin. Adam's sin gave mankind a tendency to sin, a leaning towards sinning which is in the very nature of humans at birth. Human nature has sinful propensities as a result of Adam's broken relationship with God. So the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* can say,

When Adam and Eve rebelled against God, they not only lost their right to the tree of life, which resulted inevitably in their death and in the passing on of death to their descendants, but by sin also became depraved in nature, thus lessening their strength to resist evil (see PP 61). Thus Adam and Eve passed on to their posterity a tendency to sin and a liability to its punishment, death. By their transgression sin was introduced as an infectious power in human nature antagonistic to God, and this infection has continued ever since. It is because of this infection of nature, traceable to Adam's sin, that men must be born again (see on chs. 3:23; 5:1).⁴⁰

Adam did not impute to mankind condemnation, guilt, punishment or sin. He did pass on a tendency to sin, because He led mankind into a broken relationship with God. All sins issue out of this state of sin into which mankind is born. In the above quote it is important to note that the need to be born again is not because of personal sins (which of course is also true), but because of "this infection of nature, traceable to Adam's sin." In his parallel passage to Romans 5, Paul compares death from Adam with resurrection out of death from Christ (1 Cor 15:21). Both death and eternal life come from one "man." The impression is that what Adam actually gifted the race is canceled by what Christ provisionally gifted the race. Because of Adam's sin humans are born to die (first death). Because of their own sins, humans need to be born again to avoid the second death.

Another important insight into the meaning of Romans 5 is found in comparing its parallel statements. Romans 5:12, 17 speak of death being passed on and Romans 5:18-19 speak of Adam's sin constituting his descendants sinners. It would seem that this constituting of a person a sinner is the death that is passed on. Both refer to the broken relationship with God which necessitates a Savior. That Adam's sin affects the race is mentioned five times in Romans 5:15-19. It is important to realize that the comparisons in this passage are between Adam and Christ (three times) and not between Adam and his posterity. Paul's focus is on Christ's super-abounding salvation in view of Adam's Fall and its effects.

We need to follow the corresponding phrases in Romans 5, as pointed out by Richard Davidson.⁴¹ There are three types: (1) the *hos (hosper)*. . . *houtos*, or "as . . . so" phrases in verses 12, 18, 19,

21; (2) the *ouch hos*. . . *houtos* or "as . . . so" phrases in verses 15,16; and (3) the *ei*. . . *pollo mallon* "if . . . much more" phrases in 15b, 17. The first group have a correspondence of similarities. Thus, as sin entered the world, so death passed to all humankind. As one offence brought all condemnation, so one act brought all justification/life (potentially), and as from one disobedience many were constituted sinners, so by one obedience were many constituted righteous. The "many" in these last two phrases are to be understood as equivalent to "all," for verse 15 says that many died because of Adam's sin, whereas verse 12 says that death passed to all from Adam's sin.

The second group are a correspondence of opposites, for Christ's gift was not like Adam's sin, and also condemnation came from Adam's one sin whereas justification comes to humans after many sins (Adam's and theirs). The word "condemnation" (Gr. *katakrima*) is not to be understood as imputed punishment, but as imputed broken relationship with its consequences. The third group builds upon the second group by stressing that Christ's gift is much more than Adam's sin. The "much more" focus is mentioned five times in Romans 5 (vss. 9, 10, 15, 17, 20). From these corresponding phrases it is clear that (1) Adam and Christ are similar in gifting the race, apart from human works, and (2) dissimilar in that all receive the gift from Adam, whereas the gift from Christ is received only by those who accept it. Furthermore, (3) Christ gifts the state of justification by faith in the new birth that more than makes up for Adam's gift of the state of sin and death to the race at birth.

The soteriological context of Romans 5 is seen in verses 1-11. Paul glories in the super-abounding salvation through the life and death of Christ. The focus is on justification by faith, not on sanctification which follows in chapters 6 and beyond. Paul has argued convincingly in the first four chapters that justification is not by works of the law but by faith in the gift given by Christ. Romans 5:12 begins with "Therefore," as a summation of what precedes. "Therefore" as by the first Adam sin and death entered and passed through to all mankind, and as a type of Christ (*tupon*, vs. 14) Adam gifted all mankind, so Christ's more abundant gift was given for the whole human race (see John 3:16). Romans 5 mentions gifts (*charisma, dorema*) in verses 15 and 16. To be true gifts they

cannot be earned. This is a crucial argument in Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. It is not by works. Neither Christ's justification nor Adam's sin-state can be earned by human works. The two Adams give to the race apart from human works (good or bad). So death comes to the whole race not when each one sins personally, but when each is born. Furthermore, in the whole context of Scripture, the gifts of both Adams are received at birth: sin, as broken relationship (tendency to sin) at one's first birth, and justification when one is born again.

Terms such as "constituted sinners" and "condemnation," although biblical, are misinterpreted by Federal theologians, because Scripture knows of no imputation of sin, condemnation, punishment or guilt. These terms are simply ways of expressing the broken relationship of mankind with God which has its source in the "original sin" of Adam. This is the essence of the "state of sin" or "tendency to sin" into which all humans are born.

Humans Born Into a Race Separated from God

If humans are born separated from God, then the center of their lives is not God but self. Have you ever seen a baby who was always unselfish? As wonderful as babies are, I believe Edward Heppenstall was right when he said, "Every child is born with an impossible self-centeredness. This Biblical truth is the primary fact of all human life at its beginning."⁴² Consider Ellen White's insights on this. She said,

Adam was required to render obedience to God, not only in his own behalf, *but in behalf of his posterity*. God promised him that if he would stand the test of temptation, preserving his allegiance to the Creator during the great trial to which he would be subjected, his obedience would insure his acceptance and favor with God. He would be forever established in holiness and happiness and these blessings *would be extended to all his posterity*. But Adam failed to bear the test, and because he revolted against God's law, *all his descendants have been sinners*.⁴³

Note that all descendants are sinners as a result of Adam's sin. The word "sinners" is defined by other words she uses, as found in the following quotations. Thus, "because of [Adam's] sin his posterity was *born with inherent propensities*."⁴⁴ For "when man

transgressed the divine law, his nature became evil. . . ."⁴⁵ "Thus at its very source human nature was corrupted."⁴⁶ Here inherent propensities, evil or corrupt nature are all ways to describe a broken relationship with God, which has its center in self.

Just as Adam and Eve were created in the image of God (Gen 1:26, 27), Adam "had a son in his own likeness" (Gen 5:3, NIV). What is the significance of this change? "Seth was a worthy character, and was to take the place of Abel in right-doing. Yet he was a son of Adam, like sinful Cain, and inherited from the nature of Adam no more natural goodness than did Cain. He was *born in sin*."⁴⁷

Conclusions

Geoffrey W. Bromiley said it right when he noted, "original sin raises difficult problems."⁴⁸ Yet the *Sacramentum Mundi*, the *summa* of Catholic theology since Vatican II Council (1963-65), states "the doctrine plays a very small part in the contemporary presentation of Christianity."⁴⁹ Bromiley writes with the whole spectrum of theological thinking in mind, and the *Sacramentum* speaks from the perspective of the Catholic church. Should this difficult problem be important to Seventh-day Adventists? I believe it should be, as it impacts on our understanding of the nature of Divine salvation. The "cure" is better understood in the light of the "disease."

We have seen that sin is more than acts. It precedes acts in the motives, the tendency to sin and the broken relationship with God rooted in self-centeredness. As Erickson suggests, "sin is not merely wrong acts and thoughts, but sinfulness as well, an inherent inner disposition inclining us to wrong acts and thoughts. Thus it is not simply that we are sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners."⁵⁰ What are the implications of the fact that all are sinners at birth, born separated from God, centered in self with a tendency to sin? When we grasp the utter desperate condition of the race, we better appreciate how great is the gift of salvation.

As Coates put it, "The whole nature of the Christian religion stands upon these two great pillars, namely, the greatness of our fall and the greatness of our redemption."⁵¹ As Erickson stated, "the

more radical our conception of sin, the more supernatural the salvation we will deem needed."⁵²

The book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* sums it up in this manner:

While the natural birth saddles each person with the results of Adam's transgression, everyone who experiences the spiritual birth receives the benefits of Christ's perfect life and sacrifice. 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive' (1 Cor 15:22).⁵³

General Conference President Robert S. Folkenberg recently wrote, "Through his sin Adam infected us with sinful natures. . . ."⁵⁴ Whether we call the effects of Adam's sin "sinful nature," "depravity," "sinfulness," "lostness" "leaning," "tendency to sin" or "inherent propensity" is not important, as long as these terms do not imply imputation of sin, punishment or guilt. All these terms are simply attempts to describe the broken relationship with God that each newborn experiences. Without Christ even a precious newborn baby cannot get to heaven. Jesus said "no one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Thank God for His super abundant provision to more than make up for what we have received from Adam!

Endnotes

**American Bible Union Version* (Improved Edition), (United Bible Society)

1 Edward Heppenstall, *The Man who is God, A Study of the Person and Nature of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man*, (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1977), p. 107.

2 George Vandervelde, *Original Sin: Two Major trends in contemporary Roman Catholic Reinterpretation* (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1981), pp. 10-14.

3 G. C. Berkouwer, *Sin*, trans. Philip C. Holtrop (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 436-448.

4 G. C. Berkouwer observes, "The federalist admit that not all men are personally responsible for the sin which Adam has committed," (*Sin*, p. 465).

5 The Creationist view of the soul's origin is that God creates each individual soul directly at the moment of conception or at birth, whereas the Traducianist view of the soul's origin is the soul is transmitted from the parents. The first is immediate, and the second mediate. (See M. J. Erickson, *Concise Dictionary of Christian Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1986], p. 157; and G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God* [Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962], pp. 279-309). Catholics and Calvinists prefer the Creationist view and Lutherans believe the Traducian view. In 1950 the Pope's encyclical *Humani Generis* concurred that ideas relative to the creation of the human body could conform to unfolding insights from science, but the truth that souls are immediately created by God must be held fast. Of course, both views hold that the soul is immortal.

6 *The Documents of Vatican II*, Gen. ed. Walter M. Abbott, S. J., trans. Joseph Gallagher, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), pp. 233-234.

7 Vandervelde, p. 57. See pages 1-2.

8 Berkouwer, *Sin*, p. 436.

9 For example, Edwin H. Zackrisson, *Seventh-day Adventists and Original Sin: A Study of the Early Development of the Seventh-day Adventist Understanding of the Effect of Adam's Sin on his Posterity*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Andrews University, 1984. I am indebted to Zackrisson's thesis for this source listing. Albert R. Parker, *A Theological Study of the Effects of the Sin of Adam upon his Posterity as Related to Sin and Guilt*, M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1954; Lee H. Fletcher, *The Seventh-day Adventist Concept of Original Sin*, M.A. thesis, Andrews University, 1960; Edwin H. Zackrisson, *M. L. Andreasen's Position on the Moral Nature of Christ*, term paper, Andrews University, 1963; Andrew Mustard, *A Comparison between Calvin's Doctrine of Original Sin and the Seventh-day Adventist Position Implied from Various Sources*, term paper, Andrews University, 1965; Bruno W. Steinwig, *What about Original Sin?* term paper, Andrews University, 1969; Haraldo J. Seidi, *On Original Sin*, term paper, Andrews University, 1972; Marius E. J. Brinkman, *Original Sin*, term paper, Andrews University, 1974; Tim Crosby, *A New Approach to an Adventist Doctrine of Original Sin*, term paper, Andrews University, 1977.

10 Zackrisson's doctoral dissertation gave insight into the interpretation of "original sin" in early Seventh-day Adventist history.

11 Also, the SDA view on the new birth changed from placing it at the resurrection to conversion. See Zackrisson, pp. 252-257, 371. The focus on post-new birth, Christian living occupied some of the new soteriological emphasis, for original sin was now understood to have affected the *imago Dei* (image of God, Genesis 1:26, 27) - "Through sin the divine likeness was marred, and well-nigh obliterated." Ellen G. White, *Education* (Angwin, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1952), p. 17.

12 J. M. Stephenson, "Inasmuch as all die for original sin, none can die for personal sin." *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, August 22, 1854; Uriah Smith, "Inasmuch as all die for original sin, or on account of the sin of Adam, . . ." *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 9, 1857 are two examples. Little wonder that Smith could affirm, "Christ's death had no reference whatever to Adam's original sin, in the way of paying the penalty therefore, or saving men from its effects." *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 3, 1888. See Zackrisson, op cit, pp. 417-418.

13 E. R. Jones "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Rom. 5:19. None will deny that this refers to the inherited depravity, the sinful nature and tendency in which, through his disobedience, every single soul of Adam's race is born." *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, January 7, 1890.

14 Berkouwer, *Sin*, p. 242.

15 See Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), pp. 564-575 for a good discussion of these terms, from which I have drawn.

16 See C. Ryder Smith, *The Bible Doctrine of Sin* (London: Epworth Press), 1953 and G.M. Staffen, *Sin as Set Forth in Holy Scripture* (New York, NY: E. P. Dutton Company, 1986).

17 *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed F. D. Nichol (Takoma Park, Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1954), 3:755.

18 See Leon Morris, *Luke, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), p. 77.

19 *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, ed. F. D. Nichol (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1953), 1:603

20 See Strong, p. 579. This text implies that (a) sin exists in the case of infants prior to moral consciousness, and therefore (b) sin exists in the nature, as distinguished from personal activity.

21 Ellen G. White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1956), p. 17.

22 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Takoma Park, Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn., 1958), p. 57.

- 23 Heppenstall, p. 122.
- 24 Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1940), p. 21.
- 25 The Greek verb for "coming" (*erchomenon*) can grammatically, in this passage, apply to Christ's coming in the first advent (as the RSV and NIV translate) or to each human's coming into the world (as in the KJV). Both are grammatically and theologically correct.
- 26 Heppenstall, p. 107.
- 27 Heppenstall, p. 116.
- 28 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 149-187.
- 29 Berkouwer, *SIN*, pp. 509-510.
- 30 *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 6:529
- 31 "By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen." Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 25.
- 32 *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 6:532.
- 33 Ellen White has written about receiving guilt, although it is not clear what is meant. For example, "As related to the first Adam, men receive from him nothing but guilt and the sentence of death." Ellen G. White letter 68, 1899, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 6:1074. Also Ellen G. White, *Child Guidance* (Nashville, TN: Southern Publishing Assn., 1954), p. 475; "The sin of our first parents brought guilt and sorrow upon the world, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1913), p. 61. See the exchange of views on whether Ellen White means guilt or not, Robert Olson affirms this in *Ministry*, October 1970, and Bruno Steinwig denies it in *Ministry*, 1971.
- 34 *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, ed Don F. Neufeld, (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Assn, 1966), p. 748. It is also true to say that some believe in inheriting propensities without calling them sin.
- 35 For example, Edward Heppenstall, *The Man Who is God, A Study of the Person and Nature of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man*, pp. 107-128. Richard Rice, *The Reign of God* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1985), pp. 126-128. Note the following from around 1888. R. F. Cottrell, *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, (subsequently as RH) January 18, 1881, "The whole race was lost when our first parents sinned." *Adult Sabbath School Quarterly*, 1889, "Lessons on the Letter to the Hebrews," p. 17, "Adam's sin involved his whole posterity in ruin." G. W. Morse, RH, (June 19, 1888), p. 394, "The entire race sinned in Adam."
- 36 For one example, Dennis E. Priebe says, "Sin is not basically the way man is, but the way man chooses." Or, "sin is concerned with a man's will rather than with his nature." *Face to Face with the Real Gospel* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1985), p. 17. Even though Priebe maintains that "sin is not nature but choice," op cit, p. 17, he also believes "we do inherit badness, weakness, and corruption from Adam. We have the same desires that Adam had in his sinful state. We desire to do wrong; we desire to rebel against God. It is hard for us to do right. It is more natural to do wrong. I think if we're honest with ourselves, we will admit that we are our own tempters all too often. We really do not need Satan to follow us around and tempt us with all sorts of ideas, because we are well able to tempt ourselves. Our own natures lead us astray. . . So we do inherit negative tendencies from Adam, which lead us to do wrong." op. cit., pp. 27, 28. So, for Priebe, only the choice to give into nature is sin, not the nature itself.
- 37 Although man's own sin obviously adds to the sin-problem, and is not to be condoned.
- 38 Berkouwer, *Sin*, p. 492.
- 39 *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1957, 6:531.
- 40 *Ibid*.
- 41 See Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study in Hermeneutical Typos Structures*, (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), pp. 299-304.

- 42 Heppenstall, p. 121.
- 43 Ellen G. White, Ms 126, 1901, italics added.
- 44 Ellen G. White, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, 1956, 5:1128 (EGW letter 8, 1895) italics added and brackets supplied.
- 45 Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1950), p. 505.
- 46 Ellen G. White, *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, April 16, 1904, (vol. 4, p. 281).
- 47 Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, February 20, 1879, (vol. 1, p. 87), bold letters supplied.
- 48 Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Historical Theology. An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1987), p. 183.
- 49 *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, eds. Karl Rahner, Cornelius Ernst and Kevin Smyth (New York, NY: Herder and Herder, nd), 3:329.
- 50 Erickson, p. 578.
- 51 Gottfried Quell, George Bertram, Gustav Stahlin and Walter Grundmann, *Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, trans Grundmann and Coates, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1959), preface by J. R. Coates, p. v.
- 52 Erickson, p. 562.
- 53 General Conference Ministerial Association, *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* (Washington D.C., 1988), p. 113.
- 54 Robert S. Folkenberg, "Called to Repentance in Christ," *Adventist Review*, October 28, 1993, p. 3.

ENDNOTES: MUSIC AS ECUMENICAL FORCE

By Wolfgang H. M. Stefani
Newbold College

As Seventh-day Adventists we believe that our witness is to be wholistic—an integrated message for spirit, mind, and body. We see the Christian faith as not just a set of doctrines but as a way of life to live and share with others. Hence, lifestyle dimensions such as diet and exercise are integral to our faith, and medical, educational, and relief work vital to our outreach.

Need: An Aesthetic Witness

However, there are certain blindspots or gaps in our message, both in the way it is proclaimed and how it is lived. One such gap is the arts, or what is broadly defined as the aesthetic realm—music, dance, theater, and movies. This is one aspect of Adventist lifestyle in which the communication and transmission of distinctive values is weak. The Valuegenesis study revealed that scarcely one quarter of Adventist youth supported church-held positions or standards in this area.¹ The data on adults indicated similar dissent. Interestingly, health-related ideals such as the prohibition of tobacco, beer, liquor and illegal drugs as well as the need for daily exercise were overwhelmingly endorsed.² Clearly, rejection of Adventist lifestyle ideals is not across the board. But, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that today the arts are a component of Adventist lifestyle in which the last verse of the book of Judges is sadly true: "And every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Unfortunately, discussions about the arts are usually relegated to the endnotes of our message, if noted at all. Perhaps this has occurred because we do not consider the arts important

enough to be part of the body of our message, or maybe we are unsure of just what to say about them. Whatever the case, I believe the time has come to reconsider this omission. As Seventh-day Adventists we believe we have a doctrinal witness to take to the world, and a health witness to share and practice. But is this all? Is there not also an aesthetic witness that is to be a part of our wholistic message? When Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," did that truth as it is in Jesus include a truth about the aesthetic realm? Or, is there no aesthetic truth? Or, is the truth about the aesthetic realm quite legitimately to be ignored as unimportant? Or, are we increasingly intimidated by what we perceive as a purely subjective, "taste-and-preference" issue, especially in a multi-cultural community of faith?

I believe Roger L. Dudley, author of *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance*, was right when he summed up his discussion of the transmission of Adventist lifestyle valued by calling "for the top attention of denominational leaders, educators, pastors and parents" in this area, as well as "extensive interactive dialogue to clarify how timeless biblical principles should be translated into specific guidelines in our time and place."³ If we fail to do this, the results are clear—the next generation of Adventists will, by default, simply drop altogether "dubious" Adventist standards in the aesthetic realm.

Impact of the Arts

Paradoxically, often the arts alone remain as a concrete witness of a Christian mentality in a particular age. When all the sermons have been preached, all the theological debates adjourned, and all the peoples' lives passed from view, the arts—including literature, music, architecture, sculpture, and painting—stand as a continuing testimony to the belief of the people and time that spawned them.⁴ The values invested in them are then evident to all. But, what will be their witness of Christianity in our age? And what will contemporary Adventist artistic involvement tell future generations? Will it reveal any distinctive impress of Adventist faith?

Of all the arts, music is one of the most commonly utilized and practiced among Adventists. Although she did not write about it as prolifically as health, Ellen White clearly recognized music's impor-

tance, and its impact on lifestyle and spirituality. We will consider just two quotations about music from her writings.

He [Satan] works through the means which will exert the strongest influence to hold the largest numbers in a pleasing infatuation, while they are paralyzed by his power. When turned to good account, music is a blessing, but it is often made one of Satan's most attractive agencies to ensnare souls.⁵

And again she wrote:

Music was made to serve a holy purpose, to lift the thoughts to that which is pure, noble and elevating, and to awaken in the soul devotion and gratitude to God. What a contrast between the ancient custom and the used to which music is not too often devoted! . . . A love for music leads the unwary to unite with world lovers in pleasure-gatherings where God has forbidden His children to go. Thus, that which is a great blessing when rightly used, becomes one of the most successful agencies by which Satan allures the mind from duty and from the contemplation of eternal things.⁶

These two quotations take on particularly significant meaning in light of some recent sociological research into the musical art, and provide provocative reason for clear and serious thinking in this area.

Popular Music: World Unifying Force

In the mind 1980's Bob Geldorf organized his "Live-Aid" program in which top popular musicians joined together in a concert extravaganza to raise money for the Ethiopian famine victims. Linked via satellite, worldwide interest in this venture was so extensive, sociologists began to explore it as a phenomenon. Talk of a "world social formation" and the possibility of a "strategy for global moralization"⁷ were no longer considered a figment of speculative imagination. Because of its universal availability and acceptance, popular music was identified as "the major rallying point for the formation of an international youth culture. . . based on common, worldwide tastes and values."⁸ Describing popular music as a "powerfully cohesive force," concern was expressed that "heavy consumption of internationalized music, most of which has been Anglo-American in origin, may be causing world youth to identify more with globalized music and by extension with the

lifestyle and values of other societies than those of their own culture."⁹

While a subsequent five-year study found that local cultures are continuing to produce their own music and that world musical homogenization is by no means a *fait accompli* certain portentous facts were noted:

1. The popular music of all countries is being shaped by international forces such as multinational capital and technology, and global pop norms and values. In 1985 ethnomusicologist, Bruno Nettl observed: "If there is any trend in world music that might justify the fear of musical homogenization, it would have to be [the] realm of popular music."¹⁰ In 1989 Simon Frith, a prominent scholar of popular music culture, confirmed that: "Even the most nationalistic sounds—carefully cultivated 'folk' songs, angry local dialect punk, preserved (for the tourist) traditional dance—are determined by a critique of international entertainment. No country in the world is unaffected by the way in which the twentieth century mass media . . . have created a universal pop aesthetic."¹¹

2. Significant global synchronization with one cultural pattern has been achieved through popular music. Commenting on this, Cees Hamelink ruefully observed: "Never before has the process of cultural influence proceeded so subtly, without any blood being shed and with the receiving culture thinking it had sought such cultural influence."¹²

3. The global music industry, that is, the selection, recording, promotion, and sale of all categories of music, is largely in the hands of give corporations—RCA (now part of BMG and merged with Ariola), Sony/CBS, Time Warner, EMI, and Polygram.¹³

4. Domination of the "West over the rest" in the promotion and distribution of internationalized popular music is indisputable.¹⁴

5. Substantial promotion and distribution of both classical and popular music by the music industry, tunes the world's ears to specific musical forms.¹⁵

6. Popular music is recognized as a powerful, unifying force. It is seen as a significant component in the process of global integration and the struggle for planetary order. In short, sociologists

believe that today's popular music provides "one of the potential means for the appropriation and conquest of daily life."¹⁶

Modern Music Trends and the End-Time

Believing that we live in the final countdown of the great controversy, it would seem foolish not to probe the possibility that there might be some eschatological significance in these developments—maybe even some masterminded manoeuvre.

As Adventists we believe that the stories of the Book of Daniel are not merely for use in the children's Sabbath School divisions. Rather, they are significant keys to help us understand the large prophetic schemes. For example, the story of the three Hebrew worthies' refusal to bow to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Daniel 3) is a cameo illustration of what will one day occur on a global scale when the whole world is commanded on pain of death to worship an image to the beast. Here is a miniature of the time when state and religion will join to force everyone, "small and great, rich and poor, free and bond," to receive the mark of the beast or be put to death.

You remember the story, don't you? The golden image on the Plain of Dura, the fiery furnace prepared for the treacherous, the panoplied Nebuchadnezzar impatiently awaiting the homage of the thousands from all nations who stand before him. The moment of worship comes, but note: the phenomenon that prepares, organizes, and unites the vast throng in this act of false worship is not an announcement from the king or some well-chosen words from the platform—it is music. When the music plays, all must bow.

This is not the first time in Scripture that a connection is made between false worship and music. For example, in the plains of Moab, on the borders of the Promised Land, Israel was beguiled into a terrible apostasy through the influence of music and dance.¹⁷ God's people were lured to bow down and participate in heathen worship—something which they rejected intellectually, and may have resisted under other circumstances.

Music's influence, both on individuals as well as groups, is very apparent. From the study of music in cultures the world around, Alan P. Merriam observed that: "The importance of music, as judged by the sheer ubiquity of its presence, is enormous. . . . There is

probably no other human cultural activity which is so all-pervasive and which reaches into, shapes, and often controls so much of human behavior."¹⁸

More specifically, psychologist Oliver Sacks wrote: "The power of music. . . is of the greatest practical and theoretical importance. . . . What we see, fundamentally, is the power of music to organize—and to do this efficaciously. . . when abstract or schematic forms of organization fail. Indeed, it is especially dramatic, as one would expect, precisely when no other form of organization will work."¹⁹

It would seem evident that in order to unify socially all nations for his final deception, our arch enemy cannot depend solely on political ideologies, economic treaties, and even theological interpretations. But, it could be that he has been carefully planning and developing a powerful "social glue" in the form of music, something that could provide the means for emotionally unifying and organizing the world's inhabitants—squeezing them into a mold²⁰—for the final act of worship, just as he did on a micro scale 2500 years ago in Babylon.

In 1835 in a kind of visionary manifesto about religious music of the future, the renowned Western musician and musical thought leader Franz Liszt called for art to leave the precincts of the church and seek a stage for its magnificent manifestations in the outside world. He posited a new "humanistic music" that would "sum up both the THEATER and the CHURCH" and ultimately allow "all classes of people" to be "joined together in a common, religious, grand and sublime feeling." (Emphasis is Liszt's own.) He yearned for the day when art would "raise itself to its ultimate heights by fraternally uniting all mankind in rapturous wonder."²¹ Today, sociologists acknowledge that music is the only known social factor of its kind that can bring together people from all nations and backgrounds in such common interest and commitment.

Further, as leading ethnomusicologist David McAllester observed, music seems to "be the clearest reinforcement of identity we have."²² Could it be that by fostering a homogenized global musical style—a style that is increasingly visible in the Christian music culture—the stage is being set for a global, religious identity response? A response that will allow people of all nations, all religious backgrounds to say, "Yes, this is my music, this is who I

am: this is my music for being happy an religious and I am part of it; I am right at home now."²³

Could it be that when the whole world is gathered on the apocalyptic Plain of Dura and the music plays, it will be easier for you and me to capitulate to that almost overmastering temptation to false worship *then*, because we have absorbed the world's music patterns instead of presenting a unique and timely aesthetic witness *now*? Could it be that by pushing music into the endnotes of our theology and thinking, our end note may not be the New Song, the song of Moses and the Lamb as we had hoped?

Endnotes

- 1 Roger L. Dudley with V. Bailey Gillespie, *Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance* (La Sierra University Press, 1992), p. 148.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- 4 H. R. Rookmaaker, *Art Needs No Justification* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1978), p. 20.
- 5 Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, vol. 1 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), p. 506.
- 6 Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1958), p. 595.
- 7 Deanna Campbell Robinson, "Youth and Popular Music: A Theoretical Rationale for an International Study," *Gazette: International Journal for Mass Communication Studies* 37 (1986): 41, 49.
- 8 Deanna Campbell Robinson et. al., *Music at the Margins: Popular Music and Global Cultural Diversity* (London: Sage Publications, 1991), x-xi.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Bruno Nettl, *The Western Impact on World Music: Change, Adaption and Survival* (New York: Schirmer, 1985), p. 85.
- 11 Simon Frith, ed., *World Music, Politics and Social Change* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1989), p. 2.
- 12 Cees Hamelink, *Cultural Autonomy in Global Communications: Planning National Information Policy* (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 4.
- 13 Robinson et. al., *Music at the Margins*, pp. 42-43.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 240.
- 16 Ian Chambers, "Some Critical Tracks," *Popular Music* 2 (1986): 19.
- 17 White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 454.
- 18 Alan P. Merriam, *The Anthropology of Music* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), p. 218.
- 19 Quoted in Andrews Stiller, "Toward a Biology of Music," *Opus* (August 1987): 12-14.
- 20 Compare Romans 12:2 (Philips translation).
- 21 Franz Liszt, "Religious Music of the Future," in *An Artist's Journey: Lettres d'un bachelier ès musique 1835-1841*, by Franz Liszt, trans. and annotated by Charles Suttoni (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 236-237; and Mark Bangert, "Church Music History, Classic and Romantic," in *Key Words in Church Music: Definition Essays on Concepts, Practices and Movements of Thought in Church Music*, ed. Carl Schalk (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), pp. 132-133.

22 David P. McAllester, "Music as Ecumenical Force," *The Australian Journal of Music Education* 27 (October 1980): 10.

23. A paraphrase of statement by Alan Lomax quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Dr. Pfandl shows that "the time of the end" refers in the book of Daniel to the consummation of the history of the world in an apocalyptic setting. This phrase refers to the final period of time leading up to the absolute end of the present world.

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CONTRIBUTORS

John T. Baldwin, Ph.D. (University of Chicago) in Systematic Theology, taught at Union College before coming to teach at the SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University. He is a man of wide experience being born of missionary parents in the Far East. He specializes in the relationship of theology and science and also serves as associate director of the M.Div. program.

Jack J. Blanco is currently Chairman of the Religion Department at Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists, Collegedale, TN. He holds a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from the University of South Africa. He has been a pastor, editor, academic dean, and has written in journals and published a paraphrase of the OT and NT. He is a founding father of ATS and served as its president for the first two-year term. He is a popular speaker for church gatherings in many different places.

P. Gerard Damsteegt holds a doctoral degree in theology from the Free University of Amsterdam, a master's degree in Public Health from Loma Linda University and an engineering degree from the School of Aeronautics, The Hague. He was the principle contributor to the book *Seventh-day Adventists Believe...* He has been a missionary in the Far East, an evangelist and pastor, and is now teaching in the Church History Department of the SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University.

Richard M. Davidson serves as chairman of the Old Testament Department, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University, where he also teaches. He earned a Th.D. and published a masterly volume, *Typology in Scripture*. He is known as a skilled writer of books and articles; a widely travelled speaker at rallies, campmeetings, and pastors' conventions; and a founding father of ATS.

Norman R. Gulley has earned his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from the University of Edinburgh. He has been a pastor and missionary, is a prolific writer who has written extensively in many of the leading SDA journals and papers, and published numerous books. Presently he is teaching in the Religion Department of Southern College of Seventh-day Adventists. He is a much sought after speaker for church rallies, campmeetings, and religious gatherings.

Gerhard F. Hasel is director of the Ph.D./Th.D. Programs at the Theological Seminary of Andrews University where he also teaches in the area of Old Testament studies. He earned a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies. He served as Dean of the Seminary from 1981-88 and has published more than a dozen books and numerous articles. His extensive speaking appointments include church rallies, campmeetings, pastors' conventions, etc. He also served as president of ATS for a two-year term ending in 1992.

C. Raymond Holmes has been led by the Lord from being a Lutheran pastor to become an Adventist pastor, missionary, teacher and director of the Doctor of Ministry Program at the Theological Seminary of Andrews University. He holds a doctorate in ministry and has written a number of books and many articles. He is a speaker with empathy and conviction. He is a founding father of ATS with a deep concern to keep the Adventist movement on its central track. His two-year term as president of ATS began in the summer of 1992.

Angel M. Rodriguez has earned a Ph.D. in Old Testament Studies and served as professor, chairman of the religion department, academic dean, and president of the SDA college in Puerto Rico. He has also been academic dean of Southwestern Adventist College before he took a call to serve in the Education Department of the Inter-American Division. He is currently serving as Associate Director of the General Conference Biblical Research Institute.

Wolfgang H. M. Stefani has earned his Ph.D. from Andrews University in 1993 in the area of the relationship of music to worldview. He also studied in Australia and Germany, is an ordained pastor who served in Australia and Great Britain, and now teaches at Newbold College, England. He has published articles on the vital subject of music in the church and is a much sought after speaker on this subject among professionals and in churches.

Alberto R. Timm is working on his Ph.D. dissertation in Adventist Studies at the SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University. He is a Brazilian, an ordained minister and a teacher at the Adventist College, Sao Paulo State. He also functions as Director of the E. G. White-SDA Research Center in Brazil and has published articles in Portuguese, Spanish and English.