

you?

Listen to it further, as you make up your mind: 'For all practical purposes, we can take a modern translation in hand -- even the King James with all its errors and say, "This is the Word of God." It is not the Word of God, because it is not the original, which the Holy Spirit inspired...' (a quote from Dr Palmer's article in the January, 1977, issue of *The Outlook*).

Look for a moment at the Bible, in your hand or on the pulpit, and see if your lips can frame your *Outlook's* words: '*It is not the Word of God...*' For then -- it is only the word of man!

Is that now your doctrine of Scripture?

Briefly. *The Outlook's* scenario runs like this: God once inspired the original writers of the Bible. He preserved them from all error as they committed His inspired (God-breathed) word to writing. But, alas, those original manuscripts (called the autographs, or autographa) were lost, or worn out, or destroyed in the course of time. But what happened, then, to that inspired Word? *The Outlook* says that this Word went with the autographs; God's Word was lost -- as if God's intent to preserve His inspired Word for His Church in all ages was thus easily frustrated! The inspired Word of God, according to *The Outlook*, no longer exists. History has devoured it!

Obviously, on this view, the world has been without any inspired Word from the Lord ever since the first copies were made, and originals lost.

But what good, then, for *The Outlook* to assure us that "we" (whoever that is) are now sure of the accuracy of '98 percent' of our copies! What good would it do if that 'we' were certain of 100 percent accuracy so long as the 'God-breathed' Word upon which Preaching depends was lost with the first copy? 'We' might say that the Bible on our pulpits is as pure a copy as Ivory soap -- it remains, on *The Outlook's* grounds, still the uninspired, fallible, errant word of copyists and translators. No basis, Brethren, for: 'Thus saith the Lord!'

Of course, it should be pointed out in the interests of objectivity that, in the midst of all of the dust thrown into the air at Palmer and Lindsell's expense, DeKoster never attempts an alternative explanation for his position that the Bible on his table and on the pulpit of his church "*is*, here and now, the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God." instead he retreats into mysticism. He speaks of "God's mysterious ability to use a fallible, frail, erranting human ministry to proclaim his infallible Word!" and then goes on to say:

No one, at least in the Reformed tradition, claims inerrancy, or infallibility, or inspiration for the pulpit ministry. Yet, genuine Preaching is possible, and can mark off the true Church, only because the Word of God is, in fact, here and now, conveyed to the faithful by the lips of sinful man! You know this well, Brethren. Many of you depend upon this inexplicable mystery every Lord's Day to dare to say: 'Thus saith the Lord!'....

No, this cannot be explained. Only believed -- or disbelieved. How can God convey His inspired Word across time and space by way of fallible human beings? This is, for us, an inexplicable mystery. But we are naive enough to believe (except for *The Outlook*) that God in His over-arching Providence does get His inspired, infallible, inerrant Scriptures from its writers to our pulpits., and, from our pulpits to the faithful in the pew. This is what Reformed believers gladly affirm, knowing full well, Brethren, that if you and I never believe more than we can explain, we still never believe unto salvation!

Aside from the rhetoric, let us analyze what Dr DeKoster is saying. First, he affirms that God uses sinful human ministers to proclaim the Word of God. With this affirmation we can humbly and joyfully acquiesce. Second, he affirms that God conveys his Word across time and space, from the writers of Scripture to present-day ministers and their people. To this