

# **The Strange Case of Fuller Theological Seminary**

by

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(chapter 6 from his “Battle for the Bible” 1976AD edition)

Fuller Theological Seminary was founded in 1947. It was brought into being through the efforts of Charles E. Fuller of the “Old Fashioned Revival Hour.” He secured the services of Harold John Ockenga, then minister of the Park Street Church in Boston, as president of the fledgling institution. The school opened its door with four faculty members: Wilbur Moorehead Smith, Everett F. Harrison, Carl F. H. Henry, and myself. The seminary started with thirty-seven students, and in a few years enrolled three hundred. Faculty members were added, buildings were erected, and endowments were secured.

## *ONE PURPOSE OF THE FOUNDING*

From the beginning it was declared that one of the chief purposes of the founding of the seminary was that it should be an apologetic institution. The son of the founder, Daniel Payton Fuller, had attended Princeton Theological Seminary. Princeton was neo-orthodox at best in its theological stance and had long since abandoned the tradition of biblical inerrancy represented by Charles Hodge and Benjamin Warfield. Charles Fuller wanted a place where men like his own son could receive excellent theological education. He and the founding fathers, including the founding faculty, were of one mind with respect to the Scriptures. It was agreed from the inception of the school that through the seminary curriculum the faculty would provide the finest theological defense of biblical infallibility or inerrancy. It was agreed in addition that the faculty would publish joint works that would present to the world the best of evangelical scholarship on inerrancy at a time when there was a dearth of such scholarship and when there were few learned works promoting biblical inerrancy.

## *THE FULLER STATEMENT OF FAITH*

At its founding, Fuller Seminary had no statement of faith. It was left to the founding faculty to work on, although it was clearly understood that such a statement would encompass the basic doctrines of evangelical faith as held through the ages. Several years elapsed before a doctrinal statement was finished, and in the interim a number of new members had joined the faculty. Among them was Bela Vasady who had come to Pasadena from Princeton Theological Seminary where he had been a visiting professor. It was around the doctrinal beliefs of Bela Vasady that the first theological eruption took place.

As the faculty of Fuller worked its way through the formulation of its confession of faith, it was discovered that Bela Vasady had reservations about an inerrant Scripture. When the faculty completed its work, the following

statement on Scripture was adopted by the faculty and by the Board of Trustees of the seminary: "The books which form the canon of the Old and New Testaments as originally given are plerarily inspired and free from all error in the whole and in the part. These books constitute the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

The statement on the Scriptures was as strong as any ancient or contemporary statement could be. The phrase "free from all error in the whole and in the part" could only mean that all of the Bible and every part of it is free from error. Thus, the statement declared that the Bible is free from errors in matters of fact, science, history, and chronology, as well as in matters having to do with salvation.

### *THE CASE OF BELA VASADY*

The first test of the seminary's determination to be true to this commitment was raised by the response of Bela Vasady to the statement. He made it clear that he could not honestly sign that part of the statement of faith. He was a man of great integrity and was not in the least bit disposed to sign the statement tongue in cheek. In fact, as we shall see later, the catalogs of the school included a preface to the statement of faith to the effect that every member of the faculty signed it every year without mental reservation, and that anyone who could not so sign would voluntarily leave the institution. Bela Vasady left the institution on this basis, and mutually agreeable terminal arrangements were worked out.

### *THE COMING CRISIS*

In or about 1962 it became apparent that there were some who no longer believed in the inerrancy of the Bible, among both the faculty and the board members. One of the key board members, who was later to become chairman and whose wealth helped to underwrite the annual operating budget, was C. Davis Weyerhaeuser. As the situation developed, he was to play a key role in the final outcome. He was clear in his own conviction that the Bible had errors in it. Nor did he hesitate to make his position plain. But he neither chose to resign from the institution nor was forced to resign by other board members.

A second indication of the coming crisis occurred at a faculty meeting when one member of the teaching staff declared that what he was about to say might cost him his job. He said it, but it didn't cost him his job. He made it apparent that he believed the Bible was not wholly free from error. He was joined in this by at least one other faculty member at that meeting. Neither the administration nor the board moved to censure and remove those who could no longer affirm the doctrinal statement of the seminary, at least at the point of inerrancy. The situation was allowed to drift.

A third indication of the coming crisis involved the son of the founder, Daniel Payton Fuller. Following his graduation from Fuller with the B.D. degree, he joined Harold John Ockenga as an assistant at the Park Street Church in Boston. He later went to Northern Baptist Theological Seminary where he earned the Th.D. degree. He then joined the faculty of Fuller Seminary. After he had been there several years, he went to Basel, Switzerland, to work for another doctorate under men like Karl Barth. While

Fuller was at Basel, rumors began coming back to America that he had shifted his position on the Scriptures. I personally talked to Charles E. Fuller about this on a number of occasions. In every instance he assured me that there was no truth to the rumors that his son had changed his position. He was wrong, as subsequent events demonstrated.

When Daniel Fuller returned to Pasadena upon completion of his doctoral work at Basel, he was appointed dean of the faculty. I was moved over to vice-president. Edward John Carnell, who had been president, had resigned to return to teaching. Harold John Ockenga again became president *in absentia*. It soon became known that Daniel Fuller indeed had changed his viewpoint. This was pinpointed in two major decisions that were made. The first one had to do with the appointment of Calvin Schoonhoven to the faculty. He was a Fuller Seminary graduate who also had gone to Basel, and was a close friend of Daniel Fuller. When Schoonhoven was examined for a faculty appointment, he admitted that he did not believe in an inerrant Scripture. Other faculty members and I opposed his appointment. We got nowhere. One concession was made, however. Schoonhoven was appointed to a librarian's post with the understanding that he was never to receive a faculty berth in New Testament. This decision was later nullified and he was given a teaching appointment.

The second decision related to the selection of a new president of the seminary. David A. Hubbard was Charles Fuller's candidate and Daniel Fuller's as well. He had the support of C. Davis Weyerhaeuser, too. At the time he was being considered he was on the faculty of Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. He was teaching in the field of biblical studies, and was embroiled in controversy with the administration and trustees over a mimeographed Old Testament syllabus he was using in one of his classes. The syllabus was co-authored by him and Robert Laurin, who was then on the faculty of the American Baptist Seminary in West Covina, California. The syllabus contained teachings that were opposed to historic evangelical understanding. They included matters like the non-historicity of Adam and Eve, the Wellhausen approach to the Pentateuch, the late dating of Daniel, and other points. The offensive parts had been written by Laurin who, in turn, was defended by Hubbard as an outstanding evangelical. In more recent years Laurin moved farther and farther to the left, and is now dean of the American Baptist Seminary in Berkeley.

Hubbard, one of the brightest students graduated from Fuller Seminary, maintained that his own views were orthodox. But before he was chosen to become president, the office was offered to Harold John Ockenga, who, then and now, was a firm believer in biblical inerrancy. It was agreed by the trustees that if Ockenga did not accept the post it would go to Hubbard. As it turned out Dr. Ockenga did not come and the election of David Hubbard to the presidency followed.

### *THE CRISIS COMES*

It was in the middle of this presidential problem that the developing theological situation came to a head. In December, 1962, a faculty-trustee retreat was held at the Huntington Hotel in Pasadena. On what was called "Black Saturday" by some, the issue of biblical infallibility surfaced. It assumed dimensions that called for a definitive decision with regard to the

statement about Scripture as “free from all error in the whole and in the part.” Hubbard at that point could have made it clear that if he came as president, he would stand for the inerrancy of Scripture and would carry through on it administratively, removing any faculty members and securing in advance the resignation of any trustees who did not believe in it. He failed to do so.

Stenographers were present at the Black Saturday meeting and every word was taken down in shorthand. From the discussions there could be no doubt that a number of the members of the faculty and board did not believe in an inerrant Scripture. Edward Johnson, president of Financial Federation and a member of the board, focused the issue when he used the term *benchmark* in the discussions. He insisted that once the benchmark (a term used by surveyors having to do with the point from which they take all of their measurements) was changed, the institution would lose its bearing and depart from orthodoxy in other ways. The failure of the board to stand firm on the original commitment of the seminary led Johnson to resign within a month following Black Saturday.

On the Monday following Black Saturday the stenographers began the work of transcribing the records of all that had been said at the retreat. Before they had finished their work, I received a letter from Charles Fuller. In it he wrote, “I think it is best to take the written records of the discussion concerning inspiration and keep them under my personal supervision for a time since the president at the end of the discussion expressed a desire that the discussion be kept within the Seminary family. If copies of the discussion fall into many hands the chances of realizing the president’s purpose would not be carried out. Moreover, it might be misunderstood and could hurt the school.” The stenographers’ notebooks and those parts that had been transcribed were given into the possession of Charles Fuller. I doubt that anyone has seen them from that day to this. Their reappearance would make it clear beyond any shadow of doubt that biblical inerrancy was the key question, and that the faculty and trustees were split over it.

### *SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS*

The developments that followed after this episode were interesting as well as indicative of what the new stance of the institution would be. The 1963-64 seminary catalog retained the usual statement about the creed of the school (p. 9). It said, in part, “The Seminary has formulated a statement of faith as expressed in the following propositions, to which each member of the Faculty subscribes at the beginning of each academic year. This concurrence is without mental reservation, and any member who cannot assent agrees to withdraw from the institution.” Suffice it to say that every member of the faculty and Board of Trustees signed the statement in September, 1963, including those who indicated they did not believe in inerrancy. Nor did any of them withdraw from the institution as they had agreed to when they had previously signed the statement.

When the 1965-66 catalog appeared, the statement “This concurrence is without mental reservation, and any member who cannot assent agrees to withdraw from the institution” was deleted. It was stated that “every member of the faculty subscribes at the beginning of each academic year.” The current catalog reflects a further change from the 1965-66 catalog. “At the beginning

of each academic year” no longer appears. This could mean, of course, that once having signed the statement, a faculty member is not required to sign yearly, but I have not inquired concerning the intricacies of the situation since that further change was made.

As time went by, a dark cloud hung over the institution: faculty and trustee board members were signing a statement of faith, one important part of which some of them did not believe. And they were signing with mental reservations at a time when the promotional literature of the institution kept assuring its constituency that all was well and nothing had changed.

Faculty resignations followed on the heels of the change of direction. Charles Woodbridge left first. His departure occurred prior to the Black Saturday episode. Wilbur Smith was the next one to resign after the 1962-63 school year closed. I left the institution at the end of the following school year, and Gleason Archer left several years after that. The departure of all four was directly related to the question of biblical inerrancy. Other members of the faculty who held to a view of biblical inerrancy chose to remain, as did some members of the Board of Trustees.

Fuller acquired additional faculty members when the institution opened its School of Psychology and its School of World Mission and when it began offering a professional and then an academic doctorate. One of the persons joining Fuller was James Daane, with whom I was personally acquainted and with whom I had many theological discussions. He was an amillennialist and did not hold to an inerrant Scripture. When he was interviewed for a professorship, he did not hide any of these things from the institution. He was invited to join the faculty and signed the statement of faith with the consent of the institution with respect to his reservations about Scripture and the institution’s commitment to premillennialism.

One of the things I found intensely interesting was what happened during Carnell’s presidency in regard to premillennialism. He was convinced that the great creeds of the church left this matter open and that a theological seminary should be broad enough to encompass amillennialism as well. Carnell was a graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary, which was generally amillennialian, and undoubtedly he got his ideas about millennialism there. Westminster, of course, was thoroughly orthodox in its theological beliefs and held strongly to an inerrant Scripture. Carnell had a number of talks with Charles Fuller about this subject and secured from him a written statement that after Fuller’s death he could be quoted as approving the deletion of premillennialism from the credal commitment of the seminary. Charles Fuller himself was a dispensationalist and a premillennialist. His radio broadcast was listened to mostly by people in the same tradition. It would have been catastrophic to the ministry if he had announced a willingness to abandon premillennialism from the seminary’s doctrinal statement.

#### *DANIEL FULLER REPUDIATES INERRANCY*

In 1968 I covered the World Council of Churches Assembly at Uppsala, Sweden. President David Hubbard of Fuller was there. I asked him when the institution was going to change its doctrinal statement to conform to the realities of the situation. He was not entirely happy with the thrust of the question, but the urgent need to clarify the seminary’s ambiguous posture now

was apparent in a public sense by what had transpired some months earlier. Daniel Fuller was invited to deliver an address at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Toronto, Canada, in December, 1967. He was not a member of the Society. He delivered a paper entitled “Benjamin B. Warfield’s View of Faith and History.” So far as I know, this was the first time that a Fuller faculty member went on record in print, declaring that he did not believe the Bible to be free from all error in the whole and in the part.

Daniel Fuller acknowledged that “Warfield, however, inferred from the plenary verbal inspiration unmistakably taught by the doctrinal verses, that all Biblical statements whether they pertain to knowledge that makes men wise unto salvation or to such subjects as botany, meteorology, or paleontology, are equally true. He armed ‘the complete trustworthiness of Scripture in all elements and in every, even circumstantial statement.’”<sup>1</sup> Daniel Fuller then said he wished to make a slight corrective to Warfield and his view of an inerrant Scripture. He argued that there are two kinds of Scripture: revelational and non-revelational. Revelational Scripture is wholly without error; non-revelational Scripture is not.

Dr. Fuller said, “I am sure Warfield would agree that if the doctrinal verses explicitly taught only the inerrancy of revelational matters, matters that make men wise unto salvation, and that if the phenomena bore this out, loyalty to Biblical authority would demand that we define inerrancy accordingly.”<sup>2</sup> The “slight corrective” Fuller proposed to Warfield’s view “is to understand that verbal plenary inspiration involves accommodation to the thinking of the original readers in non-revelational matters.”<sup>3</sup> In other words, non-revelational Scripture has errors in it; revelational Scripture can be fully trusted.

In analyzing the position of Daniel Fuller, we must make several observations. He said that the phenomena of Scripture show it to have errors. Therefore, whatever the Bible teaches about its own reliability, that teaching must conform to the data of Scripture itself. Thus, because he feels there are errors in the Bible, the Bible itself cannot teach a doctrine of inerrancy in all of its parts. But in all matters having to do with making a person “wise unto salvation” one can trust the Scripture fully, and for those parts it is proper to use the term *inerrant*.

A second point we derive from Daniel Fuller’s corrective to Warfield has to do with the question concerning what parts of Scripture are revelational and what parts are non-revelational. And who decides which is which? It is conceivable that someone could come to the Bible and declare the virgin birth of Christ to be untrue. This could be argued on the basis of its being a biological problem, buttressed with the claim that it has nothing to do with knowledge that makes us wise unto salvation. Anyone could argue in favor of a dual authorship of Isaiah on the same basis. Again, on the same basis, one could argue that Daniel was written around 168 *B.C.*, rather than the seventh century *B.C.* as it claims to be. One could argue that Adam and Eve were not historical persons, and affirm this by saying that to believe they were is not necessary to salvation. Anyone can prove anything he wants to when the door has been opened to the distinction the Bible itself does not make: that there are revelational and non-revelational parts to Scripture. Maybe Daniel Fuller can tell the reader which parts of the Bible to believe and which parts to disbelieve, but then the reader trusts Fuller over the authors of Scripture. And

nowhere does Scripture draw the distinction between revelational and non-revelational parts to the Bible.

### *GEORGE LADD AND INERRANCY*

Professor George E. Ladd stands in the same framework established by his colleague Daniel Fuller. He does not make the distinction Fuller does between revelational and non-revelational Scripture, but he does come out in favor of errancy in Scripture in the areas of history and fact. In his scholarly and able book, *The New Testament and Criticism*, he has this to say:

If the Bible is the sure Word of God, does it not follow that we must have a trustworthy word from God, not only about matters of faith and practice, but in all historical and factual questions? “Thus saith the Lord” means that God has spoken His sure, infallible Word. A corollary of this in the minds of many Christians is that we must have absolute, infallible answers to every question raised in the historical study of the Bible. From this perspective, the “critic” is the one who has surrendered the Word of God for the words of men, authority for speculation, certainty for uncertainty.

This conclusion, as logical and persuasive as it may seem, does not square with the facts of God’s Word; and it is the author’s hope that the reader may be helped to understand that the authority of the Word of God is not dependent upon infallible certainty in all matters of history and criticism.<sup>4</sup>

It is apparent that Dr. Ladd believes in a limited infallibility. In this sense his position does not differ substantially from that of Dr. Fuller. The same questions that Fuller must meet and answer Ladd must face and reply to. The main point made here is that Dr. Ladd at one time signed and professed to believe the first Fuller Seminary statement of faith that the Bible is free from error in the whole and in the part. He no longer believes this.

### *HUBBARD AND THE FULLER ALUMNI*

The matter was further fogged by a letter President Hubbard sent to the alumni during the summer of 1970. In that communication Hubbard said the opposite of what Daniel Fuller had said about Warfield. Hubbard wrote, “And there are those today who even go beyond anything Warfield ever said when they insist that Biblical inerrancy would apply to every scientific, historical, geographical, factual, and theological statement of Scripture.”<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately for Hubbard this is precisely what Warfield insisted on. It was this insistence that caused Charles Briggs of Union Seminary in New York to argue that a single proved error in Scripture swept the ground from beneath the feet of Warfield. Daniel Fuller was right in affirming that Warfield believed all of Scripture to be trustworthy. Indeed if Warfield had not believed it, there would have been no need for Fuller to suggest a “slight corrective” to Warfield.

Hubbard, moreover, wanted to do away with the use of the word *inerrancy*. It “is too precise, too mathematical a term to describe appropriately the way in which God’s infallible revelation has come to us in a Book.” This was equally strange because Daniel Fuller, in an article published in the *Seminary Bulletin*, said, “We assert the Bible’s authority by the use of such words as *infallible*, *inerrant*, *true*, and *trustworthy*. There is no basic difference between these words. To say that the Bible is true is to assert its

infallibility.”<sup>6</sup> Again Fuller had the edge on Hubbard, for what he wrote was unquestionable correct. And if inerrancy is too precise, too mathematical a term, how is the situation improved if other words that mean the same thing replaced *inerrancy*? And if none of these words were used to describe biblical authority what other words could be found to do so?

David Hubbard in his letter to the alumni assured them “the faculty and administration have continued to affirm their belief in the divine inspiration of both Testaments ....” Since he knew about the views of Daniel Fuller and other faculty members, we can draw certain obvious conclusions from his statement. “Divine inspiration” could mean no more than what Fuller was saying: some Scripture is revelational and some is not; some can be trusted and the remainder cannot. But this must also mean that if both the Old and the New Testaments are inspired, inspiration is then no guarantee that what is said is true. Thus, inspiration loses any credible meaning, unless one is ready to say that God inspired error as well as truth. In that event who can tell what is true and what is not?

#### *FULLERS NEW DOCTRINAL STATEMENT*

It was ten years after the issue of inerrancy had erupted that the ethical problem was resolved by the adoption of a new doctrinal statement. Two major changes were made. One had to do with eschatology. In signing the first seminary statement, the signer made a commitment to premillennialism. The requirement of this commitment was later eliminated so that men like Daane were no longer faced with the dilemma of signing, even with administrative and trustee approval, what they did not believe. The second change was the statement on Scripture. This was the important one.

Fuller’s new statement on Scripture says: “Scripture is an essential part and trustworthy record of this divine disclosure. All the books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, are the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” If it can be assumed that all of the faculty members believe this and subscribe to it, then it follows that whatever the statement means, it cannot mean what the former statement meant about being “free from all error in the whole and in the part.” Nor can it mean what the first statement meant about inspiration guaranteeing all of Scripture to be inerrant because all of it was inspired. But the key to an understanding of the new viewpoint is to be found in the words that the books of the Old and New Testaments “are the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” It is where the word *infallible* is placed that makes the difference. Had the statement said that the Books of the Old and New Testaments “are the infallible Word of God, the only rule of faith and practice,” it would have repeated in different words what the first statement of faith had said. But what the new statement does is this: it limits infallibility to matters of faith and practice. And this is the view espoused by Daniel Fuller in his address on Warfield. Scripture that does not involve matters of faith and practice is not infallible.

More recently Paul King Jewett, a colleague of both Ladd and Fuller, has taken the next step away from a trustworthy Scripture. The seminary statement of faith proclaims a belief in an infallible Bible in matters having to do with



faith and practice. But Dr. Jewett now says that it is defective in at least one area having to do with faith and practice.

Dr. Jewett published a book in 1954 entitled *Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation*. It was an Evangelical Theological Society publication. At that time he was a member of the Society but he no longer is. And at that time, and in this book, he committed himself to a belief in an infallible Bible and accepted verbal inspiration. This can be seen from the following excerpts:

At the basis of Brunner's rejection of verbal inspiration is the insistence that the Bible .... is a human book and as such is laden with imperfections and defects, which necessarily attach to all that is human. The Scripture is not just the Word of God, but rather man's word about God's Word, and we must ever keep in mind that while it is divine to forgive it is human to err .... Men must first have forgotten what to come in the flesh, to become historical, meant, to be able to set up a doctrine of an infallible Bible book .... Now if God can reveal Himself in a man who never sinned, and yet is truly human, why could He not reveal Himself in an infallible book which would yet be truly human?<sup>7</sup>

[Jesus'] appeals to Scripture are always final. So far is the Scripture from being laden with the imperfection which Brunner ascribes to all that is human, that for Jesus it is the one thing that cannot be broken .... Everywhere Jesus appeals to Scripture, to each part of Scripture and to each element of Scripture as to an unimpeachable authority.<sup>8</sup>

This book which was dedicated to Gordon Haddon Clark, one of Jewett's college teachers and a lifelong advocate of a verbally inerrant Scripture, clearly shows that at that time in history Jewett was committed to inerrancy. But that has now changed as evidenced by his book *Man As Male and Female*. It is true that Jewett's further concession and his departure does not touch on a doctrine that is essential to salvation, but he signs a statement that declares in favor biblical infallibility on matters of faith and practice. And in this book the subject he treats is distinctly a matter that has to do with the Christian faith and the practice of that faith by Christians.

The nub of Jewett's argument is that the apostle Paul erred on the matter of the subordination of a wife to her husband, which is taught in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians. Paul gives a rabbinic view that contradicts the first creation account in Genesis and he also is in disagreement with his own teaching that there is neither male nor female in Jesus Christ. But let Professor Jewett speak for himself.

Furthermore, in reasoning this way, Paul is not only basing his argument exclusively on the second creation narrative, but is assuming the traditional rabbinic understanding of that narrative whereby the order of their creation is made to yield the primacy of the man over the woman. Is this rabbinic understanding of Genesis 2:18f. correct? We do not think it is, for it is palpably inconsistent with the first creation narrative, with the life style of Jesus, and with the apostle's own clear affirmation that in Christ there is no male and female (Gal. 3:38).<sup>9</sup>

Finally, all of the Pauline texts supporting female subordination, both those that are directly from the apostle's pen and those that are indirectly so, appeal to the second creation narrative, Genesis 2:18-23, never to the first.<sup>10</sup>

Because these two perspectives—the Jewish and the Christian—are incompatible, there is no satisfying way to harmonize the Pauline argument for female subordination with the larger Christian vision of which the great apostle to the Gentiles was himself the primary architect . . . . For one thing, in the very passage where he most emphatically affirms female subordination he makes an interesting parenthetical remark ...,<sup>11</sup>

[Jewett approves of Gen. 1:27 being] understood not as a literal piece of scientific reporting but as a narrative, which illumines the ultimate meaning of Man's existence in the dual form of male and female. The narrative in Genesis 2:18-23 is commonly classified by scholars as a religious "myth" or "saga" in the sense that it clothes the truth about the origin of man and woman in poetic or parabolic form.<sup>12</sup>

We have rejected the argument for female subordination as being incompatible with (a) the biblical narrative of Man's creation, (b) the revelation which is given us in the life of Jesus, and (c) Paul's fundamental statement of Christian liberty in the Epistle to the Galatians .... The problem with the concept of female subordination is that it *breaks the analogy of faith*.<sup>13</sup>

It can readily be seen what Jewett's conclusions are. First, he says that Paul *did* teach female subordination. The second conclusion is that Paul used Genesis 2:18-23 to support this view and followed the traditional rabbinic understanding of that passage. But this understanding cannot stand up under the teaching of the first creation narrative in Genesis 1:27. Therefore what Paul taught about female subordination is wrong. Third, he says that what Paul taught in 1 Corinthians and Ephesians goes against the revelation given us in the life of Christ and contradicts Paul's own teaching in Galatians 3:28. So Paul was teaching two different viewpoints and his subordination viewpoint was also contrary to the revelation in the life of Jesus. Thus the Bible is in error and this sort of error definitely has to do with matters of faith and practice. But Jewett signed the Fuller statement of faith that declares in favor of what he now denies—that the Bible is “the infallible rule of faith and practice.”

In this same book Dr. Jewett has a striking paragraph on Scripture that is worth perusing.

While the theologians have never agreed on a precise theory of inspiration, before the era of critical, historical study of the biblical documents, they tended, understandably, to ignore the human side of Scripture and to think of divine inspiration in a way that ruled out the possibility of any human limitations whatever in the Bible. The Bible, for all practical purposes, was so immediately dictated by the Holy Spirit that the human writers were more secretaries than authors. Historical and critical studies of the biblical documents have compelled the church to take into account the complexity of the human level of the historical process by which the documents were produced. Instead of the simple statement, which is essentially true, that the Bible is a divine book, we now perceive more clearly than in the past that the Bible is a divine/human book. As divine, it emits the light of revelation; as human, this light of revelation shines in and through the “dark glass” (1 Cor. 13:12) of the “earthen vessels” (2 Cor. 4:7) who were the authors of its content at the human level.<sup>14</sup>

It is apparent that Professor Jewett does not believe in an infallible Bible and that this in turn has led him to abrogate what he himself says is the clear teaching of the apostle Paul about female subordination. I am not entering here into the current discussion having to do with the liberation of women. That is worthy of a tome of its own. I simply am pointing out that Professor Jewett's conclusion that Paul is wrong in his teaching about subordination shows that he has attributed error to the apostle in a matter having to do with faith and practice and thus has invalidated the new Fuller Seminary statement of faith.

Lest it be supposed that I have misunderstood or misinterpreted Professor Jewett it would be well to consider the review of his book by the Rev. Tom Stark of the University Reformed Church in East Lansing, Michigan. Writing

in the magazine of the Reformed Church in America, *The Church Herald*, he says this:

. . . (Jewett) proceeds to reject systematically many of the teachings of Scripture. Perhaps Dr. Jewett's key statement is "The traditional teaching of Judaism and the revolutionary new approach in the life and teaching of Jesus contributed each in its own way to the Apostle's (Paul) thinking about the relationship of the sexes." He proceeds to say that Paul's two perspectives are incompatible and cannot be harmonized, and that Paul speaks in such a way that he probably has "an uneasy conscience." It is all done very calmly, but the reader should be clear—Dr. Jewett believes that the traditional understanding of what the Apostle Paul is teaching is a correct understanding of what the Apostle Paul taught and thought, but he is rejecting almost all of those passages, except for Galatians 3:28 .

... my further problem is that his doctrine of inspiration allows him to set himself as a judge of the Apostle Paul, and to discard many verses in Scripture ostensibly on the basis that they contradict one verse of Paul (Gal. 3:28), and the life-style of Jesus. Dr. Jewett reveals in his book a clear break from an evangelical view of the inspiration and authority of the Bible.

There are many other things that could be said to provide more background relative to the changed situation, but though they are interesting, they are not essential to the main point this book addresses—the current slide with regard to biblical inerrancy. In fairness it should be stated that, so far as I know, no member of the faculty has denied any of the other theological essentials of the Christian faith up to this point. But neither can one be left comfortable, since for ten years there were faculty and board members who did not believe what they were then affirming. And with this sort of background it would not be difficult to imagine that a similar situation could exist at this moment. Once a trust has been breached, especially when the official standards of the institution were being claimed as the viewpoint of all when actually they were not, it is difficult to regain the confidence that has been lost by such action.

The question must be asked: Is the change of doctrinal commitment from an inerrant to a partially errant (in non-revelational parts) Scripture one that is incidental and not fundamental? This question is asked on the basis of the assumption that Fuller Seminary is still faithful to the other fundamentals of orthodox Christianity. It is the thesis of this book that biblical inerrancy is a theological watershed. Down the road, whether it takes five or fifty years, any institution that departs from belief in an inerrant Scripture will likewise depart from other fundamentals of the faith and at last cease to be evangelical in the historical meaning of that term. This is the verdict of history. And Fuller Seminary has taken the first step that will bring about this untoward result unless it proves to be the first exception in history, or unless the institution reverses its stance and returns to its original commitment to biblical inerrancy in principle and in fact.

Now Dr. Jewett has taken the second step, a step that could not be taken if the original commitment to inerrancy had been kept and enforced. Will Fuller Seminary do anything about Jewett and any other faculty member who may have breached the new statement of faith on the same plane that Jewett has, although it still may, not have touched upon one of the essential doctrines of a salvatory nature? It has taken only five years since the revised statement of faith was promulgated, for the institution to reach stage number two. How

long will it be before it reaches that stage in which the atonement, the resurrection of Jesus in the same body, or the Second Coming are challenged?

Dr. Jewett also lists himself as the Dean of the Young Life Institute in his book. The importance of this connection cannot be overlooked. He has the responsibility for the theological training of many people, connected with Young Life. These people, in turn, are found in the high schools of America where they have a formidable influence on minds still in formation. The percolation of Dr. Jewett's views is a significant matter under these circumstances. Perhaps his influence in this area is more important than his influence in a theological seminary where other scholars who hold another view can articulate, that view strongly in their classrooms.

## FOOTNOTES

1 Evangelical Theological Society *Bulletin*, Vol. II, No. 2, Spring 1968, p. 80.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid, p. 82.

4 George Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967 pp. 16f.

5 Unpublished letter to the Alumni, Summer, 1970.

6 *Fuller Theological Seminary Bulletin* Issue, Vol. XVIII No. 1, March, 1968.

7 Paul King Jewett, *Emil Brunner's Concept of Revelation* (London: Clarke, 1954), p. 164.

8 Ibid., pp. 166-168.

9 Paul King Jewett, *Man As Male and Female* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 119.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., pp. 112, 113.

12 Ibid., p. 122.

13 Ibid., p. 134.

14 Ibid., p. 135.