

premillennialists, and pretribulationists. In fact, there are even inerrantists and errantists! How can we reconcile these differences of interpretation with the claim that it is possible to have a correct understanding of the Word of God? Shall we say that all of these interpretations are correct, and that all of them are informed by the infallible Interpreter of Scripture, the Holy Spirit?

I believe that the disparity can at least partly be explained by the recognition of four factors: (1) the continuing effects of sin upon even the regenerate human understanding; (2) the differences in the systems of hermeneutics devised by biblical scholars; (3) the frequent gaps between good theory and bad practice; and (4) the frequent failure to distinguish essentials from non-essentials, or verities from distinctives.

In the midst of all of these differences of interpretation, three facts should give us hope. First, our understandings, our hermeneutics, our practice, and our emphases are, by God's grace, always remediable, always open to correction and modification. Second, all born-again Christians have more in common than they have in difference; they have a greater unity than they have diversity; there is more that should unite them than divide them. Third (quoting the words of the Westminster Confession. Chap. I. Sect. VII), "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all, yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded. and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them."

The seventh step in the transmission of God's Word is that of the proclamation of God's Word. Here we ask the question, "When, by means of the exposition, illustration, application, and persuasion, we attempt to preach upon or teach a portion of Scripture, can we properly say that we are preaching or teaching the Word of God?" In Acts 4:31 we find thousands of believers gathered together, and we are told that "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the Word of God with boldness." In Acts 8:4 we are told concerning the scattered disciples of the church in Jerusalem that "Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word." And in 2 Tim 4:2 Paul exhorts his son in the faith to "preach the word!" On the basis of many Scripture passages I believe that it is quite proper to speak of preaching or teaching the Word of God. Of course, this is only true as we approximate the content and intended meaning of Scripture, and if the Scripture which we have can properly be called the Word of God. This brings us back to the concept of "inspiredness"

Earlier in this paper it was noted that Paul writes, "All Scripture *is* God-breathed and profitable." It was pointed out that it is not exegetically defensible to translate this statement, "All Scripture was God-breathed and is profitable." Still the objection may be made. "Even though we cannot put "was" with the first predicate adjective and "is" with the second, is there not inherent in the word "God-breathed" the idea of origination? Is not Paul saying that Scripture has come from God's mouth, and therefore is the Word of God? And does this not speak of the