# THE NEW BIRTH

# In Symbol, In Doctrine, In Experience

By A. S. COPLEY

"God saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit"

Titus 3:5

### REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- American Standard Version (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- King James Version (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- Revised Version (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19thcentury British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- Wuest: Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

**Note**: Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.

### **DISCLAIMER**

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# 1. THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH

"7And thou shall set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar and shall put water therein ... 12 and thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation and wash them with water ... 31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat, 32 when they went into the tent of the congregation..." [Exo.40:7, 12, 31-32a]

The first 2 verses of the above citation are typical of the new birth; the latter two, of the cleansing from defilement incident to contact with carnal environment. The washing of regeneration is the essential washing, being the basis for the other. There are 7 citations in the New Testament which speak specifically of the new birth by employing the same word in the original. The Greek words LOUO (meaning "to wash") and LOUTRON (meaning "washing"), occur 5 times; and the compound, or strengthened word, APOLOUO (meaning "to wash away"), occurs twice.

- In Ephesians 5:26 and Titus 3:5, LOUTRON is rendered laver (RV), a laver, a bath, a washing vessel—Young.
- In John 13:10, the word wash is LAVED in the Interlinear.

Hence, the verb means "to lave, to wash, to bathe;" and the noun means "a laver, a bath, a bathing vessel." Now, look at these 7 citations as found in the Greek text.

"Jesus saith to him, He that hath been **LAVED** needeth not save to wash (NIPSASTHI) his feet; but is wholly clean; and ye are clean." [Joh.13:10]

"Christ loved the assembly and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it in the **LAVER** of the water by the Word." [**Eph.5:29**]

"According to His mercy, he saved us through a **LAVER** of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." [**Tiu.3:5**]

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts having been sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies having been **LAVED** in pure water." [**Heb.10:22**]

"Unto Him who loved us and **LAVED** us from our sins." [Rev.1:5]

"Arise and be baptized, and LAVE AWAY thy sins." [Act.22:16]

"And such were some of you; but you were LAVED CLEAN." [1Co.6:11]

An unprejudiced comparison of the above 7 citations must prove conclusively that they all refer to the new birth, either directly or indirectly. Surely Jesus meant that Peter, being "*laved*," was already born again; hence, needed only to be washed (cleansed) from possibly daily defilement. Paul agrees with this in saying, "*The laver of regeneration*," through which he declares that God saved

us. Thus, he defines the meaning and use of the word **laver** and interprets its first typical meaning as used in Exodus 40:12.

Ephesians 5:26 includes both the initial washing of regeneration, "having cleansed it in the laver," and the daily cleansing from defilement, "that he might sanctify it." Compare John 17:17, "sanctify them through thy truth." Mark the past perfect tense of "having cleansed" [Eph.5:26 RV]. Christ gave himself, not only to redeem us by His death and save us by "cleansing us in the laver of the Word," but also to sanctify us, or separate us from the defilements of people and error. Having been once "laved," we are already clean as to our standing, and need only to have our feet washed (or be sanctified) as to our walk; that is, cleansed of defilement from contact with the flesh. This also is through the Word, symbolized by the laver.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word." [Psa.119:9]

Of the 3 Greek words in the New Testament, meaning "to wash" LOUO, which invariably refers to the new birth, means "to wash the whole body," as Moses did when he brought Aaron and his sons in to anoint them for the priesthood [Exo.40:12, Lev.8:6]. Paul interprets this in Hebrews 10:22 as "our bodies having been washed in pure water." NIPTO means "to wash a part of the body," as the feet [Joh.13:10], and as the hands and feet [Exo.40:30, 32]. PLUNO means "to wash inanimate things," as nets [Luk.5:2] and robes [Rev.7:14].

# 2. Justification and Regeneration.

What is the difference between justification and regeneration, or the new birth? There are a number of points of difference.

**JUSTIFICATION** is a governmental act, granted by God as a Sovereign.

In **JUSTIFICATION**, we are pardoned by divine justice.

**JUSTIFICATION** is pronounced upon the basis of Christ's death and resurrection in our behalf.

**JUSTIFICATION** gives to the sinner, who believes, a new standing.

**JUSTIFICATION** imputes righteousness and counts us holy.

**JUSTIFICATION** reckons us innocent, and makes us citizens of God's kingdom.

**JUSTIFICATION** changes our position.

**JUSTIFICATION** makes us accepted of Christ.

**REGENERATION** is a personal act, granted by God as a Father.

In **REGENERATION**, we are begotten by divine love.

**REGENERATION** is wrought through the power of the incorruptible Word of God. Of course, they occur at the same moment.

**REGENERATION** gives a new nature through the new birth.

**REGENERATION** imparts righteousness and makes us holy.

**REGENERATION** makes us children and heirs in God's family.

**REGENERATION** changes our relationship to God.

**REGENERATION** makes us alive in Christ.

**JUSTIFICATION** puts us into Christ, the last Adam.

In **JUSTIFICATION**, God's attitude toward the sinner is changed.

**REGENERATION** puts Christ into us.

By **REGENERATION**, the sinner's attitude to God is changed.

When God pardons, or justifies a sinner from his iniquities, He also imparts His Son's Divine Human Life to him. Therefore, salvation really includes justification and the new birth, a new standing and a new heart. Both changes occur at the same moment, even at the very moment that the sinner believes on the Savior. Note Paul's beautiful words on both of these experiences:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us, by the washing (laver) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior), that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." [Tiu.3:5-7]

# 3. THE DAILY CLEANSING

In the New Testament, we find statements like the following:

"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." [2Co.7:1]

"He that hath this hope (of Jesus' coming) in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." [1Jo.3:3]

Jesus taught the same lesson by washing the disciples' feet, and by instructing them to wash one another's feet [Joh.13]. By contact with the world, with error, with carnal believers, we are liable to be defiled. Our standing is not affected; but ...

- Our vision may be blurred;
- our ardor may be chilled;
- our joy may be jolted;
- our minds may be confused;
- our faith may be staggered,
- our victory may be weakened, the flag hanging only at half-mast;
- we may be overburdened with other's needs;
- we may be unduly occupied with the failures and errors of others;
- our feathers may be ruffled with the deplorable conditions in Christendom, and
- we may be fretted and sad.

All these are defilements and make us unfit to be real, acceptable worshippers. Though it is the same LAVE, the pure Word of God, we need cleansing not the washing of regeneration. Cleansing comes by reading or pondering certain portions of the Word. For example, the carnal man says,

"The Lord delayeth His coming;" but the Word itself foretells us of this unbeliever, and exclaims, "Behold I come quickly" [Rev.3:11; Rev.22:7, 12, 20].

You may feel defiled by the sarcasm of a would-be friend who vaunts himself that the age of miracles is past; but you are cleansed by reading or recalling that "these signs shall follow them that believe," and that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" [Mar.16:17, Heb.13:8].

You may be jolted by human logic and sympathy which contends that parents should not neglect their children; they need to have a good time, etc. This defilement is offset by the word, "*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it*" [Pro.22:6]; and "we must obey God rather than men" [Act.5:29]. Thus also we wash the feet of others; we minister to them the word of caution, comfort, or correction. We help them to make their walk easier, firmer, steadier, faster, and constant.

The detailed instructions of the Epistles are not stern laws, but wise counsels of a loving Father. For example,

- Brother, go not to law with brother [paraphrase of 1Co.6:7].
- Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers [2Co.6:14].
- Abstain from all forms of evil [compiled from Act.15:20, Act.15:29, 1Th.4:3, 1Th.5:22, 1Ti.4:3, 1Pe.2:11].
- Walk in love [Eph.5:2].
- Etc.

These are big bowls of warm water from the great **LAVER**, the Word, meant to cleanse our feet for good walking and our hands for good service. Therefore, saints who do not heed these counsels of Divine Love, who reuse to dip their hands and feet into the daily **LAVER**, remain defiled, wax carnal, break fellowship with God and with spiritual saints, and finally cease walking and working altogether and are put on the shelf, though for a time they may manifest a make-belief yieldedness to God.

Possibly the extremist case recorded in the Word is the fornicator of 1 Corinthians 5. He yielded to "sin in the flesh" and the assembly became defiled. Doubtless, if he had not yielded in due time to the purifying power of the Truth, he would have been cut off with premature death; for Paul turned him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit might be saved in the day of Jesus Christ, "saved as by fire." But even this fellow made acknowledgement, and the assembly forgave him and restored him to their fellowship [2Co.2]. The word of correction led him to wash his defiled hands and feet in the LAVER of cleansing. He needed not to be born again; he had only to pray as David did, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" [Psa.51:7]. Often believers are a long time out of fellowship with God and the saints; but, there is a quick way back acknowledge the wrong; read (or hear) the Word; and heed the first prompting of the Spirit, the first word of correction. "If we (as believers) confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" [1Jo.1:9].

Oh, friend, fail not to make frequent use of our common **LAVER** for personal purification.

- Are you polluted by the ways of the wicked? **BATHE** in Psalm 37.
- Are you spattered with a modern, superficial Pentecost? **Lave** in Acts 2:1, 10.
- Are your garments befouled by contact with Dr. Slow-come, or Slow-go, on the race track? **Take A HYSSOP ABLUTION**<sup>1</sup> in 1 Corinthians 9 and 10 and Philippians 3.
- Do your robes smell of penuriousness? **Wash** in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9.
- Are you tainted and leavened with error in doctrine, which weakens you for walking and service? TARRY LONG at the Tabernacle door of Brother Paul's Epistles and wash your hands and feet in the pure water of his Word of grace that you may indeed "build gold and silver and precious stones" for which you will receive a sure and eternal recompense.

## THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN

Observe an important difference between our initial laving, or the new birth, and our daily cleansing. God does the initial laving, but we do the daily cleansing. Moses, representing God, brought Aaron and his sons to the front tent door and washed them before they could be anointed for the priesthood. That symbolized their new birth. But Moses, as a man, and Aaron and his sons themselves washed their hands and feet every time they entered the Tabernacle to minister [Exo.40:12, 31]. Being dead in trespasses and sins, we cannot "born" ourselves, though it is written, "Ye must be born again." God must do that. God only is "Him that begat" [1Jo.5:1].

Believing on Jesus, receiving Him as Savior, is absolutely the only part we have in our new birth. But, the daily cleansing from defilement is for us. "Let us cleanse ourselves," is the admonition. "He that hath this hope, purifieth himself." "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." Peter beautifully gives us the means and manner of purifying: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit," and connects this daily cleansing with the new birth which must precede it having "been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever" [1Pe.1:22-23]. Therefore we cannot stress too strongly the importance of learning God's Word; for it is the only instrument of our daily cleansing.

It may be remarked that Aaron and his sons were born priests, being the sons of Levi. That is correct; but we are born priests also. Jesus "hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father" [Rev.1:6]. But the majority of us do not lay hold upon our office. Though many are saved through the washing of regeneration, and are anointed with the Holy Anointing Oil (the Holy Spirit);

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The act of washing yourself as a religious rite.

yet they remain in the outer, larger congregation. Most of them do not come to the **LAVER** *for cleansing* for worship and service. They live at a distance from the Lord, know little of actual fellowship with Him, and are ignorant of His ways, though they may know something of His acts. The priestly function of ministering to God in deep, enjoyable worship is foreign to most saints. Even their intercessory prayers are largely fruitless, because they have not learned the Word of God to pray in the Spirit. Much so-called intercession is like the teaching—"wood and hay and stubble"—for which there is no reward.

# 4. THE NEW BIRTH MEMORIAL

"Repent and be baptized every one of you upon the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." [Act.2:38 Greek]

"Having arisen, be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." [Act.22:16 Greek]

Here we enter upon a prolific investigation. We shall see clearly the proper setting, purpose, meaning, and use of water baptism. The words **baptize** and **baptism** (together with **Baptist**) occurs at least 112 times in the New Testament, with a diversity of uses.

According to a tradition of the elders, the Pharisees baptized (washed before eating); they also baptized (washed) vessels and cups [Mar.7:4, 8; Luk.11:38]. Baptize is translated dip in Luke 16:24, "Send Lazarus that he may dip (baptize the tip of his finger) in water," in John 13:27, "He it is to whom I shall give a morsel when I have dipped (baptized) it." Also in Revelation 19:13, where baptize means "to dye or color", we read, "Clothed in a garment dipped (baptized) in blood." Its root meaning and general use are "to dip, immerse, or submerge." John baptized people in water, and Jesus baptized the same in the Holy Spirit. Jesus also had a baptism into death, and so have we [Mat.20:22, Luk.12:50].

Baptism was not something new, as if introduced by John the Baptist. In Moses' time, the service consisted "only in meats and drinks and divers baptisms" [Heb.9:10]; for example, the priest washed his clothes and bathed (baptized) his flesh in water [Num.19:7]. Hence, the Apostle exhorts, "Having left the word of the beginning of the Anointed One, we should go on to full growth, not laying a foundation for a doctrine of baptisms" [Heb.6:1-2 Diaglott]. John began by showing the real meaning and purpose of baptism. We have the frequent phrase, "John's baptism," which is correctly termed, "a baptism of repentance." Therefore, we read that his hearers "were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" [Mat.3:2, 6]. It is therefore argued, that the people were saved by being baptized, and that Peter taught them that their salvation depended upon being baptized in water in Jesus' name. If that was the meaning of baptism and baptism was the means of our salvation then Jesus was not saved until John baptized Him; and, John was not saved at all for he exclaimed to Jesus, "I have need to be baptized of Thee." We have no account of John the Baptist ever being baptized by Jesus.

John indeed baptized Jesus in Jordan, not because He personally needed to be baptized, but "*to fulfill all righteousness*" [Mat.3:15]; that is, to actually carry out Tract. The New Birth — Page 7

what the Old Testament foreshadowed about Him. As Jesus later said, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" The Law [Mat.5:17]. Now, inasmuch as Jesus came in the "likeness of sinful flesh" [Rom.8:3] and identified Himself with the old creation in order to redeem us, He had to have a figurative washing. Though He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and knew no sin" [Heb.7:26]; yet, because He should be "numbered with the transgressors" [Isa.53:12] and be counted sin for us on Calvary, He had to die, and apparently had to have a washing in the laver of regeneration. By being baptized, Jesus showed out the necessity of death (not for Himself; for He was the embodiment of the new creation), but for others. To fully fill up the type, Jesus had to be baptized before He could be anointed with the Spirit. These two, His baptism and anointing, gave Him the right, according to Moses' law, to enter upon His prophetic and priestly ministries.

Aaron was only a typical priest; his washing was only a typical washing in a typical laver; and his anointing was only typical. Now, when the Real Priest came, He could not be laved in a typical laver, or one made with man's hands; but in one Divinely Made. For this reason, and because Jesus was not of the Aaronic line or of the tribe of Levi but of Judah [Heb.7:11-16], John could not baptize Him in the laver in the temple. The river Jordan was the expression of the real laver.

The Jordan river started from 2 springs, called, **Jor** and **Dan**; the latter means "judge or judging" (compare **Gen.49:16**). It is defined as "their descent," "flowing down," "death." Israel being led through it by Joshua, and Elijah crossing it, suggests their death, burial, and resurrection. The baptism of our Lord in Jordan points to Calvary, where the judgment of God flowed down unto death upon His Son, not in His own behalf, but in behalf of all men, because He identified Himself with us in our ruin. On the cross, He provisionally "washed (laved) us from our sins in His own blood" [Rev.1:6]. His baptism also teaches the necessity of our new birth, which is termed "a washing (laver) of regeneration" [Tiu.3:5] and is symbolized by our being baptized in water. In baptizing Jesus, John was acting for God, and Jordan was acting for Calvary.

Thus, at the very gateway of John's ministry, we see that His baptism spoke of judgment unto death, an entire cutting off. He boldly announced, "And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire" [Mat.3:10]. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus showed that every tree was bad and could not bring forth good fruit. To the enquiring ruler, Jesus exclaimed, "There is none good but one, God" [Mar.10:18]; and, He said unto him, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" [Mat.19:17]. Hence, everybody must be cut down. Therefore, when the people were baptized by John, they said thereby that they deserved to die, which truth the slaying of the lamb also taught; but by baptism in Jordan, they acknowledged that He, who should come after him, and on Whom they should believe [Act.19:4], would die in their stead; and if they did not thus believe on Him, they would be cast into the fire, that is, "the lake of fire" [Mat.13:42].

John cried of Jesus.

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world ... That he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water" [**Joh.1:29, 31**]

The typical lamb, the shadow, was no longer to be seen. The Substance, the real sacrifice, had come and would soon be offered up. If they believed on Him, they signified it by letting John baptize them in water. Thus they were forever cut off, counted dead; the old creation was judged as hopeless. "*They justified God*" [Luk.7:29]. As Israelites, they were cut off from the Mosaic system forever and from the observance of the temple rites and ceremonies, which were only shadows of good things to come.

We are informed by a Christian Jew that baptism in Jesus' name means an entire and utter cutting off to a Jew. When once he is baptized, he is no longer a Jew; he is disowned and counted dead by his relatives and friends. Baptism expresses so much to them that today, converted Jews fear to accept the testimony of another Jew as long as he is not baptized. If he really accepts Christ as his Messiah, he gladly acknowledges it by baptism. But thank God, baptism means more than a cutting off from Judaism; it means a cutting down of the whole old creation and necessitates and makes room for a new creation "where there is neither Jew, nor Greek, Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free; but Christ is all and in all" [Col.3:11, Gal.3:28].

### THE TWO BAPTISMS

"Then said Paul, John verily baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is on Christ Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." [Act.19:4-5]

In these verses, we have both John's baptism and Christian baptism, as it is often called. The question arises, "Why did Paul baptize these disciples again?" Because there is a difference between them. They are essentially alike, in that they both speak of death. They differ essentially in this—Paul's baptism speaks also of life, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" [Act.11:18]. Further, John's baptism pointed forward to the death of Jesus, in which all the race would be cut off; Paul's baptism points to an accomplished fact, even Jesus' baptism into death on the cross, where He should "taste death for every man" [Heb.2:9]. To this He made reference in saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with" [Luke.12:50]. Paul's baptism also points back to the resurrection of Christ [Rom.6:4, Col.2:12], the basis of our justification and regeneration [Rom.4:25, Rom.6:4], and points forward to the actual resurrection of our bodies [Rom.6:5, 1Co.15:29] (study these citations). Hence, we cannot separate our new birth from Calvary. As we said before, the baptism of Christ in the Jordan river foreshadowed our provisional washing from sin and our actual experience of salvation. When we are baptized, we offer up a memorial of our death with Him on the cross, and of our actual coming into life with Him.

# 5. How to obtain the New Birth

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power (authority) to become the sons (children) of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." [Joh.1:12-13]

John here declares that the new birth is obtained by receiving a person, even Christ, rather than a blessing. To believe on His name is to receive Him. Thus, we become children of God through being born of God, and He became the Father of all them that believe on His Son. Study the following.

We were born "*Not of blood*" (lit. *bloods*); this was not a corruptible birth. No nationality can boast of its "blue blood;" for all natural births are corruptible. All born of the old creation die sometime and turn to corruption. But by faith in Jesus, we experience an incorruptible birth. We obtain a life that can never die, never change, never decay.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." [1Pe.1:23]

As we can have only one old creation birth, so can we have only one new creation birth. Therefore, being born of God, we have eternal life and shall never perish.

We are born not "of the will of the flesh," not of nature [Joh.1:13]. Our first birth, being natural, was by the will of the flesh of our parents. The new birth is supernatural. Neither our parents' flesh, nor any other flesh, figured into it. It is in no sense carnal; it is absolutely spiritual, being wholly after the will of God. Our new birth was not even after the will of our own flesh, no more than was our natural birth. Therefore, our natural, animal life may easily be kept in subjection to our new spiritual life, by counting the old man dead and Christ in us our only life.

We were born "not of the will of man" [Joh.1:13]. Only one will, the Divine Will, figured into our new birth, because it is a divine birth. We were born "of God," born by the will and power of God—by the authority of God. Satan never wills anyone to be born again; therefore, he introduces all sorts of religions imitations of the new birth. It is not the will of man's wisdom that any should obtain the new birth; hence, men try to change themselves. All occult and philosophical religions are avowed enemies of the new birth, which is absolutely and only of the will of God. Therefore, beware of Christian Science, Unity, etc.

## SUMMING UP

Our new birth was incorruptible, supernatural, spiritual, heavenly, and divine. We are "partakers of the divine nature" of Christ [2Pe.1:4]. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" [Joh.3:6]. Likewise, it cannot be anything else; neither can it be unborn. The natural birth is only a figure of the spiritual birth, which is the real, substantial birth. Therefore, when born of God, we have a life which is incorruptible, supernatural,

spiritual, heavenly, and eternal. It cannot be imitated, duplicated, nor obliterated. Oh, if believers really knew and would consider these fundamental facts, they would soon learn to walk apart from the corruptions of this world, even in "newness of life," by supernatural power. They would learn to "walk in the spirit," and thus be spiritual and heavenly in their daily lives. They would be "Godlike" by a Divine Instinct and not by effort.

