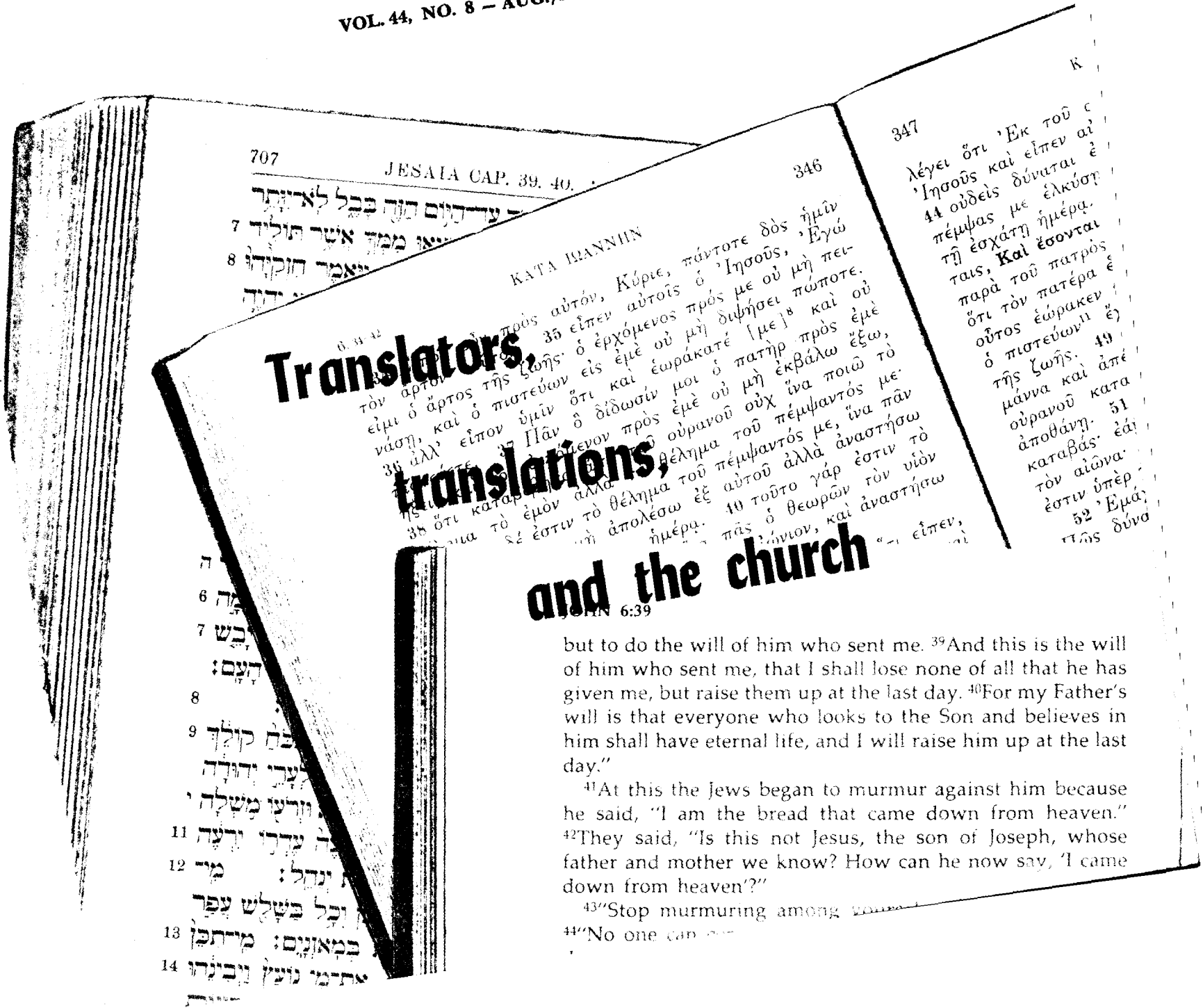


The Presbyterian Guardian

VOL. 44, NO. 8 - AUG./SEPT., 1975



Translators,

translations,

and the church

but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

⁴¹At this the Jews began to murmur against him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."

⁴²They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven?'"

⁴³"Stop murmuring among yourselves,"

⁴⁴"No one can see the Son of Man, but only he who is revealed by the Father."

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ISAIAH CAP. 49, 40.

לְאִיִּיךְ
7 עַד־תָּנוּחַ הַיָּד הַכֹּלֶל
8 יִשְׁמַח מִמֶּנִּי אֱלֹהִים
9 וְיִשְׂמַח בְּיָדֵי
11 וְיִשְׂמַח בְּיָדֵי
12 מִיָּדֵי
13 בְּמִאֲוָנֵי
14 אֲתִדְמֶנּוּ נִעְנֵן וְכִבְיָנוּ

KATA IOHANNIN

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35 εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ ἔρχόμενος πρὸς με οὐ μὴ πε-
νάσῃ, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ οὐ μὴ διψήσει πώποτε.
36 ἀλλ' εἶπον ὑμῖν ὅτι ἐωρακάτε [με] καὶ οὐ
πίστευτε. Πᾶν ὃ δίδωσίν μοι ὁ πατήρ πρὸς ἐμέ
οὐκ ἀπολέσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ οὐδ' οὐρανὸν οὐχ ἵνα ποιῶ τὸ
θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με, ἵνα πάν
αὐτοῦ ἀλλά ἀναστήσω
38 ὅτι καταράσθαι ἐξ αὐτοῦ γάρ ἐστιν τὸ
ἔστιν τὸ θέλω ἀπολέσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ γάρ ἐστιν τὸ
ἡμέρα. πᾶς ὃ θεωρῶν τὸν υἱὸν
ἰσχυρῶν, καὶ ἀναστήσω
39 εἶπεν,

347

λέγει ὅτι Ἐκ τοῦ
'Ιησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐ-
44 οὐδεὶς δύναται ἐ-
πέμψας με ἐλκύσει
τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ.
ταῖς, καὶ ἔσονται
παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς
ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἔ-
οὔτος ἐώρακεν
ὁ πιστεύων ἐ-
τῆς ζωῆς. 49
μάννα καὶ ἀπέ-
οὐρανοῦ κατα-
ἀποθάνη. 51
καταβάς. 51
τὸν αἰῶνα.
ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ-
52 Ἐμὰ
τῆς δύνα-

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Letters

"Immediate instrument of the Holy Spirit"

As soon as time permits, I would like to develop a second series of articles on the matter of tongues. This particular question shall be confronting the church for some time to come.

In the meantime, a response to the question posed by Mr. Ramsay in the April issue of the *Guardian* (p. 54) is in order. The question has to do with the character of the divine inspiration that was operating at the time the New Testament gift of tongues was functioning.

It was posited in the article, "Tongues—unquestionably a revelation gift," in the February *Guardian*, that man's tongue was the "immediate instrument of the Holy Spirit" as the gift of tongues was operating. The intention of this assertion was not to dismember the tongue from the whole person who was undergoing this experience. Instead, the point being made was that the words of the tongue-speaker had all the characteristics of those God-breathed utterances that marked off the divinely inspired words of the prophets and of the Scripture-writers (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21).

Certainly the divine control that characterized the utterances of prophetic tongue-speaking should be considered under the category of "organic inspiration." To assert that a person's tongue functioned as an "immediate instrument of the Holy Spirit" does not deny the involvement of the whole person in the utterance. God's inspiration did work organically.

Yet at the same time, the danger of over-reaction to unbelieving criticism must be noted. "Dictation *not* undignified" would be a great theme to develop in the face of constant neo-evangelical defections from an adequate commitment to the reality of God's communicating his truth in human language. In the broader con-

text of the organic manner of God's inspiration of his spokesmen, it would seem very likely that there were many cases in which God dictated—yes, dictated—the precise words of his prophets.

Such would seem quite possible in the case of tongues. The man spoke revelational truths in an unlearned language. Indeed, his spirit was involved (1 Corinthians 14:14). It was his spirit that was praying. But at the same time, God's Spirit quite decisively was determining the precise words of the foreign tongue the speaker was uttering. In such a manner, the tongue of the speaker became the "immediate instrument of the Holy Spirit."

Palmer Robertson
Westminster Seminary

Ed. note: We hope further articles on this subject from Dr. Robertson may appear later in the Fall.

Faith alive down South

We recently spent a couple of months in the deep South and were amazed to find so much religion there among the people. In one small town we found eleven different churches. We visited five of them. They were overflowing with people, the young as well as the old. We worshipped with them and received a rich blessing every time. We found the young people, mostly, witnessing for Christ their Savior.

Then when we returned to the North, we found so many empty seats there in the half-full churches. And we felt sad and heavy of heart, because of this indifference among us Northerners. We are so blessed that we are free to worship our Lord in this country. The time is coming when we will not be allowed to do this. And the time is getting short.

We hope and pray that the people here in the North will come back to the faith of their fathers and serve The Lord again, before it will be too late.

William Crown
Rochester, N.Y.

The Presbyterian Guardian is published eleven times each year, every month except for a combined issue in July-August, by the Presbyterian Guardian Publishing Corporation, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, PA 19126, at the following rates, payable in advance, postage prepaid: \$3.75 per year (\$3.25 in clubs of ten or more; special rate for "every-family churches" on request). Second class mail privileges authorized at the Post Office, Philadelphia, Pa.

About that review of the NIV . . .

Dear Duncan:

EDWIN H. PALMER

I have never responded to a review of the New International Version, and that for two reasons: 1. I do not consider it good taste for the Executive Secretary of the NIV to reply. 2. Ninety-eight percent of the reviews have been favorable.

But in your case I have changed my mind. And that for three reasons: 1. I know you well, having taught you at Westminster Theological Seminary. 2. I feel very close to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and to the *Guardian* in which your brief review appeared. 3. It gives me an opportunity to say something that I've wanted to say for some time.

You gave guarded praise of the NIV when you concluded that it was "clear and modern and quite faithful." But you had three reservations. I will comment on each one.

A matter of style

First, you judge that in comparison to the King James Version, the NIV "sounds toneless" and that it has "departed pointlessly from an existing standard of excellence."

You may be right—style is such a subjective matter. But many of the reviews the NIV has received came to the exactly opposite conclusion you have reached. For example, Calvin Linton, professor of English literature and Dean of Arts and Sciences at the George Washington University, writes:

"High on the list of stylistic characteristics of the NIV is a kind of economical integrity, a quality of simple dignity, of tightly drawn texture. . . . Here is no straining after catchy colloquialism, shirt-sleeve casualness, or perky slang. . . . This is not to say that it is without a style of its own, for to make simplicity moving, one must adorn it with appropriate aesthetic devices. Chief among these in the NIV, I think, is rhythm. Care has obviously been taken with flow, with rise and fall, and with the effect that connectives have in linking one rhythm to another. . . . By its combination of integrity, dignity, and stylistic felicity, the NIV will read as well on solemn occasions as in private devotions."

The one example you give for the

superior style of the KJV is John 3:30. The King James says, "He must increase, but I must decrease." The NIV reads, "He must become greater; I must become less important."

You state that the KJV is "perfectly modern" here. But now, is it really, Duncan? Do you talk like that today? Would you ever for a moment say, "Nixon has decreased, but Ford has increased"? I hope not, for that is simply not modern English. So our translators wrestled with this one: How would you say it today?

They were as mindful as you are of the beauty of the KJV's increase-decrease. They wanted to keep that beauty, too. And this is one of the virtues that the NIV has been praised for repeatedly, that it does not change just to be novel.

But have you looked at the Greek, Duncan? The remarkable thing is that the King James at this point is better than the Holy Spirit! For the KJV has a certain rhyme and jingle (if that is a virtue!), but not so the Greek. The Greek sounds like this: *auxanein . . . elaitousithai*. I am afraid if you were reviewing the Greek, you would say it "sounds toneless." As I say, in some people's minds the KJV is even better than what the Holy Spirit produced. But is that good and faithful? And it is not even current English!

A degree of accuracy

Now, your second reservation. You write that "as far as accuracy is concerned, the NIV does a respectable job." But your reservation here is that the NIV "tends to expand beyond a simple translation into the realm of interpretation, when that is not at all really necessary."

I am glad you added that last phrase about interpretation, because it is impossible to escape interpretation in translation. For example, should the translator capitalize the "s" of "spirit" or not? Well, it depends on your interpretation, whether the word refers to God or man.

Your concern about unnecessary expansion is very valid. For it is easy to expand in an incorrect way. You cite as an example the NIV rendering of

James 2:12, "the law that gives freedom," rather than the KJV, "the law of freedom." I do not have too much of a hang-up on the NIV at that point, because I am convinced that that is exactly what the Greek means. And how much clearer! The reader immediately understands what the Holy Spirit was trying to say, but not so with the KJV.

Another example that could have been given is 2 Corinthians 5:14 where the NIV reads, "For Christ's love compels us." The KJV reads, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." The King James translation could be interpreted as our love for Christ or Christ's love for us. How much clearer is the NIV! It would be possible to leave it ambiguous, but why do so if you are absolutely convinced that Paul means Christ's love for us? (Remember Dr. Machen's eloquent sermon on this and his emphatic assertion that it means exactly what the NIV says: Christ's love for us.)

On the other hand, when the many, many NIV editors were not sure of the correct interpretation, they left the translation ambiguous. For example, what does Revelation 1:1 mean by "the revelation of Jesus Christ"? Is this a revelation about Jesus, or one that came from Jesus? Or both? We were not sure, and so we left it ambiguous.

Now, at times, I think that our translators may have gone too far and expanded unnecessarily. But this sort of evaluation is very subjective, and I think the public can have great confidence in the overall job done by so many theologians. Incidentally, we are not infallible, and hope to make improvements in later editions.

A charge of inconsistency

Your third reservation was that "the NIV does sacrifice . . . consistency in the translation of certain key terms," and you mentioned the term "works." This raises the very important principle of translation: Should the same Greek word be translated by the same English word every time?

It must be clear to the thoughtful person that the answer is No. Look in Webster's International Dictionary to see the many different meanings to be found under one word. The same is true with the Greek or Hebrew, and one English word cannot be used to cover the wide range of meaning found in the Greek or Hebrew words.

To take a concrete example, in 1

(Continued on page 126.)

Translators, translations, and the church

RAYMOND B. DILLARD

The seemingly unabated stream of Bible translations appearing in recent years has brought with it an intense interest in the subject of translations and translating. It is entirely proper that this concern should be so intense; the issue of what is or is not a good translation is of vital concern to the church.

The discussion has also had its impact on presbyteries, congregations, and individual members. Four overtures from presbyteries of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church were directed to the recent general assembly requesting that the Committee on Christian Education be forbidden to use *The Living Bible* in its publications. Sessions in some congregations require that the reading of the Scriptures in worship services be from a particular version. At least one congregation refuses to use church bulletins printed by the denomination since the Scripture citations are not always from the King James Version. Pulpit committees often quiz candidates regarding their attitudes to a particular translation. Individuals become incensed when the pastor or denomination uses other than their favorite version.

A healthy concern

This concern with Bible translations in our churches is a healthy one. It is hard to imagine a more crucial question for the life of the church than the availability to it of good translations of the Bible.

Much of the hubbub in our churches over the matter of Bible translations, however, stems from misunderstandings of the nature of language and of the translation process. Few Christians have ever given much thought to how the Bible should be translated or what criteria should be used to evaluate a translation's fidelity to the original biblical text.

General linguistics as a science has many implications for the conduct of the translation process. Whether one is translating medical literature from English to German or the Bible from Hebrew to English, the techniques are the same. A Christian linguist regards the biblical languages to be like any others; principles used in translating other literature must also be put to use in Bible translation.

In this article, the writer wishes to take some of the implications of general linguistics for the conduct of translation work and apply them to translating the Bible and to current discussions in the church. First we will look at a system of priorities that must control the translation process; then we will develop some criteria for judging what is a "faithful" translation of the Bible. A few notes regarding the discussion in the churches will conclude the article.

A system of priorities¹

Translation of any literature is a difficult task. An order of priorities is essential to assist in decision-making in specific instances. Four such priorities will be examined here: (1) the priority of meaning over form; (2) the priority of contextual consistency over verbal consistency; (3) the priority of the aural form over the written; and (4) the priority of the needs of the audience over tradition.

1. The priority of meaning over form

Older translations have generally tended to strive for a literal, word-for-word equivalence in the translation of the original. The result of this approach has been the production of translations of the Bible that do not read very well as English literature, but have an awkwardness in English that betrays the idiom and structure of the original language. To the extent that translators have placed their emphasis on this very tight correspondence between the source and target language, the English has become less intelligible and the communicative efficiency of the translation is reduced.

When someone says of a translation of the Bible, "Now that sounds like the Bible," we should not think of this as complimentary. Rather it is an indictment, an index of just how much we have begun to expect the Bible not to sound like our own language. Above all, the biblical writers intended to be understood. To reproduce idioms and patterns of Greek or Hebrew into English where they are not used only makes a translation less intelligible.

In contrast, contemporary linguistics has shifted our focus. The concentration now is not on identity between the two languages, but rather is on equivalence. The translator is happy to stay as close to the structure and usage of the original language as possible, but where this literalness jeopardizes the clarity of the passage, the meaning of the passage must always take the precedence over a literal correspondence. The translator dare not blunt the communicative efficiency of the Word of God in order to maintain a word-for-word transfer.

No doubt some illustrations would help at this point.

¹This set of priorities is essentially drawn from E. A. Nida and Charles Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), pp. 1-32. See also the treatment in J. Beekman and J. Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), pp. 19-44. A discussion of the relevance of linguistics to biblical studies is found in Nida, "Implications of Contemporary Linguistics for Biblical Scholarship," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972):73-89.

Hundreds of examples could have been chosen, but I have selected a few familiar ones.

	<i>The literal</i>	<i>Suggested alternative</i>
Matt. 9:15	"children of the bridechamber"	"groom's attendants" or, "guests of the groom"
Rom. 12:26	"obedience of faith"	"that nations might believe and obey"
Jas. 2:12	"law of freedom"	"law that gives freedom" ²
Gen. 18:11	"it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women"	"Sarah was past the age of childbearing" or, "Sarah no longer had monthly periods" or, "Sarah no longer menstruated"
Exod. 19:15	"do not go near a woman"	"refrain from sexual intercourse"

When I have discussed this approach to translating with students and others, there are usually a couple of objections. One is that this "goes beyond a simple translation into the realm of interpretation." It must be recognized, however, that every Bible translation, from the very first word, is *interpretation*; the mere selection of equivalents in the most literal of all translations is still interpretation. It is possible for a translation to be "too interpretative." Yet the far greater danger in our congregations is that we readily sacrifice the clarity of a text in the name of maintaining identical correspondence.

A second objection often heard is something like this: "What does this do to the priesthood of all believers?" To be sure we are all involved in interpreting the Scriptures. But the insistence of the Reformation was that we have the Scriptures *in our own language*. The precious doctrine of the priesthood of believers does not imply that each believer can understand the nuances of Greek and Hebrew idiom as they appear in English. To the contrary, it is just because of the priesthood of believers that our translations must read like natural English. If using the same number of words and the same word order of the source language makes the target language difficult to understand, then the tight identical correspondence must be sacrificed for meaning and intelligibility.

2. The priority of contextual over verbal consistency

Two points about the nature of human languages must be underscored here.

(1) Each of the world's languages segments reality in its vocabulary, and each does this in its own unique way. One language may divide the spectrum into three major colors, another into seven, or nine, or any other number. The result of the uniqueness of each language is that words in one language very rarely have a one-for-one correspondence in another language. Such overlapping of concepts prevents the translator from using the same English word for every occurrence of a particular Greek or Hebrew term.

² Readers may want to contrast the approach taken here with that of a review of the *New International Version* New Testament by D. Lowe, *Presbyterian Guardian* (March 1975), p. 52.

Above all, the biblical writers intended to be understood. . . . The translator dare not blunt the communicative efficiency of the Word of God in order to maintain a word-for-word transfer.

(2) If you consult a dictionary, you note that many words have several different meanings or nuances. Yet when we are actually speaking our own language, rarely do we feel any ambiguity about the precise meaning of a given word, for this is *determined* for us *by the context*. In the two sentences, "He had a speech impediment" and "His speech was too long," the same word *speech* is used in two distinct senses: a reference on the one hand to the ability to speak and on the other to a formal oration. We have no question, however, as to which sense is intended, for the two are unambiguously distinguished by context. It may well be the case that translation of these two sentences into some other language would require two different words for the one English term.³

In light of the uniqueness of the semantic structure of each language and the role that context plays in determining meaning, translators of the Bible must choose terms required by the English context rather than woodenly attempt to use the same English word for every occurrence of a term in one of the biblical languages. Failure to place the requirements of context above verbal consistency also jeopardizes the clarity of the Scriptures.

Once again some examples may help. The Hebrew word usually translated in English as *to know* (Hebrew, *yādd*) covers a wide range of concepts in Hebrew, ranging from mere acquaintance or cognizance to intimate love. A translator who is sensitive to context will translate "Adam had intercourse with Eve" (Gen. 4:1) rather than "Adam knew Eve"; "you only of all the families of the earth have I loved" (Amos 3:2) rather than "have I known"; "the Lord loves the way of the righteous" (Psalm 1:6) rather than "the Lord knows the way of the righteous."⁴

Similarly the Hebrew verb most often translated as *to visit* (Hebrew, *pāqad*) is used in Hebrew in other senses such as *to inspect, punish, watch over, care for*. Context then requires that we translate "God punishes the children for the sins of the fathers" (Exodus 34:7) rather than "visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children"; and "God will surely watch over you" (Genesis 50:24) rather than "God will surely visit you".⁵

The Greek term *sarx*, usually translated *flesh*, would be treated differently in the following contexts: "wise from a human point of view" (1 Cor. 1:2) instead of "according to the flesh"; "make the people of my own race jealous" (Romans 11:24) instead of "my own flesh"; "we had no relief" (2 Cor. 7:5) instead of "our flesh had no rest"; as well as "no spirit has flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39).

(Continued on page 128.)

³ This would be the case, for example, if we were translating into modern Hebrew where *dibbūr* (ability to speak) and *derāshā* (oration) would most likely be used.

⁴ So also the Greek term at Romans 8:29: "those whom he loved beforehand" rather than "foreknew."

⁵ So also the Greek term at Matthew 25:36: "I was sick and you took care of me" rather than "visited me."

The Gospel of Predestination

The Apostle Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians with a burst of praise and thanksgiving to God. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ!" God in his grace has bestowed immeasurable blessings, and in verses 3 through 14, Paul is not able to say enough by way of appreciation for them.

We cannot help but be struck by the enthusiasm of what he has to say, and how, just in his enthusiasm, he returns again and again to the theme of *predestination*. God has *chosen* us in Christ (verse 4) and has *predestinated* us in love (verse 5). God's *purpose* is set forth in Christ (verse 9), and according to the *counsel* of his will, God has predestined and appointed us (verses 11, 12).

There is no way to escape Paul's emphasis on predestination. It is much more than a mere toleration of that truth; Paul is enthusiastic, even ecstatic about it.

Hopefully we, too, can come to share this enthusiasm as we observe what Paul says about predestination, and come also to understand why predestination was such wonderful news, why it was *gospel* for Paul.

The fountain of predestination

Paul's doxology begins with an ascription of praise to God the Father: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," for it is the *Father* who has chosen and predestined us (verses 3-5). It is of course true that Jesus is our Saviour; that is his proper name. But the Father may not

be excluded from the program of redemption.

Specifically, says Paul, it is the *love* of God the Father that is the source of our election. Although we are prone to think of the Father as wrathful and the Son as loving, verse 5 says that we have been predestined in love by the Father.

From this perspective we can understand why the apostolic benediction speaks of "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the *love of God*, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." The obvious orientation of this benediction to the three persons of the Trinity makes clear that the love of God is the love of God the Father, and from this love arises predestination unto life. In Ephesians itself, there is a benediction with the form, "Peace be to the brethren and *love with faith from God the Father* and the Lord Jesus Christ (5:23).

We did not first love God, but he first loved us and predestined us. Ephesians 1:4 says that this predestination arose from before the foundation of the world. An expression like that stretches the mind further than it can be stretched, and it is no wonder that this thought excites the amazement of the Apostle.

This thought is also set out in Psalm 36:9, "For with thee is the fountain of life." It is further reinforced by the observation in Ephesians 1:5 that foreordination is according to the good pleasure of the Father's will. The Father's will is the pattern of our election. Not our faith, not our good works, nothing but the purpose of his will accounts for our predestina-

tion. Indeed, the fountain of predestination is God the Father; its source is his love, and its pattern his will.

The foundation of predestination

Paul also tells us that the foundation of predestination is God the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We are chosen *in him* (verse 4), predestined *in him* (verses 11, 12); we are predestined *through Jesus Christ* (verse 5).

What does this kind of language mean? It surely means that Jesus was not an afterthought with God, any more than men are an afterthought with God. In choosing men unto eternal life, God does not bypass the problem of sin, but effectively deals with it.

When God chose men for communion and fellowship with himself, he determined to destroy the very sin that had broken the original fellowship and communion. He determined to send his Son as the Redeemer of his people, and the Son willingly undertook that work of redemption. Hebrews 10:5-8 recalls the language of Psalm 40: "I have come to do thy will, O God." Jesus determined to do the Father's will as the Father commanded.

But the success of the Son's mission was guaranteed. He was not sent to make the best of a bad situation, but to redeem a people. These are the ones the Father has given to him. Jesus was not the chosen Redeemer apart from his people, and his people are not chosen apart from him for they are chosen in him.

This is to say that the church of God is the church of Jesus Christ. We may never think of Jesus separate from his brethren, for he says, "Behold, I and the children God has given me" (Hebrews 2:13). Nor may we think of the church separate from her Lord and Saviour, for the church is the bride of the groom, and there is an indissoluble bond between the two. There is no bride without a groom and

no groom without a bride. Jesus is the foundation of our election.

The fulfillment of predestination

Paul expands his theme still further as he shows that the fulfillment of predestination is *through the Holy Spirit*. This comes out most clearly in verses 13 and 14. Our interest in Christ is sealed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, and the life we have from Christ flows to us through the Holy Spirit who indwells us. The Spirit is also the guarantee of our inheritance as the down payment on a forthcoming legacy.

Just because of the presence of the Holy Spirit within us, we are to understand that our election to eternal life does not leave us personally untouched. According to verse 4 we are chosen *to be* holy and blameless. We cannot help but notice that this emphasis comes first in the passage. Holiness of life is not an optional extra which we may or may not choose to have according to our own predilections.

According to Ephesians 5:27, Jesus presents the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, in order that she might be holy and without blemish. The Spirit is a Holy Spirit. We are not chosen because we are holy, or even because we have faith; but we are chosen to be holy. It could not be otherwise, for the mission of Christ was to destroy the sin that separates us from God.

Verses 5 and 6 make clear that the fulfillment of election is realized *in our status as sons*. We are predestined to be sons through the grace bestowed upon us in the Beloved. This name for Christ, "Beloved," was first used of him at his baptism when God testified from heaven, "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." It was then that the Spirit of God descended upon Christ in the form of a dove.

As the brethren of Christ we are the sons of God. But as previously observed, it is *in love* that we have been predestined and that means that we become the *beloved sons* of the Father together with Christ who is preeminently and distinctively the *Beloved Son* of God. We too receive the gift of the Spirit of God, and according to Romans 8:15, 16, this Spirit of God is the Spirit of sonship whereby as sons we cry to God, "Abba, Father."

Our election is also fulfilled as we receive pardon through the blood of Christ. Paul mentions this expressly in verse 7: "In the fulness of time Christ

gave himself for us to redeem us from our sins."

As we look back over these opening verses in Ephesians 1, we see that Paul has mentioned the great benefits that flow to us from Christ. These include sanctification or holiness of life, adoption to sonship, and justification whereby we are forgiven and made acceptable to God. We can see why the Apostle is not only enthusiastic but ecstatic.

The goal of our predestination

At the same time, God does not exist for our "benefits"; we exist for his benefit. Therefore Paul concludes by saying that it is all to the praise of his glory (verse 14). Thus we reach the goal of our creation and of our re-creation.

According to Answer 6 of the Heidelberg Catechism, our goal is to know God, to love him, and then with him in eternal blessedness to praise and glorify him. Or, in the language of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Answer 1, "man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever." Both aspects of this answer come to the fore in what Paul says so enthusiastically about predestination.

Predestination as a problem

For many people, however, predestination is a problem. For Paul it was not a problem, but an answer and therefore a matter of praise. Predestination explains why we stand where we are standing now as baptized believers in the body of Christ.

But we must ask whether this message of predestination is really *gospel*. Is it gospel, or is it simply secret information intended only for the congregation of believers? Is it something to tell the world because it is good news, or is it to be held back until people come to believe? Is it a doctrine the church can discuss openly, or only in "executive session"? Will it discourage those outside of her communion and fellowship from coming to Christ? Can we preach this doctrine as *gospel*?

The Westminster Confession of Faith says that the doctrine of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care. Some have concluded from this that we should be silent about the doctrine altogether. Paul's attitude is obviously different; he is not timid, but he is very bold. This truth, and the reality which the truth speaks, are for the glory of God. If we do not speak out, we are rob-

bing God of his glory.

We must ever keep in mind that there is no truth in Scripture that militates against the salvation of any man. It is precisely by glorifying God that we are to enjoy him.

The so-called problem with election, however, becomes especially acute for many people when the other side of the doctrine is brought into consideration, the reality of reprobation. If we preach that some men are elect, we must also say that some are not elect. When Paul writes that God has chosen us, he is thinking of individual men. We may be tempted to think that election may be good news for those who are elect, but reprobation is not good news for anybody.

Predestination as good news

To think this way really underestimates the problem to which election addresses itself as the divine answer. According to Ephesians 2:1-5, men are dead in trespasses, in sins. There is a different spirit in control of their lives, not the Spirit of God, but the spirit of bondage and slavery.

Men are under the wrath of God, all men. In that condition their only hope is God's election and the power of his Spirit. If God passes us by — reprobation — we pass inevitably into the condemnation of God's wrath forever. If we are unwilling to acknowledge that truth, and if we are unwilling to make it an element in the church's proclamation to all men, what we are in effect doing is attempting to give men some other comfort than the comfort that is found alone in the name of Jesus Christ, for election is election in Christ.

It is perfectly true that the natural man will twist this truth of election and reprobation as he will twist every truth of the Scripture to his own destruction. But the truth itself is not designed for his destruction. The truth is designed to drive him to Jesus Christ and to cause him in his helplessness to cry out to the Savior for mercy.

It is precisely the truth of God that is borne home to the heart by the power of the Spirit. If the Spirit of God convicts men of sin, and of the truth of election, if he convicts them of the truth of reprobation, what happens? Men do not turn up their noses at the truth; they do not speculate about it. They cry to God for mercy. A doctrine that provokes that kind of response is surely nothing less than

(Continued on next page.)

(Continued from page 123.)

the gospel of the grace of God.

A student once came to this writer to discuss some conversations he had been having with a man in prison. He was not sure what to do with the turn the conversations had taken. The prisoner had been raised as a Calvinist and reasoned as many do: If I am elect, I will be saved; but if I am not, I am lost—and there is nothing I can do about it.

The man was right. To tell him that there was something he *could* do to escape the force of election would be to lead him away from Christ, back into himself, and that would be fatal. There was nothing he could do. His problem was that the truth he acknowledged with his lips he did not understand with his heart. He did not savingly understand it. He did not see himself as lost and under the wrath of God, did not see that there really was nothing he could do. And he never would understand it savingly if, in the interest of "evangelism," his counsellor were to avoid it altogether!

No minister can deal directly with the heart; only the Holy Spirit can do that. But the minister can teach the gospel concerning Jesus Christ—that the Savior takes helpless sinners and transforms them, that he receives them on the basis of what he has done for them, that he saves them. This is precisely the word of gospel with which the Holy Spirit brings his transforming power to bear upon men and in them for their salvation. Anything less than the full truth about Jesus will not lead men to him.

To see the truth of the gospel—including predestination and reprobation—in the power of the Spirit drives us to the Redeemer. If we do not see this doctrine with enlightened eyes and renewed hearts, Jesus will never be, and can never be, our *only* comfort in life and in death.

The revelation of the grace of God in predestination is only the beginning of what is true in every phase of our Christian experience. Redemption is all of grace, and grace glorifies God. We delight in the doctrine of predestination, just as Paul did, because our chief purpose in life is to glorify God and to enjoy him. To boast in predestination is not to boast in ourselves, but in Christ.

Professor Shepherd teaches systematic theology at Westminster Theological Seminary.

A Study on Church Offices

JOHN K. REEVES

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America appointed an Ad Interim Committee to Study the Question of the Number of Offices in the church. Historically, Southern Presbyterianism has held to the view proposed by James Thornwell that there are basically only two church offices, those of elder and deacon, though recognizing a distinction in function within the eldership between those who rule and those who also preach.

In the century since Thornwell's day, the "two-office" view has largely been passed by as three offices came to be recognized. When the Presbyterian Church in America was founded (in December 1973), there was concern to return to the Thornwell position. Out of this concern and the various practical problems involved, the Ad Interim Committee was established. This committee is reporting the results of its study to the Third General Assembly to be held beginning September 9, 1975.

The report should be of considerable interest to all those in Presbyterian and Reformed churches. The question is one of what the Scripture teaches in this area of church office. It will spark considerable discussion within the PCA and perhaps elsewhere, and could lead to a deepened understanding of biblical church government.

A "Rough Draft" was sent to all PCA churches earlier in the year. After responses to this were received and another meeting held, a "Second Rough Draft" was prepared. A summary of that draft is given here with comments.

"Biblical and Theological Issues"

Under this heading the committee sets forth its understanding of basic biblical principles that guided the committee's report on its assigned concern. The report affirms the view (Thornwell's) of only two ordinary and perpetual offices, those of elder and deacon. It recognizes that within the eldership there are some, not of differ-

ent rank, but with additional gifts and added functions, specifically in regard to public preaching and administering of the sacraments. The earlier draft had referred to these as "Ministers of the Word"; the second draft terms them "Preaching Elders."

Another principle set forth is that the elder is ordained to an office and may be ordained "by any court of the church, as a plurality of Elders or Presbyters." Therefore, one who has been ordained as a (Ruling) Elder and later, after appropriate training and examination, is called to the functions of a Preaching Elder should *not* be reordained.

Comment: The sentence referring to ordination might be clarified by saying one is ordained by the "appropriate court of the church," precluding the impression that Preaching Elders might be ordained by a session, if this is the intention of the report. If otherwise, the committee's meaning should be spelled out more clearly.

This section on basic principles also affirms the propriety of special training, licensure, and examination by presbytery of the Preaching Elder. And finally, it affirms the good order of the sacraments' being administered by Preaching Elders but allows Ruling Elders, approved and licensed by presbytery, to administer sacraments where a Preaching Elder is not available.

Another important and interesting section of the report deals with the committee's responses to various overtures and motions assigned to it by the General Assembly. One overture was concerned with who may serve as moderator of a session; the report answers that a session may choose any of its members to be moderator for a term of one year at a time.

A second overture brought forth a lengthy response summarized as follows: (1) Ordination is to an office, not to a function. (2) "The office of elder includes various functions, not limited to the 'pastorate,'" and thus

Preaching Elders may be ordained with a call to function as missionary, evangelist, chaplain, church executive or administrator, seminary professor, college teacher of Bible, or headmaster or teacher in a Christian day school. (3) To have Preaching Elders other than those in pastorates serving on committees of higher courts is not out of keeping with the parity of the eldership. (4) Unordained persons serving the church are under the jurisdiction of their own sessions. If working for a committee of a higher court, appropriate examination and qualifications shall be determined by the court of the committee for which they are working.

Comment: In the first draft, this response included the judgment that a Preaching Elder should hold membership in a local congregation; but this was removed in the second draft. *Guardian* readers will remember the discussion of Dr. Van Til's plight and his concern to be a ministerial member of a local congregation. [A proposed new Form of Government for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church would permit Dr. Van Til an active, voting membership in a local congregation, while reserving the presbytery's right to exercise discipline over him.]

Also deleted in the second draft was a statement that would permit a session to choose all of its representatives to presbytery without being required to include the Preaching Elder. This deletion seems to be much for the better.

Administering the sacraments

In response to a question concerning who might properly administer the sacraments, the second draft states that this "should normally be done in conjunction with the preaching of the Word." The report declares that the administration of the sacraments should be left normally to Preaching Elders, but allows for Ruling Elders, when examined and approved, to administer the sacraments where a Preaching Elder is not available.

Comment: There are several aspects of this response to which one might take exception. It could be pointed out that this would necessitate a change in the Confession of Faith which says that neither sacrament "may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the Word lawfully ordained" (XXVII, 2). This refers to the Preaching Elders, as most would agree. But why this teaching of the Confession? Most probably the answer is that the uniform position

Third PCA Assembly faces crucial issues

On September 9, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America convenes at the First Presbyterian Church of Jackson, Mississippi. The assembly is faced with a docket of issues, many of which will set the pattern for the future existence of this youngest Presbyterian body.

The now-named Presbyterian Church in America was formed on December 3, 1973 in its first assembly at Birmingham, Alabama. Made up largely of congregations that had withdrawn from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (the "Southern" Church), it has shown rapid growth since. With many congregations now located outside the southern states, its membership is estimated at over 80,000 in more than 380 congregations. Most recently, a presbytery was organized in western Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Among the items on the docket that promise considerable debate is the report of the Ad Interim Committee to Study the Question of the Number of Offices [see the report by the Rev. John Reeves elsewhere in this issue]. The assembly will also be asked to approve having its Committee on Christian Education enter into a joint publications venture with the corresponding committee of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, whose assembly has already approved it; some negative reaction to this proposal is expected.

A continuing debate on the methods

and practices to be followed in foreign mission activity is also expected. The Committee on the Mission to the World was instructed by a previous assembly to spell out its intentions in various parts of its operation, especially in respect to cooperation in non-Reformed mission works and in areas of fund-raising.

Budget matters will also be in the spotlight. During recent months, the PCA's foreign mission program has received nearly 100% of its budget, but in home missions and Christian education contributions have fallen seriously short of the need.

It seems fair to summarize the situation in the PCA at present as one of growing pains and initial shake-down period. There is a tendency, sometimes overestimated, to see the church as polarized between a "hard-line Reformed" element and a "soft-line Evangelical" group. But from the beginning of its existence, the Presbyterian Church in America has sought to avoid any splintering of its forces and so far has been successful. The PCA is surely one of the most encouraging developments in biblical Christianity in recent years. May the Lord of the church give this branch of his vine great wisdom in its affairs.

[The *Guardian* will give a full report on the actions of the Third General Assembly in the October issue.]

—J.J.M.

of Reformed churches is not merely that administration of the sacraments "should normally be done in conjunction with the preaching of the Word," but rather that it should of necessity be done in conjunction with the preaching of the Word.

In response to a question concerning the proper status of an Assistant Pastor, the committee referred to the right of a congregation to elect its own officers. Since an Assistant Pastor is not elected by a congregation (according to the present Book of Church Order), the committee recommended amending the book to remove this title altogether, leaving the Pastor and Associate Pastor, both of whom are elected by the congregation.

Comment: The committee's report is bold in many respects. And with several exceptions, it does seem to present recommendations that are built on biblical principles. It may be hoped the

Assembly will not act hastily in this matter or reject the report simply because of its "boldness."

Studies and articles concerning such basic passages as Acts 20, 1 Timothy 3 and 5:17, Titus 1 and 1 Peter 5, as well as historical studies of these issues, would be most beneficial before final decisions are made on these questions. The writings of James Thornwell in debate with Charles Hodge concerning some of these basic matters of church polity should also be studied; they touch on many of the issues involved and are worthy of most careful consideration.

The Rev. John Reeves is pastor of the Moss Point (Mississippi) Presbyterian Church. The report he discusses above will be a major item on the docket of the forthcoming General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Dear Duncan:

(Continued from page 119.)

Corinthians 13:8-11 the Greek uses one word (a key word at that) four times in close succession. And yet in this passage on love the KJV translates this same word four different ways (fail, vanish away, done away, and put away). I am not criticizing, but only saying to those who want consistency in translation and who appeal to the KJV for this—I am only saying to them, "Caution!"

As a matter of fact, many times the NIV is more consistent than the KJV. For example, in Ephesians in translating *dunamis* the KJV flip-flops between "power" and "might," whereas the NIV consistently uses "power" every time. In 2 Corinthians 12:9 the KJV even shifts the translation in the same sentence! It goes from "strength" to "power," whereas the NIV uses "power" in both cases. In 1 Corinthians (KJV) a key word, *schisma*, is translated two times by "divisions" (1:10; 11:18) and once by "schism" (12:25); but the NIV uses "divisions" all three times. In Ecclesiastes 7:25, 27 and 29, the KJV translates the same word in three different ways (reason, account, inventions)! But the NIV keeps them basically the same (scheme of things [twice] and schemes).

Now, I do think that there are times when the NIV may have needlessly introduced variations, and your comments on "works" will be carefully checked out. My colleagues obviously disagree with me, as is seen by the final translation. Some did it for clarity; others to avoid tiresome monotony. And I respect them for their careful judgment. But a person must be very cautious in preferring the KJV for being more consistent than the NIV, because, as has been seen by a few random examples, the KJV itself is not always consistent.

A love of the traditional

There is one final matter, Duncan, that I want to stress—one, I think, that underlies your entire review: the veneration of the traditions of men. You are in the company of many fine scholars in this regard, including at least one Westminster theologian whom I admire and love greatly.

Let me explain. You—and others with you—wax eloquent (how do you like the King James terminology?) when you write that "almost certainly, no version in English will ever be able to equal the majesty and dignity of that classic of classics, the King James

Bible." The Westminster professor whom I mentioned concludes his review of the NIV by saying that he would recommend the KJV for private reading, public reading and memorization.

Frankly, I find that incomprehensible. And especially from Westminster men! That is the last place I would expect to find such an attitude. If there is one thing I associate Westminster with, it is its belief that the Bible is *The Infallible Word of God*, as is summarized in this title of the one book the faculty collaborated in writing. Now if someone really believes the Bible is the infallible Word of God, why in all the world would he want that Word to be clouded over with words that few can understand? Why would he want one passage from God to be obscured, let alone hundreds and hundreds as they are in the KJV?

I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, inerrant in every detail. I believe it is the one and only place we find God's will for us. It is a rock that is firm and immovable—a source of comfort, a guide for living. Well, why should we permit even a small portion of God's Word to be hidden from God's people and the world under an antiquated King James jargon that no one understands?

Let me give you a very real example. Not long ago I was at a fund-raising dinner for the NIV. Before the meeting I moved in an anonymous way among the people to get a feel for the audience. I went up to one godly saint and played dumb. He had read the entire Bible through twenty-six times! Praise God for such wonderful people!

So I asked him a few questions about the meaning of the Bible—he was carrying a King James Bible. I asked him, "Sir, could you tell me what the word 'sincere' means in 1 Peter 2:22?" He looked at it and said he thought it had something to do with not being hypocritical. He had missed entirely the point the Holy Spirit was trying to get across to him—all because this "classic of classics" was unintelligible.

Then I asked him to turn to verse 9 and help me out with the word "peculiar." He mumbled something about a Christian's being distinctive. Oh, oh! How he has missed the comfort and treasures from the Word of God. The NIV translated that accurately by "a people belonging to God." When that man's wife dies and he is left alone in this world, what comfort will he re-

ceive from 1 Peter 2:9? None. Unless somebody helps him out, he will never know the Holy Spirit was saying to him through Peter that he belongs to God, and therefore everything is all right, even though his wife has died. God will care for him and comfort him. Oh, he can find this truth elsewhere in the Bible, but he won't find it right here where the Holy Spirit is teaching us in 1 Peter 2:9.

Now we were not dealing with some obtuse Old Testament genealogy, ritual or prophecy, but with the New Testament, and with Peter—with vibrant, vital teachings that are practical for our everyday living. And this godly saint, who had read the KJV through twenty-six times, did not understand the key ideas. What comfort, what admonitions, what encouragement he had never seen in God's Word!

And what is he going to do with Paul, who Peter said was hard to understand? What will the vast majority of Americans do who rarely go to church and never read the KJV? And will the little children have to wait to find out what God says until they read it through twenty-six or perhaps fifty-two times? Or are we to be satisfied that they understand just the general, main themes that God wants to tell them?

Dear Duncan, and all you venerators of the King James, don't you see how you are teaching the traditions of men and not the Word of God? You who love the Word of God so much, you who believe it is God's only message to us, why, oh, why, do we still withhold God's Word from our people, from God's little lambs? You theological professors, you eloquent preachers of God's Word, you cannot go with each lamb of the flock of God every day to tell him what the King James means.

Do not give them a loaf of bread, covered with an inedible, impenetrable crust, fossilized by three and a half centuries. Give them the Word of God as fresh and warm and clear as the Holy Spirit gave it to the authors of the Bible. When the Holy Spirit inspired the New Testament, he did not cause it to be written in the unclear, philosophical language of a Plato or an Aristotle, nor in the lofty language of literary scholars. No, the Spirit inspired it in the language of the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker.

For any preacher or theologian who loves God's Word to allow that Word

Here & There

Mason City, Neb. — *The Presbytery of the Dakotas (OPC) is conducting a ministers' retreat here, Sept. 2-4, with Dr. Paul Woolley as guest speaker on the subject, "Crumbs from an Aging Loaf" (!).*

Valdosta, Ga. — *The congregation of Westminster Presbyterian Church has called the Rev. Robert L. LaMay of Columbia, Tenn., to be its pastor. This church recently transferred from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the Presbyterian Church in America.*

Wilmington, Del. — *The congregation of Emmanuel Orthodox Presbyterian Church has extended a call to the Rev. Arthur J. Steltzer to be its pastor. The Steltzers have recently returned from missionary service in Ethiopia.*

Harriman, Tenn. — *The West Hills Presbyterian Church is requesting dismissal from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in order to unite with the Tennessee Valley Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America. Its pastor, the Rev. Luder Whitlock, has accepted a call to a teaching position at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Miss.*

Middletown, Del. — *The congregation of Grace Orthodox Presbyterian Church has called Mr. Neil Lodge to be its pastor. Mr. Lodge is a recent graduate of Westminster Seminary and resides at 202 N. Broad St., Middletown, DE 19709.*

KARL & DEBBIE TO VISIT WEST COAST AREA

Karl and Debbie Dortzbach plan to make a speaking tour of West Coast states during November, beginning in the north and working southward. Interested church groups should contact, as soon as possible, the area "coordinator"

John K. Novinger
6141 Lime Ave., Long Beach, CA 90805
(213-422-4401)

The Dortzbachs particularly desire opportunities to present an evangelistic message to people who have heard of their ordeal. They also welcome inquiries from any who may be willing to serve as a "coordinator" in other areas of the country.

ATTENTION: PASTORS & CLERKS OF SESSION

You are requested to send names and addresses (and phone numbers if available) of all members who have moved out of your area during the past year, to

The Rev. Robert H. Graham
9249 Carlton Oaks Dr., Apt. 76
Santee, CA 92071

Mr. Graham is Field Missionary for the (OPC) Presbytery of Southern California, but desires to have all names of members who have moved in order to serve your church and other presbyteries.

to go on being misunderstood because of the veneration of an archaic, not-understood version of four centuries ago, is inexcusable, and almost unconscionable.

Now maybe the NIV is not the answer. I happen to think it is, and that the more than a hundred Evangelical translators who hold to the infallibility of the Word of God have produced a great version. But be that as it may—at least feed the people with a version of your own choice. Give them the Word of God in an accurate form—a form they can understand. They need it.

May God be merciful to us, to whom his Word has been entrusted. And may his blessings be on your work.

Dr. Palmer is Executive Secretary for the New International Version translation project of the New York International Bible Society. He is a minister of the Christian Reformed Church and formerly taught at Westminster Theological Seminary.

Aug./Sept., 1975

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Translators, Translations, and the Church

(Continued from page 121.)

Reviewers of Bible translations are often critical of a translation that sacrifices consistency in the translation of some terms.⁶ This criticism can be quite unjust. The use of a variety of terms in the target language for one term in the source language is required by the very nature of human languages. If warranted by the context and needed to make the sense of a passage clear, the translator must always give priority to the context above verbal consistency.

3. The priority of the aural over the written

This can also be stated as the priority of the needs of the hearer over the reader. For the Bible translator it means that he must be constantly sensitive to how his translation will sound when read aloud in worship or on a broadcast.

On the one hand the translator wants to avoid leaving open the possibility that a vulgar or obscene interpretation could be placed on his words. I expect it is for this reason that the word *donkey* is used in preference to *ass* in most American English translations. The translator also wants to be alert to the possibility of unintentional oral puns that produce new "Bible jokes."

On the other hand the translator wants to be sure that he is not relying on punctuation, spelling, or capitalization to clear up what would potentially be ambiguous or misleading. An example of this would be Galatians 3:3: "having begun by the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" Does Paul refer to the human spirit, or the Spirit of God? It is possible to remove the ambiguity for the reader here by capitalizing the *s* in *Spirit*; but for the sake of the hearer, one may have to insert the word *Holy*. Thus, "having begun by the Holy Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?"

As Nida notes, there is an important advantage in giving priority to the heard form of the language: one can be certain that if it is understood by the average hearer, it is more likely to be fully intelligible to the silent reader.⁷

4. The priority of the needs of the audience over tradition

This can be stated somewhat more narrowly as the priority of the needs of the non-Christian audience over the Christian audience. If the translation is to be an effective tool in evangelism, for it to confront men with the Word of God it must be intelligible and unhindered by the use of archaic or traditional phrases that have little communicative power.

There is a much more fundamental issue here. Every field of human endeavor has its own particular jargon, a technical vocabulary used by a special group. The church too has acquired a jargon, a sub-dialect of English in which we worship and pray, but a dialect that is quite different from our daily speech. Just as much as the non-Christian has difficulty with archaisms and esoteric vocabulary in Bible translations, so too he is "out of it" in a worship service where the jargon of hallowed traditions of the past is not understood by him and thus prevents his hearing the Word of God with its full impact.

If we want the non-Christian to be converted, or if we

want to reach our own children—who in their daily speech are each generation farther removed from the traditional practice of the church—we must speak to them in the language they use and give them a Bible translation that communicates the Word of God with full intelligibility. The writer wonders if even "churched" people understand why "Jacob sod pottage";⁸ but some church sessions are ready to insist that this is how it must be read from the pulpit.

The need to communicate the gospel clearly forces us to take account of the fact of language evolution. All languages are always changing. For the linguist it means that he must aim his translation to a younger age group (around 20-25 years old) in order to give his translation greater longevity. For the individual Christian or congregation it means that we may need to shift our emphasis in worship and personal reading to more recent translations in the dialect of English we now use.

I cannot refrain from at least mentioning the traditional use in the church of the archaic pronouns *thou, thee, thy, thine, and ye*. It has long been regarded as a mark of Christian devotion to preserve this distinctive way of addressing the transcendent Deity. Reviewers often object to translations that abandon this traditional usage of the church. To the contrary, one must remember that during the period of Shakesperian English these forms were the equivalent of the ordinary pronouns in use today and were heard in bawdy humor as often as in prayer. These forms did not originally mark a distinctive way of addressing Deity, nor did the writers of Scripture use any such distinct forms.

The danger in the continuing use of such forms in the church is that they interfere with the communication of the Word. To the non-Christian they appear to be some semi-magical, secret way that Christians implore God. I wonder how many Christians are themselves hesitant to lead in public prayer due to their discomfort in using these archaic forms. The sooner this practice is abandoned the more effective our translations and public prayers will be.

All that has been said in the foregoing about these priorities in Bible translation can be boiled down to saying quite simply that the translator must be ever vigilant that he not blunt the sword of the Spirit. While there are many, many other considerations that bear on the translation process, the readability and communicative efficiency of the translation must be paramount. The souls of men and the honor of God are at stake.

Fidelity in a translation

How then do we judge whether or not a translation is "faithful," fit for devotion, study, and use in public worship? To be sure, criticizing Bible translations is not a difficult task—there are so many considerations to be taken into account, it is not difficult to point out failures in various versions. General linguistics has shown us that a translation of any literature always not only loses some of the original, but also adds to it; this is inescapable and applies as well to Bible translations.

A translation that is a good translation is one where the priorities outlined above have been observed. We can no longer afford to call a translation "faithful" if it simply attempts a direct transfer of Greek or Hebrew into English.

⁶ Contrast the approach taken by D. Lowe in the previously mentioned review.

⁷ Nida, *Theory and Practice*, p. 31.

⁸ Genesis 25:29, *KJV*.

If we want the non-Christian to be converted, or if we want to reach our own children, . . . we must speak to them in the language they use and give them a Bible translation that communicates the Word of God with full intelligibility.

The focus must be on its communicating the equivalent message of the original, while taking as few liberties as possible. A faithful translation is one in which the meaning of the original has been the fundamental and overriding concern.

But not only meaning is crucial. The translation must also communicate that meaning in a style that is as clear and idiomatic as the original was to its hearers. That is to say that a Bible translation must not sound like a translation, but must sound like good English. The writers of Scripture communicated the Word of God in a way that was natural for both writer and reader; our translations must also read naturally. Naturalness is a prerequisite for understanding.

So then two major criteria are needed to evaluate the fidelity of a translation—does it say what the original did? is it a natural, readable style? A translator who does not give the reader the opportunity to understand clearly what God is saying has defeated his own purpose.⁹ A church that insists on the use of a translation of the Bible that has a low degree of communicative efficiency is hindering the work of the Spirit of God. Think how much more reproving, rebuking, and exhorting can be done if a large part of the sermon time is not consumed by the necessity of explaining the translation that was read.

A perspective on the current situation in the church

An abundance of modern versions confronts the church today. What version should the church use? Or is that question itself illegitimate? The King James Version of the Bible, which has been a virtual standard in the church for generations, becomes progressively dated with each year that passes. Fewer and fewer Christians regard it any longer as their most frequently used version. Is there anything on the horizon or already present to replace it?

This writer doubts that any one translation will again become "the Bible" of the Protestant Church, or even of Evangelical Protestantism, for many generations to come. Ministers must themselves become accustomed to using other versions more widely and must encourage members to sample the rich variety of good translations that are available.

Of course, if this description of the situation is correct, many problems follow. Should one version always be used in the pulpit? What version should we memorize?

It may be that a session will feel obligated to require the use of one version for the formal reading of Scripture from the pulpit in order to satisfy the desire of members to be able to follow the reading in their own Bibles. Hopefully the version chosen would not be one of the archaic translations. Having been saddled by sessions with a request that an older translation be used during the reading of

Scripture, I can only relate that I regard it as an interference with the preaching of the Word of God to require use of a version that, due to its age or approach, obscures what God is saying.

From this writer's vantage, however, it would be a better situation if the minister were allowed to select a translation for the reading in a given service that best reflects the text for the sermon of that hour. Remember that many of the books of the prophets consist of sermons first delivered orally to hearers and that many of the epistles were written to be read in congregations of the early church. Exact copies were not in the hands of the original hearers and need not be in ours.

Whatever the conclusion be, clearly a new approach to the question is needed. Ministers may need to wean members from older and less effective translations. Christians must become more knowledgeable about the translation process and the fact that translation is inherently interpretation; they need to read more widely in various versions.

To be sure, some translations of the Bible are decidedly inferior to others. Some may even be "dangerous," injurious to the truth of God. But our facing these questions cannot be by retreat to literalism or the use of older "trusted" versions.

Dr. Dillard is Assistant Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature at Westminster Theological Seminary. His Ph.D. degree is from the College of Hebrew and Cognate Learning of Dropsie University. He is currently an editor of the New International Version Old Testament and spent the summer in Greece working on Job and Proverbs for that translation. He reads fifteen different languages.

A Sticky Question

Which Bible version shall we use? Professor Dillard makes a strong case for use of good modern translations in the pulpit, for private devotions, and for use in memorizing.

And the time of change-over is upon us. Even so, there are many difficult problems involved. Not the least of these are those feelings of "at-homeness" with the familiar King James, especially among those who grew up with it. There are problems for the untrained Christian in choosing a version, and the danger of making a choice simply because "I like it better."

It makes you wonder how long there were Englishmen who insisted on keeping Wycliff's version after that new-fangled "King James" was first produced. Perhaps all the current work of producing new translations is merely laying the foundation for one yet to come that will eventually be the "Authorized Version" for most of us.

We do not expect all our readers to agree very readily with Dr. Dillard's views. But we do believe that all Christians must be aware of the crucial issues involved in this making of many versions in our day.

—J. J. M.

⁹ Beekman and Callow, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

A Wise Mouth, A Kind Tongue

HERMINA DAVIES

The women's Presbyterial of the Northwest (OPC) did a daring thing at their Spring meeting. They discussed the lady of the manse and what she can be to the Lord, to her husband, and to the congregation.

This was not a "clear-the-air" sort of discussion, nor did it presuppose that if there is a congregation and a pastor's wife, there must of necessity be problems. They simply hoped that this Christian discussion would bring a better understanding of how we can *all* further Christ's kingdom work together—and that is exactly the kind of discussion it became. Beautiful!

Before the meeting, both pastors' wives and women from congregations *outside* of the Northwest Presbytery were asked to send types of problems pastors' wives can be and also how they can be blessings to their husbands and congregations. The replies were anonymous, so no one was able to place the writers. The response sent in by the so-called lay women (but pastors' wives are "lay women," too!) showed blessings far out-numbering problems!

The "knots" suggested about pastors' wives were various:

"Our pastor's wife is too aloof; she's not friendly enough."

"The pastor's wife doesn't really care about us, or show that she cares."

"Our pastor's wife is not hospitable."

"She tries to please *all* of the people *all* of the time!"

"She doesn't become involved in the lives of those in the congregation," or "She becomes *too* involved."

Interestingly, the defensive replies to these came more from congregational members in the Presbyterial than from the pastors' wives themselves:

"We are *all* members of one body, the body of Christ. We're to bear one another's burdens *in the Lord*. It doesn't say to bear burdens like our own, or like those of our own age, or our own interests. As *Christian women*, all of us have to make it a part of our business to be sensitive to the needs of each particular person. We need to cross barriers to reach out to people. We need to listen more!"

Is the pastor's wife wearing herself too thin? Perhaps she does try too hard to please all the people all the time. This is where the congregation can help her. Don't let her spread herself too thin! She isn't there to keep peace; she is there to serve the Lord *as a member of the congregation*. Pray for her in the same way you pray for other women in the congregation, that she may be an example of a godly woman taking care of her husband and children, and trying to take her place in the body of Christ in a mature and godly way.

Blessings from pastors' wives

But the blessings these wives can be to the congregation far out-numbered the problems:

"Her humility is such an example to us."

"She never complains about the physical and financial burden of having the manse become the 'entertainment' center."

"She is accessible to any who come to her door with problems."

"Her friendliness is a blessing and is essential to creating good will in the congregation."

"Her 'open house' hospitality is so easy-going. She's such a cheerful and gracious hostess."

"She becomes personally involved with the elderly."

"She is a channel of communication between her husband and the congregation."

There were many more for which we are thankful to God. For it is our Triune God we want to glorify, not ourselves!

Problems for pastors' wives

The group also discovered that pastors' wives have their problems:

"How do we do a deed of mercy in the community in Christ's name without its becoming something that obligates the recipient to come to 'our church?'"

"Ours is a lonely position. Where can we turn for those personal friendships that we need as human beings?"

"How do we maintain a balance as a homemaker and mother while pursuing a ministry for the Lord on the outside?"

"No matter what we do, or don't do, or how we do it, we're criticized."

"If we do too much in the church, we're considered to be 'running' the church. If we do too little, we're accused of being indifferent to the programs of the church."

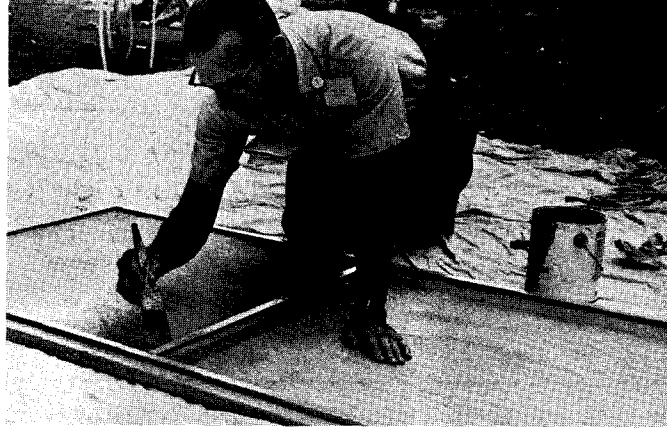
"How can we guard the precious time alone as a family in a busy pastorate?"

"We're expected to be the congregation's idea of perfection."

"How do we accept the large blocks of time our husbands spend in evening ministry?"

"How do I learn to sleep even when he has to be away very late?"

Concerning our problems as pastors' wives, will you as members of the congregation help us? Where we err, tell us lovingly and pray *with us* and *for us*. We long to be proper helpmeets for our husbands, and a proper witness to the congregation



COVENANT COLLEGE HOLDS "YOKE WEEK"

During summer vacation, some 200 people from across the country journeyed to Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, to donate time and labor in fixing up and cleaning up the campus of Covenant College.

College officials estimate that the week of volunteer labor was worth more than \$20,000. In addition to working, volunteers had time to use the college's recreational facilities. The college also feels the annual "Yoke Week" builds interest and support for the college itself.

in the Lord.

Do we seem aloof? Perhaps we're frightened! "Virtues don't come to us automatically as soon as we become pastors' wives! Are we made to feel that we have to measure up? If we're aloof, what is your attitude toward us? Do you forgive? Do you try to love us? Do you come to us on a one-to-one basis?"

God created a help for Adam suited to his needs. God gave us to our particular husbands for their particular needs. It is God who equips us to meet those needs, and it is God who knows the kind of help our husbands need.

Summing it up

It was recognized that we all are human. All of us have inconsistencies, both those of us in pastoral families and those without. One woman said, "The relationship of a pastor's wife to the congregation is like the marriage relationship. We are one in the Lord. We need to back each other up!" How true!

We walk a narrow path. Being "one" with that man in the pulpit has to make the pastor's wife sensitive to the burden he bears, even to the burdens he cannot share with his wife. We pastors' wives are all weak and foolish and need love and understanding.

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Proverbs 31:26). If she

can be that kind of pastor's wife, if she can be that kind of fellow member of the congregation, then perhaps she can also be the sort of helpmeet to her husband so that he is "known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land" (verse 23).

I left that meeting of the Presbyterian with two conclusions. I am grateful to God for asking me to "wear two hats." And, if these young women at that meeting are representative of the future of our church,

then as far as the women are concerned, we need have no fear. That future is in good hands, by the grace of God!

Mrs. John Davies has "worn two hats" for some forty years, serving with her husband as a missionary to the Menominee Indians in Wisconsin and then in his pastorate in Wildwood, New Jersey. Now in "retirement," they serve together at the chapel mission in Glenwood, Washington.

Dear Sarah:

I am terribly concerned about the empty pews in our church. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that I'm concerned about the lack of concern on the part of the officers and members.

The pastor said it was the job of the congregation to fill the empty pews, and the congregation seems to think it is the pastor's job. The church officers apparently infer that it is up to God to do the job.

—Concerned.

Dear concerned:

From what you say, your church seems to need *leadership* in bringing new people in. Perhaps God has raised *you* up for such a day as this. Perhaps you could give needed leadership by your own example—bringing a neigh-

bor, friend, or co-worker to fill the pew next to you.

Have you thought of having a Bible study in your home and asking your neighbors to come? Filling pews will come only as there is a hunger for God's Word, and home Bible studies are excellent for introducing people to Scripture in a personal, practical and stimulating way.

Don't let yourself become a victim of the "let-George-do-it syndrome" that seems to have paralyzed your church. May God grant you the grace to take the leadership if "only" by example, as his Spirit has opened your eyes to a real need. Remember what Jesus said to those who were looking for miracles: "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). And that is *your* faith, not the faith of the officers or of the other members!

—Sarah.

The Changing Scene

HENRY W. CORAY

The humor of God

I hope I will not be charged with irreverence when I say I believe there is an element of humor residing in the Godhead. Three times in the Psalms we are told that God laughed.

God's humor was frequently expressed in a play on words. When Sarah laughed in her heart at God's promise of a son, the Lord instructed Abraham to name the child Isaac, which derives from the Hebrew word "to laugh." The Lord seems to be combining a pun with his promise, as though to show that he was laughing with the prospective parents.

All of which suggests that our heavenly Father is not only afflicted when his children are afflicted (Isaiah 63:9), but that he identifies with us in a blessed and personal way in our wholesome pleasures and delights. "He will joy over thee with singing" (Zephaniah 3:17).

Actually, there is therapeutic value in clean humor. Christian people should not despise the lighter side of life. "A cheerful heart is good medicine" (Proverbs 17:22). The Hebrew itself is even stronger: "A cheerful heart causes good health."

Would we be physicians of value in a sick world? Then we would do well to ask our God to give us merry hearts and cheerful spirits so that we might be able to speak "a word in season to him who is weary" (Isaiah 50:4).

Solzhenitsyn

The *Gulag Archipelago* is a chilling real-life commentary on the total corruption of the heart of man. The methods of torture employed by Soviet guards on Russian political (?) prisoners is not a piece of reading recommended to people with queasy stomachs.

Normally, the process of brainwashing takes place at night—the subject is more vulnerable. Intimidation, bullying, foul language, deafening sound effects, tickling, pressing of cigarettes against raw flesh, use of bright lights, threats to the prisoner's loved ones, bludgeonings, false promises, forcing one to sit on a stool for six successive days, depriving the sufferer of food and water—on and on endlessly and sickeningly runs the tragic story.

"Brother mine!" the author exhorts, "do not condemn those who, finding themselves in such a situation, turn out to be weak and confessed to more than they should have. Do not be the first to cast a stone at them" (p. 117).

Solzhenitsyn burns with fiery indignation against—whom?

the Soviet leaders? the guards? Yes, but also against the fence-riders, the balcony-sitters who refuse to take some kind of stand against exploitation and atrocity.

"In keeping silence about evil," he thunders, "in burying it so deep within us that no sign of it appears on the surface, we are *implanting* it, and it will rise up a thousandfold in the future. When we neither punish nor reproach evil-doers, we are not simply protecting their trivial old age; we are thereby ripping the foundations of justice from beneath new generations. It is for this reason, and not because of the 'weakness of indoctrinational work' that they are growing up 'indifferent.' Young people are acquiring the conviction that foul deeds are never punished on earth, that they always bring prosperity" (p. 178).

In the Bible, moral cowardice, the sin of silence when evil stalks, is condemned. "Cry aloud, spare not," God commanded Isaiah (58:1); "lift up thy voice like a trumpet and show my people their transgression."

John the Baptist's ten-word message to Herod cost him his life. Our Lord in the court of the Sanhedrin swore to his own hurt; in testifying to the truth concerning his person, he wrote his own death sentence.

*O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train.*

Correction: In the November issue of the *Guardian* I referred to Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones as rebuking his office-bearers at Westminster Chapel when they became overly concerned about the dropping off of Sunday evening attendance. The incident did occur, but the rebuke was administered not by Dr. Lloyd-Jones but by one of his predecessors, Dr. John A. Hutton. Apologies to the Doctor.

At a recent Sabbath evening service,
Halfway through the sermon,
A gentleman stood up and slowly walked
— out of the church.

When the service was over,
The man's embarrassed wife
Went to the minister and said,
"Pastor, I hope you will make allowances
For what my husband did; you see
— he walks in his sleep."

The Old Chinese Philosopher