

Dedicated
To those who are serious Students
of the Scriptures and who desire
and are disciplined to learn,
apply themselves and
become addicted to
the Word of God

An Introduction To Biblical Hermeneutics

The Issues, History and Principles of
Biblical Interpretation

W. R. Downing

πάσα γραφή θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος
πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμὸν, πρὸς
ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ,
ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος,
πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος.

2 Tim. 3:16–17



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A Church Membership Manual
The New Testament Church
A Theological Propaedeutic
Selected Shorter Writings
How to Study the Bible
The Minister's Library
Biblical Hermeneutics

Preface

Every Believer should strive to become a skillful student of the Bible. The Scriptures are our one objective standard for both our faith and our practice. Everything else is subjective and prone to change. Religious tradition, ritualism, ceremonialism, habit and neglect are all harmful to the Christian. Further, the influence of worldliness, doctrinal departures among professed Christians, and the ignorant dogmatism of some all have their baneful effect.

The Apostle Paul called the Word of God the “Sword of the Spirit.” This refers in the immediate context to the inscripturated Word of God spoken in prayer (Eph. 6:17–20), not to the written Word [ῥῆμα θεοῦ, “utterance”].

Unless we have a firm grasp of the meaning of the Scriptures, the written Word, and are able to quote it, utter it, declare it with authority, or reflect it in prayer (Acts 4:24–26), temptation (Matt. 4:1–11), evangelism (1 Pet. 1:25) and in defense of the faith (1 Pet. 3:15), we will lack direction, discernment and ability to pray aright—and we seem to have few true “prayer warriors” in our day! We also need to evangelize and defend the faith. Declaring the Scriptures is wielding the “Sword of the Spirit!”

May this volume on how to study the Bible prove to be enlightening, challenging and helpful in becoming a true, exact and proficient student of the Word of God. This more than anything else will determine one’s Christian experience and usefulness in the Kingdom of God.

—W. R. Downing

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Linguistic Abbreviations

The following abbreviations and explanations are used in the exegetical notes and footnotes pertaining to the Old Testament Hebrew [MT], the Septuagint [LXX] and the Greek New Testament, various reference works and biblical commentaries. These are included for this Survey and also for reference to other works.

á	Aquila. A revision of the LXX.
abl.	Ablative case. The case of separation.
absol.	Absolute. Used for the Gk. Gen. or Acc. Absolute.
acc.	Accusative case. The case which relates to the direction, extent or end of action.
act.	Active voice.
anarth.	Anarthrous. Without the definite article. Stresses character or quality. See “Arthrous,” “def. art.”
aor.	Aorist tense. A punctiliar action or event. Viewing an action as a whole rather than a process.
aor. imp.	Aorist imperative. A command or entreaty to commence an action at once with a sense of urgency and determination. See “pres. imp.”
aor. subj.	Aorist subjunctive.
aor. subj. prohib.	Aorist subjunctive of prohibition. A command or entreaty to not even begin a given [anticipated] action. See “pres. imp. of prohib.”
Arab.	Arabic.
Aram.	Aramaic.
art.	Article. Definite article. Stresses identity. See “def. art.”
arth.	Arthrous. Articular, having the definite article. Stresses identity. See “Anarthrous,” and “def. art.”
cl.	Clause, or Class of conditional sentence.
cod.	Codex, codices. A codex is a ms. with pages sewn together in a book form, replacing the earlier scroll form.
cond.	Conditional, conditional sentence.
conj.	Conjunction.
const.	Construction, with reference to various linguistic arrangements.
Const. St.	Used for Heb. words in “Construct State,” or dependent and often joined to another by <i>maqeph</i> (ֿ). See “Absol. St.”

Crit.	Critical. The Critical Text, the latest Greek eclectic text.
D	Latin Vulgate. C. 406 AD.
D	“Deuteronomic.” See JEDP.
dat.	Dative case. The case of personal concern.
def. art.	Definite article. See “Arthrous,” “Articular.”
def. dir. obj.	Definite Direct Object.
demon.	Demonstrative.
dir. obj.	Direct Object.
dual.	Dual number. Heb. thought of some things as naturally existing in pairs.
E	“Elohistic.” See JEDP.
E.g.	<i>Exempli gratia</i> , “for the sake of example.”
emph.	Emphatic, emphasize.
emph. imp.	Emphatic Imperative. In Heb., the addition of the suffix ׀ to the imp. vb. for greater emph.
emph. pos.	Emphatic position. Inflected languages often reserve word-order for emphasis, usually placing the emphatic words or phrases toward the first of the given statement. At times the emphatic words are placed last for a culminative emphasis.
Eng.	English.
Eth.	Ethiopic Version.
fem.	Feminine gender.
fig.	Figure, figurative.
fut.	Future tense.
gen.	Genitive case. The case of source or possession.
Ger.	German.
Gk.	Greek.
Heb.	Hebrew.
i.e.,	<i>id est</i> , “that is.”
imp.	Imperative mood. The mood of command or entreaty. See “pres. imp.” and “aor. imp.” See also “ind.,” “subj.,” and “opt.”
imperf.	Imperfect tense. The Gk. imperfect denotes continuous [linear] or repetitive action in time past. The Heb. imperfect denotes an incomplete action. See “perf.”
ind.	Indicative mood. Statement of fact or [presumed] reality. See “subj.,” “opt.” and “imp.”
indef.	Indefinite.

ind. obj.	Indirect object.
inf.	Infinitive.
inst.	Instrumental case. The case of means.
intens.	Intensive. Various constructions may be used to produce an intensive expression.
interj.	Interjection.
interrog.	Interrogative.
K, cop ^{sa}	Coptic Sahidic Version.
K, cop ^{bo}	Coptic Bohairic Version.
κ τ λ	An abbreviation for καὶ τὸν λοιπὸν, lit: “and the rest or remaining.” Roughly the equivalent of “etc.”
KJV, AV	King James Version or Authorized Version of the English Bible (1611).
LLat.	Late Latin.
Lat.	Latin.
Lex.	Lexicon.
loc.	Locative case. The case of location.
LXX	Septuagint. The Greek Version of the Old Testament, c. 246 BC, which is designated by the Roman Numerals for “Seventy.”
masc.	Masculine gender.
ME.	Middle English.
MFr.	Middle French.
mid.	Middle voice. The middle voice in Greek is reserved for either a reflexive or intensive expression.
MLat.	Middle Latin.
ms.	Manuscript. A hand-written document. Pl., “mss.”
n.	Noun.
neg.	Negative.
neut.	Neuter gender.
OE	Old English.
OFr.	Old French.
opt.	Optative mood. The mood of possibility, further removed from reality than the subj. See “subj.,” “opt.” and “imp.”
Orig.	<i>Hexapla</i> of Origen, Polyglot, c. 230 AD.
part.	Particle.
pass.	Passive voice.
per.	Person.

perf.	Perfect tense. The Gk. perfect tense views an action as past and the results existing into the present. The Heb. perfect denotes a completed action. See “imperf.”
periph.	Periphrastic. An equitive verb construed with a participle used to emphasize a given action or state.
pl.	Plural number.
pluperf.	Pluperfect tense. An action considered as extending from one time to another in the past.
pos.	Position. Refers to word-order in either Gk. or Heb. sentence. See “emph. pos.”
poss.	Possessive.
prep.	Preposition. These may be used either separately or intensively [the “perfective” use] in a compound word.
pres.	Present tense. An [linear] action considered as in progress from the present view of the speaker or writer.
pres. imp.	Present imperative. A command to keep on doing a certain action.
pres. imp. of prohib.	Present imperative of prohibition. A command to stop something already in progress.
pron.	Pronoun.
ptc.	Participle. A verbal adjective. The pres. ptc. can be used with a def. art. (rel. ptc.) to emphasize an outstanding characteristic. The ptc. may be used temporally with an equitive verb to emphasize a given action or state.
Q	Qumran Texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls [DSS].
qual.	Qualitative. Combined with the rel. pron., used to demonstrate a kind of person or thing.
rel.	Relative. The rel. or arthrous ptc. is used to stress a given characteristic.
rest. att.	Restrictive attributive. The repetition of the def. art. with the adj., both in the same case and gender as the preceding noun, for emphasis.
RV, ASV	Revised Version or American Standard Version of the English Bible (1901)
G, LXX	Septuagint.
σ	Symmachus, a later literary version of LXX [c. 170].

sing.	Singular number.
stat. vb.	Stative verb. A vb. that describes a state of being, condition or quality. An intransitive vb.
subj.	Subjunctive mood. The mood of contingency or probability, closest to reality. See “ind.,” “opt.,” and “imp.”
Syr.	<i>Old Syriac</i> . The language of ancient Syria, an Aramaic language [Aramaean] very closely related to the Chaldee. Syriac versions are significant in the textual criticism of the Hebrew OT.
S, syr ^p	<i>Peshitta</i> or <i>Peshito</i> (“Simple”). A standardized Syrian text that dates from the early fifth century, based on earlier texts (c. 120). See “Old Syriac.”
Talm.	<i>Talmud</i> . The written body of Jewish tradition and commentaries, comprised of the Mishna and Gemara.
θ	Theodotian, a 200 AD version of LXX.
TR	<i>Textus Receptus</i> . 1633 revision of the 1550 <i>Stephanus Text</i> with emendations from Beza’s final editions (1588-89, 1599).
transl.	Translated.
vb.	Verb.
Ver.	Version.
v.l.	<i>Varia Lectio</i> . A variant reading in the text.
voc.	Vocative. The case of direct address.

Part I: Preliminary Issues

- I. The Definition of Hermeneutics
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 - H. To Understand the Purpose and Retain The Purity of the Church
 - I. To Edify Others
 - J. To Evangelize the Unconverted
 - K. To Intelligently Defend the Faith

I

The Definition of Hermeneutics

The term “Hermeneutics” is derived from ἑρμηνεύτικός, which derives from ἑρμηνεύειν, “to explain, expound or interpret,” and τεχνῆ, “art,” the source of our Eng. “technique” and “technology.”¹ Hermeneutics is thus the science and art of interpretation. “Sacred Hermeneutic” [*Hermeneutica Sacra*] is the science and art of the interpretation of Scripture.

¹ ἑρμηνεύτικός is derived from Ἑρμῆς (*Hermes*), the god of Greek mythology who served as a herald or interpreter of and messenger to the other gods.

- *As a science*, Hermeneutics proceeds along given principles which strive for consistency and faithfulness to God and his Word. It seeks, by certain established and self-consistent principles or laws of interpretation and methods, to ascertain the mind of the Spirit and thus the meaning of a given author from his language.
- *As an art*, Hermeneutics necessitates an acquaintance with various disciplines and the development of certain skills in the application of its principles to convey the meaning of grammatical constructions, idioms, figurative language, etc. Hermeneutics ought to become almost instinctive to the experienced Bible student through the development of a given amount of skill and experience.²

Although this department of biblical study is vital to every Christian as the starting-point for faith, doctrine and experience, little if any attention seems to be paid to it in or from the modern pulpit, in either practice or teaching. Our study seeks to remedy this omission with an introductory study which is designed to make us more skilled and consistent students of the Word of God.

The terms “interpret,” “interpreter,” “interpretation,” “interpreting,” and “interpreted” occur a total of sixty-six times in the KJV of our English Bible. These terms are the translation of six Hebrew root terms and two Greek terms. Thus, even within the biblical idea of “interpretation,” there are a variety of connotations.

The following terms give the biblical idea of interpretation or Hermeneutic:

- “Interpret” occ. 8 times. Heb. פָּתַר (pathar), “to open [the meaning of].” Gk. διερμηνεύω, “to thoroughly explain.”

² E.g., Gal. 6:2, 5, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ....For every man shall bear his own burden.” (Ἀλλήλων τὰ βάρη βαστάζετε...ἕκαστος γὰρ τὸ ἴδιον φορτίον βαστάσει). Two distinctly different terms for “burden.” The first denotes a heavy, overpowering burden; the second, something that pertains to individual responsibility. *Phillips’ Version of the New Testament* interprets the latter as, “but every man must shoulder his own pack,” which draws an exact image of the thought in modern, English idiom.

- “Interpreter” occ. 4 times. Heb. פָּתַר (*pathar*), “to open [the meaning of];” לִוְטֵן (*luwts*), “to scoff, make a mouth at, i.e., attempt to pronounce a foreign language,” hence “to interpret.” Gk. διερμηνευτής, “interpreter, expounder.”
- “Interpretation” occ. 46 times. Heb. פִּתְרוּן (*pithrown*), “one who opens, interprets;” שֶׁבַר (*sheber*, or שָׁבַר), “to fracture, ruin, burst,” hence to give the solution [to a dream];” מְלִיצָה (*meliytsah*), “aphorism, satire, enigma,” and so “the interpretation of a difficult saying or hidden meaning;” פֶּשֶׁר (*peshar*), Aramaic or Chald., “intepretation.” Gk. ἑρμηνεύω, “interpret, translate,” from Ἑρμῆς, Hermes or Mercury, the mythical god of speech, the spokesman for the gods; and ἐπιλύσεως, “unravel, loose, solve, explain.”
- “Interpreting” occ. once. Heb. פֶּשֶׁר (*peshar*), Aramaic or Chald., “intepretation.”
- “Interpreted” 11 times. Heb. פָּתַר (*pathar*), “to open [the meaning of];” לִוְטֵן (*luwts*), “to scoff, make a mouth at, i.e., attempt to pronounce a foreign language,” hence “to interpret.” Gk. διερμηνεύω, “to thoroughly explain [ἐρμηνεύω];” μεθερμηνευόμενον, “being interpreted, translated.”

II

The Scriptures

Our texts, several of which do *not* include the various terms associated with interpretation, nevertheless exemplify the principle, usage and inferences of the idea of Hermeneutic or the interpretation of Scripture.

Genesis 1:1–8, 26–28. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light...And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night...

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters...And God called the firmament Heaven. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God

blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.³

Genesis 3:1–7. Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?⁴

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.⁵ And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die⁶: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.⁷

And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make

³ Creation was both a creative and definitive act. Man entered a world already created and defined by God. There are no “brute” or uninterpreted facts. Every fact is a created fact and possesses a meaning or significance already established by the Creator. Man was created to live in this world to have dominion over it and wisely govern it under God. He was to give the same meaning to everything that God had given to it, i.e., to interpret every fact in the universe by the Word of God. He was meant to live in a hermeneutical context (Matt. 4:4).

⁴ The first hermeneutical perversion was by Satan, and was intentional, twisting the Word of God to put an undue restriction upon the Divine command, “Has God really put all these trees off-limits?” By this means, Satan sought to find out Eve’s grasp of the Word of God.

⁵ Eve’s grasp or understanding of the Word of God [her hermeneutic] was defective. She added to the command the idea of touching the fruit, and detracted from the command by lessening “surely die,” מוֹת תָּמוּת (mōth tamūth), Heb. emph. by rep., “dying thou shalt die” to “lest ye die.”

⁶ Satan knew the Word of God thoroughly, but had purposely misconstrued it. Then he absolutely contradicted it.

⁷ The idea is that they would be as God himself (כְּאֱלֹהִים) *k^e lohīym*), determining for themselves what was good or evil. Through his perverted hermeneutic, he offered them autonomy, i.e., self-determination apart from God and his Law–Word.

one wise, she took of the fruit thereof,⁸ and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Matthew 4:4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.⁹

Psalms 1:1–3. Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD¹⁰; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.¹¹

Luke 10:25–29. And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?¹² And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

⁸ When the woman touched the fruit and did not die, her faulty hermeneutic added strength to the temptation and lie of Satan. A faulty hermeneutic [a faulty understanding, and a misunderstanding] of the Word of God was at the foundational cause of the Fall.

⁹ Adam was necessarily the first interpreter. He was created in the image and likeness of God as an intelligent or rational, self-determining, moral being to have dominion over creation under God. He was created to interpret himself and all created reality in the context of God's Word. Hence, hermeneutics was to be an essential part of his life. He was to give the same meaning to everything that God had given to it, i.e., he was to interpret all reality in the context of God's Word. This principle remains, although man is now fallen and therefore suffers from the noetic effects of sin, an alien world-and-life view, and a will that is subservient to the reigning power of sin.

¹⁰ Lit: "But if he has any delight at all, it is in the Law of the Lord." The Heb. **אֲנִי יְיָ** ("but if") const. emph. the priority of the Word of God in the man's thought, life and experience.

¹¹ The constant meditation which manifests itself in a distinct lifestyle is doubtless the result of an inclusive and consistent hermeneutic.

¹² Ἐν τῷ νόμῳ [emph. pos.] τί γέγραπται; πῶς ἀναγινώσκεις; These are exegetical (a matter of reading the text) and hermeneutical (a matter of interpreting the text) questions requiring an interpretation of the Scripture.

with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?¹³

Luke 24:25–27, 44–45. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded¹⁴ unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself....And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures...¹⁵

Acts 8:26–35. And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?¹⁶ And he said, How can I, except some man

¹³ The following “Parable of the Good Samaritan” turned on a question about the interpretation of the word “neighbor.” The Lawyer, a Pharisee, believed that his neighbor was one of his own caste or religious and social standing. Our Lord implies that our neighbor is anyone with whom we come in contact.

¹⁴ “Expounded,” διερμήνευσεν, aor., “thoroughly interpreted.”

¹⁵ Interpretation is essential in opening the Scriptures to one’s understanding.

¹⁶ ...Ἄρα γε γινώσκεις ἢ ἀναγινώσκεις; The term for “read” is lit. “to know up,” implying the taking of knowledge from the written word. It is not enough to read, but we must also read with understanding—and this necessitates a hermeneutic. This question pervades all biblical study.

should guide me?¹⁷ And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

Acts 17:1–3. Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: and Paul, as his manner was,¹⁸ went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging,¹⁹ that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:3–6. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.²⁰

¹⁷ ...Πῶς γὰρ ἂν δυναίμην ἐὰν μή τις ὁδηγήσει (lead, guide, teach the way, from ὁδος and ἄγω). An interpreter guides the hearer to an understanding of what has been written.

¹⁸ ...κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθὸς... If possible, Paul began his evangelistic ministry in a given location by preaching in the local synagogue to Jews and proselytes who had a knowledge of God, his Word and his moral self-consistency through their Scriptures.

¹⁹ The preaching methodology of Paul is the inspired scriptural example found in primitive Christianity. διελέξατο, "he reasoned, thoroughly discoursed," aor. αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν (from the Scriptures, i.e., the Scriptures formed his text and the substance of his preaching), διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος..."[by means of] completely opening and putting forth his arguments," pres. ptcs modifying the main vb., διελέξατο. Such preaching necessarily included exegesis, exposition and interpretation.

²⁰ 1 Cor. 2:9–16 and 2 Cor. 4:3–6 enforce the absolute necessity for a regenerate theology [*theologia regenitorum*] or renewed mindset to truly comprehend spiritual truth. This is a prerequisite for Sacred Hermeneutics. Bare intellectual ability is grossly insufficient, as is a Pietistic perversion of spiritual illumination.

2 Corinthians 2:17. For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God:²¹ but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

Ephesians 4:11–14. And he [the ascended, glorified Lord Jesus Christ] gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry,²² for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive...

2 Timothy 2:15. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.²³

2 Timothy 3:16–17. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for

²¹ ...οὐ γὰρ ἔσμεν ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ [arth., the majority!] καπηλεύοντες [corrupt, dilute, water down, 'hawk' at a cheaper price] τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ... Even in Paul's day, the majority were diluting, or corrupting the Word of God. To misrepresent Scripture is to rob it of its authority and destroy its character. It is to purposely fail or refuse to "rightly divide the Word of truth"—and the failure or refusal is both hermeneutical and sinful.

²² ...πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας... The comma in the Eng. Ver. should be omitted. The sense is that believers are to be equipped to minister. This would necessarily include the principles of Hermeneutics or interpretation, as such are essential for doctrinal discernment and spiritual maturity.

²³ This is a key passage for the necessity of hermeneutic. If God is intelligent, then his inscripturated Word is necessarily intelligent, and must be understood in an intelligent and consistent manner.

Σπούδασον ("Give the utmost diligence," aor. imp.) σεαυτὸν δόκιμον παραστήσαι (to present one's self before) τῷ θεῷ, ἐργάτην ἀνεπαίσχυντον (a skilled craftsman not having any cause whatsoever [intensive or perfective use of ἐπί with α privitive] for shame), ὀρθοτομοῦντα (cutting straight, handling with skill. Paul was a worker of *Cilicium*, the long, dark goat hair fabric from which tents were made. He knew the vital importance of making a straight cut. It is all too possible to make a crooked cut, i.e., to mishandle or misinterpret) τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας. God's Word is truth, and so must be dealt with reverently, truthfully, carefully, skillfully and faithfully.

instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.²⁴

1 John 2:20, 27. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things²⁵But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you²⁶: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

From the foregoing texts, the connotation of Hermeneutics as used in the Scriptures themselves is as follows:

- Divine Creation was both a creative and definitive act. Hermeneutics or interpretation is an essential part of man's existence as a rational, moral being in a created world where every fact must be interpreted in a God-given context. Interpretation is essential to the physical, mental, moral,

²⁴ The Scriptures are Divinely inspired, and so must be held reverently as the very Word of God inscripturated. They are to find practical manifestation in our lives. *πᾶσα γραφή* (every Scripture, i.e., every aspect, including grammar, syntax, context, etc.) *θεόπνευστος* (God-breathed) *καὶ ὠφέλιμος* (profitable, valuable, useful) *πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμόν, πρὸς ἐπανόρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, ἵνα ἄρτιος* (fully-limbed, symmetrical, emph. pos.) *ἦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος* (emph. const.), *πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθόν* (toward every good work, emph. pos.) *ἐξηρτισμένος* (completely outfitted).

²⁵ *καὶ ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ οἴδατε πάντες.* This "unction" or anointing (*χρίσμα ἔχετε*) is from the Holy Spirit (*ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου*), enabling the believer to perceive (*οἴδατε*) all spiritual truth (*πάντες* in this context must refer to spiritual truth). Such spiritual perception derives from regeneration and a principle of intellectual restoration in the image of God (Col. 3:10).

²⁶ The statement that John's readers needed no human teacher must, in this context, refer to the attempts of the Docetic Gnostics to assume the role of teachers in some assemblies. This statement must not be taken as absolute, i.e., that the believer needs no human teacher whatsoever (thus equating spiritual illumination with Divine revelation and inspiration), as it stands against the very nature of the church's ministry instituted by our Lord (Eph. 4:11ff; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2), against the very idea of the serious study of Scripture (1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:13) and against the possibility of spiritual digression (Heb. 5:11-14).

ethical and spiritual realms—it is, therefore, an inescapable part of life.²⁷

- One’s hermeneutic or interpretation ultimately and inescapably derives from one’s presuppositions.
- There is by necessity a *theologica regeneritorum*, a regenerate theology, because the natural or unregenerate man is utterly incapable of discerning spiritual truth.

NOTE: Regeneration or the “new birth” necessarily implies and includes five scriptural realities:

(1) The impartation of spiritual life to those who up to that moment were in a state of spiritual death (ὄντας ἡμᾶς νεκροῦς, Eph. 2:4). Cf. Jn. 3:3; 1 Cor. 2:9–14; Eph. 2:4–5.

(2) The breaking of the reigning power of sin, or a definitive breach with sin’s reigning power over the life and person by the effectual power of the Spirit (Rom. 6:1–18).

(3) The removal of the natural enmity against God (Rom. 8:7–8).

(4) The re-creation of the image of God in man in principle—a spiritual, moral and intellectual transformation (Eph. 4:17–24; Col. 3:9–10). Note that the aor. infs. in Eph. 4:22, 24 point to result, not purpose, as clearly translated in Col. 3:10.

(5) The removal of satanic blindness (2 Cor. 4:3–6). It is at regeneration that the noetic effects of sin are overcome in principle (Col. 3:10), and the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit commences (1 Cor. 2:9–15; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).

(6) The gifts of repentance and saving faith (Eph. 2:8–10). These are distinct from mere human trust and mere moral reformation.

²⁷ Hermeneutics consciously or unconsciously stands at the very foundation of animal and human existence. The hunting dog with its nose to the wind is interpreting the various scents by instinct intensified with training and experience. The tracker reading “sign” (tracks, disturbances in the soil, rocks or grass, animal droppings, the moisture content of the tracks or tell-tale minute cobwebs in the trail or in the tracks themselves) is involved in a hermeneutical process. The woman shopping for a bargain and closely examining food items or a garment is involved in hermeneutics. The scholar seeking to translate and understand an ancient document is involved in hermeneutics. This process, which is inclusive of all of life, takes instinct, principles, experience and skill.

- Every believer possesses a degree or principle of spiritual illumination, but such is neither revelatory nor infallible; it is, rather, developed through diligent study.
- Sacred Hermeneutics or the interpretation of Scripture is to be approached with great care and reverence. It is entirely possible, and even sadly common, to misunderstand, misinterpret and thus mishandle the Word of Truth.²⁸
- A lack of hermeneutical discernment and ability is to be considered a fault—a sinful matter—on the part of professing Christians, although hermeneutical ability and skill will inevitably vary according to mental ability, doctrinal presuppositions, education, experience and skill.
- Hermeneutics or interpretation was necessary to certain individuals—seers or prophets—to reveal the esoteric meaning of dreams, visions, enigmas and parables.
- Hermeneutics or interpretation is necessary to understand foreign languages.
- Hermeneutics or interpretation is necessary to comprehend the typology, symbols, figures and prophecies of the Scripture.
- Hermeneutics or interpretation is necessary to explain the meaning and understand the truth of Scripture in teaching and preaching. Sadly, the pulpit is often the source of confusing interpretation with application, and the violation of sound and consistent hermeneutical principles.
- As the very Word of God inscripturated, and thus intelligent, the Scripture can have only one meaning, although it may have various applications.

²⁸ This is all too common in the pulpit, and thus from the pulpit into the minds and lives of the hearers. Thomas Edison, when a person commented upon his great, practical genius, retorted, “Genius is two percent inspiration and ninety–eight percent perspiration.” This equally applies to hermeneutics. One must labor at arriving at the correct interpretation of any passage of Scripture before presuming to teach upon it, preach from it and live by it.

- Interpretation necessarily forms the basis for application. Two necessities present themselves: first, there must be a correlation between the interpretation and the application, and second, once the interpretation has been made, there may legitimately be a variety of applications.
- Part of the church's teaching and preaching ministry is to equip believers to skillfully handle the Scriptures and arrive at a given degree of doctrinal discernment and spiritual maturity. This would necessarily include consistent hermeneutical principles.
- The consistent manifestation or usefulness of the Scriptures as applied to our lives wholly depends upon our hermeneutic.

The modern usage of Hermeneutics or interpretation does not deal with immediate inspiration or revelation, but with a consistent understanding and explanation of what has already been revealed and inscripturated under inspiration.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is a concise definition of Hermeneutics?
2. What is the ancient name for Hermeneutics? Why?
3. Why must Hermeneutics be considered as both a science and an art?
4. What are the biblical terms that form the basis for the term "hermeneutics"?
5. What does a survey of Scripture teach concerning necessity and nature of Hermeneutics?
6. What is the relation between creation and Hermeneutics?
7. How did Hermeneutics figure in Abraham's test of faith in the command to offer Isaac as a burnt offering?
8. What is the relation between Moses' understanding and Joshua's misunderstanding concerning the noise in the Israelitish camp?
9. What is the relationship between one's presuppositions and his Hermeneutics?
10. What is the significance of 2 Timothy 2:15 in relation to Hermeneutics?

11. What is the relation between spiritual illumination and Hermeneutics?
12. Why is a faulty or a lack of Hermeneutics a sinful thing to any Christian?
13. What relationship does Hermeneutics have to the Christian's life and experience?

III

Objections against Hermeneutics

There are several objections against any formal approach to interpreting the Scriptures which ought to be addressed before proceeding with a positive study of this vital subject. These objections are largely based on ignorance, pride, misunderstanding, fear, mysticism and irrationalism.

A. Ignorance

Many simply assume that the Bible is understandable without any hermeneutic,²⁹ and thus approach it in an arbitrary way, mixing the literal with the spiritual, taking matters out of context, and assuming a "Chapter and Verse" mentality.³⁰ These are ignorant of the fact that that *any* writing involves hermeneutical principles,³¹ whether it is a personal love letter or a literary production.

E.g., When a lover writes to his beloved that he "would climb the highest mountain, swim the deepest rivers, endure the greatest hardships," etc., she would doubtless interpret this hyperbolically

²⁹ See footnotes 24, 25 and 33. Cf. David's prayer in Psalm 119:18, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

³⁰ Often a "Chapter-and-Verse mentality" views Scripture as isolated "proof-texts" taken out of their proper and necessary context, and so furthers misunderstanding and misapplication.

It must be noted that the Bible was not originally divided into either chapters (c. 1203 AD by Stephen Langdon) or verses (c. 1550 AD by Robert Etienne), and that such an approach often fragments the thinking, argumentation and purpose of the inspired authors—and inculcates an erroneous approach to Bible students, readers and hearers.

³¹ Such persons may be described as possessing "the infallibility of ignorance," as they profess a suspiciously false humility on the one hand, yet claim infallibility on the other—a strange mixture of ignorance and pride.

as saying that his love for her is extremely strong and without question, i.e., she would approach it hermeneutically and thus figuratively.

E.g., Literary experts still argue over the correct interpretation of Shakespeare—and even over his identity.

The Bible, as the very Word of God inscripturated, demands a reverent, careful, consistent hermeneutic.

B. Pride

Some will simply not admit that there are portions of Scripture that they do not understand, and rather than admit this, will twist the Scriptures to fit their preconceived ideas. Others believe that ignorance is a virtue and pride themselves in a simplistic approach which misunderstands, misconstrues and thus misapplies the Scripture. Still others rather mystically or superstitiously “feel” that they possess an insight into the Bible apart from consistent and legitimate study.

C. Misunderstanding

Some misunderstand the references to and the nature of the spiritual illumination which characterizes every true believer (1 Jn. 2:20, 27). Illumination is a spiritual insight into the Scriptures deriving from the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

- Such illumination must be understood in its proper context. 1 Jn. 2:20, 27 refers primarily to Gnostic teachers.³² The very idea that anyone does not need teaching is preposterous and implies either perfection or infallibility. Should this be so, why would God have ordained the ministerial office of teacher? How can we explain the perplexity of an inspired Apostle, such as Peter, and his difficulties with some of Paul’s writings (2 Pet. 3:14–16)?

³² 1 John was written against the Docetic Gnostics (from *δοκέω*, “to seem, have an opinion”) who denied the true and full humanity and physical nature of our Lord. These and the Valentinian Gnostics (who denied his Deity) sought to assume the role of teachers in the primitive churches. Cf. 2 Pet. 2:1–22; Jude 3–4.

- Such illumination is not static, but either progressive or regressive in the context of teaching and learning, spiritual experience and growth, and sanctified study.
- Such illumination is not inspiration, i.e., a direct revelation which is infallible. While this spiritual illumination separates the weakest believer from the most astute unbeliever, it is subject to the infirmities of human nature and bias. Not even believers are entirely free from the noetic effects of sin, and no one individual possesses all the gifts, experience, information, skill and lack of bias to be the perfect interpreter.

Note: Mark the comments of C. H. Spurgeon on 2 Tim. 4:13, "The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring *with thee*, and the books, *but* especially the parchments."

Even an apostle must read....He is inspired, and yet he wants BOOKS! He has been preaching for at least thirty years, and yet he wants BOOKS! He had seen the Lord, and yet he wants BOOKS! He had had a wider experience than most men, and yet he wants BOOKS! He had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard things which it was unlawful for a man to utter, yet he wants BOOKS! He had written the major part of the New Testament, and yet he wants BOOKS!

The apostle says to Timothy and so he says to every preacher, "Give thyself unto reading"....The man who never reads will never be read; he who never quotes will never be quoted. He who will not use the thoughts of other men's brains, proves that he has no brains of his own. Brethren, what is true of ministers is true of all our people.

You need to read. Renounce as much as you will all light literature, but study as much as possible sound theological works, especially the Puritanic writers, and expositions of the Bible....He says, "especially the parchments." I think the books were Latin and Greek works, but that the parchments were Oriental; and possibly they were the parchments of Holy Scripture....Now, it must be "especially the parchments" with all our reading; let it be especially the Bible.

D. Fear

Some fear any approach to Scripture which threatens their preconceived notions.

This is true concerning many who hold that the believer is comprised of both an “old man” and a “new man” at the same time, and resist any attempt to explain the biblical truth concerning what has become entrenched in traditional teaching.

The “old man” is the unregenerate self, and the “new man” is the regenerate self, not a “spiritual schizophrenic.” Others would hold that the believer has two natures, “the old nature” and “the new nature.” It is thought that the “new nature” does not sin, and only the “old nature” sins, leaving the believer as “half-‘sinlessly perfect!’”

The biblical truth is that the believer is the “new man” in union with Christ Jesus who struggles with a principle of indwelling sin and remaining corruption which manifests itself in acts of sin, using the members of the body to express itself. This same traditional misunderstanding is true, likewise, of those who hold to *paedorhantism*, or infant sprinkling, or to the idea that at salvation “the Holy Spirit baptizes the individual believer into the mystical body of Christ.”

All the foregoing are without adequate biblical support and desperately need to be diligently re-studied from the Scriptures without traditional bias. An unbiased perusal of Scripture would reveal the Scriptural teaching to be quite different.

Others fear any “scholarship” or an educated approach as inherently suspect, i.e., as “Liberal” or “Modernistic,” while ignorance is often equated with spirituality. Such people often speak with an assumed “authority” from their own feelings or impressions while distaining any intelligent approach to the text. We refer to this also as “the infallibility of ignorance.”

E. Mysticism

Some approach the Scripture in an arbitrary way, appealing to its alleged mystical, “spiritual” or “deeper” meaning. This has been especially true of such mysticism as the “biblical numerology,” of Jewish Kabbalism, which assigned a numerical significance to each Hebrew letter which was then totaled in each word and became an

arbitrary interpretation;³³ Pietism, which over-emphasized the illumination of the Spirit almost to the point of revelation; and the allegorical method of interpretation, which made most literal, objective interpretation improbable.

F. Irrationalism

Some approach the Scripture in an arbitrary or emotional way that suits the given occasion, mixing interpretation with application and thus confusing the truth of the Word of God. Some will even say such things as, “But I just feel that this is right!” or “But that’s what I’ve always believed or heard [from the pulpit]!” If God is intelligent, and the Scripture is his Word, then it can have only one meaning. A very necessary distinction must then be made between interpretation and application. Both interpretation and application must be intelligent and consistent—and the application must have some correlation to the interpretation.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the major objections against the need for a consistent hermeneutical approach to Scripture?
2. Why is ignorance of the nature of Scripture or of literature in general an invalid objection against the need for Hermeneutics?
3. Is there usually a relation between ignorance and pride as objections to needing a consistent approach to the understanding of Scripture?
4. Explain why spiritual illumination is not static, but dependent upon one’s spiritual growth or regression.
5. Why do some fear a consistent hermeneutical approach to the Bible?
6. Why do the traditional teachings concerning the believer as comprised of an “old man” and a “new man,” or “old nature” and “new nature,” prove unscriptural? Substantiate your answer textually and theologically from the Scriptures.

³³ Jewish Kabbalism [Kabbalism] would then interchange words of like numerical equivalents, causing utter confusion and necessitating a mystical, arbitrary interpretation.

7. On what principle is paedorhantism found to be contrary to the Scriptures?
8. What do the Scriptures teach concerning the “baptism in or with the Holy Spirit?”
9. What is meant by “the infallibility of ignorance” in the foregoing discussion?
10. What are the dangers of a mystical approach to the Bible?
11. What is the relation of the nature of God to his Word as to its self-consistency?
12. Why is an irrational or merely subjective approach to the Bible wrong and dangerous?
13. Why can the Scripture have only one meaning?
14. Is there a necessary relation between interpretation and application? Can a given Scripture have more than one application?

IV

What Is God Doing?

What is God doing in the life of every single believer? What is his purpose? How can we account for or explain the great variety of Christian experience, with its trials, opposition, inconsistencies and sin, disappointments, unanswered prayer, spiritual warfare, and Divine chastening? The answer is, that God is in the process of conforming each one of us to the image of his Son, and so has foreordained us to “good works” (Rom. 8:28–30; Eph. 1:3–14; 2:8–10).

This process experientially commences at regeneration and will only be concluded in our glorification (Rom. 8:17–23; 29–30). It is in this preordained context that we must view the Christian life and experience. Whatever we think, do or say either brings us closer to this goal or necessarily puts us in the way of Divine correction and discipline (Heb. 12:4–8). How much time has been lost, energy expended, and trials endured needlessly simply because some have ignorantly thought that salvation was conversion—simply an event, an experience, the work of a moment—or that God would overlook sin in the lives of his own, or that the Christian life was one of options.

Coming to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith and turning from a life of sin in repentance are only the beginning, the very first steps in a pilgrimage that cannot end until we stand glorified and completely redeemed—body, soul and spirit—in the very presence of God. Such truth should transform our lives, govern our thinking, sanctify our motives, mitigate our suffering, determine every human relationship, and quicken our feeble efforts to live as Christians—those who are being conformed to the image of Christ.

V

The Place of Bible Study in The Divine Purpose

Because of this high and glorious goal of being conformed to the image of Christ, of being foreordained unto good works, and giving ourselves to the service of Christ for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), there are certain necessary issues:

- We must be a holy or sanctified people (Eph. 1:3–5; 1 Thess. 4:3; Titus 2:11–15; 1 Pet. 2:9).
- We must grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18; Phil. 1:9–11; 3:10–15).
- We must mortify sin (Psa. 119:11; Rom. 8:11–13; Col. 3:5).
- We must have a proper understanding of the Scriptures in order to interpret and apply them correctly (2 Tim. 2:15).³⁴

³⁴ The word translated “study” in our English Bible, which makes this the primary text for Bible study, does not necessarily convey the full significance of the Gk. The term σπουδάσων, aor. imp., denotes “give the utmost diligence with a sense of energy and determination.”

The wording of the Gk. is that our primary diligence and obligation are God-ward, that we are to be skilled craftsmen, ἐργάτην, either skilled craftsman or hard worker) who have absolutely no need to be ashamed, ἀνεπαίσχυντον, an intens. term with the α privitive and the intensive ἐπί, correctly handling, ὀρθοτομοῦντα, and so correctly interpreting the Word of truth.

Paul was a skilled craftsman in *cilicium*, the dark goat’s hair fabric of the Roman Cilician Province. He knew the utter necessity of making a straight or correct cut. The utmost determination and skill are required in the careful and consistent interpretation and application of Scripture.

- We must have an inclusive, and very practical grasp of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16–17).

Note: The first issue is that the Scriptures are the very Word of God, and therefore have absolute authority (πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος, “every Scripture is God–breathed”). The second issue is that every major area of life is covered in a very practical sense: doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. The third issue is that through this inclusive, authoritative ministry of the Scriptures, the individual becomes symmetrically developed (ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος, “in order that fully–limbed [symmetrically–developed] might be the man of God” (πρὸς πᾶν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐξηρτισμένος, and to every good work completely out–fitted.”

- We must apply the Scripture to our own experience in a very practical and consistent manner (2 Tim. 3:16–17; Phil. 2:12–16³⁵).

The God–ordained means of grace for all these is the inscripturated Word of God. This means that every Christian must seek to become a very serious, thorough and consistent student of the Bible.

VI

What are The Right Purposes for Bible Study and The Need for a Consistent Hermeneutic?

Why study the Bible? Is such study optional? Must it necessarily be intelligent and consistent? What is Bible study supposed to do? What is its purpose? What is the need for a consistent hermeneutic? The following are the correct or proper reasons:

A. To Glorify God

The first purpose for Bible study is that this is one of the primary means by which we are to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31). An understanding of and an alignment to the Scriptures is at the very

³⁵ “Work out” (κατεργάζεσθε, pres. imp., “constantly seek to bring to its logical conclusion,” i.e., Christ–likeness in the life, as connoted by the context of v. 5–16 and directly taught in Rom. 8:29.

heart of true Christianity. We cannot glorify God in any other aspect of our lives if we are defective at the point of understanding and being faithful to the Scriptures. Apart from the Bible, we would neither rightly know God nor have any idea how to live to and for the glory of God.

Private, personal Bible study and prayer are the primary means of grace for the Christian. If we truly love God, we will love his Word, we will pray, and we will grow in both grace and knowledge. Those who do not love God or his Word, who do not learn his commandment to obey them are simply unconverted persons (Acts 20:32; Col. 3:16; 2 Tim. 3:15–17; 2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:3–5, 15–17, 20, 27; 4:19; 5:2–3, 10–13)

B. To Commune With Christ In The Scriptures

There is a very definite place for an academic approach to the Scriptures. To truly and properly understand the Bible, we must gain knowledge through other sources and develop certain necessary skills. But there is also a sanctified and proper devotional aspect that ought to be aimed for. The academic should under gird this, but not supplant it.

Through the Scriptures, coupled with meditation of Divine truth and prayer, we are to commune with the Lord Jesus Christ and be refreshed in mind and spirit. It is not enough to have the mind filled if the heart and spirit are never touched with Divine truth and its implications. The end of the study of Scripture is doctrinal truth—and that truth experientially brought home to the heart and applied to the life.

There is thus a Divinely–ordained balance between the academic and the practical. Through the academic process of exegesis and the theological process of treating biblical truth consistently and inclusively, the practical ought to be impressed upon the mind and heart by the Spirit of God.

E.g., Rom. 5:5 forms a culminative thought on the juxtaposition of justification by faith and assurance of salvation (5:1–5). Paul immediately passes from justification to assurance—a full and glorious assurance that supports the believer through present trials and difficulties. The Eng. reads, “And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts

by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Gk. text reads, ὁ ἐλπίς οὐ καταισχύνει, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκκέχυται ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν διὰ πνεύματος ἀγίου τοῦ δοθέντος ἡμῖν.

This hope or anticipation of certain, ultimate salvation is not disappointed because the love of God has been and continues to be abundantly poured forth, flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given unto us.” From exegesis immediately to interpretation and application, the believer is thrilled with the reality of the Spirit’s ministry, part of which is to fill him with a glorious sense of God’s love.

C. To Know The Will of God

The Bible reveals the general will of God and often his specific will to all men, especially the believer (Ex: 20:1–17; Eccl. 12:13–14; Matt. 22:36–39). The spiritual nature of Bible study is presupposed in knowing God’s will through the study of his Word. The end result is conformity to God’s will through the grace of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures know nothing of a mere abstract or theoretical knowledge but only a concrete or experiential knowledge of God’s will, i.e., the will of God is only truly known and enjoyed as we submit and conform to it (Psa. 119:11; Rom. 12:1–2)!³⁶

D. To be Obedient to God

A right understanding of the Scriptures is essential for intelligently knowing the revealed will of God, which, in turn, is necessary to our complete, willful and loving obedience (Rom. 2:17–20; Eph. 5:15–17; 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:18; 1 Jn. 2:3–6). Apart from the Scriptures we would be left to our own ideas, prejudices and feelings. True Bible study, which necessarily includes a consistent hermeneutic, is meant to bring us into faithful obedience to the Word of God.

³⁶ Rom. 12:1–2 is based upon the foregoing doctrinal content of Romans chapters 1–11. The Apostle’s reasoning is that we must spiritually prepare and conform to God’s will in order to see how blessed it is in and for our lives.

E. To Grow Toward Spiritual Maturity

True spirituality is primarily intellectual and then practical—not mystical, emotional or irrational. It is primarily intellectual because we must intelligently grasp the Scriptures through which the Holy Spirit ministers grace and brings us to spiritual maturity (Acts 8:30³⁷; Eph. 4:11–16³⁸; Phil. 1:9–11; Col. 1:28–29; 2 Pet. 3:18). It becomes practical as the grace of the Holy Spirit works through the Word to conform us to the image of Christ.

There is a very necessary and proper place for the feelings or emotions, but this is in the context of Divine truth; conversely Divine truth has no place in the context of the emotions, i.e., we must not have to become emotional to receive or reject Divine truth. The emotions are meant to be responsive, not determinative. This balance must be emphasized in our present age of religious irrationality.

True spirituality is not a legalistic approach to the Christian life, although many sincerely believe that spirituality consists of an often arbitrary list of “Do’s and Don’ts.” True spirituality is not necessarily being religious, or religiously traditional. It is not a matter of possessing certain alleged spiritual gifts or talents. It is not possessing an academic knowledge of the Scriptures. One may possess natural abilities or acquire religious traits and yet be unregenerate. Nor can we judge true spirituality by a single aspect or even several aspects of a person’s life. We must take into account the entirety of the life.

True spirituality exists, not by nature but by grace. It is in those graces, virtues and tendencies which are often contrary to nature but positive in the realm of grace that we discover true spirituality. It is manifested or exhibited in a heart–conformity to the Scriptures, despite the frailties and failings of sinful humanity.

³⁷ Philip did not ask the Ethiopian eunuch, “How do you feel about the Bible?” but rather, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

³⁸ Note that spiritual maturity is not nebulous, but primarily intellectual, as it centers here not only on love, unity and spiritual growth, but also on doctrinal knowledge and maturity.

F. To Further Our Sanctification

Sanctification, or holiness in the life and experience, is absolutely essential to salvation (Rom. 6:14; Heb. 12:14). It is by the grace of the Holy Spirit through or in connection with Divine truth (Psa. 119:11; Jn. 17:17; Acts 20:32; Eph. 5:25–27). Apart from a right understanding of Scripture, our views on holiness will inevitably be traditional, false or misleading.

There is hardly any faction or sect within Christendom which does not embrace a given amount of error or heresy in its view of holiness or sanctification. This demonstrates, that, even when in possession of the Scriptures, there is a great need for consistent principles of interpretation.

G. To Prepare for The Ministry of The Word

Bible study prepares us to sit under the preaching ministry of the church. All preaching, except the very basic evangelistic, missionary outreach to the heathen, assumes some basic knowledge of God and his Word.

There could be no possible progress in the pulpit ministry whatsoever if the hearers continued in complete ignorance of the Bible. Preparation for the preaching or teaching ministry of the church must be two-fold for the hearer: first, biblical, and second, spiritual (Psa. 119:18; Acts 10:33³⁹).

What must every believer do to be prepared for the preaching ministry and for such a ministry to be profitable?

- He must be prepared to worship, implying a God-consciousness that derives from Bible study and prayer.

³⁹ Cornelius had gathered a congregation in his spiritual concern, had them assembled on time, and they were all present for the purpose of hearing the Word—all the Word—that God had commanded Peter to preach. What a blessed congregation and meeting! (νῦν οὖν πάντες ἡμεῖς ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ πάρεσμεν ἀκοῦσαι πάντα τὰ προστεταγμένα σοι ὑπὸ τοῦ κυρίου). Lit: “And now we are all before God present for the purpose of hearing all the things commanded to you by the Lord!” Cornelius was a career military officer, and uses the terminology of assembled troops at attention, ready to receive their marching orders.

- He must be prepared to listen, implying the attitude of heart and attention of mind.
- He must be prepared to come to terms with the Divine truth that is presented in the preaching. Preaching must be experienced as well as heard.
- He must be prepared to learn, implying an earnestness and sanctified eagerness with respect to Divine truth.
- He must be prepared to apply the truth to his own life, implying a willingness to submit to God’s Word. Without such preparation of mind and heart, one will either tend toward a passive, disinterested attitude or toward a negative, critical spirit.
- This preparation ought to be a joyous time of earnest, prayerful sanctified anticipation.

It is not only possible, but sadly common for many modern evangelical churches to maintain the church by the use of programs and entertainment rather than the ministry of the Word of God (a complete contradiction of Eph. 4:11–16), thereby disguising the lack of a true, scriptural ministry with mere human excitement and activity—but the end result must necessarily be spiritually disastrous.

H. To Understand The Purpose of and Retain The Purity of The Church

The local church stands before God and the community as “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:14–15). If the pastor were the only true, serious Bible student in the assembly, or even one of the very few, and the congregation largely depended upon his studies for their knowledge of biblical truth and doctrine, the following deficiencies would exist:

- His ministry would largely be a failure, as he is to preach the gospel, equip the saints, edify the church, and strive to bring

every member to a given degree of spiritual maturity (Mk. 16:15; Eph. 4:11–16; Col. 1:28–29⁴⁰).

- The members would remain in disobedience to the Divine mandate to learn to individually interpret God’s Word and be able to give an intelligent answer to anyone and everyone who might ask (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15).
- The purity of the church would be in jeopardy, as God holds each member individually and corporately responsible for the truth (2 Tim. 3:16–17; 4:3–4).

I. To Edify Others

How do we edify other believers? Not necessarily through our experience, not through mere musical or instrumental skill, not through various artistic expressions—unless these in some consistent and reverent way communicate Divine truth (Eph. 5:18–21; Col. 3:12–16). This is the acid test in the question of whether we have church worship or entertainment, testimony meetings, special music, the public reading and explanation of the Scriptures as part of public worship, and are having true fellowship or simply mundane conversation. It is the truth of Scripture, taken and used by the Holy Spirit, which edifies the people of God. True Bible study ought to enable us to edify or minister to others in a godly, consistent manner.

J. To Evangelize The Unconverted

To evangelize⁴¹ means to declare, teach or explain the truth of the gospel (Matt. 28:18–20; Mk. 16:15). Sinners are converted through the truth of the gospel, not through personal experience, not through one’s religious ideas, not through religious philosophy, and not through existential [irrational, emotional] religious experiences.

⁴⁰ “...labor, striving...” κοπιῶ ἀγωνιζόμενος denotes extreme toil, laboring to the point of exhaustion. “labor, striving,” i.e., toiling to the point of exhaustion, agonizing...”

⁴¹ “Evangelize,” εὐαγγελίζω, to proclaim the good news or evangel or εὐαγγέλιον.

The message of the gospel must first be intelligently presented, then intelligently received through the thought–process to reach the conscience to produce a Holy Spirit–engendered conviction of sin. Then, by the grace of God, saving faith and repentance evidence the reception of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The serious Bible student ought to be able to present the truth of salvation by grace, through the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, clearly, concisely and thoroughly—and, if need be, as simply as possible. This is necessarily a situation which normally calls for prayer, study, the memorization of Scripture, and an inclusive grasp of the doctrinal issues involved.

One must deal from the Scriptures with such truths as regeneration, faith, repentance, justification, propitiation, reconciliation and the atonement. One must also be prepared to deal with various objections and difficulties—real or imagined—by those who would question various aspects of biblical Christianity. Study such passages as Rom. 1:16–17; 3:21–31; Acts 17:18, 22–31 or Acts 24:25–26 to examine the careful and precise language used by an inspired apostle in carefully explaining the sinfulness of man, the truth of the gospel, and the utter necessity of faith and repentance.

K. To Intelligently Defend The Faith

Every believer without exception is called upon to be able at any given time to give a defense of his faith (1 Pet. 3:15). This is not the same as “giving one’s testimony,” “sharing one’s faith,” or “sharing how we feel about Jesus and what he’s done for us.” Defending the faith includes both an explanation and defense of biblical doctrinal truth,⁴² and also the ability, by the grace of God,

⁴² Jude 3. We are called upon to “earnestly contend [intensely agonize] for the once–for–all–delivered–unto–the–saints faith” (ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει), i.e., to explain and defend biblical doctrine. The position of the def. art. τῇ... πίστει identifies faith as preeminently doctrinal, and makes the entire clause emphatic.

to dismantle the reasoned arguments of our opponents.⁴³ How can anyone possibly attempt this without being an experienced, skilled Bible student—and a serious student of related subjects as well?

In order to accomplish these necessary things to any given degree, we must become serious students of Scripture. The Scriptures must, then, not only be constantly read, but seriously, comprehensively and intensely studied and interpreted, and the strategic passages committed to memory.

Questions for Discussion

1. Explain what God is doing in the life and experience of every believer without exception. How does this correlate to the need for a proper biblical hermeneutic?
2. Explain how an adequate comprehension of Scripture is necessary for its consistent application to the life and experience.
3. List the purposes for Bible study and the need for a proper hermeneutic.
4. How would a consistent, intelligent hermeneutic relate to 1 Corinthians 10:31? How would the lack of a biblical hermeneutic become sinful in the light of this statement?
5. How does a right hermeneutic enable us to truly commune with Christ in the Scriptures?
6. What does obedience to God imply regarding a right understanding of the Scriptures?
7. What place does Hermeneutics have in spiritual growth?
8. If the Scriptures are the instrument of sanctification, what relation does Hermeneutics have to our sanctification?
9. Is there any relation between Hermeneutics and preparing to hear the public ministry of the Scriptures in preaching? What is that relation?
10. What is the local church in the purpose of God? Why is it incumbent upon every Believer to have an intelligent grasp of biblical truth in relation to the local church?

⁴³ 2 Cor. 10:3–5. “casting down imaginations” ...λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες... lit: “logical arguments dismantling.”

11. What is edification? Is the edification of the people of God an objective or subjective reality? If objective, then is doctrine necessary to edification? If subjective, then what supplies the objective basis?
12. Is there a relation between seeking to edify other believers and possessing a consistent hermeneutic?
13. Is Hermeneutics in any way related to evangelism? How? Explain.
14. Can one faithfully and consistently defend the faith without a proper, consistent hermeneutic? Explain and substantiate the answer.

Part II General Considerations

- I. Basic Issues
 - A. Hermeneutics, Inspiration And Canonization
 - B. Hermeneutics And Theology
 - C. The Presuppositions Of Hermeneutics
 - D. The Goal Of Hermeneutics
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 - I. Words of Information and Caution

I Basic Issues

A. Hermeneutics, Inspiration and Canonization

As a science and art, Sacred or Biblical Hermeneutics⁴⁴ presupposes the Divine inspiration and canonization of the Scriptures, i.e., Hermeneutics necessarily builds upon a definitive body of Divinely inspired truth. If there is any question concerning the definitive, unique nature of Scripture (i.e., what writings form the canon or body of inspired and inscripturated truth) or about the character of Divine inspiration (i.e., it either fails to be verbal or

⁴⁴ See Part I.

plenary), Hermeneutics necessarily becomes subjective and arbitrary.

Biblical Hermeneutics and Divine Inspiration

Divine inspiration has given to us the very Word of God inscripturated, a unique body of Divine truth, distinct from all other literature, to be our sole rule of both faith [what we are to believe] and practice [how we are to live]. This is the necessary foundation for hermeneutics.

What is the exact nature of inspiration? The great truth of Divine revelation is that God has spoken to men. The great truth of inspiration is that this revelation is preserved and protected as the very Word of God inscripturated. Inspiration is “...a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given Divine trustworthiness.”⁴⁵ An extended explanation is:

Inspiration...is the inbreathing of God into men, thus qualifying them to receive and communicate Divine truth...God speaking through the Holy Spirit through men to men. It is the work of God through the Spirit in men, enabling them to receive and give forth Divine truth without error. It makes the speaker and writer infallible in the communication of this truth, whether this truth was previously known or not. It causes the message to go beyond human power and become Divinely authoritative.⁴⁶

Note: It is vital to understand that the New Testament, when referring to the Old, uses the terminology “Scripture saith,” “God saith,” “It saith” and “He saith” synonymously, even when referring to the words of Moses or other Old Testament speakers. This is the self-consistent witness of the Scripture to itself.⁴⁷

It must be carefully noted that inspiration refers not only to the human authors, but the very writings themselves: “all *Scripture* is God-breathed...”

⁴⁵ B. B. Warfield, *Revelation and Inspiration*, pp. 77–78.

⁴⁶ H. S. Miller, *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁴⁷ See B. B. Warfield, *Op. cit.*, pp. 283–332 for a full discussion of this subject.

Theories of Inspiration

There are at least nine different views or theories concerning the exact nature of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures:

1. *Verbal dictation or mechanical inspiration.* This theory teaches that the Bible was dictated by God to men, and so the human authors were mere stenographers. While it is true that some portions of Scripture were dictated (e.g., the Decalogue, Ex. 20:1–17, etc.), the Scriptures give ample expression to the inspiration of the writers themselves (their human peculiarities and personal differences of style) and not merely to the writings.
2. Dictation or mechanical inspiration excludes the writers from inspiration altogether. This was the prevalent belief of Rabbinic and Hellenistic Judaism, and also of the Church Fathers. It resulted in a superstitious worship of the very letters of the Hebrew or Greek themselves, and so to a multiplicity of meanings and extremes in interpretation.
3. *Myth, legend and religious evolution.* This theory, derived from the so-called Enlightenment mentality (Renaissance Humanism, French Skepticism and German Rationalism—all denying the supernatural and so the possibility of Divine inspiration), alleges that the religion of Israel in the Old Testament was the product of religious evolution, largely borrowed from pagan sources.

According to this view, myths, legends and oral traditions were written down and constantly revised by various redactors [editors]. This view is variously known as the Documentary hypothesis, “JEDP Theory,”⁴⁸ or the radical and rationalistic criticism of the Old Testament. Rationalistic New Testament criticism has denied inspiration by positing that the New Testament writings were further developed or embellished from their original

⁴⁸ The Old Testament is alleged to have evolved through various sources, i.e., “J,” or “Jehovistic,” “E,” or “Elohistic,” “D,” or “Deuteronomic,” and “P,” or “Priestly Code.” This radical position was prominent in the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries. See Part III.

sources as oral traditions to their present form [form criticism]—another implicit denial of Divine inspiration. Radical criticism makes hermeneutics completely arbitrary.

4. *Natural human genius*. This theory holds that the writers of Scripture were only inspired in the same sense and extent that any great writer (e.g., Aristotle, Milton, Shakespeare, Bunyan) is inspired. This theory denigrates or denies the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit and is in reality no Divine inspiration at all. This necessarily renders all hermeneutics or interpretation the same, whether of human writings or Divine.
5. *Degrees of inspiration*. This theory teaches that some writers were more inspired than others according to their needs. This is also a denial of the true and necessary biblical doctrine of [verbal plenary] inspiration. This would enable the reader to pick and choose what he considered to be truly inspired. This would necessarily make any interpretation subjective.
6. *Illumination*. This theory holds that the writers of Scripture were only illuminated in the same sense and to the same degree that every Christian receives spiritual illumination or insight by the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 2:20, 27). This is grossly inadequate and contrary to Scripture, which asserts a unique inspiration to the human writers (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). This would necessarily remove the “sacredness” or reverence from hermeneutics and make the interpreter equal to the original author, and thus lessen the authority of Scripture.
7. *Inspired concepts*. This theory teaches that only the concepts or general ideas of Scripture are inspired. If this were true, then the words themselves would be ultimately meaningless, and where would inspiration or the interpretation be? See below, “Why is verbal inspiration absolutely necessary?”
8. *Partial or occasional inspiration*. This theory holds that only certain portions of the Bible are inspired, or that only at certain points did the human authors reach the level of true,

Divine inspiration. This presupposes that the Bible is only partially [contains] the Word of God and is an admixture of error, tradition, and human ideas as well as Divine truth. This would ultimately destroy any consistent approach to inspiration or interpretation.

9. *Subjective or crisis theology.* This is the theory of Neoorthodoxy, which holds that the Scriptures are *not* objectively the Word of God inscripturated. The Spirit of God allegedly speaks to the individual reader subjectively in a crisis experience—religious existentialism. Is an existential hermeneutic possible?
10. *The true, consistent view of Divine inspiration.* The true, consistent doctrine of the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures is that God so moved upon the human writers within and upon their individual personalities, minds and spirits so that the very words they wrote were the very words God intended for them to write—including their choice of thoughts, words, grammar, idioms and syntax. Thus, inspiration pertains to both the writers and the writings themselves.

What is Verbal, Plenary Inspiration?

The Divine inspiration of the Scriptures is both *verbal* (and so extending to the very words, grammatical constructions, syntax and intricacies, etc.)⁴⁹ and *plenary* (fully, equally inspired throughout).⁵⁰ Thus, all and every part of Scripture is both fully and equally [organically] inspired in the original [autograph] manuscripts.

Why is Verbal Inspiration absolutely Necessary?

Some think that only the *general ideas* or *concepts* of Scripture are inspired. If this were true [and it is not], then the words of Scripture themselves would not have meaning or the utmost significance. The grammatical constructions and intricacies of the original languages would be largely irrelevant. The special

⁴⁹ “Verbal” is from *verbum*, Lat. for “word.”

⁵⁰ “Plenary” is derived from the Lat., *plenus*, *plenarius*, “full in scope or extent; complete in or absolute in force.” (*OED*).

revelation from God would not be definite, and much truth would either be left to question, confusion or one's own interpretation. Verbal inspiration presupposes that God has given his Word in a manner that is intelligent and understandable by man—that he has spoken in the very *words* themselves.

Why is Plenary Inspiration absolutely Necessary?

Some hold that the Bible only *contains* the Word of God, and that we must separate what is actually the Word of God from the words, tradition and ideas of men. This is false. Who could or would decide what is the Word of God and what is not? Others hold that at this distant day and time much of the original Word of God has been lost. We must presuppose that the sovereign God who gave his Word has the purpose and power to preserve it.

Sacred Hermeneutic and The Canon of Scripture

The canon of Scripture stands separated from all other writings as the very Word of God inscripturated. No writings can be omitted from this canon and none can be added. It forms a unique and distinct or definitive body of Divine truth.

What is meant by the “Canonicity” of Scripture?

The “canonicity” of Scripture has reference to the various books that together make up the Bible [the Scriptural *canon*] and the process by which they alone are recognized as Scripture [*canonization*].⁵¹

The Bible as a Book and a Divine Library

All of the Holy Scriptures together form a book—the Bible. But the Bible is itself comprised of sixty–six books. It is a Divine library of various books—thirty–nine in the Old Testament [Genesis—Malachi in our English Bible] and twenty–seven in the New Testament [Matthew—Revelation in our English Bible]—that together form the *canon* of Scripture.

⁵¹ “Canonicity” literally means “according to rule,” and technically refers to the state of being canonical, i.e., of being included in the canon of Scripture.

Note: The word *canon* is derived from the Gk. κανὼν, and originally signified a measuring staff or straight rod. It was probably a derivative of the Heb. קֶנֶף, (*kaneh*) reed, an Old Testament term for a measuring rod (Ezk. 40:3; 42:16). In pre-Christian Greek it also had the connotation of *rule* or *standard* by which a thing is measured. This usage occurs in the New Testament several times (e.g., Gal. 6:16).

The metaphorical use of canon as *standard* or *norm* is found in the early Church Fathers from the time of Irenaeus. They referred to the κανὼν [rule] of Christian teaching which they called the “κανὼν [rule] of the Truth,” or the “κανὼν [rule] of Faith.” By the time of Athanasius (c.350), the term *canon* was applied to the Bible, both as the rule of faith and practice and as the body of inspired and authoritative truth.

Christian Theism

The existence and validity of a scriptural canon presupposes Christian theism—the belief in the triune, self-disclosing God of Christianity as revealed in the Scriptures. Only if it is presupposed that the self-revealing God of Scripture has spoken, and that this revelation has been inscripturated under Divine superintendence, can the issues of canonicity be settled in a positive manner.

Upon the presuppositions of Christian theism, the Scriptures are self-authenticating as the inspired, infallible, inerrant, and therefore authoritative Word of God inscripturated (Heb. 1:1–2; 2 Pet. 1:20–21; 2 Tim. 3:16). Thus, the Bible itself defines and determines canonicity. Early Christianity did not canonize the Scriptures, but rather *recognized* those writings that were and are canonical.

Note: Even the Church of Rome admits the priority and superiority of the canon, although it admits also the Apocryphal books and tradition:

...These books of the Old and New Testament are to be received as sacred and canonical, in their integrity, with all their parts, as they are enumerated in the decree of the said Council and are contained in the ancient Latin edition of the Vulgate. These the Church holds to be sacred and canonical, not because, having been carefully composed by mere human industry, they were afterwards approved by her authority, nor merely because they contain revelation, with no admixture of error; but because they were written by the inspiration of the

Holy Ghost, they have God for their author, and have been delivered as such to the Church herself. Decree of the Vatican Council, AD 1870, Chapter II.⁵²

The Necessity of a Scriptural Canon

A fixed, authoritative body of Divine truth is essential to Christianity. Without such, no standard could exist for faith or practice. The need for a recognized canon or definitive body of Divine, authoritative truth arose from the following:

- *The existence of both written and oral tradition.* The Christians of the early to mid-second century had either heard the apostles personally or had been taught by those who had. There existed, not only the Apostolic writings, but a whole body of oral traditions and sayings allegedly from both the Lord himself⁵³ and the Apostles that maintained a great influence over Christian faith and practice. The oral traditions were in great danger of being changed by time. The truth had to be established by the written Word, all the written Word and only the written Word.
- *A consistent evangelistic and missionary effort.* Versions of the Scriptures were made in the early second century and onward in various languages as the gospel spread to other geographical areas with diverse languages. There was an urgent need to define the body or library of inspired writings as many spurious writings [*pseudographica*] were already extant.
- *Intellectual assaults against Christianity from pagan Greek philosophy.* The early Christians appealed to the Scriptures for their arguments and proof of the Divine origin of Christianity. Appeal to Scripture logically placed the writings of the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament Apostles on the same level. Melito of Sardis [an early Church Father] (c. 170) journeyed to Palestine to

⁵² Quoted in Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, II, pp. 241–242.

⁵³ E.g., Acts 20:35, “I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

affirm the Old Testament canon of the Hebrew text, as there existed some question as to the canon because the LXX⁵⁴ contained the Apocrypha.⁵⁵ The Hebrew canon was then established for Christians.

- As the Old Testament canon was established and upheld by the witness of the Lord himself and the Apostles, it was left to the early Christians to recognize the writings that would comprise the New Testament canon.
- *The abundance of heretical literature that sought to pervert Christianity.* Many books were written by Gnostics and others that perverted the truth. Appeal to authoritative writings necessitated a fixed canon of Divine truth.
- *Sectarians began to make changes in various apostolic writings to suit their peculiar views.* Many books were edited and some were also forged under the names of the apostles.
- *The canon of Marcion the Gnostic (c. 140).* Marcion was the first “higher critic,” and established the first “New Testament canon” on Gnostic principles. He excluded everything except the Gospel of Luke in a mutilated edited form and ten epistles of Paul. Reaction to the canon of Marcion hastened the formation of the New Testament canon.
- *Persecution.* Early Christians took great precautions to protect the Scriptures during periods of persecution when the government demanded that all the sacred Christian writings be confiscated and destroyed. Those writings recognized as Scripture were protected at the risk of lives while other writings might be given up.

⁵⁴ Legend [without foundation] has it that seventy scholars translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek [c. 260–240 BC] in seventy days. The traditional designation of the Septuagint is the Roman numeral for seventy—LXX.

⁵⁵ The *Apocrypha* refers to fourteen additional [uninspired] books of Jewish history and legend that the LXX included and are included by the Romish Church in its Old Testament canon.

The Tests of Canonicity

How did the early Christians recognize certain books as Scripture and reject others? The criterion [judge, standard] was not antiquity, as though books written in a given period were considered scriptural. Many books were in existence which were contemporary or even antedated some Scripture, e.g., *The Book of the Wars of the Lord* (Numb. 21:14), *The Book of Jasher* (Josh. 10:13), an epistle by Paul (1 Cor. 5:9). *1 Clement* (c. 96 A.D.) was written during the lifetime of the Apostle John. The answer lies in the application of various principles gathered from early Christian writings which detail the process used by the early Christians and churches:

- *Is the book authoritative?* Does it possess Divine authority? This includes either immediate prophetic or apostolic authorship [genuineness], or authorship by an amanuensis or understudy and close companion of an apostle who wrote or interpreted under his authority and influence (e.g., Peter and Mark, or Paul and Luke). God inspired the Scriptures through the prophets and apostles.
- *Is the book authentic?* Does it agree with the rest of Divine revelation and with the rule or “analogy of faith?” Does it contradict the truth in any way?
- *Is the book dynamic*, i.e., does it possess the power of God to evangelize and edify? Does it manifest the witness of the Spirit?
- *Is the book recognized by the early Church Fathers?* Is it quoted or referred to as Scripture and undisputed?
- *Is the book received by the people of God?* Does it have universal acceptance? Is it a book that is to be read in all the churches? Some later works, as the Epistles of Clement, Barnabas, Hermas, *et. al.*, were read in some churches for a time, but were eventually discarded. There was a great and recognizable distinction between the apostolic writings and those of the early Fathers.

Note: What must be carefully noted is that the Church did not canonize the Scriptures, i.e., did not make them the

authoritative Word of God. Rather, Christianity *recognized* the various books as Scripture. Indeed, the authority of the Church or Christianity derives from the Scriptures, and not the Scriptures from the Church or from Christianity.

The History of the Canon

The recognition of the New Testament canon was a gradual process, due to state persecution, the existence of oral Christian tradition, the slowness of copying the Scriptures by hand, the relative isolation of churches throughout the Roman Empire, the fact that few, if any churches possessed all the Scriptures, and the existence of other early Christian writings.

- *The earliest recognition of New Testament writings as Scripture* comes from the Apostle Peter in referring to the writings of Paul, implying the existence of a canon or body of New Testament truth at that time (2 Pet. 3:14–16).
- *The closest Church Fathers to the Apostles, i.e., the writers to 170 A.D., refer to the apostolic writings as Scripture* and held them as being far superior to their own writings and wholly authoritative: Clement of Rome (95), Ignatius of Antioch (117), Polycarp (118), Papias (140), Justin Martyr (150).
- *By the year 170, the New Testament canon was complete or recognized by all, with the exception of 2 Peter*, implying that by the end of the second century the question of the canon was almost completely settled.
- *The Eastern or Greek Church had fully recognized the full or present canon by the letter of Athanasius in 367. The Western or Latin Church recognized the full canon by the Council of Hippo (393) and the Council of Carthage (397).*

Note: The necessarily gradual recognition of the canon meant that the early Church Fathers often gave great credence to uninspired writings from the Apocrypha and from other early Church Fathers.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the relation between inspiration and Hermeneutics?

2. What is verbal, plenary inspiration? Why is this view of Divine inspiration a necessity?
3. What is the relation between the canon of Scripture and the interpretation of Scripture?
4. What were the ancient tests of the early Christians for canonicity?

B. Hermeneutics and Theology

Hermeneutics and the exegetical process form the culmination of Exegetical Theology. It must be noted that Theology as a science has five interrelated branches in which each branch should necessarily be built on the preceding. The five branches or departments within Christian Theology are: Exegetical, Biblical, Historical, Systematic and Practical.⁵⁶

- *Exegetical Theology* forms the basis of all theological science, as it is concerned with the text of Scripture itself, its exegesis, and its interpretation.

Note: There are two basic questions that Exegetical Theology seeks to answer:

1. *What does the Bible say?*—the matter of the reading of the text. This question is concerned with such issues as Biblical Philology [Original Languages], Bible Backgrounds, Isagogics [Textual and Historical criticism], Canonic and Exegesis (including grammar, syntax, the larger and more immediate context, [grammatical, historical, doctrinal, social and psychological context), parallel passages, the analogy of faith, etc.
 2. *What does the Bible mean?*—the matter of interpretation. Hermeneutics is based on the first question and deals directly with this second question. Although there may be several avenues of legitimate application, there is only one possible and consistent interpretation.
- *Biblical Theology* builds upon this foundation and traces the progressive revelation of God throughout the Old and New Testaments, drawing the necessary distinctions between the Old and New Covenants and economies.

⁵⁶ Most theologies designate four major branches, usually combining Exegetical and Biblical, but this proves to be inadequate, as each of these possesses its own distinctives and regulative principle.

- *Historical Theology* traces the development of Christian doctrine from the close of the Apostolic era to the present time. It is the doctrinal and controversial aspect of Church history as manifest in the creeds, confessions and controversies.
- These three branches—Exegetical, Biblical and Historical—are then systematized and harmonized into an integrated whole by *Systematic Theology*. In this department attention is given to each doctrine as it relates to the sum-total of doctrinal truth so as to form an organic unity or consistent system.
- These four branches culminate in *Practical Theology*, which is the expression of doctrine in the life of the church and the individual.

Theological science thus properly begins with the very text of Scripture and its exegesis and interpretation (Exegetical Theology), traces the development of any given doctrinal distinctive to its culmination within the context of the “Analogy of Faith” and according to the principle of progressive revelation (Biblical Theology).

Then considers it in the historical context of its explanation, development and debate (Historical Theology); and then seeks to consider it in the context of all other aspects of Divine truth (Systematic Theology), and then gives it its full and consistent expression in the individual and corporate life of Christianity (Practical Theology).

Thus, Hermeneutic is primary and vital in Christian thinking, and forms the basis of all Christian doctrine and experience. Ultimately, all our belief and practice ought to rest on the reading and interpretation of the text. The Reformer Martin Luther put the issue succinctly, when he stated, “The science of theology is nothing else than grammar applied to the words of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁷

⁵⁷ F. W. Farrar, *The History of Interpretation*, p. 287.

C. The Presuppositions of Hermeneutics

It is humanly impossible to be without some presuppositions or assumptions, as man by nature is presuppositional, i.e., we consciously or unconsciously think and act upon certain assumptions.⁵⁸ A proper Biblical Hermeneutic is founded upon certain presuppositions:

- That God has spoken, and that this Divine revelation has been inscripturated and preserved as the very Word of God (1 Cor. 2:9–16; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21).
- That God has given his inscripturated Word to man to be understood intelligently, consistently and practically—according to the *usus loquendi* (Matt. 4:4).
- That the Word of God is preeminently spiritual; therefore it must be interpreted by those who are spiritually qualified. Bare intellectualism, tradition and irrationalism [emotionalism] are all foreign to Biblical Hermeneutics (1 Cor. 2:9–16).
- That the starting point for Hermeneutics is Scripture, not man. The interpreter approaches the Scripture reverently; he does not approach it with a superior, calloused, merely “scientific” or indifferent attitude (Heb. 4:12–13).
- That God has given his Word to be both understood and implemented in doctrinal belief and practical experience. Thus, Hermeneutics is not a mere theoretical or academic science, but a practical, integral part of life (Psa. 119:105; Matt. 4:4; 2 Tim. 3:16–17).

⁵⁸ Man was created as a presuppositionalist, i.e., to assume or presuppose the Word of God over the totality of life (Matt. 4:4). This is inescapable. E.g., the polytheistic presuppositions and ignorance of the philosophers who could not understand the gospel as preached by Paul (Acts 17:18). To them, he was preaching something about “healing” (τὸν Ἰησοῦν, masc, and sounding much like ἰασις, or “healing”) and “restoration” (τὴν ἀνάστασιν, fem., and physically, referring to recovery from illness) i.e., a god and goddess with which they were not familiar! Even such terms as “salvation” (σωτηρία and σωτήρ) could refer to physical health, a healer [physician] and recuperation.

D. The Goal of Hermeneutics

The goal of Hermeneutics is to understand the mind of the Spirit through the original inspired, human author and be able to accurately and consistently convey and apply his thought and words to contemporary Christianity individually and corporately.

Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, but their language was subject to all the ordinary conditions and limitations of human speech...Hence the one aim of the interpreter should be to ascertain the specific meaning of the inspired teacher, and to clothe it in the forms which will best convey that meaning to the minds of his contemporaries.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the five interrelated branches of theology?
2. What position does Hermeneutics occupy in the theological curriculum?
3. Why is Hermeneutics situated at the critical point in theological science? Explain in detail.
4. What are the presuppositions for Hermeneutics?
5. Why do these presuppositions necessitate a reverent, careful approach?
6. What is the goal of Hermeneutics?
7. What does this goal entail? Is it reasonable? Explain.

E. The Definition of Essential Terms

There are several terms which must be understood to properly deal with the subject of Biblical Hermeneutics. These will be discussed at various points, but it is necessary to have a basic comprehension of these now:

“Interpretation”

We must not only know what the Scripture says; we must also know what it means. This is the task of Hermeneutic or interpretation—to accurately and consistently bring forth the *meaning* of Scripture. Hermeneutics comes into action in the exegetical process, providing the presuppositions and framework for exegesis and exposition.

“Application”

Application (Lat. *applicare, applicationem*), “the bringing of anything to bear practically upon another...the putting of anything

to a use or purpose...”⁵⁹ Application is the process by which the truth of Scripture affects contemporary Christians and Christianity. What was written to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, the Hebrews,⁶⁰ etc., may have either direct or indirect application to us.

All application is necessarily based on the interpretation. Once the proper interpretation has been established, application can be made without confusing the two. Interpretation and application must never be confused—but they are often confused and the distinction ignored in preaching, which is a major cause for misunderstanding Scripture.

“Exegesis”

Exegesis (Gk. ἐξεγέσις, ἐξηγέομαι, from ἐκ, “out,” and ἡγέομαι, “lead”) means “to lead out, to unfold in teaching.” To bring out the meaning [of the original language]. Hermeneutics plays an integral part in the exegetical process. Cf. Jn. 1:18, where our Lord “has declared” (ἐξηγήσατο, aor.) the reality of the Father.⁶¹ Jesus Christ is the “exegesis” of God, i.e., the critical examination and exposition of the original.

It must be noted that exegesis is only possible in the original language, and not in a translation or version, as inspiration does not pertain to the grammar or syntax of a second language. E.g., an exposition of the Scripture in our English Bible is legitimate, but not an exegesis, which would presuppose the Divine inspiration of the grammar and syntax of the English Bible, a fatal fallacy of most cults in their proof–text mentality and argumentation.

Note: e.g., John 3:16 and the phrase “whosoever believeth in him.” The Greek reads πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν, i.e., “every

⁵⁹ *OED Third Ed.*, p. 86.

⁶⁰ In a discussion concerning the “Carnal Christian” heresy, the author referred to Heb. 12:14 and the necessity of holiness. He was rebuked by a pastor who stated that “that statement was written to the ‘Hebrews,’ not to us,” as though God had a double standard for Jewish Christians. What then could be said of what was written to the Romans, Galatians or Ephesians? Such faulty hermeneutics precluded any direct or indirect application whatsoever.

⁶¹ Jn. 1:18 θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς [ὑἱος] ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκείνου ἐξηγήσατο.

single one without exception constantly exercising faith in him.” The idea of “whosoever” has been completely misconstrued because of its seeming relation to the term “world,” making it indefinite and inclusive, when it is actually particular and exclusive. See the classic example of Acts 2:38 under “Exposition.”

“Eisegesis”

Eisegesis. (Gk. εἰσεγείσις, from εἰς, “into,” and ἡγέομαι, “lead”) is a reading *into* the text a meaning which is not there. This may be done in various ways, such as by allegorizing or “spiritualizing” the text,

E.g., making every reference to “Jerusalem” or “Zion” refer to “the Church,” thus finding “the Church” in the Old Testament, and then attributing various Old Testament qualities to it. E.g., spiritualizing passages to fit a pre-conceived idea, such as the Song of Solomon referring to “the mystical relationship between Christ and the Church.”

E.g., Making “Jordan” refer to death and Canaan to heaven, as in several traditional hymns. Canaan was a place of warfare, not a place of rest and glory! Much illegitimate spiritualizing of the Scriptures takes place in dealing with the interpretation of parables, in which every aspect is alleged to teach some spiritual truth, or even become the basis for certain doctrinal teaching. Parables, by their very nature and use, are told to illustrate certain truths.

No doctrine must be derived from or be based solely on parabolic teaching. Such violation has often resulted in strange and contradictory teaching. This subject is further developed under special hermeneutical principles.

Other means of eisegesis are: confusing terms and obscuring the meaning, confusing application with interpretation,⁶² reading issues of contemporary Christianity into an ancient text,⁶³ arbitrarily reading a theological teaching or

⁶² E.g., Referring 1 Cor. 2:9, “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” The context plainly refers this to spiritual truth presently known to believers, not to the anticipated glories of heaven, as is plainly evident from the context.

⁶³ E.g., Dt. 22:5, “The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.” This is a prohibition of transvestism [cross-dressing], not a prohibition of women wearing pants. In biblical times, both men and women dressed very similarly in long, flowing garments—neither wore “pants” as we do today—although the

evangelistic meaning⁶⁴ into a given text, or by misunderstanding the significance of the words or terminology used.⁶⁵

Note: e.g., “backsliding, backslider, backslidden.” A term which actually means rebellion and a refractory shoulder, i.e., apostasy, not the idea of sliding back into sin. The terms “Backslider,” “Backsliding” and “backslidings” occ. 17 times in Scripture, all in 3 books of the OT: Proverbs, Jeremiah and Hosea.

The term “Backslidden” never occurs in Scripture. Thus this is a manifestly OT doctrine. The Heb. uses three root terms: סוּג, “deviate, draw back, turn away”: (Prov. 14:14); נָשָׁבָה, “turn back, apostasy” (Jer. 3:6); שׁוּבוּ בָּנִים שׁוֹבְבִים, (Jer. 3:14). סָרָה סָרָה (Hos. 4:16). The picture is that of a young heifer which openly rebels or rages madly and throws off the yoke.

men with their beards and the women with their coverings were distinctly different in style.

⁶⁴ E.g., The various types of *eisegesis* peculiar to “The Parable of the Ten Virgins” (Matt. 25:1–13) all seek to make “oil” in this passage a type of the Holy Spirit, or, in addition to this, making the “virgins” into “churches.” This is incoherent in the context of the parable, as the Spirit could then be lost, then purchased, and then those in such possession of the Spirit excluded from the kingdom! To interpret the virgins as churches would simply be allegorical, and would remove all interpretive safeguards. The parable was given to teach one truth, “watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh.” Interpreting parabolic incidentals may espouse error.

E.g., Rev. 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” This is not an evangelistic text, but our Lord seeking fellowship in an apostate church. Yet it has almost become heresy to question the alleged evangelistic connotation. Such is the strength of evangelical tradition. This is a graphic example of *eisegesis*, of failing to consider the context, and of confusing interpretation with application.

⁶⁵ E.g., Gal. 1:6–7. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” This is sometimes lessened as in the English idiom, when, in fact, it is emph. in the Gk. ...ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο... “another gospel [of a different kind] which is not [at all] another [of the same kind].”

The very terms used refer to apostasy. If this doctrine is brought into the NT by implication, then it does not and cannot refer simply to a Christian slipping back into sin. Taking the terms used and finding their counterpart from the LXX into the Greek NT, it must refer to apostasy i.e., to those who apostatize from a mere outward profession of faith. The NT term is ἀφίστημι, to stand off or apart from.

“Exposition”

Exposition vs. Exegesis

Biblical Exposition (from Lat. *exponere*, to put out, hence “to expose, expound.” Gk. ἐκτίθημι, “to put out, expose;” ἔκθεσις, “exposition”) refers to the opening, explanation and clarification of a given text or passage of Scripture. What is the difference between exegesis and exposition? Exegesis deals with grammar and syntax; exposition deals with analysis.

One can legitimately perform an exegesis of a passage from the Hebrew Old Testament or Greek New Testament, but he cannot legitimately do an exegesis of a passage in the English or any other translation or version. Why? Because the very grammatical particulars, syntactical constructions, idioms and figurative language of and in the original are inspired; those of any translation or version are not.⁶⁶ A passage of Scripture in any translation or version can be analyzed as to its content, but not grammatically or syntactically approached in a legitimate fashion except in the original language.

Note: e.g., A famous Fundamentalist preacher began his exposition of “The Great Commission” in Matt. 28:19–20 by stating that there were four imperatives or commands: “Go,” “Make disciples,” “Baptize” and “Teach”—absolutely not true. The Greek reads: “Having gone... baptizing... and teaching” as temporal participles all related to the one main vb. in the aor.

⁶⁶ E.g., the Eng [KJV] of Acts 2:38 grammatically makes “Repent” and “be baptized” compound verbs and thus equal—the classic argument of the Campbellites, but the Greek reads (Μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν). “Repent” is aor. imp. act. pl. “be baptized” is aor. pass imp. sing. i.e., “All of you with a sense of urgency and all determination, Repent!...and [then] let each one of you be baptized.” The former receives the emphasis and the latter is much less a command.

imp. “make disciples.” (πορευθέντες...μαθητεύσατε...
βαπτίζοντες...διδάσκοντες...).

Exegesis and exposition belong to the Scriptures in the original languages; but only an exposition of the Scripture in a second language.

Are Translations and Versions Inspired?

This necessitates answering the question, “Are translations and versions of the Bible inspired?” The orthodox doctrine of Divine inspiration concerns only the “autograph manuscripts,” i.e., the original copies of Scripture and the original writers. It does not technically extend to subsequent copies or to translations [copies of the Scripture in another language other than original] and versions [copies and revisions of translations in a given language other than original] of Scripture. There are three necessary considerations:

- *God has necessarily preserved his Word.* Unless we presuppose that God has preserved his inspired Word, then the whole question of inspiration is irrelevant at this distant day. We believe that God has preserved his Word—that providential preservation is as true and necessary as the inspiration of the autographs [originals].

Although we do not possess the original manuscripts [autograph copies], we do possess the Scriptures in the original languages, and the text has undoubtedly been preserved in the extant manuscripts.

- *There is a distinct difference between a translation and a version.* A translation begins with the original language and, while expressing itself in another language, keeps as closely as possible to the original text with its grammatical intricacies, syntax and idioms—even to some sacrifice of style.

A version differs from a translation in that it is a revision in a second language, and takes much more liberty with the grammar, syntax and idioms of the original language and makes much greater allowances for smoothness of reading and expression of thought, i.e., a version, unlike a bare

translation, expresses itself in the grammar and idioms of the second language, not the original.

- *To the extent that a given translation or version expresses the thought and truth of the original language, such a translation or version gives us the Word of God.* This necessarily takes into consideration the idiomatic expressions of a language, the incapacity of some languages to express the fullness of the original, and a determined faithfulness to the grammar, syntax, context and theology of the text.

Some cultic and modern versions fail in these necessary elements and are at best mere paraphrases or even worse. Such cannot be called the Word of God as these are not based on any text of Scripture and often express the defective theology or ideas of the editors rather than a faithful rendering of the original as close as a given language will permit.

E.g., *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* [Russelite] in Jn. 1:1, “..and the Word was a god.” καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. The anarth. const. emphasizes the quality or character of the Word. Further, had θεὸς the def. art., it would refer in the context to God the Father, denying the necessary distinction between the Father and the Son or Word. θεὸς is in the emphatic position, and thus, “The Word as to his very essence, was [emphatically] Deity!”—a culminative statement in this context, emphasizing the Deity of the Word:

In the beginning was the Word (Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος), the Eternity of the Word.

And the Word was with God (καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν), the Equality of the Word.

And the Word was God (καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος), the Deity of the Word.

E.g., δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται. The NIV renders Rom. 1:17, “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed...,” a misinterpretation of the anarth. use of the definite art., which stresses quality, and must be inserted in the English to adequately express the truth that the gospel provides the very righteousness which God requires. Further the term δικαιοσύνη is in the emphatic position.

E.g., *The Living Bible* obscures the sense and truth of Acts 13:48, "...and as many as wanted eternal life believed," rather than the rendering of other versions, "...and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. These had been appointed by God to eternal life, and so believed.

E.g., *The Living Bible* again obscures the truth of Rom., 8:28 by insinuating that we may or may not fit into God's purpose: "And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans." The truth of Rom. 8:28 is not subjective, but objective and inclusive, as God has one eternal, infallible, all-inclusive purpose (οἷς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὐσίην).

"Usus Loquendi"

Usus Loquendi is Latin for the usual, ordinary, or common usage of words within a given language. To find the *usus loquendi*, we must bridge linguistic, cultural, geographical and temporal barriers, as the Scripture was given to men and written in other ages, other languages, other cultures and in a geographical location far removed from us. Through proper linguistic, historical and cultural tools, we can properly comprehend the *usus loquendi* of the biblical age and culture.⁶⁷

"The Analogy of Faith"

The terminology "the analogy of faith" refers to the total teaching of Scripture as it bears upon any given point or aspect of Divine truth. The Scriptures, as the very Word of God, are necessarily self-consistent and non-contradictory. Synonymous terms used for this principle are "Scripture interprets Scripture," or "the perspicuity of Scripture," i.e., the more obscure passages may be understood by those parallel passages which are more plain and easier to understand.

⁶⁷ There are an abundance of legal documents, private correspondence, public records, inscriptions, and comparisons with cognate terms and languages to enable us to adequately understand the common languages with their use of legal and religious terms, figures of speech, idioms, etc. We know more about the Bible and its languages and history than any other ancient literature.

Note: The terminology “analogy of faith” was originally based on a misunderstanding of Rom. 12:6, “...according to the proportion of faith” (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, i.e., the measure of personal faith—not going beyond what God has given by way of personal gifts of ministry and faith personally or individually received).

The term “faith” was taken by the Church Fathers in an objective sense as the doctrinal teaching of Scripture rather than a subjective sense of personal, experimental faith, belief or trust. They spoke of the *Analogia* or *Regula Fidei* as pertaining to the general principles of the Christian faith.

The term, then, entered into Christian theology. Thus, the “analogy [ἀναλογίαν] of faith” came to have its present meaning. It has become an acceptable theological term, although it was originally misappropriated from Rom. 12:6.

“Spiritualize”

The term “spiritualize” does *not* refer to figurative language, but to a process of *eisegesis* in which another, second meaning, or multiplicity of “meanings” is read into the Scripture other than the literal meaning. There are two issues:

- *The existence of a “deeper” or “fuller” meaning.* Although there may be a “deeper” or “fuller” meaning [*sensus plenior*], i.e., a greater significance in a given passage of Scripture,⁶⁸ it is founded upon the literal interpretation, not a second or different meaning.

Types and symbols have much deeper significance than the initial things or objects themselves. E.g., the Tabernacle, priesthood and offerings, which all pointed ahead to the person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many prophecies have both an immediate and a yet future significance, but all are based on the literal meaning and are not to be considered in a mystical or different sense.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ The Latin term for an alleged hidden or fuller meaning beyond the literal, which is allegedly imbedded in a given text. Such a subject is open to debate and confusion, and must be approached with utmost caution. By such we must never mean an allegorizing of Scripture. See Glossary.

⁶⁹ E.g., Psa. 22, which is distinctly Messianic, and refers beyond David’s figurative speech to our Lord’s crucifixion (v. 1, 7–8, 14–18). E.g.,

- *There cannot be more than one meaning.* If the Scripture is capable of another or second meaning, or a multiplicity of meanings, then it might prove self-contradictory and irrational, the truth of God would necessarily become relative, and all true sense would be lost.

“Literal”

The term “literal” needs to be understood in various contexts. There are three very elementary issues:

- *The literal and the figurative.* “Literal” may stand in opposition to what is “figurative” in the case of metaphors, similes, allegories, parables, etc. E.g., consider Psalm 133:

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.

The governing statement is found in v. 1, the goodness and pleasantness of brethren dwelling together in unity. The figurative comparisons [similes] are found in the constructions: “...like...as...as...” The idea of this blessed unity is compared to “precious ointment,” “the dew of Hermon,” and “the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion.” While the words “ointment” and “dew” are literal, their usage in this context is figurative, emphasizing the refreshing character and perfume of ointment or the moistness of dew in that arid climate.

- *The literal includes the figurative.* However—and this is vital to understanding the idea of “literal”—if the language uses a word in a figurative sense, then that figurative sense is the “literal” meaning in that context, i.e., the literal use includes figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, parables, allegories, etc., and does not necessitate that words

Psa. 16:8–10, which David describes figuratively of his own experience of hope, but was, indeed, a prophecy of the resurrection of our Lord (Acts 2: 24–36).

are either “literal” in the sense of being only physical or material, or “figurative” in the sense of being “spiritual” or “spiritualized.”

The term “literal use” is then synonymous with the “normal use,” which necessarily includes the use of figurative language. There is, then, a correlation between the literal and figurative use of words. Ramm plainly states the issue:

The literal method of interpreting the Bible is to accept as basic the literal meaning of the sentences unless by virtue of the nature of the sentence or phrase or clause within the sentence this is not possible. For example, figures of speech or fables or allegories do not admit of literal interpretation.⁷⁰

The literal meaning of a word is the basic, customary, social designation of that word. But speech is a very complicated and flexible activity. On top of the basic, native, primitive meaning of words are heaped many shades, nuances, and figures of speech, i.e., the entire retinue of rhetorical use of language. These...meanings depend upon and are derived from the literal meanings....

To interpret literally (in this sense) is nothing more or less than interpreting words and sentences in their normal, usual, customary, proper designation.⁷¹

This relation between the literal and figurative is not arbitrary, as it often is in an illegitimate “spiritualization.” E.g., Psa. 51:7:

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean:
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

The terms “purge,” “hyssop,” “wash” and “snow” are used in a figurative sense, i.e., David asks God to cleanse him, and uses figurative language in doing so, yet the use of these terms in a figurative sense (God will not cleanse him with literal, material elements) does not obscure their literal meaning, but corresponds to it and gives the figurative connotation its significance.

⁷⁰ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, p. 45.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91.

- “*Literal*” as contrasted with “*spiritual*.” E.g., “The Parable of the Great Supper” in Lk. 14:16–24:

Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things.

Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

All of the terms in this story are in the context of a parable and meant to teach a spiritual truth concerning the kingdom of God, presented figuratively as a Great Supper. Our Lord himself interprets this parable when he states that he is the host of this supper,⁷² but the words are to be taken “literally,” i.e., not “spiritually,” or they cease to have any cogent meaning.

If we do spiritualize any of these statements, we lose the literal sense and cause confusion. Augustine did so in using this parable to teach that the state church system had a compelling power to force the Donatists into the Church of Rome—a plainly spiritualized–political interpretation.

...at that time the church was only just beginning to burst forth from the newly planted seed and that saying had not as yet been fulfilled in her ‘All kings shall fall down before Him, all

⁷² Cf. v. 24 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν (The singular “I” and the plural “you” means that the Lord of the supper is no longer speaking to the servant [singular], but he, the Lord Jesus Christ, is addressing all those present to whom the parable was told. He applied the parable to them) ὅτι οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐκείνων τῶν κεκλημένων γεύσεταιί μου τοῦ δείπνου.

nations shall serve Him.’ It is in proportion to the more enlarged fulfillment of this prophecy that the church now wields greater power—so that she may now not only invite but also compel men to embrace that which is good.⁷³

The same type of spiritualizing was used to justify the burning of heretics in religious persecution by the Romish Church from an allegorization of John 15:1–6:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

It was reasoned that as the “Vine” was Christ, so the church was his “body.” Therefore, if one departed from the “Vine,” “body” or “true, Mother Church,” he or she should be literally burned as a heretic. An interpretation that could not be further removed from the spirit of this text, of our Lord, or of biblical Christianity.

Thus, it must be remembered that, although the literal and figurative may be contrasted, the literal interpretation [*usus loquendi*] includes the figurative, and the use of figurative language is not “spiritualizing” the text to find another meaning different from or foreign to the literal.

Questions for Discussion

1. Explain the difference between knowing what the Bible says and what it means. What is the importance of Hermeneutics in this context?
2. What is the primary difference between interpretation and application? What is their relationship? Why is their confusion dangerous and misleading?

⁷³ Augustine, *Letter to Donatus Number 173, The Nicean and Post-Nicean Fathers*, St. Augustine, Vol. I, pp. 546-547.

3. What is exegesis? Why is exegesis possible only in the original language? What would be the result if exegesis were attempted in a secondary language? Give examples from Scripture.
4. What is eisegesis? What is the contrast between exegesis and eisegesis? Can you explain the errors of the examples of eisegesis given in the text? Can you think of or recall other examples of eisegesis? Can you correct these in your thinking?
5. What is exposition? What is the difference between exposition and exegesis?
6. Explain the issues of Divine inspiration in relation to translations and versions of the Bible. Are these inspired? If so, why? If not, then why not?
7. What is meant by the term *usus Loquendi*? What does this entail in the interpretation of Scripture?
8. What is the “analogy of faith”? What does this terminology imply? What passage of Scripture is the term based on? If this was a misinterpretation, why does the term retain validity?
9. What does the term “spiritualize” mean? Why is this a dangerous and wrong way to approach Scripture?
10. Why is allegorizing Scripture an erroneous approach? From the Glossary, explain what this approach is and why it is a form of eisegesis.
11. What is the *sensus plenior*? From the glossary, carefully explain why caution must be exercised and why this can never include any allegorizing of Scripture.
12. Why must Scripture have only one meaning? If it could have more than one legitimate meaning, what would this necessarily imply?
13. What does the term “literal” imply? What does “literal” imply in relation to “figurative”? In relation to “spiritual”? Give examples of errors with regard to each.
14. What is the relation between “literal” and the *usus loquendi*? How does this relation give a balanced view of the use of “literal”?

II

Why is a Proper Hermeneutic Vital for Every Christian?

The vital importance of proper, correct and consistent understanding of the Word of God ought to be self-explanatory. The following reasons should answer the issue once-for-all:

- *Hermeneutics or interpretation is a necessary and essential part of human existence.* Intelligent human existence and interaction is impossible apart from the hermeneutical process. This hermeneutical reality is paramount in understanding the very Word of God inscripturated. Hermeneutics reaches its apex in seeking to understand the Bible. Since God has spoken (Heb. 1:1–2), we must make absolutely certain that we understand what he has said.
- *Hermeneutics is a high and holy, intelligent task to be pursued reverently* because the inscripturated Word of God is preeminently intelligent, spiritual and holy. It is not a work to be undertaken optionally, lightly, callously, or merely intellectually or only emotionally [irrationally]. Neither a bare intellectualism nor any spiritual illumination will compensate for an erroneous interpretation.
- *Hermeneutics stands at the very foundation or basis of all doctrinal and practical Christianity.* If our hermeneutic is erroneous, then our subsequent doctrine will be become erroneous or even heretical, and our practical Christianity will likewise suffer. All legitimate application to the Christian life and experience must derive from a proper interpretation of Scripture.
- *We must be consistent, and not drift into any form of eisegesis, i.e.,* we must not “confuse the voice of God with the voice of man” whereby we pervert the Scriptures. Examples of such *eisegesis* abound in the history of interpretation. E.g., Old Testament Polygamy has been used as a basis historically to excuse the practice. The so-called “Divine Right of Kings” that characterized the totalitarian monarchies of Western Civilization for a millennium and a

half was based on the Old Testament model of the Hebrew Monarchy, and was sanctioned through *eisegesis*.

The practice of executing witches in Europe, Britain and in Puritan New England was based on the Old Testament text, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” (Ex. 22:18).

Until Queen Victoria took Chloroform to help ease the pain during the difficulty of delivering a child, it was taught by theologians and believed in society that a woman must suffer unmitigated during childbirth because of Eve’s sinfulness, holding Gen. 3:16 as a necessary experience, “Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children...”

The gross externals of historic statist religion have been based on the Old Testament idea of the Levitical priesthood and rituals rather than a New Testament, gospel approach.⁷⁴

- *There are doctrinal variances within Christendom.* Arminians and Calvinists have the same Bible, but utterly disagree on the purpose of God, the atonement, salvation, the Christian life and experience, and final perseverance. Baptists and Presbyterians have the same Bible, but disagree on the nature and character of the church, its history and membership, the Covenant of Grace, and baptism. Most of the cults and “isms” in Christendom have the same Bible as orthodox believers, but deny or pervert essential truths. All is ultimately disciplined by one’s hermeneutic. Proper interpretation is vital to orthodoxy.
- *All preaching and teaching must stand on a solid exegesis of the text of Scripture,* which is impossible apart from a consistent hermeneutic. Preachers are among the worst offenders, which strengthens the argument for a strong hermeneutical emphasis on the part of all Christians, both preachers and others.

⁷⁴ These and other examples are found in Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 2–3.

- Christians may be called upon to give an impromptu interpretation and explanation of Scripture in conversation, discussion, debate, apologetics, or in evangelism. Every Christian ought to be able to explain and defend his position clearly and consistently from the Scriptures.
- *We must not in any way undermine the authority of Scripture.* It must be both stated and understood very clearly that if any statement of Scripture is misinterpreted and used in a sense other than God intended, it has no Divine authority. Even to change the tense or mode of a verb,⁷⁵ to fail to theologically interpret the gender of a pronoun,⁷⁶ or confuse application with interpretation,⁷⁷ may involve great error and heresy.
- To understand the importance of a proper hermeneutic and the significance of misinterpreting the Scripture, consider carefully the inclusive nature and vital importance of scriptural authority.⁷⁸ The authority of Scripture is the rule or

⁷⁵ E.g., Rom. 5:1, "...we have (ἔχομεν) peace with God..." is in the indicative mode, the statement of fact. Some, on questionable textual evidence, would read "...let us have (ἔχωμεν) peace with God..." changing to the subjunctive mode, a textual reading with impressive credentials, yet one which confuses the truth of justification. The reading simply does not fit the doctrinal context.

⁷⁶ E.g., the Holy Spirit is at times referred to by a neuter pronoun, as the word "spirit" (πνεῦμα) is grammatically neuter, yet the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person of the triune Godhead, and so pronouns ought to be theologically translated as "he" rather than "it" (Cf. Rom. 8:16 and also our Lord's use of the masc. demonstrative pron. repeatedly to emph. the personality of the Holy Spirit in Jn. 15–16.).

⁷⁷ A classic confusion is referring 1 Cor. 2:9 to heaven, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." This refers in the context to present spiritual truths known by believers through the illuminating ministry of the Spirit (Cf. v. 6–15).

⁷⁸ The term "authority" derives from the Latin *auctor*, "originator" or "author." The authority of Scripture derives from the self-disclosing or self-revealing God of Scripture. The Bible is the authoritative Word of God because it is just that—the very Word of God. Because God is

government the Bible is to have over our total lives as the very Word of God, and so any misinterpretation and subsequent misuse must inevitably affect both the faith and life of believers. Consider the nature of Scripture and its necessary preeminence for the believer:

1. The authority of Scripture is *necessary*. Fallen man needs special revelation [an authoritative word from God] to lead him to truly and rightly know God, be reconciled to him and live in the context of his revealed will (Matt. 4:4).⁷⁹
2. The authority of Scripture is *comprehensive*. It encompasses the whole of life and reality. We must beware of a truncated Christianity, i.e., a “Christianity” that severely limits the scope of the Bible’s authority. There is to be no part of our minds, hearts, lives or concept of reality that is to be apart from or contrary to the Word of God and its authority. There can be no selective obedience or submission to the Word of God—there can be only obedience or disobedience (Deut. 6:4–5; Matt. 4:4).
3. The authority of Scripture is *executive*. The Word of God comes to us as command, not merely suggestion or information—we must read, study and conform to it as such.
4. The authority of Scripture is *legislative*. It is to be our rule of both faith and practice. God legislates morality—note the Decalogue in Ex. 20:1–17 and also Matt. 22:36–40; 1 Tim. 1:8–10.⁸⁰

ultimate and absolute, his inscripturated Word is ultimate and absolute. Simply put, it is authoritative because God said it.

⁷⁹ Unfallen or primeval man [Adam] also needed special revelation, or a direct word from God by which to interpret creation about him and give direction for obedience and life (Gen. 1:26–29; 2:16–17).

⁸⁰ It may be asked how anyone can give consistent Christian, moral direction, without in some way quoting, reflecting, paraphrasing or inferring the Moral Law?

5. The authority of Scripture is *judicial*. It is the ultimate and absolute standard of what is right or wrong, manifesting the moral self-consistency of God (Cf. Ex. 20:1–17; Matt. 22:36–40; Heb. 4:12–13).
6. The authority of Scripture is *perpetual*. Mark the constant reference in the New Testament, “It is written,” when referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. The connotation is that the Scriptures as the very Word of God remain wholly authoritative.⁸¹
7. The authority of Scripture is *ultimate*. Because the Scriptures derive from God himself, there is no other criterion or authority to which they can be subjected or by which they may be judged. If there were, then logically and necessarily, the Word of God would itself be relative and subordinate to such a standard or criterion. It is self-authenticating, intelligent and absolute.

All other criteria or authorities are relative to the Scriptures. (Psa. 138:2; Isa. 46:9–11; Matt. 24:35; Heb. 1:1–3).⁸²

Questions for Discussion

1. List and explain the reasons why Hermeneutics is a necessary subject of study and knowledge for every Christian.
2. Why is Hermeneutics not only a necessary study but also a reverent study?
3. What is the strategic place occupied by Hermeneutics in the faith, life and experience of every Christian?
4. Why must we carefully avoid any type of eisegesis? What effect has biblical eisegesis had on Christianity and society in the past? Give examples from history.

⁸¹ “It is written” (γέγραπται, *gegraptai*). The perf. tense signifies, “It stands written [with undiminishing authority].”

⁸² Evangelical and Reformed Christianity hold that the Scriptures are the sole rule [authority for] of both faith and practice. The Greek Orthodox Church holds that authority rests partly on Scripture and partly on Church Councils. The Roman Catholic Church holds that authority rests partly on Scripture and partly on Councils, ecclesiastical tradition and the Pope.

5. How and why can believers possess the same Bible, and often very close beliefs and yet come to such different conclusions?
6. How and why does a faulty hermeneutic or the lack of a consistent hermeneutic undermine the authority of Scripture?
7. List the various aspects of biblical authority. Explain each.

III

What are The Qualifications for The Biblical Interpreter?

Every science and art necessitates certain qualifications and skills. Sacred Hermeneutics, or the interpretation of Scripture, demands certain qualifications and the accumulation of skills.⁸³

A. Spiritual Qualifications

Because the Bible is the very Word of God inscripturated, it is preeminently a spiritual book, and so must be interpreted and understood spiritually. The essential spiritual qualifications are:

- *Regeneration by the Spirit of God.*⁸⁴ Spiritual regeneration or the “new birth” is absolutely essential as a basis for spiritual illumination and spiritual discernment (Jn. 3:3; Rom. 8:7–8; 2 Cor. 4:3–6). An essential part of regeneration is the restoration of the image of God in principle “in righteousness, holiness of the truth and knowledge,” i.e., a spiritual, moral and intellectual transformation (Eph. 4:22–24; Col. 3:10).⁸⁵
- *A disposition and desire to know the Word of God* and to grow in both grace and knowledge (Psa. 119:18; Heb. 5:11–14⁸⁶; 2 Pet. 3:18⁸⁷).

⁸³ See Ramm, *Op. cit.*, pp. 12–16; Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, pp. 151–158.

⁸⁴ There are six necessary, spiritual realities which accompany regeneration, apart from which the individual is yet unregenerate.

⁸⁵ The realities of “putting off the old man” and “putting on the new man” are not commands to be implemented, but necessary, existing realities to be reckoned and acted upon. Cf. the use of the aor. inf. of result, i.e., “You have already put off...already put on...”

⁸⁶ Heb. 5:11–12, ...γεγόνατε...γεγόνατε... “become...become” (perf.), implying an increasing state of spiritual degeneration from what these ought to have been.

⁸⁷ ...αὐξάνετε δὲ ἐν χάριτι καὶ γνώσει... pres. imp., “Continue to grow...”

- *A reverent disposition and a humble, teachable spirit* toward the Scriptures (1 Tim. 5:3–5). History bears witness to many who, although intelligent and gifted, have had a strong tendency toward error and heresy, e.g., Pelagius, Socinius, Arminius, John Wesley, Edward Erving, etc.
- *A communion with God and a moral purity* which will neither quench⁸⁸ nor grieve the Holy Spirit (Psa. 66:18; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 5:19).
- *A dependence upon the Holy Spirit* to guide and direct (1 Cor. 2:9–16; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27).

B. Intellectual Qualifications

Because the Bible is the inscripturated Word of an intelligent God, it is itself intelligent and must be approached intelligently. Hermeneutics is both a science and an art, and thus necessitates the accumulation of a given degree of varied skills and experience. It requires a balanced mind and approach that are not given over to either tradition or emotion at the expense of the truth, and also a consciousness of one's own personal and doctrinal tendencies, pride and bias.

C. Educational Qualifications

This introduction is concerned with individuals who desire to become the best possible Bible students within the range of their capabilities, and for ministerial students and beginning scholars.⁸⁹ The self-taught Bible student must possess a great degree of self-discipline and seek to obtain the widest possible biblical education.

The ministerial student or scholar must build upon the widest possible base, integrating the various academic disciplines into a

⁸⁸ Although the exhortation for not quenching the Spirit might be the context of the local assembly and be corporate rather than individual, yet it necessarily remains by application at the very least.

⁸⁹ Every Christian ought to strive to become the most able Bible student possible. What could be more important?

foundational framework—the Original Languages, Biblical Studies, Theology, Church History, Apologetics and Philosophy.⁹⁰

For the average Christian or the advanced student, it ought to be self-evident that one should seek to invest in and begin to accumulate a concise, workable library in the basic reference, biblical, theological and historical disciplines. Any education, be it self-education, college or seminary education, is deficient without a suitable, efficient library.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why are certain qualifications absolutely essential for being an interpreter of Scripture?
2. What are the necessary spiritual qualifications for being an interpreter of Scripture? Why is each of these absolutely essential? Is there any spiritual qualification that could be omitted? If so, why?
3. Can an unregenerate or unconverted individual be a qualified and consistent interpreter of Scripture? In what position does this place many alleged authorities in history who became professional biblical scholars in seminaries and universities? What has been the effect of such persons?
4. Is the average Christian intellectually or educationally qualified to read and study the Bible? Which are more important, spiritual qualifications or educational qualifications?
5. Is it possible for an average Christian to sufficiently educate himself to be a suitable, skilled Bible student and scholar?

⁹⁰ It ought to be noted that until the early twentieth century, the basic education was “Grammar School” through the eighth grade, and that every student had basic Latin and Greek by that time.

IV

What are Some Helpful Works on Hermeneutics?

A. General Hermeneutics

- Berkhof, Louis, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969. 169 pp.⁹¹
- Klein, William W., Blomberg, Craig L., and Hubbard, Robert L., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1993. 518 pp.
- Maier, Gerhard, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994. 526 pp.⁹²
- Masters, Peter, *Not Like Any Other Book: Interpreting the Bible*. London: The Wakeman Trust, 2004. 161 pp.⁹³
- Mickelsen, A. Berkeley, *Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963. 425 pp.
- Ramm, Bernard, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969. 274 pp.
- Terry, Milton S., *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964. 782 pp.⁹⁴

B. The History of Interpretation

- Bray, Gerald, *Biblical Interpretation*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. 608 pp.
- Farrar, F. W., *The History of Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961. 553 pp.

⁹¹ Either Berkhof or Ramm would fill the need for a basic or introductory work, although Berkhof is presently out-of-print. Ramm remains the standard, conservative work.

⁹² G. Maier is a conservative German Evangelical. A recommended work. The author, however, omits a history of Hermeneutics.

⁹³ A very bold work which aims at both teaching the essential principles of practical interpretation and also correcting the modern trends. The student must adjust somewhat to Dr. Masters' terminology which at times might seem confusing.

⁹⁴ M. Terry's work is encyclopedic and very useful.

The works by Gerald Bray, F. W. Farrar and Donald McKim are outstanding in the study of the history of interpretation. The classic work is that of Farrar, but it is dated. Bray includes the contemporary. McKim concentrates more on recent studies. These works do not overlap to the extent that one would be preferred above the others.

McKim, Donald K., *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. 643 pp.

V

What are Some Necessary and Helpful Tools for The Biblical Interpreter?

A. Introductory Principles

There are three introductory principles at work in the choice of works:

- This bibliography is for the beginning biblical scholar, thus, many standard reference works presuppose a knowledge of the Original Languages, History and Theology.
- This bibliography is exemplary and suggestive, not exhaustive.⁹⁵
- Any literary work which helps open the meaning of the text becomes a suitable and even necessary tool for the interpreter.

B. General Reference Works in English

A Concordance

Strong, James A., *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990. 1260 pp., with additional appendices and dictionaries.

A Bible Atlas

Aharoni, Yohanan and Avi-Yonah, Michael, *The Macmillan Bible Atlas*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

⁹⁵ A more exhaustive bibliography and evaluation may be found in the author's *The Believer and His Books*.

A Bible Encyclopedia

Orr, James, Gen. Ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939. 5 Vols.⁹⁶

Bullinger, E. W., *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968. 1104 pp.

C. Linguistic Tools: Hebrew And Greek

To be a true and thorough interpreter of Scripture, it is absolutely necessary to have some knowledge of the original languages. Through diligent personal study and the proper use of various language tools, any Christian can achieve some skill in the Hebrew and Greek through the use of inter-linears, lexicons, Hebrew and Greek concordances, manual grammars and critical commentaries.

The truly interested, disciplined and more advanced student of Scripture will strive for a working knowledge of the original languages. The following testimonies ought to instill and sanctify this discipline:

Note: John Brown of Haddington (1722–1787) grew up as a relatively unlearned young man, a rustic shepherd boy in Scotland, and was only able to spend one semester in a grammar school. With a scant knowledge of the rudiments of Latin, and *without a Greek grammar or teacher, he taught himself to read Greek* by comparing biblical names with the Greek alphabet and seeking the meaning through the English Bible. He developed his own rules from Latin and English grammars he had borrowed.

Having thus established the basis for reading the Greek, he desired a Greek Testament. Having saved what money he could, he left his flock in the hills with a friend and walked all night to St. Andrews University.

...one evening, in the year 1738, at the age of sixteen, he set out on the twenty-four miles of unknown road that lay between him and St. Andrews. He arrived early in the morning, footsore and weary. He found the bookseller's shop in South Street, near the University Library, then owned by Alexander McCulloch. Going

⁹⁶ This older set is to be preferred over the newer work as more conservative.

in, he startled the shopman by asking for a Greek New Testament. He was a very raw-looking lad at the time, his clothes were rough, home-spun, and ragged, and his feet were bare. 'What would you do wi' that book? you'll no can read it,' said the bookseller. 'I'll try to read it,' was the humble answer of the would-be purchaser.

Meanwhile some of the professors had come into the shop, and, hearing the talk and surveying the youth, questioned him closely as to what he was, where he came from, and who taught him. Then one of them, not unlikely Francis Pringle, then Professor of Greek, asked the bookseller to bring a Greek New Testament and, throwing it down on the counter, said, 'Boy, if you can read that book, you shall have it for nothing.' He took it up eagerly, read a passage to the astonishment of those in the shop, and marched out with his gift, so worthily won, in triumph. By the afternoon, he was back at duty on the hills of Abernathy, studying his New Testament the while, in the midst of his flock.⁹⁷

John Brown of Haddington, largely self-taught, also mastered Latin, Hebrew, geography, mathematics, and theology. He later became known as a universal scholar and author, and wrote a Bible dictionary, a Self-Interpreting Bible, and several volumes on history and theology. He was the primary teacher of the preachers of the Secession Church of Scotland. His two sons were both ministers of great repute, and his grandson was the eminent Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh, the biblical commentator of the nineteenth century.

John Gill (1697–1771) was taken from the local grammar school by his parents at age eleven because of religious convictions—the local school master insisted that the Baptist students accompany him to the Anglican Church for the weekly hours of prayer. Largely self-taught, John Gill had, by the age of twelve, fairly mastered Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. He later became the most prominent Calvinistic Baptist minister in Britain, and the author of a commentary on the entire Bible, a Body of Divinity, and several other classic works, including perhaps the best defense of the "Five points of Calvinism" ever written, *The Cause of God and Truth*.

He personally wrote and edited over ten thousand pages of commentary and theology. He became a great force for orthodoxy in a time when many were led astray by the false notions of Arianism and Arminianism. Augustus Toplady, a close

⁹⁷ Robert Mackenzie, *John Brown of Haddington*, pp. 34–35.

personal and younger friend, said of him that “If any one man can be supposed to have trod the whole circle of human learning, it was Dr. Gill.”

Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813–1875). As a boy, while earning his livelihood at an ironworks, he managed to devote his spare time to the study of Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic and Welsh. He became a great British scholar, and, despite poverty, ill health and opposition from other scholars, devoted a life–time of meticulous labors upon the text of the New Testament as *an act of worship*. The fruit of his studies has blessed subsequent generations, and “he, being dead, yet speaketh” through his published works.⁹⁸

Sinclair Thomson (1784–1864). This singular man, known as “The Shetland Apostle,” was relatively unschooled and earned his living as a crofter and fisherman. Upon his conversion and subsequent call to the ministry, he arose from two to three o’clock each morning to study for at least two hours before commencing his ordinary labors to earn a living for himself and his family. He was a fervent Christian, an exceptional preacher, and became an astute theologian. His ministry brought a revival of truth to the Shetland Islands.

Computer Programs

In this technological era, the student has the advantage of computer Bible programs, which can prove to be of great help in working through the Hebrew and Greek. A computer Bible program which does not enable the student to work within the text itself is insufficient. One ought to be able to perform basic Greek and Hebrew exegesis within the program itself. The following are among the most useful:

MAC: *Accordance Bible Software*. Developed by OakSoft Software, Inc. (www.oaksoft.com).

PC: *Bibleworks*. Developed by Hermeneutika (www.bibleworks.com).⁹⁹

PC: *Logos Bible Software*, 1313 Commercial St., Bellingham WA 98225–4307, has both a Greek and Hebrew program.

⁹⁸ Taken from the introductory lecture of the author’s *Introductory Lessons in New Testament Greek*, pp. x–xi.

⁹⁹ *BibleWorks* is discontinuing its services as of 2018.

Some sets of critical commentaries on CD are keyed to the Logos software.

Note: *BibleWorks* is the most useable program for doing exegesis. The beginning student who needs help in the basics of either Hebrew or Greek can find an excellent aid in Parsons Technology: *Greek and Hebrew Tutor for Multimedia CD-ROM*. 1700 Progress Drive, P. O. Box 100. Hiawatha, Iowa 52233-0100. (www.parsonstech.com).

Hebrew

The Hebrew Text

Green, Jay, *The Inter-Linear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible*. Evansville, IN: The Associated Publishers and Authors, 1978. 4 Vols.

Kittel, Rudolf, Ed., *Biblia Hebraica*. Stuttgart: Privileg. Württ. Bibelanstalt, for the American Bible Society, 1937.

Note: There are excellent computer language programs which contain the Hebrew and Greek languages and texts, enabling the student to do word studies and to parse each word by the mere movement of the cursor, etc. These may promote a pseudo-scholarship. The student must be careful to advance in his studies and internalize the principles of the languages with their significance.

Lexicons and Dictionaries

Botterweck, Johannes G., Ringger, Helmer, Eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974-11 Vols. (projected completion in 16 vols.)

Brown, Francis, Driver, S. R., and Briggs, C. A., *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford University Press, 1962. 1127 pp.

Davidson, B., *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1966. 784 pp.

Gesenius, William, (with notes and editing by Samuel P. Tregelles), *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964. 919 pp.

- Girdlestone, Robert B., *Synonyms of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint of 1897 ed. 346 pp.
- Harris, R. Laird, Ed., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. 2 Vols.
- Jenni, Ernst, and Westermann, Claus, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997. 3 Vols.
- Owens, John Joseph, *Analytical Key to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989. 4 Vols.
- Unger, Merrill F., and White, William, Eds., *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1980. 509 pp.
- VanGemeren, Willem A., Gen. Ed., *Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997, 5 Vols.
- Wilson, William, *Old Testament Word Studies*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1978. 566 pp.

Hebrew Concordances

- Lisowsky, Gerhard, *Konkordanz zum Hebraischen Alten Testament*. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1958, 1672 pp.
- _____, *The Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance to the Old Testament*. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, 1890). 1682 pp.

Greek

The Greek Text

Whatever Greek text one uses, it should contain a critical apparatus at the bottom of each page with variant readings so the student is aware of such and eventually, with some degree of expertise, evaluate their significance.

- Aland, Kurt, Ed., et. al., *The Greek Testament*. Stuttgart: Privileg. Württ. Bibelanstalt for the United Bible Societies, 1968.

Green, Jay, *The Inter-Linear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible*.
Evansville, IN: The Associated Publishers and Authors,
1978. 4 Vols.

_____, *The Englishman's Greek New Testament* [Stephanus Text
of 1550 with an inter-linear translation and critical
apparatus]. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, n.d. 670 pp.

Lexicons and Dictionaries

Abbott-Smith, G., *Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*.
Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1964. 512 pp.

Arndt, W. F., and Gingrich, F. W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of
the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*.
Cambridge University Press. 1967. 909 pp.

Bromiley, Geoffrey W., Transl. and Ed., Gerhard Kittel,
Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Grand Rapids:
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968. 10 Vols.

Han, Nathan E., *A Parsing Guide to the Greek New Testament*.
Scottsdale, PA: The Herald Press, 1971. 479 pp.¹⁰⁰

Liddell, H. G., and Scott, R., *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford at
the Clarendon Press, 1966. 2,111 pp.¹⁰¹

Silva, Moises, Ed., *New International Dictionary of New
Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan
Publishing House, 2014. 5 Vols.

Thayer, J. H., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*.
Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965.
726 pp.

Wigram, J., *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*. London: Samuel
Bagster & Sons, n.d., 444 pp.

¹⁰⁰ Han's *Parsing Guide* differs from the *Analytical Lexicon* in that it
parses every verb and participle in the context of chapter and verse rather
than alphabetically.

¹⁰¹ Liddell-Scott is an exhaustive work, and gives the student an
entrance into both the Κοινή and Classical Greek.

Vine, W. E., *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1962. 3 Vols-in-One.

Concordances

Moulton, W. F. and Geden, A. S., *A Concordance to the Greek Testament*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1967. 1033 pp.¹⁰²

Smith, J. B., *Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1965. 430 pp.¹⁰³

_____, *The Englishman's Greek Concordance*. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, n.d. 1020 pp.

Manual Grammars

Of the advanced or manual [working] grammars, Dana-Mantey is the most popular and useful. A. T. Robertson's *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* is the most complete and exhaustive.

Dana, H. E. and Mantey, Julius R., *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. New York: Macmillan, 1957. 368 pp.

Funk, Robert W., Transl., Blass-DeBrunner's *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University Press, 1961. 325 pp.

Moulton, J. H., *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1967. 4 Vols.

Robertson, A. T., *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*. Nashville: Broadman Press. 1934. 1454 pp.

Wallace, Daniel B., *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996. 827 pp.

¹⁰² Moulton-Geden is in the Greek text, Smith and the Englishman's in the English text. Smith is in the form of charts and graphs, analyzing the various words and numbering their occurrences.

¹⁰³ J. B. Smith's Concordance is based on the *Englishman's, Gk. Concordance*, and is arranged by charts listing the occurrences by books and translation.

Specialized Works

- Brooks, James A., and Winebery, Carlton L., *Syntax of New Testament Greek*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1979. 204 pp.
- Burton, E. D., *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of New Testament Greek*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1966. 215 pp.
- Metzger, Bruce M., *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*. London: United Bible Societies, 1971. 775 pp.
- Moule, C. F. D., *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*. Cambridge: University Press, 1968. 246 pp.
- Nunn, H. P. V., *A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1976. 180 pp.
- Perschbacher, Wesley J., *New Testament Greek Syntax: An Illustrated Manual*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1995. 449 pp.
- Porter, Stanley E., *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992. 339 pp.
- Thrall, Margaret E., *Greek Particles in the New Testament*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1962. 107 pp.

Septuagint

- Hatch, Edwin, and Redpath, Henry A., *A Concordance to the Septuagint*. Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz-Austria, 1975. 3 Vols.
- Taylor, Bernard A., *The Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994. 460 pp.
- _____, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha Greek and English*. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, n.d. 1378 pp.

D. Isagogic or Biblical Introduction

General Introduction

- Geisler, Norman L. and Nix, William E., *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1971. 480 pp.
- Halley, Henry H., *Halley's Bible Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965. 860 pp.

Horne, Thomas Hartwell, *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, reprint of 1839 ed. 5 Vols.¹⁰⁴

Scroggie, W. Graham, *Know Your Bible*. London: Pickering & Inglis. 1965. 380 pp.

Old Testament Introduction

Benware, Paul N., *Survey of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1993. 318 pp.

Crossley, Gareth, *The Old Testament Explained and Applied*. Darlington, ENG: Evangelical Press, 2002. 866 pp.

Dillard, Raymond B., and Longman, Tremper III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994. 473 pp.

Dumbrell, William J., *The Faith of Israel*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988. 286 pp.

Geisler, Norman L., *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. 299 pp.

Green, William Henry, *General Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980 reprint. 209 pp.

Hamilton, Victor P., *Handbook on the Historical Books*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2004. 557 pp.

Harrison, Kenneth R., *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971, 1325 pp.

Hill, Andrew E., and Walton, John H., *A Survey of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991. 461 pp.

Unger, Merrill F., *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967, 410 pp.

Wolf, Herbert, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1991. 3 Vols.

¹⁰⁴ Although outdated in many ways, Horne is still a source for introductory studies.

Young, E. J., *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965, 431 pp.

New Testament Introduction

Benware, Paul N., *Survey of the New Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1990. 340 pp.

Boettner, Loraine, *A Harmony of the Gospels*. Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976. 131 pp.

Brown, Raymond E., *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New York: Doubleday, 1997. 878 pp.

Carson, D. A., Moo, Douglas J. and Morris, Leon, *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992. 537 pp.

Davies, Benjamin, Ed., *Baker's Harmony of the Gospels*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991. 184 pp.

Goodwin, Frank J., *A Harmony of the Life of St. Paul*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. 240 pp.

Guthrie, Donald, *New Testament Introduction*. Chicago: InterVarsity Press, 1966, 3 Vols.

Machen, J. Gresham. *The New Testament: An Introduction to its Literature and History*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976. 386 pp.

Harrison, Everett F., *Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968. 481 pp.

Hiebert, D. Edmond, *An Introduction to the New Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1975. 3 Vols.

Moffatt, James, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961. 659 pp.

Robertson, A. T., *A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ*. New York: Harper & Row, 1950. 305 pp.

Scroggie, W. Graham, *A Guide to the Gospels*. London: Pickering & Inglis, 1962. 664 pp.

Tenney, Merrill C., *New Testament Survey*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970. 465 pp.

Thiessen, H. C., *Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966. 347 pp.

Zahn, Theodor, *Introduction to the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1977. 3 Vols.

E. Theological Works

Sacred hermeneutic necessitates theological interpretation. The end of interpreting Scripture are the doctrinal propositions which form the basis of all doctrinal and practical Christianity. A theological dictionary is, at times invaluable, and there are a variety of Biblical, Historical and Systematic Theologies.

Dictionaries of Theology

Elwell, Walter, A., Ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990. 1204 pp.

Ferguson, Sinclair B., Wright, David F. and Packer, J. I. *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988. 738 pp.

Harrison, Everett F., *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966. 566 pp.

McClintock, John, and Strong, James., *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981. 12 Vols.¹⁰⁵

Muller, Richard A., *Dictionary of Greek And Latin Theological Terms*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989. 340 pp.

Ramm, Bernard, *A Handbook of Contemporary Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966. 141 pp.

¹⁰⁵ McClintock & Strong's *Cyclopedia* contains a wealth of information on subjects not usually considered in Bible dictionaries, or even in Dictionaries of Theology.

Reese, W. L., *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*. Atlantic Heights, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980. 644 pp.¹⁰⁶

Reese, W. L., *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*. Atlantic Heights, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1980. 644 pp.¹⁰⁷

Stelten, Leo F., *Dictionary of Ecclesiastical Latin*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1995. 330 pp.

Biblical Theology

Bernard, T. D., *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament*. London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d. 223 pp.

House, Paul R., *Old Testament Theology*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. 655 pp.

Ladd, George Eldon, *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974. 661 pp.

Payne, J. Barton, *The Theology of the Older Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962. 554 pp.

Vos, Geerhardus, *Biblical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948. 453 pp.

Historical Theology

Berkhof, Louis, *The History of Christian Doctrines*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949. 293 pp.

Cunningham, William, *Historical Theology*. London: Banner of Truth, 1960. 2 Vols.

Fisher, George P., *History of Christian Doctrine*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1949. 576 pp.

¹⁰⁶ Reese's *Dictionary* is the most useful of the various dictionaries of philosophy.

¹⁰⁷ Reese's *Dictionary* is the most useful of the various dictionaries of philosophy.

- Gonzales, Justo L., *A History of Christian Thought*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970. 3 Vols.
- McGrath, Alister E., *Historical Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. 388 pp.¹⁰⁸
- Orr, James, *The Progress of Dogma*. London: James Clarke & Co., 1901. 365 pp.
- Pelikan, Jorslav, *The Christian Tradition*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1991. 5 Vols.¹⁰⁹
- Schaff, Philip, *The Creeds of Christendom*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1877. 3 Vols.
- Seeberg, Reinhold, *The History of Doctrines*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House. 1977. 2 Vols.
- Shedd, W. G. T., *A History of Christian Doctrine*. New York: Scribner's, 1868. 2 Vols.

Systematic Theology

This section contains many standard works which relative value must be determined by the individual student.

- Berkhof, Louis, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963. 784 pp.
- Berkouwer, G. C., *Studies in Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979. 10 Vols.
- Dabney, Robert L., *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972. 903 pp.
- John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*. Atlanta, GA: Turner Lassetter, 1965. 1023 pp.
- Garrett, James Leo., *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990. 2 Vols.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ A recent work that is both introductory and treats contemporary issues.

¹⁰⁹ Pelikan's work majors on Romanism, Eastern Orthodox and major Protestant doctrine.

¹¹⁰ Though not consistently Calvinistic, Garrett's work builds upon a historical basis, and often proves very valuable for this reason.

- Grudem, Wayne, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994. 1264 pp.¹¹¹
- Hodge, Charles, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, n.d., 3 Vols.
- Hoeksema, Herman, *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1973, 917 pp.
- Murray, John, *Collected Writings*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1977. 4 Vols.¹¹²
- Owen, John, *The Works of John Owen*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976. 17 Vols.
- Reymond, Robert L., *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998. 1210 pp.
- Shedd, W. G. T., *Dogmatic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969, 3 Vols. (Presbyterian)
- Strong, Augustus H., *Systematic Theology*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1967. 3 Vols–in–1.
- Thornwell, James Henley, *The Collected Writings of James Henley Thornwell*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1986. 4 Vols.
- Turretin, Francis, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1992. 3 Vols.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Grudem is very useful and helpful, listing other sources for further study. He does hold to the continuance of certain spiritual gifts which we hold to be only apostolic.

¹¹² Although incomplete as a Systematic Theology, the writings of John Murray are excellent. In addition to his Collected Writings, we must recommend *Redemption: Accomplished, and Applied, Principles of Conduct and Commentary on Romans* (NICNT) as of the highest order. Murray's strength lies in his exegetical background.

¹¹³ Francis Turretin [François Turretini] was Beza's successor at Geneva.

F. A Dictionary of Church History

A variety of historical works may be necessary to ascertain background information and historical approaches to the Scripture or to doctrinal issues.

Douglas, J. D., Gen. Ed. *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974. 1074 pp.

G. Background Studies

Edersheim, Alfred E., *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967. 2 Vols.

_____, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967. 342 pp.

_____, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969. 414 pp.

Evans, Craig A., Porter, Stanley E., Eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. 1328 pp.

Freeman, James M., *Manners and Customs of The Bible*. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1972. 515 pp.

Keener, Graig S., Ed., *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993. 831 pp.

Neusner, Jacob, Ed.-in-Chief, *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996. 693 pp.

Thomson, William M., *The Land and The Book*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966. 718 pp.

Walton, John H., Matthews, Victor H., and Chavalas, Mark W., Eds., *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. 832 pp.

Wright, Fred H., *Manners and Customs of Bible Lands*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1966. 336 pp. (recently revised)

H. Commentaries

For interpretive purposes, practical and devotional commentaries are not suitable, as they deal primarily with application and edification and not with exegesis or interpretation. Critical commentaries¹¹⁴ are those which deal to some extent with the Original Languages and offer exegetical information and grammatical, historical, cultural, doctrinal and geographical insights missing from most expository works. Expository commentaries are either based on the Original Languages or deal mainly with the English Bible, and are usually doctrinal in nature.

Note: In addition to the commentaries listed below, there are individual commentaries dealing with exegesis and both textual and doctrinal exposition, which are outstanding.

Commentaries on The Entire Bible

Calvin, John, *Commentaries on the Holy Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948. 22 Vols.¹¹⁵

Carroll, B. H., *Interpretation of the English Bible*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1943. 17 Vols.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Critical commentaries are not to be confused with the "Critical-Historical method," which is synonymous with radical, destructive "higher criticism." Some, but not all critical commentaries are written from a radical perspective. E.g. the *ICC* series [*International Critical Commentary*] is radical in the Old Testament volumes, but several of the New Testament volumes are somewhat conservative and helpful, notably those by C. K. Barrett, C. E. B. Cranfield, I. Howard Marshall, Alfred Plummer and Sanday and Headlam.

¹¹⁵ Calvin is the true father of modern hermeneutic and exegesis. He who is not acquainted with Calvin's works is yet a stranger to true interpretation and commenting.

¹¹⁶ Carroll's work has been reprinted in 6 large volumes. Often too general for an exact textual interpretation, but often very helpful in a more general sense.

- Dockery, David S., Gen. Ed., *The New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1991. 38 + Vols.
- Hubbard, David A., and Barker, Glenn W., Gen. Eds., *Word Biblical Commentary*. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987—. 61 Vols.¹¹⁷
- Gaebelein, Frank E., Gen. Ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979. 12 Vols.
- Gill, John, Dr. *Gill's Commentary on the Holy Scripture*. Atlanta: Turner Lassetter, n.d. 6 Vols.
- Guthrie, Donald, Gen. Ed., *The New Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976. 1310 pp.¹¹⁸
- Jamieson, Robert, Fausset, A. R., and Brown, David, *A Commentary Critical, Experimental and Practical on the Old and New Testaments*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967. 6 Vols.¹¹⁹
- Lange, John Peter, Ed., *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures Critical, Doctrinal and Homiletical*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960. 12 Vols.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Up-to-date critical scholarship and exegesis. Somewhat conservative, although some volumes unequal doctrinally, espousing some recent errors.

¹¹⁸ The best conservative one-volume commentary, although often too brief for a detailed knowledge of the text.

¹¹⁹ The comments are brief, but helpful. The introduction to each book is valuable.

¹²⁰ This is one of the very few conservative commentaries on the Old Testament, and takes into consideration the Hebrew text in a elementary fashion. Suited to the advanced student also.

Spence, H. D. M., and Excell, Joseph E., Eds., *The Pulpit Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961. 24 Vols.¹²¹

Old Testament Commentaries

There are fewer conservative works among Old Testament scholars, and even among some who tend to be conservative, there is, at times, some taint of radical scholarship.

Harrison, R. K., and Hubbard, Robert L., Gen. Eds., *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968—. 14 vols.

Keil, K. F., and Delitzsch, Franz, *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997. 10 Vols.

Wiseman, D. J., Gen. Ed., *Tyndale Old Testament Commentary*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1960's—. 27 Vols.

In addition to the preceding works, some helpful volumes may be found in *The Anchor Bible Commentary*, although it is not conservative. Helpful are also volumes in the *Hermeneia* and the *JPS Torah Commentary* Old Testament series. *The Geneva Commentary* series by the Banner of Truth is more expository than exegetical, but contains some excellent volumes.

New Testament Commentaries

Alford, Henry, *The Greek Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1968. 4 Vols.

Bengal, J. A., *New Testament Word Studies*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1971. 2 Vols.

¹²¹ One of the standard works. Contains a verse-by-verse commentary in addition to general and more specific sermon outlines and illustrations. As with any composite work, it varies in orthodoxy and value with the given author.

- Bruce, F. F., Gen. Ed., *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954—. 16 Vols.
- Hendriksen, William, and Kistemaker, Simon, *The New Testament Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975—. 13 Vols.
- Hovey, Alvah, Gen. Ed., *An American Commentary on the New Testament*. Valley Forge, PA: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1886. 7 Vols.¹²²
- Lenski, R. C. H., *The Interpretation of the New Testament*. Minneapolis: The Augsburg Publishing House, 1961. 12 Vols.
- Meyer, H. A. W., *The New Testament Commentary*. Winona Lake, IN: Alpha Publications, 1979. 11 Vols.
- Nicoll, W. Robertson, Gen. Ed., *The Expositor's Greek Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961. 5 Vols.
- Robertson, A. T., *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930. 7 Vols.¹²³
- Tasker, R. V. G., Gen. Ed., *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959. 20 Vols.
- Vincent, Marvin, *Word Studies in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965. 4 Vols.

¹²² A scholarly Baptist commentary on the New Testament which contains Broadus on *Matthew* and Hackett on *Acts*. A new edition with the same title is being published, but does not have the same authors.

¹²³ A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures* is based on the Greek, but transliterated and of good use to readers having some knowledge of Greek.

Wilson, Geoffrey B., *New Testament Commentaries*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, v.d. 10 Vols.¹²⁴

In addition to these works, some of the volumes in *Black's New Testament Commentary* are valuable, especially those by C. K. Barrett and J. N. D. Kelly. The *Anchor Bible Commentary* series has some volumes which are helpful. The *International Critical Commentary* series has valuable volumes in the New Testament. The *New International Greek Testament Commentary* series is valuable for exegesis. The commentaries by such exegetes as John Brown (of Edinburgh), John B. Lightfoot, Frédéric Godet, John Candlish, and John Eadie are helpful.

I. Ecclesiastical History

Every doctrine and interpretation has a history. Through the study of both ecclesiastical history and the history of doctrine these can often be traced. The following works are only exemplary and introductory to this wide and inclusive area of study.

Aland, Kurt, *A History of Christianity*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980. 2 Vols.

Bainton, Roland H., *Christianity*. New York: American Heritage, 1985. 416 pp.

Baker, Robert A., *A Summary of Christian History*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1959. 391 pp.

Bruce, F. F., Gen. Ed., *The Advance of Christianity Through the Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961. 7 Vols.

Cairns, Earle E., *Christianity Through the Centuries*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971. 511 pp.

Fisher, George P., *History of the Christian Church*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913. 729 pp.

Gonzales, Justo L., *The Story of Christianity*. San Francisco: Harper, 1984. 3 Vols.

¹²⁴ Small paperbacks with the essence of the meaning. Sound in interpretation. Sub-titled "A Digest of Reformed Comment."

- Houghton, S. M., *Sketches from Church History*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991. 256 pp.
- Johnson, Paul, *A History of Christianity*. New York: Atheneum, 1976. 556 pp.
- Jones, William, *The History of the Christian Church*. Gallatin, TN: Church History Research & Archives, 1983 reprint of 1826 ed. 2 Vols.
- Kurtz, J. H., *Church History*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1888. 3 Vols.
- Latourette, Kenneth Scott, *A History of Christianity*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953. 1516 pp.
- Neander, Augustus, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Company, 1871. 6 Vols.
- Newman, A. H., *A Manual of Church History*. Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press, 1964. 2 Vols.
- Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962. 8 Vols.
- Sheldon, Henry C., *History of the Christian Church*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988. 5 Vols.
- Walton, Robert C., *Chronological Background Charts of Church History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. 94 pp.

J. Words of Information and Caution

Commentaries are just that—the comments and studies of learned men on passages of Scripture. They can be extremely helpful when used properly and judiciously in connection with the student's own original research, and they can be harmful and dangerous when used without discernment or in place of one's own personal study.

With time, experience, the acquiring of doctrinal acumen, and the development of skill, the student ought to be able to derive much good from those learned scholars who have preceded him.

He should eventually learn the doctrinal presuppositions and bias of each commentator, and so anticipate his approach to any given passage. He will begin to understand each writer and why he

may completely or partially agree or disagree upon a given point with the results of the exegesis. In doing so, “He may detect some mistake that will compel him to revise his opinion. But if he finds that every step he took was well warranted, then he should allow his interpretation to stand in spite of all that the commentators may say.”¹²⁵

Some general rules for the use of commentaries may prove helpful to the average Christian or beginning student:

1. The study of any commentary must never replace the intense, careful, personal study of the Scriptures themselves.
2. The Bible student who does not make judicious use of the scholarship of the past is truly ignorant and inevitably given to pride and dangerous subjectivism. The student should purchase and peruse only the best possible commentaries. As Philip Schaff stated:

A library is the student's working tool and armory. Books are his best friends, always on hand to give instruction...and encouragement...The value of a library depends on its *quality* rather than its *quantity*. A *selection* is better than a *collection*...Books, like friends, should be few and well chosen.¹²⁶

3. For exegetical and hermeneutical purposes, the student must study the critical commentaries. English-based expository and devotional commentaries are usually unsuitable.
4. The student must educate himself through the use of sound exegetical and expository works. He must strive to rise to their level and even beyond through the development of his own personal grammatical, exegetical and hermeneutical skills.

Questions for Discussion

1. Should the average Christian seek in any way to accumulate some basic reference tools for the study of the Scriptures? Why? Why not?

¹²⁵ Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*, p. 112.

¹²⁶ Philip Schaff, *Theological Propaedeutic*, p. 91.

2. Why should the student of Scripture seek to internalize the principles of biblical interpretation through study, memorization and implementation?
3. What would be gained by a study of the history of exegesis and interpretation?
4. What basic works would provide a suitable working library for the average Christian?
5. What basic works would provide a suitable working library for the serious student of Scripture?
6. What tools should a ministerial student seek to acquire, learn to use, and seek to develop an exegetical skill in continued use? Explain the necessity for each type of literary and linguistic tool.
7. What do the lives, labors and sacrifices of such men as John Brown of Haddington, John Gill, Samuel P. Tregelles and Sinclair Thomson teach the beginning student? What do each of these particular men teach?
8. What linguistic tools would comprise a basic working library for the biblical exegete and interpreter?
9. What is a lexicon? Explain its practical use.
10. What is a Concordance? Explain its practical use.
11. What is a “manual grammar”? What is its purpose? Explain its practical use.
12. Is a knowledge and study of the Septuagint necessary? What is its practical value?
13. What is Biblical Eisagoge? Why are such works important for biblical interpretation?
14. Explain the use of an Old Testament and New Testament Introduction.
15. What good is a Dictionary of Theology? How would it be used in hermeneutics?
16. What relation do Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Theologies have to biblical exegesis and interpretation?
17. What place does Church History have in exegesis and biblical interpretation?

18. Explain the place in one's interpretive library for background studies that deal with the cultures and times of the Bible.
19. What is the proper place for commentaries in one's working library?
20. What are critical commentaries? What is their particular use?
21. What are expository or doctrinal commentaries? What is their particular value?
22. What would the use of devotional commentaries be in relation to exegesis and interpretation?
23. What are the extremes to be avoided in the use of commentaries?
24. Generally survey the order in which personal, independent study should be done and commentaries used in Bible study.

Part III

What does The History of Hermeneutics Teach Us?

Introduction

- I. Our Point-of-Reference: Historico-Grammatical Interpretation
- II. Ancient Exegesis
 - A. The Spoken and Written Word
 - B. Ezra and Biblical Hermeneutics
 - C. Scribal and Rabbinic Tradition
- III. Rabbinic Exegesis
 - A. The Essene or Qumran Community
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 - C. The Tannaim and The Amoraim
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 - E. Talmudic Judaism: The Mishna and Gemara
 - F. The Masoretic Text
 - G. The Kabbalists and Karaites
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 - A. The Historical Significance
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 - E. Lessons and Cautions
- V. Auto-Christic And Apostolic Exegesis
 - A. The Use of The Old Testament in The New Testament
 - B. Auto-Christic Exegesis
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- VI. Patristic Exegesis
 - A. The Significance of The Patristic Era
 - B. The Chronology of The Patristic Era
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- VII. Medieval Exegesis
 - A. The Characteristics of The Medieval Era
 - B. The Chronology of The Medieval Era
 - C. A Hermeneutical Survey of The Medieval Era
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- VIII. Reformation Exegesis
 - A. The General Character of The Reformation Era
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- IX. Post-Reformation Exegesis
 - A. Time-Frame and Significance
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 - C. Pietism
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- X. Modern Exegesis
 - A. The Significance of The Modern Era
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Introduction

The history of hermeneutics and exegesis reveals the various attempts to understand and interpret the Scriptures—and these attempts vary from the reverent, literal and consistent to the superstitious and ultra-literal, to the rationalistic, the irrational and the absurd.¹²⁷ It is often as much a history of misinterpretation and misunderstanding, as Church History is a history—not of the natural historical development of Christianity—but rather of continued and radical departures from the inspired New Testament pattern.

¹²⁷ For a full discussion of the history of interpretation and the various approaches, see the following works: Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969, pp. 19–39; Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996, 608 pp.; F. W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961. 553 pp.; Donald K. McKim, *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998. A Berkeley Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966, pp. 20–53; Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969. pp. 23–84; Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964. pp. 163–174.

The student of the Bible, Church History and Theology, should take a great interest in the history of Hermeneutic and Exegesis. Such a study should alert one to the wrong use of right principles, to the tendencies, errors and heresies of the past, and enable him to avoid the extremes that have plagued the history of biblical interpretation.

A knowledge of the history of biblical interpretation is of inestimable value to the student of the Holy Scriptures. It serves to guard against errors and exhibits the activity and efforts of the human mind in its search after truth and in relation to the noblest themes.

It shows what influences have led to the misunderstanding of God's word, and how acute minds, carried away by a misconception of the nature of the Bible, have sought mystic and manifold meanings in its contents...

The student who acquaints himself with the various methods of exposition, and with the works of the great exegetes of ancient and modern times, is often saved thereby from following new developments of error, and is guarded against the novelties of a restless fancy.

He observes how learned men, yielding to subtle speculation and fanciful analogies, have become the founders of schools and systems of interpretation. At the same time he becomes more fully qualified to maintain and defend the faith once delivered unto the saints.¹²⁸

I

Our Point-of-Reference:

Historico-Grammatical Interpretation

Luke 10:26. What is written in the law? how readest thou?¹²⁹

2 Timothy 2:15. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

¹²⁸ Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, p. 603-604.

¹²⁹ The question of our Lord to the Pharisee, who was an interpreter of the Law, implies a historico-grammatical, exegetical approach to Scripture, deriving from the meaning of words and the interrelationships within specific statements to form and communicate intelligent thoughts and meaning.

Note: This statement implies a historico–grammatical interpretation. If the spiritualization of Scripture were legitimate, then it would be impossible to wrongly divide, as any meaning would ultimately be arbitrary.

2 Timothy 3:16–17. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.¹³⁰

The methodology applied to the Scriptures must be in accordance with an intelligent, self–consistent approach to the Scriptures themselves as the Word of Divine revelation from an intelligent, self–consistent God. To interpret in such a manner as to deny, ignore or misrepresent their teaching is to both be in grievous error and also to dishonor God. One must take care not to improperly “spiritualize” the Scriptures, i.e., find some secondary “deeper” or “spiritual” meaning beneath the “literal” or *usus loquendi*—and thus twist their intended meaning.

The only intelligent, consistent hermeneutic is the *historico–grammatical* method. It is such an interpretation that is necessitated by and in accordance with the rules of grammar and the facts of history. It is a “common–sense” interpretation (i.e., adhering to the principle of the *usus loquendi*, or the common, usual meaning and use of words in the given era, society or culture).

It seeks no spiritual or hidden meaning unless necessary in the normal figurative, symbolic, idiomatic or typical expression of the given language, culture, or historical context of a given passage. It presupposes that God has given his revelation in an intelligent and understandable form.

Following is a general historical survey of the major approaches in general chronological order with their tendencies. Each approach or method is given and, if necessary, historically developed as a given system.

¹³⁰ If every aspect of Scripture is “God–breathed” (πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος), then it is to be intelligently and consistently interpreted, necessitating the historico–grammatical method.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why should every Christian, and especially the serious student of Scripture, take an intense interest in history?
2. Is there a parallel between general Church History and the the history of Hermeneutics? Explain.
3. Explain the issues of and necessity for the historico-grammatical interpretation of Scripture.
4. What is the *usus loquendi* and how is it to influence or govern interpretation?
5. Why is it dangerous and against the very nature of Scripture itself to “spiritualize” the text or engage in allegorizing?

II

Ancient Exegesis

Ezra 7:6, 10–11, 25. This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given....For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments...Ezra the priest, the scribe, *even* a scribe of the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of his statutes to Israel....And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that *is* in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that *are* beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know *them* not.

Nehemiah 8:7–8. ...the Levites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place. So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

A. The Spoken and Written Word

A distinction ought to be made at the outset between the interpretation of the spoken and the inscripturated Word of God. The interpretation of the spoken Word began with Adam and Eve, and continued until Moses and the prophets. With Moses, Divine revelation began to assume a written form, although God still spoke directly to Israel through symbols, types, visions, dreams, and, finally through the prophets or seers from Samuel to Malachi.

B. Ezra and Biblical Hermeneutics

The interpretation of the written Word began with Ezra the scribe during the Era of Restoration when a remnant returned from Babylonian captivity to rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. The older, classical or biblical Hebrew was no longer spoken, Chaldee or Aramaic having become the official and common language of the captivity. There was thus the necessity of translating the Scriptures from Hebrew into Aramaic and explaining or interpreting them through paraphrases.

C. Scribal and Rabbinic Tradition

With Ezra (c. 457 BC) began the calling and office of the scribe as copier and interpreter of Scripture, and according to Jewish tradition, the first sessions of “The Great Synagogue” at Jerusalem, in which the scribes interpreted the Written and “Oral Law” and wrote their commentaries.

Although Ezra was of the literalist school, the scribes and rabbis of Judaism soon began to develop a superstitious bibliolatry¹³¹ and casuistry¹³² that began during the Intertestamental Era (c. 397–4 BC), and was already quite advanced by the Maccabean Era (c. 167–63 BC).¹³³ During the time of the

¹³¹ Bibliolatry is a superstitious worship of the Scriptures and parchments themselves, which with the Jews, involved giving superstitious meaning to the very letters of the scrolls, obscuring the literal significance. The Babylonian captivity cured the nation from pagan idolatry, but the rabbis and scribes transferred this idolatrous principle to the Scriptures.

¹³² Casuistry is the solving of specific cases of right and wrong in conduct by applying general principles of ethics. It often becomes sophistry, or a false and misleading, arbitrary reasoning. Rabbinical casuistry far surpassed even that of the later Romish Jesuits.

¹³³ The Intertestamental Era extended from the close of the Old Testament canonical writing of Malachi to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ (397–4 BC). It can be divided into four periods: (1) Persian rule (538–332 BC), (2) Egyptian–Greek rule under the Ptolemies (331–198 BC) and Syrian–Greek rule under the Seleucids (198–167 BC), (3) Jewish independence under the Maccabeans (167–43 BC), and (4) Roman rule under the puppet government of the Herodian dynasty (43 BC–70 AD).

Maccabees, the various religious parties were developed and grew into prominence: the Pharisees and Sadducees, and, later, under Roman rule, the Herodians and Zealots.

Among the Pharisees were the scribes or lawyers (νομικοί) who made copies of the Scriptures, interpreted them and taught the people from the precepts and traditions of both the Written and alleged “Oral Law.”¹³⁴ This was the situation and politico–religious–traditional system that our Lord confronted during his earthly ministry, calling such the traditions of men which made the Word of God of none effect.

D. Jewish Hermeneutic: Rabbinic and Alexandrian Exegesis

Biblical Exegesis properly began with the Jews, as distinct from general exegesis and hermeneutic, which derived from ancient pagan Greece in the interpretation of dreams, the oracles of the gods, and the writings of their ancient sages and poets.

Jewish exegesis and hermeneutic were developed in two directions. The Palestinian and Babylonian Jews, comprised of those who either remained in Babylon after the exile or returned to Jerusalem, developed the complex traditional system known as Rabbinical Judaism. This is referred to as the alleged “literal” school in contrast to the Alexandrian school, although it indulged itself in allegories, fancies and complexities far removed from literalism.

The Jews of the Diaspora developed the system which became known as Hellenistic, Alexandrian, or Allegorical Exegesis. This allegorical system was developed in Alexandria, Egypt, as the result of the assimilation of Hellenistic thought, culture, and the application of pagan Greek allegorism to the Scriptures.

¹³⁴ The rabbis taught that Moses received two laws on Mt. Sinai: the Written Law contained in the Pentateuch, and the “Oral Law,” which was handed down orally and contained the esoteric teaching and true substance of Judaism. This alleged “Oral Law” formed the basis of Judaism with the Talmudic writings, their commentaries and casuistry.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the subject and time-frame of Ancient Exegesis?
2. Why is it necessary to distinguish between the interpretation of the spoken Word and written Word?
3. When and with whom did the interpretation of the written Word begin? Why?
4. What was the office of the scribe in Israel?
5. Exactly where did biblical exegesis and hermeneutics begin? Where did general hermeneutics begin?
6. From what sources did Jewish exegesis and hermeneutics begin and in what two directions it proceed?

III

Rabbinic Exegesis

Romans 3:1. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.¹³⁵

Romans 2:17–27. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and rest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the

¹³⁵ God committed the Scriptures to the Jews, who completely obscured them through their tradition and then completely departed from them through their belief in the “Oral Law” and the subsequent rabbinical writings which explained away any semblance of truth into absurdities.

righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?¹³⁶

Matthew 15:3, 6, 9. But...[Jesus]...answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition....Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition....But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.¹³⁷

Mark 7:9, 13. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition....Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

John 5:38–40. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures¹³⁸; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

Romans 9:1–5. I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish¹³⁹ that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of *God*, and the promises; whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ The Jew, through a great misunderstanding of Divine truth, possessed a superior attitude toward the Gentile, and allowed in himself what he would forbid in the Gentile!

¹³⁷ Our Lord was referring to the rabbinical teachings of the alleged “Oral Law,” which were later written down in the form of commentaries and became the substance of Talmudic Judaism.

¹³⁸ ἔραυνάτε either imper. “Search,” or ind., “ye are [constantly] searching,” implying that they were already searching the writings, which was true.

¹³⁹ ἠὺχόμεν γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτοῖς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ... Idiomatic use of the imperf., implying that if it were possible, which it was not—an extreme expression in this context.

¹⁴⁰ The Jews possessed every advantage, but lost it all through losing the truth of their Scriptures through their belief in an “Oral Law” and through the traditional Rabbinical teachings that derived from it.

2 Corinthians 3:14–15. But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.¹⁴¹

1 Timothy 1:3–7. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.¹⁴² But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully...

Titus 3:9–11. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Rabbinic¹⁴³ Judaism was the complex, traditional system that characterized the Jewish culture of Palestine in the New Testament era. It was with this system that our Lord and the Apostles had to contend. Later Judaism continued to systematize and commit to writing the “Oral Law” and traditions handed down by successive generations and schools of Rabbis.

These produced a complex exegesis and casuistry that often centered on specific words or even individual letters and their peculiarities,¹⁴⁴ and neglected the necessary context.

¹⁴¹ As Moses, whose face was shining from the reflected glory of God, had to veil his face to speak to Israel, so there is a hermeneutic and traditional veil upon their minds in understanding the Divine truth of their own Scriptures. Such misunderstanding is only taken away in the truth and glory of the gospel of Christ.

¹⁴² Paul was doubtless referring to the Rabbinic traditions and possible Alexandrian teachings which were then current in Judaism.

¹⁴³ “Rabbinic,” from רַבִּי (*Rabbiy*), “Master” [teacher], from רַב (*rab*), “great.” (“my Great One”). Gk ῥαββί, Eng., “Rabbi.”

¹⁴⁴ F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

Note: Rabbi Aqiba (d. 135 AD), "...not only explained every particle and copula, but said that there was a mystic meaning in every letter of Scripture, and in every horn [corner of the letter] and letter-flourish of every letter, 'just as in every fiber of an ant's foot or a gnat's wing'."

Note: e.g., In the treatise *Sanhedrin* it is argued that the man who made all his children pass through the fire to Moloch would be guilty of no sin, because Moses only said, 'thy seed' and not 'all thy seed'. *Sanhedrin* f. 64, 2.

The entire time-frame for Rabbinic Judaism extended from the Intertestamental era to c. 1780 with the influence and writings of Moses Mendelssohn and the beginnings of Jewish biblical criticism.¹⁴⁵

A. The Essene or Qumran Community

The Essene community of Qumran on the shore of the Dead Sea (c. 150 BC–68 AD) was a schismatic group which viewed mainstream Rabbinic Judaism as corrupt. They were characterized by asceticism and an eschatological and messianic emphasis. They were convinced that they were the only truly pure ones among the Jews, were living in the final time, and awaiting the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.

Their commentaries reveal much of the fallacies that have always plagued interpreters: they interpreted the text of Scripture from their own cultural and ascetic perspective¹⁴⁶ and according to their own temporal point-of-reference.

Note: Most generations of Christians have also sought to find in biblical prophecies a fulfillment in their own time. E.g., at the beginning of World War II, some Fundamentalist preachers and prophetic teachers were "proving" from the Scriptures that Mussolini was the Antichrist!

In the mid- 1950s, a Fundamentalist Baptist preacher wrote a book based on Acts 17:26, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their

¹⁴⁵ See Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, pp. 627–628.

¹⁴⁶ The eisegetical tendency to read into the Scriptures our own thinking, cultural distinctives and mores is a natural tendency that must be avoided.

habitation...” (a misinterpretation of the Greek, which refers to the rise and fall of succeeding civilizations), asserting that man would never get into space. The book mysteriously disappeared after Sputnik and the beginnings of the subsequent space program of the early 1960s.

The positive contributions of the Qumran community were that they left a very detailed record of the Jewish life in that era and also copied and preserved the sacred scrolls. Many of these were discovered as “The Dead Sea Scrolls” in 1947 and revolutionized Old Testament biblical scholarship. Until this discovery, the oldest Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament were dated at c. 1100 AD. The Dead Sea Scrolls took the available Hebrew texts back before the first century BC.

B. From Ezra to the *Tannaim*:
the *Midrash* and *Targum*

Pre-Christian Rabbinic exegesis began in the time of Ezra the scribe. Bilingual necessity established the office of scribe, and the scribes developed a body of traditional interpretation which embraced the whole of Judaism. The two great divisions of Jewish literature were the *Midrash* (an exegesis, interpretation, and commentary on and application of the Pentateuch and Five Rolls) and the *Targum*.

- The Law of Moses [Pentateuch] was elevated to a unique position above the Prophets and Writings into a literal form of bibliolatry.
- Interpretation was divided into the *Halakha*¹⁴⁷ (exegetical interpretations of a legal nature, which were strictly binding and confined to the Law of Moses) and the *Haggadah*¹⁴⁸ (homiletical [non-exegetical] interpretations of an edifying, non-binding nature, spanning all of the Jewish Scriptures).

¹⁴⁷ *Halakha*, “decision, norm, systemized legalized precept,” from הלכה, “to walk.”

¹⁴⁸ *Haggadah*, “story, legend.” אגדה (*’agadah*) is the Aramaic form of the Heb. הגדה (*haggadah*), from נגד (*nagad*), “to be manifest, show, tell.”

- The principles of interpretation—a type of arbitrary, intricate symbolism or allegorism unparalleled even in Alexandrian, Patristic and Medieval interpretation—was permeated with tradition, religious introspection, narrowness and superstition that obscured the true meaning of the Scriptures.
- This immense body of the “Oral Law” continued to grow and develop until it had completely replaced the Written Law [Scriptures] and had become a substitute for it.
- This was the situation, often reflecting the schools of either Hillel or Shammai, that confronted our Lord and his Apostles in their ministries.¹⁴⁹

C. The *Tannaim* and *Amoraim*

Rabbinic Judaism can be generally divided into two historic phases: the *Tannaim*¹⁵⁰ (c. 20 BC–15 AD) and the *Amoraim*¹⁵¹ (c. 200 AD–c. 490 AD). The *Tannaim* phase was pre-Christian and characterized by the two Rabbinical schools of Shammai (c. 20 BC–c. 15 AD), which was conservative, and that of Hillel (c. 20 BC–c. 15 AD),¹⁵² which was more liberal, and eventually won ascendancy in Rabbinical thought and interpretation. The Jewish proverb expressed the difference between them by saying that ‘Shammai bound and Hillel loosed;’ in other words Shammai interpreted

¹⁴⁹ The confrontations that occurred between our Lord and the Scribes or lawyers and the Pharisees over the meaning and use of Scripture graphically demonstrate the need for a proper concept of Scripture and a sound and consistent hermeneutic. E.g., Matt. 5:17–45; 12:1–14; 15:1–9; 23:1–33; Rom. 2:17–29; 1 Tim. 1:3–7; Titus 1:14.

¹⁵⁰ *Tannaim*, or “learners” (תַּנַּיִם [tann'iym], Chaldee for the Heb. שׁוֹנֵיִם [sōniym]). This era was characterized by the labors of the *Sopherim* or Scribes, who held to a literal interpretation of Scripture, the *Chakamim*, or Wise Men, and then the *Tannaim*. Cf. F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 52–53, 73.

¹⁵¹ *Amoraim*, or commentators.

¹⁵² These schools were probably the result of a continuously developing system that had existed for several centuries since the Restoration Era.

every legal maxim with the extremest rigidity, while Hillel allowed modifying circumstances.¹⁵³ During this era the *Targumim* (Aramaic paraphrases of the Scriptures) were probably written. During the Amoraic or post-Christian era,¹⁵⁴ the large body of oral traditions from earlier times surrounding the alleged “Oral Law” was gathered and codified eventually into the *Talmudim* to form the basis for modern Judaism.

D. The Seven Principles of Hillel

As the seven hermeneutical principles (*middot*)¹⁵⁵ of Hillel,¹⁵⁶ one of the great Rabbinical *Tannaim* interpreters, formed the basis for interpretation in subsequent Talmudic Judaism, these should be given in at least summary fashion:

1. “Light and heavy,” an application of the ordinary argument from the less to the greater.
2. “Equivalence,” or “equal decision” meant the inference of a relation between two subjects from the occurrence of identical expressions in the discernment of analogies and comparisons.
3. Deduction from special to general, or deducing general implications from a single passage.
4. An inference from several passages, or the explanation of two passages by a third.
5. Inferences from the general to the special, or particular.
6. Analogy from another passage, or using one passage to interpret another.
7. An inference from the context, or using the context to interpret one statement.

¹⁵³ F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

¹⁵⁴ The Amoraic era was post-Christian in the sense that Christianity antedated it, and it exhibited a decided anti-Christian character and bias.

¹⁵⁵ *Middot*, or canons, rules, principles.

¹⁵⁶ These were later expanded to thirteen rules under Rabbi Ishamel ben Elisha (c. 110–130 AD), and even later to the thirty-two rules of Rabbi Eliezer ben Jose ha-Galili (c. 130–160 AD).

With the final two of these principles we could be in agreement, with the middle ones, perhaps, but we would certainly question the exact application of the first three.

The two fundamental issues, however, were: first, the alleged “Oral Law” and its replacement of the Scriptures, and, second, later Talmudic Judaism and four-fold interpretation of the *Midrashim*,¹⁵⁷ which consisted mostly of superstitious spiritualization and confusion of application with interpretation, known mnemonically as פַּרְדֵּס [PaRDeS], or “Paradise”:¹⁵⁸

1. *Peshat* (פֶּשֶׁת), or the literal sense—the historico-grammatical sense.¹⁵⁹
2. *Remez* (רִמְזֵי), or hint, the development of latent meanings. This was devoted to the development of the *Halakha*.
3. *Darush* (דַּרְשׁוֹ, “to search”), or homiletics, including allegory and illustration. This was devoted to the *Haggada*.
4. *Sôd* (סוֹד), or mystery. This was the special area later more fully developed by the Kabbalists with their superstitions and esoteric numerology.

¹⁵⁷ The *Midrashim*, מִדְרָשִׁים (*Midrash*), from דַּרְשׁוֹ (*darash*), “search into, investigate, examine or explain.” It consists of the Pentateuch and the Five Rolls [Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther]. The oldest Jewish exposition of Scripture, exhibiting a subjective mode of interpretation that appeals more to the emotions than to the mind. It constitutes part of the Talmud.

¹⁵⁸ פַּרְדֵּס (“*paradise*”) in Heb. referred to an enclosure, preserve or park of fruit trees. BDB, *Heb. Lex.*, p. 825. The description of PaRDeS is taken essentially from F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 95–96.

¹⁵⁹ Note that this term has been somewhat preserved in the ancient Syriac Version, known as the *Peshitta* (“simple,” i.e., the common language), implying that it was simple and literal. The Scriptures were translated into the Syriac and Latin by the mid-second century AD [*Peshitta* and *Old Latin* Versions].

E. Talmudic Judaism: the Mishna and Gemara

Post-Christian Rabbinic exegesis begins with Talmudic Judaism (c. 200– AD). The Jewish Talmud¹⁶⁰ [the written collection of all oral traditions, commentaries, applications, etc.] is in turn, composed of two literary works—the *Mishna*¹⁶¹ and the *Gemara*¹⁶²:

- The *Mishna*, an elucidation of the fundamental text of the Mosaic Law with an immense body of casuistry, related and unrelated cases, and applications. (c. 200 AD).
- The *Gemara* (an immense body of expositions, commentaries and illustrations on the *Mishna*, c. 490 AD). The following quotations demonstrate the mentality of a Talmudic Judaism that was doubtless far advanced in the earthly days of our Lord:

‘The voice of the Rabbi is as the voice of God.’ ‘He who transgresses the words of the Scribes throws away his life.’ ‘Scripture is like water, the Mishna like wine, the Gemara like spiced wine.’ ‘The Scripture is as salt, the Mishna as pepper, the Gemara as spice.’ ‘There is no salvation...for the man who passes from the study of the Halakha to that of Scripture.’

‘Men learned in Scripture are only as the tendrils of the vine; the Mishna students are the grapes; the students of the Gemara are the ripe clusters.’ ‘The study of the Scripture is non-meritorious; the study of the Mishna deserves a reward; the study of the Gemara is an unapproachable virtue.’ ‘He who only studies the Scriptures is as an empty cistern.’¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ תלמוד, “Doctrine,” from לָמַד (*lamad*), “to teach.”

¹⁶¹ *Mishna*, מִשְׁנָה (rendered by the Early Church Fathers as δευτέρωσις), “to repeat,” later, to be equivalent to the teaching or learning of the Oral Law. Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People at the Time of Jesus Christ*, First Division, I, p. 119.

¹⁶² *Gemara* גְּמָרָא, “supplement, complement.” It must be noted that this was a commentary on a commentary that was already far removed from Scripture by obscurity, superstition and tradition.

¹⁶³ F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 62–63.

F. The Masoretic Text

The Masorah or Masorites were Jewish scribal critics who were located at Tiberias on the coast of the Sea of Galilee. This school existed until about the sixth century AD. Here, the pronunciation of the Hebrew text was preserved by a system of diacritical markings (vowel–pointings, accents, syllable breaks, etc. twenty–seven different types in all). This standardized Hebrew text became known as the *Massoretic Text*.

The Hebrew language was written in a form of shorthand with only the consonants. The vowels and other diacritical markings were inserted by the Masorah. The rabbinical scribes were meticulous. If pronunciation necessitated doubling a letter, rather than insert a letter into the text, they put a dot in the bosom of the letter (*dagesh forte*) to signify its strengthening or doubling. They also had marginal readings rather than change the text, distinguishing between the *Qere* [what is read] and the *Kethibh* [what is written], if there were any question.

The *Qere* and *Kethibh* included the Divine Name, as the Jews out of a misplaced reverence and in fear of taking God's name in vain, did not pronounce the Divine Name, *Yahweh*, but always read in its place, "*Adonai*." Note that when the consonants of יהוה [*The Tetragrammaton*, or "Four Letters"] were combined with the vowel pointings of אֲדֹנָי for *Qere*, the result is *Yehowah*, or "Jehovah."

G. Medieval Rabbinic Exegesis: The Kabbalists and Karaites

From the Midrash, Medieval (twelfth century) Jewish Kabbalism¹⁶⁴ invented a system of biblical interpretation that combined both the "literalism" of the Rabbinic tradition and the

¹⁶⁴ קבלה (*Qabbalah*), "received," refers to an esoteric system of Jewish philosophy or theosophy that pretended to have received ancient wisdom or secret traditions. Jewish Kabbalism became much of the basis for the Scottish Rite of Free Masonry, which considers the Bible to be a book of errors for a rude and ignorant people not fitted for the finality of truth. The wisdom and truth of the ancients, they claim, was passed along through Kabbalism, Eastern mysticism, etc. See Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, pp. 11, 224–225, etc.

allegorical tendencies of the Alexandrian Jews. They invented a numerology from a superstitious belief in the mystical significance of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the alleged numerical value of certain words.¹⁶⁵ This superstitious alleged numerical significance in turn formed the basis for a mystical and esoteric interpretation.

Note: The three Kabbalistic methods of interpretation:

- (1) *Gematria*, or mystic relations based on equivalent numerical letters, resulted in the following “exegesis”: Eliezer, Abraham’s servant was equal to all the 318 armed servants born in Abraham’s house, because the numerical equivalent of his name amounts to 318. There are 903 ways of dying because the word for “issues of death” in Psa. 68:21 amounts to the numerical 903.
- (2) *Notarikon*, in which letters stood for words in an acrostic system.
- (3) *Temoorah*, in which letters were interchanged either spelling backwards, or by dividing the alphabet in half, then substituting one letter for another in the other half of the alphabet.

For centuries the Rabbis debated about which commandment was the greatest—a question current even during our Lord’s earthly ministry. For centuries, some Rabbis taught that the law respecting fringes (ribband of blue tassels or fringes for their garments) was the greatest!

Numb. 15:37–39. And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them...

Rashi, a twelfth century Rabbinical writer so believed, and sought to prove it by following the Talmud, that the numerical value of *Tsitisith* [fringes] is 600, and this with the eight threads and five knots equals 613, the number of all the commandments of the Lord!¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Discussed by F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 95–105.

¹⁶⁶ Referred to by F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 50–51.

During the late Middle Ages (twelfth–fifteenth centuries), despite continued Rabbinic absurdities, Jews in Spain returned to a more consistent hermeneutic, and through their commentaries, expositions and grammars, helped initiate the study of Hebrew among scholars and Christians during the Renaissance and Reformation eras.

Except for the Karaites¹⁶⁷ and the publication of early Hebrew grammars, Jewish hermeneutic and exegesis provide little help to the modern exegete—except to serve as a warning against fanciful, irrational and religious–traditional tendencies in interpretation. The Karaites, as opposed to the Kabbalists, were literalists, and some schools of rabbinical exegesis taught such principles as the necessity of interpreting according to the context, the comparison of Scripture with Scripture and a logical principle of reasoning from the text by deduction or implication.

H. Lessons and Cautions

From the long and complicated history of Rabbinic exegesis, the following observations can be made:

1. Superstitious Bibliolatry results in losing the true sense or meaning of Scripture.
2. We must take great care not to give authority to tradition. The Jewish belief in the second or “Oral Law” allegedly given to Moses on Mt. Sinai was the greatest source of Jewish error and heresy. It completely obscured and undermined the authority of Scripture.
3. Great care must be taken not to spiritualize the Scripture, or confuse application with interpretation.
4. We must take great care to consider the context,¹⁶⁸ and not have a fragmented view of biblical truth.

¹⁶⁷ *Karaites*, Heb. בן מִכְרָא (*bēn mikra*), “the Sons of Reading,” “They were so called because their fundamental principle was to regard Scripture as their sole authority in matters of faith.” Louis Berkhof, *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁶⁸ There is a necessary syntactical or grammatical context by which words are related to form a coherent thought and statement, an

5. We must take great care with the interpretation of types, symbols and a questionable or false biblical numerology. A type of Kabbalism has been revived in modern Christianity as a key to understanding the Scriptures.
6. Tradition always tends to obscure and then replace the truth of God. The Jews were entrusted with the Oracles of God for over 2,000 years and, rather than make them known to the nations, made them obscure and of none effect through their tradition.
7. We must always distinguish between the Word of God and the words of men. We can never think highly enough of the Scripture, but we may think too highly of the words of men and their teachings. Tradition must never obscure or replace the truth.
8. God will preserve his Word and his truth providentially through men, even if not purposely done on their part.
9. We must beware that we do not commit *eisegesis* from a doctrinal, cultural, eschatological bias or irrational approach.
10. Caution must be used when older commentators, who were schooled in Rabbinic literature, quote from the Rabbis in their speculations and spiritualization of the words and text of Scripture.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by the term “Rabbinic Exegesis”? Describe this hermeneutical approach geographically and historically.
2. What does the term “Rabbi” mean?
3. What was the “Oral Law”? How did the belief in and dependence upon the “Oral Law” govern the direction of Judaism and nullify the teaching and force of Scripture?

immediate context within a paragraph or narrative, a larger context, and then an even greater context that considers the nature and character of a given writing or author.

4. Who were the Essenes? What significance do these have in Jewish history? In the history of biblical studies?
5. What were the two great divisions in ancient Jewish literature? Explain their nature.
6. What were the two primary types of Rabbinic interpretation. Explain each.
7. What were the two historical phases in the development of Rabbinic lore, literature and interpretation? Describe each.
8. What were the two schools of thought or approaches to interpretation in first century Judaism? How did these affect Jewish thinking? How would such thinking be countered by the Lord in his earthly ministry and teaching? Are there instances or biblical examples in the Gospel records?
9. What are the Seven Principles of Hillel? Discuss them, demonstrating which are legitimate and which are questionable or erroneous.
10. What was the four-fold interpretation of Talmudic Judaism? Describe its approach and influence.
11. What two works comprise the Talmud? Explain the character of each.
12. What is the Masoretic Text? Explain its nature, history and significance.
13. What is Kabbalism? What are some examples of its approach to Scripture? What influence has Kabbalism had in Jewish and non-Jewish history?
14. Who were the Karaites? Explain their relation to Rabbinic interpretation.
15. What influence has Rabbinic interpretation had on Christian interpretation?

IV Alexandrian Exegesis

Romans 3:1. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.¹⁶⁹

2 Corinthians 3:14–15. But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.¹⁷⁰

Romans 2:17–20. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?

1 Timothy 1:3–8. As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law *is* good, if a man use it lawfully...¹⁷¹

Titus 3:9–11. But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second

¹⁶⁹ God entrusted his Word to the Jews, but it was obscured and then perverted through both Rabbinic and Alexandrian Judaism.

¹⁷⁰ As Moses, whose face was shining from the reflected glory of God, had to veil his face to speak to Israel, so there is a veil upon their minds in understanding the Divine truth of their own Scriptures. Such misunderstanding is only taken away in the truth and glory of the gospel of Christ.

¹⁷¹ Paul was doubtless referring to the Rabbinic traditions and possible Alexandrian teachings which were then current in Judaism.

admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Colossians 2:8, 16–18, 20–23. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ....Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ.

Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind....Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.¹⁷²

A. The Historical Significance

Alexandrian Exegesis (originating in Alexandria, Egypt), as the source of the allegorical approach, includes Pagan, Jewish and Christian Hermeneutics. The pagan Greeks used the allegorical approach to reconcile their ancient sages and poets with their philosophers. Alexandrian Jews appropriated the allegorical approach from their pagan Greek contemporaries in order to harmonize Moses and Plato.

The apologists among the early Church Fathers then borrowed this approach from the Alexandrian Jews to defend the Scriptures by seeking to make the Old Testament a “Christian book” through allegorization. This approach was subsequently applied to all of Scripture by statist Christendom, and became the predominant hermeneutic of the state church until the Sixteenth Century Reformation.

¹⁷² The “Colossian heresy” was very probably an early form of Gnosticism, which derived from a perversion of Christian truth with a mixture of Judaism, Oriental mysticism and theosophy, and Platonic philosophy.

It was in large part the allegorical approach that obscured the gospel, promoted Gnosticism, established the sacerdotal system, bolstered the Romish ecclesiastical hierarchy, determined Romish exclusiveness on biblical interpretation,¹⁷³ exalted celibacy, helped usher in the “Dark Ages,”¹⁷⁴ launched the various Crusades against the Bogomili, the Mohammedan “infidels,” the Waldenses, Albigenses and Hussites, and burned anti-Romish “heretics.”

Our immediate concern, however, is with Pagan and Jewish interpretation. Christian allegorism is considered under Patristic Exegesis.

B. The Allegorical Approach

Alexandrian Exegesis is known for its establishment and promulgation of the allegorical or “spiritualizing” approach to interpretation. This approach seeks “a deeper meaning” than the literal or common and ordinary usage of the language [*usus loquendi*]. Ramm explains:

Allegorical interpretation believes that beneath the letter (ῥητι) or the obvious (φανηρά) is the real meaning (ὑπονοία) of the passage...the basic problem is to determine if the passage has such a meaning at all...If there are no cues, hints, connections, or other associations which indicate that the record is an allegory, and what the allegory intends to teach, we are on very uncertain ground.¹⁷⁵

Mickelsen and Terry are very blunt about this approach and its potential evils:

In the allegorical method a text is interpreted apart from its grammatical historical meaning. What the original writer is trying

¹⁷³ Allegoricalism had no rational or consistent checks, therefore the statist Romish Church had exclusive rights on interpretation, bolstered by a misinterpretation of 2 Pet. 1:20–21.

¹⁷⁴ The era of the “Dark Ages” was basically the period when the Romish Church ruled exclusively over kingdoms and society, theologians ruled science, and biblical interpretation—the alleged basis for it all—was completely arbitrary.

¹⁷⁵ Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

to say is ignored. What the interpreter wants to say becomes the only important factor.¹⁷⁶

The allegorical method of interpretation is based upon a profound reverence for the Scriptures, and a desire to exhibit their manifold depths of wisdom. But it will be noticed at once that its habit is to disregard the common signification of words, and give wing to all manner of fanciful speculation. It does not draw out the legitimate meaning of an author's language, but foists into it whatever the whim or fancy of an interpreter may desire. As a system, therefore, it puts itself beyond all well-defined principles and laws.¹⁷⁷

C. Pagan Greek Allegorization

This approach began with the Greeks who had applied it to the writings of Homer and their other ancient sages. The Greeks had a two-fold tradition, religious and philosophical. The religious was prior to the philosophical and contained elements that were crude, absurd and not fitted to the later, more refined Greek mind. Thus, they developed an allegorical approach to harmonize their religious heritage with their philosophy.

The guiding principle was the Platonic "idea," i.e., that behind the literal, material, imperfect world existed eternal thought or ideas which represented the true and perfect.¹⁷⁸ When applied to various writings, the interpreter sought out the true or "deeper meaning" that lay behind the literal meaning of the text.

D. Jewish Allegorization

The two main branches of Jewish Exegesis and Hermeneutic were Rabbinic Exegesis, centered in Palestine and Babylon, and Alexandrian Exegesis, centering in Alexandria, Egypt, representing

¹⁷⁶ A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹⁷⁷ Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, p. 164.

¹⁷⁸ This movement (c. 80 BC–220 AD) was known as Middle Platonism, an attempt to revive and systematize Platonic thought to meet the religious demands of the day. The result was an eclecticism with Neopythagorean, Aristotelian, Stoic and even Jewish elements. Cf. Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought, I*, pp. 84–85; Frederick Copleston, *The History of Philosophy, I*, pp. 456; Sinclair B. Ferguson, et. al., *New Dictionary of Theology*; J. D. Douglas, Gen. Ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 787.

the linguistic, cultural and philosophical tendencies of the diasporic¹⁷⁹ Jews living for centuries in a Hellenistic world.

Alexandria, Egypt, possessed a great university and one of the greatest libraries in the ancient world.¹⁸⁰ It also had a large, wealthy and influential Jewish community, and one of the largest synagogues in the ancient world.¹⁸¹ Jewish commentators borrowed their allegorical approach from their Greek counterparts in seeking to make the Hebrew Scriptures palatable to the Greek philosophical mind-set. Here the LXX was translated about the third century BC.

The Septuagint

The Septuagint, or Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures was translated at Alexandria (c. 240–200 BC). Its designation is LXX, meaning “seventy,” deriving from Jewish tradition.¹⁸² The LXX, however, not being in Hebrew, and deriving from Diasporic Jews, did not receive the great Rabbinic superstitious care given the Hebrew text and scrolls. The differences are at times pronounced, and there are evident Hellenistic influences¹⁸³ as well as the

¹⁷⁹ The Jews of the Diaspora (διὰ, “through, thoroughly,” σπόρα, “scattered as seed.” Cf. the Eng., “spore”) were those scattered throughout the Roman world and beyond. This term is used by Peter (1 Pet. 1:1, when referring to the Jewish Christians “scattered throughout (διασποράς)” the various Roman Provinces.

¹⁸⁰ The three great university cities of the ancient world were Athens in Achaia, Tarsus in Cilicia and Alexandria in Egypt. The University Library at Alexandria consisted of 400,000 volumes.

¹⁸¹ The Alexandrian Jews numbered over one million, monopolized the Mediterranean corn trade and had the largest, wealthiest synagogue in the ancient world. “A flag had to be waved to show the people when to say ‘Amen!’” F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 114–115.

¹⁸² An ancient tradition states that seventy (72?) scribes in seventy days independently made seventy identical translations of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek.

¹⁸³ E.g., Gen. 1:2, “without form” becomes “unseen” (ἀόρατος), making the Platonic distinction between the ideal (κόσμος νοητός) and the material (κόσμος αἰσθητός) world. In Gen. 6:3, where בְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים, “the sons of God” is rendered, οἱ ἄγγελοι τοῦ θεοῦ, “the angels of God” in the Alexandrian text. In Deut. 32:8, “according to the number of the children of Israel.” became κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῦ. In Deut. 33:2,

inclusion of the Apocryphal books. This became the “Bible” of the common people in the Jewish world, as they spoke either Aramaic or Κοινή Greek as their common tongue.

The importance of the LXX is noted in the following:

- Although opposed by the Rabbis, who alone spoke, studied and held to the classical Hebrew, it became the Scriptures of the common people of the Greek-speaking Roman world.
- It contained the Apocryphal writings, which were concerned with the later history of the Jews, but also were filled with myth and legend. The Church of Rome recognizes the Apocrypha¹⁸⁴ as part of the canon of Scripture.¹⁸⁵ Reformed and Evangelical Christianity do not.
- It was the “Bible” most often used by our Lord and the inspired Apostles. It is often quoted, paraphrased or referred to in the New Testament.¹⁸⁶
- As most of the Church Fathers did not read Hebrew, it became, with the Latin Vulgate, the Old Testament Scriptures of Early Christianity.¹⁸⁷

“saints” is changed to ἄγγελοι. In Isa. 9:6, “an angel of mighty counsel” (μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος) is substituted for “the mighty God,” betraying an Alexandrian theological influence. For a fuller discussion, see F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 116–127.

¹⁸⁴ The term derives from the Gk. ἀπόκρυφος, “hidden, secret, esoteric,” later of works that were non-canonical. The Old Testament Apocrypha (or deuterocanonical books, i.e., those not reckoned in the canon of Scripture) consists of 1 and 2 *Esdras*, *Tobit*, *Judith*, *The Rest of Esther*, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah*, *The Song of the Three Holy Children*, *The History of Susanna*, *Bel and the Dragon*, *The Prayer of Manasses*, and 1 and 2 *Maccabees*.

¹⁸⁵ The Apocrypha contains some basis for the Romish doctrinal traditions of purgatory, prayers for the dead, etc. The Apocrypha was also included in the later *Latin Vulgate*, c. 403 AD.

¹⁸⁶ The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is a study reserved for Auto-Christic and Apostolic Exegesis. New Testament references to the Old Testament are quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, quotations from the LXX, paraphrases from both, or references in which there is a change of emphasis under inspiration.

- Until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, the oldest extant Old Testament Hebrew manuscripts dated back to approximately 1100 AD, thus Old Testament textual criticism and exegesis relied more heavily on the LXX before that time.

Aristobolus

The first Jewish allegorist of which we have record was Aristobolus, an Alexandrian priest and peripatetic philosopher (c. 160 BC).¹⁸⁸ He thought and wrote that Greek philosophy had been borrowed [plagiarized] from the Old Testament, especially from the Law of Moses, who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. By applying the allegorical approach, which he borrowed from the Greeks, he could find Greek philosophy in Moses and the Prophets, and thus defend his Jewish faith with some of its despised tenets,¹⁸⁹ and present it in a form that coalesced more with the Greek mind and culture.

Philo the Jew

The greatest allegorist was Philo the Jew of Alexandria, a Stoic philosopher (Philo Judaeus, c. 20 BC–54 AD). His culture was mainly Hellenistic and he was well read in Greek Literature. He sought to synthesize Greek philosophy and the Hebrew religion by allegorizing the Old Testament Scriptures. He was acquainted with the three contemporary exegetical schools or tendencies:

There were the literalists, of whom he speaks with lofty superiority; Rationalists who apostatized from Judaism altogether and whom he regards with sorrow and indignation; and Allegorists, who had already learnt the secret how to reconcile Judaic institutions with Hellenic culture. Philo's works are the epitome and the development of the principles of the Allegorists...by the aid of allegory, Philo was able to regard

¹⁸⁷ E.g., even the great Augustine, unable to read Hebrew, depended upon the LXX for his biblical authority in the Old Testament.

¹⁸⁸ Referred to in 2 Macc. 1:10. Eusebius wrote that he was one of The Seventy who translated the LXX for the Ptolemaic Kings. He wrote a commentary on the Pentateuch.

¹⁸⁹ The Judaistic peculiarities of worship, dress, diet, and washings for cleanliness became sources of derision in Hellenistic culture.

himself as a Stoic philosopher and yet at the same time as a faithful Jew.¹⁹⁰

Philo's approach betrays early Rabbinic¹⁹¹ Halakhaic and Haggadistic and Greek Stoic influences.¹⁹² His hermeneutical principles, some twenty in number, are thoroughly laid out in the first three chapters of his writings.¹⁹³ These can be narrowed to the following six in which the literal sense is to be set aside, for examples of his exegetical approach¹⁹⁴:

1. The literal sense is excluded when the statement is unworthy of God; when there is any contradiction; when the allegory is obvious.¹⁹⁵
2. The rules which prove the simultaneous existence of the allegorical with the literal sense are mainly Rabbinic.¹⁹⁶
3. Words may be explained apart from their punctuation.
4. If synonyms are used, something allegorical is intended.

¹⁹⁰ F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 137.

¹⁹¹ Although he betrayed Rabbinic influences, Philo differed in the following five ways: (1) He did not quote authorities or opinions. (2) He commented on paragraphs rather than verses and words. (3) He used more of a rhetorical style. (4) He referred to the LXX alone, not the Heb. text., and (5) He was more arbitrary and allegorical than the Rabbis. Cf. F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 150, footnote.

¹⁹² While Philo professed to respect the literal sense, he likened it to the body, and the allegorical sense to the soul. The literal was a concession to the weak and ignorant. "His great aim is to exhibit the mystic depths which lie concealed beneath the sacred words." He also dealt with an esoteric numerology. See Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, pp. 609–611; F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 139.

¹⁹³ See C. D. Yonge, Transl., *The Works of Philo*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993. pp. 3–79.

¹⁹⁴ Taken in general from the discussion by F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 140–158.

¹⁹⁵ E.g., Adam hiding himself from God, who necessarily sees all things, must be allegorized as it would be literally impossible.

¹⁹⁶ E.g., In the repeated expression, "Abraham, Abraham," the first expresses affection and the second, admonition.

5. Plays on words are admissible to educe a deeper sense. This would include deducing meaning from the etymology of names.¹⁹⁷
6. Particles, adverbs and prepositions may be forced into the service of allegory. Parts of words may be made significant. Each word may have all its possible meanings apart from the context.

Some general examples include the following:

Speaking of paradise and the trees of life and of knowledge, he observes:

These statements appear to me to be dictated by a philosophy which is symbolical rather than strictly accurate. For no trees of life or of knowledge have ever at any previous time appeared upon the earth, nor is it likely that any will appear hereafter. But I rather conceive that Moses was speaking in an allegorical spirit, intending by his Paradise to intimate the dominant character of the soul, which is full of innumerable opinions, as the figurative Paradise was of trees.

And by the tree of life he was shadowing out the greatest of the virtues—namely, piety toward the gods, by means of which the soul is made immortal—and by the tree which had the knowledge of good and evil he was intimating that wisdom and moderation by means of which things contrary in their nature to one another are distinguished.

In Gen. 2:6, where the Hebrew reads, “A mist went up from the land and watered the whole face of the ground...”

Here he calls the mind the fountain of the earth, and the sensations he calls the face of the earth, because there is the most suitable place in the whole body for them with reference to appropriate energies...And the mind waters the sensations like a fountain, sending appropriate streams over each.¹⁹⁸

The tree of life that most general virtue which men call goodness. The river that goes forth out of Eden is also generic goodness. Its four heads are the cardinal virtues... prudence...

¹⁹⁷ The etymology of names is a valid study at times, especially if the name was given by God (e.g., “Abraham”, Gen. 17:1ff), but to take the etymology of any name in Scripture as some spiritual significance would lead to absurdities.

¹⁹⁸ Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, pp. 612–613.

courage...temperance...justice... The Euphrates does not mean river, but the correction of manners.¹⁹⁹

The literal statement that God cast Adam into a deep sleep and made Eve of one of his ribs is fabulous; the meaning is that God took the power which dwells in the outward senses, and led it to the mind.²⁰⁰

Instead of the glorious story of Abram, the father of the faithful, we get a typical Stoic who departs from the Chaldea of the sensual understanding to Haran, which means ‘holes,’ i.e., the five senses which teach him that they are nothing without the soul! Finally he becomes ‘Abraham’ that is ‘an elect father of sound;’ in other words he attains unto a knowledge of God and marries Sarah, or Abstract Wisdom.²⁰¹

It is simply amazing that such an arbitrary and fanciful approach to the Scriptures, misinterpreted by principles imported from paganism, could be used by a Stoic Jew, and then borrowed again by the early Church Fathers to defend Christianity—and ultimately determine the standard approach to the interpretation of Scripture for 1500 years—yet it was so!

E. Lessons and Cautions

The allegorical approach has had a profound affect upon the history of Christian interpretation of Scripture, which will be noted under Patristic and Scholastic Exegesis. Even as a system used in Alexandrian Judaism, there are some necessary issues:

1. The Scripture can have only one meaning—the meaning given to it by the all-wise, all-knowing and intelligent God. To seek a “deeper meaning” is to seek a second sense—an exercise in irrationality.
2. To depart from the *usus loquendi* [common, ordinary meaning of words and the thoughts they naturally convey] is an extremely dangerous practice in any type of writing, e.g., the directions for taking medicine, for dealing with highly corrosive or hazardous materials, or handling high

¹⁹⁹ F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 143–144.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140–141.

explosives—but it is even more so when approaching the Word of God!

3. There is always a grave danger in seeking to make one's religion and religious convictions acceptable to contemporary society. This is precisely a hermeneutical issue!
4. The importation or appropriation of pagan or humanistic methods is always a dangerous principle.
5. One may inherit a defective system of biblical interpretation. The past ought to be respected, but neither worshipped nor appropriated without discernment.
6. Subjectivism tends to lessen the absolute authority of the Scripture and give more authority to human speculation.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by “Alexandrian Exegesis”? Describe the influence of Alexandria, Egypt, in the ancient world.
2. What is the allegorical approach to Scripture? Where did the allegorical approach originate?
3. What influence has Alexandrian interpretation had on Judaism and on Christianity?
4. What is the Septuagint Version? What is its literary symbol?
5. Describe the influence and importance of the Septuagint in Jewish and Christian history and interpretation.
6. What two names are associated with the allegorical approach to Scripture as it began in Alexandria?
7. What are the essential principles of Philo's approach to biblical hermeneutics? Give examples of his allegorization of Scripture.

V

Auto-Christic and Apostolic Exegesis

Matthew 4:4. But he [the Lord Jesus Christ] answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.²⁰²

Matthew 5:17–18. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.²⁰³

Matthew 5:27–28. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.²⁰⁴

Luke 24:25–27, 44–45. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.....

And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and

²⁰² Our Lord answered Satan's temptations with the quotations from Scripture—all from Deuteronomy. He unquestionably held to the absolute authority of the Old Testament Word of God.

²⁰³ "Think not" (Μή νομίσητε, aor. subj. of prohib.), "Do not even begin to think!" "Do not even let it enter your mind!" that our Lord came "for the purpose of unloosing, dismantling" (καταλύσαι, aor. inf. of purpose) the Old Testament Scriptures. He rather came to "fill full" (οὐκ ἦλθον καταλύσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι). "One jot" (ἰῶτα ἐν, not even one *iota*, Heb. *yod*, smallest letter [י]) "or one stroke" (ἢ μία κεραία, Heb. [קַרְן], *qeren*] horn, point, corner of a letter) "in no wise" (οὐ μή, double neg. for emph.), "absolutely not!"

²⁰⁴ In this passage, v. 21–45, there is a contrast between what had been the long-standing Rabbinic tradition and the teaching of our Lord. He does not set himself against Scripture, but rather the Rabbinic interpretation of Scripture. He was restoring the spiritual nature of the Law which the Rabbis had obscured through tradition. E.g., Rabbinism condemned only the outward act of lustful activity or adultery; our Lord condemned all that would lead to it, restoring the full force of the commandment. E.g., Matt. 15:3, 6, 9; Mk. 7:9–13.

in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures...²⁰⁵

John 10:30–36. I and *my* Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

Note: The wrath of the Jews was against the statement that our Lord and the Father “are one” (ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατήρ ἐν ἑσμεν). The “one” is neut. and emph., “one in essence, will and purpose,” a *de facto* claim of Deity. For this statement, the Jews sought to stone our Lord. His defense was that their own Scripture called their judges “gods” (Psa. 82, where the judges, because they represented God in matters of right and wrong, life and death, were called “gods” (Heb. אֱלֹהִים אֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי (‘*aniy ‘amarētiy ‘elohiyim ‘attem*) which is followed by the emph אַתָּא, “ye.” The LXX, which our Lord quoted, ἐγὼ εἶπα θεοί ἐστε equates this with the emph. pos. of θεοί). “...the Scripture cannot be broken” (οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή) i.e., rendered null and void, destroyed, dismantled. This was our Lord’s high and absolute view of Scripture.

2 Timothy 3:16–17. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.²⁰⁶

Hebrews 1:1–3. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person,

²⁰⁵ The understanding must be opened to the Scriptures. Our Lord performed this hermeneutical exercise for his disciples. Doubtless his interpretation was largely typological [types of Christ in the OT] and prophetic, due to the nature of the Old Testament Scriptures.

²⁰⁶ The apostolic concept of Scripture was that it was undoubtedly the very Word of God inscripturated, with inclusive authority.

and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high...²⁰⁷

2 Peter 3:15–16. And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.²⁰⁸

By “Auto–Christic” Exegesis, we mean the use of Scripture by our Lord Jesus Christ himself (ὁ Χριστός αὐτός, “Christ himself.” emph. pers. pron.) as he referred to, quoted and explained the Old Testament. “Apostolic Exegesis” refers to the allusions, references to and quotations of the Old Testament in the inspired writings of the New Testament writers.

A. The Use of The Old Testament in The New Testament

This gives rise to a very vital issue: *We might think that all interpretive problems would be solved if we simply used the hermeneutical principles of our Lord and the inspired Apostles as they interpreted the Old Testament Scriptures.* Surely such an inspired hermeneutic would put an end to all controversy! But this is not nearly so simple as it may seem at first. The use of the Old Testament by our Lord and the New Testament writers is a necessary and unique area of study, especially in the realm of Hermeneutics.

What are we to presuppose or necessarily assume concerning their use of the Old Testament? How were these Scriptures used? Was there a distinct, specific, applicable hermeneutic evidenced by

²⁰⁷ ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας...ἐλάλησεν... “God, having spoken...spoke...” The const. reveals the preparatory Word to be through the prophets (Πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας ἐν τοῖς προφήταις) and the final Word in [his] Son (ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ). The inspired writers viewed the New Testament Christologically in their interpretation.

²⁰⁸ The inspired writers were evidently conscious that their writings were on the same plane and authority as the Old Testament Scriptures.

our Lord and the inspired New Testament writers which is adequate and suitable for us today?

Presuppositions

There are several presuppositions which we, as orthodox Christians, must consider concerning the use of the Old Testament in the New:²⁰⁹

- That the Old Testament Scriptures were and remain the inspired Word of God inscripturated (1 Cor. 2:12–13; 2 Tim. 3:16–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). The New Testament writers held the Old Testament Scriptures in the highest regard as the very Word of God inscripturated.

They introduced quotations, references or allusions with the following formulae: “God said,” “Scripture saith,” “It saith” and “it is written” with equal authority,²¹⁰ unquestionably personifying the Scriptures as God himself speaking. This would often set them against Rabbinic traditions.

- That the Old Testament Scriptures were, in the context of Divine progressive revelation, incomplete, preparatory in themselves, awaiting the fullness of the redemptive purpose in the Lord Jesus Christ.²¹¹ Much was typical, some symbolic and most remained relatively incomplete until the

²⁰⁹ Approximately “...one-tenth of the New Testament is comprised of Old Testament material....A conservative count discloses some 295 separate explicit references...These occupy 352 verses of the New Testament...94 from...the Pentateuch, 99 from the “Prophets,” and 85 from the “Writings.” Roger Nicole, “Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament,” Bernard Ramm, et. al., *Hermeneutics*, p. 43.

²¹⁰ Cf. the usual terminology, “It is written,” (γέγραπται, perf.), “It [stands] written [with undiminishing authority]. For “Scripture saith,” see Rom. 9:17.

²¹¹ Cf. Gal. 4:4–5 and to Heb. 10:1, which refers to the Law as having a “shadow” (Σκιάν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν), or dim outline, sketch of gospel realities. Apart from their fulfillment in the New or Gospel Covenant, the Old Testament Scriptures would become truncated into an exclusive, legalistic, self-righteous system of rituals and works—and that is exactly what occurred in Judaism.

completion of the New Testament canon. *Thus, not all hermeneutical principles pertaining to the Old Testament might fully be applicable to the New.*

- That the New Testament writers were likewise inspired by the Spirit of God in their writing, including their use of the Old Testament Scriptures (Jn. 15:26–27; 16:12–13; 1 Cor. 2:12–13; 2 Pet. 3:15–16).
- That the New Testament, as the finality of the inscripturated Word of God to man, brought added revelation of the truth (Jn. 16:13), and even shed much light on the Old Testament Scriptures,²¹² their symbols, types²¹³ and prophecies. Thus, some hermeneutical principles might be different from or advance beyond those of the Old Testament exegesis of our Lord and the New Testament writers.²¹⁴

Therefore, the hermeneutic of our Lord and the inspired Apostles, as it pertained only to the Old Testament (which was preparatory and anticipatory in nature) and not to the New Testament (which is culminative and characterized by finality), which was either yet to be written or only in the process of being written, would prove inadequate for the modern interpreter.

Further, they stressed certain prophecies and issues to credential the gospel fulfillment of the Person, redemptive work and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so do not provide an adequate or inclusive hermeneutic which would also pertain to the New Testament.

²¹² E.g., Gen. 22 with Heb. 11:17–19, where the Spirit reveals Abraham's inner thoughts and faith. E.g., Psa. 16:8–10 with Acts 2:25–31, in which David prophesied of the resurrection of our Lord.

²¹³ E.g., the Tabernacle, priesthood and offerings all pointed to the person and redemptive work of our Lord, as made clear in the Gospel records and especially in Hebrews.

²¹⁴ This is why it is untenable to construct a complete and inclusive hermeneutic from the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, even by our Lord and the inspired writers. They were not interpreting the completed, inscripturated Divine revelation.

Texts, Allusions, References, Quotations and Use

How did the New Testament writers, under Divine inspiration, use the Old Testament Scriptures? The answer is that they used them in the following manner:

- Direct quotations, from either the Hebrew text or the LXX.
- The LXX is often substituted for the Hebrew reading, with the peculiarities of the LXX.²¹⁵ At times either the Hebrew text is slightly modified for emphasis, or the LXX receives the same type of modification.²¹⁶
- Indirect quotations, paraphrases or allusions to either the Hebrew or the LXX, at times giving meaning or a added significance to the original writer's intention.

Note: E.g., Matt. 2:15 as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Hos. 11:1, "...out of Egypt have I called my son." E.g., Paul's use of the ox treading out the corn (Deut. 25:1) as having a greater and necessary application for preachers of the gospel (1 Cor. 9:9–12). E.g., also Paul's use of Sarah and Hagar as an allegory in his arguments against the legalists in Gal. 4:21–31.

Cf. Rom. 10:6–8, where Paul quotes from the LXX the words of Moses in Dt. 30:11–14, ascribing these statements to "the 'of faith' righteousness" (ἡ δὲ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη οὕτως λέγει...), which is personified as describing itself. He adds references in the form of phrases concerning the incarnation, humiliation and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to make a clear and unmistakable gospel or New Covenant statement.

Some hold that, as Paul does not attribute the words to Moses, he is not actually quoting Scripture, but statements that had become proverbial for impossibilities.

²¹⁵ E.g., the "Great Commandment" to love God with all one's heart, soul and mind, is from the LXX, which added "mind" (Matt. 22:37). The Heb. (Deut. 6:5) reads "with all thy heart, soul and might."

²¹⁶ E.g., when quoting the LXX of Isa. 28:16, ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ μὴ καταισχυνηθῆ, Paul adds πᾶς to the statement to emph. every single one without exception, Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ' αὐτῷ οὐ καταισχυνηθήσεται.

Others think that, as he does not approach this with the usual formulas as an authoritative use of Scripture, e.g., “Scripture saith,” “Moses saith,” “It is written,” etc., he is merely accommodating the statement in a rhetorical fashion as a transition to the gospel.

Still others hold that this is a *midrash peshet*, or rabbinical commentary type of approach, which was common among the Jews of that era.

And some even think that Paul “puts Moses against Moses” and forces the passage out of context in order to insert the gospel. None of these touches the issue, and each would destroy both his credibility and that of his argument. What is the correct interpretation and answer?

The larger context is Dt. 28:1–30:20. Disobedience would ultimately result in their being taken captive out of their land and scattered among the nations. Dt. 30:1–16, the immediate context, speaks concerning the future, ultimate gathering of Israel after being scattered among the nations under Divine judgment. God will gather them back to the land, he will circumcise their hearts to love him and they will turn to him with all their heart and soul. God will then bring great blessings upon them.

This is nothing less than a prophecy of the New or Gospel Covenant and the spiritual restoration of Israel (Rom. 11:1–8, 14–15, 25–36), as it did not occur upon the return from the Babylonian Captivity and yet largely remains unfulfilled, except for a very small, elect number now being gathered. It is to this gathering and conversion that Paul must refer (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezk. 36:25–27; Rom. 11:1–2, 5, 7, 25).

The change from the plural “commandments” in the immediate context to the singular “commandment” in the passage from which Paul quotes refers specifically to the nearness or accessibility of this Divine work of righteousness within their hearts. It was not impossible; it was accessible. Thus, Paul has full biblical warrant for interpreting this of heart-obedience and response of faith, and so of “the ‘of faith’ righteousness.” Moses himself had evidently anticipated this very truth.

- Using an amalgamation of Old Testament texts to enforce a general spiritual truth.²¹⁷
- Using a conflation of texts to emphasize certain truth.²¹⁸
- Allusions in which the wording or emphasis of the Hebrew or LXX is modified for contemporary application.²¹⁹
- References specifically to Israel in the Old Testament that are applied specifically to include Gentile believers.²²⁰
- References to and applications from general principles which lay within the Old Testament Scriptures.²²¹
- In teaching, preaching,²²² debate and action, the Old Testament Scriptures were unquestionably referred to as the ultimate authority.²²³

²¹⁷ E.g., Rom. 3:9–18, where a variety of Old Testament texts and phrases are gathered to describe the inherent depravity and sinfulness of mankind.

²¹⁸ Cf. Rom. 9:30–33. The quotation in v. 33 is a conflation of Isa. 8:14 and 28:16 from the LXX, joined in such a way as to make the “stone of stumbling and rock of offence” clearly and unmistakably Messianic. Note that Peter uses these verses almost the same way, 1 Pet. 2:4, 6–8, 10. Thus Paul shows that Israel was responsible for its unbelief and failure in rejecting its promised Messiah and righteousness by faith.

²¹⁹ E.g., Eph. 6:2–3, where Paul paraphrases the Fifth Commandment, changing the wording and emph. of the LXX, and adding some wording to fit a contemporary Gentile Christian situation. Cf. also Paul’s use of the LXX with modification in Rom. 9:9 (a rather free quotation that conflates Gen. 18:10 and 18:14), 9:13 (a quotation from Mal. 1:2–3, ...καὶ ἠγάπησα τὸν Ἰακωβ... with the first three words [Τὸν Ἰακωβ ἠγάπησα...]) out of the LXX order), 9:17 (a paraphrase of Ex. 9:16).

²²⁰ E.g., Rom. 9:6–9, 23–29.

²²¹ E.g., 1 Cor. 9:1–12, Paul refers to the Mosaic Law of not muzzling the ox that threshes the grain (Deut. 25:4), stating that it was not written merely for oxen, but for New Testament preachers, who ought to live from the ministry.

²²² E.g., Acts 17:1-3, where Paul clearly preached Christ from the Old Testament Scriptures.

²²³ E.g., the inclusive practicality of the Old Testament Scriptures for the totality of life and experience (2 Tim. 3:16–17). E.g., The silence of

B. Auto-Christic Exegesis

There are several issues remaining concerning the hermeneutic of our Lord in his approach to the Old Testament Scriptures:

- It is evident that our Lord was not “accommodating” himself to the “myths and superstitions of the time” when he argued from the Scriptures or assumed their Divine inspiration and authority. This is the argument of Critical-historical-naturalistic school of radical criticism, which denies the very principle of the supernatural, and so the reality of inspiration, prophecy and miracles.²²⁴ Our Lord believed in the inspiration and absolute authority of Scripture and lived in this context.
- It is evident that our Lord at times used the very same principles that characterized Rabbinic Exegesis.

Today there is widespread agreement that both basic pillars of all four kinds of interpretation...[literal, symbolic, typological and allegorical]...were part of Jesus’ use of Scripture. That is even true of ‘literal’ exegesis! Here see Matthew 5:18; 22:3 ff. Jesus even makes use of a few scribal interpretive rules, like the much-favored reasoning from the lesser to the greater. Examples would be Matthew 7:11; Luke 12:28; John 7:23; 10:34–36).

Inference in the opposite direction, from the greater to the lesser, is also present (e.g., Mt 10:25). In other places one gets the impression that Jesus, similar to the rabbis, used a doubled proof from Scripture, adducing support from, say, the Torah and the Prophets (cf. Mt 12:3–5).

The phrase ‘again it is written’ as employed by Jesus in Matthew 4:7 points to the desire to avoid contradictions in Scripture. The common question ‘Have you not read,’ or the presupposition of ‘reading’ in Scripture, again shows Jesus’ involvement in the scribal, thoroughly methodical interpretation of his time (cf. Mt 12:3, 5; 19:4; 21:16, 42; 22:31; 24:15; Lk 10:26).

women in the Christian assembly is an absolute command, enforced by reference to “the Law” (1 Cor. 14:34–35). But where does “the Law” state this, unless it is a general reference to Gen. 3:16?

²²⁴ This school of thought is considered under “Rationalistic Exegesis.”

Especially weighty is the observation that Jesus taught his disciples like a Jewish rabbi would teach his. In any case a portion of his sayings were consciously formed so as to be suited for memorization (Cf. Mt 6:9; 28:20; Lk 11:1ff). Someone proceeding in this fashion is thinking methodically.

To summarize: Jesus certainly prescribed no binding 'method' for his followers. But still less did he forbid them to employ methodical interpretation of Scripture. He rather encouraged them by the example of his earthly activity to regard Scripture in a methodical-didactic manner.²²⁵

There are two possible reasons for this. First, some of these principles were essentially valid when used consistently. Second, he was arguing against them on their own terms and refuting their exegesis of Scripture.

It would be erroneous, however, if not blasphemous, to categorize our Lord as simply belonging to either the school of Hillel or the school of Shammai in his interpretation of Scripture. There was an enormous difference between our Lord and the scribal scholars. He was expounding his own Word with clarity and inherent personal authority; they were wandering in the labyrinth of rabbinical speculation.²²⁶

- Our Lord's interpretation was ultimately based on the *usus loquendi* and did not seek any "deeper or different meaning" as did rabbinic and Alexandrian allegorization.
- Our Lord's hermeneutic possessed some marked contrasts to that of the Scribes. First, he pointed to Abraham and his personal faith as archetypal of the true religion of Israel rather than to Moses and the Law, as emphasized by the

²²⁵ Gerhard Maier, *Biblical Hermeneutics.*, p. 327.

²²⁶ Cf. Mk. 7:28, ἦν γὰρ διδάσκων αὐτοῦς ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων καὶ οὐχ ὡς οἱ γραμματεῖς αὐτῶν. Our Lord's teaching was distinctly and personally authoritative, i.e., his own force of prerogative or right was expressed in his teaching (ὡς ἐξουσίαν ἔχων). The periph. const. (ἦν...διδάσκων) reveals that such authority or prerogative was characteristic of his ministry. This was in sharp contrast to this lack in their scribes.

Rabbis.²²⁷ Second, he pointed to himself as the object of faith. Third, he exegeted the Mosaic Law and institutions in such a way as to strip them of their traditional misunderstanding and restore them to their true, spiritual nature.²²⁸

- Our Lord's hermeneutical role was not complete, but rather seminal, as the subsequent Apostles, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, would be led unto all truth (Jn. 16:13).

C. Apostolic Exegesis

Apostolic exegesis naturally and logically followed that of our Lord, and exhibits the same characteristics. As our Lord:

- They possessed the inspiration and leadership of the Holy Spirit. Although our Lord was the eternal Son of God incarnate, he was also a man, and as the promised Messiah, was full of the Holy Spirit—and accomplished his earthly ministry in this context (Isa. 61:1ff; Matt. 3:16–4:1; Jn. 3:34; Acts 10:38).
- They held the Old Testament Scriptures to be the very Word of God with full authority. Their use was under Divine inspiration and any departures from the Hebrew or Greek text must be carefully considered in this context.
- They, through the inspiration of the Spirit, built upon the teaching of our Lord through their preaching, teaching and writings.
- They taught against and refuted the Rabbinical and Alexandrian tendencies—obscuration, substitution, tradition, misinterpretation—of the Scriptures.
- Although dealing with symbols, types and allegories from the Old Testament Scriptures, they always assumed the *usus loquendi* and its significance. They did not indulge in

²²⁷ Cf. Gerald Bray, *Op. cit.*, p. 62.

²²⁸ E.g., Matt. 5:15ff. The traditional rabbinical view was that the only overt act was sinful. Our Lord taught that sin began in the heart with a wrong motive, and thus everything that led up to the overt act was likewise sinful.

Rabbinic speculations or the spiritualization and allegorizing of the Scriptures.²²⁹

D. Lessons and Cautions

What lessons or cautions may be gathered from the exegesis and interpretation of our Lord and the inspired New Testament writers?

- Both our Lord and the inspired writers stayed close to the *usus loquendi*, and built their interpretation and application from it. Even if they dealt with symbols, types and prophecies, they built upon the literal meaning of the text.
- An adequate and inclusive hermeneutic probably cannot be founded in exegesis and interpretation which dealt solely with the Old Testament Scriptures, due to their preparatory nature and incomplete content.²³⁰ The statement of Roger Nicole is pertinent: “It would probably be hazardous to assert that the way in which the New Testament interpreted the particular passages from the Old Testament was meant to be the norm for all Biblical exegesis.” Further, the Apostles were essentially and necessarily Christological or Christocentric in their approach to the Old Testament, as they were primarily engaged in preaching the gospel or evangelizing, not in giving a detailed exegesis of the Old Testament.²³¹
- These writers spoke and wrote under Divine inspiration, and therefore their otherwise questionable use of Scripture must be accepted. We do not have the infallibility to approach the Scriptures the same way they did—by an immediate, infallible inspiration. We might simply substitute subjectivism, presumption and speculation for inspiration.

²²⁹ Paul uses the allegory of Sarah and Hagar in Gal. 4:21–31 simply to illustrate a truth, not to establish or teach it, and further, clearly introduces it as an allegory.

²³⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 47–48.

²³¹ Even Luther’s Christological or Christocentric interpretation of the Old Testament turned to allegory at times, as he sought to find Christ where he was not by a forced and illegitimate typology. See “Reformation Exegesis.”

- The New Testament era was an era of transition until the completion of the scriptural canon and thus, the “maturity” of Christianity. There was still a need for such revelatory gifts as tongues, prophecy and supernatural knowledge. Christianity was still in its “immature stage,” as Paul himself states in 1 Cor. 13:8–13:

Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity.

The issue is not directly the completion of the scriptural canon, but the existence of revelatory gifts due to the imperfect or immature (νήπιος, infant) state of Christianity. When it reached maturity (ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον), then such gifts would become needless, as Paul illustrates with reference to the contrasting states of childhood and adulthood.

Thus, any hermeneutic pertaining to this era might well become inadequate in some aspects for a hermeneutic which embraces both Old and New Testaments.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by “Auto-Christic Exegesis”?
2. How did our Lord answer the devil in his wilderness temptation? In what ways is this exemplary for us?
3. What is the meaning of our Lord’s statement that he came to fulfill the Law? What was the “jot” and “tittle” that our Lord referred to?
4. What examples of our Lord’s interpretation are found in Matthew 5? How did he differ from traditional Jewish interpretation? How did he correct their misinterpretation?

5. Did our Lord at times use the Jewish approach to interpretation to confuse and defeat them on their own principles? Explain.
6. What presuppositions are to govern the use of the Old Testament in the New Testament?
7. Why is our Lord's use of Scripture and the Apostles' use of Scripture insufficient for us in our day? Why would it at times prove dangerous or presumptive?
8. How did our Lord and the inspired Apostles use the Old Testament when they quoted or referred to it in the New Testament? Explain the various ways.
9. Did our Lord and the Apostles use the Hebrew or Greek Old Testament [LXX]? Or did they use both? As the LXX is a translation which differs from the Hebrew in many places, how can one explain such a use?
10. What examples can be given in the writings of the Apostle Paul which illustrate the inspired use of the Old Testament in the New?
11. Explain the approach of Paul in Romans 9:30–33 and Peter in 1 Peter 2:4, 6–8; and their conflation of Isaiah 18:14 and 28:16.
12. What is the significance of 1 Corinthians 13:8–13 in relation to the completion of the scriptural canon and the beginnings of Christianity?

VI

Patristic Exegesis

John 16:13–15. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.²³²

²³² ὁδηγήσει ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ πάσῃ. “guide, teach, instruct, lead you into all truth.” As there was no “Apostolic Succession” of church officers, so there was no “Apostolic Succession” of correct and infallible biblical interpretation. The Scriptures, although Divinely inspired and infallible, are yet subject to misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

Mark 7: 13. ...Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition...²³³

Colossians 2:8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ...²³⁴

A. The Significance of The Patristic Era

The Patristic Era refers to the age of the Church Fathers,²³⁵ Christian writers who lived and wrote during the first eight centuries of the Christian Era, extending from the generation which followed the inspired Apostles to John of Damascus (c. 675–754).²³⁶

Note: The term “Church Father” (Gk. Πατήρ, Lat. *Pater*), originated from the early custom of transferring the concept of “father” to spiritual or ecclesiastical relationships and was used for teachers, priests and bishops. Such terminology arose with the development of ecclesiasticism and sacerdotalism. The Church of Rome did not recognize all the Church Fathers as equally authoritative:

...the Roman church excludes a Tertullian for his Montanism, an Origen for his Platonic and idealistic views, a Eusebius for his semi-Arianism, also Clement of Alexandria, Lactantius, Theodoret, and other distinguished divines, from the list of “Fathers” (*Patres*), and designates them merely “Ecclesiastical Writers” (*Scriptores Ecclesiastici*).

²³³ As the Rabbis substituted their own traditional teachings for the truth of God, so did the Patristic writers, adopting the allegorical approach, obscuring the truth of God and substituting both fanciful speculation and church authority.

²³⁴ It was in seeking to defend Christianity against Greek philosophy and Gnostic heresy, that the Old Testament and then the New Testament were subjected to the allegoristic approach by the Apologists. They began by seeking to make the Old Testament a “Christian book,” reading into it an extreme Christology and confusing typology with allegory.

²³⁵ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, II, p. 627.

²³⁶ The most helpful and available works for a detailed study of the history and character of Patristic Exegesis are: Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 77–128; F. W. Farrar, *The History of Interpretation*, pp. 161–242; Donald K. McKim, *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, pp. 1–73; and Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, pp. 629–660

During this era Christianity was transformed from a persecuted sect [*religio illicita*] to the dominant religion of the Empire. This era was predominantly characterized by:

- State persecution during the first three centuries—the preeminent age of the martyrs.
- The influence and controversies over various errors and heresies: (1) Trinitarian, e.g., Modalistic and Dynamic Monarchianism, Patripassianism, Sabellianism, (2) Christological errors and heresies: Arianism, Apollonarianism, Monophysitism, Monothelitism and Nestorianism, and (3) Pneumatological errors and heresies: Macedonianism or Pneumatomachianism (4) The errors and heresies of Gnosticism, Ebionism, and Manichaeism.
- The necessary development of a theology and theological vocabulary.
- The challenge of Christian thought to Greek philosophy.
- The rise of ecclesiasticism and sacerdotalism, which culminated in the “Constantinian Change” (c. 313).
- The separation of churches (Montanists, Novatians and Donatists) seeking to maintain primitive distinctives and discipline from the dominant “Catholic” party.
- The seven great Ecumenical Church Councils and other lesser councils and synods.²³⁷
- The final recognition of the scriptural canon (c. 350–381).
- The rise of monasticism (c. 350–).

²³⁷ The Council of Arles (314), at which Constantine sat as “Christian Emperor”; the Council of Nicea (325), which condemned Arianism and formulated the Nicene Creed; the Council of Constantinople (381), which condemned Apollonarianism; the Council of Hippo (381), which finalized the canon of Scripture; the Council of Ephesus (431), and Nestorianism Controversy; the Council of Chalcedon (451), defined the relation between the two natures of Christ; the Second Council of Constantinople (553) and Monophysite Controversy; the Third Council of Constantinople (680), and the Monothelite Controversy; the Second Council of Nicea (787), and Iconoclastic Controversy.

- The attempt to develop a biblical hermeneutic.

Thus, it was an era of persecution, external and internal controversy, doctrinal definition and the need to finalize the canon of Scripture and its interpretation to deal with such issues.

B. The Chronology of The Patristic Era

This era may be considered from several different perspectives: chronologically, linguistically, logically and hermeneutically:

- *Chronologically*, the first great Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325 forms the common focal-point. The Church Fathers are properly classified as Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers, according to the relation of their lives and writings to this first Ecumenical Council.
- *Linguistically*, the Fathers may be classified as Greek Fathers or Latin Fathers. The first Church Fathers wrote in Greek.

The first of the great Latin Fathers was Tertullian (*Quintus Septemius Florens Tertullianus*, c.160–220). The transition from Greek to Latin was completed during these first three centuries, although Greek would continue as the language of the Eastern or Orthodox Church. The long line of Latin Fathers in the West extended to Gregory the Great (Pope Gregory I, d. 604) and the Greek Fathers in the East to John of Damascus (d. 754).

- *Logically*, There are four distinct periods that trace the literary development of the Patristic Era: (1) The edificatory period of the Apostolic Fathers. (2) The apologetic period. (3) The polemical period. (4) The scientific period and the predominance of the Alexandrian school.²³⁸
- *Hermeneutically*, this era can be divided into four general stages²³⁹: (1) the initial stage, extending from the Apostolic Era to about 200 AD. (2) the Origenistic stage, from about 200 AD

²³⁸ A. H. Newman, *A Manual of Church History*, I, pp. 212–214, 237–239, 271–272.

²³⁹ Cf. Gerald Bray, *Op. cit.*, pp. 78–79.

to the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. (3) the Conciliar stage, from the Council of Nicea, 325 AD, to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. (4) The Final stage, or from the Council of Chalcedon to Gregory the Great (c. 590–604 AD).

C. A Hermeneutical Survey of The Patristic Era

There are four very general exegetical or hermeneutical phases discernable during the Patristic Era, as noted above. Our survey of Patristic Exegesis will follow this general outline.

The Initial Stage of Patristic Exegesis (C. 90–200)

This initial stage or era began in the first century at the close of the Apostolic Era²⁴⁰ and continued to about 200.

The Apostolic Fathers and Early Christian Writings (c. 95–160)

This was the age of the “Apostolic Fathers,” who formed the earliest group of Christian writers apart from and after the inspired Apostles. The name refers to the sub-apostolic or post-apostolic, non-canonical writers of the late first and early second centuries (c. 90–160). These were the leaders, teachers and writers who had direct contact with and were taught by the inspired Apostles themselves.

The writings of the Apostolic Fathers are characterized by pastoral concerns, primitive zeal, piety and love. They were concerned with the practical matters of faith and life rather than theological disputes or philosophical speculation.

The Apostolic Fathers include: Clement of Rome (*Titus Flavius Clemens*, c. 30–100), Ignatius of Antioch (*Ignatius Theophorus*) (d. 117), Polycarp of Smyrna (c. 69–160), Papias (c. 60–130), Hermas (c. 90–140), “Barnabas,” unknown only through his *Epistle of Barnabas*, (c. 90–140), the unknown author of *The Epistle to Diognetus*, *The Didache*, or “The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles” (Dating varies from 70–165) and Sixtus of Rome (c. 119–128).

²⁴⁰ All of the Apostles except John, died by martyrdom during the Neronian persecution (c. 64–68 AD). John lived to approximately 100 AD, and the Apostolic Era officially closed at that time.

The Early Apologists (c. 150–200)

The term “Apologist” denotes one who defends a certain position.²⁴¹ The Apologists were Christian writers of the second and third centuries (c. 120–220) who sought to defend the Christian faith against misrepresentation and attack by Judaism, Gnosticism²⁴² and paganism.

These were men of higher learning and culture than the earlier Apostolic Fathers. Most of these writers were either philosophers or rhetoricians by training. The Apologists were more theological, systematic and philosophical than their forebears in the faith, although they manifested the same fervent spirit and earnestness.

They naturally accommodated the form, method and terminology of their pagan contemporaries and used it to defend the Christian faith. It is with these writers that Greek philosophy began to insert its influence into Christian thought. Some apologies were intellectual appeals for toleration addressed to Roman Emperors and rulers; others were sustained arguments, addressed to pagan philosophers or Judaistic writers in answer to their arguments against Christianity.

They demonstrated that Christianity was the oldest religion in the history of the world, and that it was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. This approach gave a centrality to the Old Testament, which was largely interpreted allegorically.

Thus, the wholesale Christian allegorization of Scripture began about the middle of the second century with the Apologists, who faced the challenge of Greek philosophy and sought to answer it from an allegorization of the Old Testament (to make it a “Christian” book). By the early third century the same allegorizing principles were applied to the New Testament by the Polemicists.

The Apologists include: Justin Martyr (*Flavius Justinus*) of Samaria (c. 100–165), Quadratus, Bishop of Athens (c. 117–138),

²⁴¹ The term “apology” derived from the Gk. ἀπολογία, to speak from a certain position, and so defend it, a verbal defense, and so *Apologetic*.

²⁴² Marcion the Gnostic was the first radical biblical critic. He disavowed the entire Old Testament, and refused to acknowledge any of the New Testament, except Luke’s Gospel and ten of the Pauline epistles.

Aristides of Athens (c. 138–161), Aristo of Pella (c. 140), Tatian of Assyria (c. 110–172), Athenagoras of Athens (c. 161–180), Theophilus of Antioch (d. 190), Melito of Sardis (d. 190), Apollinarius (*Claudius Apollinaris*) of Hierapolis in Phrygia (c. 160–180), Hermias the philosopher (c.160–200), Miltiades (c. 150–200), Hegesippus (c. 180), Minucius Felix (?) and Dionysius of Corinth (c. 180).

The Earlier Polemicists (c. 180–200)

The Polemicists were the writers of the late second and third centuries who refuted the heresies of pseudo-Christianity.²⁴³ As the Apologists defended the faith against attacks from without Christianity, the Polemicists defended the truth from within the ranks of professing Christianity and largely wrote against the heresy of Gnosticism.

Note: The term “Gnosticism” derived from the Gk. γνῶσις [*gnosis*], or “knowledge” that allegedly derived from direct Divine revelation. As a syncretic religio-philosophical system, it substituted an esoteric knowledge for faith, and sought to transform the truth of Christianity into a religious philosophy and mystic wisdom. The beginning of the Christian era was a time of religious and intellectual ferment, with various systems vying for the increasing void left by the old pagan religions. Gnosticism and Biblical Christianity were the major contenders.

Schaff describes Gnosticism as follows:

Gnosticism is...the grandest and most comprehensive form of speculative religious syncretism known to history. It consists of Oriental mysticism, Greek philosophy, Alexandrian, Philonic, and Cabalistic Judaism, and Christian ideas of salvation, not merely mechanically complied, but, as it were, chemically combined...Gnosticism is a heretical philosophy of religion, or, more exactly, a mythological theosophy, which reflects intellectually the peculiar, fermenting state of that remarkable age of transition from the heathen to the Christian order of things.²⁴⁴

Latourette adds a word about its infiltration into Christianity:

²⁴³ *Polemics*, the study of doctrinal differences and controversies, derives from the Greek noun πόλεμος, “war,” or the adjective πολέμικος, “war-like,” and so “war, battle, combat, quarrel, or dispute.”

²⁴⁴ Philip Schaff, *Op. cit.*, pp. 448–450.

When combined with elements of Christianity, Gnosticism proved so attractive that, while no accurate figures are obtainable, the suggestion has been made that for a time the majority of those who regarded themselves as Christians adhered to one or another of its many forms.²⁴⁵

With the polemicists began the development of a systematic or dogmatic theology. The Apologists were generally individuals who were converted from heathenism and had a background in philosophy; the polemicists were generally individuals who had grown up within Christianity and thus were more refined and less crude or rudimentary in their doctrinal statements. Among the Ante-Nicene Fathers there are those who may be classified variously as apologists or polemicists because of the varied nature of their writings.²⁴⁶

The Gnostics and others within the ranks of professing Christianity repudiated the Old Testament, making the New Testament and its teachings the center of controversy. This centrality of the New Testament, and the Gnostic tendencies toward allegorizing Scripture, caused some of the Polemicists to recognize the evils of the allegorical method of interpretation, although this method would continue to exist and exert a great influence in Christian thought.

The Earlier Polemicists include: Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (c. 115–202), Hippolytus (c. 170–236) and Tertullian (*Quintus Septemius Florens Tertullianus*) (c.160–220), the first Latin Father.

Hermeneutical Development

From the relatively homiletical and pastoral writings of the Apostolic Fathers, to the more philosophical and theological writings of the later Apologists and Polemicists, Hermeneutics and exegesis demonstrated a gradual trend toward allegorization, first, of the Old Testament, which was studied and defended from the

²⁴⁵ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, p. 123.

²⁴⁶ E.g., Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Cyprian, etc.

LXX,²⁴⁷ and then of the New Testament in order to defend Christianity against its religious and intellectual opponents.

There was an early confusion of allegorism with typology, and a great amount of irrational eisegesis.²⁴⁸ Terry points to the probable reason for the irrational trend toward allegorism:

The Church of this early period was too much engaged in struggles for life to develop an accurate or scientific interpretation of Scripture...the tone and style of the earlier writers were apologetical and polemical rather than exegetical...In the hurry and pressure of exciting times men take readily what first comes to hand, or serves an immediate purpose, and it was very natural that many early Christian writers should make use of methods of Scripture interpretation which were widely prevalent at the time.²⁴⁹

This would explain the often undisciplined and wholesale use of Rabbinic and Alexandrian approaches by these early Fathers.

Hermeneutical Examples

Farrar points to the first instance of Allegorizing in the Patristic writings:

...Clement of Rome [c.90–100]. This ancient bishop...is the first...who endows Rahab with the gift of prophecy, because by the scarlet cord hung out of her window she made it manifest that redemption should flow by the blood of the Lord to all them that believe and hope in God. As the pictorial fancy of a preacher, such an illustration would be harmless; but when it is offered as the explanation of an actual prophecy it is the earliest instance of

²⁴⁷ The earlier Church Fathers, with the exception of Melito of Sardis and Origen, had no knowledge of Hebrew, and so depended wholly on the LXX, and often the Apocrypha, when interpreting the Old Testament.

²⁴⁸ The misinterpretation of a Greek word in Ps. xcii. 12, 'The righteous shall flourish as a palm tree,' led the Fathers into an unfortunate argument. They mistook the word φοῖνιξ, 'a palm tree,' to mean "a Phoenix," and accepting all the ancient fables about the Indian bird, they quoted the verse as a proof of the Resurrection and the Virgin Birth of Christ. F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

²⁴⁹ Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, pp. 630–631.

the overstrained Allegory, which was afterwards to affect the whole life of Christian exegesis.²⁵⁰

The Epistle of Barnabas used extensive allegorizing, seeking to spiritualize anything that favored Judaism, although its method was often Rabbinic [Kabbalistic] or Alexandrian! Farrar gives many examples, of which the following are but four:

'He shall be as a tree planted by the waters,' indicates both baptism and the cross. "His leaf also shall not wither," means that "every word proceeding out of your mouth in faith and love shall tend to bring conversion and hope to many." Among the prophecies of the cross, Barnabas is the first of the Fathers to quote the apocryphal verse, "And the Lord saith, When a tree shall be hewn down and shall again rise, and when blood shall flow out of wood."

...Barnabas is the earliest Christian writer who based the notion that the world was to last six thousand years upon the six days of creation, and the Psalmist's expression, 'One day is with the Lord as a thousand years.' In this fantastic inference he is followed by Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Lactantius, Hilary, Jerome and many others.²⁵¹

The Origenistic Stage of Patristic Exegesis (c. 200–325)

This stage or era extends from the rise and influence of Origen and the Catechetical School at Alexandria to the Council of Nicea. During this era biblical interpretation and exegesis were largely dominated by the genius and influence of Origen (c. 185–254),²⁵² the most prolific author of this age (over 6,000 works), and marks the beginning of the Christian attempt to scientifically interpret the Scriptures.

Christian Alexandrian exegesis, with its background in Greek and Philonic allegorism, dates from the Christian Catechetical School under Pantaenus, a converted Stoic, Clement of Alexandria (c. 155–220), and his disciple and successor, Origen (c. 155–254).

²⁵⁰ F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 166.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 169–170.

²⁵² Origen was the first scientific biblical textual critic, interpreter and commentator. He authored over 6,000 works.

Hermeneutical Examples from Clement

Clement taught at least five possible meanings in any given passage: (1) The *historical* sense, or actual and literal. (2) The *doctrinal* sense, or moral, religious and theological. (3) The *prophetic* sense, or prophetic and typological. (4) The *philosophical* sense, or finding meaning in natural objects and historical persons, following the psychological method of the Stoics. (5) The *mystical* sense, or the symbolism of deeper truths. An example of Clement's approach to Scripture is noted in the following:

...[Clement] commenting on the Mosaic prohibition of eating the swine, the hawk, the eagle, and the raven, observes: 'The sow is the emblem of voluptuous and unclean lust of food...The eagle indicates robbery, the hawk injustice, and the raven greed.'...Clement of Alexandria maintained that the laws of Moses contain a four-fold significance, the natural, the mystical, the moral, and the prophetic.²⁵³

Hermeneutical Examples from Origen

Although Origen was "the father of the grammatical as well as of allegoric exegesis,"²⁵⁴ he held that, as the nature of man is composed of body, soul and spirit, so the Scriptures possess a corresponding three-fold sense: the literal, the moral and the spiritual. He spent very little time concerned for the literal or moral and devoted himself almost exclusively to the spiritual [allegorical].

He was not sufficiently acquainted with the laws of Hebrew parallelism to prevent him from drawing mystic inferences from synonyms and repetitions. Thus he thinks that there is a mystery in the repetition of the word 'God' in 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob;' and that the expression 'Rebecca was a virgin, neither had any man known her' (Gen. xxiv:16), must mean that Christ is the husband of the

²⁵³ Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, pp. 163–164.

²⁵⁴ The School at Antioch, no less than that of Alexandria, owed its origin to the mighty impulse which the Christian world received from his labours, but unhappily for the cause of sound learning the School of Antioch was crushed by charges of heresy, and the allegorical tendencies of the School of Alexandria prevailed. F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 189.

soul when it is converted, and that Satan becomes the husband of the soul when it falls away....

When we are told that Rebecca comes to draw water at the well and so meets the servant of Abraham, the meaning is...that we must daily come to the wells of Scripture in order to meet with Christ. He thinks that there is a contradiction because in Ex. 1:5 the midwives are not said to have killed the female children as well as to have saved the male children...he explains the female children to mean carnal affections, and the male children the reasonable sense and intellectual spirit. So that when men live their life in pleasure Pharaoh is killing the males in them and preserving the females.²⁵⁵

The Conciliar Stage of Patristic Exegesis (c. 325–451)

The Alexandrian School vs. The Antiochene School

During this era, the opposing schools of biblical exegesis were Alexandria (allegorical) and Antioch (literal, grammatical and historical). The Church Fathers associated with the literal, historical hermeneutic were Lucian (d. 312), Diodorus (d. 393?), Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–428) and John Chrysostom (c. 344?–407). The influence of the Antiochene School was mitigated by the greater acceptance of the allegorical approach and also various errors and heresies that caused their writings to be suppressed. Among those of the Alexandrian School was John Cassian (360–435), whose influence would be more pronounced through his writings in early medieval exegesis.²⁵⁶

The Western or Latin School

A third school of thought and exegesis, the Western [Latin or Roman], became a synthesis of the Alexandrian and Antiochene approaches, partly historico–grammatical and partly allegorical. Ambrose (d. 397), Jerome (c. 345–419) and Augustine (354–430) followed this type of hermeneutic and exegesis. Ambrose was very

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 198–199.

²⁵⁶ John Cassian was responsible for a different classification of the senses of Scripture, modifying the Origenistic and Augustinian classification, adding a fourth, the “mystagogical [mystical],” which later became most important to standard Romish interpretation. See Gerald Bray, *Op. cit.*, p. 133.

much given to allegorism, and Jerome, although condemning its tenets, reverted to it as occasion required.

Augustine

Augustine was the greatest theologian among the Church Fathers. Unlike Origen, he was unacquainted with Hebrew and very deficient in Greek, and so was mostly limited to the *Old Latin Version* that preceded Jerome's *Latin Vulgate*. He was a genius and his strength was in his mental ability, logical thought-process and breadth of thought, but his exegesis was extremely poor.

Augustine wrote a work on Homiletics and Hermeneutic, *On Christian Doctrine* (c. 397). He alone, of all the Fathers, sought to develop a theory of "signs" from Scripture.²⁵⁷

In interpretation, Augustine adopted a four-fold sense: a historical, an aetological, an analogical, and an allegorical sense. He generally followed the interpretative method of Tyconius (c. 370–400), a renegade Donatist who wrote a work, *The Book of Seven Rules* [*Liber Regularum* or *Liber de Septum Regulis*].²⁵⁸ These rules, together with those added by Augustine himself, as explained by Bray, are as follows:

1. *De Domino et corpore eius* (on the Lord and his body). This says that Scripture does not distinguish between the person of Christ and his body, which is the church...Scripture passes from one to the other without hesitation or distinction.
2. *De Domini corpore bipartito* (on the twofold body of Christ). Christ's body has two parts, both good and bad. There is no pure church, but the wheat and tares grow together until the harvest.
3. *De promissis et lege* (on the promises and the Law). This rule is intended to clarify those passages in Romans and Galatians where it seems that the Law is presented

²⁵⁷ Augustine defined a "sign" as 'a thing which over and above the impression that it makes on the senses, causes something else to come into the mind as a consequence of itself...' *On Christian Doctrine*, Book II, chap.1 (p. 535). Biblically one can see the substance of his thought in what is signified by the terms "cross," "blood," and "tongue," etc.

²⁵⁸ Gerald Bray, *Op. cit.*, pp. 90–92, 107–109.

sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. This is explained by referring to the preparatory nature of the Law; it was good in its day, but inadequate as a means of eternal salvation.

4. *De specie et genere* (on the particular and the universal). This explains that Scripture sometimes moves from the particular to the general, and *vice versa*. Thus the Old Testament prophets mention cities which are figures of the church, sometimes of the whole body of Christ, and sometimes of only a part of it... This rule is somewhat similar to Hillel's fifth rule, *Kelal upherat*, though there is no indication that Tyconius knew of it.
5. *De temporibus* (on times). This rule seeks to resolve chronological problems in Scripture by saying that sometimes a part of the time is used for the whole and *vice versa*.
6. *De recapitulatione* (on abbreviation). This explains why Scripture sometimes reduces to a single moment a concept which is much broader in reality.
7. *De diabolo et corpore eius* (on the devil and his body). This corresponds exactly to the first rule. When Scripture refers to the devil, it also includes those who belong to him, *i.e.* the wicked on this earth.

Augustine adopted Tyconius's rules and made great use of them, especially of the first, but he was also aware of their deficiencies. In an effort to make up for these, he added the following important points:

1. The authority of Scripture rests on the authority of the church. It is as the church receives the sacred text that it acquires its authority, so that books which are less universally recognized are correspondingly less authoritative.
2. The obscurities in Scripture have been put there by God, and may be interpreted on the basis of the many plain passages. This doctrine, which repeats the view of Origen in a non-allegorical context, has continued to function as a main principle of biblical exegesis up to the present time.
3. When Scripture is ambiguous, the rule of faith can be used to interpret it.

4. Figurative passages must not be taken literally. In his opinion, anything which did not seem to lead to good behaviour or true faith was 'figurative'.
5. A figure need not always have only one meaning. Meaning may vary with the context, as when the word 'shield' signifies both God's good pleasure (Ps. 5:13) and faith (Eph. 6:16). Augustine goes on to say that because a figure may have several meanings, it may be interpreted in a way which the author did not intend, but which accords with what can be found in other parts of Scripture.
6. Any possible meaning which a text can have is legitimate, whether the author realized it or not.²⁵⁹

Some of these principles were legitimate; others were very dangerous and misleading, and formed the basis for the arbitrary dominance of the Romish hierarchy over the interpretation of Scripture.

Augustine was often inconsistent with his own interpretive principles, except for those which gave him license to allegorize. He "justified the allegorical interpretation by a 'gross misinterpretation' of 2 Cor. 3:6. He made it mean that the *spiritual* or *allegorical* interpretation was the real meaning of the Bible; the *literal* interpretation kills."²⁶⁰ He was forced into such an approach by his polemic encounters with the Manichaeans and the Donatists.

Thus, he justified the use of force by the civil authorities to "compel" dissenters to return to the Catholic Church by interpreting the Parable of the Great Supper to "The Church" (Cf. Lk. 14:16–24, esp. v. 23). Bray gives an example of Augustine's interpretation from his comments on the Feeding of the Five Thousand:

Augustine starts off by saying that miracles are intended to remind us that the whole universe is miraculous, and that God's providential ordering of the created order is a far greater miracle than merely feeding 5,000 people with five loaves and two small fishes.

The story itself contains a wealth of detail which is meant to point us to Christ. The fact that he is on the mountain reminds us that the Word is on high. The five loaves are the Pentateuch, and

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

they are of barley because barley is hard to extract from its covering of chaff, just as the spiritual message of the Old Testament is hard to discern under the layer of outward symbolism.

The little boy represents Israel, which possessed the divine nourishment but did not feed on it. The 5,000 stand for Israel under the law; they recline on the grass because their thoughts are carnal, and all flesh is grass. The twelve baskets of leftovers were the many teachings which the people could not receive. They were entrusted to the apostles, whose duty it would be to nourish the people with them at a later date.²⁶¹

In another example, Bray comments on Augustine's allegorizing simply because he was unfamiliar with Jewish custom:

Exodus 23:19, 'Do not boil a kid in its mother's milk.' Augustine regarded this verse as an allegory, because to him the literal sense was absurd, and unworthy of Scripture. He believed that it was a veiled prophecy that Christ would not perish in the slaughter of the innocents at Bethlehem (Matt. 2:16).²⁶²

Augustine's great influence would give impetus to the allegorical approach and church authority in biblical interpretation throughout the following Scholastic Era to the time of the Renaissance and Reformation.

The Final Stage of Patristic Exegesis (c. 451–604)

This was the least productive age among the patristic writers. The complete canon of Scripture was recognized, but it had become fashionable to quote largely from the earlier Church Fathers. At the Fifth Ecumenical Council [Second Council of Constantinople, 553], several of the early Church Fathers were condemned for heresy, including some from the Alexandrian School and also of the Antiochene School. This era logically ends with Gregory the Great (d. 604), who emphasized a moral allegorizing of the Scriptures.

D. Lessons and Cautions

The Patristic Era witnessed both the retention of Rabbinic absurdities and Allegorical fancies, and the development of a

²⁶¹ Gerald Bray, *Loc. cit.*

²⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 153.

subjective, arbitrary approach that would remain essentially the same until the Renaissance and Reformation. The lessons and cautions are:

1. Although the Scriptures are Divinely inspired and infallible, they are not Divinely protected from misunderstanding and misinterpretation. There is a great human responsibility to remain faithful to a literal [historico–grammatical] interpretation.
2. Men necessarily proceed to interpret the Bible from their presuppositions. We must be absolutely certain that our presuppositions are in accord with consistent Christian Theism.
3. The very best of traditions may be a very poor guide and can be exceedingly dangerous in the interpretation of Scripture.
4. Great men are not necessarily correct or consistent in their approach to Scripture. Great men have been and can be greatly mistaken.
5. Men may be great and astute in their theology, but in error in their interpretation of the very Scriptures which ought to form the basis for their theology.
6. A working knowledge of the Original Languages and legitimate Biblical Criticism is essential for adequately comprehending the Scriptures. Translations or versions are not adequate, and are misleading if we attribute to them what belongs only to the Scriptures in the Original Languages.
7. A reactionary hermeneutic is a dangerous hermeneutic. Our hermeneutic must be governed by faithfulness to the Word, not by the ignorance or error of our opponents.
8. We must never confuse application with interpretation or allegory with typology.
9. We must strive to be consistent with proper hermeneutical principles. Our inconsistency nullifies the very best and most consistent of principles.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by “Patristic Exegesis”? Explain in terms of its methodology, history and influence.
2. What are the various stages and designations of the Church Fathers?
3. Why did the Patristic writers adopt the allegorical approach to the interpretation of Scripture? Explain the reasons and historical process.
4. What were the major errors and heresies of the Patristic Era?
5. What were the major Church Councils of the Patristic Era? What led to the convening of each Council?
6. What is the first discernable, recorded instance of allegorizing among the early Church Fathers? Can this be seen as a confusion of interpretation with application? Is this a graphic illustration of the danger of confusing the two? Explain.
7. What is Gnosticism? What influence did it exert upon early Christianity? How did it affect biblical interpretation?
8. What was the influence of Origen and the Alexandrian school of interpretation? Explain its predominance in the thinking of early Christianity.
9. What school or schools opposed the allegorical approach? Why did these schools lose their influence?
10. What was the influence of Augustine in early Christianity and theology?
11. What was Augustine’s influence in the area of biblical interpretation? How did his lack of skill in the biblical languages influence his exegesis?
12. What is the significance of the following statement: “Although the Scriptures are Divinely inspired and infallible, they are not Divinely protected from misunderstanding and misinterpretation.” How does this relate to the necessity of a consistent hermeneutic?
13. What is meant by the statement that all men think presuppositionally? How does this relate to creation?

To fallen, sinful mankind? To the science and art of Hermeneutics?

14. Why is a reactionary hermeneutic a very dangerous hermeneutic?
15. Why is it very dangerous and misleading to confuse application with interpretation?

VII

Medieval Exegesis

Mark 7:13. ...Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition...²⁶³

Colossians 2:8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ...

Note: The scholastic writers of the middle and late Middle Ages adopted a philosophical approach to Scripture and theology, in addition to the inherited and accepted four-fold interpretation of Scripture.

1 Tim. 1:5–7. Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: from which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

1 Timothy 6:20–21. ...keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith...

A. The Characteristics of The Medieval Era

The Medieval Era or the Middle Ages extended from Gregory the Great (d. 604) to the Era of Renaissance and Reformation (c. 1500). It signaled the end of the Patristic Era, included the rise of monasticism, the rise and intrusion of Islam into Europe, the “Dark Ages,” serfdom, the establishment of the universities, the Southern or Italian and later Northern Renaissance, and culminated at the Sixteenth Century Reformation.

²⁶³ As the Rabbis substituted their own traditional teachings for the truth of God, so did the Medieval writers, continuing the allegorical approach inherited from the Patristic writers, obscuring the truth of God and substituting both fanciful speculation and church authority.

This age was characterized by the rule of the State Church over kingdoms, society, morals and science—a rule enforced largely by the allegorical and arbitrary use of Scripture. This age was also largely characterized by ignorance of the Scriptures, even among the clergy; moral laxity, religious tradition and oppression; the “Great Schism” of 1059, the rise of scholasticism, and finally the beginnings of religious reformation.

Exegetically and hermeneutically, the *Latin Vulgate* was considered inspired Scripture, and, with very few exceptions, Hebrew and Greek were forgotten until almost the close of this era. Thus, little advance was made, as most religious writings were simply the restatement or compilation of the early Church Fathers:

...and it became an established principle that the interpretation of the Bible had to adapt itself to tradition and to the doctrine of the Church....not a single new hermeneutical principle was developed at this time, and exegesis was bound hand and foot by traditional lore and by the authority of the Church.²⁶⁴

There are traces of three different approaches in this era: the traditional, which followed the authority and writings of the church; the allegorical, which was the most predominant; and the historical, which was the least influential, but was the beginning of a return to the literal sense, and came largely from association with medieval Jewish exegetes.

B. A Chronology of The Medieval Era

There are four general, discernable periods²⁶⁵ within the time-frame of the Middle Ages:

- *From 604–800.* The “Dark Ages,” or time of transition from the ancient world, which actually began with the fall of Rome in 476. The Eastern or Byzantine Empire continued to exist, as did the Greek-speaking Eastern [Orthodox] Church. This was the era known as the “Dark Ages” because of the low standard of learning and true intellectual activity.

²⁶⁴ Louis Berkhof, *Op. cit.*, pp. 23–24.

²⁶⁵ This division is appropriated from Gerald Bray, *Op. cit.*, pp. 131–133.

The works of Junilius (c. 550), largely borrowed from Theodore of Mopsuestia, were influential in maintaining some interest in literal interpretation. Isidore of Seville (d. 636) wrote an encyclopedia that became a standard reference work. Aldhelm of Malmesbury (c. 640–709) was influenced by Junilius towards the literal interpretation of Scripture.

- *From 800–1150.* The Early Middle Ages, which witnessed the establishment of monasteries and the first theological schools. The “Great Schism” between the Western and Eastern [Latin and Greek] State Churches occurred in 1059. The first Crusades were sent to Jerusalem to fight against the Mohammedan inhabitants of Jerusalem and Palestine.

John Scotus Eriugena (d. c. 877), with his acquaintance of Greek, found contradictions among the writings of the Church Fathers, and held them to be lower than Scripture. Remigius of Auxerre (d. 908), through his knowledge of Hebrew and Greek, became the first biblical scholar of the Medieval Era.

Guibert of Nogent (1053–1124) sought to promote the literal meaning of Scripture. Hugo of St. Victor (c. 1096–1141) founded a tradition of scholarship [“Victorines”] that emphasized the literal sense of Scripture.²⁶⁶ Peter Abelard (1079–1142) developed a distinction between the subject-matter [*materia*] of a text and its intention [*sensus*], which brought the figurative within the scope of the literal sense of Scripture.

In this era the *Glossa Ordinaria* was written by Anselm (d. 1117) and Ralph of Laon (d. c. 1134), giving the comments of the Church Fathers upon passages of Scripture.

²⁶⁶ Hugo and others, however, did not hold exclusively to the literal sense. Hugo himself said, “Learn first what you should believe, and then go to the Bible to find it there.” (Louis Berkhof, *Loc. cit.*). The Victorines and others of the more literal school were greatly aided in their studies by recourse to and scholarly intercourse with Medieval Jewish exegetes among the Karaites and others. See Gerald Bray, *Op. cit.*, p. 139.

- *From 1150–1300.* This was the period of the High Middle Ages, which saw the height of Romish ecclesiastical and Papal power, and the establishment of the universities throughout Western Europe and Britain. This era was the height of mystical writing, medieval philosophy and theology with the revival of Greek philosophy through the translation and study of Aristotle.

The Victorines during this era helped revive a return in part to the literal sense of Scripture. The greatest Victorine was Nicholas of Lyra (c. 1270–1340), who largely rejected allegory and returned to the literal sense of Scripture alone. Stephen Langton (d. 1228) was of the more literal school, and made the chapter divisions in Scripture.

Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274) was the greatest theologian of this era, and maintained the four-fold sense of Scripture, while insisting that the other three senses must be based on the literal sense. Roger Bacon (c. 1214–1292) argued for the importance of the study of biblical languages. Peter Lombard (c. 1100–1160) formulated his *Sententiae* to systemize the *Glossa Ordinaria*.

- *From 1300–1500.* The Late Middle Ages witnessed the waning of Papal power with the exile of the pope to Avignon, France (1309–1377) and the demise of the scholastic system.

The fall of Constantinople to the Seljuk Turks (1453) caused the Eastern clerics and monks to immigrate to the West, bringing with them their Greek learning and manuscripts. The Renaissance, or “awakening” of humanistic learning (1300–) began to build a secularized way of thought and life that departed from the rule of the state church system.

John Wycliffe (c. 1329–1394), the “Morning Star” of the Reformation, was an outstanding biblical scholar. He translated the Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate. This era marked the beginning of the “Lollard” movement in England.

C. Exegesis in The Medieval Era The Four-Fold Sense of Scripture

The Middle Ages or the Scholastic Era was greatly influenced by the allegorical method and such men as Augustine, who had added to the allegorical sense the authority of the Romish Church.

John Cassian, a fifth century Origenist monk (360–435), had added a fourth sense of Scripture to the three held by Origen, i.e., the “mystagogical,” or mystical. During the Medieval Era, these gave to Rome its standard approach to the interpretation of Scripture. The four senses or meanings are:

1. *Literal* (historical), i.e., the literal meaning established by the text and interpreted in the context of history.
2. *Allegorical* (doctrinal), i.e., the “deeper” or “hidden” meaning beneath the text “drawn out” [sic] “eisegeted” by the interpreter. This alleged allegorical sense was the predominant interpretation of Scripture for medieval scholars, following Augustine.
3. *Moral* (tropological, from the Gk. τρόπος, a way of life), i.e., that which would give moral instruction and direction.
4. *Anagogical* (or eschatological), i.e., that which pointed to or anticipated the future consummation.

For example, medieval Bible scholars commonly took the word “Jerusalem” to have four senses: literal, or the ancient Jewish city; allegorical, or the Christian church; moral, or the faithful soul; anagogical, or the heavenly city.²⁶⁷ An additional comment by Mickelsen is helpful:

Some Latin poetry of the sixteenth century expresses this [four-fold sense] well. A rough paraphrase keeping the metrical rhyme in English goes like this:

The *letter* shows us what God and our fathers did;
The *allegory* shows us where our faith is hid;
The *moral* meaning gives us rules of daily life;

²⁶⁷ The allegorizing of “Jerusalem” or Zion still characterizes much of traditional Christianity in both theology and hymns, E.g., “We’re Marching to Zion,” etc.

The *anagogy* shows us where we end our strife.²⁶⁸

Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274) typifies the medieval approach with its use of the four–fold sense:

The author of Holy Writ is God, in whose power it is to signify His meaning, not by words only (as man can also do), but also by things themselves. So...that the things signified by the words have themselves also a signification.

Therefore that first signification whereby words signify things belongs to the first sense, the historical or literal. That signification whereby things signified by words have themselves also a signification is called the spiritual sense, which is based on the literal, and presupposes it.

Now this spiritual sense has a threefold division...the allegorical sense...the moral sense...the anagogical sense. Since the literal sense is that which the author intends, and since the author of Holy Writ is God, Who by one act comprehends all things by His intellect, it is not unfitting, as Augustine says (*Confess.* Xii), if, even according to the literal sense, one word in Holy Writ should have several senses.²⁶⁹

Medieval Writings

There were several types of writing by the medieval theologians and scholars. These are mostly filled with allegorizing absurdities and have little value. These can be categorized as:

- *Glosses*, i.e., scribal additions to the text of Scripture in the form of quotations from the Church Fathers. Some glosses were inserted into the biblical margins and others inserted as interlinear comments. The *Glossa Ordinaria* [Standard Gloss] was begun by Walafrid Strabo (d. 849), it was completed by Anselm and Ralph of Laon and others, and became the standard work (c. 1135).
- *Catena* (Lat: “Chains”), or strings of thoughts and comments from some of the Church Fathers on the text of Scripture.

²⁶⁸ A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

²⁶⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part 1, Question 1, Article 10.

- The *Liber Sententiarum* (Lat: “Book of Sentences”) of Peter Lombard (extracted from his *Magna Glosatura* or “Great Gloss”) was a supplement to and an attempt to theologially systematize the *Glossa Ordinaria*. This work became the standard theological textbook for the late Medieval Era.
- *Postilla* (Latin: “After these”), i.e., *Postilla perpetuae, seu brevia commentaria in universa Biblia*, or *Continual Comments, or Brief Annotations on the whole Bible* by Nicholas of Lyra, which gave precedence to the literal interpretation.
- *Historia Scholastica*, or first coherent biblical commentary, was compiled from the Glosses and other materials by Peter Comestor, Chancellor of Notre Dame (c. 1175), and took its place beside the *Glossa Ordinaria*.²⁷⁰

With the combined influence and force of both a four-fold sense of Scripture and the authority of the Church (dogmatic exegesis), medieval interpretation reigned supreme.

The apologetic, polemic, or dogmatic approach is generally synonymous with the “proof-text” method of interpretation, by which various passages are asserted to teach or buttress a given opinion or theological position. Such an approach can be readily noted in almost any religious dispute concerning Christianity, and is legitimate to a given extent, although such usually tends to become strained and divorced from the immediate context and the analogy of faith. Romish hermeneutic and exegesis has not essentially changed from the beginning of the Scholastic era to the present.²⁷¹

The later Scholastic Era had two positive contributions to the principles of interpretation.

(1) The literal meaning formed the basis for the other senses of Scripture. Nicholas of Lyra (c. 1265–1349) gave special prominence to the literal sense as opposed to the others.

²⁷⁰ Donald K. McKim, *Op. cit.*, p. 77.

²⁷¹ Bernard Ramm gives a survey of Roman Catholic Allegorical Exegesis from the Medieval to the contemporary, *Op. cit.*, pp. 38–45.

(2) William of Ockham (c. 1280–1349) departed from earlier Scholastics²⁷² in their use of Aristotelian philosophy and separated Divine revelation from the priority of human reason. Divine revelation was to be received through faith. This would have a profound effect upon Martin Luther and later Protestant interpretation in the following two centuries.

D. Lessons and Cautions

Following largely in the allegorical tradition, medieval scholarship has some lessons and cautions for biblical interpreters:

1. Men necessarily think and proceed to interpret the Bible from their presuppositions. When their presuppositions are ecclesiastical or political rather than biblical and theological, they must inevitably err from the truth.
2. Allegorizing the Scriptures in reality makes the meaning of the text putty in the hands of the interpreter. Manifold meanings necessarily means irrationality.
3. We must never give any translation or version the status of the text of the Scripture in the Original Languages, i.e., exalt a translation or version to the position of infallibility.
4. The Scriptures are self-authenticating, i.e., manifest their own authority. Interpretation does not need ecclesiastical authority to make it authoritative.
5. There is a great danger of building an entire system of theology upon a wrong approach and misunderstanding of Scripture. Exegetical Theology must form the basis for theological thought.
6. The four-fold meaning of Scripture still clings to Christianity by way of tradition, hymns²⁷³ and the failure to distinguish between interpretation and application in preaching.

²⁷² Notably Thomas Aquinas, who taught that reason was prior to faith, or *Intelligo et credo*.

²⁷³ E.g., the references in the Psalms to Israel are spiritualized to believers and Zion to mean “the Church,” e.g., “We’re Marching to Zion.”

7. There is a great danger in simply and only reading the comments of men upon the Scriptures, rather than the Scriptures themselves—no matter how godly, knowledgeable or orthodox such commentators might be considered. We may simply perpetuate error and heresy.
8. There is a great danger to the preacher or teacher in reading, compiling and digesting the thoughts and comments of others rather than personally experiencing the force of the Scriptures in his own life.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by the designation “Medieval Exegesis”? Explain in terms of methodology, characteristics and history.
2. What is meant by “scholasticism” in its historical sense?
3. How did the allegorical interpretation as used by the Roman State Church correlate to the “Dark Ages” and the advancement of education, science, medicine and social progress?
4. What was the direct and indirect influence of the Fall of Constantinople on the history and character of biblical interpretation?
5. What was the influence and result of the use of Latin in biblical studies and worship during this era?
6. What important lesson is learned from the history, use and exaltation of the Latin Vulgate? Do some evangelicals or Fundamentalists do the same in principle with the King James Version? Explain.
7. What is the four-fold *sensus* of Scripture? Explain each sense and its significance. Give an example using the word “Jerusalem.”
8. How has the four-fold sense or use of Scripture traditionally affected even orthodox, evangelical Christianity? Give examples.
9. What is a “gloss”? What is a “catena”?
10. What were some of the major ecclesiastical writings of the Medieval Era?

11. Who was John Wycliff? What is his significance during the latter part of this era?
12. Who was Thomas Aquinas? William of Ockham? What influence did they have upon scholasticism and the Reformation?
13. What principles would the Schoolmen teach us today with regard to reading and studying commentaries?

VIII

Reformation Exegesis

Psalm 119:18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.²⁷⁴

Psalm 119:99–100. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies *are* my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.²⁷⁵

Acts 8:30–31. And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readeest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me?²⁷⁶

A. The General Character of The Reformation Era

The Protestant Reformation was largely a reformation of the Medieval Roman Catholic Church. It was partly spiritual, partly intellectual, partly religious, partly ecclesiastical, partly social, and partly political.

It was, however, primarily and very pointedly a reformation in or a resurrection of a legitimate hermeneutic, as it signaled a return to the Original Languages and to the historico–grammatical method

²⁷⁴ With the Reformation came the acknowledgement that spiritual illumination from the Holy Spirit is essential for truly understanding the Scriptures, but not mere intellectual knowledge.

²⁷⁵ Because the Reformers returned to the historico–grammatical sense and denied the multiplicity of meanings and allegorization, they had a much greater grasp of truth than the Church Fathers and Scholastics before them.

²⁷⁶ The Word of God was given to be understood, presupposing the *usus loquendi*, which characterized the Reformation Era. The Church Fathers and Scholastics had not been guides, but rather obscured the Scriptures.

of interpretation, casting aside much of the grave clothes of the Patristic and Scholastic Eras. *Sola Scriptura* was the hermeneutical battle-cry that epitomized the Reformation.²⁷⁷ This hermeneutical transformation was reflected throughout Western Civilization, as it affected the religious, ecclesiastical, moral, social and political life of Europe.

The Reformation Era dawned with most of the common people hearing the Scriptures without understanding—the mass being read in Latin²⁷⁸—and ended with translations and versions in the vernacular possessed by the common people, the gospel preached publicly in the national languages, and the political and ecclesiastical structure of Europe forever changed. The effect of finally understanding the Bible in a society and culture that had been spiritually, politically, ecclesiastically, academically and scientifically governed by the Romish priestcraft is evidenced in the cultural upheaval of the sixteenth century.

The Era of the Reformation generally extends from the posting of Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* (October 31, 1517) to the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which determined the Catholic and Protestant boundaries of Europe. The major issues, incidents or movements that characterized this age are:

- The Renaissance, or “rebirth” of Europe that signaled the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of modern history—and a departure from the oppressive rule of the Romish Church over all of life, academics, science, medicine and culture.

The Sixteenth Century Reformation did not occur in a vacuum. It was preceded and given great impetus by the Renaissance (c. 1300–1500), which had brought about a

²⁷⁷ Although the “Five Solas of the Reformation” are often touted as orthodox—*Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fide*, *Sola Gratia*, *Solo Christo* and *Sola Deo Gloria*—The Reformed churches violated most of these through their concepts of a state [persecuting] church and infant sprinkling.

²⁷⁸ We do not discount the significant influence of the evangelical, pre-reformation groups such as the Waldenses and others who possessed the Scriptures in the vernacular. These were persecuted peoples whose influence was constantly suppressed by Rome.

revival of classical learning, culture, science, the advent of printing, an increasing secular philosophy, and a necessary change in world—and life—views.

The Northern Renaissance began over a century after the Southern or Italian Renaissance, and brought about a revival in the study of the ancient Hebrew and Greek, and a general longing for more knowledge. The Northern was more conservative and religious, while the Southern was more secular, humanistic and pagan-oriented.

The Northern Renaissance provided an intellectual and cultural climate that questioned Romish dogma, favored self-expression, religious independence and a study of the Scriptures in the Original Languages.

- The various aspects of the Reformation reflected the influence of a recovered Bible, written to be understood by the common people in their own languages:
 1. *Hermeneutically*, the Reformation was a return to the historico-grammatical method of interpretation.
 2. *Doctrinally*, the Reformation revived the essential doctrines of the sufficiency and authority of Scripture apart from church tradition and dogma (*Sola Scriptura*) and salvation by grace (grace alone, faith alone, Christ alone), while rejecting the sacerdotal system and papal hierarchy of Rome.
 3. *Biblically*, it returned the Bible to the people in their own language. It must be emphasized that almost since the end of the Apostolic Era, the Scriptures in general had been hidden from the common people by a faulty hermeneutic (the allegorical approach, c. 100– ; the Catholic traditional four-fold *sensus*, c. 450–) and a foreign language (Latin, c. 405–).²⁷⁹

²⁷⁹ We date the four-fold *sensus* of Romanism early because the three-fold had been in vogue since Origen, the allegorical was championed by Augustine (354–430), and the fourth developed from John Cassian (360–435). The separatist pre-Reformation groups such as the Paulicians and Waldenses had the Scriptures in the vernacular from the

4. *Ecclesiastically*, Protestantism did not fully return to the New Testament pattern, but eventually established in most instances a rival state–church system. One of the great positive influences of the Protestant Reformation was the formulation of the great Confessions of Faith.
 5. *Culturally*, the ecclesiastical power of the Romish Church had dominated religion, politics, society, science, medicine and academics. This had a stifling effect upon the entire culture for over a millennium. The Renaissance with its learning, and the Reformation with its recovered Bible, helped liberate Western Civilization from this oppressive, Romish monopoly.
- The “Counter–Reformation” of the Romish Church (1542–), as epitomized by the Council of Trent (1545–1563), sought to bring reform within its own ranks and also to oppose the Protestant Reformation.

Note: The “Catholic Reformation,” “Catholic Renaissance” or “Counter–Reformation,” culminated in the Council of Trent. It was to be the Romish attempt to correct the abuses, excesses and low moral and educated state of her priests, bishops and monastic orders, and to answer the doctrines of the Protestants. Because the Catholic Reformation culminated in the Council of Trent (1545–1563), not convened until twenty–eight years after the Protestant Reformation began, it has been commonly called the “Counter–Reformation.”

It is generally more accurate to view the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Reformation as almost simultaneous phenomena. The preferred term is “Catholic Reformation,” for the Renaissance and various internal troubles had called for reform from within since the late Middle Ages. The Protestant Reformation simply became the final catalyst. K. S. Latourette notes:

The Catholic Reformation is sometimes called the Counter–Reformation, but that designation can be misleading. It is accurate if by it is meant that it was in part a reaction against Protestant criticisms and secessions, and

early centuries, and some liturgical passages had been translated for worship even within the Romish Church.

that through it the Roman Catholic Church regained some of the ground which it lost to Protestantism. It is inaccurate if it is intended to convey the impression that but for Protestantism the Catholic Reformation would not have come.²⁸⁰

- The rise of Puritanism (c. 1560–) in Britain gave to the British Isles the most dynamic and practical form of Protestantism in Western Civilization. Puritanism also produced some of the greatest and most practical biblical exegetes, expositors and commentators.
- The defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588) signaled the decline of the Spanish and Catholic mastery of the seas, and marked the beginnings of the expansion of the British Empire which carried with it its Protestantism.
- The Remonstrance or Arminian controversy, led by Jacobus Arminius and Simon Episcopus (c. 1604–1619), led to a definitive statement of Reformed Doctrine at the Synod of Dort (1618–1619).
- The Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643–1649) produced the *Westminster Standards* (Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms), the epitome of Evangelical Calvinism for Britain and America.
- The Thirty Years' War ended with the Peace of Westphalia (1618–1648) and determined the final boundaries of Catholic and Protestant Europe.

B. The Bibles of The Reformation Era

With the Reformation and the surge of Protestant nationalism, there arose a great need for the Scriptures in both the Original Languages for scholars and in the vernacular for the common people. Every translation or version of the Bible in Western Civilization throughout the Middle Ages to the time of Erasmus and Tyndale was based on the *Latin Vulgate* of Jerome (c. 405) with its errors, doctrinal misunderstandings and mistranslations.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *Op. cit.*, p. 840.

²⁸¹ The *Romount Version* of the Waldenses (c. 1180) was based on the *Latin Vulgate*, as was the translation of John Wycliffe (c. 1384). The

With the advent of printing (c. 1450), a revival of learning in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, a critical evaluation and correction of the Latin Vulgate, the general foment of the Reformation, the departure of the reformers from the four-fold *sensus* of Romish tradition, and the great need for the Scriptures in the vernacular, a plethora of translations and versions appeared. Even the Council of Trent authorized a new version for the Romish Church—the *Clementine Bible*.

The Complutensian Polyglot

Cardinal Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros (1437–1517) began in 1502 to prepare a polyglot²⁸² Bible under the supervision of several scholars. It was a magnificent work in four languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin—and printed in six volumes.²⁸³ The work was printed at Alcalá in Spain,²⁸⁴ and completed in 1514, making the Greek portion the first printed Greek Testament. It was not published with papal sanction, however, until 1522, giving the precedence to the Greek Testament of Erasmus (1516).

The Greek and Latin New Testament of Erasmus

Erasmus (1469–1536) was the greatest humanist scholar of the late Renaissance and early Reformation Era, and was well-studied in Latin and Greek. Having gathered all available Greek mss. of the New Testament text, Erasmus published his Greek New Testament in 1516 together with a new Latin translation which corrected many of the errors of the Latin Vulgate. He evidently hurried the process to publish the Greek New Testament before the *Complutensian Polyglot* was published.

final Wycliffe Bible, revised in English idiom, was completed by his secretary, John Purvey, shortly after Wycliffe's death.

²⁸² "Polyglot" from the Greek (πολύς, πολί, and γλώσσα), "many languages."

²⁸³ The Old Testament was in the first four volumes. The New Testament was in volume five, together with a Greek glossary and Latin equivalents. Volume six contained a Hebrew lexicon and grammar.

²⁸⁴ The old Roman or Latin name for Alcalá was *Complutum*, hence, *The Complutensian Polyglot*.

This critical edition eventually became the basis for the *Textus Receptus*, or “Received Text” of Stephanus. Erasmus lacked a complete Greek text of the Book of Revelation, and so made his own from the Latin Vulgate.²⁸⁵ In the third edition, after bowing to Romish pressure, he inserted the “Johannine Comma” [*Comma Johanneum*] (1 John 5:7–8).²⁸⁶

A. T. Robertson draws the vivid picture of the dawning of the Reformation and the significance of Erasmus’ Greek New Testament:

There is nothing like the Greek New Testament to rejuvenate the world, which came out of the Dark Ages with the Greek Testament in its hand. Erasmus wrote in the preface to his Greek Testament about his own thrill of delight: ‘These holy pages will summon up the living image of His mind. They will give you Christ Himself, talking, healing, dying, rising, the whole Christ in a word; they will give Him to you in an intimacy so close that He would be less visible to you if He stood before your eyes’.²⁸⁷

To the Romish priest who declared, “We were better to be without God’s law than the pope’s,” the celebrated answer of Tyndale was, “I defy the pope and all his laws; if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost!”²⁸⁸ This statement was

²⁸⁵ Erasmus translated from the Latin Vulgate into Greek several passages from Revelation, including the final six verses. For a full discussion of Erasmus’ Greek Testament, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968. pp. 98–103.

²⁸⁶ Erasmus promised to insert the passage, which was in the Latin Vulgate, if it could be found in even one Greek mss. The Romish scholars produced it from a sixteenth century Greek text, which was produced under questionable circumstances, so Erasmus was forced to insert it. For a discussion of the controversy surrounding the *Comma Johanneum*, see Metzger, *Loc. cit.*; *A Textual Commentary of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 716–718; Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*. Des Moines: The Christian Research Press, 1973. 204–208.

²⁸⁷ A. T. Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978. p. 20.

²⁸⁸ Brian H. Edwards, *God’s Outlaw: The Story of William Tyndale and the English Bible*, Darlington, Eng.: Evangelical Press, 1976. p. 61.

but an echo of Erasmus' words from the preface of his Greek New Testament, which Tyndale himself had studied.²⁸⁹

The *Textus Receptus*

The Greek New Testament of Erasmus was an eclectic text.²⁹⁰ This text was later revised from additional mss. by Robert Estienne [Stephanus] (1503–1559) of Paris in 1550. This third edition was the first Greek New Testament to have a critical apparatus²⁹¹ and to divide the text into verses. This became the accepted Greek text²⁹² and general basis for the *Geneva Bible* (1560) and other English Bibles, culminating with the *King James Version* (1611).

Theodore Beza (1519–1605), the successor to John Calvin at Geneva, published several editions of the Greek New Testament

²⁸⁹ 'I would have the weakest woman read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul....I would have those words translated into all languages, so that not only Scots and Irishmen, but Turks and Saracens might read them. I long for the plowboy to sing them to himself as he follows the plow, the weaver to hum them to the tune of his shuttle, the traveler to beguile with them the dullness of his journey....Other studies we may regret having undertaken, but happy is the man upon whom death comes when he is engaged in these. These sacred words give you the very image of Christ speaking, healing, dying, rising again, and make him so present, that were he before your very eyes you would not more truly see him'. Quoted by Will Durant, *History of Civilization: The Reformation* (Vol. VI), p. 285.

²⁹⁰ An eclectic or critical text is a text which has been compiled and established from several sources and from an evaluation of textual variants. Erasmus utilized about six different minuscule codices. Estienne utilized readings from fourteen different codices, and also from the Greek text of the *Complutensian Polyglot* and from the *Codex Bezae*. See Bruce M. Metzger, *Op. cit.*, pp. 102–105.

²⁹¹ A critical apparatus is a series of marginal notes or footnotes which list the variant readings of the text. Stephanus used marginal notes; modern critical *apparatai* use footnotes and both list and evaluate the variant readings.

²⁹² The 1633 edition of the *Stephanus Text*, with emendations from the later editions of Beza's Greek Testament (1588–89, 1598), the *Complutensian Polyglot*, etc., became the so-called *Textus Receptus*. See footnotes 173, 174. It ought to be noted that it was not termed the *Textus Receptus* until 1633, after the King James Version was already in print (1611–1612).

between 1565 and 1604, using the Stephanus text with a few alterations.

The Elzevir Brothers, printers at Leiden and Amsterdam, used Beza's text of the 1565 edition for two printings. The 1633 edition became the so-called "Received Text" [TR]. The designation *textus receptus* was taken from the words of the preface: *Textum ergo habes nunc ab omnibus receptum in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*, i.e., "Therefore you now have the text received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted."²⁹³

Luther's German Bible

Martin Luther (1483–1546), the first of the great Protestant Reformers, labored to give the German people the Scriptures in the vernacular. This labor was the logical and experiential outcome of his own conversion experience and great need for the common Germanic peoples to read and understand the Word of God.

His knowledge of the Hebrew, Latin and Greek served him well in his work as a translator and exegete. He first translated the New Testament in secret at Wartburg Castle in 1522, and then the Old Testament during the years 1523–1534. This was, in the thinking of many scholars, his greatest single achievement. His Bible formed the linguistic basis for the modern German language.

The French Version of Olivetan

Olivetan [Pierre Robert]²⁹⁴ (c. 1506–1538), a French Reformer and cousin to John Calvin, translated the Bible into French for the Waldenses, basing his translation on the earlier work of Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. It was published at Neuchâtel (1535), and contains a preface by John Calvin, his first public confession of faith. This version became the Bible of the French Reformers and Huguenots.

English Versions of The Reformation Era

- *Tyndale's New Testament* (1526). This was the first English New Testament translated from the Greek, rather than the

²⁹³ B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 106.

²⁹⁴ He was called "Olivetan," from olive oil, because he always burned the midnight oil in his studies.

Latin Vulgate. Tyndale used the third edition (1522) of Erasmus. Tyndale also was at work on the Old Testament before his martyrdom (1535).

- *Coverdale's Bible* (1535). Miles Coverdale based his work on that of Tyndale, and also resorted to Latin and German versions. This Bible introduced chapter and verse divisions into the English Bible, and contained the Apocrypha as an appendix to the Old Testament.
- *Matthew's Bible* (1537). "Thomas Matthew"²⁹⁵ was based on the work of Tyndale in both the Old and New Testaments.
- *The "Great Bible"* (1539). This Bible was largely Coverdale's revision of the Matthew's Bible. This large volume was made available to be read by the general public and so placed in every Church of England parish in England, chained to a stand, available for public reading.
- *The "Geneva Bible"* (1560). This was produced in Geneva by the English-speaking refugees and exiles who had fled there during the reign of Mary (1553–1558). This was the first English Bible translated entirely from the Original Languages (Stephanus' Greek Text), and the first to use italics to show added words necessary to complete the sense. This became the Bible for English-speaking Protestants, the Scots, Cromwell's "Ironsides" and the Pilgrim Fathers—all who opposed the prelacy of the Church of England and thus, avoided the *King James Version*.
- *The "Bishops' Bible"* (1568). This was an improved version of the Anglican "Great Bible," designed to replace the Geneva Bible, but failed in this attempt.
- *The Rheims–Douay Version* (1582–1610). This was the English translation from the Latin Vulgate for English-speaking Catholics by Gregory Martin, who taught in the

²⁹⁵ A pen name for the English martyr, John Rodgers, who was burned at the stake during the reign of Mary Tudor (1555).

English expatriate college in Flanders. It is named from the places of its publication, Rheims and Douay.²⁹⁶

- *The King James Version* (1611). The “Authorized Version” was produced under James I by forty–seven scholars divided into three panels. These scholars drew largely from the “Bishops’ Bible,” previous English versions, and versions in other languages, while constantly referring to the Original Languages. This Bible set the standard for the English–speaking world for three centuries.²⁹⁷

The Antwerp and Nuremburg Polyglot Bibles

Two polyglot Bibles were published in the late sixteenth century. *The Antwerp Polyglot* was a revision of the *Complutensian Polyglot* of Ximenes (1522), with added texts and philological helps by Arias Montanus and other scholars (1568–1573). *The Nuremburg Polyglot* (1599–1600) was prepared by Elias Hutter, and contained the Old Testament in six languages and the New Testament in twelve languages.

The Clementine Bible

The *Clementine Bible* (named after pope Clement VIII) was the work of Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) and other Catholic scholars. It was published in 1592 as a major revision of the *Latin Vulgate*. This remained the official Latin Bible of the Romish Church until the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965)

²⁹⁶ The New Testament was published at Rheims (1582) and the Old Testament was published at Douay (1609–1610). Richard Challoner successively revised the *Rheims–Douay Bible* (1749–1772), and brought it into more harmony with the King James Version. This remained the official Catholic English Bible until the Catholic edition of the Revised Standard Version of 1965–1966, which was soon superceded by the *Jerusalem Bible* (1966), and the *Confraternity Version* (1970), with the title *The New American Bible*.

²⁹⁷ The English *Revised Version* [RV] was finally produced in 1881. The American adaptation, the American Revised [Standard] Version [ASV] was published in 1901. The main reasons behind the revision are found in modern Biblical Criticism, the discovery of more and older Greek mss., and the change in biblical critical theory from majority readings to the preference for the oldest mss.

C. The Exegesis of The Reformation Era The Nominalism of William of Ockham

An epistemological shift occurred during the Scholastic Era that would help prepare the thinking of the later Protestant Reformers. William of Ockham (c. 1280–1349), through his Nominalism, opposed the Realism of the Medieval Scholasticism characterized by such writers as Thomas Aquinas.

This epistemological shift led to a weakening of the Aristotelian hold on Medieval Scholasticism. The Scholastics had held to a Platonic Realism which taught that universals existed; Ockham held to an empirical Nominalism, which taught that universals are created by reason.

This subject is far beyond the scope of this work, but one aspect is highly significant—there was a shift in the relationship of faith and reason. The Realism of Aquinas and earlier scholastics gave the primacy to human reason; the Nominalism of Ockham separated reason from faith in the matter of Divine revelation.

Therefore what may be known of God was through Divine revelation, not human reason. This would give precedence to the Scriptures over human reason and church tradition. This helps explain the thinking and subsequent influence of Luther.

...Ockham was a nominalist, and much of training which Luther had was in the philosophy of Ockham. In Ockham we find a separation of revelation and human reason...The authority for theological dogma rested solely on divine revelation and therefore upon the Bible.

Thus Luther was so trained as to magnify the authority of the Bible as over against philosophy. When called upon to prove his position he appealed to Scripture and reason (logical deductions from Scripture). A traditional Catholic theologian would appeal to Scripture and reason, but also to Thomistic philosophy, councils, creeds, and the Fathers.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, pp. 51–52; See also John P. Dever, "Nominalism," Robert G. Clouse, "William of Ockham," *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, pp. 713–714, 1049–1050.

The Humanists

The Sixteenth Century Reformation owed much to the humanist scholars of the late Renaissance era. It was through these scholars that the study of Hebrew and Greek was renewed. Such study would inevitably lead to an intense study of the Scriptures in the literal sense, cause scholars to abandon the Catholic four-fold *sensus*, especially the allegorical approach, undermine the exclusive claims of the Latin Vulgate, and thus undermine papal authority. The major personalities and their influence is noteworthy:

- *Laurentius Valla* (1407–1457). Valla attacked Thomas Aquinas as an interpreter of Scripture. He pursued a literal interpretation of Scripture, and was one of the first to return to the Greek text in his *Notes on the New Testament*. These *Notes* had a profound effect on Erasmus, who published them in 1505.
- *Johannes Reuchlin* (1455–1522). A great uncle of Melancthon and the leading Hebraist of his day, he published a Hebrew grammar (1506).

He justly deserves the title of father of Hebrew learning in the Christian Church. He far surpassed the Jews of his time in the knowledge of their own language...He was also acknowledged everywhere as an authority on Latin and Greek...²⁹⁹

As a teacher, he often spent as much on furthering his education, and paying his Jewish tutors, than he received from his teaching services.³⁰⁰ Reuchlin and Erasmus, for their respective work on the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament, were called “The Two Eyes of Europe.”³⁰¹

- *Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples* [*Jacobus Faber Stapulensis*] (c. 1460–1536). A Catholic commentator on the Scriptures. His conversion to Protestantism was questionable. Although he “can hardly be ranked with the great Reformers...yet in fact

²⁹⁹ Milton Terry, *Op. cit.*, p. 670.

³⁰⁰ F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 314–315.

³⁰¹ Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, p. 670.

he was the father of the Reformation in France.”³⁰² His French translation of the Bible (New Testament, 1523; Old Testament, 1538) was the basis for the later work by Olivetan.

- *Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam* (c. 1466–1536). The greatest universal scholar of his day, was “the embodiment of humanism,” a true “Renaissance man.” Although he did not side with the Reformers, it indeed can be said that “Erasmus laid the egg; Luther hatched it.”³⁰³ In 1505 he published the *New Testament Notes* of Valla.

In 1516 he published the first edition of the Greek New Testament with a new Latin translation. His later *Annotations on the New Testament* was so highly valued that every parish church in England was required to possess a copy in English. Erasmus, more than any other humanist scholar, initiated the new era in biblical learning.

- *Guillaume Budé* (1467–1540). A French humanist scholar who persuaded the King of France to appoint secular scholars to lecture on the Scriptures in the Original Languages at the Universities. It was in this context that young Calvin providentially obtained his training in biblical exegesis.

The Lutheran Exegetes

- *Philipp Melancthon* (1497–1560) was the younger associate of Luther, and the greatest Lutheran scholar and theologian. Melancthon was a greater linguist and systematic theologian, but lacked the force of Luther and compromised later Lutheran theology.
- *Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt* (c. 1477–1541) was an older companion of Luther, who finally departed from him. Carlstadt wrote 380 theses on the supremacy of Scripture, remarkable for their Reformed emphasis, a humanistic love of languages and a knowledge of medieval rabbinic exegesis. His doctrine was more Reformed or “Puritanic” than Lutheran.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 671.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*

- *Johann Bugenhagen* (1485–1558). He helped Luther translate the Bible into German, wrote several commentaries on Scripture, and was responsible for reorganizing the Danish Church according to Lutheran principles.
- *Martin Luther* (1483–1546) is ranked first among the great Protestant Reformers, exegetes and commentators. He possessed a photographic memory,³⁰⁴ which greatly aided in his linguistic and exegetical work.

Skilled in the Original Languages, Luther refused the authority of the Church in interpretation with its four-fold *sensus*. He also largely rejected the allegorical approach and maintained the literal, or historico-grammatical sense. His interpretation was preeminently Christological. The main principles of Luther's approach to interpretation are as follows:

1. *The supreme and final authority and absolute sufficiency of Scripture.* A principle inherited from his own conversion experience, the very nature of Scripture, and very possibly from the influence of William of Ockham. Thus Luther stated:

'I ask for Scriptures and Eck offers me the Fathers. I ask for the sun and he shows me his lanterns. I ask: 'Where is your Scripture proof?' and he adduces Ambrose and Cyril...With all due respect to the Fathers I prefer the authority of the Scripture.'³⁰⁵

2. *The literal sense of Scripture is also the spiritual sense,* i.e., the literal was inclusive of the figurative. This was an out-right rejection of the Romish Medieval four-fold *sensus*. At times he pushed the literal too far, as when, in

³⁰⁴ God raises up certain men and gifts them naturally as well as spiritually to be outstanding in their own time. Martin Luther, John Calvin, C. H. Spurgeon and other outstanding men of God had photographic memories.

³⁰⁵ Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, p. 55, quoting from F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 327.

C. H. Spurgeon once stated his similar view when he said that many could quote from or refer to the Church Fathers for their arguments, stating that he preferred "The Grandfathers, that is, the inspired Apostles themselves!"

debate with Zwingli, he insisted that our Lord pointed to himself when he said, “This is [*ist*] my body,” necessarily saddling Lutheranism with the doctrine of “the ubiquity of the body of Christ.”³⁰⁶

3. *The perspicuity of Scripture.* Scripture interprets Scripture, or the more obscure passages are understood by those which are more plain—a principle deriving from the literal sense.
4. *The right of private judgment or interpretation.* This implied both the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit and the priesthood of the individual believer.
5. *The Bible contains two opposed but mutually complimentary elements, the law and the gospel.* This and the sacramental issue set Luther apart from Calvinistic or Reformed exegesis, which viewed the Moral Law as eternal and binding on all humanity.³⁰⁷ This also caused Luther to view the Scriptures as somewhat uneven in interpretation and edification. He thus placed Paul above James, etc.
6. *The Bible is the Word of God in written form, which points to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ.* This is at the root of his Christological interpretation, which led him at times in the Old Testament to find Christ where he was not typologically, by the very allegorization he otherwise avoided.

It must be noted that Luther’s idea of Divine inspiration was neither verbal nor plenary, and he tended to be a rather radical biblical critic in confusing a continuing inspiration with illumination, and in putting some books above others in value

³⁰⁶ The ubiquity of the body of Christ is necessitated by the doctrines of consubstantiation [the real presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament] and the nature of the resurrection body of our Lord. The Lutheran doctrine of ubiquity means that the physical body of Christ can be in many places at one time.

³⁰⁷ Adapted from Gerald Bray, *Op. cit.*, pp. 197–200 and F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, pp. 325–334.

according to their presentation of Christ or their emphasis on either law or gospel.³⁰⁸

On some matters, his hermeneutical principles were much better than his actual practice, e.g., holding to the negative principle that if the Scripture did not forbid a certain thing, it was legitimate, as in the matter of infant sprinkling, which at first troubled him, then led him to abandon the clear teaching of Scripture for the sake of expediency.

...while translating the Bible, at the Wartburg, Luther had determined to retain whatever practices it did not forbid. At first he had no light struggle with infant baptism. On other subjects he had been forced, against his will, step by step, to abandon the Fathers, the Councils and Catholic tradition, being driven to the authority of the Scriptures.

But when he found no authority for infant baptism, he assumed a new attitude. At that point he had a fiery contest with himself as to the true key of biblical interpretation, and he deliberately chose the negative turn. That is, he determined to abide by what the Scriptures did not forbid, instead of what they enjoined, as the law of ordinances.

He saw at a glance where his rule of interpretation on other subjects must inevitably lead him on this point; and he dared not venture one step further in free thought, for fear of invoking a complete moral revolution. To take one step more was to let infant baptism go and the State Church with it, so that a regenerate Church only would be left. But this was not the sort of Church Luther wanted, and he said, 'Where they want to go I am not disposed to follow. God save me from a Church in which are none but the holy.'...Luther simply trifled with this truth.³⁰⁹

This same principle is also evident in the matter of the bigamous marriage of Phillip of Hesse to a second wife.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 333–341. This is why he placed Paul far above James, and had a low view of several Old Testament books, such as the Book of Esther.

³⁰⁹ *Neue Propheten* p. 175, as quoted in Thomas Armitage, *History of the Baptists*, I, p. 358.

³¹⁰ Luther married Philip to Margaret von der Saale on December 10, 1539, as his second wife (while still married to Christina, the daughter of George of Saxony), after stating that Moses in the Old Testament allowed it. *Ibid.* I, p. 359–360.

The Reformed Exegetes

- *Ulrich Zwingli* (1484–1531) was the first great Reformer at Zürich. Essentially a preacher and pastor. His symbolic interpretation of the sacrament in his dispute with Luther, separated the Lutheran and Reformed scholars. He and Bullinger developed the essence of Reformed Covenant Theology in their disputations with the Anabaptists.
- *Johannes Oecolampadius* (1482–1531) was a German disciple of Erasmus who aided him in the publication of the Greek New Testament and gained influence as a professor of theology, a Bible commentator and a defender of the Zwinglian symbolic view of the sacraments.
- *Conrad Pellican* (1478–1556). The first Christian Hebraist to write a Hebrew grammar. Between 1532 and 1539, he wrote a commentary on the entire Bible and the Apocrypha.
- *Peter Martyr Vermigli* (c. 1500–1562). An Italian Reformer and commentator who went to Zürich as professor of Hebrew. He later taught at Strasbourg and Oxford.
- *Johann Heinrich Bullinger* (1504–1575). Zwingli's successor at Zürich. He gained a reputation both as a doctrinal preacher and biblical commentator.
- *John Calvin* (1506–1564). Calvin was the greatest of the Reformers and the father of modern biblical exegesis.

His genius overshadows most great men of modern times:

Calvin's intellect was of the very first class, at once acute, penetrating, profound, and comprehensive. His cultivation was in harmony with it. Scaliger [Joseph Scaliger, Huguenot scholar] declares that at twenty-two Calvin was the most learned man in Europe.³¹¹

Even in his early student days, one of his professors, the greatest legal mind in France at the time, stated that "Calvin scarcely has his equal." His memory was phenomenal. On occasion he could either quote or refer to extended passages

³¹¹ McClintock & Strong, *Cyclopedia of Theological, Historical and the Ecclesiastical Literature*, II, p. 40.

from the Scriptures or the Church Fathers and Reformation literature.³¹²

His knowledge of and writing style in Latin have been called the greatest since Tertullian.³¹³ There is not one aspect of religious, academic and political life in the modern world that does not bear the stamp of his influence. It may well be said that from medieval times to the nineteenth century, there have been but two distinct types of men: the “Renaissance Man” and “The Calvinist.”

As an Exegete and Interpreter. With the other Reformers, Calvin held that the Scriptures were given by God to be comprehensible to man in the sense of the *usus loquendi*. He held to a reasonable and consistent historico–grammatical method of interpretation. In this sense, Calvin is the father of modern biblical exegesis.³¹⁴

In this vital area, as well as the Christological principle, he differed from Luther, the other great interpreter of the Reformation, whose “negative” principle was to abide by what the Scriptures did not forbid, instead of what they positively enjoined. Calvin’s salient hermeneutical principles, in addition to those in common with or distinct from the other Reformers, were³¹⁵:

1. *Sola Scriptura*. John Calvin, more than any other Reformer exemplified this principle. Among the other Reformers, even Luther and Zwingli, Calvin stands unique—a towering figure, encyclopedic in knowledge, indefatigable in labor, progressive in application and

³¹² It is noteworthy that God gifts men naturally as well as spiritually; common grace and redemptive grace often coalesce. Luther, Calvin and Spurgeon were true geniuses and all possessed what is commonly called “photographic memories.”

³¹³ For the remark concerning Tertullian, see McClintock & Strong, *Op. cit.*

³¹⁴ B. B. Warfield, *Op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.; *Shorter Writings*, I, pp. 397–400; Douglas F. Kelly, *Op. cit.*, pp. 9–10.

³¹⁵ Adapted from Gerald Bray, *Op. cit.*, pp. 201–204.

inclusive in influence. In his personality, labors, writings, preaching ministry and sufferings, he was the most thorough and “Paul-like” of all the Reformers.

2. *The Scriptures are self-attesting or self-authenticating as the very Word of God.* The Holy Spirit testifies of the authority and genuineness of the Scripture to the believer. The author’s intention must be the guiding principle of interpretation. He believed that the paramount duty of the commentator was to reveal the mind of the writer, and thus the mind of the Spirit.³¹⁶ Thus, the Scriptures are for edification, leading Calvin to lecture and preach statement-by-statement through the Bible.
3. *The literal sense is paramount, but we do not have to follow it slavishly*—a consistent yet pliable approach to the *usus loquendi* that prevents “literalism” and takes into account figurative language.³¹⁷
4. *The Christological interpretation must be historical as well as theological.* This was a departure from Luther’s Christological principle and a return to a more sound typology, recognizing that not all passages are Christocentric or point to Christ.
5. *Biblical interpretation passes through three distinct but related stages.* If any one of these is omitted, the text will not be interpreted properly: (1) Exegesis and hermeneutic, what the texts says and what it means. (2) Dogmatics, or the doctrinal and theological framework in which exegesis is to be interpreted, and (3) Preaching, which is the consistent application of Scripture.
6. *The chief features of a good commentary are clarity and brevity.* He criticized Melancthon for his verbosity and obscuring of the text.

³¹⁶ T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin’s New Testament Commentaries*, p. 91, 95–96.

³¹⁷ See “Literal” and “Literalism” in the Glossary in this volume.

7. The religious and legal education of Calvin, as passed through his humanistic bent (which stressed philology and grammar) and Renaissance background (which prompted brevity), providentially gave to him the major characteristics of his style as a commentator—simplicity, conciseness, clarity and brevity.³¹⁸

He was honest with the Scriptures in spite of Romish tradition and contemporary Protestant prejudice and practice.

As a Lecturer and Preacher. Calvin would enter the pulpit with only his Hebrew Old Testament or Greek New Testament and lecture in Latin to his students and the Genevan pastors, or preach in French to the common people of Geneva.³¹⁹ Exegesis, exposition and application characterize both his lectures and sermons.

The Catholic Exegetes

During the late Renaissance and early Reformation Era, some Catholic exegetes and commentators were positively affected by the renewed study of the Original Languages, the departure from and correction of the Latin Vulgate, and the Reformation within the Church of Rome by emerging Protestantism.

The Council of Trent (1545–1563), however, took a very adverse view of the Lutheran and Reformed Doctrines and of undermining the Latin Vulgate, so Catholic scholarship faded once again into the shadows of church authority and tradition. Several of the major Catholic scholars of this era were: *Tommaso de Viro* (Cajetan) (1464–1534), *Jacopo Sadoletto* (1477–1547), *Jean de Cagny* (Gagnaeus) (d. 1549). A few others wrote various biblical commentaries in the literalist tradition.

³¹⁸ The enduring character and freshness of his commentaries on Scripture are summarized in his own words, “The chief virtue of the interpreter lies in clear brevity.” He believed that a commentator should “be brief in style, his statements, explanations and arguments compressed and concise.” *Ibid.*

³¹⁹ Calvin’s *Institutes* in their French edition helped form the basis for the modern French language.

Covenant Theology

Covenant Theology is distinctive of Reformed theology. Zwingli and Bullinger assumed such an approach in principle when debating the Anabaptists, giving to it their peculiar ideas of the circumcision–infant sprinkling argument from the Abrahamic Covenant. Later Reformed theologians and Confessions³²⁰ developed a Covenant Theology to which both Reformed and Calvinistic Baptists have historically held.

Post–Reformation theologians further developed this theme. Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669) developed the concept of Federal Theology, and Herman Witsius (1636–1708) wrote a detailed work on *The Economy of the Divine Covenants*. The older Calvinistic Baptists such as John Gill (1697–1771), J. L. Dagg (1794–1884), J. P. Boyce (1827–1888) and C. H. Spurgeon (18),³²¹ all held strongly to Covenant Theology, as expressed in their Confessions of faith.³²²

Covenant Theology and Hermeneutics

Covenant Theology derives from a distinct hermeneutical position that expresses an inclusive Biblical Theology viewed from the perspective of the eternal redemptive purpose as expressed through the Divine covenants revealed in Scripture and considered in the context of the principle of progressive revelation. It stands in distinct contrast to the later Dispensational hermeneutic, to which most modern Baptists subscribe, having abandoned their more consistent Calvinism.

Note: Dispensationalism emphasizes such terms as “dispensation” (οἰκονομία, Eng. “economy,” from οἶκος, “house,” and νόμος, “law,” hence the management of an household, a stewardship) and “age” (αἰών, “age,” “era”) in the Scriptures. Dispensationalism is an inclusive, literalistic hermeneutical approach that views the Scriptures as divided into various well–defined time–periods, “economies” or

³²⁰ See *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapters 7 and 8.

³²¹ See John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal and Practical Divinity*; J. L. Dagg, *Manual of Theology and Church Order*; J. P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*; C. H. Spurgeon’s published sermons.

³²² See *The London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, Chapters 7 and 8, and *The Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, Chapters 7 and 8.

“dispensations.” In each dispensation God reveals a particular purpose to be accomplished to which men respond in either faith or unbelief.

These dispensations or time-periods are seen as the successive stages of progressive revelation. Although the number of ages varies from five to many dispensations [ultra-Dispensationalism], the common seven dispensations are: (1) “Innocency,” the era of unfallen Adam, (2) “Conscience” and “Human Government.” from Adam’s fall to Noah, (3) “Promise,” from Abraham to Moses), (4) “Law,” from Moses to Christ, (5) “Grace,” from Pentecost to the Rapture, (6) “Millennium” [1,000 year reign of Christ on Earth], and (7) The New heavens and earth.³²³

The Dispensational approach to Scripture stands diametrically opposed to Reformed tradition. It views the diversity of the covenants to such an extent that it even denies their essential continuity. There is a sharp distinction between national Israel and “the Church.” The “Church Age” is seen as a “parenthesis” between God’s dealings with national Israel. Because it views the Moral Law [Decalogue] as given only to Israel and essentially limited to the Mosaic or “Legal Dispensation,” Dispensationalism is inherently antinomian.³²⁴

Following is a survey of its essence and the distinctions between the traditional Reformed and historic Baptist positions:

The Essence of Covenant Theology

Covenant Theology holds that God has always dealt with man within a covenant relationship—from a principle of *representation* and *imputation*—and not merely on a personal basis. This was and is the Divine prerogative by right of both creation and redemption.

³²³ The Dispensational authors include such men as: J. N. Darby, C. I. Scofield, James B. Gray, Henry C. Weston, A. T. Pierson, W. G. Moorehead, Arno C. Gaebelein, William L. Pettingill, E. W. Bullinger, Lewis Sperry Chafer, John Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, and Charles C. Ryrie.

³²⁴ Consequently, Dispensationalism has been largely responsible, along with the modified Wesleyan perfectionism of Finney, for promoting an easy-believism Gospel, the “Carnal Christian” heresy, and a denial of “Lordship” salvation.

Human beings have no say in this matter or right to complain against it as mere creatures of God (Rom. 9:19–24).³²⁵ Man was created to live in a covenant relationship with God (Gen. 1:27–28; 2:16–17; Jn. 17:1–2; Rom. 8:28–31; Eph. 1:3–14). There have been two covenants that determine the state of man before God—what are commonly called the *covenant of works* and the *covenant of grace*.

The covenant of works was made with Adam (Gen. 1:26–28; 2:16–17). Adam stood before God not merely as an individual, but as representative Man [the federal head of the human race]. When Adam apostatized from God by disobedience to that covenant and fell (Gen. 3:1–7; Rom. 5:12), the entire human race fell in him and were constituted sinners in and by his transgression (i.e., the imputation of [Adam’s] original sin and its necessary consequences).

Thus, man in Adam is a sinner (Rom. 5:12; 3:23), a covenant-breaker, a rebel, predisposed against God and his Law–Word (Rom. 8:7), alienated from a righteous, just and holy God, and now under the curse of the Law and the reigning power of sin.

Personal obedience on the part of any individual can never deliver from either original sin or the guilt, penalty, pollution or power of sin because every human being is a sinner by imputation, by the inheritance of a sinful nature, and by personal transgressions or sins.

Nothing can change or set aside the consequences of sin but the free and sovereign grace of God through the imputation of the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, any thought of salvation by works or human ability, or any cooperation between man and God is utterly foreign to the truth of Scripture and the necessity of salvation by grace alone.

The covenant of redemption and grace refers to the eternal redemptive purpose of the triune God to save elect sinners. It is termed the “covenant of redemption” because it is redemptive in

³²⁵ The Scripture carefully maintains the Creator–creature relation. The Creator is absolute, sovereign and self-determining; the creature has no right to question the Creator (Rom. 9:20–21).

nature. It is termed the “covenant of grace” because in this covenant man is considered as a sinner and must be saved by grace alone. All three Persons of the Godhead are inherently involved in this eternal, redemptive purpose.

- *God the Father* preeminently elects, calls, justifies and glorifies (Rom. 8:28–33; Eph. 1:3–11).
- *God the Son* is identified with the elect of the Father and becomes their Mediator, Surety, Redeemer and Advocate or Great High Priest (Rom. 5:1–2, 12–21; 8:34–39; Jn. 17:1ff; Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:5; 2 Tim. 1:8–10; Titus 2:11–14; Heb. 2:9–18; 4:14–16; 7:25–27; 9:11–12; 1 Pet. 1:18–20; 1 Jn. 2:1).
- *God the Spirit* applies the finished work of the Son to the elect in their experience, making Christian experience both possible and necessary (Rom. 5:5; 8:12–16, 26–27; Gal. 5:22–23).

In order to redeem sinners, God the Son became incarnate, not merely as Savior and Redeemer, but necessarily and pointedly as Representative Man. The covenant of grace was especially made with the Lord Jesus Christ—the “Second Man” [in contrast to the “first Man,” Adam] and the “Last Adam” [in contrast to the “first Adam”] (Rom. 5:12–21; 1 Cor. 15:21–22, 45–47).

By our Lord’s active obedience (his perfect life lived in conformity to the Law and its fulfillment) and passive obedience (his vicarious suffering and death, which paid the Law’s penalty, removed its curse, and answers to the righteousness of God, Rom. 1:16–17; 3:24–26; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13), those whom he represents are delivered from the curse of the Law (Gal. 4:4–5; 3:13), justified and reconciled to God (Acts 13:38–39; Rom. 5:1–11; Heb. 9:12).

Thus, every human being is included in one of two covenants: either in [union with] Adam or in [union with] Christ; either under the curse of the Law or redeemed from that curse through the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ; either under the reigning power of sin or freed from the reigning power of sin.

Those who are unregenerate, unconverted and therefore yet in their sins, are under the curse of the Law, under its condemnation and utterly alienated from a righteous, just and holy God. Those who are resting in Christ by faith have been brought into union with Christ with all its covenant blessings: justification, reconciliation, forgiveness of sins; are positionally sanctified, definitively sanctified, being practically sanctified, and will inevitably be glorified.³²⁶

The Distinctions between Reformed Tradition and The Baptist Position

There are two diverse approaches to Covenant Theology—Reformed tradition and the historic Baptist view. The Reformed tradition, possessing an “Old Testament mentality,” views the redemptive purpose from an Old Testament perspective; the Baptist position, possessing a “New Testament” mentality from the consistency of the principle of progressive revelation, views the covenant from a New Testament perspective.

Thus, Baptists have held that there are elements of diversity within the various covenants, while Reformed tradition has held that the Abrahamic covenant is *identical* with the “Covenant of Grace.”

Reformed tradition, denying the diversity and straining the unity of the covenant[s], makes no distinction between the promises made to Abraham personally and then to Abraham and his physical descendants concerning their nation and land, and then the spiritual promises made to Abraham concerning his spiritual seed and children. This “Reformed” approach was first put forth by Zwingli and Bullinger in their disputes with the Anabaptists, and was necessary to “prove” that circumcision was fulfilled in infant sprinkling.³²⁷

³²⁶ The pervasive argument of Romans 1–8 is that those who are justified by faith are also sanctified, and those who are justified and sanctified must inevitably be glorified. Paul under inspiration reasons from the context of the eternal, infallible, redemptive purpose.

³²⁷ See M. E. Osterhaven, “Covenant Theology,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 279.

The truth is that God in free and sovereign grace chose one man, Abraham, and in Abraham, a nation, and in that nation, his Elect, his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the true and singular “Seed of Abraham,” and in him, all believers (Acts 7:2–3; Gen. 12:1–3; 17:1–7; Jn. 8:31–56; Rom. 2:28–29; 4:9–17; 9:6–30; Gal. 3:6–16; 4:4–5).

The Scriptures further draw a distinction between national or physical Israel—the “seed of Abraham” (σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ), i.e., the Jews, and the “children of Abraham” (τέκνα Ἀβραάμ), i.e., believers from among both Jews and Gentiles.

D. Lessons and Cautions

Even in the glorious return to the truth of the Scriptures in the Reformation Era, there are lessons to be learned and cautions to be given:

- The study of the Hebrew and Greek must never be deprecated. A revival of the study of the Original Languages not only changed religion, but the whole of Western Civilization. God will bless the study of his Word.
- The Reformation was essentially and primarily a reformation in hermeneutic. To be consistent and thorough, hermeneutical reformation—the first step from Scripture to faith and practice—must accompany doctrinal reformation.
- The Reformers’ cry of *Sola Scriptura* must be considered in historical context. We are all children of our age, and none of us are completely free from our heritage or contemporary influences.
- The Lutheran and Reformed exegesis was still governed by ecclesiastical presuppositions inherited from Rome, possessing an Old Testament bias, which led them to retain and defend such practices as infant sprinkling, an intolerant persecution of other Christians, and an “Old Testament mentality” that colored their hermeneutic.
- Otherwise good principles can be held to an extreme. Error and heresy are but truth distorted. Luther’s Christological or Christo-centric principle, while seeking to see Christ as central in the Scriptures, found him where he was not, and

tended to change typology into allegory—the tendency of the Church Fathers, Scholastics, and even many modern evangelical preachers.

- Great blessing can be expected when people take an intimate interest in the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are correctly understood by the people. For a millennium, most of the common people of Europe listened to the Scriptures in an “unknown tongue”—Latin.

We do not fully appreciate what we have in our freedom to read the Bible and our ability to understand it. We stand upon the foundation of preceding generations, but do not appreciate that what we take for granted was once forbidden to the common people—and punishable by death.

- Truth brings controversy, not unity—unless the Holy Spirit prepares hearts and minds for true, scriptural unity.
- Classical learning should not be despised. The Reformation Era was greatly advanced by the preceding era of the Renaissance. God uses many men and means and sanctifies them or uses them unwittingly on their part to advance his cause.
- The science of Biblical Criticism is essentially legitimate, if it possesses the correct presuppositions and proceeds upon consistent principles. Even the so-called *Textus Receptus* was an eclectic and critical text.
- No one man—and no one group of men—possesses all the truth. Human nature is still sinful, still suffers from the noetic effects of sin, and still is prone to religious and ecclesiastical bias. This was true of both Catholics and Protestants.
- We must beware that we do not develop our hermeneutic or theology by reaction to issues that force us to defend an untenable position. E.g., Luther and the “negative principle” of allowing what the Scriptures do not expressly forbid, and Zwingli and Bullinger with their attempted use of a peculiar “Covenant Theology” to retain infant sprinkling.

- The right of private interpretation and the priesthood of the individual believer are spiritual realities that are not static, but dynamic in the believer's experience through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

There is a given amount of irrationality that approaches superstition pertaining to Bible translations and versions. The Romanists hold that the Latin Vulgate of Jerome (c. 405)—a version of a translation (from the *Old Latin Version*, c. 150) is inspired Scripture and authoritative as such. Some modern Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christians hold the same for the King James Version.

No translation or version can equal the Scriptures in the original languages. There are even great differences between the majority Greek text, represented by the *Stephanus* text of 1550, the later *Textus Receptus* of 1633, and the *King James Version*. The Romanists argue for the Latin Vulgate because of its antiquity and interpretation of certain terms which perpetuate Romish error.³²⁸

The modern irrationality or superstition surrounding the King James Version derives mostly from ignorance and a reaction to the later theories of Wescott and Hort,³²⁹ which helped give rise to the modern translations and versions such as the Revised Version (1881), American Standard Version (1901), The revised Standard Version (1946–1957), etc.

³²⁸ E.g., the interpretation of “repentance” as “penance.”

³²⁹ The Greek New Testament of Erasmus and later revisions that became the *Stephanus Text* of 1550 and finally the *Textus Receptus* of 1633 (with the influence of the *Codex Bezae*) were all eclectic or critical texts based on majority readings. The latter two each contained a critical apparatus listing major variant readings.

The later approach of Wescott and Hort was based on the oldest manuscripts (discovered after and much later than the texts used by Stephanus and in the TR) rather than the majority readings. The serious student will note that many of the readings adopted by Westcott & Hort have been abandoned in favor of the majority text in the most recent critical additions of the Gk. Testament, e.g., NA27.

Questions for Discussion

1. What was the time–frame and significance of the Sixteenth Century Reformation?
2. What was the significance of the Reformation with regard to hermeneutics and exegesis?
3. Can the Reformation be seen essentially as a reformation in biblical interpretation and the far–reaching ecclesiastical, moral, social and political effects of a recovered Bible? Explain in detail.
4. What were the effects of the Renaissance on the Reformation? Which were positive and which proved to be negative?
5. Explain the nature and effects of the Catholic Reformation. What effect did this, as expressed by and reflected in the Council of Trent, have upon biblical interpretation?
6. What are “Realism” and “Nominalism” as philosophical approaches to reality? What affect did they have on biblical studies and interpretation?
7. What was the influence of English Puritanism on biblical interpretation and study? Trace the lasting influence of Puritanism throughout Britain and to America.
8. How did a recovered Bible and a return to the historico–grammatical interpretation of the Scriptures give rise to the great Confessions of Faith?
9. What is the relation of the European invention of the printing press to the Reformation and the revival of biblical studies?
10. How did the Humanist scholars of the late Renaissance and early Reformation era further biblical studies? Who were the outstanding individuals and what were their contributions?
11. What was the *Complutensian Polyglot*, and what is its significance?
12. What was the effect of Erasmus’ Greek and Latin New Testament upon Europe and Britain?

13. What is the source of the now famous statement of Tyndale about the boy behind the plow knowing the Scriptures better than the priest?
14. What is the history of the so-called *Textus Receptus*? Trace its history and show its relation to the *Stephanus Text* of 1550, the Geneva Bible and the King James Version. Why can it be said historically that the *Textus Receptus* is *not* the basis for the KJV? What was the basis for the KJV?
15. Trace the development of the King James Version from the history of the English Bible.
16. How did the Nominalism of William of Ockham affect the thinking of Luther in his approach to the Bible?
17. What were the positive and negative aspects of Luther's principles of interpretation? Where did they lead him astray? What has the effect been on Lutheranism?
18. How can the general superiority of the Reformed exegetes be explained in comparison with others of the Reformation Era?
19. What were the outstanding features of John Calvin as the greatest exegete and commentator of the Reformation Era?
20. What were Calvin's distinctive principles of interpretation that made his exegesis superior?
21. What one principle of Calvin's doctrine of the Scriptures remains a distinct Calvinistic doctrine to this day? What relationship does this have to salvation and evangelism? To exegesis and interpretation? To Apologetics?
22. What is the essence or controlling principle of Covenant Theology?
23. What are the essential differences between Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism?
24. Why do each necessitate an inclusive, self-consistent hermeneutic?
25. Have Baptists historically held to Covenant Theology or to Dispensationalism? Explain the reasons why the

transition has taken place from Covenant Theology to Dispensational theology on the part of many.

26. Are there differences between a Covenant Theology as historically held by Baptists and by that held by paedobaptists? What are these differences?

IX

Post–Reformation Exegesis

John 13:34–35. A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.³³⁰

1 Timothy 6:3–5. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth...³³¹

Hebrews 5:11–14. ...ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which *be* the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to

³³⁰ Christian love is a rare commodity—yet it is commanded by our Lord as the one great characteristic of true Christianity! ἐντολήν καινὴν (new in quality or nature) δίδωμι ὑμῖν, ἵνα ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους (not an undefined or nebulous love, but a love that reflects the love of Christ to his own) ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκονται πάντες ὅτι ἐμοὶ μαθηταὶ ἐστε, ἐὰν ἀγάπην ἔχητε ἐν ἀλλήλοις. (such love is to be the badge of true Christianity!). Love is usually the first grace to disappear in controversy.

³³¹ Doctrine is to be expressed in godliness, not merely in controversy or confusion. Doctrine always tends to become harsh, divisive and uncharitable when divorced from practical godliness and holiness of life. We are reminded of the words of Evangelist Rolfe Barnard concerning those who prided themselves in doctrinal correctness, but lacked the corresponding godliness of life: “Straight as a gun barrel—and just as empty and just as deadly!”

them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.³³²

A. Time–Frame and Significance

Time–Frame

The Post–Reformation Era of exegesis and hermeneutic is generally considered as extending from the death of John Calvin to the end of the sixteenth century (1564–1700), or even to the French Revolution (1564–1789). Calvin was the great exegete and interpreter of the Reformation.

The following generation entrenched itself in a “Neo–Scholasticism” that regressed from the primacy and influence of the literal exegesis of the great Reformers, and reverted to a more mechanical view of inspiration and an exegesis subordinated to the Creeds and Confessions.

The influence of Enlightenment philosophy,³³³ which preceded and was characterized by the French Revolution, introduces us to the Modern Era of Biblical Studies and its conflicts—a denial of Divine inspiration, a radical, so–called “Destructive Higher Criticism.”

Note: There are two types of Biblical Criticism: Textual or “lower” (in the sense of being primary or first) Criticism, and Historical or “Higher” (in the sense of being later or after) Criticism. Both are legitimate aspects of biblical science. Textual criticism deals with the text of Scripture in the Hebrew or Greek mss. with their variant readings, glosses or alleged scribal errors. Historical

³³² Spiritual regression is a great possibility. Cf. v. 11–12, *γεγόνατε...γεγόνατε*, “Ye have become...ye have become...,” the perf. of *γίνομαι* implying a regression from their former state. This was the sad state of much of Post–Reformation exegesis.

³³³ The “Enlightenment” was the child of the humanism of the Renaissance in its separation from God and religion. It was a rejection of supernatural revelation and a belief in human ability through reason. It is referred to by historians as “The Age of Reason.” The Enlightenment philosophy found expression in German Rationalism, English Deism and French Skepticism. Enlightenment philosophy spawned Unitarianism, Transcendentalism, nineteenth century religious Liberalism and a rationalistic approach to Scripture which was expressed in radical biblical criticism.

Criticism deals with external and internal evidence to establish the authorship and date of a particular writing.

If the presuppositions are rationalistic [antissupernaturalistic], denying Divine revelation, inspiration, miracles and prophecy, then historical criticism becomes a “Destructive Higher Criticism” that reconstructs the Scriptures along evolutionary lines by a process of redaction [subsequent and continual editing, e.g., the JEDP theory], giving a “late date” for a given writing, or an approach that seeks to find the alleged original oral sources for the writings, e.g., “Form Criticism”, etc. Liberalism, Modernism, Neo-Orthodoxy, etc.

Significance

The Post-Reformation Era, like the Medieval Era, was transitory. This time formed a significant transition from the Renaissance and Reformation to the Modern Age in the history of interpretation. Two lines of thought diverged, one inherited from the Renaissance and the other from the Reformation.

The negative aspect of humanism, with its rationalistic tendencies would be evidenced in Socinianism and Rationalism, and eventually in the modern critical-historical approach to biblical exegesis.

The positive aspect of humanism, with its emphasis on the Original Languages, Philology, a revival of Hebraic and historical studies, and Textual Criticism, would combine with the theology of the Reformation to produce a confessional type of exegesis largely characterized by a proof-text approach to agree with the prevalent Lutheran or Reformed Confessions. This latter influence, revised, refined and sanctified, would find its expression in modern Reformed and Evangelical Hermeneutic.

This period of church history was characterized by the establishment of a rival state-church system which paralleled that of Rome.³³⁴ Each European country, according to its predominant

³³⁴ The concept of a state-church began with the “Constantinian Change” in 313 AD under the Emperor Constantine. Such an entity is a hybrid, an unscriptural institution that makes the “church” a national, religio-political organization. The Reformation, rather than return to the scriptural concept of the New Testament or gospel church, simply created

Lutheran or Reformed tendency, sought to produce its own doctrinal standards or Confession of Faith as a test of orthodoxy. This produced several great theological controversies and a confessionalism that became religiously and politically oppressive toward all opposition. This was, in part, a reaction to the Council of Trent and an attempt to achieve religious and political stability against the threat of Romanism and various “heretical” factions.

This situation produced a “Neo–Scholasticism,” that paralleled Medieval Scholasticism, in which exegesis and hermeneutic were harnessed to enforce the theology of either Lutheran or Reformed systems. This was, indeed, a regression from the Reformation Era.

The Neo–Scholasticism of the Post–Reformation Era tended to produce a cold, merely doctrinal and controversial religion largely bereft of personal faith, holiness of life and true spirituality.³³⁵ Reaction came in the form of Pietism, which tended to the other extreme, and in subsequent Moravianism, Methodism and the first “Great Awakening.”

Other notable issues of this age were the rise and influence of Puritanism in Britain, the influence of Rationalism through humanism and Socinianism, and the mystical tendencies of such men as Jacob Böehme and Emanuel Swedenborg. This was also the beginning of the science of textual criticism and a time when some great and useful biblical commentaries were written.

B. Neo–Scholasticism

Neo–Scholasticism marked a period of decline or regression from the Reformation Era. It was the age of polemic or theological controversy, “a period of heresy hunting and rigid, creedal

several state churches to rival Rome. These necessarily became exclusive and oppressive within their respective spheres of power.

³³⁵ F. W. Farrar, whose perception usually proves helpful, had no appreciation for the Post–Reformation Era and its controversies. He sided with the Arminians, Rationalists and Mystics, and aligned himself against the more orthodox doctrine of inspiration.

Protestantism.”³³⁶ The major controversies and resulting Standards or Confessions of this era were: A series of Lutheran controversies, the greatest of which concerned salvation, antinomianism, and the sacraments, and was settled by the *Formula of Concord* (1577); The Arminian controversy in the Netherlands, which took on an international character and resulted in the Synod of Dort (c. 1607–1619); and the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* (1675).

This council, among other things pertaining to the nature of Scripture, held that the Hebrew vowel-points were Divinely inspired, as opposed to Louis Cappel, a Salmurian scholar who denied their inspiration.³³⁷

The result of the polemic atmosphere was that “exegesis became the handmaid of dogmatics, and degenerated into a mere search for proof-texts.”³³⁸ Exegesis was determined by the Confessions of Faith and Doctrinal Standards rather than the reverse.

The prevalent polemic atmosphere and approach once again began to obscure the truth of a dynamic inspiration in favor of a more mechanical idea of inspiration divorced from Christian life and practical application.³³⁹ “...theological statements forged in the heat of controversy often lacked the balance that comes from

³³⁶ Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

³³⁷ The “pointings” refer to the twenty-seven different diacritical markings including vowel points, accents, etc., in the Masoretic Text. Louis Cappel [Capellus] (1585–1658) was a scholar from the Huguenot School at Samur, France, the source of a modified Calvinism in the form of Amyraldianism and Pajonism. See W. R. Downing, “Salmurianism,” *Lectures on Calvinism and Arminianism*, pp. 283–291. Subsequent biblical scholarship confirms that the Masorah, or Jewish scribes of about the sixth century (c. fifth–ninth centuries?) inserted the system of vowel-pointings to preserve the pronunciation of the text.

³³⁸ Louis Berkhof, *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

³³⁹ Even the corrections in translations and versions were frowned upon. Among the Lutherans, “To correct even acknowledged errors in Luther’s translation was regarded as ‘dangerous;’ nay, the very typographical errors of his editions were to be left intact—a sure sign of what kind of faith was being set up.” F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 374.

comprehensive exegetical study based on a dispassionate study of the Scriptures.”³⁴⁰

Farrar generally summarizes this era with the following insight: “The whole of this epoch was retarded, and its labour vitiated by a three-fold curse: the curse of tyrannous confessionalism; the curse of exorbitant systems; the curse of contentious bitterness.”³⁴¹ He later adds, “They read the Bible by the unnatural glare of theological hatred.”³⁴²

C. Pietism

Seventeenth and eighteenth century German Pietism was a reaction against the neo-Scholasticism and cold theological dogmatism [dogmatic interpretation] in the century and a half that followed the Protestant Reformation. “Pietism was the effort to recover the Bible as spiritual food and nourishment to be read for personal edification.”³⁴³ It approached the Scripture in a very practical and subjective way for personal edification—the “devotional” approach to Scripture.

Such an approach characterized the ministry and writings of such men as Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), who had been greatly influenced by the writings of Richard Baxter, and published his *Pia Desidera* [*Pious Requirements*] (1675)³⁴⁴ and organized his *Collegia pietis* where believers met for edification. August Hermann Francke of Halle (1663–1727) was the Pietist scholar, linguist, exegete and preacher. He published commentaries and several works on Hermeneutics.

German Pietism had a great and wide influence in instilling a practical, spiritual warmth back into a Christianity that had been

³⁴⁰ A. Berkeley Mickelsen, *Op. cit.*, p. 41.

³⁴¹ F. W. Farrar, *Op. cit.*, p. 359.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 363.

³⁴³ Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, p. 61.

³⁴⁴ In this work, Spener “...urged...that all Christian doctrine should be sought in a faithful study of the Holy Scriptures rather than in the symbols...[Creeds, Confessions]...of the Church, and that the living truth of God’s word should be brought home to the hearts of the people.” Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, p. 705.

hardened and chilled by controversy. Later groups, such as the Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf and the Moravians, the Wesleyans and Quakers, all followed the early German Pietists.

The Puritans, modern-day Evangelicals and Baptists evidence either some direct or indirect influence from Pietism in stressing individual conversion and practical godliness. Modern Baptists and other Evangelical Arminians, with their lack of doctrine and tendency toward subjectivism [emotionalism] are modern Pietistic Christians, although they lack the linguistic and biblical scholarship of the early Pietists.

Pietism, however, led to a religious subjectivism and a contempt for intellectual Christianity. Some Pietists and the Quakers claimed to be guided by an “inner light” in their interpretation of Scripture—an extreme view of 1 Jn. 2:20, 27 which confused illumination with inspiration.

Such an approach tended toward confusion, subjectivism, irrationalism and a mystical approach to Scripture. Feeling must never replace doctrine, or subjective impressions the objective teaching of Scripture. There is a legitimate devotional approach to Scripture that is necessarily founded on historico-grammatical principles.

However, some modern so-called “devotional” uses of Scripture violate basic and consistent hermeneutical principles, such as a complete disregard for the grammar or context of Scripture.³⁴⁵

If one changes the grammar of the Scripture, or disregards the context, one necessarily changes the meaning or disregards it, and so speaks, writes or acts without any scriptural authority.³⁴⁶ Further,

³⁴⁵ E.g., Gen. 31:49, “The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another...” is often used as a benediction, when it was actually a covenant between two deceivers who did not trust each other, and so called upon God to watch the other! E.g., In Psa. 118:24 the indicative “rejoice” is changed to the imperative mode and given as an exhortation, “This *is* the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

³⁴⁶ E.g., Psa. 2:8, “Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen for thine inheritance...” has been used as a missionary text, but the context

the devotional use of Scripture tends to erase the distinction between legitimate typology and allegorism. Finally, care must be taken to make the absolutely necessary distinction between *interpretation* and *application*—a distinction often lacking in Pietistic Christianity.

D. Mysticism

Mystical interpretation is characterized by a rather irrational and disjointed approach to the Bible. “Manifold depths and shades of meaning are sought in every word of Scripture.”³⁴⁷ This approach not only characterized most of the allegorists among the Church Fathers and Medieval scholastics, but included several later heretical writers.

Jakob Böhme (1575–1624), a Lutheran mystic and theosophist, was given to ecstatic experiences and visions. He was the author of several devotional works. He taught, among other things, a “Higher Life” type of doctrine of dying to self and living on a “higher plane.”³⁴⁸

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), a Swedish scientist, psychic, neo-Platonic philosopher and theologian, also was given to strange visions and dreams. He taught a three-fold sense of Scripture: the “natural” or literal, the “spiritual” and the “celestial.” This hermeneutic caused him to reject many biblical books.³⁴⁹

The mystical approach must also include some Pietists and the Quakers and their insistence upon their “inner light.” John Wesley would generally fit into this group, as his approach to Scripture and view on Christian experience were determined largely by his reading of the early and Medieval Christian Mystics, his belief in

(v. 6–9) refers this to the reign of the Messiah–King, who shall judge the nations and rule them with a rod of iron.

³⁴⁷ Milton S. Terry, *Loc. cit.*

³⁴⁸ See Robert G. Clouse, “Böhme, Jakob,” *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 139.

³⁴⁹ Swedenborg denied the trinitarian nature of the Godhead, the vicarious nature of the atonement, and justification by faith. He rejected any biblical writings that lacked the “internal or spiritual sense,” including Chronicles, Song of Solomon, Acts and all the New Testament Epistles.

“Christian perfectionism,” insistence upon the realities of witchcraft, his practice of casting lots and bibliomancy, and a confusion of illumination with inspiration.³⁵⁰

Note: Bibliomancy is the practice of opening the Bible at random and receiving a definite, sure word from God pertaining to any given situation or circumstance as the leading of the Holy Spirit. This practice led him to preach and publish his tirades against Calvinism.

E. Puritanism

The Puritans (c. 1560–1740)³⁵¹ both in Britain and in America from the late sixteenth to early eighteenth century followed closely in the train of the Reformers, and their commentaries have proven to be some of the richest, most doctrinally-sound and practical works ever penned, although some would find a tendency at times toward a dogmatic exegesis.

Although they lacked a more modern, informed approach to the languages, their doctrinal exegesis was sane and very balanced for their day, and their practical approach to the personal, experiential, pastoral and evangelical application of Scripture has never been equaled.³⁵²

³⁵⁰ See W. R. Downing, *Op. cit.*, “Evangelical Arminianism,” “Appendix IV: An Open Letter from Mr. George Whitefield to Mr. John Wesley,” *Op. cit.*, pp. 293–322, 493–503.

³⁵¹ The Puritan Era has been extended to include such writers as Jonathan Edwards, Matthew Henry and Thomas Boston, who are usually considered among the Puritan writers and tradition. It may be well to recall the words of C. H. Spurgeon, who “noted that a puritan is not someone who lived at such and such a period or age, but a puritan is one of God’s precious few who makes God and His Word the end and the square of his life.” Quoted by Jay Green, Sr., in the preface to John Brown’s *Commentary on Galatians*.

³⁵² E.g., see Peter Lewis, *The Genius of Puritanism*. Lewis develops his work in the following manner: The Puritan in the Pulpit, The Puritan in the Pew, and The Puritan in Private. Also see Robert P. Martin, *A Guide to the Puritans*, in which the author lists the Puritan works and sources for comments upon the entire Scriptures with both a topical and a Scripture index. Perry Miller’s *Introduction to the Puritans* in two volumes, although failing to grasp their spiritual nature, contains a very complete listing of the Puritan writings.

Note: A general listing of the Puritan writers: The writings of the Puritans give us some of the finest doctrinal and practical expositions ever written. The Puritan era gave rise to great practical theologians, rich commentators and eminent preachers. The following authors comprise the most well-known published Puritans: Thomas Adams, Joseph Alleine, Isaac Ambrose, William Ames, John Ball, William Bates, Richard Baxter, Paul Bayne, William Beveridge, Robert Bolton, Samuel Bolton, Thomas Boston, William Bradshaw, Thomas Bridge, William Bridge, Thomas Brooks, John Bunyan, Anthony Burgess, Jeremiah Burroughs,

Joseph Caryl, Stephen Charnock, David Clarkson, Elisha Coles, John Collins, David Dickson, Jonathan Edwards, John Flavel, Christopher Fowler, Thomas Fuller, Thomas Goodwin, William Gouge, Richard Greenham, William Greenhill, William Jenkyn, William Gurnall, William Guthrie, Joseph Hall, Philip Henry, Matthew Henry, Thomas Hooker, Ezekiel Hopkins, John Howe,

George Hutcheson, James Janeway, William Jenkyn, Robert Leighton, John Lightfoot, John Livingstone, Christopher Love, Thomas Manton, Walter Marshall, Christopher Ness, John Owen, William Perkins, John Preston, John Robinson, John Rogers, Samuel Rutherford, Henry Scudder, Obadiah Sedgwick, Thomas Shepherd, Richard Sibbes, Henry Smith, George Swinnock, Thomas Taylor, Robert Traill, John Trapp, Ralph Venning, and Thomas Watson.

F. Biblical Scholarship

The Post-Reformation Era was not bereft of scholarship. This period marked the beginning of the science of textual criticism and also one of the great eras of the writing and publication of great biblical works.

Textual Criticism

This period witnessed the beginning of the science of textual (“Lower”) criticism in both Hebrew and Greek.

The issues concerning the Hebrew or Masoretic Text of the Old Testament revolved about the vowel-points, the alleged corruption of the text, questions concerning the *Qere* [what is read]

and the *Qethibh* [what is written], and the differences between the Hebrew text and the LXX.³⁵³

With the publication of Erasmus' Greek New Testament (1516) and a renewed interest in the Original Languages, the study of variant readings in the existing Greek manuscripts became a matter of concern. Both conservative and rationalistic scholars approached the problems in a systematic way. The so-called *Textus Receptus* of Stephanus and Beza was edited and a comprehensive critical apparatus was formed.³⁵⁴

The great work of this era was the *Critici Sacri*, a multi-volume work on the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament containing essays on biblical interpretation, antiquities, textual criticism and exegesis gathered from the leading theologians and exegetes of this era and first published in 1660.³⁵⁵ During this era the foundations were being laid for the modern historical-critical approach to Scripture that would be characterized by the rationalistic theories of radical biblical criticism.

Biblical Works

The Post-Reformation period was a prolific era for Biblical scholarship, including polyglot Bibles, the linguistic, grammatical and lexical work done in Hebrew, Syriac, Aramaic, Chaldee, the rabbinic literature, and the Greek; the commentaries of the English and Scottish Puritans, the commentaries and devotional writings of the German Pietists, and a host of commentaries and critical works by French, Dutch and German authors.³⁵⁶

³⁵³ The controversy concerning the Masoretic Text and the LXX would continue until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, as until that time, the oldest Old Testament Hebrew mss. were dated at approx. 1000 AD.

³⁵⁴ It ought to be noted that this was a century before the advent of Wescott and Hort and their textual theory. See footnotes 173–175.

³⁵⁵ The 1660 edition had nine volumes, subsequent editions (1698–1702) increased to thirteen volumes. See Donald K. McKim, *Op. cit.*, p. 138; and Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, pp. 684–685.

³⁵⁶ The listing of Donald K. McKim comprises at least fourteen pages, *Ibid.*, pp. 137–151.

Several wrote commentaries on the entire Bible, e.g., Jean Alfonse Diodati, Daniel Tossanus, John Piscator, Abraham Calovius, Matthew Poole,³⁵⁷ John Trapp, John Gill and Matthew Henry. Several of the Westminster Divines consorted to write a commentary on the entire Bible, popularly called the *Westminster Annotations*.

Some Major Contributors

- Hugo de Groot (Hugo Grotius) (1583–1645) was a prodigy and an internationally famous jurist. He developed the Governmental Theory of the Atonement subsequently held by the Arminians, Wesleyans and Finney. His biblical writings anticipated the modern historical–critical method.
- Louis Cappel (Cappellus) (1585–1658) was a professor at the Huguenot school at Samur. He opposed the view of François Turrentin and the Formula Consensus Helvetica that the Hebrew vowel–points were Divinely inspired.
- John Lightfoot (1602–1675)³⁵⁸ was a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines and a Hebraist and biblical scholar. Among his many works is *A History of the Jewish People at the Time of Jesus Christ* in five volumes, demonstrating the Jewish background to the Gospel records and the relation of rabbinic Judaism to early Christianity.
- Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669), the Dutch scholar who developed the Federal Theology, stressed a biblical theology that reacted against the proof–text mentality, and asserted the organic unity of Scripture. However, he went to the opposite extreme of holding to a multiplicity of meanings in the text.

³⁵⁷ Poole's Synopsis "is for substance, an abridgment of the *Critici Sacri* although it includes the comments of many other writers, and refers to versions not represented in the larger work." Milton S. Terry, *Loc. cit.*

³⁵⁸ Not to be confused with J[oseph] B[arber] Lightfoot (1828–1889), Cambridge theologian and one of the greatest Greek New Testament commentators of the nineteenth century, or with R[obert] H[enry] Lightfoot (1883–1953), professor of New Testament at Oxford and radical critic who introduced Form Criticism into England.

- Richard Simon (1638–1712), called “the greatest scholar in seventeenth century France,” was a liberal and Catholic who maintained the corruption of the Hebrew text. He was a forerunner of the modern historical–critical theory, holding that behind the text lay a historic tradition and a process of redaction or editing.
- John Mill[s] (1645–1707) was one of the leading New Testament scholars, and the first to call attention to and study the variant readings in the *Textus Receptus* and other mss. His work launched the modern academic study of New Testament Textual Criticism.
- Jean–Alphonse Turretin (1671–1737) was the son of François Turretin, successor to Theodore Beza at Geneva. Although of the rationalistic school, he opposed Cocceius, holding to the primacy of the Original Languages, and insisting that the Bible must be “interpreted without any dogmatic prepossessions, and with the aid of logic and analysis. He exercised a profound and beneficial influence.”³⁵⁹
- Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687–1752) was a Pietist and the founder of modern New Testament Criticism. He developed the first concise critical apparatus and was the first to divide the variants into text “families” according to their predominant characteristics and origins, laying the foundation for all further textual criticism.

His *Gnomon*, or Word Study of the Greek New Testament (1724) is a helpful, practical work to this day, highly praised by such men as C. H. Spurgeon.

- Johann Jakob Rambach (1693–1735) was a Pietist exegete, poet and hymnwriter. He authored a very influential work on Hermeneutic, *Institutiones Hermeneuticae Sacrae* (1724).³⁶⁰

³⁵⁹ Louis Berkhof, *Op. cit.*, p. 30. The original family name was Turretini, Italian. The shorter form is the Latinized version.

³⁶⁰ In addition to Rambach, Donald K. McKim lists twelve significant works on Hermeneutic written and published during the Post–Reformation Era. *Op. cit.* p. 138.

- Johann August Ernesti (1707–1781) was professor at Leipzig and author of *The Biblical Interpreter*. He held the orthodox view of Divine inspiration and to the historico–grammatical interpretation, opposing the dogmatic exegesis of the day. He insisted that the Old Testament and New Testament be studied separately, reacting to the predominant Old Testament mentality.

G. Rationalism

Rationalism represented the mentality inherited from the Renaissance and expressed itself both without and within the biblical studies of the Post–Reformation Era. Without the scope of biblical studies, rationalism was represented by the English Deists and later Unitarians, who were skeptics concerning the Bible and Christianity. Rationalism was also characteristic of such philosophers as Thomas Hobbs (1588–1697), John Locke (1632–1704), Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), David Hume (1711–1776) and François–Marie Arouet Voltaire (1694–1778).

These thinkers held that man could be governed by reason alone, and either denied the supernaturalism of Scripture, or sought to separate the rational from religion, which relegated religion, Christianity and the Bible to the realm of the irrational—antedating and anticipating the later influence of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). In such a context, the Scriptures were held to be fictitious or deprived of their spiritual, doctrinal, historical and moral veracity.

Within the framework of biblical studies, Rationalism was represented by two forces. Socinianism subordinated the authority of Scripture to human reason and later Biblical Criticism questioned both the integrity of the text and the historical veracity of the various writings, advancing theories which would bear evil fruit in subsequent decades.

H. Lessons and Cautions

- It is sadly possible to regress from scriptural truth and emphasis through a defensive posture or even the highest possible motives.

- As every generation needs regeneration, so every generation needs to exegete the Scriptures to remain fresh and biblical. To interpret according to the Creeds and Confessions is to regress from Scriptural truth and raise a great barrier between the mind, heart and soul and the Scriptures.
- It is always dangerous and an inevitable source of error when any doctrinal statement, standard or Confession of Faith supplants the Scriptures.
- Theological exegesis is a necessity because of the nature of the language of Scripture and theological terminology, but we must let our exegesis determine our theology and not our theology determine our exegesis. Those who lack the necessary skills in the Original Languages necessarily interpret the Scriptures through either their theology or according to their feelings.
- There is a necessary relation between doctrinal and practical Christianity, but the doctrinal both precedes and determines the shape of the practical. To reverse this order is to invite error and distort truth.
- The devotional use of the Bible is necessary, but must be pursued within definite bounds. Liberty must never be taken with the text to change grammar or syntax, or to disregard the context.
- Any reaction to exegesis, exposition and theology necessarily tends to the opposite extreme. Error and heresy are but distorted aspects of truth.
- Although the Puritans lived and wrote long before the modern, practical knowledge and use of the Κοινή Greek, yet they made the best use they could of the Original Languages, leaned toward practical exegesis, doctrinal exposition and practical application. Their heritage is largely the richest in scriptural exposition that we possess.
- We must remember never to minimize the noetic effects of sin. Rationalism and Evidentialism both either deny or greatly minimize the effect of The Fall and apostasy of man from God in relation to his thought–process. Man by nature

does not possess a right understanding of God, his Word, or the gospel. To adequately and properly come to terms with Divine truth, he must be regenerated and illuminated by the Spirit of God.³⁶¹

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by the Post–Reformation Era? Explain this era historically and as to its major characteristics.
2. What was “Neo–Scholasticism”? How did neo–Scholasticism parallel the scholasticism of the Medieval Era? Why was this one of the major characteristics of the Post–Reformation era?
3. Why is motive or intention, even if sanctified and devoted to the Bible, a poor point–of–reference and substitute for an intelligent, self–consistent approach to the Scriptures determined by the rules of grammar and facts of history?
4. What are the dangers of a creedal or confessional exegesis?
5. What are the dangers of a “proof text” approach to scriptural exegesis and interpretation?
6. Is a catechism with proof texts a legitimate method for teaching? Why? Why not? What must be the safeguards?
7. What is Pietism? How did the early Pietists differ from later Pietists? What was lost and what were the inevitable results?
8. What is mysticism? What has the effect of mysticism been on biblical exegesis and interpretation?
9. What are the lasting beneficial effects of Puritanism on biblical studies?
10. What is Biblical Criticism? Is it a legitimate biblical science? What are its two main branches of study? How do these relate to each other?

³⁶¹ Cf. Part II, “Spiritual Qualifications.”

11. What is the very necessary distinction between being rational and being rationalistic? What is Philosophical Rationalism? What is Religious Rationalism?
12. What has been the effect of Rationalism on biblical scholarship and Hermeneutics?
13. Without an adequate knowledge of the original languages, how must one interpret the Scriptures? Why are such approaches not only insufficient, but also misleading and dangerous? Can you think of specific examples?
14. What is the necessary relation that must exist between the exegetical or expository approach to the Bible and the devotional approach?
15. What are the inherent dangers in a mere devotional or even a mere homiletical approach to Scriptures, divorced from sound exegesis and consistent exposition?

X

Modern Exegesis

Psa. 11:3. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?³⁶²

Hos. 4:6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee...

Matthew 15:6, 9. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition....teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

John 5:38–40. And ye have not his word abiding in you...ye believe not.

1 Cor. 2:11–14. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which

³⁶² David laments because justice seems to be taken from among men, and so he looks to God. By application the Word of God forms the very foundation, and when it is removed, what shall the righteous do? The introductory verses in this section are all used by way of application to the issues of modern exegesis.

things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.³⁶³

A. The Significance of The Modern Era

The eighteenth through twentieth centuries witnessed the industrial revolution, the greatest wars in human history, the greatest advancements in science and technology, and the greatest changes in the Christian Religion since the Sixteenth Century Reformation.

The early eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries witnessed the first and second “Great Awakenings,” which religiously and morally transformed British and American churches and their respective societies for several decades, and halted for a time the intrusion of British Rationalism and Deism, French skepticism and the German Enlightenment philosophy.

The nineteenth century was the era of the rise of most of the various cults and “isms” that characterize the extreme fringe of American religion.

Throughout this era, two general lines of thought, religious tendencies and approaches to the Scriptures have manifest themselves: the tendencies which generally characterized the Renaissance and those which characterized the Reformation.

The Renaissance–mentality gave impetus to Rationalism, Deism, The Enlightenment, the historical–critical method of approach to the Scriptures, with its attendant disciplines; and to Unitarianism, Liberalism, Modernism, and Postmodernism.

The Reformation–mentality gave impetus to a general orthodoxy in exegesis, doctrine and Christian experience. Other tendencies began to rise in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries—tendencies which in some ways synthesize both the

³⁶³ Modern radical biblical scholarship cannot enter into the spiritual realities of Scripture because its adherents are incapable of doing so, being bereft of the Spirit, and therefore of spiritual discernment.

Renaissance and Reformation mentalities, or are reactionary, such as ecumenism, religious existentialism and the postmodern approach to exegesis.

Note: The modern Fundamental, Evangelical and Reformed interpretation of Scripture basically follows the principles of the historico–grammatical approach that characterized the Reformation, although Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism suffer from a lack of exegesis and serious interest in the Original Languages, and tend toward both a devotional use of Scripture and a Dispensational Hermeneutic.

B. A Chronology of The Modern Era

The era of modern exegesis overlaps the early rationalistic trend that arose during the Post–Reformation Era. This Modern Era includes a variety of exegetical or hermeneutical approaches, including: historical–critical exegesis, the interpretative approach of nineteenth century Liberalism and twentieth century Modernism, Neoorthodox or existential interpretation, Liberation Theology, Black Theology and Feministic interpretation.

The major concerns of the Modern Era in the area of exegesis in this chapter are given to the rise of the “scientific” or critical method and subsequent departures from the faith. This era may be very generally divided into the following phases:

- *The Beginnings*: Early philosophical Rationalism as inherited from the Renaissance (c. 1650–1700).

Rationalism has been considered in the preceding chapter. Rationalism and English Deism gave rise to French infidelity or Skepticism [“Free Thought”] and to German Rationalism, which became known as “The Enlightenment,” i.e., the intellectual movement which held to the supremacy of reason in matters of science and religion, and centered in the German Universities.

- *The Age of Reason*: The Enlightenment (c. 1700–1800).

Although by 1750, Enlightenment thought was dying out in Britain, the place of its origin, it was flourishing in Germany, where it produced an intellectual revolution, especially in the area of biblical scholarship. The issues were essentially:

1. *Epistemological*. What was the source of truth, the human mind guided by reason, or the Scriptures as given by God? The result was that reason was divorced from religion, and the scriptures were subjected to a new, “scientific” or critical method that denied the supernatural in general and inspiration and miracles in particular.
 2. *Religious*. What was the relation of religion to the Bible? Religion divorced from the authority of Scripture and dogma became simply the bulwark of morality and, with the later rise of Romanticism, was relegated to the realm of the irrational—the feelings or subjective experience.
- *The Liberal Era: the Development and Height of the Critical Method* (c. 1800–1918).

This was a turbulent period, beginning with the Napoleonic Wars (1789–1815). It embraced the French Revolution (1789–), the second “Great Awakening” (1793–1840), the modern missionary movement (1793–), the American War between the States (1861–1865), the Bolshevik Revolution (1917) and the First World War (1914–1918).

During this time, Germany became unified and German Rationalism reached its peak and height of influence through the academic freedom of the German university system. German radical biblical criticism was imported into both Britain and America,³⁶⁴ adversely affecting biblical scholarship.³⁶⁵

Note: It was a time of German philosophical dominance. The philosophies of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and Georg

³⁶⁴ Due to the prominence of German Theology and biblical scholarship, many American theological students studied in Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Many returned with German “Neology.” Even Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield of Princeton Seminary spent time studying in Germany. Invariably, American seminaries and universities became corrupted through their Old Testament and Hebrew departments through which German rationalism was imported.

³⁶⁵ See C. Gregg Singer, *A Theological Interpretation of American History*. Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1976. 305 pp., for a full and outstanding discussion of American History, especially of Transcendentalism.

Wilhelm Freidrich Hegel (1770–1831) pervaded the thinking of Europe, Britain and America. Both Kantian Idealism and Hegelian Dialectic (and Hegelian pantheism and the later panentheism of Transcendentalism) had a determining effect upon Christian thought. Transcendental Idealism divided things into the *phenomena* and *noumena*. *Phenomena* existed in the world of sense experience and are subject to scientific investigation. *Noumena* could not. This ultimately relegated God, religion, faith and the Scriptures to the realm of the irrational, beyond empirical investigation.

Kant sought to salvage religion because of its moral and ethical value. Kantian Idealism destroyed any objective authority of Scripture, furthered religious subjectivism and was the precursor to the religious existentialism of Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855).

Scientific discoveries and theories, coupled with evolutionary [Darwinian] presuppositions brought the veracity of the Bible into question and also became a paradigm for biblical criticism, i.e., the biblical history of Israel in the Old Testament and the history of the New Testament were subjected to an evolutionary [social Darwinian] hypothesis and reconstructed accordingly.

Romanticism (c. 1790–1850), a reaction against Rationalism, emphasized the aesthetic and emotional or sentimental, while promoting the alleged nobility and innocence of human nature (e.g., the idea of “the noble Savage”). This furthered religion as subjective experience divorced from rational thought and scriptural authority.

German “Liberalism,” a religion freed from the authority of Scripture by the historical–critical method from dogma, and limited to morality and feeling, was imported into Britain and America through scholarly literary works,³⁶⁶ the universities and theological seminaries.

³⁶⁶ E.g., Some German works were either translated into English or British and American scholars promoted German Rationalism through their writings. Some of the scholarly reference works of this era were given to radical scholarship, e.g., *Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible* and Hasting's *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.

The rationalistic or radical approach, through its social Darwinism, gave rise to such movements as the “Social Gospel” (i.e., the Gospel drained of its true, redemptive power and character and refitted into a socialist scheme), and gave impetus to such sects as Unitarianism and Transcendentalism in the nineteenth century.

This was the era of the greatest advancement in New Testament Textual Criticism, among both Liberal and Conservative scholars.³⁶⁷ The discovery of more ancient manuscripts, Egyptian papyri, ostraca, and numerous other archeological finds shed much light on both the language and text of the Greek New Testament. It was then proven beyond doubt that the language of the New Testament was Κοινή Greek.

In contrast to the German Rationalists and their British and American counterparts, there were many orthodox or conservative biblical scholars and evangelical authors in this era whose works are valuable.

Note: The major Old Testament German Higher Critics have included (with dates of their works): Jean Astruc (1684–), J. S. Semler (1771–75), Johaan Gottfried Eichhorn (1783), Wilhelm Martin Lebrecht De Wette (1807), Heinrich Ewald (1823, 1830), Friedrich Bleek (1836), Hermann Hupfield (1853), Karl Heinrich Graf (1866), Abraham Kuenen (1870), August Dillmann (1875), Julius Welhausen (1877), A. Klostermann (1892), R. Kittel (1900–), and R. H. Pfeiffer (1941).

The major New Testament German rationalistic critics have included Julius Welhausen, F. C. Baur and the “Tübingen School” of radical N.T. criticism (1845–), H. J. Holtzmann (1863–), A. Harnack (1907–), David F. Strauss (1835), Johann Weiss (1912), Martin Dibleius (1919–), Hermann Gunkel (1895–), A. B. Ritschl (d. 1889).

British and American Radical Biblical Critics included: Samuel Davidson (1806–1898), John W. Colenso (1814–1883), C. H. Toy (1836–1919), William Robertson Smith (1846–1894), J.

³⁶⁷ The significant New Testament textual scholars included: Karl Lachmann (1793–1851), Constantin Tischendorf (1815–1874), F. J. A. Hort (1828–1892), B. F. Wescott (1825–1901), Eberhard Nestle, Adolf Deissmann (1866–1937), A. T. Robertson (1863–1934), Gerhard Kittel (1888–1948) and Frederick G. Kenyon (1863–1952).

Skinner (1898), William Rainey Harper (1856–1906), J. J. Stewart Perowne (1823–1904), C. A. Briggs (1907), S. R. Driver (1846–1914) and T. K. Cheyne (1841–1915).

Conservative Bible Exegetes and Commentators included: E. W. Hengstenberg (1802–1869), J. K. F. Keil (1807–1888) and Franz Delitzsch (1813–1890), H. A. W. Meyer (1800–1873), Bernhard Weiss (1827–1918), Johann Peter Lange (1802–1884), Theodor Zahn (1838–1933), Adolf Deissmann (1866–1937), Charles Simeon (1759–1836), Robert Haldane (1764–1842), John Brown of Edinburgh (1784–1858), Charles Hodge (1797–1878), J. A. Alexander (1809–1860),

Thomas H. Horne (1780–1862), Patrick Fairbairn (1805–1874), James Eadie (1810–1871), Henry Alford (1810–1871), Hugh Martin (1822–1885), A. A. Bonar (1810–1892), W. G. Blaikie (1820–1899), J. B. Lightfoot (1828–1889), Alfred Edersheim (1825–1889), Frédéric Godet (1812–1900), J. C. Ryle (1816–1900), C. J. Ellicott (1819–1905), H. B. Swete (1835–1917), James Orr (1844–1913), B. H. Carroll (1843–1914), R. C. H. Lenski (1864–1936) and James Hope Moulton (1863–1917).

- *The Modern Era*: Modernism, Neoorthodoxy and Ecumenism (c. 1918–1960s).

World War I marked a turning-point in Western Civilization. The humanistic optimism of the old theological Liberalism was gone. The religious and biblical issues were fought out in America during the 1920s in the newer “Modernist–Fundamentalist” controversies. Some were still known religiously as “Liberals” and “Conservatives.”

Religious Liberals generally deny Divine inspiration and the authority of Scripture, consider dogma or theology as irrelevant, and consider religion as essentially subjective or existential. They are the progeny of nineteenth century Liberalism. Liberal critics include such men as: Albert Eichhorn (1856–1926), Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932), Otto Eissfeldt (1887–1973), Herbert Edward Ryle (1856–1925), C. C. Torrey (1863–1956), John Skinner (1851–1925), Henry Preserved Smith (1847–1927), A. S. Peake (1865–1929), G. A. Smith (1856–1942), Henry Wheeler Robinson (1872–1945), William O. E. Oesterley (1866–1950), Theodore Henry Robinson (1882–1964), and Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878–1969). To these may be added the promulgators of the “Social Gospel,” such as: Charles Kingsley (1819–1875), Washington

Gladden (1836–1918) and Walter Rauschenbusch (1861–1918).

Conservatives hold to Divine inspiration and the authority of Scripture, hold to some objective doctrinal truth (the “Fundamentals of the Faith,” which is in reality a truncated Christianity, devoid of a consistent biblical world–and–life view), but also tend toward personal religious subjectivism.

Conservative scholars include such men as: H. C. G. Moule (1841–1920), John J. Davis (1854–1926), William M. Ramsey (1851–1939), John J. Lias (1834–1923), J. A. Robinson (1858–1933), William M. Ramsey (1851–1939), Oswald T. Allis (1880–1973), Gerhardus Vos (1862–1949), Robert Dick Wilson (1856–1930), R. C. H. Lenski, J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937), John Murray (1898–1975), Ned B. Stonehouse (1902–1962), E. J. Young (1907–1968), George Eldon Ladd (1911–1982), F. F. Bruce (1910–1991), Donald Guthrie (1915–1992), R. K. Harrison (1920–1993), Everett Harrison (b.1902–d.?) and Leon L. Morris (1914–2006).

The historical–critical approach to the Scriptures had by then assumed unquestioned dominance in almost all theological institutions and in some biblical works.³⁶⁸ The Modernist–Fundamentalist controversy gave rise to the reactionary “Bible School” movement, which majored on the study of the English Bible, the practical aspects of Christian service, and evangelism.³⁶⁹

From the late 1800s through the mid 1900s, archeological discoveries bore testimony to and resulted in a more conservative stand for the biblical history of Israel and the Old Testament documents.

Form Criticism, which sought to discover the original oral sources behind the biblical text began to give way to Redaction

³⁶⁸ E.g., *The International Critical Commentary Series on the Old Testament*; *The Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*, *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*.

³⁶⁹ The “Bible School” movement was inherently suspect of biblical scholarship and thus retreatist, denigrating the study of the Original Languages, minimizing theology, truncating Christianity to the few “Fundamentals of the Faith,” and thus leaving the scholarly realm to the historical–critical school.

Criticism, which considered the process of development more important than the origin of the alleged biblical tradition.

The era from World War I to World War II marked the rise of neoorthodoxy through the influence of Karl Barth. After World War II, the influence of Rudolph Bultmann gave rise to the existentialism of the “New Hermeneutic.”

This era also saw the rise and influence of “Redaction Criticism,” A type of Biblical Theology and Hermeneutic called “Salvation History” and “Canon Criticism.”³⁷⁰ “Neo–evangelicalism” became a shift from the older conservative orthodoxy and Fundamentalistic stance to a more mediating or non–separatist position.

Among Evangelicals and Neo–Evangelicals, with the loss of orthodox doctrine and the intrusion and popularization of modified Wesleyanism, came the “Biblical Psychology” movement.

- *The Postmodern Era: Social and Political Emphases* (1960s –to the present).

“Postmodernism” is a term generally used to denote the reactionary movement of those disillusioned by and rejecting the modern era and its conventions. The issues seemed to be drawn between the historical–critical school and those variously categorized as “Orthodox Tradition–alists,” “Fundamentalists,” or “Conservatives,” until the 1960s.

The historical–critical school then came under attack from several sources approaching the Bible from the perspective of the culture, from literature, from social, sexual and

³⁷⁰ The “Canon Criticism” school has been led by Brevard Childs (b. 1923). It holds that the different emphases existing in Scripture form a single canon, and their coexistence and interaction shape their canonical meaning. Thus the interpreter must wrestle with both sides of any issue to arrive at the proper meaning and significance of the text. E.g., concerning the alleged differences between Paul and James regarding justification by faith, each writer is to be understood on his own terms. See A. C. Thiselton, “Hermeneutics,” *The New Dictionary of Theology*, pp. 296–297.

political issues, and from a renewed interest in Bible study among evangelicals.

The questions asked, for instance, are of this nature: “What does the Bible teach about the exploitation of women and minorities? the abuse of children? racial inequality? the environment and pollution? the exploitation of the poor? warfare and peace?”

The present situation seems nebulous, except for noting that the realities of Divine inspiration, the full and final authority of Scripture, and the relationship of dogma [accepted doctrinal truths] to exposition and application have yet to be recovered.

Those with a postmodern mentality seem to be using the Bible and interpreting it, as the neo-scholastics of the post-Reformation Era did to support their confessionalism, as a means of furthering their convictions, and not as the very Word of God inscripturated, the sole rule of both faith and practice.

This chapter on Modern Exegesis will give the most attention to the historical-critical method developed in and promulgated from German Rationalism, as it has had the most pervasive influence on biblical scholarship, characterized nineteenth century Liberalism and twentieth century Modernism, and gained acceptance in most academic institutions. Several more recent and influential approaches to Scripture are then considered.

C. Historico-Critical Exegesis

Definition and Description

The historical-critical approach to Scripture is the result of Enlightenment Philosophy and its naturalistic world-and-life view. As the biblical expression of theological “Liberalism” or “Modernism,” it is also variously termed “Rationalistic Exegesis,” “Historicism,” “Radical Criticism,” and “Destructive Higher Criticism.”

- Historical–Critical Exegesis refers to an exegesis which approaches the Bible from the *pou sto*³⁷¹ of the modern, “scientific” method which denies any supernaturalism, and therefore the Divine inspiration and infallibility of Scripture.
- It seeks to reconstruct the contents and teachings of the Bible on a mere naturalistic [antisupernaturalistic] foundation according to the confines of human history. It presupposes that the universe is a closed and evolutionary system without external or supernatural providence or interference. It thus proceeds along Rationalistic presuppositions and principles.
- It is “historical” in that it limits the Bible to Israelitish history, which it necessarily reconstructs along evolutionary lines, omitting all supernatural elements of miracles and prophecy.
- It is radical because it seeks to go to the very philological, historical, cultural and religious foundations of the biblical record and is extreme in its nature.
- It has been termed “Destructive Higher Criticism” to distinguish it from the legitimate science of Higher or Historical Criticism, which seeks by external and internal evidence to establish the date and authorship of a given document.³⁷²

General Characteristics and Principles

Although Old Testament Rationalistic Criticism differs from New Testament Rationalistic Criticism in certain aspects, there are several general characteristics and principles which are held in

³⁷¹ *Pou sto* (Literally, “[a place] where I may stand”) or point-of-reference.

³⁷² Biblical criticism has two major divisions: textual or “lower” criticism, and historical, or “higher” criticism. These biblical sciences are legitimate when pursued with Christian theistic presuppositions and in their proper place. When the presuppositions are antisupernaturalistic, historicist, or rationalistic, then such science becomes illegitimate.

common. These are evidenced in the “Liberal” or “Modern” approach.³⁷³

- *A modern, “educated” mentality which recognizes that the validity of the objective, scientific method is to govern one’s approach to the Bible.* In this context, the authority and infallibility of the Bible are necessarily denied, and it is treated as any ancient literature or document—a blatant antisupernaturalism.

The historical–critical method was characterized by the alien combination of technical or mere academic biblical scholarship and unbelief.³⁷⁴

- *The exegete is to be without presuppositions.* By this is meant that the Scriptures are not to be approached from the context of ecclesiastical Symbolics,³⁷⁵ i.e., the confessional standards of historic Christianity, and thus is to be interpreted as any other literature.

However, no one is without presuppositions, especially the Rationalist or Liberal! Further, the purpose is to separate the history and content of Scripture from doctrine, thus denying Divine inspiration and resulting in mere religious experience.

- *Inspiration is redefined* from verbal, plenary and dynamic, to an existential power that inspires religious experience. Divine revelation gives way to human insight and subjective religious feeling.

³⁷³ These principles are generally adapted from Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, pp. 64–69.

³⁷⁴ The German radical biblical critics and their followers were nearly all highly educated in matters of the Original Languages, church history, philosophy, philology and exegesis—but were lacking in biblical, personal faith. Their literary productions in the realm of biblical scholarship have produced an enduring suspicion for any scholarly approach to the Scriptures.

³⁷⁵ Symbolics (Gk. Σύμβολον, Lat. *symbolum*, from συμβάλλειν, “to throw together, to compare,” means a mark, badge, watchword or test. Used of creeds in a theological sense since the fourth century. Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, I, p. 3) is the study of the creeds, confessions and doctrinal standards of any given church or denomination.

- *The determining factor of criticism or validity is “the spirit of Jesus,”* i.e., the spirit or teachings of Jesus are normative and whatever is morally or ethically below or beyond this is not binding.

This eliminates much of the Old Testament, with its wars of extermination, animal sacrifices, Mosaic institutions, death penalty for various offences, etc. and some of the New.³⁷⁶ It in reality also excludes the doctrinal content of Scripture and substitutes for it subjective religious experience.

- *The supernatural element of Scripture is redefined.* While the supernaturalism of miracles, prophecy and providence is denied, the idea of supernaturalism is transferred to the immaterial, e.g., prayer, ethics, morality, sacrificial human goodness—modern mysticism or existentialism.
- *The concept of evolution is applied to the religious history of Israel, and thereby to its documents.* Thus, Jehovah is first seen as a tribal deity who, through the process of cultural and religious development, becomes the God of Israel and later, of Christianity. The Scriptures were first oral traditions, then primitive writings, which were later edited or redacted, until they reached their present form (the operative view of “Form Criticism”).

The documents were either written or edited after the events they predicted, thus, a much later date must be given to the books of the Old Testament and much of the New Testament.

- *The notion of accommodation must be applied to the teaching of our Lord and the Apostles.* This means that our Lord taught in terms limited to the understanding of his hearers, i.e., he accommodated himself to the conditions, superstitions and thinking of the time in which he lived. Thus, his testimony concerning the historicity of creation,

³⁷⁶ E.g., It does not matter, we are told, if Moses and Paul wrote about and condemned homosexuality. Jesus did not speak directly about it, therefore, it is neither sinful nor against “the spirit of Jesus”—such is the arbitrary nature of the “Liberal” or “Modern” approach.

Adam and Eve, sin and judgment are not actual, but merely an accommodation to a relatively primitive people who thought in such terms. All biblical doctrine must be considered in the same light.

Note: That God accommodated himself to human finiteness by the use of anthropomorphisms and human language in the Scriptures is understandable. But an “accommodationism” that undermines the veracity of Scripture is utterly foreign to both the truthfulness of God in general and to the Eternal Son of God in particular.

- *The Bible must be interpreted historically*, i.e., in a reductionist sense, eliminating the supernatural, making theological beliefs the result of social and cultural conditions, and making religion essentially subjective and malleable. Such an approach seeks to stress the alleged commonality of Israel’s religion with the pagan religions of other ancient peoples, and find a common source in myth, tradition and the human psyche.
- *Philosophy has a legitimate claim upon religious belief.* This, of course, would be valid, if the other principles and characteristics of Liberalism or Modernism were admitted, and all human knowledge—scientific, religious, moral and ethical—were leveled. The truth is, that humanistic philosophy has provided the determining presuppositions for religious Liberalism and Modernism.³⁷⁷

Rationalism and Deism formed the basis for the so-called “Modern Approach” to the Bible by eliminating the supernatural, and therefore the inspiration, authority and infallibility of Scripture.

Immanuel Kant made ethics or moral will the essence of religion through removing objective Divine truth and relegating it

³⁷⁷ By humanistic philosophy, we mean the thought-process of fallen, depraved man suffering under the noetic effects of sin and seeking to be his own “god” and determine for himself what is right or wrong, i.e., seeking autonomy, and denying the authority and infallibility of Divine revelation.

to the *noumena* in his system.³⁷⁸ G. W. F. Hegel provided a foundation for the historical–critical approach to biblical criticism through his dialectic³⁷⁹ and pantheistic belief.³⁸⁰

The History of Rationalistic Biblical Criticism

The following history is arranged in a very general chronological fashion according to the first exponent of a given movement, school of thought or approach, and its subsequent principles or characteristics and exponents.

J. S. Semler and Religious Rationalism

Rationalism held that the human intellect was capable of determining objective truth from reflection within in a time–space world rather than through the revelation of a transcendent God.

The historical school of religious Rationalism, a strange admixture of Rationalism, Pietism and Romanticism,³⁸¹ originated with Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791), who denied Divine inspiration, held that the biblical record was historically conditioned to localized situations, and that our Lord and the Apostles accommodated themselves to the contemporary religious thinking of their day.

³⁷⁸ The separation of religion from reason would characterize much of later “Biblical Mythology” and German Liberalism as promulgated by Schliermacher.

³⁷⁹ The Hegelian dialectic philosophy of thesis, antithesis and synthesis has been influential in the thought of F. C. Baur and the Tübingen School, which viewed early Christianity as a conflict between the teachings of Paul and Peter, or between Palestinian and Hellenistic Christianity, etc. It has also been a factor in the Dialectic Theology of Karl Barth and the modern synthesis known as “Neo–Evangelicalism.”

³⁸⁰ “The mythical theory...[held by Herder, Heyne and Strauss]...was a logical and self–consistent application to biblical exposition of the Hegelian (pantheistic) doctrine that the idea of God and of the absolute...developed in the consciousness of humanity.” Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, p. 168.

³⁸¹ From Rationalism, they adopted their critical spirit, from Pietism, a subjectivism that separated objective truth from faith, and from Romanticism, the idea that the Bible was a literary monument to be interpreted in literary categories.

He thus held that the Scriptures were fallible records, mixed with error, and that historical investigation had no bearing on faith. As a Rationalistic exegete, he divorced the text from any doctrinal teaching and asserted that the exegete should not have any presuppositions.

Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791) followed Semler's commentaries with his own historical study of biblical documents. This approach became known as "Neology."³⁸² Later scholars of the Rationalistic or Historical School include Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827), who first posited myth as a category of biblical study and laid the groundwork for the later documentary hypothesis of the Pentateuch.

Source Criticism: the Documentary Hypothesis

Although the alleged founder of modern critical Old Testament scholarship was Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette (1780–1849), the beginnings of Source Criticism or the Documentary Hypothesis (i.e., that the biblical documents derived from earlier literary sources which had been subjected to subsequent and repeated editing [redaction] or revision) are attributed to Henning Bernhard Witter (c. 1711).³⁸³ The traditional pioneer, however, was Jean Astruc (1684–1766), Court physician to King Louis XV and an amateur theologian.³⁸⁴

He asserted that the Pentateuch was composed of several documents written at various times by different authors. This general theory has been termed the "Graf–Kuenen–Wellhausen School" after its major promulgators,³⁸⁵ or the "JEDP Theory," asserting that the various previous discernable documents were the

³⁸² "Neology," a new way of approaching and reading the Scriptures. Cf. Gerald Bray, *Op. cit.*, pp. 257ff.

³⁸³ Richard Simon (1638–1712), seventeenth century priest and influential biblical scholar anticipated the idea that behind the present biblical documents was a long pre–history of earlier documents.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 240–241.

³⁸⁵ Karl Heinrich Graf (1815–1869), Abraham Kuenen (1828–1891), a Dutch scholar and professor at Leiden, and Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918), professor at Greifswald, Halle, Marburg and Göttingen.

“Jahwist” sections, the “Elohistic” sections, the “Deuteronomic Code” and the “Priestly Document.”³⁸⁶

The principles of this hypothesis were applied to other books of the Old Testament, resulting in such assertions, for instance, that there were either two [“Deutero–Isaiah”] or even three [“Trito–Isaiah”] authors to the prophecy of Isaiah. In common with such a rationalistic interpretation, the history of Israel in the Old Testament was reconstructed along evolutionary lines and the final “rescensions” [allegedly edited versions] of the various books were given “late” dates according to antisupernaturalistic presuppositions.

This type of approach has formed the core of rationalistic biblical scholarship, and has been promoted by such men as John William Colenso, Anglican Bishop of Natal, Africa, who imported German Rationalism to English readers in his very influential work, *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (1862).³⁸⁷

H. E. W. Paulus and Naturalism

Heinrich Eberhard Gottlob Paulus (1761–1851), professor at Jena, Würzburg and Heidelberg, Naturalistic commentator and author of a *Life of Jesus* (1828), explained away the miracles as natural events. “Of all the rationalistic theories the Naturalistic is the most violent and radical.”³⁸⁸ Strauss’s *Life of Jesus* (1835) in

³⁸⁶ Later documentary hypotheses posited a “Hexateuch,” adding the Book of Joshua and such alleged documents as: “J= Jahwistic document, E= Elohistic document, JE= J and E combined, D= Deuteronomic Code, JED= J, E, and D combined), P= Priestly document), P^H= the Code of Holiness, P⁹= the main work of P, J^S, E^S, etc.= the schools of J, E, etc., R= Reviser, at whatever period.” F. H. Woods, “Hexateuch,” James Hastings, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899, II, p. 363.

³⁸⁷ “When Bishop Colenso examined the Pentateuch and Joshua, he disclaimed any intention of assailing the miraculous narrative as such; as if he had said: ‘My dear little fish, you need not fear me: I do not wish to catch you; I only intend to drain the pond in which you live.’ To many scholars the waters at present seem very low in the Hexateuch and indeed throughout the whole Old Testament.” Quoted from A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, I, p. 170.

³⁸⁸ Milton S. Terry, *Op. cit.*, p. 167–168.

the mythical tradition was an answer to Paulus's work (see "Herder, Heyne and Biblical Mythology," below).

H. S. Reimarus and
"The Quest For The Historical Jesus"

Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1694–1768) wrote an extensive critique of Christianity from a Deistic standpoint, later published by G. E. Lessing as the *Wolfenbüttel Fragments* (1774–1778). Reimarus thought our Lord to be a mere man, a political agitator who was executed by the Romans for treason. His disciples had then fabricated the farce of his resurrection.

These writings initiated a new era of biblical studies in which the question was raised as to how much of the original teaching of Jesus was reflected in early Christianity. It has been alleged that the original teachings and emphasis were lost to the Hellenizing influence of the Apostle Paul, and through legends, myths, etc.

The publication of David Friedrich Strauss's work, the *Life of Jesus* (1835) sought to ground our Lord's life in myth. This type of study culminated with *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* by Albert Schweitzer (1875–1965), professor and medical missionary in Africa. Schweitzer, following the eschatological theories of Johannes Weiss (1863–1914), maintained that our Lord had convinced himself that he would rise and soon return to the earth. All these radical Christological works fomented crises in rationalistic and conservative biblical scholarship.

Herder, Heyne and Biblical Mythology

Reacting against the Naturalism of Paulus and others, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Christian Gottlieb Heyne (1729–1812) developed the idea of biblical mythology as a legitimate factor in historical criticism and as a literary category. They sought to separate religious feeling from both myth and history.

Heyne was the first to define myth as a literary category, a device commonly and universally used by primitive peoples before the development of rational thought, thus seeking a means by which the Bible could be interpreted without resorting to

rationalistic assertions that the biblical writers had practiced deliberate deception.³⁸⁹

Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827) and Johann Philipp Gabler (1753–1826), proponents of German “Neology,” were associated with this school of thought, as was W. M. L. De Wette (1780–1849), who broke with the neologist tradition, although he asserted that much of the Old Testament was mythical.

F. D. E. Schliermacher and German Liberalism

Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schliermacher (1768–1834), professor at Halle and Berlin, was the father of liberal German theology in the nineteenth century. He combined a critical approach (ignoring inspiration) to textual and historical issues with a religious tone he had inherited from Pietism.

According to Kantian Idealism, he sought to make a distinction between what he considered essentials and non-essentials and separated the rational from the irrational, relegating religion to the realm of feeling. He viewed Christianity as the highest form of religious evolution. His major area of work was New Testament Criticism.

Baur and The Tübingen School

Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792–1860), professor at Tübingen was one of the greatest and most influential critical New Testament scholars of the nineteenth century. His Hegelian philosophy led him to consider early Christianity as a synthesis created from the conflict of opposing forces. This led to the idea that each New Testament book had a “tendency” that had to be discerned before it could be interpreted.

This view also led to a redactionist approach, a re-dating of several books, a restructuring of the New Testament, and a confusion of early heretical groups (Ebionites, Gnostics) with true Christians. The Tübingen School of New Testament criticism, of

³⁸⁹ The Radical critics held alleged “biblical myths” to be important vehicles for the expression of philosophical and religious ideas in an essentially poetic or epic form. Story-telling was used by primitive peoples as philosophy or rational thought would be used by more advanced peoples.

which he was the founder and leading exponent, embroiled New Testament scholarship for half a century and was attacked by both conservative and radical scholars.

Usener and “The History of Religions” School

This approach was anticipated by Rudolf Sohm (1841–1917), a jurist, who argued that Church History must be pursued theologically. Hermann Usener (1834–1905) was a leading scholar in the field of Comparative Religions and led in the “History of Religions” approach to New Testament criticism.

Otto Pfleiderer (1839–1908) held that there was a radical difference between our Lord and Paul which resulted in the Hellenization of Christianity. Others of this school included Albert Eichhorn (1856–1926), who applied the Comparative Religions approach to the Old Testament, and Adolf von Harnack (1851–1930), the author of the multi-volume *History of Dogma* (1886–1889).

H. Gunkel and Form Criticism

Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932) pioneered the path in Form Criticism, which sought to examine the genre [*Gattung*] and “setting in life” [*Sitz im Leben*] of biblical construction. This theory holds that behind the documents were oral traditions, sagas, legends and myths, which may be discovered under the layers of the text.

As the Documentary Hypothesis sought a “late” date through various redactors, Form Criticism sought the alleged early oral traditions. Form Criticism has played a major role in both Old Testament and New Testament critical scholarship.

G. Von Rad and Redaction Criticism

Gerhard von Rad (1901–1971) pioneered the development of Redaction Criticism. He argued, in opposition to Form Criticism, that the development of religious traditions was more important than their origin, and thus the focus moved to the alleged various redactions within the layers of the text, to the theology of the redactors, and to a study of the concept of covenants in the religious history of Israel.

The Hermeneutic of Salvation–History

The Hermeneutic of “Salvation–History” (*Heilsgeschichte*) derived from Biblical Theology. The roots and substance of this approach in an orthodox sense reach back to such men as J. A. Bengal (1687–1752) and Jonathan Edwards (1703–1752). The modern pioneer was Johann Christian Konrad von Hoffmann (1810–1877), who held that the single theme of the Bible is the unfolding of redemptive history. “It traces in history and doctrine the development of the Divine purpose in the salvation of men.”³⁹⁰

He sought to ground religious authority on the experience of regeneration, the fact and history of the church, and Scripture. Biblical historical events “had roots in the past, meaning in the present and portent for the future.”³⁹¹

This system, while holding to some aspects of truth, admits the validity of the critical method and is characterized by a subjectivity akin to Neoorthodox existentialism. American adherents of this approach include Otto Piper, John Bright, George Ernest Wright and Oscar Cullmann.³⁹²

Neo–Orthodox and Existential Exegesis

Out of the aftermath of World War I, the loss of Liberal optimism, and in reaction to the Rationalistic Exegesis of the Historical–Critical period rose Neoorthodoxy. It approaches the Scriptures as a *record* or a *witness* to Divine revelation and *not* the very revelation or Word of God. God is *encountered* in or through the Scriptures in a “crisis” experience.

According to this approach, the Scriptures are neither the inspired Word of God nor is there propositional revelation in Scripture; God allegedly reveals himself in an existential [entirely

³⁹⁰ J. H. Gerstner, “Heilsgeschichte,” *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 505.

³⁹¹ Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, p. 79.

³⁹² A negative result of the modern approach is “salvific inerrancy,” i.e., that the Bible is trustworthy in matters of faith and salvation, but contains historical and scientific errors. See J. H. Gerstner, *Loc. cit.*

subjective and personal] way, as faith has no objective basis in an inspired or infallible Word, and thus remains merely subjective.³⁹³

The leaders of this movement were the Swiss neo-Reformed theologian, Karl Barth (1886–1968) and the German New Testament scholar, Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976). Barth’s approach was a combination of theological conservatism and critical methodology which became known as “Neoorthodoxy,” “Crisis Theology,” “Neo-Liberalism,” “Biblical Realism,” or “Dialectic Theology.”

In its wider American expression, it has become known as “Neo-Evangelicalism,” which assumes a mediating position between Fundamentalism and Modernism.³⁹⁴

The central six principles of this movement may be generally summarized as follows:³⁹⁵

- *The Revelation Principle.* The orthodox position on revelation, inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy is denied. The Bible contains conflicting, sub-Christian and even anti-Christian parts. The Scripture is not Divine revelation, but merely contains a record or witness to revelation. God speaks through his personal presence to one’s personal presence. Revelation occurs in this existential context.
- *The Christological Principle.* The Word of God to man is Jesus Christ. Only the part of the Bible that witnesses to this Word [Christ] is binding.

³⁹³ Cf. R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Scriptures* and Carl F. H. Henry, *Revelation and the Bible*.

³⁹⁴ This movement betrays the shadow of Hegel, as a synthesis of the extremes of both Fundamentalism and Modernism. Like Evangelicalism, Neo-Evangelicalism, claims to hold to the truth of the gospel; unlike Fundamentalism, Neo-Evangelicalism denies the necessity of a separatist position from Modernism. Strong Fundamentalists hold to both primary and secondary separation, i.e., they will not fellowship with non-Fundamentalists, nor will they fellowship with those who will fellowship with non-Fundamentalists. Harold J. Ockenga, Carl F. H. Henry and Billy Graham are representatives of Neo-Evangelicalism.

³⁹⁵ Summarized in general from Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, pp. 70–79.

- *The Totality Principle.* The Bible must be understood in its totality from a Christological perspective.
- *The Mythological Principle.* Doctrines are interpreted seriously, unlike Liberalism, but not literally, unlike orthodox Christianity. They are to be treated mythologically, as myth is a form of the theological communication of transcendent truth.
- *The Existential Principle.* The Bible is to be read or studied with anticipation of personally encountering God. In such an encounter, the Bible becomes the Word of God to the reader.
- *The Paradoxical Principle.* The theological nature of the truth of God in the Bible appears as dialectical or paradoxical.³⁹⁶

Karl Barth was most influential between the First and Second World Wars. In the post–World War II era, Bultmann pioneered what has become known as the “New Hermeneutic.” This included the “demythologization” of Scripture, a process which carries on the general approach of Herder, Heyne, Eichhorn and De Wette.

For Bultmann, the gospel message was essentially a proclamation or *kerygma* [κηρύγμα] which must be liberated from the layers of myth surrounding it. This “demythologization” is to rid the text of foreign materials (myth, errors, inconsistencies, etc.) and is termed “Content Criticism.” This search for the religious intention of myth led Bultmann to existentialism. In this, he was greatly influenced by Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger.

This “New Hermeneutic” holds that language itself is interpretation. The Word itself is thus hermeneutical and existential. Those who hold to this “New Hermeneutic” write of a “word–happening” or “speech–event” which communicates its own unique

³⁹⁶ Examples of paradoxes are: “...man must use reason to understand God yet God is beyond human reason; man is responsible for his sins, yet he inevitably sins; ...man must lose his life to save it; God is one yet three; the cross is foolishness yet wisdom; God is absolute holiness yet unmeasured love.” Bernard Ramm, *Op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

truth in light of the hearer's own experience.³⁹⁷ Ramm seeks to explain the significance of this radical approach:

The Word of God is really more a movement than a notion. The Word of God is the existential communication of God within the text of Scripture; it is to be dug out by the exegesis and exposition of the text; it is to be formulated in a kerygmic sermon; and it is received as the Word of God by the hearer when in decision he accepts it by faith. Existential considerations permeate each step of the procedure.³⁹⁸

Liberation Theology

Liberation Theology, first developed in Latin America, approaches the Scriptures from the perspective of the politically and socially oppressed. It possesses a socialist [Marxist] bias in its hermeneutic of Christology (viewing our Lord as a poor laborer and revolutionary), ecclesiology (the place of the church in society and involved in social issues) and eschatology (the Kingdom of God in society).

Feministic Exegesis

Feminism in its hermeneutic is a social reaction against the idea of God being revealed in the masculine form, the patriarchal form of the family and government in the Old Testament, the pastoral ministry limited to men only, the submission of wives to husbands and the male leadership within the context of the church, etc.

There seem to be two movements within feministic interpretation: first, a radical feminism, which seeks to feminize God, the language of Scripture, and teach an unscriptural equality to promulgate the leadership of women.

The second type is more subtle. Referring to itself as "Biblical Feminism," it seeks to base its principles on exegesis and change the modern thinking of evangelical Christianity regarding the place and role of women within the churches.

³⁹⁷ Cf. Klein, *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

³⁹⁸ Bernard Ramm, *Hermeneutics*, p. 136. This work originally appeared as a section of *Baker's Dictionary of Practical Theology*, 1967, and is later than Ramm's larger work.

Much modern hermeneutic and exegesis reveal once again—adding their deviant testimony to Rabbinic, Alexandrian, Patristic, Scholastic, Pietistic and Rationalistic Hermeneutics—that one must maintain a high view [presuppose the inspiration and Divine authority and infallibility] of the Scriptures. Further, it is clear that the historico–grammatical method is the only consistent or correct approach to Scripture.

D. Lessons and Cautions

- Exegesis and Hermeneutic do not and cannot exist in a vacuum. Both are conditioned by the age, culture, and the intellectual, social, political and religious conditions under which the exegete and interpreter both live and think. We must not allow ourselves to become conditioned away from an understanding of and an equitable stand for the truth.
- The thinking of most people is often unconsciously governed by persons who they have never thought, and by those who they have never heard. We do well to study, reassess our own presuppositions, and seek to remain faithful to the inscripturated Word of God.
- We must beware of how others use accepted terms and both biblical and theological language. To change the meaning of accepted terms without changing the terminology is seductive and destructive to the faith.
- We must never become fragmented in our thinking and separate the intellectual from the emotional or *vice versa*. Fallen man by nature tends to be both idolatrous and existential. These extremes may and do find expression in one's personal relationship to God through his Word.
- We must beware of our natural tendencies. Emotion is no substitute for the truth of God. Subjective religious experience must not be allowed to distract or dissuade us from objective, filial obedience to the Scriptures.
- We must neither despise nor denigrate the study of the Original Languages. A working knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek is necessary to fully comprehend Divine truth. A sanctified knowledge is rare but both edifying and practical.

It is a sad commentary on orthodox and conservative Christianity that many have allowed the Liberals, Modernists and other religious unbelievers to assume control over biblical scholarship. Such a retreatist attitude is dishonoring to God.

- We must strive to be scriptural in our thinking and question the source of any thinking or teaching that does not seem to entirely square with Scripture. The scholar will inquire and discover why.
- The Scriptures, as the very Word of God, speak by precept, example or at least in principle to every issue in reality. It is our duty before God to study his Word and seek to operate on valid scriptural principles in every area and endeavor.
- Scholarship is no true preventive from error or heresy, and a high intelligence does not necessarily correlate to any great degree of spiritual discernment. We must not fear a scholarly approach, but rather seek to sanctify it. The head and heart are both necessary in true biblical studies.
- Any and all scholarly literature must be carefully studied with discernment. Some authors may be trusted philologically, but not philosophically or theologically. We must not despise all biblical scholarship, but approach it with settled presuppositions. The answer is not total abstinence, but moderation with a discerning palate.
- The study of auxiliary disciplines such as history, theology, philology, philosophy and archeology, is not inherently wrong. These may further, though they must never replace, the study of Scripture. Knowing the origins and principles of various schools of thought may indeed deliver us from making great mistakes in understanding the Bible.

Such study may help us comprehend why others have been led into error and heresy. A sanctified scholarship is neither ignorant nor existential, i.e., sinfully subjective in substituting experience or feeling for knowledge and objective truth.

- We must take great care to purchase only the best in books, and build our libraries with discernment.
- Ultimately, everything is disciplined by our Theology, and Theology is disciplined by our Hermeneutic—and Hermeneutic is disciplined by presuppositions which must be self-consistent with Christian theism and vouchsafed through the illumination of the Spirit.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by “Modern Exegesis”? Explain in terms of history and predominant characteristics.
2. What two lines or directions of world-and-life views grew out of the Later Middle Ages and the Reformation Era that generally govern one’s point-of-reference and thus approach to the Scriptures and religion. Explain how each of these inclusively governs the presuppositions and thought-process.
3. What two basic issues characterized the “Age of Reason” in relation to biblical studies? Why are these vital in the area of exegesis and interpretation?
4. What was the “Enlightenment”? Explain this term in the context of history, and then in the context of its effect upon the Scriptures and their interpretation.
5. What was the influence of G. F. W. Hegel upon the study of philosophy? What was his predominant principle? How did this affect society? How did this affect biblical studies?
6. What was the philosophy of Immanuel Kant? How did this affect religion in general and biblical studies in particular?
7. What do the terms “Liberalism” and “Modernism” convey?
8. What relation do these have to exegesis and hermeneutics?
9. What was the effect of Darwinism on religion and society in general and biblical studies in particular?
10. What was Romanticism? What effect did this movement have on religion and biblical studies?

11. What important advancements were made in textual criticism during the nineteenth century? Explain in terms of individuals, discoveries and published works.
12. What is “Rationalistic Exegesis”? What are its foundational principles and what are its major aspects?
13. What is the “modern scientific” or “critical method”? How has this affected most modern studies and especially biblical studies?
14. What is the “Historico–Critical Method”? What are its major presuppositions and tenets? How have these affected religion and biblical studies?
15. What is the “Documentary Hypothesis”? What are its presuppositions and major tenets”?
16. What is “Naturalism”?
17. What is meant by “The Quest for the Historical Jesus”?
18. What was the Tübingen School of biblical criticism? What was its influence in biblical scholarship?
19. Why is “myth” considered a legitimate subject of religious study by modern, rationalistic critics?
20. What is meant by “demythologizing” the Scriptures?
21. What is Existentialism? What is religious existentialism?
22. Can you trace the growth and influence of religious existentialism from Immanuel Kant to Rudolf Bultmann?
23. What is “Form Criticism”?
24. What is “Salvation–History”? What is legitimate about this study and what is erroneous concerning its presuppositions or methodology?
25. What is “Redaction Criticism”?
26. What is Neo–orthodoxy? What are its guiding principles?
27. What is the “New Hermeneutic”?
28. What were the issues in the “Modernist–Fundamentalist Controversy” of the early twentieth century?
29. In what department of study did the universities and theological seminaries of our nation usually become

- corrupt? Why? Where did this spread? What was the effect upon the churches?
30. Can you explain the modern “Bible School” phenomenon? What led to this? What have been the positive and negative results?
 31. What is “Liberation Theology”?
 32. What is “Feministic” exegesis or interpretation?
 33. What is meant by “Postmodernism”? What are the chief characteristics of this era as expressed in concerns over biblical studies? What are the positive and negative aspects of this movement?
 34. What might be the effects of one’s world–and life view [presuppositions], culture, contemporary society and political conditioning upon one’s hermeneutic? Explain this in terms of several of the outstanding individuals or schools of thought in the history of interpretation. What can be learned from this?

Part IV

Principles of Biblical Interpretation

- I. General Principles of Biblical Interpretation
 - A. Historico–Grammatical Interpretation
 - B. General Hermeneutical Principles
 1. The Principle of a Reverent Approach
 2. The Principle of the Primacy of the Original Languages
 3. The Principle of the Perspicuity of Scripture or the Analogy of Faith
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 5. The Principle of a Covenantal Distinction
 6. The Principle of a Lexical and Syntactical Distinction
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 8. The Principle of the *Usus Loquendi*
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 10. The Principle of Theological Proposition
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 - C. The Principles of Practical Exegesis
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- II. Special Principles of Biblical Interpretation
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I

General Principles of Biblical Interpretation

To achieve a true, proper and adequate understanding of the Scriptures, one's approach must be reverent, intelligent, organized, disciplined and persevering. Necessary to this life-long, holy task of understanding the Scriptures are certain principles which must be consistently applied.

A. Historico-Grammatical Interpretation

The methodology applied to the interpretation of the Scriptures must agree with the Scriptures themselves as the Word of Divine revelation from an intelligent, self-consistent God—a Word given in an understandable form. To interpret in such a manner as to deny, ignore or misrepresent their teaching is to both be in grievous error and also to dishonor God.

One must take care not to improperly “spiritualize” the Scriptures, i.e., find some secondary “deeper” or “spiritual” meaning beneath the “literal” or *usus loquendi*³⁹⁹—and thus twist their intended meaning.

The witness of history sadly testifies to such perversion, even by many well-meaning interpreters because their principles were erroneous.⁴⁰⁰ The only intelligent, consistent hermeneutic is the *historico-grammatical* method. It is such an interpretation that is necessitated by and in accordance with the rules of grammar and the facts of history.

It is therefore a “common-sense” interpretation that seeks no spiritual or hidden meaning unless necessary in the normal figurative, symbolic, idiomatic or typical expression of the given language, culture, or historical context of a given passage. It

³⁹⁹ The *usus loquendi* is Latin for the common, usual meaning and use of words in a given era, society or culture.

⁴⁰⁰ Rabbinic, Alexandrian, Patristic and Medieval interpreters all took the principle of allegorizing or “spiritualizing” Scripture from the pagan Greeks who used such an arbitrary approach to their own ancient poets to make their writings acceptable to the later Greek philosophical mind.

presupposes that God has given his revelation in an intelligent and understandable form.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the one approach to interpreting Scripture which is self-consistent with the nature of Scripture itself as the inscripturated Word of God?
2. Why is the *usus loquendi* consistent with the interpretation of Scripture and allegorizing is not?
3. Why is the historico-grammatical approach alone consistent with the Bible as the inscripturated Word of God?
4. Why is the “common sense” approach synonymous with the historico-grammatical approach?
5. In what sense does the literal interpretation include figurative language?

B. General Hermeneutical Principles

Within the proper, consistent, historical and grammatical approach, there are several general principles of interpretation:

1. The Principle of a Reverent Approach

Necessary Presuppositions

The Bible is the very Word of God inscripturated. It must be approached—not merely academically, nor yet superstitiously, mystically, irrationally or rationalistically—but reverently. One’s view of Divine inspiration, infallibility and authority [presuppositions] determines his approach to the text.

One cannot properly interpret the truth of Scripture merely intellectually or academically, or merely devotionally or irrationally [emotionally]. Scripture must be approached, intelligently studied, interpreted, and practically applied with a regenerate mind (Jn. 3:3; Rom. 1:18–22; 3:11; 1 Cor. 2:14; 2 Cor. 4:3–4; Eph. 4:17–24; Col. 3:9–10) illuminated by the Spirit of God (1 John 2:20, 27) and predisposed to obedience (Matt. 4:4). Thus, the study of the text is not only an intellectual and academic procedure; it is preeminently a spiritual exercise—an act of worship.

Obedience or Disobedience

There is a direct correlation between a study of the Word of God and obedience to that Word. In approaching the Scripture properly and adequately, we must think in terms of what the Scripture says, what it means, and what it demands from us. Any approach that does not think in terms of obedience or disobedience to the inscripturated Word of God is inherently both defective and inadequate.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are we to assume or presuppose to rightly and reverently approach the Scriptures as an act of worship?
2. Is true spirituality rational or irrational, intelligent or non-intelligent, objective and subjective, or merely subjective?
3. If true spirituality were merely subjective, then what would be the use of studying the objective truth of God's Word?
4. What place would there be for Hermeneutics?
5. Why must we approach the Scriptures with a prepared mind and heart disposed toward obedience?

2. The Principle of The Primacy of The Original Languages

God had a purpose in giving his Word in the languages he did—Hebrew, Aramaic⁴⁰¹ and Greek. The Κοινή Greek of the New Testament was the common language of the people in the Greco-Roman era. It was the richest, most expressive language ever developed. English by comparison is relatively barren and inexpressive. Thus, when translating from such an inflected language, rich in expressive qualities and nuances, much is necessarily lost.

We have the truth of God, but the nuances often and necessarily remain untranslated—a variety of tenses peculiar to original languages, synonyms, emphatic constructions, idiomatic

⁴⁰¹ Although the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, some small sections were written in Aramaic, reflecting the language changes of the Babylonian exile. E.g., Dan. 2:4b–7:28; Ezra 4:8–6:18; 7:12–26.

expressions, etc. These often determine an adequate understanding the text. No serious study, investigation, research or legitimate science can remain consistent or achieve its anticipated goals without consulting original sources. In the realm of Bible study, these sources are the original languages.

The Importance of Genre

The French word “genre” has reference to a given type or kind of a thing. Contemporary Hermeneutics has come to take the reality and importance of genre very seriously, as it should. Each type of literature in Scripture possesses its own genre or character, its own frame of reference, rules, development and purpose.

Poetry, prose, historical narratives, parables, doctrinal dissertations or arguments, diatribes, etc., all must be approached with a recognition of their distinct literary nature. This is critical to a correct interpretation.

Misunderstanding the Original Languages⁴⁰²

“A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.” This adage is certainly true with regard to the original languages of Scripture. Those with little or no accurate knowledge of the original languages may misrepresent the significance of their etymology, tenses, grammatical constructions and idiomatic expressions. Word studies, the etymology of words and some grammatical constructions may prove either dangerous or nonsensical.

E.g., note the prevalent teaching concerning the “church” (ἐκκλησία) as “those who are called out of the world” (from ἐκ, “out,” and καλέω, “call”) in a mystical sense, i.e., the theory of a “universal, invisible church”, the mystical body of Christ, etc. The ἐκκλησία was simply an assembly of Greek citizens, and this meaning was transferred to the church as an assembly of Christians, and is used locally, generically or institutionally and eschatologically in the New Testament.

The idea that it refers to those called out of the world in a spiritual sense is a form of theological eisegesis. E.g., also note the objective genitive. Cf. Rom. 3:22, διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, i.e., “by faith *in* Jesus Christ.” (Ἰησοῦς has no loc.,

⁴⁰² For a full discussion, see Appendix I “Why Study the Original Languages of Scripture?”

dat. or inst. form, thus, the gen. form is used, which must be read with the loc. sense of “in”). An erroneous theology, usually left unexplained, has developed that we are “saved by the faith of Christ.”

Exegesis and Exposition

A consistent exegesis is necessarily limited to the original languages of Scripture with their distinct grammatical, syntactical, idiomatic and figurative constructions and expressions. Attempts at exegesis in any secondary language necessarily results in a given amount of misinterpretation and therefore misunderstanding and error.

Although one may legitimately attempt an exposition⁴⁰³ of the text in a secondary language, one cannot attempt an exegesis, as the grammar of any translation or version [secondary language] is not inspired.⁴⁰⁴

The Concept of Tense in Hebrew and Greek

Both the Hebrew and Greek differ greatly at times from the English in their concept of the tense of the verb and in their use of participles. These are often mistranslated in the English with a loss of force or failure to adequately express the nuances.

Note: Both the Hebrew and Greek concept of “tense” differs from the English, therefore a certain degree of discontinuity necessarily occurs. The Hebrew has the basic concept of an action either being complete (perfect, preterite) or incomplete (imperfect); the Greek tense views an action as either linear or punctiliar.

⁴⁰³ By “exposition” we mean an analysis of the text into its constituent parts or an analysis of its doctrinal teaching, which would be fairly evident in both the original and a secondary language.

⁴⁰⁴ E.g., Acts 2:38. The Eng [KJV] grammatically makes “Repent” and “be baptized” compound verbs and thus equal—the classic argument of the Campbellites, but the Greek reads *Μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν...* “Repent” is aor. imp. act. pl.; “be baptized” is aor. pass imp. sing., a const. with only a permissive force, i.e., “All of you with a sense of urgency and all determination, Repent!...and [then] let each one of you be baptized.” The former receives the emphasis and the latter is much less of a command.

The Greek has six tenses: present (a continuous or linear action),⁴⁰⁵ imperfect (linear or repeated action in the past),⁴⁰⁶ future (usually punctiliar, unless combined with a ptc. as a periphrastic const. to denote linear action),⁴⁰⁷ aorist (punctiliar action. May be used as a simple past tense, or may possess various nuances),⁴⁰⁸ perfect (an action in the past which has a

⁴⁰⁵ E.g., Rom. 1:18, where the words “hold the truth in unrighteousness” are lit: “the truth in unrighteousness habitually [constantly] suppressing.” τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, using the pres. ptc.

⁴⁰⁶ E.g., Acts 17:18–19. Paul did not encounter the Epicureans and Stoics on one occasion, but evidently daily or repeatedly in the agora for some time. Note the repeated use of the imperf., “...were encountering...were saying...he was preaching...this new doctrine whereof you have preaching up to this time [perf.]...” ..συνέβαλλον...ἔλεγον...εὐηγγελίζετο...λαλουμένη..

⁴⁰⁷ E.g., Matt. 16:19, from which much papal authority has been alleged, i.e., that the pope as the alleged “Vicar of Christ” on earth has the power to bind and loose. “...whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” The const. is that of the fut. equitive vb. and an imperf. ptc. in a periphrastic const., ἔσται δεδεμένος [“shall...have already been bound”] ἔσται λελυμένος [“shall...have already been loosed”].

⁴⁰⁸ E.g., The terms “are dead,” “is dead,” and “be dead” in Romans 6:2–9 are all in the aor. tense, which denotes an action or event, and ought to be translated as “died.” This does not refer to a state of being, but to an act of the Spirit of God in breaking the reigning power of sin through the believer’s union with Christ in his death.

Further, the word “dead” in v. 11 is a substantive (νεκρούς), “corpses.” Upon such misunderstandings is based such errors as the “old man” and “new man” within the believer, “two natures” within the believer, the “carnal Christian” heresy, the error of seeking the experience of “being crucified with Christ,” “living the crucified life,” or spiritual “self–crucifixion as a further Christian experience” to be sought, consonant with the erroneous “Higher Life” concept of holiness.

E.g., Jn. 2:20, “..forty and six years was this temple in building...!” The Eng. would seem to emph. the duration of the construction of the temple, and that the Jews sought to impress our Lord with such. They did, but used the aor. οἰκοδομήθη rather than the pres. Why and how? The aor. lumped the whole time–frame into one huge block of time and this was forcibly pushed at our Lord as a great solitary, impressive fact.

result extending to the present)⁴⁰⁹ and pluperfect (a past action that extended to another point in the past). The significance and nuances of these are often lacking or misconstrued in the English translation.

The Greek also has periphrastic constructions to emphasize time and a given type of action.⁴¹⁰ The English has to leave such distinctions untranslated. The aor. inf. of result has been misconstrued in some statements, leading to great doctrinal misunderstanding.⁴¹¹

Italicized Words or Phrases

In many places the English Bible contains italicized words or phrases that are necessary to complete the sense where the nature of the original language was more abrupt or words were omitted by *ellipsis*⁴¹² because of style or for emphasis. Mark the following comments, statements and examples:

- Some in ignorance erroneously believe that italics are used for emphasis. This manifests an unforgivable ignorance of the Bible.
- Unavoidably, the insertion or omission of italicized words affect the interpretation of Scripture.

⁴⁰⁹ E.g., Our Lord's final declaration from the cross, "It is finished!" τετέλεσται, "It has [finally] come to completion and the results will continue on forever!" A cry of victory. Doubtless the greatest single word ever uttered since God said, "Let there be light...and there was light." (Our Lord may have cried out in Aramaic, his "mother tongue," yet it was but one word). E.g., "It is written" (γεγράφται), "It stands written [with undiminishing authority]." E.g., Rom. 1:17; 3:21, "Righteousness of God stands revealed [ἀποκαλύπτεται]..." in 3:21, πεφανέρωται.

⁴¹⁰ E.g., Acts 1:14; 2:42, ἦσαν...προσκαρτεροῦντες, (an imperf. equitive verb joined with a pres. ptc. to emph. a continuous, uninterrupted action in time past) i.e., "they were continuing obstinately or steadfastly, without any absence or slacking."

⁴¹¹ E.g., Eph. 4:22–24, where the commands in English to "put off the old man" and "put on the new man" actually state the result of an action already completed, not a command [aor. inf. or result]. Cf. Col. 3:9–10, which gives a more correct rendering.

⁴¹² See Ellipsis on pp. 184–185 under "Figures deriving from Grammar or Rhetoric."

- At times, due to chapter or verse divisions, italics have in reality obscured the flow of the argument, e.g., Eph. 2:1, where a sentence fragment has to be completed by supplying both the subject and the verb. The sentence fragment is actually a continuation of 1:22.
- Not all added words have been italicized. The failure to italicize some words may lead to textual or doctrinal confusion.⁴¹³

Key–Words, Phrases or Constructions

The study of key–words is legitimate, either in the original language or a secondary language, if there is a direct correspondence from the original to the secondary language.⁴¹⁴ If the original language uses several diverse terms for only one in the secondary language, then the continuity may be lost, as that word might not truly reflect the argument or development of thought in the original language, but only seem significant in the secondary language.

Note: E.g., the two “therefores” in Rom. 8:1 and 12:1 as giving the basic divisions of the epistle. The sub–section concerning the

⁴¹³ E.g., Heb. 2:9, and the phrase, “should taste death for every man.” The Greek text reads, ...ὕπὲρ παντὸς γεύσεται θανάτου, i.e., “on behalf of every one tasted death.” The word “man” does not occur in the text, and ought to be italicized. The words “every one” (ὕπὲρ παντὸς) are properly defined by the context, as in the case with all pronouns (Cf. v. 10, “many sons,” v. 11, “they who are sanctified...brethren,” v. 12, “my brethren,” v. 13 “the children which God hath given me,” v. 14, “the children,” v. 16, “the seed of Abraham,” v. 17, “his brethren,” etc.).

⁴¹⁴ E.g., note the historical section of Romans chapters 9–11. Although this section deals with redemptive history (the relation of Israel to the gospel) and the mysteries of Divine election and rejection [reprobation], the key–word or theme and emphasis are on the free and sovereign mercy of an infinite God.

It is significant that the word “mercy” only occurs twice in the rest of this epistle (12:8; 15:9) and only five other times in all of Paul’s writings, yet occurs in chapters 9–11 nine times in the Greek text. Carefully mark these occurrences: 9:15 (twice); 9:16; 9:18 (the second occurrence being added to compensate for the Gk. *ellipsis*); 9:23; 11:30; 11:31 (twice); and 11:32.

Law and the Believer extends from 6:15 through at least 8:8. Should 8:1 be seen as beginning a new and distinct section, then the whole of Rom. 7:14–25 would be misunderstood and the doctrine of sanctification would become perverted. When, however, the artificial chapter division is omitted at 8:1, the section does not end with defeat, but with a note of positive power and blessing through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Failure to note this has led to the erroneous “carnal Christian” teaching that one “must get out of Romans 7 and into Romans 8.”

Indeed, such “key-words” may only exist in the secondary language, and not the original, or be mere accommodations of several diverse terms in the original. For a listing of various legitimate key-words or terms and constructions in the Epistle to the Hebrews, note the following list:

A careful study reveals various key-words, terms or phrases that develop the contrast between the Old and New Covenants, the superiority of faith, and emphasize the superiority of Christ’s Person and finality of his redemptive work:

“Perfect,” “Perfection.” (Gk: various forms of τέλειος, τελειόω, connoting that which is mature, complete, fulfilled or accomplished). These terms occur fifteen times: twelve times in the English Version (2:10; 5:9; 6:1; 7:11, 19; 9:9, 11; 10:1, 14; 11:40; 12:23; 13:21). three additional times in the Greek text translated in the English as “them that are of full age,” 5:14; “consecrated,” 7:28; “finisher,” 12:2.

“Eternal,” “Forever,” “Everlasting.” (τὸν αἰῶν τοῦ αἰῶος, εἰς τὸν αἰωνίαν, εἰς τοῦς αἰῶνας, αἰωνίου, αἰωνίαν). Used of the abiding or permanent character of our Lord and Christianity as contrasted with the Mosaic or Old Covenant. These terms occur fifteen times (1:8; 5:6, 9; 6:2, 20; 7:17, 21, 24, 28; 9:12, 14–15; 13:8, 20–21).

“Heaven,” “Heavenly.” (οὐρανός, often in pl. form as an Hebraism). Used to contrast the glory and ultimate character of the work of our Lord and Christianity as contrasted with the earthly sphere and ministry of the Mosaic institutions. These words occur sixteen times (1:10; 3:1; 4:14; 6:4; 7:26; 8:1, 5; 9:23–24; 10:34; 11:16; 12:22–23, 25–26).

“Partakers.” The Gk. uses two terms: κοινωνέω, “to have in common.” As a noun κοινωνός, “a companion, partner, partaker,” 2:14. μέτοχος, “a sharer in something, a partner,” 3:1, 14; 6:4; 12:8, 10). These terms are used to connote a definite

participation, association or companionship in the realities of the Gospel. Occurs six times in the English Version.

“Having therefore...let us...” This phrase occurs twice (4:14–16; 10:19–24), and introduces the major practical sections of the epistle: the practical exhortation to truly appropriate and implement what believers are to possess in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Once,” i.e., “once–for–all.” The Gk. uses two terms: ἅπαξ and ἐφάπαξ. This term occurs twelve times (6:4; 9:7, 26, 27, 28; 10:2; 12:26, 27) and in its emph. form ἐφάπαξ three times (7:27; 9:12; 10:10).

“Lest.” The Gk. uses various particles: μήποτε, μή. Used to introduce several warnings about the fear of losing what believers are to possess in the fullness of the Gospel. This term occurs ten times and is related to the five larger warnings against apostasy, which occur in this epistle (2:1; 3:12, 13; 4:1, 11; 11:28; 12:3, 13, 15–16).

“Better.” The Gk: κρείσσων, from κράτος, “strong,” hence: “better, more useful, serviceable, more advantageous, excellent.” This word is used to emphasize the superiority of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the superiority of the Gospel Covenant over the Old Covenant. This term occurs 13 times:

- 1:4 “better than the angels.” This is descriptive of the glorified, exalted Son of God as the Mediator of the New Covenant compared with the angels, who are messengers and ministers for God.
- 6:9 “better things.” In view of possible apostasy from the Gospel, these “better things” are the realities associated with true faith.
- 7:7 “the less is blessed of the better.” An argument applied to the blessing from Melchizedek conferred upon Abraham, emphasizing the greatness of this King–Priest.
- 7:19 “a better hope.” The limitations or insufficiency of the Old Covenant are contrasted with the glorious sufficiency or hope of the Gospel Covenant.
- 7:22 “a better testament.” This is the New Testament or Gospel Covenant founded in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 8:6 “a better covenant.” This is the New or Gospel Covenant, which is not characterized by the inadequacies of the Old Covenant (Cf. 8:7–12).

- 8:6 “better promises.” These are the promises of spiritual blessings as contrasted with the largely earthly blessings of the Old Covenant (8:10–13).
- 9:23 “better sacrifices.” These refer to the High Priestly ministry and intercession of our Lord (9:24).
- 10:34 “a better and an enduring substance.” The realities of the believer’s glorious inheritance as contrasted with earthly possessions.
- 11:16 “a better country.” The pilgrimage of faith is not toward an earthly country or future, but transcends this life and views the glory of heaven.
- 11:35 “a better resurrection.” This denotes the believer’s resurrection to glory. The context implies that to “accept deliverance” would have meant apostasy.
- 11:40 “some better thing.” In the context of v. 39–40, this refers to the fullness of salvation and revelation in and through our Lord Jesus Christ, of which the heroes of old had only a rudimentary knowledge and promise.
- 12:24 “the blood...that speaketh better things.” The contrast is between “the blood of Abel” that cried out to God for vengeance (Gen. 4:10) and the blood of our Lord that speaks pardon, peace and reconciliation.

Greek Conditional Sentences

The conditional statements in Greek may also be misconstrued when brought into English. The Greek has four types of conditional sentences, each with a *protasis* (the “if” clause) and an *apodosis* (the conclusion).

- *The first class conditional sentence* (εἰ + indicative mood in the protasis) assumes the condition to be true. Cf. Matt. 4:3, Εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ... “Since you are the Son of God...” The temptation was not for our Lord to prove to Satan that he was the Son of God, but rather *because* he was, to use his prerogative and power independently to fulfill a legitimate appetite, and not live by the Word of God alone.

The first class may also be used in an argument: Cf. Matt. 12:27, καὶ εἰ ἐγὼ ἐν Βεελζεβούλ ἐκβάλλω τὰ δαιμόνια... “And if I [for the sake of argument] by Beelzebub cast out demons...”

- *The second class conditional sentence* (εἰ in the protasis with past indicative and ἂν in the apodosis) assumes the condition to be false. Cf. Matt. 24:43 εἰ ἦδει ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ποῖα φυλακῆ ὁ κλέπτης ἔρχεται, "...if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come..." ἐγγηγόρησεν ἂν "...he would have watched..."
- *The third class conditional sentence* (εἰ + subjunctive mood) is based on contingency or probability. Cf. Rom. 7:2, εἰ δὲ ἀποθάνῃ ὁ ἀνὴρ, κατήργηται ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου τοῦ ἀνδρός. "but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband."
- *The fourth class conditional sentence* (εἰ with optative mood) is that of less probability. Cf. 1 Pet. 3:14, ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ πάσχοιτε διὰ δικαιοσύνην, μακάριοι. "But even if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye..." Cf. Acts 17:27, εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὔροιεν. "...if haply they might feel after him, and find him ..." which emphasizes the noetic effects of sin upon man's ability to seek God.
 Note: There are no complete instances of a fourth class conditional sentence in the New Testament. Were there, ἂν would occur in the apodosis.
- Incomplete conditional statements may be used in a rhetorical sense (a common use in Classical Greek). E.g., Rom. 9:22–24, εἰ δὲ θέλων ὁ θεός... "What if God..."

Verbs, Participles and Adjectives

The English may reverse the grammatical construction of the original language, translating a verb as a participle and a participle as a verb, and thus shifting the whole force of a given statement.⁴¹⁵ At times the English fails to properly translate the relationship

⁴¹⁵ E.g., Heb. 1:1–2, and the major const, "God...having spoken...spoke..." (...ὁ θεός λαλήσας...ἐλάλησεν...). The Eng. reverses the vb. and ptc., shifting the force of the opening statement and lessening the force of the finality of Divine revelation in Christ.

between a participle and a verb.⁴¹⁶ This reversal is likewise true of adjectives and nouns.⁴¹⁷

The Greek Middle Voice

Finally, the voice of the verb may be mistaken or misread. The English has two voices, the active and passive, i.e., the subject is either doing the acting or is acted upon. The Greek, however also possesses a middle voice, in which the subject either acts upon himself (reflexive) or with reference to himself.

It is the voice of personal interest. In some instances, the middle voice is used for emphasis—the “dynamic middle” voice.⁴¹⁸ At times, the middle voice in Greek is incorrectly read as a passive⁴¹⁹ or the passive incorrectly with the middle sense.

Note: E.g., of the passive, Acts 17:4, *καί τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπέισθησαν καὶ προσεκληρώθησαν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σιλᾷ...* “And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas...” *προσεκληρώθησαν*, however, is pass., not mid., i.e., “they were allotted to...” God allotted Paul and Silas converts in their ministry. Cf. the use of the same term in Eph. 1:11. *ἐκληρώθημεν προορισθέντες*, “having been chosen by lot, having been predestinated...” (aor. vb, aor. ptc.). E.g., Heb. 2:1,

⁴¹⁶ E.g., Matt. 28:19 (*πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε*), “having gone, therefore, [with a sense of urgency and with all determination] make disciples!” Lk. 18:11 (*σταθεὶς...προσηύχeto*), “having taken his stance...began [and continued] to pray.” Acts 17:22 (*Σταθεὶς δὲ [ὁ] Παῦλος...Πάγου ἔφη*), “then Paul, having taken his stand [having taken the stance of an orator]...said.”

⁴¹⁷ E.g., Eph. 4:24, “true holiness” (*ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας*), lit: “holiness of the truth,” i.e., the rightness [unpolluted nature] and holiness of the truth. E.g., Rom. 8:21, *εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ*, “into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.”

⁴¹⁸ E.g., Eph. 1:4, *καθὼς ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς ἐν αὐτῷ... ἐξελέξατο* is aor. mid., i.e., “according as he chose us out for himself, or with reference to himself,” or as the dynamic mid., “according as he and no other chose us...!”

⁴¹⁹ E.g., 2 Pet. 2:22, *ὡς λουσαμένη*, “[the] sow once washed herself,” referring to the false teachers who, for a time seemed to act contrary to their true nature.

“...lest at any time we let them slip.” ...μήποτε παραρῶμεν aor. subj. pass., i.e., “...lest at any time we drift away from them.”

Emphases in Hebrew and Greek

Both Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek possess a variety of ways in which to express varying degrees of emphasis, antithesis, intensity and dramatic effect which we do not possess in English prose. These subtleties are lost in the English language, and therefore to the English Bible. Yet these often have a bearing on a proper and adequate interpretation. Remember that exegesis and translation always necessitate a given degree of interpretation.⁴²⁰

Synonyms

The original languages often have a variety of terms for one in the English, or a term used in a variety of ways. E.g., the Hebrew uses several different words for “man:”

אָדָם (*‘adam*), “Adam,” both the proper name for the first man and also the generic term for “man” or “mankind,” e.g., Gen. 1:27. (2) אִישׁ (*‘ish*), virile, strong, a male as distinct from a female (אִשָּׁה, *‘ishah*), e.g., Gen. 13:16. (3) זָכָר (*zakar*) to remember, and so a male, man-child, as the father’s memory is preserved in the genealogy, e.g., Gen. 17:10. (4) זָקֵן (*zakēn*) old man, aged, e.g., Gen. 25:8. (5) אָנוּשׁ (*‘enosh*) mortal, man in his frailty, e.g., Job 9:2. (6) גִּבּוֹר, גִּבּוֹר (gēbēr, gibbōr) man in his strength, a warrior, champion, e.g., Job 38:3. (7) חָסִיד (chasiyd) a godly one (masc.), a saint, Psa. 12:1. (8) צַדִּיק (tsadiyq), a just or righteous one (masc.), e.g., Psa. 37:16. (9) נָעַר (*na’ar*), young man, lad, e.g., Psa. 119:9. (10) בַּעַל (*ba’al*), man, owner, master, husband. Used of the foreign god “Baal.” e.g., Judg. 20:5. (11) נֶפֶשׁ (*nephesh*) soul, life, person, e.g., Ex. 12:16.

The Hebrew uses several diverse terms for the concept of “Law,” “Commandment,” “Statute” or “decree.” The various terms are descriptive of man’s law, but especially of the nature and character of God’s Law-Word. The following are all taken from Psalm 119, which is dedicated to the influence or effect of God’s Law-Word upon the life:

⁴²⁰ For a thorough discussion of emphatic and intensive constructions in Hebrew and Greek, see the author’s *Exegetical Handbook for Biblical Studies*.

(1) תּוֹרָה (*torah*), v. 1. This is also the designation of the Pentateuch, or Five Books of the Law.” It is the common term for “law.” (2) עֵדוּת (*‘edah*), testimony, witness, v. 2. God witnesses or testifies either for or against us in his Word. (3) פְּקוּדָה (*piqqudh*), precept, statute, v. 4. (4) חֹק (*chôq*), statute, ordinance, a thing prescribed, v. 5. (5) מִצְוָה (*mitsvah*), code, law, ordinance, command, v. 6.⁴²¹ (6) מִשְׁפָּט (*mishpat*), judgment, ordinance, v. 7. (7) דְּבָר (*dabar*), utterance, word, saying, commandment, v. 9. The Word of God is the law for life. It is all command, never simply suggestion. (8) אִמְרָה (*‘imrah*), utterance, speech, word, the Law, Torah, v. 38.

The Greek of the New Testament abounds in a rich variety of synonyms. Note the following examples:

- There are two different terms for “repent.”

Note: The two terms for “repent” and “repentance” are: (1) μεταμέλομαι, “to care for, regret and so repent one’s self.” Although there is regret, there is no change of mind or reversal toward sin and turning toward God. (2) μετανοέω, “to think back, and so change one’s mind.” The former word is used of Judas (Matt. 27:3); the latter always of evangelical repentance (Mk. 1:15; Acts 17:31).⁴²²

- There are three different terms for “know” and “knowledge.”

Note: The three terms for “know” or “knowledge” are:

(1) γινώσκω, γνώσις, a knowledge that implies a relationship between the one who knows and the object of such knowledge. This may at times be expressed as an

⁴²¹ The pronunciation of מִצְוָה has traditionally been with a “v,” i.e., *mitsvah*. At age twelve a Jewish boy is considered a man, and through a ceremony becomes a “son of the law,” or בֶּן־מִצְוָה (*bar-mitsvah*). The usual term for “son” is *bēn*, but *bar* means pure grain separated from the chaff, and so a son in the purest sense, and is thus used for the *bar-mitsvah* ceremony.

⁴²² It may be objected that in Heb. 12:15–17, Esau is said to have “found no place of repentance [μετανοίας], though he sought it bitterly with tears.” This has erroneously been used to teach that someone may “cross the line” of God’s grace and not be able to be saved, no matter how much he tries. Such teaching is absolutely false (Jn. 6:37). In this context, it simply states that Esau sought to change his father’s [Isaac’s] mind, but could not although he cried out and wept bitterly (Gen. 27:31–38).

experiential knowledge, e.g., Jn. 17:3. The compound form, ἐπίγνωσις, (intensive use of ἐπί) connotes a full or adequate knowledge, e.g., Matt. 11:27 (occ. twice); Rom. 3:20.

(2) οἶδα, which denotes perception, and may even imply the perception of faith that extends beyond experience, e.g., Rom. 8:28. (3) ἐπίσταμαι, ἐπίστημι, which denotes critical, scientific or certain knowledge, e.g., Acts 10:28; 18:25; 19:15; 26:26; Heb. 11:8. This term is the source of the Eng. “epistemology,” the science or theory of knowledge.

- There are five basic words for “power.”

Note: The five terms for “power” in New Testament Gk. are:

(1) δύναμις, hence, “dynamic, dynamo, dynamite,” “might, ability, power.” This always emph. the source of power, e.g., Rom. 1:16.

(2) ἐξουσία, “right, prerogative, authority,” e.g., Jn. 1:12–13.

(3) ἰσχὺς, “ability, force, might, strength” e.g., Eph. 6:10, “might.”

(4) κράτος, “power, dominion, strength,” e.g., Eph. 6:10.

(5) ἀρχή, “a beginning, a rule or governing power,” e.g., Eph. 6:12, “principalities.”

- There are six different terms for “servant.”

Note: The seven terms for “servant” are:

(1) δοῦλος, “[literal or spiritual] willing bondsman,” e.g., Rom. 1:1; 6:17–18.

(2) διάκονος, “servant, minister, deacon.” From the vb. διώκω, to pursue, emph. perseverance in work. Used more of ministers [preachers] than deacons in New Testament.

(3) παῖς, “minor child, servant, attendant, subordinate,” e.g., Acts 4:27, 30, where “child” ought to read “servant,” referring to the condescension of our Lord and his subordination to the Father in his incarnation as the God–Man and “Servant of Jehovah.”

(4) οἰκέτης, from οἶκος, “house,” a “household servant,” e.g., Acts 10:7.

(5) ὑπηρέτης, lit: “an under rower,” hence a minister or subordinate servant, attendant,” e.g., Acts 13:5.

(6) θεράπων, “one who serves, heals (hence Eng., “therapeutic”), attends to;” e.g., Heb. 3:5. Cf. also Acts 17:25, “worshipped,” as religious service which is needful to the “gods.”

- There are two words for “love.”

Note: The Κοινή Gk. had three words, but ἔρος (*eros*), “Love, [sexual] desire. (hence, Eng. “erotic”) is *not* used in the New Testament.

(1) φίλη, φιλέω, a love or affection that derives from the emotional nature. It is a spontaneous affection which can be very strong.⁴²³ From this word is derived such terms as φίλημα, “kiss,” and several compound terms, e.g., φιλανθρωπία, φιλαδελφία, φιλόστοργος, φιλοτέκνος, φίλανδρος, φιλαργυρία, φιλήδονος, φίλαντος, φιλοξενία, φιλοσοφία, φιλόνηκος, φιλοπροτεύω, φιλόθεος.⁴²⁴

(2) ἀγάπη, ἀγαπάω, a love that derives from the rational nature. This love possesses a distinct moral quality or character, can be commanded, and is capable of intelligent purpose and fulfillment.⁴²⁵ It is this term that is used of God’s commands to men to love him, and of God in his love for his own. It is not compounded. Φιλέω was being slowly replaced by ἀγαπάω in the first century AD because Christianity ennobled the latter word.

The various terms translated “receive” in the Greek New Testament number at least seven, and several have their compound distinctives with addition of various prepositions, numbering more than eighteen in all. There are seven different terms translated as “master,” at least three translated “evil,” and another three translated by the one English term “lust.” The different terms used

⁴²³ Cf. the conversation between our Lord and Peter in Jn. 21:15–17, “Lovest me more than these?” Our Lord used ἀγαπάω the first two times, and Peter responded with φιλέω. The final time our Lord used φιλέω, acquiescing to Peter’s strong and spontaneous affection, but he desired a more substantial and intelligent love. Ἀγαπάω is the love necessary for the service of Christ and for feeding the sheep and lambs of God. Peter’s φιλέω or tender affection for, pleasure in and passion for our Lord failed in the hour of crisis.

⁴²⁴ Cf. 2 Tim. 3:5, “lovers of God.” To take pleasure in God or to have a passion for God, is not wrong. Φιλέω has its proper place in Christian experience.

⁴²⁵ Cf. Phil. 1:9–11, where this word is used in such a context for Christian love.

to describe the various aspects of “sin” number nine in the Hebrew Old Testament and twelve in the Greek New Testament.

Care must be taken to make the proper distinctions when the English version uses only one term and the Hebrew or Greek uses one of several possible terms, each with its distinctive nuances.

It is of the utmost importance to study the historical development and usage of any given word in Scripture. Words must be understood, as much as possible, in their contemporary scriptural meaning and setting. Words may change their meaning with time in any given language. Failure to note this through careful study will result in a form of eisegesis.

English Ambiguity

Some terms in English versions have caused a misunderstanding of the text, and so have influenced both faith and practice. Take, for example, the following:

- “World.” Gk: Κόσμος, the created and ordered universe, Acts 17:24; the world of mankind, considered as comprised of either Jews and Gentiles or believers and unbelievers, Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 2:2; used of the Gentiles as distinct from the Jews.⁴²⁶
Rom. 11:12, 15; of the present condition of sinful human affairs which stands in opposition to God and seeks to seduce from him, 1 Jn. 2:15–17; used hyperbolically of men in general, though in a limited locality, Jn. 12:19. Αἰών, “age, period of time,” Matt. 28:20; Lk. 20:34–35; Heb. 11:3. Οἰκουμένη, “the inhabited earth” or a portion of it, Lk. 2:1; Acts 11:28; Rom. 10:18; Heb. 2:5.
- “Perfect.” Gk: τέλειος, “perfect, complete, mature,” Matt. 5:48; 19:21; Col. 1:28; καταρτίζω, “finished, complete,” Lk. 6:40, referring the completion of one’s training or education; ἄρτιος, “fully–limbed, symmetrical, completely outfitted,” 2 Tim. 3:17, where this term is used twice; once as “perfect” (vb.) and then as “thoroughly furnished” (ptc.). From a

⁴²⁶ Jn. 3:16–17. This is how our Lord used the term and how Nicodemus understood it.

misunderstanding of this term has derived the various ideas of relative and “sinless perfectionism.”

- “Peculiar” in 1 Pet. 2:9, περιποίησις, “an acquisition, a valued possession.”⁴²⁷
- “Conversation,” which does not denote speech, but has the general connotation of “lifestyle” or the behavior suitable to citizenship: ἀναστροφή, “behavior,”⁴²⁸ Eph. 2:3; τρόπος, “turning,” Heb. 13:5; περιπατέω, “to walk about” (Eng. “peripatetic”), Eph. 5:15; and πολίτευμα, “citizenship, behavior of a citizen,” Phil. 1:27; 3:20..
- “whosoever.” Often the relative pronoun ὅς and the indefinite relative pronoun ὅστις, “who, whoever, whosoever,” are translated as “whosoever,” e.g., Matt. 5:21; 10:33. The indefinite relative pronoun ὅστις is also used with πᾶς, “all, every,” in the sense of “whosoever, everyone whosoever” Πᾶς οὖν ὅστις ὁμολογήσει, “Whosoever therefore shall confess...” Matt. 10:32.

Often, however, the relative participle with or without πᾶς is used to denote a certain, distinct type of person and characteristic quality or action. This gives a very different—often the very opposite—connotation than an indefinite “whosoever.” E.g., Jn. 3:15–16, πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν, “every single one [without exception] constantly believing [exercising faith] in him...” Jn. 8:34, πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, “every single one [without exception] constantly practicing sin...” Rom. 10:11, Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐπ’ αὐτῷ “every single one [without exception] believing [exercising faith] upon him...” 1 Jn. 3:4, Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, “every single one [without exception] practicing sin...” Cf. also Jn. 4:13 and Rev. 22:17, ὁ θέλων, rel. sing. ptc., “the one willing.”

⁴²⁷ Some, influenced by the English sense, have actually interpreted the idea of “peculiar” to mean “odd.”

⁴²⁸ Ἀναστροφή is closely related to ἐπιστρέφω, which means “to turn about, return, be converted,” e.g., Matt. 13:5; Mk. 8:33; Lk. 22:32; Acts 3:19; 11:21; 15:19; Jas. 5:19–20.

Chapter and Verse Divisions

It must be carefully noted that the chapter and verse divisions are neither inspired nor part of the original languages. A “Chapter–and–Verse” study may be well–meant, but it is misleading. The Scriptures were originally written as books and these were later logically divided into paragraphs.

Chapter and verse divisions are artificial, and though sometimes correct, often interrupt the argument or reasoning of the writer. Remember that they were inserted for ease of reference, not for interpretive purposes.

Note: Chapter divisions (Gk. *κεφάλαια*, chief [points, summaries], heads; Lat. *capitulum*, chapter). The Greek New Testament was originally written in paragraphs. The earliest “chapter divisions” occur in the codex Vaticanus of the fourth century. Such early divisions were often arbitrary and occurred in far greater number than the present divisions. The modern chapter divisions are products of the Middle Ages, and were probably made either by Stephen Langdon (Archbishop of Canterbury, d.1228) or Cardinal Hugo (d. 1263).

Verse divisions (Lat: *versus*, a line or row). These divisions were first made by Robert Etienne [Stephanus], a Paris printer (1550) and included in his Greek New Testament. The first English Bible to have the modern chapter and verse divisions was the Geneva Bible (1560).

Examples of the influence of chapter divisions: e.g., Rom. 8:1. The transition occurs at 8:5. The “Therefores” of 8:1 and 12:1 influence one’s interpretation. See next paragraph.

Mark the development of the believer’s relation to the law in Rom. 6:15–8:7. The chapter and verse divisions in this extended passage have obliterated the full argument and have created much theological controversy. It has become traditional to speak of the two “Therefores” in Romans (8:1 and 12:1) as the major divisions of the epistle, which absolutely obscures the Apostle’s argument.

The “Higher Life” teaching of “getting out of Romans Seven into Romans Eight,” i.e., from a life of spiritual conflict and defeat to one of continuous victory (a non–Pentecostal second work of grace) is based on the artificial chapter division and a misunderstanding of conversion that begins in Romans 6 with the believer’s union with Christ. A “Chapter–and–Verse” for every truth may well be an obscuration of truth.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why must one give precedence to the original languages of Scripture? Explain by demonstrating the nature of Scripture and the difference between the Scriptures in the original language, a translation and a version.
2. What is meant by the term “genre”? How does genre affect the study of Scripture? Explain by examples from various types of Scripture.
3. How is it possible to misunderstand the Scriptures in the original languages and twist their meaning through word studies?
4. Why are word studies of the Bible in any language, the original or a secondary language, often dangerous and misleading? What is the inherent flaw in such a study?
5. What are the differences between exegesis and exposition?
6. Why is it misleading to attempt an exegesis of Scripture in a secondary language or translation?
7. What is the basic concept of verbal “tense” in Hebrew? In Greek? How does this correlate to translations into other languages?
8. What is the need for and also the danger in using italicized words or phrases in a translation or version? Illustrate your answer.
9. Is there a danger in analyzing Scripture according to various “key words”? Explain why this can be both legitimate and illegitimate.
10. What is a conditional sentence in Greek? Name and describe the four types or classes. What effect do these have on understanding certain passages?
11. If verbs are translated as participles and participles as verbs, or the active and passive (or middle voice) fail to be translated correctly, how does this affect the

meaning of Scripture? How does the meaning of Scripture affect theology?

12. What are the various ways in which the Old Testament or Classical Hebrew language conveys the idea or force of emphasis? Illustrate your answer.
13. What are the various ways in which the Greek of the New Testament expresses emphasis through words, phrases or clauses? Illustrate your answer.
14. What is necessarily lost in the failure to convey the emphases of the original language to a translation or version?
15. Why is a study of biblical synonyms often both necessary and rewarding?
16. Why is it important to study the historical development of any given word or term used in Scripture?
17. Are the chapter and verse divisions inspired? If not, when were they inserted and what are their functions? Illustrate why these can be misleading.
18. How do chapter and verse divisions influence interpretation? Illustrate both.

3. The Principle of the Perspicuity of Scripture or the Analogy of Faith

Scripture interprets Scripture. The more obscure passages are understood by clearer passages,⁴²⁹ presupposing that the Scriptures, as the very Word of God, are not contradictory, but self-consistent and complementary. Parallel passages or thoughts often open what would otherwise remain obscure or misunderstood.⁴³⁰

The “analogy of faith” refers to the total or inclusive, non-contradictory teaching of Scripture as it bears upon any one given

⁴²⁹ “Perspicuity,” from the Lat. *perspicere*, to see through. The quality of being transparent or easy to understand.

⁴³⁰ E.g., There are nineteen instances in which Matthew uses the term “kingdom of heaven.” In each case the other Gospel Records use the term “kingdom of God,” making the terms synonymous.

point or issue.⁴³¹ Note the alleged contradiction between Paul in Rom. 4:1–5 and James in Jas. 2:14–26. Does Paul teach justification by faith alone and James by works when they both refer to Abraham for their example of justification? No. What James emphasizes is that true faith does not stand alone without being evidenced by works.⁴³²

4. The Principle of Progressive Revelation

The New Testament is not a mere continuation of the Old, but rather the finality of the progressive self-revelation of God to man. The Old Testament is a preparation for the New; the New sheds light upon the Old, as the reality explains the “dim outline,” sketch, or the “shadow.”⁴³³

The types of the Old Testament find their fulfillment in the antitypes of the New. Many of the prophecies, including those concerning the Messiah find their fulfillment in the Person and

⁴³¹ For the “Analogy of Faith,” see Part II, “Definitions of Essential Terms,” p. 39.

⁴³² Paul uses Abraham’s faith in Rom. 4:1–5 (a reference to Gen. 15:6) to illustrate a completely free justification, i.e., a justification without works whatsoever (although the remainder of the chapter four illustrates the works that flowed from his faith), whereas James emphasizes the faith of Abraham evidenced by his works in the offering up of Isaac (a reference to Gen. 22, which occurred forty years later). A forty-year-old faith produced corresponding works or evidence.

⁴³³ Cf. Heb. 10:1, Σκιάν [“shadow, dim outline,” emph. pos.] Σκιάν γὰρ ἔχων ὁ νόμος τῶν μελλόντων ἀγαθῶν... Too much importance cannot be given to progressive revelation [the historical context].

(1) The inscripturated Word of God has been given to us in a historical format. It is Divine revelation in the context of redemptive history.

(2) The Old Testament is generally preparatory in nature (e.g., types, the history of Israel as an elect nation to whom God revealed himself in preparation for the Gospel, etc.); the New is characterized by realization or finality (the antitypes: the rituals, ceremonies, Tabernacle in the wilderness, Levitical priesthood and sacrifices, etc., all finding fulfillment in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the fullness of the Gospel, etc.). Cf. the pervading reality of Heb. 1:1–2, and the major const, “God...having spoken...spoke...” ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας...ἐλάλησεν...

work of Christ. The New or Gospel Covenant is the realization of what was anticipated in the Old Covenant.

The Old Testament institutions of the Levitical priesthood, the sacrificial system, and the offices of Prophet, Priest and King all find their fulfillment in our Lord. Mark this reality in the following rhyme:

The New is in the Old contained,
The Old is by the New explained.

5. The Principle of a Covenantal Distinction

This is closely related to the foregoing principle of progressive revelation, but should be noted separately because of its importance. The terms “Covenant” and “Testament” are neither synonymous nor co-extensive.

Note: The Old Covenant was progressively revealed, beginning with Adam and the *protevangelium* (Gen. 3:15). It was further revealed and expanded to Noah (Gen. 6–9), Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3; 15:1–6; 17:1–5), Moses (Ex.–Dt.), David (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17) and through the prophets (e.g., Jer. 31:31–34; Ezk. 36:25–27).

This covenant was centralized in and epitomized by the Mosaic institutions—the Tabernacle (and later Solomon’s temple), Levitical priesthood and sacrificial system—and the later offices of prophet and king. This entire system was an elementary, anticipatory and typical preparation for the New or Gospel Covenant that centered in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The “Old” and “New” “Covenants” should not be confused with the Old and New Testaments. Although often used interchangeably, these are neither identical nor coextensive. The Old Testament is the first major division of the Scriptures and contains that part of the “Covenant of Grace” that was preparatory for the Messiah or the “Old Covenant,” i.e., the Mosaic institutions.

The New Testament is the second major division of the Scriptures and contains the fulfillment or finality of the “Covenant of Grace” in the Gospel economy, i.e., the “New Covenant” as it centers in the Person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A necessary distinction must be made between the Old “Testament” and Old “Covenant” and the New “Testament” and

New “Covenant” to avoid the “Old Testament mentality” of Reformed tradition. Also, the necessary interrelation of the two Testaments and Covenants must be maintained to avoid what we consider to be the extreme dichotomy of modern Dispensationalism.

Note: (1) The principle of covenantal distinction must ever be taken into account. Any denial or modification of this principle results in an “Old Testament” mentality that views the New Testament as a mere continuation of the Old. This is so fundamental that it largely determines one’s presuppositions and approach to the given text.

(2) The fundamental unity of the Scriptures must be maintained within the principle of progressive revelation and covenantal distinction, or artificial divisions may be made which govern one’s whole approach to the interpretation of Scripture.

This is true of modern Dispensationalism, with its arbitrary divisions of the Bible and inherent antinomianism (in confining the Law of God to the Jews and a given “Dispensation”); and modern Arminianism and Pelagianism, with their presuppositions (unmitigated by the revelation of the nature of God and his salvation in the Old Testament) concerning free will, “easy-believism,” and universalism, etc.

6. The Principle of Lexical and Syntactical Distinction

Within any given passage, the words must be studied both lexically (as to their basic and subsequently-derived “dictionary” meanings) and syntactically (i.e., as they occur in a given context, as words are not necessarily static in meaning). Failure to make such distinction has resulted in great misunderstanding and subsequent misinterpretation.⁴³⁴ Take, for instance, the English word “fast.” It may denote rapid movement, no movement at all (“stand fast,” “hold fast”), or to abstain from food, depending on the given context.

A biblical example may be taken from the term “Law,” which is used in a variety of ways in Scripture, depending on the given context. It may refer to:

⁴³⁴ This is one of the major objections to such works as *The Amplified Bible*, which usually gives only a static, lexical meaning.

- The entire Old Testament, which was the only “Scripture” until the New Testament canon was written (Psa. 19:7–14; Heb. 10:1).
- The five books of Moses (“The Law, Prophets and Writings”—the three-fold division of the Heb. O.T.). E.g., Rom. 3:19–21.
- The whole Mosaic legislation (“Moral,” “Ceremonial” and “Civil” law). This use of the term “law” is usually contrasted with grace or faith in a redemptive context. This designation of the law is sometimes called “Moses” by *metonymy*⁴³⁵ (Acts 21:17–22).
- The Decalogue or 10 Commandments—This is the epitome of the “Moral Law” in its mostly negative form (Ex. 20:1–17).
- The entirety of the Word of God—for all of God’s Word is “command” or “law” (1 Jn. 2:3–4; 3:4).
- Human law or custom (E.g., Rom. 7:1–2).
- Various principles or powers (E.g., Rom. 3:27–28; 7: 21–23; 8:1–4).
- The law (as a mere outward principle of obedience) as contrasted with grace (as an internal dynamic).⁴³⁶ E.g., Rom. 6:14.
- The Moral Law as it expresses the moral self-consistency of God, i.e., his absolute righteous character. It is in this context alone that sin is revealed in its true character and significance. Cf. Ex. 20:1–17; Matt. 22:36–38; Rom. 3:19–20; 5:20; 7:7–13; 1 Tim. 1:5–11; 1 Jn. 3:4.

⁴³⁵ *Metonymy* (fr. Gk. μετὰ, other, and ὄνομα, name) is a figure of speech which substitutes one thing with another by association, e.g., The executive branch is termed “the White House,” the local civil authorities might be referred to as “City Hall,” etc.

⁴³⁶ Cf. Rom. 6:14 (...οὐ γὰρ ἔστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριτι). Both “law” and “grace” are anarth., emph. character or quality. Here, of a principle of operation.

This is the great danger in “Word Studies” of biblical terms. Such studies are legitimate—but only if and when a proper study of the lexical meaning, syntactical relationship and historico–theological development have been carefully considered.⁴³⁷ Again, words are to be taken in their literal or common sense usage (*usus loquendi*) unless they bear some figurative or idiomatic significance necessary to the context.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by the “analogy of faith”? What is the source for this terminology? Why is the original source a misunderstanding, but the principle itself legitimate and necessary? Illustrate the necessity of this principle from Scripture.
2. What are the presuppositions on which the analogy of faith stands? Why are these vital to any and all biblical interpretation?
3. What is a “parallel passage”? What is the importance and even necessity of studying parallel passages?
4. What is the “Principle of Progressive Revelation”? How does this principle operate in the study of Scripture? How would failure to observe this principle influence one’s interpretation? Give biblical evidence for the validity of this principle.
5. What is the “Principle of a Covenantal Distinction”? How many covenants are there in the redemptive purpose?

⁴³⁷ Word studies must be utilized with caution. God has not spoken in isolated or unconnected words, but in words arranged in a given syntax and context, expressing his Word intelligently, consistently and authoritatively. Each term must be considered lexically (the basic or dictionary sense), syntactically (as it is used in a given syntax or context), according to its historico–theological development, and finally as to its significance in the ultimate, comprehensive analogy of faith.

6. Are the terms “Covenant” and “Testament” synonymous? Why not? What misunderstanding could arise from failure to distinguish between the two terms?
7. What are the differences between the lexical meaning of a word and its syntactical meaning? Explain why this distinction is absolutely essential in Hermeneutics. Illustrate your answer from Scripture.

7. The Principle of Context

The context of any statement in Scripture is not limited to the immediate textual context, but necessarily includes the historical, theological, cultural and psychological context⁴³⁸ as well. All these must be considered for an accurate interpretation of any given passage.

The basic rules of context can be put in question form for the sake of convenience. Such questions ought to become an integral part of one’s hermeneutic skill:

- *Who is speaking?* It makes a great difference whether God or the devil is speaking. A given scriptural reference may be the inspired record of the words of an unregenerate individual. In the case of Job and his “comforters,” it makes a difference whether he or one of them is speaking i.e., the speaker’s point-of-view.
- *Who is being spoken to?* It makes a great difference whether our Lord or an inspired human author is speaking to believers, unbelievers or to mere professing believers.

Note: Some would take references to the unregenerate and make them refer to so-called “carnal Christians,” e.g., Rom. 8:5–8; Phil. 3:17–19. Cf. the autobiographical section of Rom. 7:14–25. Was Paul speaking of his pre-conversion life, his

⁴³⁸ The psychological context may be missed in a translation or version which does not convey the full use of the imperatives, exclamations, word-order and other idioms of the original language. E.g., Jn. 8:31–47, where a violent exchange takes place between the Jews and our Lord. Mark, for instance, the following: v. 33, “Seed of Abraham’ are we...” (Σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἔσμεν), and our Lord’s retort in v. 37, “I know, ‘Seed of Abraham’ are ye...!” (σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἔστε).

awakened state, or his experience as a mature believer? Undoubtedly, he speaks of his experience as a mature Christian who possesses a high degree of awareness of indwelling sin and corruption.

The key is that this section (6:15–8:8) describes the believer's relation to the Law, and does not end at 7:25, but in chapter 8, at least at v. 8. It is only in Rom. 8:1ff that he takes up the truth he has previously introduced in 5:5, 10 and 6:4–5—the presence and dynamic of the Holy Spirit.

- *What is being spoken about?* It is likewise essential to know whether a given author is writing about the objective or subjective aspect of salvation, about justification or sanctification, etc., or even stating something contrary to truth for the sake of argument.
- *Why is this being spoken?* The reason for the statement may be greatly significant.
- *When is this spoken?* The circumstances reveal much concerning a given statement.
- *In what context is this spoken?* Context of any word, phrase, clause, statement or narrative is extremely important. Remember the old cliché that “one can take a text out of context and make it a pretext.” This is the inherent danger of a “proof-text” method.⁴³⁹

8. The Principle of the *Usus Loquendi*

This principle is inherently part of the historico-grammatical approach to interpretation. It is the “common sense” interpretation that seeks the meaning in the usual or common use of words, terminology, idioms and figures of speech, and does not seek any deeper meaning or significance beyond this.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁹ E.g., 1 Cor. 2:9 has commonly been taken as a text about the unknown glories of heaven, when in reality it refers to spiritual truth already revealed to believers in contrast to unbelievers. Cf. the immediate context of v. 6–16.

⁴⁴⁰ See “Historico-Grammatical Interpretation,” pp. 163–164.

9. The Principle of Figurative Language

“When a word is employed in another other than its primary meaning, or applied to some object different from that to which it is appropriated in common usage, it is called a trope”.⁴⁴¹ The tropical sense is the figurative sense.⁴⁴²

There are several categories of figures of speech: short figures, such as similes and metaphors; opaque [difficult to understand] figures, such as riddles, fables and enigmatic sayings; and extended figures, such as similitudes, parables and allegories. There are also those figures of speech that are derived from grammatical or rhetorical styles and progress from the very simple to the more complex.

The use of figurative language—types, symbols,⁴⁴³ figures of speech, idiomatic, poetic, parabolic, and prophetic references—must be considered in the immediate context and in the larger context of the given book, and the whole of Scripture, culture and history.

Figurative language is just that—figures of speech common to a given language and culture as a vehicle to illustrate Divine

⁴⁴¹ From the Gk. *τροπος*, to turn or change. Quotation from Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 243.

⁴⁴² E.g., Gal. 2:19. James, Peter and John are referred to as “pillars” of the Jerusalem church. Our Lord is called “The Lamb of God.” Our Lord referred to Herod as “that fox.” These are examples of metaphors, or figures based on representation. Figures based on resemblance contained the terms “as” or “like” and are called similes—“All we *like* sheep have gone astray.”

⁴⁴³ Included in scriptural symbolism is “biblical numerology.” Although some numbers in Scripture do have a distinct significance, most do not. So-called “numerology” derives from Medieval Jewish Kabbalism and allegorical or mystical interpretation, and should be avoided unless clearly demanded by the text and context.

E.g., Ex. 16:1, which deals with the Divine provision of manna. The words “the fifteenth day of the second month” have been taken to mean (2 as the number of witness, 15 = 3 x 5, 3 being the number of manifestation, and 5 the number of grace)—that on this day Israel was to witness a manifestation of Divine grace in the giving of the manna! This is an example of “Christianized Kabbalism.”

truth.⁴⁴⁴ These must never be grossly literalized, nor should literal truth be spiritualized to find some “deeper, hidden meaning” unless necessitated by context and the analogy of faith. This subject is dealt with in detail under “Special Principles of Biblical Interpretation.”

10. The Principle of Theological Proposition Doctrinal Truth the End of Biblical Interpretation

The Scriptures are the very Word of God set in an historical format [redemptive history]. The content and end of Scripture is the revelation of Divine truth—doctrinal or theological truth that can be reduced to the form of theological propositions and thus implemented in the life. Thus, to properly comprehend and interpret the Scriptures, one must arrive at distinct doctrinal truth;⁴⁴⁵ conversely, to properly comprehend and interpret doctrinal truth, one must be thoroughly and consistently biblical.

Biblical and Theological Language

There is a necessary distinction between biblical and theological language. Theological terminology is necessarily more precise, as its terminology must contain the inclusive, unmistakable, accepted meaning, whereas any one given statement or passage of Scripture may not.⁴⁴⁶

If Scripture were at every point precise and unmistakable, there would be no doctrinal differences, no error or heresy, and thus no need for creeds or confessions. However, the total teaching of

⁴⁴⁴ Figurative speech is used to emphasize or illustrate a truth, and so has some point of correspondence with that truth and does not in itself form the basis of that truth.

⁴⁴⁵ To merely give an exposition of Scripture, or analyze a passage, yet stop short of doctrinal exposition, is to fail in the hermeneutical task. Further, to analyze or give an exposition of a passage of Scripture without pastoral application is to stop short of preaching.

⁴⁴⁶ E.g., the alleged contradiction between Paul and James on the subject of justification by faith (Rom. 4:1–5:11; Jas. 2:14–26). Paul emphasizes a free justification, i.e., that justification is by faith alone. James emphasizes that true faith evidences itself in corresponding works. The alleged difference is solved by the analogy of faith.

Scripture must be studied to arrive at a consistent and non-contradictory teaching [analogy of faith].

Theology and Grammar

There is at certain points a discontinuity between the grammar and theology of Scripture due to literary form, and so we must take care in our interpretation as to which deserves the precedence—grammar or theology. Usually grammar takes precedence over theology and forms the basis for theology, but at times theology must take precedence over grammar. This is not to say that there is a defect in the grammar of inspired Scripture, but only that due to the literary form or the inadequacy of human language to convey Divine truth, one must depend on theology rather than grammar or, at times, the reverse.

E.g., Heb. 11:7, “which” (ἥς) is feminine, and refers to “faith,” the remote antecedent, not “ark,” the nearer antecedent. Acts 20:28, τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἣν περιεποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου) gave rise to the “blood of God” controversy, yet God has no blood. In Paul’s mind, the Lord Jesus Christ is Divine, i.e., very God, and purchased the church with his own blood. The statement is therefore an ellipsis.

Another example derives from the word, “Spirit,” which is neuter and therefore is expressed by neuter pronouns, e.g., “the Spirit itself” (Rom. 8:16). Yet the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person of the triune Godhead, and ought to be referred to as “He.” Our Lord does exactly this in his teaching of the disciples in Jn. 15:26; 16:7–8, 13–15. In these verses, he uses the masculine gender to emphasize the personality of the Holy Spirit, e.g., “he,” etc. (ὁ παράκλητος ὃν...ἐκεῖνος...ὁ παράκλητος... αὐτὸν.... ἐκεῖνος ἐκεῖνος... ἐκεῖνος...).⁴⁴⁷

11. The Principle of Interpretive and Applicatory Distinction

God is wise, intelligent and consistent or non-contradictory; so is his inspired, infallible, inerrant Word. Thus, there can only be one legitimate, consistent, intelligent interpretation. Should more than one legitimate interpretation be possible, then all meaning and

⁴⁴⁷ This is a figure known as a solecism. See p. 207.

finality would be necessarily lost and all would result in utter irrationality.⁴⁴⁸

Although there is but one interpretation, there may be several possible and legitimate applications—but great care should be exercised to make the necessary distinction between the interpretation (what the passage means) and the application (how the truth of the passage might be applied to present persons or circumstances).

12. The Principle of Practical Exegesis Hermeneutic and Exegesis

There is a difference between hermeneutics and exegesis, though these are inherently related.⁴⁴⁹ Hermeneutics denotes the theory of and contains the presuppositions for exegesis; exegesis is the practice or implementation of the hermeneutic or interpretive process within the context of grammar, syntax and context. It would be proper to state that exegesis exists and proceeds in the context of hermeneutics.

13. The Principle of “Good And Necessary Consequence” Logic and Theology

The use of logic to deduce propositional truth from the Scriptures is older than Christian Theology itself. Indeed, one finds that from Abraham to our Lord and the inspired Apostles, men of faith have reasoned from the Word of God and drawn logical conclusions. It thus necessarily becomes a part of the study of Hermeneutics.

⁴⁴⁸ Mark the necessary and universal law of contradiction (also termed the law of non-contradiction) in reasoning, “A cannot be non-A,” i.e., a tree cannot be a rock, an animal cannot be an angel, a human cannot be plant, etc., without destroying all meaning and possibility of communication of rational thought.

⁴⁴⁹ ἑρμηνεία and ἐξήγησις (*exegesis*) are synonyms. The Greek ἐξηγητής [*exegete*] was both the expounder and interpreter of dreams and the oracles of the gods. These terms were imported into the science of theology and biblical studies.

Most early Christian theologians and scholars had been educated as philosophers, and assimilated their principles of formal reasoning into their theological methodology. Were they in error? It may be answered that although their approach or methodology was legitimate, their conclusions were often wrong because their hermeneutical principles were based on an arbitrary allegorizing of Scripture rather than on the *usus loquendi*. Thus, their conclusions were often arbitrary and unscriptural.

Misology and Scripture

Some have occasionally protested against the use of formal deductive logic, convinced that it results in a form of eisegesis, or rather illegitimate exegesis, i.e., either reading into or deriving from the text of Scripture a meaning that is foreign or forced in its conclusion.

This attitude is known as “misology,” or hatred of logic. It must be answered that God created man in his own image and likeness, and part of this creative consonance is the ability to reason consistently. Created reality is ordered in every aspect. This necessarily includes the laws of reason or an ordered thought–process.

The Scriptures themselves derive from an intelligent, self–consistent God, and are meant to be understood logically, or according to certain self–consistent principles of interpretation. Logic, then, is not a product of the fall with the attendant noetic effects of sin, but a necessary and integral part of ordered creation.

Theology and Irrationalism

This misology is particularly evident in some aspects of modern theology and its tendency toward irrationalism. The modern emphasis is largely existential, or experience–oriented. This is not only true of the Charismatics, Fundamentalists, and Neo–orthodox; it has also made its entrance into modern Reformed thinking. We think that misology usually surfaces when any aspect of Christianity fails to approach and deal with the very text of Scripture. An introduction to Hermeneutics would be incomplete without some reference to logical thinking from the Scriptures.

Misunderstanding and Opposition

The Principle of Good and Necessary Consequence has been misunderstood, misused and opposed, and so has become a subject of debate. Some have objected to this principle because it has been prominent in the polemics between the Reformed and the Baptist positions on baptism and other issues.

Note: The issue may be summarized in the following confessional, historical and theological statements:

The *Westminster Confession*, Chapter I, Article VI:

The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is *either expressly set down in Scripture*, or by *good and necessary consequence* may be deduced from Scripture...

Contrast this with the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689, Chapter I, Article 6:

The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, *is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture*.

Note the alleged difference between the Reformed view of "good and necessary consequence" and the Baptist view of "either expressly set down or necessarily contained in Scripture."

This alleged difference surfaced immediately in the latter part of the seventeenth century, the same century when these confessions were formulated. Note the words of Dr. Kenneth Good,⁴⁵⁰ who quotes from the Baptist historian Thomas Crosby:

That the above distinction has historical validity is borne out by an important passage from Thomas Crosby. Many public debates were held in England between Baptists and Paedo-Baptists in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and Crosby records some of these in detail.

On one occasion (Feb. 22, 1699) such a disputation was conducted at Portsmouth, as he says, "between the Presbyterians and Baptists concerning baptism." In the course of

⁴⁵⁰ Although we may disagree with the late Dr. Kenneth Good in this matter of "good and necessary consequence," we esteemed him as a good friend and dear Brother in Christ with whom we had blessed fellowship and the greatest agreement in the areas of soteriology and ecclesiology.

the debate, the words of which are recorded, the Paedo-Baptists refer with monotonous repetition to “consequences drawn from Scripture,” “good Scripture consequences,” “by good consequence,” “by consequence,” “the consequence of the major,” “at least consequential, it is sufficient,” “It is the good consequences I insist upon,” “good consequences from the commission are sufficient” “I am for consequences,” and “the subjects are to be brought in by consequences.”

Meanwhile the Baptists continued to insist simply upon specific Scriptures to which they made their appeal and which they frequently quoted.⁴⁵¹

This situation seems to point out a major difference of approach to Scripture between the Baptists and the Reformed tradition in the area of “good and necessary consequences,” and implies that the Baptists were more scriptural at this point, holding to the all-sufficiency of Scripture, while the Reformed approach implicitly denied this by the addition of human logic.

What do Reformed theologians mean by “good and necessary consequence?” In commenting on these words in the Westminster Confession, the following Reformed writers reveal the essence of “good and necessary consequence.”

William Cunningham: “...*inferences or deductions* from scriptural statements beyond what is contained in the mere words of Scripture...”⁴⁵²

A. A. Hodge: ...nothing is to be regarded as an article of faith...which is *not explicitly or implicitly taught* in Scripture.”⁴⁵³

B. B. Warfield: ...either by literal assertion or by *necessary implication*...”⁴⁵⁴

The use of “good and necessary consequences,” however, is not unique to the Reformed tradition. Baptists have historically acknowledged the use of deductive logic from the Scriptures. Note the eighteenth century Baptist theologian and scholar John Gill on the perspicuity of Scripture:

⁴⁵¹ Dr. Kenneth H. Good, *Are Baptists Reformed?* p. 109. Dr. Good quotes from Thomas Crosby, *The History of the Baptists*, III, pp. 314–353.

⁴⁵² William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, p. 526.

⁴⁵³ A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, p. 39.

⁴⁵⁴ B. B. Warfield, *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, p. 226.

Nor is every doctrine of the Scriptures expressed in so many words; as the doctrine of the Trinity of persons in the Godhead; the eternal generation of the Son of God; his incarnation, &c. but then the things themselves signified by them are clear and plain; and there are terms and phrases answerable to them; or they are to be deduced from thence by just and necessary consequences.⁴⁵⁵

J. P. Boyce, Baptist theologian and founder of the first Southern Baptist theological seminary stated:

These constitute the sources of our knowledge of Theology, which are two, Reason and Revelation...Reason is that power in man, which enables him to have mental perceptions, to exercise thought, and reflection, to know facts, to inquire into their mutual relations, and to deduce logically, the conclusions which may be drawn from them...Reason may be used either with reference to the natural or supernatural means of knowledge conferred by God.⁴⁵⁶

A. H. Strong, another Baptist theologian whose *Systematic Theology* remains a standard work, wrote:

The Scriptures [and...their teachings, when taken together, in no way contradict a reason conditioned in its activity by a holy affection and enlightened by the Spirit of God (The proper office of reason, in this large sense is to estimate and reduce to system the facts of revelation, when these have been found properly attested). To deduce from these facts their natural and logical conclusions...⁴⁵⁷

The Baptist position of “*either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the Holy Scripture*” necessarily and inescapably implies the deduction of “necessary consequences” as the truth of Scripture is appropriated in theology and applied to experience.

The true point of contention is not specifically “good and necessary consequence,” but the general hermeneutical approach of Reformed tradition. The objections against the persecution of Baptists and other Independents by religious and civil authorities, and the sprinkling of infants are neither “good” nor “necessary consequences” deduced from Scripture. They are rather the deductions of an “Old Testament mentality” which

⁴⁵⁵ John Gill, *Body of Divinity*, p. 21.

⁴⁵⁶ J. P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*, p. 46.

⁴⁵⁷ A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 29.

largely views the New Testament as a mere continuation of the Old, not fully recognizing either its progressive nature or the finality of the New Testament.

The clear teaching of Scripture is not set aside by “good and necessary consequences,” but by faulty hermeneutical principles and a biased historico–theological agenda.

Considerations and Illustrations

The use of logic or formal consistent thinking to deduce distinct statements of truth from the Scriptures is absolutely essential for any consistent or systematic approach to theology, preaching or the application of Scripture to the varied situations of Christian experience. Consistent reasoning from the Scriptures is essential for all consistent application.

Setting aside the historical controversies which have clouded the issue, we must note the use of “good and necessary consequences” in the Scriptures themselves. Following are some clear and unmistakable examples from the inspired record:

- Abraham reasoned from the spoken Word of God and acted upon this reasoning–by–faith when he offered Isaac upon the altar (Heb. 11:17–19).⁴⁵⁸ This is simply taking God at his Word, and through “good and necessary consequence,” acting upon his Word as applied to a given situation.
- Isaac concluded that he could set aside the Word of God, and so for many years was determined to bless Esau, a negative example (Gen. 25:21–28; 27:1–33). Personal agenda precludes correctly and consistently reasoning from the Word of God.
- King Saul, through fear of the people, erroneously reasoned that partial disobedience was acceptable with God, and acted in disobedience. This is a negative example, i.e., a bad reasoning, and thus suffering the consequences (1 Sam.

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. Heb. 11:17–19. God had told Abraham that his posterity and the fulfillment of the covenant promise would come through Isaac (Gen. 17:5–7, 15–19). Later God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22:1–18). Heb. 11:17–19 states that Abraham reasoned (logically, intelligently) that God would raise Isaac from the dead to fulfill the promise (λογισάμενος ὅτι καὶ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἐγείρειν δυνατὸς ὁ θεός).

15:1–24). Fear and unbelief preclude the ability to consistently reason from the Scriptures.

- Ezra reasoned that the Word of God would infallibly be fulfilled concerning Jerusalem (Ezra 1:1). His subsequent life and work reflected this. When going to Jerusalem from Persia, he did not ask for an armed escort because he had spoken to the king concerning the nature of God and the blessing of obedience (Ezra 8:21–23). Thus, he drew a “good and necessary consequence” from the Scriptures as a whole and the prophecy of Jeremiah in particular.
- Our Lord reasoned from the Old Testament instance of David and his men eating the shewbread of the priests when they were hungry (technically, an unlawful act, evidently offset by the dire circumstances), to defend his disciples (who were evidently being charged with “harvesting” on the Sabbath day and thus violating it). He then made an even further deduction concerning the nature of the Sabbath and its purpose and practicality (Mk. 2:23–28).
- Our Lord used “good and necessary consequences” and deductions from the Scripture to establish the principle of doing good on the Sabbath Day (Matt. 12:9–13; Mk. 3:1–5).
- Our Lord drew a “good and necessary consequence” from the necessity of circumcising a man child on the eighth day, even if it fell on the Sabbath (the law of circumcision outweighing the Sabbath rest), to exonerate himself for healing a man on the Sabbath (Jn. 7:16–24).
- Our Lord drew a “good and necessary consequence” from the declaration of God that “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,” concluding that God is the God of the living and not the dead, i.e., that the Patriarchs are alive and conscious in the presence of God, although “dead” to this world.
- Our Lord drew a “good and necessary consequence” concerning the seriousness of divorce and its being contrary to the very principle of marriage that God had ordained. He reasoned from the Scripture that God made the first pair male and female, and in that unique institution became a

separate and unified entity joined together by God. Therefore men should not lightly set the institution of marriage aside in divorce (Matt. 19:3–6).

- Our Lord stated to Pilate that the one who delivered him to the governor had “the greater sin.” What did he mean? The Jewish leaders, knowing the Scriptures and our Lord’s claim, knowingly and willfully delivered him to Pilate.

They sinned against Divine revelation and the witness of the Holy Spirit through his miracles (Acts 10:38) and our Lord through his teaching (Jn. 19:6–11). He drew a “good and necessary consequence” from the general nature of Divine revelation and the witness of the Spirit. The Scriptures speak to all issues and circumstances, either directly or by example and principle.

- Stephen drew a “good and necessary consequence” from the actions of the Sanhedrin, that they were resisting the Holy Spirit, because they acted just as their ancestors did in murdering the prophets through whom the Spirit spoke. This is an instance of reasoning from scriptural history in a general sense (Acts 7:51–53).
- The Apostle Paul drew “good and necessary consequences” in referring to the matter of financial support for Gospel ministers in referring to the ox that was used to tread out the corn, the shepherd, the farmer who partook of his harvest, and the priest who lived from the offerings (1 Cor. 9:6–14).
- The Apostle Paul, through the use of “good and necessary consequences,” demonstrated that the fulfillment of the Old Testament rite of circumcision is regeneration under the Gospel covenant (Rom. 2:28–29). This stood against the Judaizers of his day (Acts 15:1) and stands against the paedobaptists of our day.
- The writer of Hebrews concluded through “good and necessary consequences” that Abraham was looking for a heavenly city, and not an earthly one (Heb. 11:8–10, 13–16).
- Our Lord and the inspired New Testament writers through “good and necessary consequences,” correctly viewing the

Moral Law as epitomized in the Decalogue as examples of case law, concluded: (1) that adultery begins in the heart and mind (Matt. 5:27–28); (2) that hating one’s brother is “murder;” (3) true Christian love necessarily means ultimate self–sacrifice, if necessary (Matt. 5:21–24; 1 Jn. 3:14–16); (4) and that love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:8–10).

We thus have inspired examples of the use of “good and necessary consequences,” and it is the use of this principle in Scripture that concerns the interpreter.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is meant by “context”? Why is the context important for understanding the meaning of Scripture?
2. How many types of context are there? Illustrate the need for studying the various contexts of Scripture.
3. What are the basic questions that ought to be asked when studying the given context?
4. What is the *usus loquendi*? Review its significance from previous sections and chapters in this textbook.
5. Why must the student of Scripture give close attention to the use of figurative language? How does the use of figurative language relate to the literal meaning of Scripture? Explain and illustrate.
6. What is meant by the “Principle of Theological Proposition”? How does Hermeneutics relate to doctrine and theology?
7. Why is there a necessary difference between theological language and the language of Scripture? Is this distinction necessary or unnecessary? Is it correct or incorrect? Explain and illustrate by example.
8. Is it necessary in any instance to sacrifice or conform language and grammar to theology, and at times, to subordinate theology to grammar? Explain and illustrate.
9. What is the relationship between Exegesis and Hermeneutics? Explain and illustrate.

10. Why must a necessary distinction be made between interpretation and application? What has been the result in the pulpit from a failure to maintain this distinction? What has the result been in the pew? Can you give examples?
11. Is human logic a valid instrument in the interpretation of Scripture? Why?
12. What is the relation between Logic and Creation? Between Logic and Scripture? Between Logic and Theology?
13. What is the aversion to Logic called? What modern groups seem to manifest an aversion to Logic and why?
14. What is meant by “good and necessary consequence”?
15. What was the main issue in the historical controversy between the Baptists and Reformed theologians? Why has this been misunderstood?
16. Is it possible to avoid “good and necessary consequences” altogether and yet consistently preach or apply the Scriptures?
17. Have Baptists noted the necessity of “good and necessary consequences”? Explain your answer.
18. What are some clear scriptural examples of the use of good and necessary consequences”?

C. Practical Principles of Exegesis

The following principles for practical exegesis presuppose that one is examining a short, critical doctrinal passage in which care and exactness must be exercised. The exegetical process can be very practically pursued with the following principles illustrated from exegeting the Greek New Testament:

1. Study the Context

Every statement of Scripture stands in a given context in which the full significance of words, the force of terms, and the implications of the grammatical constructions are largely determined.

- The larger context of any given passage may well be the entire book in which it occurs, or even the *corpus* of the given author, i.e., words may carry a given significance because they are contained in the major argument of a given book or letter, or they are used in a specific sense by a certain writer in all his writings.⁴⁵⁹ E.g., the Johannine use of such terms as “Word,” “light,” “darkness,” or even “world.” Paul is fond of using various theological terms and expressions which are peculiar to his subjects and style.
- This will reveal the historical, cultural, psychological and theological background of any given text.
- The context will often contain connecting words that reveal the logical and progressive argument of the writer—conjunctions, interjections and prepositions which connect and hold the narrative together and give it form or structure. Often the arguments or thoughts transcend many verses and even chapter divisions.⁴⁶⁰
- There may be various figures of speech, e.g., a parenthesis, or an anacoluthon (the sudden shift of thought without any connecting particles), or a chiasmic construction (an inverted parallelism), parables, allegories, hyperboles, and metaphors of various types. Such are an essential part of biblical language.
- The doctrinal or theological nature of the context gives the full significance to any technical term that may be used.

Note: e.g., the significance of the words “made himself of no reputation” in Phil. 2:7. ἐκένωσεν must be considered in the context of the pres. ptc. and the accompanying expression ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων [eternally subsisting] οὐχ

⁴⁵⁹ There are certain terms, phraseology, or arguments which may be characteristically used by certain human authors as a matter of emphasis or style.

⁴⁶⁰ E.g., Note the use of the intensive particles in Rom. 1:18–3:20: ...διότι... διότι...Διὸ...διὰ τοῦτο...καὶ καθὼς...Διὸ...μὲν...δὲ... Cf. the section concerning the believer and the law, which extends from 6:15 to 8:4, diminishing in force the “Therefore” of 8:1 in the English versions.

ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ. The force of the pres. ptc. *in this context* overshadows the idea of self-emptying.

- The context will reveal the force of the given passage, which may be obscured by an attempted translation into the English.⁴⁶¹

2. Note any Variant Readings of the Text

There are really very few significant variant readings in the text of the Greek New Testament, when it is considered as a whole.⁴⁶² Most can be considered in the context of one's theological presuppositions. Many are simply changes of tense or mood, the addition or deletion of an article or particle. No major doctrine of Scripture is affected by the variant readings.⁴⁶³

3. Study every Significant Word in the Given Passage

Note the grammatical significance, historical development, theological and cultural importance of every word, and the presence of any synonyms.

- This study prepares for the syntactical study of the text. The interrelationship of words, phrases and clauses, sentences and paragraphs, forms the central work of exegetical study.

⁴⁶¹ E.g., Eph. 6:10–18. Note that the words “whole armour” (τὴν πανοπλίαν) refer to a suit of armor, and should not be fragmented into various articles or items, as though one could wear only some parts. The section is descriptive, not selective. Also note that the main verb is in v. 14, “Stand therefore!” and the verbals in v. 14–16 are all ptc. subservient to that main verb (στῆτε οὖν περιζωσάμενοι... ἐνδυσάμενοι... ὑποδησάμενοι... ἀναλαβόντες...). Often the whole force of a statement is changed or shifted by the relationship between verbs and participles—a relationship at times obscured in the Eng. versions.

⁴⁶² The numbering system for variant readings may be misleading to the uninitiated. If a single variant should occur in fifty different mss., the number of variants is not one, but fifty—although there is but one variant that occurs fifty times.

⁴⁶³ E.g., Rom. 5:1, which in some of the oldest mss. reads ἔχωμεν (subj., “Let us have peace”) rather than ἔχομεν (ind., “We have peace”). The latter is certainly correct considered in the context and preceded by the aor. pass. ptc. Δικαιωθέντες.

- Grammatical significance includes such nuances as the tense, mood, voice, person, and number of any verb or participle; the cases of substantives and participles; the arthrous or anarthrous use of the definite article; the predicate or attributive position of adjectives, the presence and significance of any particles; and the presence of any prepositions, etc.

Note: The parable of the Great Supper in Lk. 14:16–24. The sing. changes to the pl. “you” (ὁμῖν) in v. 24, revealing that it is not the lord of the parable speaking to the servant, but our Lord himself speaking directly to the Pharisees and applying the parable to himself and to them.

E.g., 1 Pet. 3:1 and the anarth. ἄνευ λόγου (“without a word”), referring to the demeanor of the wives not continuing to *nag* their husbands with the Word of God, but to live a consistent life before them.

E.g., also Rom. 6:14. “Law” and “grace” are both anarth., referring to the contrasting principle of a mere outward commandment as opposed to an inward principle or power of enabling grace (ἁμαρτία γὰρ ὑμῶν οὐ κυριεύσει· οὐ γὰρ ἔστε ὑπὸ νόμον ἀλλὰ ὑπὸ χάριν).

E.g., Matt. 26:47 and κατεφίλησεν (intens. use of κατά): Judas *fervently* or *repeatedly* kissed our Lord, implying a greeting of deep and fervent devotion, adding to his hypocrisy.

- The historical development, theological importance, and cultural significance of words include the use of some terms in the LXX, their equivalent in the Hebrew Old Testament, their *usus loquendi* in the papyri, and in some cases their varied use in the personal emphases of the individual writers in the New Testament.⁴⁶⁴
- Note the use of synonyms for which the Greek may have several terms for one or possibly two in English.

⁴⁶⁴ E.g., Rom. 3:25 and the term ἱλαστήριον, used in the LXX for “mercy seat,” or place of propitiation. Cf. also such terms as ἀγάπη, ζωή (as opposed to βίος) and ταπεινοφροσύνη (lowliness of mind, humility), which the New Testament either reversed, transformed or enriched in the context of the Gospel and Christianity.

4. Identify the Main Verb

The Greek sentence is based on the verb, unlike the English, which is based on the subject. Once the verb is located and its significance established, the sentence should begin to take definite form and direction of thought.

- The subject may be contained within the verb. Any separate subject that occurs in pronominal form is emphatic.⁴⁶⁵
- Any temporal participles are relative or subservient to the main verb, and show time in relation to the action of the verb.⁴⁶⁶ A relative participle is a substantive which expresses a predominate feature.⁴⁶⁷ Often in an English translation and version, the participles are translated as verbs.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁵ E.g., λέγω, “I say.” καὶ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν... “And Jesus said...” Ἐγὼ λέγω ὑμῖν, “I [emph.] say to you...”

⁴⁶⁶ E.g., Acts 17:2–3 κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθὸς τῷ Παύλῳ εἰσηλθὲν πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐπὶ σάββατα τρία διελέξατο αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος ὅτι τὸν χριστὸν ἔδει παθεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς ὃν ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν. Here the two pres. ptcs. διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος are appositional [epexegetical] or explanatory of the main verb, διελέξατο. E.g., Acts 19:2, εἰ πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐλάβετε πιστεύσαντες; “if [did] you receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?” aor. vb and aor. ptc.

⁴⁶⁷ E.g., Rom. 8:28, “to them that love God,” i.e., τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν (pres. rel. ptc.), “to the ones characterized as constantly loving God.”

⁴⁶⁸ E.g., Acts 19:22, Σταθεὶς δὲ [ὁ] Παῦλος ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου πάγου ἔφη, “Having taken his stand [aor. ptc., referring to taking his stance as a public orator], Paul in the midst of the Areopagus said...” Cf. the same const. in Lk. 18:11, “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself...” ὁ Φαρισαῖος σταθεὶς πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ταῦτα προσήυχετο. “The Pharisee, having taken his stand (assumed the position of public prayer, with his phylactery wrapped about his right arm and upon his forehead and his hands lifted up to heaven) began to pray or started praying, denoting a continuous action (aor. ptc and imperf. vb.).

- At times, the tense of the verb is given as a simple past tense when the imperfect or perfect tense occurs in the original.⁴⁶⁹ Periphrastic constructions may also be lost in the English translation and version.⁴⁷⁰
- The copulative may be omitted by ellipsis for dramatic effect, and so understood. It has the force of an “equals” sign (=).⁴⁷¹
- The verb may stand in a position of emphasis, out of the usual word order of subject–verb–object.⁴⁷²

5. Identify the Subject and Object of the Verb

The basic sentence or thought should then be complete. If the verb is transitive, it possesses an object. Some verbs take objects in either the genitive or dative cases rather than the accusative.

⁴⁶⁹ E.g., Lk. 19:3, “And he [Zacchaeus] sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.” The simple past tense of the vbs. “sought” and “could not” are imperf., denoting a progress in action, i.e., “was seeking to see” (ἐζήτει ἰδεῖν) and “was not able [though he was trying for a given length of time] (οὐκ ἠδύνατο). The imperf. is often used in a historical narrative to draw a more graphic picture of a past scene with reference to its progress.

At times, even the pres. tense is used of a past event because either a more vivid presentation or because it remained vivid in the writer’s mind. E.g., Jn. 1:29, βλέπει...καὶ λέγει... The pres. is used, although the scene took place many years before. John, as a disciple of the Baptist at that time, was an eye witness of this scene and declaration. For the perf., e.g., Rom. 5:2, and the words “we have access” and “stand.” Both are perf., and carry the significance of “having an open access that is never closed” (τὴν προσαγωγὴν ἐσχήκαμεν) and “having taken up our stand and continue to stand” (ἐστήκαμεν).

⁴⁷⁰ E.g., Acts 2:42, Ἦσαν δὲ προσκατεροῦντες The pres. ptc. in this periph. const. with the imperf. Ἦσαν emph. continuous action *at the time of* the main verb. For the significance of the fut. perf. pass. periphras. in Matt. 16:19, see p. 152, footnote 9.

⁴⁷¹ E.g., Phil. 1:21 Ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος “For to me to live—Christ, and to die—gain,” or “For to me to live [equals] Christ, and to die [equals] gain.”

⁴⁷² E.g., 2 Cor. 9:7 ...ἰλαρὸν γὰρ δότην ἀγαπᾷ ὁ θεός. The word order is object–verb–subject. Such emphasis is not translatable into English.

Note: e.g., the verb ἀκούω, “I hear,” takes either an acc. dir.obj. (emph. what is being heard), or a gen. dir. obj., (emph. that something is being heard). Cf. Acts 9:4, 7. καὶ πεσῶν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἤκουσεν φωνὴν λέγουσαν αὐτῷ· Σαοὺλ Σαοὺλ, τί με διώκεις;... οἱ δὲ ἄνδρες οἱ συνοδεύοντες αὐτῷ εἰστήκεισαν ἐνεοί, ἀκούοντες μὲν τῆς φωνῆς μηδένα δὲ θεωροῦντες. Saul heard the words spoken; the men standing with him heard only a sound. Cf. Acts 22:9.

6. Identify Any Phrases or Clauses

- There may be conditional sentences, consisting of an “if” clause (beginning with εἰ, or εἰάν with the ind., subj., or opt.) or *protasis*, and the conclusion or *apodosis*.
- Final clauses denoting purpose or result are usually introduced by such constructions as: the simple inf., τοῦ + inf., εἰς τό + inf., πρὸς τό + inf., ἵνα + subj. mood, ἵνα μή + subj. mood, ὅπως + subj. mood, and ὥστε + the inf. or the ind. mood.
- There are several types of commands or prohibitions: *Commands or entreaties* occur in the pres. imp., the fut. ind. and the aor. imp. There is a necessary distinction to be made between the pres. and aor. imp: The pres. imp. commands a continuous or repetitive action, “keep on...,” while the aor. imp. has the connotation of an action to be commenced at once with a sense of urgency and determination.

Prohibitions can occur in either the pres. imp. or the aor. subj. The pres. imp. connotes stopping an action already in progress; the aor. subj. prohibits even the commencement of a given action.

E.g., A command in the pres. imp.: Matt. 7:7 Αἰτεῖτε, (“keep on asking”) καὶ δοθήσεται ὑμῖν, ζητεῖτε (“keep on seeking”) καὶ εὐρήσετε, κρούετε (“keep on knocking”) καὶ ἀνοιγήσεται ὑμῖν.

E.g., A command in the aor. imp.: 2 Cor. 6:17 διὸ ἐξέλθατε (“with a sense of urgency and with all determination, come out!”) ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφορίσθητε, (“with a sense of urgency and with all determination, be separate!”) λέγει κύριος, Cf. also 2 Tim. 2:15; 4:2, 5; 2 Pet. 1:10.

E.g., A prohibition in the pres. imp. and aor. subj.: Acts 18:9 μὴ φοβοῦ, (“stop being afraid”) ἀλλὰ λάλει καὶ μὴ

σιωπῆσης, (“Do not even begin to keep quiet”). Cf. also Matt. 1:20; 6:13.

- Phrases may or may not contain a preposition, as the given case can be determinative. The presence of a preposition makes the case function more precise.

E.g., Rom. 5:10, where the Eng. reads, “...we shall be saved by his life.” The Gk. reads, σωθησόμεθα ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτοῦ. The prep. ἐν must retain the loc. force of “in,” as it anticipates the believer’s union with Christ in both his death and his resurrection–life in 6:1–14.

The Believer is presently in the sphere of this resurrection–life in union with Christ (6:3–5), i.e., union in his death means that the reigning power of sin has been broken (6:1–3), and union in his resurrection–life means that the same power [Spirit] that raised up Christ from the dead now indwells and animates the believer (6:3–5, 11–18).

- Note any particles that occur, as they add to the nuances of the statement.⁴⁷³
- Note any emphatic constructions, such as the word–order, words situated between the definite article and the substantive, the restrictive attributive, emphatic pronouns, emphatic particles, etc.

The exegetical process may be determined by the nature of the passage examined. With the increase of experience and skill, the student will develop his own approach. The issues are always reverence, consistency and thoroughness.

7. Exegesis, Hermeneutic and Translation

The exegetical translation should flow as smoothly as possible without losing the force of the original, if and when possible. For one’s personal use, this may mean either using parentheses to

⁴⁷³ E.g., the use of the neg. part.: Heb. 13:5 οὐ μή σε ἀνω οὐδ’ οὐ μή σε ἐγκαταλίπω (“I will never, no never you [emph. pos.] leave; never no never you [emph. pos.] forsake.”). E.g., the neg. part. μὴ in a rhetorical statement assumes a decisive “no” answer. E.g., the part. τε, which is usually left untranslated. It connects two substantives or ideas together. Cf. 1 Cor. 1:30, where “justification” and “sanctification” grammatically form an integral unity.

include the various nuances, paraphrasing the passage to include the distinctions which cannot be carried over in a limited translation, or using a system of footnotes in which the nuances can be fully explained.

8. Three Key Terms

The three key terms that extend from the exegetical to the practical are: exposition, interpretation and application. The text must first be opened, then the meaning ascertained and given, and, finally, application made from the Scripture to the present circumstances in personal application or public preaching and teaching. By application, *not* interpretation, Proverbs 24:32 gives the essence of this process: “Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction.”

OBSERVATION— “Then I saw...” (Exposition)

MEDITATION— “and considered it well...I looked upon it...”
(Interpretation)

APPLICATION— “and received instruction.”
(Application)

Everything in the Christian life and experience has a direct relation to one’s reverent study and consistent application of the Word of God. Guidance, direction, spiritual strength and discernment, godliness and spiritual maturity—all are bound up in these two issues!

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is the first step in the exegetical process gaining an understanding of the context? Illustrate the importance of this primary study.
2. List and explain each of the different “contexts” which must be considered, and why they must be examined.
3. Although few variant readings are significant, why should they be investigated toward the first part of the study?
4. What is the purpose of doing a preliminary study of every significant word in a given statement? Would arthrous or anarthrous substantives be notable? Explain and illustrate your answer.

5. What is the importance of the main verb in the sentence as opposed to the structure of a sentence in English grammar? What is the significance of the verbal tense?
6. What are the two basic uses of a participle in New Testament Greek?
7. What is the significance of a pronominal subject?
8. In identifying phrases and clauses, what constructions ought to be noted? List those which are important and why.
9. What are the various emphatic constructions that might be encountered?
10. In exegeting and translating for one's self, is it helpful to put into parentheses the full or expanded meaning to various constructions? What of those terms, constructions, or nuances that cannot be translated without extended explanation?
11. For one's own practical use and remembrance, is it beneficial to keep notes, references from exegetical tools and even make a private commentary on some significant passages of Scripture? What are the advantages of such a practice?
12. What exactly is the process of observation, mediation and application as applied to the exegesis, hermeneutics, translation and exposition of Scripture? Why would it be beneficial to take note of various doctrinal and practical observations made during the exegetical and interpretive process?

II

Special Principles of Biblical Interpretation

The general principles of interpretation are not sufficient to deal with every interpretive issue. The genre of biblical literature becomes greatly significant in the application of necessary principles for understanding figures of speech, poetry and

prophecy. The Scriptures were originally written in the context of an Oriental culture, which abounded in figurative language and figures of speech. These must be properly understood.

One third of Scripture is poetry, which necessitates a distinct understanding and approach. The phenomenon of prophecy, which exists largely in types and symbols, also necessitates specialized study. Thus, there is a need to consider special principles of interpretation.

A. The Interpretation of Figures of Speech

1. The Significance of Figurative Language

All language is governed by laws. Often languages utilize forms that differ from the normal or direct to increase the force of a word, phrase or thought that is expressed and so digress from established laws. Figures of speech are such forms of expression. E.g., to say that an army drowned in the sea in a manner that conveyed rapidity due to the heaviness of its armor might be correct, but it does not have the force of "They sank like lead in the mighty waters" (Ex. 15:10).

Something very frail, undependable and temporary or tenuous might be stated more graphically as, "whose trust shall be a spider's web" (Job. 8:14). To emphasize the immutable and eternal nature of God as contrasted with man as bound by time, Moses declared, "For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night" (Psa. 90:4). These figures are similes, or common figures of speech based on comparison.

Language may be classified as denotative or connotative. Denotative language is precise or specific. Connotative language implies more than is denoted by the term used. Figurative language is necessarily connotative, as the term conveys or connotes more than is implied in the literal term used.

Thus, the word "eagle" denotes a powerful bird of prey, but describing an army as "swifter than an eagle" connotes a vision of speed and power that transcends that which is denoted by a bird. Again, the word "lion" denotes one of the largest predatory cats, and to say that he was "as a young lion in his strength" connotes much more in terms of power than the animal itself.

Connotative language, such as “the voice of the Lord thundered from heaven,” “as quick as lightning,” or “the sea boiled with rage” connotes more than denotative language.

Oriental languages, including Hebrew, are given to figurative expressions. The Old Testament abounds in various simple, extended and very complex figures. The Greeks and Romans had a highly-developed science dealing with figures of speech, identifying and utilizing over two hundred different types in their speaking and writing.

Because this science and its application were current in the Greco-Roman world of the first century, the New Testament reflects all types of such figures. Thus, figurative language has a very definite place in and necessary effect upon the interpretation of Scripture.⁴⁷⁴

Whether something is meant literally or figuratively often carries great consequences for the student of Scripture. Consider the words of our Lord:

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us *his* flesh to eat?

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (Jn. 6:51-56)

Certainly, such language is figurative for appropriating Christ by faith, yet the Romish mass with its transubstantiation and Lutheranism with its consubstantiation are largely founded upon a misunderstanding of this passage and a confusion of the literal with the figurative. And what of the statement, “This is my body”? Was

⁴⁷⁴ For the most exhaustive treatment of figurative language as used in Scripture, see E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968. 1104 pp. Many of the examples in this chapter have been taken from this exhaustive work.

this figurative or literal? Consider the great controversy and split in the Sixteenth Century Reformation between the Lutherans and Reformed over these words!⁴⁷⁵

Further, what is the import of our Lord's exhortation in Matt. 5:29–30?

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Certainly, this is figurative for taking the utmost severe action concerning the issues of lust and temptation, as demanded by the context. The Bible, however, neither teaches nor condones self-mutiliation as an answer, for sin clearly resides in the heart, not merely in the outward members. The Scriptures teach mortification, not mutilation.⁴⁷⁶

Self-mutilation was clearly the teaching of ancient paganism with its disregard for the body.⁴⁷⁷ Christianity ennobled the body (1 Cor. 6:12–20; 15:Phil. 3:20–21; Rom. 8:23).

Note: The words “vile body” are lit: “the body of our humiliation” (τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν). The body is destined for glory, and is never depreciated in the New Testament. To depreciate the body is not biblical, but derives from pagan Greek philosophy, which viewed the body as the “prison house of the

⁴⁷⁵ Luther, opposing Zwingli and the other Reformed theologians, insisted that our Lord referred to himself and not to the bread. This forced Luther and his followers to explain how the physical body of Christ could be both in heaven and in various places on earth at once. They were forced to develop the doctrine of “the ubiquity of the body of Christ.”

⁴⁷⁶ Cf. Rom. 8:11–13. Note that it is the deeds of the body and not the body itself that must be dealt with. Cf. also Col. 3:5, where it is not the “members” as bodily parts or organs, but rather the sinful acts which utilize such.

⁴⁷⁷ Cf. Gal. 5:12, “cut off” (ἀποκόψονταί) is lit: amputated or castrated. Paul states that if the Judaizers put so much emphasis on circumcision, a “cutting in the flesh,” as essential to salvation (Cf. Acts 15:1), they ought to complete the operation and castrate themselves as the pagan priests did. Strong, connotative language.

soul,” or Gnosticism, which considered all matter as inherently evil.

Yet Origen emasculated himself as a young man because of lust. It is rather strange that Origen took this passage literally, as he was usually the foremost patristic writer to allegorize Scripture and depreciate the literal sense.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do the general principles of biblical interpretation prove inadequate when considering such subjects as figurative language, poetry and prophecy?
2. In what way does figurative language carry more force than mere prose or direct, denotative speech?
3. What is the difference between denotative language and connotative language? To which category does figurative language belong? Why is connotative language often more forceful than denotative language?
4. Explain the character of Middle Eastern language and its tendency towards figurative language as reflected in the Old Testament.
5. Explain the highly developed approach to figurative language that existed in the Greco–Roman era of the New Testament. How many distinct figures of speech did they employ in oratory and writing?
6. What biblical examples illustrate the necessity of dealing carefully and consistently with figures of speech?
7. Why is it necessary to study the background of the biblical cultures as to their beliefs, languages, customs, daily lives and routines, occupations, etc.?

2. Figures of Speech

Short Figures of Speech

As has been previously introduced, there are various types of figurative language [*tropes*] and several categories of figures of speech: the short, the opaque, the extended, and those which derive from grammatical or rhetorical style. At this point, our concern is

with short figures of speech. Some of the most common will serve as examples:

1. *Simile*,⁴⁷⁸ a stated resemblance of two things introduced with “as” or “like.” The simile is based on resemblance; the metaphor on representation. “He eats like a pig” would be a simile describing a sloppy person without good table manners but with a big appetite. E.g., “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isa. 53:6). “As the hart panteth after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God” (Psa. 42:1). A *parable* is an extended simile.
2. *Metaphor*,⁴⁷⁹ a comparison by representation and so without the introductory “as” or “like.” As the simile would state “He eats like a pig,” the metaphor would be, “He is a pig.” Scriptural examples include the following: “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want” (Psa. 23:1). “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers...” (Acts 20:28). “Except a man be born again...” (Jn. 3:3). An *allegory* is an extended metaphor, or comparison by representation.
3. *Proverb*,⁴⁸⁰ a short, pithy saying in common use which illustrates a rule or principle of life. An example in English would be, “The early bird gets the worm.” This is meant to teach industry and punctuality.

Some scriptural examples: 2 Pet. 2:22, “But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” The point is that, like the dog which licks up its own vomit and the sow, though she might once wash herself, returns to her wallow, the nature of these false teachers is clearly manifest by their actions.

⁴⁷⁸ Lat: *similis*, “like, resembling, similar.”

⁴⁷⁹ Gk: μεταφορά, from μετά, “over, beyond, across,” and φέρειν, “to carry,” hence a transference or resemblance.

⁴⁸⁰ Gk: παροιμία, from παρά, beside, and οἶμος, way or path, and so a wayside, or common saying. Lat: *proverbium*, from *pro* and *verbum*, word. An adage, a short, pithy saying in common use.

Cf. also Lk. 4:23, “Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, ‘Physician, heal thyself’: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.”

4. *Metonymy*,⁴⁸¹ a change of noun in which one name is used for another. An example would be, “The White House states...” using the “White House” to refer to the present presidential administration and policy. A scriptural example is, “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Lk. 16:29). “Moses and the prophets” are used instead of “the Law and the Prophets,” or “the Scriptures.” “Moses” is often used for the Law, e.g., Acts 21:21.

5. *Synecdoche*,⁴⁸² an exchange between two associated ideas, differing from a metonymy, which is an exchange between two names or nouns. One of the most common synecdoches puts a part for the whole or the whole for a part. An example would be using “bread” for food, “He has to earn his own bread.”

Scriptural examples: “Then Jephthah, the Gileadite died and was buried in the cities of Gilead” (Judg. 12:7). He was, however, buried in only one city. Beating “swords into plowshares and spears into pruninghooks” (Isa. 2:4) stands for total disarmament. Often “soul” is used for the whole person (Gen. 46:27; Acts 27:37). The words “all men” in 1 Tim. 2:4 stand for “all kinds of men” in the context.

6. *Hyperbole*,⁴⁸³ an exaggeration for the sake of emphasis. A common example is, “If I’ve told you once, I’ve told you a million times...” Scriptural examples: “Behold, the world is gone after him...” (Jn. 12:19). “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be

⁴⁸¹ Gk: μετωνυμία, from μετά, “change”, and ὄνομα, “a name.”

⁴⁸² Gk: συνεκδοχή, from σύν, “together with,” and ἔδοχή, “a receiving from.”

⁴⁸³ Gk: ὑπερβολή, from ὑπέρ, “over, beyond,” and βάλλειν, “to throw, cast, hence, an exaggeration.

written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (Jn. 21:25).

7. *Irony*,⁴⁸⁴ a statement made in humor, sarcasm or emotion that is contrary to fact. An example would be, “My, aren’t you coordinated?!” when referring to a clumsy person who just spilled or dropped something. Scriptural examples: the words of Elijah to the false prophets of Baal:

And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked (1 Kgs. 18:27).

Note the words of our Lord at the close of his prayer and garden agony:

Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. (Matt. 26:45–46).

The Roman cohort (480 soldiers led by six centurions) accompanied by the temple guard was even then approaching. Our Lord said to them in irony, “Sleep on now and take your rest...”

Opaque Figures of Speech

Opaque [difficult to understand] figures of speech include fables, riddles, and enigmatic sayings.

1. *Fable*,⁴⁸⁵ a story or narrative not based on fact. Often entities in animal creation or inanimate objects are given the gift of speech to illustrate a moral principle. Fables may also be used to convey sarcasm, ridicule or irony. The first fable recorded in Scripture is Jotham’s fable in Judg. 9:7–20, where trees are represented as choosing a king over themselves. The bramble bush was meant to represent Abimelech who had been made king. The fable is interpreted

⁴⁸⁴ Gk: ἐΐρων, a dissembler in speech.

⁴⁸⁵ “Fable,” from the Lat: *fabula*, a discourse. The Gk. is ἀπόλογος, a story or tale.

by Jotham himself in v. 16–20. Cf. also 2 Kgs. 14:9, a fable emphasizing contempt.

2. *Riddle*,⁴⁸⁶ “A statement intentionally worded in a dark or puzzling manner.”⁴⁸⁷ Oriental cultures abounded in riddles. Note 1 Kgs. 10:1, where the word translated “questions” is literally “riddles.” Note also Prov. 1:6, where the words “dark sayings” are but one in the Hebrew—“riddles.” An Old Testament example is the riddle of Samson, used to confuse and take advantage of the Philistines (Judg. 14:5–6, 8–9, 12–19). A New Testament example of a riddle is the statement in Rev. 13:18 concerning the number 666.
3. *Enigma*,⁴⁸⁸ a dark, mysterious, mystic saying. Some would differentiate between a riddle and an enigma by stating that a riddle is concerned with earthly things, whereas an enigma is concerned with the mysteries of spiritual truths. The saying of our Lord to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:3) may be considered enigmatic. See also Lk. 22:36.

Extended Figures of Speech

Extended figures of speech include similitudes, parables and allegories.

1. *Similitude*,⁴⁸⁹ an extended simile. The similitude differs from a parable in that it uses the present tense rather than the past tense, and speaks about a customary or timeless truth whereas the parable focuses on a particular instance. Cf. the similitude of the lost sheep and the lost coin in Lk. 15:4–10.
2. *Parable*,⁴⁹⁰ also an extended simile, or a story based on resemblance. Cf. The Parable of the Prodigal Son in Lk.

⁴⁸⁶ “Riddle,” from OE. *ráedels*, “counsel, opinion, conjecture.” The Heb. **חֵידָה** (*chiydah*), denotes something tied in a knot, a saying which must be unraveled through insight and skill.

⁴⁸⁷ *OED. Third. ed.*, p. 1735.

⁴⁸⁸ “Enigma,” from the Gk: *αἴνιγμα*, from *αἰνίσσασθαι*, “to tell a strange tale, to speak darkly or in a riddle.”

⁴⁸⁹ “Similitude,” from the Lat: *similis*, “like, resembling, similar.”

⁴⁹⁰ “Parable,” from the Gk: *παραβολή*, “a placing beside.”

15:11–32 and the Parable of the Sower in Matt. 13:1–23. The parable uses the past tense and a specific instance to illustrate a truth.

3. *Allegory*,⁴⁹¹ an extended metaphor, or a comparison based on representation. The word occurs once in the New Testament with regard to Sarah and Hagar as representing two cities, peoples and the contrast between the Old and the New or Gospel Covenant (Gal. 4:21–31).

The Lord's discourse concerning the Vine and the Branches is an allegory (Jn. 15:1–10). Although the Scriptures make use of allegories as a natural and normal part of thought and expression, it is an altogether different matter to allegorize the Scripture to find some hidden meaning beneath the literal meaning or *usus loquendi*.

Figures Deriving From Grammar or Rhetorical Style

There are several classes of figurative language that may be generally classified as those which are the products of either grammatical or rhetorical style. Following are some of the more common examples, which are given for illustration.⁴⁹²

1. *Anacoluthon*.⁴⁹³ This is a figure in which there is an absence of sequence or connection in a sentence or paragraph. There is a change of subject due to argumentation or deep emotion, emphasis or elegance. At times the writer or speaker may return to the subject after a digression or parenthesis. There are several types of anacolutha. E.g., Gal. 6:1, in which the plural is changed to the singular:

Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual [ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοὶ, pl.], restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself [σκοπῶν σεαυτὸν,

⁴⁹¹ "Allegory," from the Gk: ἀλληγορία, from ἄλλος "another," and ἀγορεύειν, "to make a speech in the agora."

⁴⁹² A more complete listing is given in the Glossary.

⁴⁹³ "Anacoluthon" (ἀνακόλουθον) from the Gk. ἀ, or ἄν, privative or negative, and ἀκόλουθος, "following," and so a want or lack of sequence, connection or continuity.

sing.], lest thou also be tempted [μὴ καὶ σὺ πειρασθῆς, sing.].

There may be a change from the direct to the indirect, as in Jn. 13:29:

For some *of them* thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy *those things* that we have need of against the feast [direct]; or, that he should give something to the poor [indirect].

Some alleged anacolutha have a great theological significance. E.g., Rom. 5:12, which is considered by many to be an anacoluthon beginning with the first clause and not coming back to the subject until v. 18.

Scholars are divided, depending on how they view the statement of 5:12 as it either does or does not grammatically end in itself and pertain to the imputation of original sin (i.e., is 5:12 a unit in itself describing the imputation of Adam's sin to the human race) or does it require the entire passage through 5:21 and thus posit a mere mediate imputation?

Those who hold to the latter usually avoid the force of the aor. [πάντες ἡμαρτον] in v. 12 and give the sense that all men sin in themselves or by their own actions.

2. *Anaphora*.⁴⁹⁴ This is the repetition of the same word at the beginning of a series of phrases, clauses or sentences. E.g., the classic passage is Heb. 11, where some eighteen times a verse begins with "By [through] faith..."⁴⁹⁵ Other passages include the nine-fold repetition of "Blessed" in the Beatitudes of Matt. 3:3–11,⁴⁹⁶ the repetition of "who shall...?" in Rom. 8:33–35,⁴⁹⁷ the repetition of "against" in

⁴⁹⁴ "Anaphora" (ἀναφόρα) from the Gk. ἀνά, "again," and φέρω, "carry, bear." and so "to carry again or to repeat."

⁴⁹⁵ Πίστει...Πίστει...Πίστει...Πίστει...Πίστει..., etc., etc., i.e., "By [through] faith..."

⁴⁹⁶ Μακάριοι...Μακάριοι...Μακάριοι..., etc.

⁴⁹⁷ τίς plus the fut. form of the given verb.

Eph. 6:12, πρὸς...πρὸς...πρὸς..., etc., occurs five times. Mark the repetition of “Is any...?” in Jas. 5:13–14.⁴⁹⁸

3. *Anthropopatheia*.⁴⁹⁹ The technical term for anthropomorphism, or ascribing human emotions, passions, actions or attributes to God.

Such language deserves attention in matters of interpretation lest God be misrepresented or limited in some way. To accommodate the finiteness of human reasoning and perception, God is represented as being “in heaven” when he is omnipresent and immanent. He is represented as “looking down from heaven,” having eyes, ears, hands, a mouth, etc. Often “the face of the Lord” is synonymous with his presence.

Human passions are ascribed to God, such as wrath, love, jealousy, and even sorrow or grief. Care must be taken not to limit the absolute, infinite God or impute sinful characteristics to him by such anthropomorphisms.

4. *Aposiopesis*.⁵⁰⁰ A figure of speech in which a statement is suddenly broken off and left incomplete. E.g., Gen. 3:22, where the Divine word is abruptly left unfinished concerning that if man should, in his fallen state, eat of the tree of life—. Cf. Lk. 19:42; Jn. 6:62.
5. *Apostrophe*.⁵⁰¹ This is a turning away from the direct to address the indirect, or diverting the speech to someone or something else. Apostrophes may occur in ejaculatory

⁴⁹⁸ τίς...τίς...τίς..., etc. occurs three times.

⁴⁹⁹ “Anthropopatheia (ἄνθρωποπάθεια),” from ἄνθρωπος, “man, and πάθος, “affections or feelings,” and so ascribing human characteristics to God. Another Gk. term was συγκαταβάσις, “to go down together with.” The Latin is *Condensio*, or *condescension*.

⁵⁰⁰ “Aposiopesis,” Gk: ἀποσιώπησις, a becoming silent; Lat: *reticentia*.

⁵⁰¹ “Apostrophe” (ἀποστροφή), from, ἀπό, “away, from,” and στρέφω, “turn,” and so “a turning away from.” Another Gk. term: προσφονεσις, “to speak toward.” The Latin is *Aversio*, or “aversion, a turning from.”

prayers in which prayer suddenly arises to God, e.g., Neh. 4:3–4; 6:9; Psa. 104:23–24; 109:29–31.

An apostrophe may also occur when, in the midst of prayer to God, men are suddenly addressed, e.g., Psa. 2:9–12; 6:4–9; 27:12–14. Some apostrophes are addressed to animals or inanimate things, e.g., Dt. 31:1ff; Joel 2:22; 12 Kgs. 13:2; Psa. 114:5–7.

6. *Asyndeton*.⁵⁰² This is a series of clauses, phrases or statements without conjunctions. This construction may be used for emphasis, poetical style or dramatic effect. E.g., Ex. 15:9–10, where the coordinate conjunction “and” is left out some seven times. Cf. also Judg. 5:27, which describes the killing of Sisera by Jael. Cf. also Isa. 33:7–11 and the list of the evil propensities of the human heart in Mk. 7:21–23. See “Polysyndeton” in this list.
7. *Chiasmus*.⁵⁰³ This is a type of parallelism and introverted correspondence in which the first in one series corresponds to the second in the other, forming a grammatical or rhetorical “X” or cross. E.g., 1 Pet. 3:7:

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

The English obscures the meaning, construing, as it does, the husband dwelling with his wife according to knowledge, giving her honor as the weaker vessel. The statement is rather to be construed in the following manner:

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with *them* according to knowledge...as unto the weaker vessel, giving honour unto

⁵⁰² “Asyndeton” (ἀσύνδετον), from ἀ privative, or “no,” and σύνδετον, “bound together.” The absence of conjunctions or “and.” Also called *Asyntheton*, or “no placings.”

⁵⁰³ “Chiasmus” from the letter “X.” Also called *Chiaston* and *Allelouchia*. The Latin is *Chiasmus* or *Decussata Oratio*. The idea is that of a parallelism in a series in which the first of one corresponds to the second of the other, and *vice versa*.

the wife...as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

The husband is to dwell with his wife intelligently because she is the weaker vessel and he is to be aware of this and understand its significance. He is to honor her because she is a fellow–heir or equal in the realities of the grace of life.

Some introverted parallelisms are intricate and may seem quite artificial or contrived to the English reader, but it ought to be remembered that such rhetorical style was highly developed in the Greco–Roman era. Two rather intricate examples demonstrate an introverted parallelism of extended *chiasm*os: the first is Matt. 3:10–12

- A) And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
- B) I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance:
 - C) but he that cometh after me is mightier than I,
 - C) whose shoes I am not worthy to bear:
 - B) he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:
- A) Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

The second example is found in Mk. 5:2–6, which describes the maniac of Gadara.

- A) And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,
 - B) Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs;
 - C) and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:
 - D) Because that he had been often bound with fetters
 - E) and chains,
 - E) and the chains had been plucked asunder by him,
 - D) and the fetters broken in pieces:
 - C) neither could any *man* tame him.
 - B) And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.
 - A) But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him.
8. *Ellipsis*. Gk. ἔλλειψις, “a leaving in,” from λείπειν, “to leave.” A gap or space is left in a statement, and thus a word or words are omitted. An ellipsis may be used for emph., as when the equitive vb. is omitted, e.g., Rom. 8:31 (εἰ ὁ θεὸς

ὕπερ ἡμῶν, τίς καθ' ἡμῶν;), “If God for us—who against us?!” Phil. 1:21 (ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος), “For to me to live—Christ, and to die—gain!”

In Eph. 1:16–20 the language is compressed by omitting some connecting words. E.g., 1 Cor. 15:53, “For this corruptible [body] must put on incorruption, and this mortal [body] must put on immortality.” Cf. also Matt. 11:18–19, where the solitariness and asceticism of John the Baptist are contrasted with the social life and unrestricted diet and drink of our Lord.

Cf. Acts 10:10, where the word “food” is implied but ellipted. Cf. Eph. 3:17–19, where the word “love” is ellipted in several phrases until the end of the statement.

9. *Epexegetis*.⁵⁰⁴ This is a repetition for the purpose of explaining something more fully, as in an apposition. This figure is used in poetic expressions to more fully explain or emphasize. E.g., Jonah 2:2:

- A) I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD,
- B) and he heard me;
- A) out of the belly of hell cried I,
- B) and thou heardest my voice.

There is also repetition for the sake of interpretation. E.g., Matt. 6:24, as in our Lord’s teaching concerning serving God and mammon.

- A) No man can serve two masters:
- B) for either he will hate the one, and love the other;
- B) or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.
- A) Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Note Jn. 7:38–39: verse 39 states the declaration of our Lord; the following verse interprets what is meant.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the

⁵⁰⁴ “Epexegetis” from ἐπί, “upon,” ἐξ, “out,” and ἡγεῖσθαι, a leading or bringing. Lit: a returning to explain. Also called *Epichrema*, a furnishing what is needful.

Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

The same is true of the parenthetical expression in Eph. 2:4–5, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;).” The parenthetical clause “by grace ye are saved” explains the truth of Divine quickening to spiritual life. Cf. also Jn. 1:12–13, where v. 13 further explains the reality and action of v. 12.

10. *Euphemismos*.⁵⁰⁵ English: “euphemism,” or to substitute a more agreeable term for one which is disagreeable. The Scripture uses such at times, but never in the sense of avoiding truth or reality, or covering sin.

Death is often referred euphemistically as “going to one’s fathers” (Gen. 15:15), “gathered to one’s fathers” (2 Kgs. 22:20), or as a “sleep” e.g., Jn. 11:11–14; 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 Thess. 4:13–18.⁵⁰⁶

The references to “covering one’s feet,” “going aside,” or “easing one’s self abroad” refer to physically relieving one’s self of bodily waste (Dt. 23:13; Judg. 3:24; 1 Kgs. 18:27⁵⁰⁷) or, to use the English euphemism, “to answer the call of nature.”

⁵⁰⁵ “Euphemismos” (εὐφημισμός), from εὖ, “well,” and φημί, “to speak,” hence to speak well of, i.e., to use a more agreeable term for one which is disagreeable.

⁵⁰⁶ From such language has derived the error of “soul-sleep,” i.e., that the soul in the intermediate state remains in an unconscious condition until the resurrection. Our Lord in Matt. 22:23–33 implies that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead only to the world of men, but were consciously in the presence of God.

⁵⁰⁷ 1 Kgs. 18:27, The KJV reads “is pursuing.” The ASV reads “is gone aside.” The Heb. reads וְכִי־דָרַךְ (w^ey-derech), which means, “way, road, manner, habit, something common or habitual,” and must be interpreted according to the context.

Eccl. 12:1–7 are a list of euphemisms for old age and death. The almond tree, which blossoms first in the spring, and so is the early sign of spring with its white blossoms, refers to gray and then white hair as one of the first signs of old age. The trembling “keepers of the house” refer to the hands. The “grinders which cease because they are few” refer to the loss of teeth. “Those that look out in the darkness” refer to failing eyesight.

The “strong men” who become bowed refer to the weakening of the legs. “Rising up at the voice of the bird” refers to the common insomnia of old age. The “low sound of grinding” refers to loss of hearing. “Desire shall fail” euphemistically refers to the gradual weakening of the sexual impulse and ability. The “long home” is the grave. Verse 6 refers to the irreparable reality and scene of death.

11. *Hendiadys*.⁵⁰⁸ The use of two words for one. E.g., Psa. 74:16, “The day is thine, the night also is thine: thou hast prepared the light and the sun,” i.e., the light, [even] the sun, or sunlight. E.g., Jer. 36:27, “...burned the roll and the words...” refers to the scroll and the words written on it. E.g., 1 Cor. 2:4, “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” i.e., the Holy Spirit whose power was evident.

A species of hendiadys known as the “Granville Sharps Rule,”⁵⁰⁹ consists of two substantives in the same case, the first articular and the second anarthrous. Both substantives refer to the same thing or person, or are inseparably joined together as one. E.g., Acts 2:23, where foreknowledge is grounded in the eternal decree and purpose of God.

τῇ ὀρισμένῃ βουλῇ καὶ προγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ. “The determinate [destined] counsel” of God forms the necessary and inseparable basis for “foreknowledge.” God does not determine

⁵⁰⁸ “Hendiadys,” from ἓν, “one,” διὰ, “by,” and δύο, “two,” and so two words for one. Note that many of the hendiadys which occur in the original language have been lost in translation.

⁵⁰⁹ Named after Granville Sharps who first studied out and discovered this consistent grammatical and syntactical principle in the Greek Testament.

because he foreknows, but foreknows because he has rendered it certain, i.e., Divine foreknowledge is concerned with what has been rendered certain, not with contingency, as witnessed throughout Scripture.

Cf. also Titus 2:13, where the words “our great God” necessarily refer to the Lord Jesus Christ.⁵¹⁰ Cf. 2 Pet. 1:10, where one’s election is made known by his calling and inseparable from it.⁵¹¹

12. *Litotes*.⁵¹² is used to diminish one thing in order to increase another. E.g., Gen. 18:27, where Abraham, pleading before God to spare Sodom and Lot, refers to himself as “but dust and ashes.” Numb. 13:33, where the Israelitish spies sent into Canaan said that they were in their own sight “as grasshoppers” before the giants or anakim. In I Sam. 24:14, David tells Saul that for the king of Israel to pursue him, was as going after “a dead dog, a flea.” David, prophetically declaring horror of crucifixion in Psa. 22:6, cries out, “I am a worm and no man!”

Paul refers to himself as “the least of the apostles” (1 Cor. 15:9) and the “of sinners, the foremost” (1 Tim. 1:15).⁵¹³ In Acts 17:24, the words “though he be not far from every one of us” are an understatement which is correctly stated in the next clause, “For in him we live, and move, and have our being...”

⁵¹⁰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Both titles necessarily refer to the same person.

⁵¹¹ σπουδάσατε βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλήσιν καὶ ἐκλογὴν ποιῆσθαι· ταῦτα γὰρ ποιοῦντες οὐ μὴ πατήσθε ποτε. “Give the utmost diligence firm [get the owner’s certificate!] your calling and election to make (aor. imp.)! For if these things you do, you shall never at any time fall, never [at any time]!” Our election is known by our calling—these are inseparable!

⁵¹² “Litotes” (λιτότης), simplicity. Also known as *meiosis* (from μείωω, to make smaller), a lessening. The Latin is *Diminutio* or *Extenuatio*.

⁵¹³ Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ἦλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἁμαρτωλοὺς σῶσαι ὧν πρῶτός εἰμι ἐγώ. “...Christ Jesus into the world came sinners to save, of whom first am I.” [emph. pers. pron.].

13. *Oxymoron*.⁵¹⁴ This is a smart or wise saying that is contradictory for emphasis. E.g., Matt. 6:23, “If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!” This is used to emphasize great darkness. E.g., Matt. 16:25, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”

Acts 5:41 emphasizes the high privilege of being shamed for being a Christian: “And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.” Cf. also 1 Cor. 1:25, “...the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” Note the extended series in 2 Cor. 6:8–10.

14. *Paradiastole*.⁵¹⁵ A type of anaphora in which the terms “neither...nor” or “either...or” are repeated. E.g., Ezk. 34:4, where the word “neither” is repeated four times:

The diseased have ye not strengthened,
 neither have ye healed that which was sick,
 neither have ye bound up *that which was* broken,
 neither have ye brought again that which was driven away,
 neither have ye sought that which was lost;
 but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

Other examples may be illustrated in Lk. 18:29; Jn. 1:13; Rom. 8:35, 38–39.

15. *Periphrasis*.⁵¹⁶ This is using more words than necessary, or an around about way of stating something to emphasize a given character, quality or type of action. E.g., Ezk. 24:16, “the desire of thine eyes” stands for Ezekiel’s wife. Matt.

⁵¹⁴ “Oxymoron” (ὀξύμωρον), from ὀξύς, “sharp, pointed,” and μωρός, “dull, foolish.” The Latin equivalent is *Acutifatum*. Both mean “wise–foolish,” a contradictory saying that emphasizes the meaning of each.

⁵¹⁵ “Paradiastole” (παραδιαστολή), from παρά, “along, beside,” διά, “by,” and στολή, “sending.” A form of Anaphora. The Latin is *Disjunctio*.

⁵¹⁶ “Periphrasis” (περίφρασις), from περί, “around, about,” and φράζειν, “to speak.” Lat: *Circumlocutio*.

26:29, “the fruit of the vine,” a poetic reference to wine.⁵¹⁷ Lk. 2:11, “the City of David” refers to Bethlehem. In 2 Cor. 5:1, “our earthly body of this tabernacle” refers to the body we now possess, temporary, and contrasted with that which will be glorified. Cf. also 2 Pet. 1:13.

Grammatical periphrastic constructions composed of an equitive verb and a participle to emphasize a given type of action are common in the New Testament, e.g., Acts 2:42; Matt. 16:19, referred to elsewhere in this work. E.g., Mk. 2:18, “...the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast...” This, however, refers to a fast then ongoing, not to something in the past from the standpoint of the speaker.⁵¹⁸ Cf. Lk. 1:21, “And the people waited for Zacharias...” The emphasis is on the durative nature or length of their waiting.⁵¹⁹ Cf. also the durative future in Lk. 21:17, “Ye shall be hated by all men...”⁵²⁰

16. *Pleonasmos*.⁵²¹ A pleonasm is a redundancy, or using more words than necessary for style or emphasis. E.g., Gen. 40:23, “Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him.” E.g., Numb. 19:2, “This is the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded...” Included in pleonasms or redundancies are emphases by repetition. Cf. Gen. 2:17; Jn. 1:2–3, 20; Acts 18:9.

⁵¹⁷ Some who hold to grape juice in the Lord’s Supper state that it need not be fermented, but only “the fruit of the vine.” But this is plainly a mealtime reference to wine. The formal prayer of the Jew at his dinner was to thank God for the wine with such a reference.

⁵¹⁸ ἦσαν οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰωάννου καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι νηστεύοντες. The periphras. const. is ἦσαν...νηστεύοντες. The vb. is imperf. and the ptc. is pres., and simply shows continuity of action at the time of the main vb.

⁵¹⁹ Καὶ ἦν ὁ λαὸς προσδοκῶν τὸν Ζαχαρίαν. The periphras. const. is ἦν...προσδοκῶν, i.e., they were [imperf. vb.] waiting [pres. ptc.].

⁵²⁰ ἔσεσθε μισούμενοι, a fut. vb. and a pres. ptc.

⁵²¹ “Pleonasmos” (πλεονασμός), more than enough, a redundancy.

17. *Polysyndeton*.⁵²² This is a form of Anaphora in which a series occurs connected by the conjunction “and.” E.g., Gen. 8:22; 22:9–11; Ex. 1:7; Josh. 7:24; 2 Kgs. 5:26; Lk. 10:27; 14:21.
18. *Prosapodosis*.⁵²³ This is a return for the sake of repetition and explanation. E.g., Jn. 16:8–11:
- And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:
Of sin, because they believe not on me;
Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;
Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.
- Cf. also Rom. 9:22; Phil. 1:15–17.
19. *Solecism*.⁵²⁴ This refers to an irregularity in speech or diction, a violation of the rules of grammar or syntax. E.g., Our Lord sacrifices grammar to emphasize the personality of the Holy Spirit in Jn. 15:26; 16:7–8, 13, 14. The masc. ὁ παράκλητος, ὄν, ἕκεινος, and αὐτόν are used with reference to the Holy Spirit. The word “spirit” is neut. (τὸ πνεῦμα), yet our Lord used the masc. gender to note the personality of the Spirit.
20. *Zeugma*.⁵²⁵ A figure of speech in which one verb is yoked to two subjects while it strictly belongs only to one of them. E.g., Lk. 1:64, where the verb is linked to both mouth and tongue. The English Version inserts the italicized *loosed* to compensate. See also Lk. 24:27 and 1 Cor. 7:10.

Understanding Figures of Speech

To adequately understand and interpret figures of speech, whether short, opaque, extended, or deriving from grammar or rhetorical style, the following must be kept in mind:

⁵²² “Polysyndeton” (πολυσύνδετον), “many bound together.” See *Asyndeton*.

⁵²³ “Prosapodosis” (προσαποδόσις), “a return or giving back.” The other term in Gk. was *Diezeugmenon*. The Latin had both *Redditio* and *Sejugatio*.

⁵²⁴ “Solecism,” Gk: σολοικισμός, speaking incorrectly; Lat: *solacismus*.

⁵²⁵ “Zeugma,” Gk: ζεύγμα, a yoke. Hence, to yoke together.

- Figures of speech are often mixed or intermingled in the biblical narrative, e.g., One must be able to identify the figure used, or a given degree of misunderstanding may result, and thus misinterpretation.
- One must have a clear conception of the realities on which the figures are based, which often necessitates a study of biblical languages, culture, geography and history.
- One must grasp the principle idea and not be misled by various incidental details. This is especially necessary when dealing with extended figures such as parables⁵²⁶ and allegories or complicated figures such as *chiasmoi*.
- One must remember that when dealing with God and eternal, infinite truths, figurative language fails to fully convey the realities.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are the four basic types of figures of speech? List, identify and explain an example from each type.
2. What is denotative language? What is connotative language?
3. What is the relation between the reality or denotative term and the figure or connotative term that must be understood?
4. What is a simile? Illustrate with several examples from the Scriptures. What is the relation between a simile and a parable? Between a simile and a similitude?
5. What is the difference between a parable and a similitude?
6. What is a metaphor? Illustrate with several examples from the Scriptures. What is the difference between a metaphor and an allegory?

⁵²⁶ E.g., the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1–11). The theme is the necessity of watchfulness because of ignorance concerning the exact time of our Lord's coming. "Oil" is an incidental, and cannot consistently be made a type of the Holy Spirit in this parable without introducing both confusion and heresy.

7. What is the difference between a scriptural allegory and the allegorizing of Scripture?
8. What is a proverb? Give several scriptural examples.
9. What is a synecdoche? A metonymy? A hyperbole? An expression of irony? Give scriptural examples of each.
10. What is a riddle? An enigma? Give scriptural examples of each.
11. What are some of the most common figures of speech deriving from grammar or rhetoric? Explain and give a scriptural example of each of the following: anacoluthon, anaphora, anthropomorphism, chiasmus, litotes and periphrasis.
12. What is the key to parabolic interpretation? Explain the danger of moving from interpreting parables to allegorizing.

B. The Interpretation of Poetry

One third of the Bible is poetry. Most poetry is contained in the books of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon and Lamentations. Other poetic examples occur as songs,⁵²⁷ hymns or epic poems,⁵²⁸ etc. In addition to quotations of Old Testament poetry, there are hymns and probable hymns in the New Testament,⁵²⁹ the doxologies may also qualify as poetry.⁵³⁰

There are five essential issues concerning biblical poetry:

1. Biblical poetry abounds in the various forms of figurative language. One must observe and seek to identify various figures of speech in poetic language.

⁵²⁷ E.g., The Prayer–Song of Hannah, 1 Sam. 2:1–10.

⁵²⁸ E.g., The Epic Song of David for Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. 1:17–27; the Epic Song of Deborah and Barak, Judg. 5:1–31.

⁵²⁹ E.g., the hymn of Mary [*The Magnificat*] (Lk. 1:46–55) and the probable hymn of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ as written by Paul (Phil. 2:5–11).

⁵³⁰ E.g., Rom. 8:28–39; 11:33–36.

2. It must be noted that simply because the Scripture, especially the Old Testament, uses poetic language does not mean that what is described is not real or true. Poetry as a literary form does not preclude reality nor necessitate the existence of either myth or legend. Poetic language may describe what would otherwise be incomprehensible or indescribable to man.⁵³¹
3. Biblical poetry was written in couplets or more extended stichs which can add up to six lines per stanza or strophe. Psa. 1:1 and Psa. 135:1, below, are examples of a tristich, or three-lined strophe.
4. Various types of arrangements give poetry its literary form. E.g., the acrostic,⁵³² as seen in Psalm 119. Each section begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Other acrostics are not retained or identified in the English Bible.
5. Biblical poetry, especially Hebrew poetry, is not based on rhyme (assonance, or like sounds) but on a parallelism of thought. It ought to be noted that often much of the Hebrew idiom and word-order is lost when translated into English. There are various types of parallelism. Following are several examples:

Synonymous parallelism (Psa. 103:3):

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
who healeth all thy diseases

Antithetical or contrasting parallelism (Prov. 15:1):

A soft answer turneth away wrath:
but grievous words stir up anger.

⁵³¹ E.g., the creation narrative in Gen. chapters 1 and 2, etc. Rationalistic critics, denying the reality of Divine inspiration, creation, the Fall of man and other scriptural realities have resorted to relegating such narratives to the realm of myth and legend to void them of truth.

⁵³² “Acrostic” (from ἄκρον, “extremity, end,” and στίχος, “verse”). Other examples of alphabetic acrostic poems, though not discernable in English are Psa. 25, 34, 111 and 112. The last twenty-two verses of Proverbs chapter 31 are acrostic, as is most of the book of Lamentations.

Emblematic parallelism (in which one line is figurative and the other literal (Psa. 42:1):

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

Incomplete parallelism in which the thought either ascends or descends. E.g., the descending parallelism of Psa. 1:1:

Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
nor standeth in the way of sinners,
nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

Note also the descending four lines of Psa. 91:5–6:

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night;
nor for the arrow that flieth by day;
Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness;
nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

and the four lines of Psa. 91:9–10:

Because thou hast made the LORD, *which is* my refuge,
even the most High, thy habitation;
There shall no evil befall thee,
neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

also the ascending tristich of Psa. 135:1:

Praise ye the LORD.
Praise ye the name of the LORD;
Praise *him*, O ye servants of the LORD.

An example of introverted parallelism (Psa. 30:8–10):

- A) I cried to thee, O LORD;
- B) and unto the LORD I made supplication.
- C) What profit *is there* in my blood,
- D) when I go down to the pit?
- D) Shall the dust praise thee?
- C) shall it declare thy truth?
- B) Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me:
- A) LORD, be thou my helper.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the difference between poetry in English thought and language and Hebrew thought and language?

2. What are the common types of parallelism in Biblical poetry? Give scriptural examples of each type.
3. What is an acrostic poem? What are the major acrostic passages *not* noted in the English Bible?
4. What is a stich? A strophe?
5. What are some of the hymns or poems in the New Testament? What are some probable early hymns?

C. The Interpretation of Types and Symbols

1. Biblical Types

Biblical types⁵³³ are Old Testament persons, places or things that anticipate or prefigure some aspect of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ or New Testament gospel realities. The fulfillment of the type is called its antitype.⁵³⁴ Technically, to be a true Old Testament biblical type, the New Testament must contain a reference and explanation. Following are a few examples:

- Adam is a type of Christ in that he stood as Representative Man or federal head of the human race. His one act was thus imputed to all his posterity. Our Lord stood as Representative Man for his people, and his one act is imputed to his covenant people (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:20–22; 45–47).
- The Tabernacle, priesthood and offerings of the Mosaic institution all prefigured the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- In some places, oil typifies the Holy Spirit. The holy anointing oil of the High Priest typified the Holy Spirit, and so was not to be duplicated upon penalty of excommunication and death (Ex. 30:22–38). In other places, oil does not (Cf. Matt. 25:1–13).

⁵³³ “Type,” from the Gk: τύπος, a figure formed by striking a blow, an impression, and so an image or figure.

⁵³⁴ “Antitype,” from the Gk: ἀντίτυπος, that which corresponds to the type, its counterpart, or fulfillment.

- The Passover and the Passover lamb typified Christ (Jn. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7).
- Jonah’s three days and nights in the belly of the fish typified the three days’ burial of our Lord (Jonah 2; Matt. 12:38–41).
- The brazen serpent made by Moses typified Christ lifted up as Savior (Numb. 21:1–9; Jn. 3:14–16).
- The rock in the desert that, smitten, gave forth water, was a type of Christ (Ex. 17:6; Numb. 20:11; 1 Cor. 10:1–4).
- Melchizedek is a type of Christ (Gen. 14:18–20; Psa. 110:4; Heb. 5:5; 6:20–8:2). Thus, Melchizedek was not the [pre-incarnate] Lord himself, as the type cannot be the antitype!
- The parallels between Joseph and our Lord are exceptional, yet Joseph is never referred to as a type of Christ in the New Testament. Many commentators, however, refer to Joseph as a type of Christ because of such parallels.
- The river Jordan is commonly thought of as a type of death and Canaan as a type of heaven in sermons and hymns, because it was the “Promised Land.” Scripture, however, gives no warrant for this. Indeed, Canaan was the scene of warfare and conflict, not rest—and a land inhabited with a degenerate people that had to be exterminated.

There are three essentials for something to be a biblical type of another person, place or thing:

1. There must be some notable or discernable point of resemblance or analogy between the type and the antitype, although there may be some great dissimilarities.⁵³⁵
2. There must be biblical evidence that the type was ordained or designed by God to represent the person or thing typified. There is a great danger of drifting from legitimate typology into an illegitimate allegorization.

⁵³⁵ All personal types of Christ, such as Adam, David, Solomon, were imperfect and are only types because of their position, office or experience.

3. The type must anticipate or prefigure someone or thing [antitype] in the future.

2. Biblical Symbols

A biblical symbol is a recognizable sign in the form of a visual object. It carries a certain significance in itself and needs no antitype or future fulfillment for its significance. The rainbow was a symbol of God's covenant faithfulness (Gen. 9:8–17). The pillar of cloud and fire that led the people of Israel was a symbol of the Divine presence [*Shekinah*] (Ex. 13:21–22).

The vine was an Old Testament symbol for Israel and later for our Lord (Jn. 15:1f).⁵³⁶ The golden lampstands symbolized the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 1:10–20). The bread and wine as used in the Lord's Supper are symbolic of the body and blood of our Lord.

Symbols are significant in that many of the prophecies contain symbols which must be correctly and consistently interpreted. One must discern whether two or more prophecies or writers use the same symbol in the same way or in different ways.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does the word "type" mean? What is an "antitype?"
2. Can a type and its antitype be identical? Why? Why not? Can you give an example from a sermon where this principle has been violated?
3. What is a biblical type? Do all true types have their antitype in Scripture? Explain your answer and illustrate it from Scripture.
4. Must a biblical type correspond completely to its antitype? Explain why or why not. Illustrate your answer from the Scriptures.

⁵³⁶ Thus, our Lord stated, "I am (emph. pers. pron.) the Vine, [I mean] the true one (rest. att.!)!" (Ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀμπελος ἡ ἀληθινή), replacing Israel.

5. What is the difference between legitimately expounding a type and allegorizing? Can you give examples of this from a book or a sermon?
6. What is a biblical symbol? What is the difference between a type and a symbol?
7. Explain the importance of rightly interpreting both types and symbols.

D. The Interpretation of Prophecy

1. The Problems of Prophetic Interpretation

The interpretation of prophecy is perhaps the most problematic aspect of understanding the Bible. The reasons for this are manifold. Tradition and prejudice color one's presuppositions. Few can agree on what is to be taken literally and what is to be taken figuratively.⁵³⁷ Even the terms "literal" and "figurative" or "spiritual" are used with various meanings or shades of meaning.

Many biblical prophecies are visionary, and so filled with figurative and symbolic language. Some prophecies are a mixture of prophetic elements that call for a double fulfillment,⁵³⁸ i.e., a figurative fulfillment in the present or immediate future and a literal fulfillment in the distant future.⁵³⁹ Some prophecies are conditional; others are unconditional. Some prophecies mingle two time frames into one.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁷ E.g., The Amillennialists hold that the Book of Revelation is symbolic—a series of prophetic signs. The Dispensationalists hold that it is to be interpreted as literally as possible. Yet it is common for the Amillennialists to take the first three chapters literally and the Dispensationalists to spiritualize these same chapters into various "church ages." Many Dispensationalists seem to mix the literal and symbolic in a rather arbitrary manner.

⁵³⁸ Note carefully that the issue is a "double fulfillment," not a *double interpretation!*

⁵³⁹ E.g., Psa. 22:14–18. David's language is figurative of great suffering, but these were literally fulfilled in the crucifixion of our Lord.

⁵⁴⁰ E.g., the Old Testament prophets envisioned the coming of the Messiah, at times as a glorious, victorious Messiah; at others as a suffering Messiah. These aspects had to do with his first and second

Some prophetic language is ambiguous, visionary or idealized. Prophetic visions were often limited to the prophet's own time and culture.⁵⁴¹ Prophecies occur throughout Scripture, and take many forms. Several might view a given future event from different perspectives.

2. General Principles of Prophetic Interpretation

The following general principles will serve as a very basic guideline:

- One must give careful attention to the language used, including figures of speech, symbols and cultural peculiarities. The literal [historico–grammatical] meaning must be the starting–point and safeguard in interpretation.
- One must consider the clarity of the text. The more obscure the passage may be through figures or symbolism, the less confident one can be of rightly understanding it. Conversely, the clearer the text, the more confident one can be of arriving at a right understanding.
- One must carefully consider the historical background or context of the prophecy.
- One must take careful notes of the flow of the prophetic passage and not be distracted by chapter or verse divisions.
- One must study any parallel passages which might throw light upon a given prophecy.
- One must seek to grasp the essence of the passage. Is it conditional or unconditional? Predictive or didactic? Fulfilled or yet unfulfilled?

Advent. The Jews failed to realize this and rejected our Lord at his first advent. Jewish tradition, unable to comprehend their prophetic Scriptures and rejecting our Lord, envisioned two Messiahs, a suffering Messiah and a conquering, reigning Messiah.

⁵⁴¹ E.g., prophecies concerning battles, weapons, kingdoms, etc., are usually described in terms of then existing conditions. Failure to take such things into consideration has resulted in prophetic speculation of a very questionable nature.

- One must be aware of the Christological nature of prophecy, i.e., how it relates to Christ. His Person and work, and his two advents, form the central key to prophetic understanding.⁵⁴²
- One must understand that fulfilled prophecies may give a pattern for interpreting those yet unfulfilled.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the phenomenon of biblical prophecy?
2. Must all biblical prophecies be infallibly fulfilled? Why? Why not?
3. What are the major problems or disagreements among those who attempt to interpret biblical prophecies?
4. What is the difference between a “double fulfillment” and a “double interpretation”?
5. What are the major problems or issues when figures or symbols are used in prophetic passages?
6. Why must one carefully study any parallel passages pertaining to the same prophecy?
7. What is the difference between a conditional and an unconditional prophecy?
8. Have all prophecies been fulfilled literally? Give an example of a fulfilled prophecy that might cause one to question the exactness of being literal.
9. Who is the central figure and key to biblical prophecy? How does this govern the interpretation and importance of various prophecies?

Conclusion

Hermeneutics is a spiritual or holy science, and so must be pursued with an intelligent, reverent attitude. Apart from the

⁵⁴² E.g., to hold that Israel is the key to prophetic interpretation, or that in a future millennium, the Old Testament sacrificial system will be re-instituted, and that “the Church” is a parenthesis between God’s dealings with Israel, is opposed to this principle (Eph. 3:20–21).

illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit, error and even heresy will be certain to gain a foothold.

Hermeneutics and exegesis are close companions. Hermeneutical presuppositions and principles necessarily intertwine with the exegetical process. It is at the point of the application of hermeneutical principles in exegesis that theology begins. This means that one's hermeneutical presuppositions and principles are foundational to a consistent biblical theology.

History witnesses to the sad reality of faulty hermeneutical presuppositions and principles, even among those who held the Scriptures in great esteem and with even a superstitious regard. One's hermeneutic must reflect the nature of Scripture itself and never be or become a template upon which the Word of God is distorted.

Life is disciplined faith. Faith is disciplined by Theology. Theology is disciplined by Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is disciplined by exegesis. All is ultimately disciplined by one's presuppositions. Our presuppositions must then themselves be in full accordance with the inscripturated Word of God.

Glossary and Annotations

The student should familiarize himself with the terms in this glossary and annotations. In addition to the list of linguistic and reference abbreviations after the Table of Contents, there are many terms associated with the study of Hermeneutics which are necessary for understanding this subject, its history and its process.

This list has in part been extracted from the text for referencing those terms which may necessitate repeated study. For an extensive glossary dealing specifically with Greek and Hebrew grammar and exegesis, see the author's glossary in *Introductory Lessons in New Testament Greek* and *An Exegetical Handbook for Biblical Studies*.

ACCIDENCE. (Lat. *Accidentia*, "that which happens"). The structural formation and inflection of words, including etymology, roots, and suffixes, e.g., declensions of the substantives and conjugation of the verbs, etc.

ACCOMMODATION. (1) God accommodated himself to man and condescended to use human language and terminology, with its limitations, when referring to Divine truth. (2) The rationalistic view that our Lord accommodated himself to the alleged primitive religion, thinking and practices of the people of his day. This would destroy any validity to his testimony to creation, the historicity of Adam, the Fall, the supernatural and miracles.

ACROSTIC. (from ἄκρον, "extremity, end," and στίχος, "verse"). A literary device in which each line, statement or section begins with a given letter of the alphabet. E.g., Psa. 119.

AGREEMENT. The sharing of common grammatical features by two different parts of speech, e.g., adjectives usually agree with their antecedents in gender, number and definiteness.

AKTIONSPORT. (Ger. *Aktionsart*, "kind of action"). The quality or "kind of action" contained in the verb-stem itself, which existed before any later idea of tense development. See "Tense."

ALEXANDRIAN EXEGESIS. The allegorical approach to the interpretation of Scripture first appropriated from the pagan Greek philosophers by the Alexandrian Jews. Later

appropriated by the Patristic writers [Apologists] to “Christianize” the Old Testament, and then defend the New Testament.

ALLEGORICAL EXEGESIS. This approach seeks “a deeper spiritual meaning” behind, beneath or beyond the literal interpretation of Scripture, which is usually not directly related to the literal understanding of the text. The same as “spiritualizing” the text. The “parabolic” approach sees in every passage an alleged hidden meaning. See “Allegory,” “Alexandrian Exegesis” and “Historico–Grammatical Exegesis.”

ALLEGORY. (Gk: ἀλληγορούμενα, from ἄλλός, “other,” + ἀγορεύειν, “to speak in the agora [marketplace];” Lat: *allegoria*, “speaking otherwise”). A figure of speech consisting of an extended metaphor based on representation or implication.

ALLITERATION. (Gk: ὁμοιοπρόθερον, from ὅμοιος, “similar,” + προφέρω, “to carry or place before;” Lat: *allittera*, “additional words”). A figure of speech in which the same letter or syllable is repeated in successive words. Cf. the initial (i.e., repetition of first letter) alliteration in Rom. 1:29–30.

ALPHA PRIVATIVE. A prefix (ἀ– or ἀν–) in Greek which *negates* a given word. Not to be confused with an augment.

AMANUENSIS. (Lat: a shortened form of *servus a manuensis*). One who copies or writes from dictation. See “Scribe.”

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION. (ASV). An American translation of the Bible based on the Critical Text (1901) which followed the English Revised Version of 1881.

AMORAIM. The second or post–Christian phase of Rabbinic Judaism (c. 200–c. 490 AD) in which the alleged “Oral Law” and Judaistic writings were codified into the Talmud.

ANABASIS. (Gk: ἀνάβασις, from ἀνά, up, + βάσις, “a stepping, ascent.” Lat: *incrementum*). A figure of speech in which there is an increase of intensity with each ascending step. E.g., 1 Cor. 4:8; 1 Jn. 1:1.

ANACOLUTHON. (Gk: ἀνακόλουθον, from ἀν, “not” + ἀκολουθός “following”). A change from one grammatical construction to another within the same sentence. The failure to complete a sentence as intended. An introverted rhetorical style. Sometimes used as a rhetorical device for intensity or evidence of strong emotion.

ANAGOGICAL. The eschatological interpretation of any given passage according to the Four-Fold Sensus of Medieval interpretation. See “Four-Fold Sensus.”

ANALOGY. (Gk: ἀναλογία, “proportion”). (1) A partial similarity between two entities otherwise unlike. (2) An explanation by comparison.

ANALOGY OF FAITH. [*Analogia Fidei*]. This terminology refers to the total teaching of Scripture as it bears upon any given point or aspect of Divine truth. The Scriptures, as the very Word of God, are necessarily self-consistent and non-contradictory.

Synonymous terms used for this principle are “Scripture interprets Scripture,” or “the perspicuity of Scripture,” i.e., the more obscure passages may be understood by those parallel passages which are more plain and easier to understand.⁵⁴³

ANARTHROUS. (Gk: ἀναρθρία, *without articulation*, hence “without the article”). Anarthrous, without the definite

⁵⁴³ The terminology “analogy of faith” was originally based on a misunderstanding of Rom. 12:6, “...according to the proportion of faith” (κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως, i.e., the measure of personal faith—not going beyond what God has given by way of personal gifts of ministry and faith personally or individually received).

The term “faith” was taken by the Church Fathers in an objective sense as the doctrinal teaching of Scripture rather than a subjective sense of personal, experimental faith, belief or trust. They spoke of the *Analogia* or *Regula Fidei* as pertaining to the general principles of the Christian faith. Thus, the term entered into Christian theology. Thus, the “analogy [ἀναλογίαν] of faith” came to have its present meaning. It has become an acceptable theological term, although it was originally misappropriated from Rom. 12:6.

article. The absence of the article stresses the *quality* of the word. The presence of the article points to identity or particularity. See “Definite Article.”

ANCIENT VERSIONS. Ancient versions of the Scriptures (containing the New Testament) in various languages include the following: *Old Latin* (second century), *Old Syriac* (including the *Peshitta* and later *Syriac*, second to seventh century), *Coptic* (third to sixth century), *Latin Vulgate* (fourth century), *Gothic* (fourth century), *Armenian* (fourth century), *Georgian* (fifth century), *Ethiopic* (sixth century), *Nubian* (sixth century).

ANNOMINATIO. (Gk: παρανομασία; “to place beside;” Lat: *annominatio*, “to a name”). A figure of speech in which the sense and sound are similar. E.g., πέτρος and πέτρα in Matt. 16:18. See “Paronomasia.”

ANTHROPOMORPHISM. (Gk: ἀνθρωποπάθεια, from ἄνθρωπος, “man,” and πάθος, “affections or feelings,” also συνκαταβάσις, “to go down together with.” Lat: *Condensio*, “condescension”). *Anthropopatheia*, or ascribing human emotions, passions, actions or attributes to God.

ANTHROPOPATHEIA. See “Anthropomorphism.”

ANTILEGOMENA. (Gk: ἀντιλεγόμενα, “spoken against”). The *Antilegomena* contained seven disputed books: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, Jude and Revelation. These books were spoken against or doubted for various reasons. Most were recognized as canonical by 170 AD, and all of the *Antilegomena* by the end of the fourth century.⁵⁴⁴ See “Homologoumena,” “Apocryphal Writings” and “Pseudopigraphal Writings.”

ANTIOCHENE EXEGESIS. A literal, grammatical and historical school of biblical exegesis that flourished at Antioch in

⁵⁴⁴ Both the Old and New Testaments had their own *Homologoumena* and *Antilegomena* within the canon. In addition, both eras had their own *Apocrypha* and *Pseudopigrapha* outside the canon of Scripture.

fourth and fifth centuries. Opposed to Alexandrian Allegoric Exegesis. Synonymous with “Palestinian Exegesis.”

ANTITYPE. (Gk: ἀντιτύπος). The fulfillment of a biblical type, the corresponding reality. See “Type.”

APOCALYPTICAL. (Gk: ἀποκαλύπτω, “uncover, disclose”). (1) The Greek title for the Book of Revelation is the “Apocalypse [Ἀποκάλυψις, unveiling, revelation] of Jesus Christ.” (2) Apocalyptic Literature refers both to the canonical books such as Ezekiel, Daniel, Zechariah and Revelation, because of their “visions” and “revelations,” and also to the pseudopigraphical works of early Christianity. See “Pseudopigraphal Writings.”

APOCRYPHAL WRITINGS. (Gk: ἀπόκροφος, “concealed, hidden, stored up”). (1) The Old Testament *Apocrypha*, consisting of fourteen to fifteen books, contained in the LXX, and recognized as canonical by the Roman Catholics.⁵⁴⁵ (2) The New Testament *Apocrypha*, although consisting of several major works,⁵⁴⁶ actually numbered in the hundreds (including many otherwise designated as “pseudo-pigraphical”).

These were rejected as non-authoritative, their contents often contradicting Scripture or containing fantasies. Some of the writings of the early Church Fathers belong to this group and were considered as edifying, but not accepted as inspired

⁵⁴⁵ (1) The Wisdom of Solomon, (2) Ecclesiasticus [Sirach], (3) Tobit, (4) Judith, (5) I Esdras, (6) II Esdras, (7) I Maccabees, (8) II Maccabees, (9) Baruch, (10) The Letter of Jeremiah, (11) Additions to Esther, (12) Prayer of Azariah [Song of the Three Young Men], (13) Susanna, (14) Bel and the Dragon, and (15) Prayer of Manasseh.

⁵⁴⁶ The exact number is indefinite, as some are classified as Apocryphal and some as pseudopigraphical: (1) Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas, c. 70–79 AD, (2) Epistle to the Corinthians, c. 96 AD, (3) Second Epistle of Clement, c. 120–140, (4) Shepherd of Hermas, c. 115–140, (5) The Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve, c. 100–120, (6) Apocalypse of Peter, c. 150, (7) The Acts of Paul and Thecla, c. 170, (8) Epistle to the Laociceans, c. 4th century, (9) The Gospel According to the Hebrews, c. 65–100 AD, (10) Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, c. 108, (11) The Seven Epistles of Ignatius, c. 110.

Scripture. Some books may be considered either as apocryphal or pseudopigraphical. See “Canon,” “Pseudopigraphical Writings.”

APODOSIS. The conclusion of a conditional sentence. See “Protasis.”

APOLOGETICS. (Gk: ἀπολογία, from ἀπό, “off, from,” and λέγειν, “to speak;” hence, to speak from a certain position so as to defend that position), an apology or defense. Technically and theologically, an apologetic is an intelligent or orderly defense of the Christian faith.⁵⁴⁷ Hermeneutically, one must beware that the Scriptures are not simply pursued apologetically, but exegetically. Often apologetics obscures some passages, which are never considered except in an apologetic context.

APOSIOPESES. (Gk: ἀποσιώπησις, “a becoming silent;” Lat: *reticentia*). A figure of speech in which a statement is suddenly broken off and left incomplete.

APOSTOLIC FATHERS. The earliest Church Fathers who lived in the generation succeeding the inspired Apostles and had personal contact with them.

APOSTROPHE. (Gk: ἀποστροφή, from, ἀπό, “away, from ,” and στρέφω, “turn,” and so “a turning away from.” Also προσφονεσις, “to speak toward.” Lat: *Aversio*, or “aversion, a turning from”). This is a turning away from the direct to address the indirect, or diverting the speech to someone or something else.

APPLICATION. (Lat. *applicare, applicationem*). “The bringing of anything to bear practically upon another...the putting of anything to a use or purpose...”⁵⁴⁸ Application is the process by which the truth of Scripture affects contemporary

⁵⁴⁷ There are two distinct approaches to Apologetics: (1) Evidentialism [Classical], which reasons *to* the Scriptures, and (2) Presuppositionalism, which reasons *from* the Scriptures. Theologically and historically, this latter approach is consonant with the nature of the Scriptures, their doctrinal teaching and examples, e.g., Acts 17:22–31.

⁵⁴⁸ *OED Third Ed.*, p. 86.

Christians and Christianity. All application is necessarily based on the interpretation. Interpretation and application must never be confused.

APPOSITION. (Lat: *appositionem*, “the act of opposing”). The placing of a word beside or parallel to another as a complement. The apposition “renames the subject.”

AQUILA. The author of a Greek version of the OT, c. 128 AD. This version, commonly called “Aquila” in references, is more literal to the Hebrew text than the older Septuagint, was widely used in the early centuries of Christianity, and possesses value in the Textual criticism of the Masoretic Text.

ARABIC. One of the five major Semitic languages (Akkadian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Ethiopic and Arabic). Ancient Arabic translations of the OT are significant in textual criticism.

ARAMISM. An Aramaic word, idiom or expression occurring in the Greek New Testament. The most common are proper names. The Aramaic was *not* Hebrew, but a dialect of the Chaldee that became the common language of the Jews during the Babylonian exile and was their “mother tongue” in the first century AD (referred to in the Eng. Version as “Hebrew” at times).

The Koine Greek was the vernacular of the Roman Empire, and most Jews were evidently bilingual. Hebrew was spoken and read, but mostly with regard to religious rituals or the Scriptures, although the Septuagint (LXX), or Greek Version of the Jewish Scriptures, was the common Version used. See “Hebraism” and “Latinism.”

ARTHROUS. (Gk: ἀρθρία, *articulation*, hence “with the article”). Arthrous means possessing the definite article. The presence of the article points to identity or particularity. See “Anarthrous,” “Definite Article,” and “Indefinite Article.”

ASSONANCE. (Lat: *assonans*, from *assonare*. “to sound to”). Likeness of sounds, rhyme. English poetry is usually based on assonance; Hebrew poetry on some type of parallelism of thought.

ASYNDETON. (α privative + σύν, “together with” + δεῖν, “to bind,” and so “not bound together”). The omission of coordinating conjunctions or other connecting particles in a series of phrases or clauses. May be used for dramatic effect.

ATTIC. (Gk: Ἀττικὸς, Lat: *Atticus*). An ancient Greek dialect which, more than any other, formed the basis of the Koine Greek of the New Testament. The age of the Greek dialects was c. 1000 to 300 BC. The language was standardized by the army of Alexander the Great, which was composed of soldiers speaking all the various Greek dialects, and from the subsequent conquests of the Greeks, which necessitated a world-language. See “Ionic” and “Doric.”

AUTHENTICITY. The term which refers to the truthfulness of a given text or writing. Not to be confused with genuineness.

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE. (Lat: *auctor*, “originator” or “author”). The authority of Scripture derives from the self-disclosing or self-revealing God of Scripture. It is thus self-attesting or self-authenticating through its own witness and that of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁹ The authority of Scripture is inclusive of all of created reality, of both faith and practice: The authority of Scripture is

(1) *Necessary.* Man needs special revelation to lead him to truly and rightly know God, be reconciled to him and live in the context of his revealed will.

(2) *Comprehensive.* It encompasses the whole of life and reality.

(3) *Executive.* The Word of God comes to us as command.

(4) *Legislative.* It is to be our rule of both faith and practice.

(5) *Judicial.* It is the ultimate and absolute standard of what is right or wrong, manifesting the moral self-consistency of God.

(6) *Perpetual.* The Scriptures as the very Word of God remain wholly authoritative.

(7) *Ultimate.* Because the Scriptures derive from God himself, there is no other criterion or authority to which it can be subjected or by which it may be judged. All other criteria or authorities are relative to the Scriptures.

AUTHORIZED VERSION. (AV). The version “authorized” by King James I of England (1611). See “King James Version” and “Textus Receptus.”

AUTOGRAPHS. (Gk: *αὐτογράφα*). The autographs refer to the original manuscripts themselves written by the original human authors or under their direction. Note that the original languages refer to the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek; the original mss. to the very hand-written documents by the original authors or their amanuenses.⁵⁵⁰

BIBLICAL CRITICISM. Biblical Criticism is comprised of two branches: Textual or “lower” (being first and foundational) Criticism is an integral part of establishing the text of Scripture. Historical or “higher” Criticism seeks to establish the genuineness—authorship, date and historicity—of any given biblical document through both internal and external evidence.

Internal evidence includes whatever might be in the text of the document itself, e.g., claims to authorship, historical data and circumstances, a distinct writing style, etc., existing in the text.

External evidence may be derived from other biblical documents, parallel passages in other documents, historical incidents that corroborate the document, religious tradition, etc.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY. (1) That branch of theological science which is founded upon Exegesis and Hermeneutics and operates on the principle of progressive revelation. (2) Theology which derives from the Scriptures themselves as opposed to philosophical or speculative theology.

The five interrelated branches of theology are: (1) Exegetical Theology, which culminates in exegesis and hermeneutical conclusions. (2) Biblical Theology, which works on the principles of progressive revelation. (3) Historical Theology,

⁵⁵⁰ The autograph copies or original mss. are not to be confused with the original languages. The original languages we have; the original autographs we have not.

which follows the development of doctrine through creeds, confessions and controversies from the close of the canon to the present. (4) Systematic Theology, which seeks to harmonize all doctrine into a unified and consistent whole. (5) Practical Theology, which seeks to consistently implement doctrine into the life of the individual and church.

BIBLIOLATRY. (1) The superstitious or mystical worship or use of the Bible as an object. (2) The superstitious or ignorant view that a version of a translation is equal to the Scriptures in the original languages in its words and grammar.

BIBLIOMANCY. (Gk: βίβλος, “book, Bible,” + μαντεία, “divination.” Lat: *mantia*, from *mantis*, “prophet”). The superstitious use of the Bible to find immediate and infallible Divine guidance by randomly fixing upon a given text.

BRACHOLOGY. (Gk: βραχυλογία, from βραχύς “short” + λόγος “discourse”). A figure of speech in which words are omitted for the sake of brevity, an ellipsis. Jn. 13:18; Rom. 9:16. See “Ellipsis.”

BYZANTINE TEXT. (Byz). This represents a “text family,” or a type of text, which arose in certain geographical areas with variations in style, tendencies, and readings. Also termed the “Syrian” or “Antiochian” text, (and also “Ecclesiastical Text”). This type of text formed the basis for the printed Greek Testaments of the sixteenth century, including the *Textus Receptus*. See “Caesarean Text,” “Critical Text,” “Majority Text,” “Western Text,” and “Textus Receptus.”

CAESAREAN TEXT. This represents a “text family,” or a type of text, which arose in certain geographical areas with variations in style, tendencies, and readings. The Caesarean Text is characterized by elements of the Alexandrian and Western texts. See “Byzantine Text,” “Critical Text,” “Majority Text,” “Western Text,” and “Textus Receptus.”

CANON, CANONICITY. (Gk: κανὼν, “measure;” Lat: *canon*, “rule”). The word originally signified a measuring staff or straight rod. It was probably a derivative of the Heb. קִנֵּה (*qaneh*) or *reed*, an Old Testament term for a measuring rod (Ezk. 40:3; 42:16). In pre-Christian Greek it also had the

connotation of *rule* or *standard* by which a thing is measured. This usage occurs in the New Testament several times (e.g., Gal. 6:16).

The metaphorical use as *standard* or *norm* is found in the early Church Fathers from the time of Irenaeus (c.115–202). They referred to the κανὼν [rule] of Christian teaching which they called the “κανὼν [Rule] of the Truth,” or the “κανὼν [Rule] of Faith.”

By the time of Athanasius (c.350), the term *canon* was applied to the Bible, both as the Rule of faith and practice and as the body of inspired and authoritative truth. See “Homologoumena,” “Antilegomena,” “Apocryphal Writings,” and “Pseudopigraphical Writings.”

CANONICAL CRITICISM. The alleged opposite of the Historical–Critical method. This historico–critical approach first referred to the hermeneutical presuppositions of the alleged redactors who originally produced the canon of Scripture. Later, it came to refer to approaching the relation of the text to its canonical context.

CANTILLATION. The singing or chanting of the Hebrew text either for memorization or liturgical use. The Masoretic Text contains various accents, such as [’]Athnach and Silluq, with other musical notations, to aid in such cantillation, e.g., [’]Athnach divides each verse into its grammatical or logical halves, the voice rising from the beginning of the verse to [’]Athnach, then falling to the Silluq of the final word.

CASE. Lat: casus, falling. Gk: πτώσις. The place a substantive occupies in a sentence.

CATENA. Pl. “Catenae” (Lat: *catena*, “chain”). A linked or connected series of excerpted writings. Strings of thoughts and comments from some of the Church Fathers on the text of Scripture widely used by the Medieval scholars.

CHAPTER DIVISIONS. (Gk: κεφάλαια, “chief [points, summaries], heads;” Lat: *capitulum*, “chapter”). The Greek New Testament was originally written in paragraphs. The earliest “chapter divisions” occur in the *codex Vaticanus* of

the fourth century. Such early divisions were often arbitrary and occurred in far greater number than the present divisions.

The modern chapter divisions are products of the Middle Ages, and were probably made either by Stephen Langdon (Archbishop of Canterbury, d. 1228) or Cardinal Hugo (d. 1263). The first Greek Text to have the modern divisions was the *Stephanus Text* of 1550.

The first English Bible to have the modern chapter and verse divisions was the *Geneva Bible* (1560). See “Verse Divisions” and “Textus Receptus.”

CHIASMOS, CHIASTIC. (Gk: χιάσμος from χιάζειν “to mark with the letter ‘X,’” or a cross). A figure of speech in which two or more items of thought are repeated in an introverted or reverse order, i.e., a reverse parallelism. Commonly, when the first and fourth, second and third items correspond—the rhetorical introversion of the second of two parallel clauses.

CHURCH FATHERS. The Christian writers of the first eight centuries. These include: (1) The Apostolic Fathers (c. 95–150), the Apologists (c. 150–), the Polemicists (c. 175–), etc. John of Damascus (c. 675–754) is considered the last of the Church Fathers. Some who for various reasons did not achieve the status of “Fathers” [*Patres*], due to alleged heresies or inconsistencies of various sorts, were termed “ecclesiastical writers” [*Scriptores Ecclesiastici*].⁵⁵¹

CLASSICAL GREEK. The language of Greek literature from Homer (c. 900 BC) down to c. 330 BC. Classical Greek is

⁵⁵¹ These Church Fathers may be classified in a general order both with respect to time and language: (1) Chronologically, the first great Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325 forms the common focal-point. The Church Fathers are properly classified as Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and Post-Nicene Fathers, according to the time-frame of their lives and writings. (2) Linguistically, the Fathers may be classified as Greek Fathers or Latin Fathers. The first Christian writers wrote in Greek. The first of the great Latin Fathers was Tertullian. The transition from Greek to Latin was completed during these first six centuries. The long line of Latin Fathers extended to Gregory the Great (Pope Gregory I, d. 604) and the Greek to John of Damascus (d. 754).

literary, more intricate in expression, containing about twice as many particles; and differs in some idioms and emphatic constructions from the Κοινή, which was the spoken vernacular of the Greco–Roman era (c. 330 BC to c. 330 AD). Both the LXX and the Greek New Testament are in the Κοινή. See “Koine Greek.”

CLAUSE. (Lat: *clausus*, from *claudere*, “to close”). A group of words containing a subject and a finite verb. The two types are an independent clause and a dependent or subordinate clause.

CODEX. (Lat: *codex*, “wooden tablet,” “book”). Pl. form, “codices.” An ancient manuscript in book form, i.e., leaves or pages bound together, rather than a scroll. This form existed by the late second century and was the common form by the fourth century AD.

CODEX ALEXANDRINUS. An uncial manuscript of the fifth century which contains most of the Old and New Testaments. It is considered very significant for textual critics, although four different hands have written in it, and the text betrays more than one source and style. It is designated by (**A**, Gk “alpha”) in the critical apparatus.

CODEX BEZÆ. An uncial manuscript from the fifth to sixth century presented to the library at Cambridge in 1581 by Theodore Beza. It contains the Gospels, Acts, and a fragment of 3 John. It is designated (**D**) in the critical apparatus.

CODEX EPHRÆMI. A fifth–century uncial manuscript that is a *palimpsest*, or was erased in the twelfth century and re–written with treatises or sermons of St. Ephraem. By a chemical process (by Tischendorf), the original writing was restored. This codex contains parts of the Old and New Testaments. It is designated (**C**) in the critical apparatus.

CODEX LENINGRADENSIS. The Masoretic Text of the Ben Asher [family] or Tiberian tradition, 1008 AD, considered to be of a more pure form than the text edited by Jacob Ben Chayim. The basis of the current BHS, or the third edition of the critical Hebrew OT.

CODEX SINAITICUS. A fourth-century uncial manuscript of the Old and New Testaments in Greek. It was discovered by Constantin von Tischendorf at the monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai (1844). This ms. holds a primary position in the critical text, and is designated (Ⲁ Heb. “aleph”) in the critical apparatus.

CODEX VATICANUS. A fourth-century uncial manuscript found in the Vatican Library. It contains most of the Old and New Testaments. Internal evidence dates it slightly earlier than the Codex Sinaiticus. This ms. is considered most important by the textual critics. It is designated (**B**) in the critical apparatus.

COMMENTARY. (Lat: *commentarius*, “notebook, annotation”). Remarks, annotations, analysis or observations on a text. There are four general types of biblical commentaries: (1) Critical or exegetical, which deal with the text in the original language. (2) Analytical or expository, which analyze the structure of the text and give an exposition of its teaching. (3) Doctrinal, which are usually expository in nature. (4) Devotional, which emphasize the spiritual, moral and practical. Critical, analytical, doctrinal and expository commentaries are better suited for hermeneutical purposes.

CONFESSION OF FAITH. (Lat: *confessio fidei*). A confession of Faith is a concise doctrinal statement that seeks to express in unmistakable terms the teaching of Scripture.

CONFLATION. (Lat: *conflare*, “to bring together”). (1) The bringing together of two passages of Scripture from the Old Testament to emphasize a certain aspect of truth by an inspired New Testament author.⁵⁵² (2) An alleged intentional scribal error in which two passages are combined [conflated] into one. See “Scribal Errors.”

⁵⁵² E.g., in Rom. 9:33, Paul conflates of Isa. 8:14 and 28:16 from the LXX, joined in such a way as to make the “stone of stumbling and rock of offence” clearly and unmistakably Messianic. Note that Peter uses these verses almost the same way, 1 Pet. 2:4, 6–8, 10. Thus Paul shows that Israel was responsible for its unbelief and failure in rejecting its promised Messiah and righteousness by faith.

CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFICANCE. (Lat: *connotatio, connotare*, “to convey”). What a particular word may convey, which may be more than it denotes. Words possess both a denotative and connotative significance. E.g., the word “tree” or “cross” in reference to the death of our Lord conveys much more than a piece or two of wood.

CONTENT CRITICISM. See “New Hermeneutic, The.”

CONTEXT. (Lat: *contextus*, “a joining together,” *contexere*, “to weave together”). The term “context” may refer to that which is immediate or more remote, but always significant:

- (1) The parts of a paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase immediately surrounding a specified word or passage that determines its significance. See “Syntax.”
- (2) The doctrinal, historical and psychological context within a given book of the Bible.
- (3) The literary corpus of a given biblical writer with his peculiarities of vocabulary, grammatical constructions, idioms, style and doctrinal emphases.
- (4) The ultimate context of Scripture itself considered in the context of the “analogy of faith.”

COPULA. An equitive verb or implied verb, a linking verb. Both Gk. and Heb. often imply the copula. See “Nominal Sentence,” “Ellipsis.”

COVENANT. (ME, from OFr. *covenir*, Lat: *convenientia*, “agreement”). A covenant is a binding agreement between the parties involved. The exact significance of the idea of covenant must be determined by its usage in the Old and New Testaments. Not to be confused or used synonymously with “testament.”

The Hebrew term **בְּרִית** (*b^eriyth*), “covenant,” is of uncertain etymology and may have either the connotation of “to cut” or “to fetter or bind.” The Greek term *διαθήκη*, or “testament” was used in both the LXX and the Greek New Testament for **בְּרִית**. This has been termed a “translation–compromise,” as it essentially denoted a disposition one made for himself rather than a binding agreement in the sense of **בְּרִית**. See Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p.

33. It may, however, emphasize the obligation or testament that one person takes upon himself, which would lend strength to the idea of an unconditional covenant. The covenants between God and men were either unilateral, i.e., “unconditional” or dependent upon God alone, or bilateral, i.e., “conditional” or partly dependent upon the faithfulness of men.

The “Old” and “New” “Covenants” should not be confused with the Old and New Testaments. Although often used interchangeably, these are neither identical nor coextensive.

The Old Testament is the first major division of the Scriptures and contains that part of the “Covenant of Grace” that was preparatory for the Messiah or the “Old Covenant,” i.e., the Mosaic institutions.

The New Testament is the second major division of the Scriptures and contains the fulfillment or finality of the “Covenant of Grace” in the Gospel economy, i.e., the “New Covenant” as it centers in the person and redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

COVENANT THEOLOGY. A Theology with its corresponding Hermeneutic that structures the Scriptures from a covenantal perspective rather than Dispensational. It presupposes that God has always dealt with man in a covenant relationship through representation and imputation in either Adam or Christ. See “Dispensationalism.”

CREED. (Lat: *credo*, “I believe”). An abbreviated, concise statement of essential belief, usually much shorter than a “Confession of Faith,” which deals with a large body system of doctrinal truth.

CRITICAL APPARATUS. (Gk: κριτής, “judge,” κριτική, “critic”). A section at the bottom of each page or section of a given Greek text containing certain variant readings, usually in a given order, according to their importance or significance. The *Stephanus Text* of 1550 was the first Critical Greek Testament and contained a critical apparatus. See “Critical Text.”

CRITICAL COMMENTARY. (Gk: κριτής, “judge,” κριτική, “critic”). A biblical commentary that deals with the text of

the original language rather than the English, and is exegetical rather than merely expository or devotional.

CRITICAL TEXT. (Gk: κριτής, “judge,” κριτική, “critic”). The text of the Greek New Testament based upon the principles of textual criticism and edited accordingly. This includes an evaluation of the variant readings found in the ancient manuscripts and the early Church Fathers, etc.

The guiding presupposition of WH was that the oldest mss. have more validity than later mss. This was opposed to the “Majority Text” view that the consensus of the majority of mss. carries more validity.

More modern Textual Criticism is much more balanced in evaluating variant readings. Variants are usually contained in a critical apparatus at the bottom of each page. See “Byzantine Text,” “Critical Apparatus,” “Majority Text,” “Western Text,” “Textus Receptus,” and “Westcott and Hort.”

CURSIVE. (Lat: *cursus*, “flowing, connected”). This refers to minuscule manuscripts which were written in small (case) letters with joined letters rather than printed letters.

DEAD SEA SCROLLS. A large quantity of ancient scrolls of biblical texts and early Jewish writings discovered in the caves at Qumran, an Essene community on the coast of the Dead Sea (c. 1947–). These have had a significant bearing on textual and historical criticism.

DECALOGUE. (Gk: δέκα, “ten,” + λόγος, “word”). The Ten Commandments. The codified epitome of the Moral Law.⁵⁵³ See “Moral Law, The.”

DECLENSION. Lat: *declenatio*, “a bending aside, inflection.” A given system of inflected forms in Greek. Each declension has three qualities: case, gender and number. Most of the

⁵⁵³ They key to understanding the nature, inclusiveness and perpetuity of the Moral Law as epitomized and codified in the Decalogue is to recognize it as examples of case law which embrace much larger and inclusive principles, as amply illustrated in both the Old and New Testaments.

nouns in the first declension are fem. in gender, and end in $-\alpha$ or $-\eta$. There are some masc. nouns, ending in $-\acute{\alpha}$ or $-\acute{\eta}$. It must be noted that all second declension nouns ending in $-\omicron\varsigma$ are masc., but there are first declension nouns ending in $-\omicron\varsigma$ that are fem. The gender of nouns can only be known with certainty by the def. art., and by observation.

DEISM. (Lat: *Deus*, “God”). The belief in the existence of God through reason and apart from Divine special revelation. God allegedly created the universe to run according to natural law and does not interfere or intervene in its affairs.

DEMYTHOLOGIZE. The rationalistic, historico-critical process of investigating the alleged myths of Israel’s religion and early Christianity. This process presupposes on rationalistic grounds that myth is a legitimate part of the evolution of religion. Myths become legends, legends become beliefs, beliefs become doctrines, doctrines become dogma.

Thus it is alleged that behind historical, doctrinal Christianity are ultimately myths which must be explored, evaluated and corrected in light of the modern, critical method. See “Myth,” “Kerygma” and “New Hermeneutic.”

DENOTATIVE SIGNIFICANCE. (Lat: *denotatio*, *denoto*, “to mark out, specify, designate”). What a given word denotes, the specific designation or meaning. Words possess both a denotative and connotative significance.

Some words may connote or convey much more than they denote. E.g., “Cross” denotes a piece of wood, a stake or gibbet with a cross-piece. Connotatively, it may signify the crucifixion, the atonement, and all that the redemptive work of Christ implies.⁵⁵⁴ The same is often true concerning “circumcision,”⁵⁵⁵ “blood,” etc. The physical blood of our Lord is often meant denotatively. Connotatively, however, it

⁵⁵⁴ Cf. Gal. 6:14. Paul did not glory in a piece of wood, but what took place on that “wood,” i.e., the reality of the redemptive work of our Lord as it centered in his atoning sacrifice.

⁵⁵⁵ Cf. Gal. 5:12, where circumcision stands, as it often does, for the whole Mosaic system.

may stand for much more redemptively. Care must be taken to note that the denotative significance must form the basis for the connotative significance. See “Connotative Significance.”

DESTRUCTIVE HIGHER CRITICISM. A radical, rationalistic [historico–critical] approach to an otherwise legitimate science. “Higher Criticism” is Historical Criticism, which by internal and external evidence establishes the authorship and dates for biblical documents. If, however, the presuppositions are antisupernaturalistic, then the methodology and results are inevitably corrupt. See “Textual Criticism,” and “Historical Criticism.”

DIALECTIC METHOD. (Gk: διαλέκτικη, “the art of discussion,” Lat: *dialectica*). (1) The art of logically discussing an issue by questions and answers. (2) Logical argumentation. (3) The logical methodology of Hegelianism, wherein social, economic and religious processes are observable as thesis, antithesis and synthesis, repeatedly in a spiral.

It is in this Hegelian form that dialectic entered into the rationalistic, historico–critical method to explain the development of Christianity. This approach explained early Christianity as developing from Jesus to Paul, then factions between Paul and James, etc.

DIATRIBE. (Gk: διατριβή, “a wearing away”). (1) A bitter, abusive criticism or denunciation. (2) A conversational method of instruction in which hypothetical objections are met and answered. E.g., the method of Paul in Romans with the Jewish objector in mind.

DIDACHE, THE. (Gk: διδαχή, “teaching”). An early second century (c. 120?) document giving a compendium of early Christian teaching. See “Apocryphal Writings.”

DISPENSATIONALISM. A Theology with its corresponding Hermeneutic that views the Scriptures from the perspective of various time–periods or “dispensations.” In each dispensation God reveals a particular purpose to be accomplished to which men respond in either faith or

unbelief. These dispensations are seen as the successive stages of progressive revelation.⁵⁵⁶

Dispensationalism is a hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures which is inclusive in its view of the relationship of the New Testament to the Old, its view of Israel and the Church, and its peculiar view of salvation and the Christian life.

DOCTRINE. (Gk: διδασκαλία, “teaching;” διδασκαλία, “teaching, instruction;” λόγος, “word [of instruction or doctrine]”).

DOCUMENTARY HYPOTHESIS. The hypothesis of the radical, rationalistic historico–critical school which alleged that the Old Testament documents evolved through a process of continual redaction [editing]. This enabled radical, antisupernaturalistic critics to give a “late date” for the books of the Pentateuch, then most of the Old Testament. This enabled them to allege an evolutionary hypothesis for Israel’s religion, discredit prophecy, and disprove the miraculous. Also known as the “J.E.D.P. Theory” and “The Graf–Kuenen–Welhausen Hypothesis.”

DOGMA. (Gk: δοκέω, “to believe, think, seem, have an opinion,” and thus “dogma,” from the rel. ptc. τὰ δεδογμένα, “what seems to be right, a principle, doctrine, decree, official ordinance or edict.” Lat: *dogma*, “doctrine”).

Theologically and historically, “dogma” refers to the official or orthodox doctrines of Christianity or any given religious body. Such dogma are either received unquestionably or are a matter of strong religious conviction by the respective adherents.

EDITOR. See “Redactor,” “Scribe,” and “Textual Criticism.”

⁵⁵⁶ The common “Seven Dispensations” are: (1) “Innocency,” the era of unfallen Adam, (2) “Conscience” and “Human Government.” from Adam’s fall to Noah, (3) “Promise,” from Abraham to Moses), (4) “Law,” from Moses to Christ, (5) “Grace,” from Pentecost to the Rapture, (6) “Millennium” [1,000 year reign of Christ on Earth], and (7) The New Heavens and Earth.

- EISAGOGICS.** (Gk: εἰς, “into,” and ἡγέομαι, “to lead, bring”). The technical theological term for a general introduction to the Bible (General Eisagogics) or to a given book or portion of the Bible (Special Eisagogics).
- EISEGESIS.** (Gk: εἰς, “into,” + ἡγέομαι, “to lead”). An illegitimate process of reading *into* the text one’s own presuppositions, biases, doctrinal convictions, or peculiarities. The opposite of exegesis. See “Exegesis.”
- ELLIPSIS.** (Gk. ἐλλῆψις “a defect;” from ἐλλείειν, “to fall short;” from λείπειν, “to leave”). The omission of a word or words implicit in a sentence, often for dramatic effect. See “Crisis” and “Hiatus.”
- EMPIRICISM.** (Gk: ἐμπίρικός, “experienced.” Lat: *empiricus*). Philosophically, the theory that experience is the only source of knowledge, as opposed to intuition, revelation, etc. Religious empiricism leads to and is characteristic of modern existentialism and irrationalism.
- ENGLISH REVISED VERSION.** (RV, ERV), also known as the “Canterbury Version.” Translated by British scholars and based on the critical text (1881, 1885). See “American Standard Version.”
- ENLIGHTENMENT, THE.** The Age of Reason (c. 1648–1789), very generally characterized by English Deism, French skepticism and especially German Rationalism. The last held sway throughout the nineteenth century. These were the progeny of the secularized Renaissance mentality.
- EPEXEGETICAL.** (Gk: ἐπεξηγεῖσθαι, “to bring out in addition to”). A word or words that explain or elucidate a preceding term.
- ETYMOLOGY.** (Gk: ἐτυμολόγος, “discourse about words;” Lat: *etymologia*). That branch of linguistic science that treats the origin of words.
- EUPHEMISM.** (Gk: εὐφημῖσμος, “to use a good voice”). The figure by which a less distasteful word or expression is substituted for one which is more exact about what is intended.

EXEGESIS. (Gk: ἐξεγήσις, ἐξεγέομαι, “to lead or bring out”). An examination and explanation of the text from the original language. It is possible to have an exposition of a text from the English Bible, but not an exegesis, as the English Bible is only a version of a translation and varies in grammatical and syntactical nuances. See “Eisegesis.”

EXISTENTIALISM. A modern philosophical movement that places emphasis on the subjective or irrational. Neo-orthodoxy in its existentialism sees Divine revelation as personal and subjective rather than propositional and objective. See “Neo-orthodoxy” and “New Hermeneutic, The.”

EXPOSITION. (Gk. ἐκτίθημι, “to put out, expose;” ἔκθεσις, “exposition.” Lat: *exponere*, to put out, hence “to expose, expound.”). Exposition is the opening, explanation and clarification of a given text or passage of Scripture.⁵⁵⁷

FIGURES OF SPEECH. A figure of speech occurs when a word is used in a way and context other than it is ordinarily used. This is also known as the tropical sense.⁵⁵⁸ There are several categories of figures of speech: (1) short figures, such as similes and metaphors; (2) opaque [difficult to understand] figures, such as riddles, fables and enigmatic sayings; (3) extended figures, such as similitudes, parables and allegories; and (4) those figures that are derived from grammatical or rhetorical styles and progress from the very simple to the more complex.

FINITE VERB. A verb which is limited to or by person, number and gender. The finite verb differs from the infinitive, so

⁵⁵⁷ What is the difference between exegesis and exposition? Exegesis deals with the inspired grammar and syntax of the original language; exposition deals with textual or doctrinal analysis in the uninspired grammar of a secondary language.

⁵⁵⁸ “When a word is employed in another other than its primary meaning, or applied to some object different from that to which it is appropriated in common usage, it is called a trope.” “Trope” is derived from the Gk. τρόπος, “to turn or change.” Quotation from Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 243.

named because it is “infinite,” i.e., it expresses the basic root idea and is not limited to person, number or gender as are other verbal forms.

FORM CRITICISM. An approach of some in the rationalistic historico-critical school by which they seek to discover the alleged original oral sources behind the evolution of the biblical text. See “Historical-Critical School” and “Redaction Criticism.”

FORMER PROPHETS. The Hebrew designation of the Old Testament Historical Literature, i.e., Joshua–II Kings.⁵⁵⁹

FOUR-FOLD SENSUS. The Middle Ages or the Scholastic Era was greatly influenced by the allegorical method. John Cassian had added a fourth sense of Scripture to the three held by Origen, i.e., the “mystagogical,” or mystical. During the Medieval Era, these gave to Rome its standard approach to the interpretation of Scripture.

The four senses or meanings are: (1) *Literal* (historical), i.e., the literal meaning established by the text and interpreted in the context of history. (2) *Allegorical* (doctrinal), i.e., the “deeper” or “hidden” meaning beneath the text “drawn out” [sic] “eisegeted” by the interpreter. (3) *Moral* (tropological, from the Gk. τρόπος, “a way of life”), i.e., that which would give moral instruction and direction. (4) *Anagogical* (or

⁵⁵⁹ The Bible student ought to be aware of the arrangement of the Heb. O.T.: (1) The Law (תּוֹרָה, *Torah*; LXX, Πεντετεεύχος, *Penteteuchos*, “The Five Scrolls”), Genesis–Deuteronomy. (2) The Prophets (נְבִיאִים, *N^ebhⁱym*; LXX, Προφήταις, *Prophētais*). The Hebrews divided the Prophets into two groups: (a) the “Former Prophets” (Joshua–2 Kings) and the “Later Prophets” (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea–Malachi). (3) The Writings or “Psalms” (כְּתוּבִים, *Kethubhiym*; LXX, Ψάλμοι, *Psalmoi*). These “Writings” were composed of three parts: (a) “The First Three,” (Psalms, Job and Proverbs). (b) The Megilloth (מְגִלּוֹת, *M^eGillōth*), or “Scrolls” read at various feasts (Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther). (c) The “Final Five” (Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and 1 & 2 Chronicles).

eschatological), i.e., that which pointed to or anticipated the future consummation.⁵⁶⁰

GEMARA. (Heb: גמרא *Gemara*, “supplement, complement”). The Jewish Talmud, the written collection of all oral traditions, commentaries, applications of Judaism is composed of two literary works—the Mishna and the Gemara. The Gemara is an immense body of expositions, commentaries and illustrations on the Mishna (c. 490 A.D).

GENRE. (Lat: *genus, generis*). A type or kind of a thing. In Hermeneutics, one must deal with the literary genre of each kind of writing. Each type of literature possesses its own frame of reference, rules, development and purpose. Poetry, epic songs, prose, law, historical narratives, parables, doctrinal dissertations, diatribes, etc., all must be approached with a recognition of their distinct literary nature.

GENUINENESS. The nature of a composition or document which guarantees its alleged authorship through internal evidence. Not to be confused with authenticity. See “Authenticity.”

GLOSS. (Gk: γλῶσσα, “tongue, language, word;” Lat: *glossa*). (1) A word or words inserted either in the margin or between the lines of a text as an explanatory rendering of a word or words. Such was done in the early centuries for the reasons implied in the note below. (2) In textual criticism, these are termed “scribal glosses,” i.e., words or explanations of scribes which may have [to some given extent] entered into the text. (3) From the tenth to thirteenth century, glosses were added in a separate column as explanatory and interpretative notes to the biblical text. See “Postill.”

GLOSSA ORDINARIA. The *Glossa Ordinaria* [Standard Gloss] was begun by Walafrid Strabo (d. 849), it was completed by Anselm and Ralph of Laon and others, and became the standard work (c. 1135). See “Liber Sententiarum.”

⁵⁶⁰ E.g., medieval Bible scholars commonly took the word “Jerusalem” to have four senses: literal, or the ancient Jewish city; allegorical, or the Christian church; moral, or the faithful soul; anagogical, or the heavenly city.

GNOSTICISM. (Gk: γνῶσις, “knowledge”). A religio-philosophical system which was an admixture of Christianity, Judaism, Greek philosophy and Oriental mysticism. It was the major internal threat to the truth of Christianity in the first three centuries. Marcion the Gnostic wrote against Christianity and was the first radical biblical critic.

GRAMMATICO–HISTORICAL CRITICISM. A form of historical criticism which concentrated on grammatical analysis and variant readings of the text.

GRANVILLE SHARP’S RULE. (Named after Granville Sharp, 1735–1813): When the copulative καί connects two substantives of the same case and both are articular, they refer to two persons or things. When the first substantive is articular and second anarthrous, the second substantive always refers or relates to the same person or thing.

HAGGADA. (*Haggadah*, “story, legend,” אגדה (*‘agadah*) is the Aramaic form of the Heb. הגדה (*haggadah*), from נגד (*nagad*), “to be manifest, show, tell.”). Rabbinic homiletical [non–exegetical] interpretations of the “Oral Law” and traditions of an edifying, non–binding nature, spanning all of the Jewish Scriptures. Interpretation was divided into the Halakha (exegetical interpretations of a legal nature, which were strictly binding and confined to the Law of Moses) and the Haggadah. See “Halakha.”

HAGIOGRAPHIA. (Gk: ἁγιόγραφα, lit: “Holy Writings”). (1) The Kethubhim, or third division of the Hebrew Scriptures. (2) Medieval writings concerning the saints and their lives. See “Kethubhim.”

HALAKHA. (*Halakha*, “decision, norm, systemized legalized precept,” from הלכה, “to walk”). Rabbinic exegetical interpretations of the Oral Law and traditions of a legal nature, which were strictly binding and confined to the Law of Moses. See “Haggadah.”

HAPAX LEGOMENON. (Gk: ἄπαξ λεγόμενον, “written one time”). Words occurring only once in the Greek New Testament. There are a total of 1,956 different *hapax legomena* in the Greek New Testament.

HEBRAISM. (Also known as a “Semitism”). A Semitic or Hebrew word, idiom, or expression brought into the Greek language of the New Testament.⁵⁶¹

HENDIADYS. (Gk: ἐνδίαδυσ, “one by means of two”). A figure of speech in which two words are employed but only one thing or idea is intended. E.g., Acts 1:25; 3:14.

HERMENEUTICAL SPIRAL. A spiral or circle that begins with the interpreter’s presuppositions and preunderstanding of the text, progresses to his new understanding after study. This spiral is progressive with additional studies.

HERMENEUTICS. (Gk: ἐρμηνεύτικος from ἐρμηνεύειν, “to interpret,” from Hermes, the Greek god who was the spokesman for the other gods). The science and art of interpretation and the culmination of Exegetical Theology.

HIGHER CRITICISM. Historical Criticism, which is also termed “higher” criticism to distinguish it from textual or “lower” criticism, which is the primary science. Higher Criticism studies the text established by textual criticism and through internal and external evidence establishes the authorship, date, purpose and destination of a given book. See “Destructive Higher Criticism,” “Textual Criticism” and “Historical Criticism.”

HISTORIA SCHOLASTICA. The first coherent biblical commentary, was compiled from the Glosses and other materials by Peter Comestor, Chancellor of Notre Dame (c. 1175), and took its place beside the *Glossa Ordinaria*.

HISTORICAL CRITICISM. That department of Exegetical Theology which deals with questions of authorship, date of

⁵⁶¹ There are several possible sources for Hebraisms: (1) The influence of the Septuagint (LXX), or Greek Old Testament, which was the common version of the Scriptures in the first century AD (2) All the writers of the New Testament, with the exception of Luke, were of Hebrew nationality and culture. Certain idioms and terms would be easily transferred in the thought process. (3) Several of the writers of the New Testament were writing specifically to Jewish Christians, and those writing to Christians were also writing to groups composed of both Jewish and Gentile Christians. See “Aramism,” “Latinism” and “Semitism.”

composition, destination, purpose, etc., after the text itself has been adequately established.

Because of the radical presuppositions of liberal scholarship, this discipline is often referred to as “radical,” or “Destructive Higher Criticism.” See “Textual Criticism,” “Higher Criticism” and “Destructive Higher Criticism.”

HISTORICO–GRAMMATICAL EXEGESIS. An interpretive approach to Scripture that is consistent with the facts of history and the rules of grammar. It rests on the *usus loquendi*. It seeks no “deeper, hidden, esoteric meaning” beneath or beyond the literal meaning of the text.

This approach holds that God gave his Word in an understandable form and takes into account that figures of speech, idioms and poetic expressions are included in the literal meaning of language.

This approach stands opposed to allegorical exegesis or the “spiritualizing” of the text. See “*Usus Loquendi*,” “Alexandrian Exegesis” and “Allegorical Exegesis.”

HISTORICAL–CRITICAL METHOD. A radical, rationalistic approach to Scripture that confines Israel’s religion to history and presupposes a closed or antisupernaturalistic interpretation. Also called “Historicism.”

HISTORICISM. Within the context of rationalistic biblical criticism, the view that religion evolved within the confines of Israel’s tribal and national history. An antisupernaturalistic view. See “Historical–Critical Method.”

“HISTORY OF RELIGIONS” SCHOOL. A type of rationalistic historical criticism which saw Christianity as a syncretic system of Phariseeism and Diasporic Judaism with tinges of Oriental mysticism, dualism, and Gnosticism.

HOMILETICS. (Gk: ὁμιλήτικος, “homily, pertaining to conversation”). The theory of preaching and the preparation and delivery of sermons.

HOMOLOGOUMENA. (Gk: ὁμολογοῦμενα, “saying the same thing, confessed, undisputed”). The Old Testament *Homologoumena* contained about thirty–four books. The

New Testament *Homologoumena* contained about twenty books: the four Gospels, Acts, the Epistles of Paul, 1 Peter and 1 John. These books were accepted as Scripture and never doubted or challenged. See “Canon.”

HYPERBATON. (Gk: ὑπέρβατον, “a stepping over, transposition”). A figure of speech in which a word or words are put out of their natural and grammatical order.

HYPERBOLE. (Gk: ὑπερβολή, from ὑπέρ, “over” + βάλλειν, “to throw,” hence, “excess, exaggerate”). A figure of speech which uses exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis rather than deception.

IDIOM. (Gk. ἴδιος “peculiarity,” ἰδιωματικός, “peculiar characteristic”). (1) The language or dialect of a people or region. (2) The peculiar way in which the words of a particular language are joined together to express thought. Every language has its “idioms.”

ILLUMINATION. (ME, OFr., *illumination*, Lat: *illuminatio*, “enlightenment, instruction”). The enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit giving spiritual perception to the believer, enabling him to understand (1 Cor. 2:7–16) and feed upon the riches of the Divine Word.

This spiritual illumination is neither an infallible inspiration, nor is it static, but increases in connection with sanctified study, experience and skill (Eph. 1:15–20; 2 Pet. 3:18), or may decrease if there is unconfessed, continual sin or a turning away from revealed truth (Heb. 5:11–14).

INERRANCY. (Lat: *inerrans*, “not wandering, fixed”). The stand that the Scriptures as the very Word of God inscripturated are without error in salvation, historical and scientific matters. See “Salvific Inerrancy.”

INFALLIBLE. (Lat: *infallibilis*, “Incapable of error, without mistake”). The Divine nature of the Scripture necessitates its truthfulness in all matters. Further, whatever Scripture predicts will be infallibly fulfilled according to the eternal purpose of God.

INFLECTION. (Lat: *inflexio*, “a turning, bending or curving”). A series of prefixes and suffixes which indicate certain grammatical relationships, e.g., tense, voice, mood, person, number, case, and gender.

INSPIRATION. (Gk: θεόπνευστος, “God-breathed;” Lat: *inspirare*, “to breathe in”). The biblical doctrine is that of *verbal, plenary inspiration*: The Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures is both *verbal* (extending to the very words, grammatical intricacies and syntax, etc.) and *plenary* (fully, equally inspired throughout).⁵⁶²

INTERPRETATION. See “Hermeneutics.”

IRONY. (Gk: εἰρωνεία, “a dissembling, disguise, concealment,” Lat: *ironia*). A figure of speech in which the intended meaning is the opposite of that which is expressed. E.g., Matt. 26:45; Lk. 13:32–33.

JEDP HYPOTHESIS. This hypothesis asserted that the various previous discernable documents of the Pentateuch were the “Jahwist” sections, the “Elohistic” sections, the “Deuteronomistic Code” and the “Priestly Document.”⁵⁶³ See “Destructive Higher Criticism,” “Source Criticism” and “Documentary Hypothesis.”

⁵⁶² Inspiration...is the inbreathing of God into men, thus qualifying them to receive and communicate Divine truth...God speaking through the Holy Spirit through men to men. It is the work of God through the Spirit in men, enabling them to receive and give forth Divine truth without error. It makes the speaker and writer infallible in the communication of this truth, whether this truth was previously known or not. It causes the message to go beyond human power and become Divinely authoritative. H. S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, p. 17.

⁵⁶³ Later documentary hypotheses posited a “Hexateuch,” adding the Book of Joshua and such alleged documents as: “J= Jahwistic document, E= Elohistic document, JE= J and E combined, D= Deuteronomistic Code, JED= J, E, and D combined, P= Priestly document), Pⁿ= the Code of Holiness, P^g= the main work of P, J^s, E^s, etc.= the schools of J, E, etc., R= Reviser, at whatever period.” F. H. Woods, “Hexateuch,” James Hastings, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899, II, p. 363.

JERUSALEM BIBLE. (Jer). A Roman Catholic version of the Bible in English, translated by Dominican scholars (1961).

KABBALISM. Also spelled “Cabbalism.” (Heb. קבלה, *Qabbalah*, “received”). An esoteric system of Jewish philosophy or theosophy and numerology⁵⁶⁴ that pretended to have received ancient wisdom or secret traditions from the Ancient Egyptians through Moses.

Jewish Kabbalism became much of the basis for the Scottish Rite of Free Masonry, which considers the Bible to be a book of errors for a rude and ignorant people not fitted for the finality of truth. The wisdom and truth of the ancients, they claim, was passed along through Kabbalism, Eastern mysticism, etc.⁵⁶⁵

KANTIAN PHILOSOPHY. The Transcendental Idealism of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). Kant divided all things into the *phenomena*, or what existed in the realm of sense perception, and the *noumena*, or what could not be perceived. His philosophy affected Christianity in two ways:

- (1) Ethics was separated from its biblical basis in God’s Law–Word. Hence, Kant posited a morality which existed for its own sake.
- (2) Religion, faith and revelation were relegated to the realm of the *noumena*, leaving only subjective experience and feeling.

This would prepare the way for later critics to separate history from Scripture, Scripture from religion, and lead inevitably into modern existentialism and irrationalism.

KARAITES. (Heb. בן מִכְרָא *bēn mikra*, “the Sons of Reading”). “They were so called because their fundamental principle was to regard Scripture as their sole authority in matters of

⁵⁶⁴ Much of the “biblical” pseudo–numerology derived from Kabbalism.

⁵⁶⁵ See Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, pp. 11, 224–225, etc.

faith.”).⁵⁶⁶ The Karaites, as opposed to the Kabbalists, were literalists, and some schools of rabbinic exegesis taught such principles as the necessity of interpreting according to the context, the comparison of Scripture with Scripture and a logical principle of reasoning from the text by deduction or implication.

KERYGMA. (Gk: κηρύγμα, from κηρύσσω, “to preach, declare,” and so, “that which is preached”). A term popularized and characterized by Neo-orthodoxy and the “New Hermeneutic” and religious existentialism of Rudolf Bultmann. The gospel message was essentially a proclamation or *kerygma* which must be liberated from the layers of myth surrounding it. See “Demythologize.”

KETHIBH. “What is written.” The Hebrew Masoretic Text in certain instances was read differently than it was written, usually through euphemism or superstitious reverence. See “Qere.”⁵⁶⁷

KING JAMES VERSION. (KJV). The “Authorized Version” (AV) of the English Bible (1611). This version was authorized by King James I of England as a new version of previous English Bibles or New Testaments: Tyndale’s New Testament (1526), Coverdale’s Bible (1535), Matthew’s Bible (1537) and The Bishops’ Bible (1568).

The translators and revisers also drew from German versions and compared the existing versions with the original languages. The New Testament was partly based on the *Stephanus Text* of 1550, and also on the later editions of

⁵⁶⁶ Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Hermeneutics.*, p. 17.

⁵⁶⁷ The Jews had marginal readings rather than change the text, distinguishing between the *Qere* [what is read] and the *Kethibh* [what is written], if there were any question. The *Qere* and *Kethibh* included the Divine Name, as the Jews out of a misplaced reverence and in fear of taking God’s name in vain, did not pronounce the Divine Name, *Yahweh*, but always read in its place, “*Adonai*.” Note that when the consonants of יהוה [“*The Tetragrammaton*,” or Four Letters] were combined with the vowel pointings of אֲדֹנָי for *Qere*, the result is *Yehowah*, or “Jehovah.”

Beza's Greek testament. See "Authorized Version" and "Textus Receptus."

KOINE GREEK. (Gk: Κοινή, "common"). The common language of the New Testament writers, and of the Greek-speaking peoples from c. 330 BC to c. 330 AD. The language of the NT is more in the style of the vernacular (common spoken language) than the literary Κοινή of that era. There are some alleged influences from the LXX and the Hebraistic mentality of the various writers. See "Classical Greek."

Κ. Τ. Λ. (An abbreviation for καὶ τὸν λοιπὸν, lit: "and the rest or remaining"). This abbreviation is roughly the equivalent of "etc.," referring to the remainder of the Greek text that is not printed in a given sentence in a critical commentary.

LATIN VULGATE. (vg). (Lat: *vulgare*, "to disseminate"). A Latin version of the Bible translated by Jerome (c. 345–419). See "Old Latin."

LATINISM. A Latin word, idiom or expression occurring in the Greek New Testament. These occur mostly in proper names, military, political, and legal terms; and in some cases, grammatical variations from the Greek idiom. See "Aramism," "Hebraism" and "Semitism."

LECTIONARY. (lect). (Lat: *lectionarium*, from *Legere*, "to read"). A liturgical book containing the list of lessons or portions of Scripture appointed to be read at worship (pericopes). Lectionaries date from the third century AD, and are significant for textual criticism. Also called *synaxaria* (Gk: συναξάριον, an account of the life of a saint). See "Menologion."

LEXICAL MEANING. (Gk: λεξιχόν, neut., from λέξις, "speech, diction," from λέγειν, "to speak"). Used for dictionaries of ancient languages. The lexical meaning is the dictionary or basic meaning. See "Syntactical Meaning."

LEXICAL MORPHEME. Refers to the root word which gives the essential concept, which is then expanded and expressed either verbally or nominally. A "morpheme" (Gk: μορφή,

“form”) is the smallest meaningful unit or form of a language.

LIBER SENTENTIARUM, THE. (Lat: “Book of Sentences”) of Peter Lombard, extracted from his *Magna Glosatura* or “Great Gloss,” was a supplement to and an attempt to theologially systematize the *Glossa Ordinaria*. This work became the standard theological textbook for the late Medieval Era. See “Glossa Ordinaria.”

LIBERAL. The popular nineteenth century theological designation of those who held to the rationalistic, historico-critical theories of biblical interpretation. Later called “Modernists.”

LITERAL. “Literal” stands for the *usus loquendi* as opposed to: (1) the spiritualization of the text, and (2) a gross and stilted “literalism” which would deny the existence and connotative nature of figurative language.

The term itself is capable of several connotations: (1) “Literal” in one sense is opposed to figurative, if one means the connotative use of language in figures of speech. (2) It includes the figurative, if by “literal” one means the *usus loquendi*, or common, ordinary usage of words, terms and figures of speech. (3) “Literal” is opposed to “spiritual,” if by “spiritual” one means seeking a deeper, hidden, esoteric [allegorical] meaning beneath the literal meaning of the text.

LITERALISM. A strict, mechanical approach to the text which may not take into account figures of speech, figurative language or the cultural setting.

LITOTES. (Gk: λιτότης). A figure of speech in which an affirmative is expressed by the negation of the contrary. See “Meiosis.”

LOWER CRITICISM. The same as Textual Criticism, as it precedes “Higher” or “Historical Criticism.”

LXX. The Septuagint, or Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, translated at Alexandria, Egypt (c. 260–240 BC). Its designation is “LXX,” meaning “seventy,” deriving from Jewish tradition. There are evident Hellenistic influences as well as the inclusion of the Apocryphal books. This became

the “Bible” of the common people in Jewish world, as they spoke either Aramaic or Κοινή Greek as their common tongue.

MAJORITY TEXT. This represents a text which is based on the consensus of the majority of Greek mss., as opposed to the WH Critical Text, which was based on the presupposition that the oldest mss. have more validity. Contemporary Textual Criticism has backed away from the WH theory to some extent. See “Byzantine Text,” “Caesarean Text,” “Critical Text,” “Western Text,” and “Textus Receptus.”

MAJUSCULE. (Lat: *majuscula*, “somewhat larger, capital”). A manuscript written in capital letters. Usually considered as synonymous with “uncial.” The transition from uncial to minuscule mss. began in the seventh century AD. See “Uncial” and “Minuscule.”

MANUSCRIPT. (Lat: *manuscriptus*, “written by hand”). This refers to all hand-written documents before the advent of printing in the fifteenth century. *ms.*, abbr. of “manuscript”, *mss.*, pl. form.

MASORETIC TEXT. (MT). The standardized Hebrew Old Testament Text. Hebrew was originally written without vowels. The *Massorah* (c. 500–1000 AD) were scribes who inserted the various vowel-pointings in the Hebrew text.

MEIOSIS. (Gk: μείωσις, “a lessening, or diminution;” Lat: *diminutio, extenuatio*). A figure of speech in which one thing is diminished in order to increase another. See “Litotes.”

MENOLOGION. (Gk: μήνη, “month” + λόγος, “word”). A liturgical book of the Greek Church containing special prayers and hymns for [monthly] festival days and biographies of various saints and martyrs.

These *menologia* were first written very early in the history of the Greek Christians of the first centuries, and are significant for textual criticism, as they contain passages of Scripture from very early Greek texts. See “Lectionary.”

METAPHOR. (Gk: μεταφέρειν. Lat: *metaphora*, “to transfer”). A figure of speech of implied comparison in which a name or

description is transferred to some object to which it is not properly applicable. E.g., Speaking of Herod, our Lord said, “Go ye and tell that fox...” (Lk. 13:32). See “Simile.”

METONYMY. (Gk: μετωνυμία. Lat: *metonymia*, “a change of name”). A figure of speech in which the name of one thing is substituted for that of another which is associated or suggested by it. E.g., “Caesar” as a substitute for the State or government power. (Matt. 22:21).

MIDRASH. An exegesis, interpretation, and commentary on and application of the Pentateuch and Five Rolls [MeGilloth]. The two great divisions of Jewish literature were the *Midrash* and the *Targumim*.

MINUSCULE. (Lat: *minuscule*, “rather less, minus”). A manuscript written in small letters, either cursive or in printed letters. The transition from uncial to minuscule mss. began in the seventh century AD. See “Cursive,” “Majuscule,” and “Uncial.”

MISHNA. (משנה, rendered by the Early Church Fathers as δευτέρωσις, “to repeat,” later, to be equivalent to the teaching or learning of the Oral Law). The *Mishna*, an elucidation of the fundamental text of the Mosaic Law with an immense body of casuistry, related and unrelated cases, and applications. (c. 200 A.D).

Post-Christian Rabbinic exegesis began with Talmudic Judaism (c. 200– AD). The Jewish Talmud [the written collection of all oral traditions, commentaries, applications, etc.] is in turn, composed of two literary works—the Mishna and the Gemara.

MODERN EXEGESIS. The modern era (c. 1800–1960) has been dominated by two opposing tendencies: (1) Traditional, conservative biblical scholarship which presupposes the inspiration, infallibility and authority of the Scriptures, and (2) The historico-critical method with its rationalistic presuppositions and antisupernaturalism.

MORAL LAW, THE. (1) The “Moral Law” is comprised of all the moral commands or mandates of Scripture. It was

epitomized and codified in the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, and also in the “Two Great Commandments” of love to God and neighbor. (2) The Decalogue as distinct from the Ceremonial Law and Civil Law of Israel.

MORPHEME. See “Morphology.”

MORPHOLOGY. (Gk: μορφή, “form,”+ λόγος, “study of”). The branch of linguistics that deals with the internal structure and forms of words. Morphology and syntax together form a basic unit of grammatical study. The study and classification of morphemes [smallest meaningful unit or form in a language].

MYSTICISM. (ME, *mistik*, Lat: *mysticus*, Gk: μύστικός, “belonging to secret rites, mysterious”). The idea that communion with God is possible through meditation or contemplation and love without the medium of human reason; religious irrationalism, subjectivism and emotionalism. See “Bibliomancy.”

MYTH. (Gk: μύθος, “word, speech, story, legend”). Some rationalistic critics posit myth as a legitimate category of biblical study, holding that myth became legend, and legend eventually became religious doctrines and rites. This principle led to and influenced the Documentary Hypothesis of the Pentateuch and Form Criticism.

NARRATIVE CRITICISM. A literary approach to Scripture which emphasizes the narrative genre (plot, theme, characters, etc.), and focuses on the aesthetic value of Scripture rather than theological or moral value.

If approached with rationalistic presuppositions which assumes either an evolutionary process [Form Criticism], redaction [editing], or myth, the Scripture is undermined by assuming that the real author must be distinguished from the implied author, who must also be distinguished from the narrator, etc. The same may be done with the readers or implied readers, etc.

NEOLOGY. A nineteenth century movement which, affected by Pietism and Romanticism, departed from the extremes of earlier English Deism. It divorced exegesis from dogmatics and promoted the theories of Accomodation and Mythology to Scripture. See “Liberalism.”

NEO-ORTHODOXY. A twentieth century movement which synthesized some aspects of Reformed tradition with contemporary cultural and religious developments. The outstanding feature was its religious existentialism. According to this view, the Scriptures are *not* the Word of God, but rather *contain* the Word of God, which is encountered in a personal, subjective experience. Also called “Crisis Theology.”

NEO-SCHOLASTIC EXEGESIS. The exegesis of the Post-Reformation era which interpreted the Scriptures on the basis and in the context of the creeds and confessions. This era saw a championing of the proof text method.

NESTLE-ALAND. (NA27). The latest Critical Text of the Greek New Testament, edited by Kurt Aland, et. al., Twenty-Seventh Edition (1983). See “Critical Text” and “Wescott and Hort.”

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE. (NASB). A revision (1963) of the *American Standard Version* of 1901.

NEW ENGLISH BIBLE. (NEB). A new translation of the Bible into English. Partly in reaction to the publication of the RSV, and its departures from the English Bible tradition, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland authorized a completely new translation (1961).

“NEW HERMENEUTIC, THE” The existential hermeneutical approach of Rudolf Bultmann which derived from earlier Neo-orthodoxy. It included the “demythologization” of Scripture.

For Bultmann, the gospel message was essentially a proclamation or *kerygma* which must be liberated from the layers of myth surrounding it. This “demythologization” is to rid the text of foreign materials (myth, errors, inconsistencies,

etc.) and is termed “Content Criticism.” This search for the religious intention of myth led Bultmann to existentialism. This “New Hermeneutic” holds that language itself is interpretation. The Word itself is thus hermeneutical and existential.

Those who hold to this “New Hermeneutic” write of a “word–happening” or “speech–event” which communicates its own unique truth in light of the hearer’s own experience. See “Existentialism,” “Neo–orthodoxy” and “Kerygma.”

NEW TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM. N. T. Textual Criticism is based on the following sources: (1) The 240 Uncial mss. (3rd–6th centuries), (2) 2,646 Minuscule mss. (7th–15th centuries), (3) The 70 Papyri fragments (2nd–3rd centuries), (4) 1997 Greek Lectionaries [pericopes], (5) 9,000 copies of early translations and versions, including the Ancient Syriac, Old Syriac, The Diatessaron of Tatian (c. 170 AD), Peshito (c. 600), The Philoxenian–Harklean Syriac (508 AD), The Palestinian Syriac (c. 600 AD), The Old Latin Version (c. 200 AD), The Latin Vulgate (c. 403 AD), The Ancient Coptic: The Sahidic Version (c. 200 AD) and The Bohairic Version. (6) The writings of the early Church Fathers.

NOMINALISM. The religious–philosophical [epistemological] approach of William of Ockham (1285–1347) and later Medieval scholasticism which gave precedence to the Scriptures and faith over human reason, as opposed to the earlier Realism of Thomas Aquinas. This movement prepared the way for the later Reformation. See “Realism.”

OLD LATIN. (Lat). The oldest version of the Bible in the Latin language (prior to 200 A.D). See “Latin Vulgate.”

OLD SYRIAC. (syr). An early version of the Bible in the Syrian language (c. 175–225 AD). The extant copies date from the fourth and fifth centuries. This is a valuable source for textual reconstruction. See “Peshitta.”

OLD TESTAMENT TEXTUAL CRITICISM. The textual criticism of the O. T. makes use of various texts and ancient

versions. The major textual sources for the biblical criticism of the O. T., considered on a descending scale from the more authoritative to the lesser are:

- (1) The Masoretic Text.
- (2) The Samaritan Pentateuch, whose source reaches back to the Restoration Era (c. 497 BC).
- (3) The Septuagint, or Greek O.T., translated by Alexandrian Jews (c. 246 BC).
- (4) The Greek O.T. of Aquila (c. 128 AD), which was a new translation from the Hebrew, and more literal than the LXX.
- (5) The Greek translation of Symmachus, an Ebionite, from the Hebrew (early third century AD).
- (6) The version of Theodotion, an Ebionite (?) from the Hebrew and LXX (c. 182 AD).
- (7) The Ancient Syriac (later termed the *Peshitto*, or “simple”).
- (8) The Targumim, or Chaldee [Aramaic] paraphrases of the Hebrew (c. 500 BC–).
- (9) The Latin Vulgate of Jerome (c. 406 AD).
- (10) The Old Latin Version from the LXX (?) (c. third century?). These are followed in order by the Sahidic [northern Egyptian, or Thebaic], Ethiopic, Arabic and Armenian Versions.

ORAL LAW. When Moses received the Divine Law on Mt. Sinai, according to Jewish Rabbinical tradition, he also received the “Oral Law.” Thus, there was a written Law and an Oral Law. The latter became the basis for the large corpus of Jewish traditions and casuistry. This alleged “Oral Law” was eventually codified in the Talmud (c. 200 AD–). See “Talmud,” “Mishna” and “Gemara.”

OSTRACA. (Gk: ὄστρακον, “baked clay”). Clay tablets or pieces of potsherd used for writing. With the papyri, these have provided a great insight into the *usus loquendi* of the *Koine*. See “Papyri.”

PALÆOGRAPHY. (Gk: παλαιός “old,” and γραφή, “writing;” Lat: *palaeographia*, from *palaeo-*, “ancient,” and γραφή). The study of ancient writing, manuscripts, inscriptions, writing materials, etc., with a view to their dating and deciphering.

PALIMPSEST. (Gk: παλίμψηστος, “scraped again;” Lat: *palimpsestus*). A manuscript which has been erased and used as a rescriptus [written over]. See “Rescriptus” and “Codex Ephraemi.”

PALESTINIAN EXEGESIS. The distinctive approach of a literalist school in Syrian Antioch in the fourth–fifth centuries. See “Antiochene Exegesis.”

PAPYRI. (Lat: *papyrus*, paper). (1) An ancient paper made from the papyrus reed. (2) The early copies of the Scripture on papyrus scrolls. (3) The letters, business documents, etc., of the papyri which have preserved the *usus loquendi* of the Κοινή and have proven to be of great value in the study of the Greek New Testament. See “Ostraca.”

PARABLE. (Gk: παραβολή, “a placing beside;” Lat: *parabola*, “comparison”). A figure of speech which is a continued simile or comparison. E.g., Matt. 13:1–34. See “Simile.”

PARALLEL PASSAGES. Passages of Scripture which are parallel in either narrative or doctrinal content, occurring in different biblical books. These can be compared and harmonized for additional light or understanding. E.g., the parallel historical, narrative, parabolic, and didactic passages in the different Gospel accounts.

PARALLELISM. Hebrew poetry utilizes various parallelisms of thought in contrast to English poetry, which traditionally uses assonance or rhyme.

PARSE. (Lat: *pars*, “a part”). To analyze a word grammatically. To parse a *verb*, the following characteristics are noted: tense, voice, mood, person, and number. To parse a *participle*, the case and gender are also noted. *Substantives* (nouns and adjectives) have gender, case and number. See “Conjugation” and “Declension.”

PATRISTIC EXEGESIS. The exegesis and hermeneutic of the era of the Church Fathers, largely characterized by the allegorical method. See “Allegorical Exegesis” and “Alexandrian Exegesis.”

PENTATEUCH. (Gk: πεντατεύχος, πέντε, “five,” and τεύχος, “implement, vessel, case for carrying papyrus scrolls,” and so “books” or “scrolls”). The five books of Moses, or “The Book of the Law,” i.e., Genesis–Deuteronomy.

PERIPHRAISIS. (Gk: περίφρασις, from περί, “around, about,” and φράζειν, “to speak”). Hence, a circumlocution, a round–about way of expressing something).

A periphrastic construction is used to further emphasize a certain type of action. It usually consists of a verb denoting a state of being accompanied by a participle, thus emphasizing a given type of action. The tenses used in the *verb* are the present, imperfect, and future; and in the *participle*, the present, aorist (a *hapax legomenon*, Lk. 23:19), perfect, and pluperfect.

PERSPECUITY OF SCRIPTURE. See “Analogy of Faith.”

PESHITTA. (syr^p). (Syr: “Simple”). Also called the Peshitta. A standardized Syrian text that dates from the early fifth century, based on earlier texts (c. 120). See “Old Syriac.”

PHILOLOGY. (Gk: φιλολογία, “fond of speech;” Lat: *philologia*). The science of words and their etymology, or linguistics.

PLEONASM, PLEONASTIC. (Gk: πλεονάζειν, “to be superfluous.” Lat: *pleonasmus*, “superfluous”). To be redundant, i.e., to use more words than necessary. Such may be done for emphasis.

PIETISM. A German post–Reformation movement which began as a reaction to the neo–Scholasticism of the Post–Reformation Era. Early Pietism was characterized by both sound exegesis and biblical devotion. Later Pietism became increasingly devotional and subjective without the restraints of sound biblical study.

PLENARY INSPIRATION. See “Inspiration.”

POLYGLOT. (Gk: πολύς, “many,” and γλώσσα, “tongue,” “language”). A volume of the Scriptures in several languages, usually arranged in parallel columns.

POSTILL. (Latin: *postilla*, “After these”). In the thirteenth century the scriptural Gloss gave way to the *Postill*, a literal commentary interwoven with the scriptural text. Glosses were thereafter limited to marginal notes. See “Gloss” and “Glossa Ordinaria.”

POSTILLA. (Latin: *postilla*, “After these”), i.e., *Postilla perpetuae, seu brevia commentaria in universa Biblia*, or *Continual Comments, or Brief Annotations on the whole Bible* by Nicholas of Lyra (c. 1265–1349), which gave precedence to the literal interpretation.

POSTMODERNISM. A movement dating from the 1960s which is characterized in general by the deconstruction and reconstruction of language, relativism [denial of moral absolutes], pluralism and existentialism.

Postmodern interpretation approaches the Scriptures in such a way as to call into question such things as ethical, environmental, racial, feministic and moral issues rather than traditional textual or doctrinal matters.

POST–REFORMATION EXEGESIS. An exegesis and hermeneutic based on and governed by the creeds and confessions of the Reformation, and majoring on a stilted, proof text method. See “Neo–Scholastic Exegesis.”

PRESUPPOSITION. An assumption. A presupposition is a reasoned or consciously held assumption; a prejudice is usually an ignorant or unconsciously held presupposition. All men by nature, as created in the image of God, are presuppositionalists.

PRETERIST. (ME, MFr., Lat: *praeteritus*, “gone by,” referring to the past). (1) The view that all, most or much of prophecy is past or historical. (2) The view that the canon of Scripture was complete before 70 AD, thus giving an early date for the Johannine writings (Gospel, Epistles and Revelation), and placing John’s exile during the Neronian persecution.

PROCESS THEOLOGY. (ME, OFr., Lat: *processus, procedo*, “go forward, advance”). The philosophico–theological view that reality is a process of becoming, not a static, Divinely created, established and ordered universe. Theologically, this is known as process theism, panentheism, or the advancement of God Himself in experience and knowledge.

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION. The view that Divine, inscripturated special revelation advances or progresses from the Old Covenant [promise] to the New [fulfillment]; that the Old Testament was largely preparatory to and anticipatory of the New Testament; and that the New Testament forms the finality of Divine revelation in the Person and work of Christ and gospel truth.

This view stands opposed to Dispensationalism and also acts as a corrective principle to a Covenant Theology which would view the New Testament as a mere continuation of the Old.

PROOF TEXT. A single text of Scripture stated as proof of a given doctrine or teaching. While such may be legitimate due to the analogy of faith and the non–contradictory nature of Scripture as the very Word of God, the proof text method fails to consider the context. The tendency is to flatten Divine revelation and fail to comprehend the principle of its progressive nature.

PROPHECY. (Gk: προφητεία, either “a forth–telling” [πρόφημι, “declare, preach”] or “a foretelling,” i.e., “prediction”). Prophecy is a Divine, infallible prediction concerning the future from the historical perspective of the speaker [prophet]. Prophecy originated with God, and was communicated to men either directly and audibly or through the inspiration of the Spirit.

PROTASIS. The “if” clause of a conditional sentence. See “Apodosis.”

PROVERB. (Gk: παροιμία, “beside a way,” i.e., a “wayside saying.” Lat: *proverbium*). A short, pithy, or sententious statement. E.g., Lk. 4:23; Jn. 1:46; 2 Pet. 2:22.

PSEUDEPIGRAPHICAL WRITINGS. (Gk: ψευδεπίγραφα, from ψευδο-, “false,” and ἐπιγραφείν, “to inscribe”). The New Testament *Pseudepigrapha* numbered in the hundreds. These were rejected as forgeries and non-authoritative, their contents often contradicting Scripture or containing fantasies.

Among these works were false gospels forged in the names of some of the Apostles, and heretical works intended to pervert Christianity. Some of these works may be classified as either apocryphal or pseudepigraphical. See “Canon,” “Apocryphal Writings.”

QERE. “What is read.” The Hebrew Masoretic Text at certain points was read differently than it was written, either from the desire to euphemize certain words or substitute others because of superstitious reverence.

QU’RAN. (or “Koran”). The “holy” book of Islam, written by Mohammed (570–632 AD). It contains 114 chapters [*surās*]. It includes historical, doctrinal, legal, exhortative and eschatological teachings. It teaches a radical monotheism,⁵⁶⁸ and is anti-Christian and anti-Jewish. It proscribes punishment, mutilation and death for Christians and Jews who do not acknowledge Mohammed.

Although Jesus is declared a prophet, he is not equal to Mohammed, and his divinity is absolutely denied. The Qu’ran was alleged revealed to Mohammed by the Angel Gabriel, and is supposedly preserved on a tablet in heaven. It is evident that Mohammed had some knowledge of the Old and New Testaments and also of both Judaism and Christianity.

Although the Qu’ran contains numerous grammatical inconsistencies and errors, its inspiration has never been denied and any critical analysis or translation is considered blasphemous.

⁵⁶⁸ “Allah” alone is God, denying any trinitarian concept of God in three Persons. Some confusion results from the name “Allah,” or “Most High,” as this is also the Arabic name for the true God of the Bible and Christianity.

RABBINIC EXEGESIS. The exegesis and hermeneutic of Judean and Babylonian Rabbinism as distinct from Diasporic Judaism,⁵⁶⁹ which was characterized by Alexandrian Exegesis.

RATIONAL. (ME, *racional*; Lat: *ratio*, “reckoning, reason, plan:” *rationalis*, “based on or derived from reason”). Rational refers to the right use of reason. It stands opposed to irrational, emotional or subjective experience. Note: Rational should not be confused with Rationalism.

RATIONALISM. (1) The idea that reason alone is the only authority for determining opinion or course of action. (2) Intellectualism. (3) Philosophically, the view that knowledge derives from pure reason. This stands opposed to intuition [Idealism] or Empiricism. (4) Theologically, the rejection of Divine revelation and the supernatural. Reason alone is sufficient as the sole source of religious truth.

RATIONALISTIC EXEGESIS. A general term for the historico-critical method in all its aspects. See “Rationalism,” “Historico-Critical Method,” “Source Criticism,” “Form Criticism,” etc.

REALISM. The epistemological stance of early and middle Medieval scholasticism which gave human reason precedence over Scripture and faith. Epitomized in the approach of Thomas Aquinas due to the influence of Aristotlean philosophy.

Later Medieval scholasticism was influenced by the Nominalism of William of Ockham, which gave the precedence to Scripture and faith. This view would providentially prepare the way for the Reformation. See “Nominalism.”

⁵⁶⁹ “Diasporic” (διὰ, “through,” and σπορά, “seed that is sown, spore”) refers to the Jews scattered throughout the Roman world after the Babylonian exile. The major influence for these came from Alexandria, Egypt, which was a great and very influential Jewish population center. Cf. 1 Pet. 1:1, “scattered throughout” (διασποράς).

RECENSION. (Lat: *recension*, “survey, review, revise”). A systematic and critical revision of a text or manuscript.

REDACTION. (Lat: *redigere*, “to bring back”). Reduction to literary form, revision or rearrangement, the process of editing a given text. See “Documentary Hypothesis” and “Redaction Criticism.”

REDACTION CRITICISM. A rationalistic, historico–critical approach that developed from Form Criticism. Form Criticism sought to discover the original oral sources behind the biblical text; Redaction Criticism considered the process of development more important than the origin of the alleged biblical tradition. See “Form Criticism.”

REDACTOR. (Lat: *redigere*, “to bring back”). One who puts literary matter into a proper form, an editor.

RENAISSANCE. The rebirth or revival of learning, art and literature based on the Roman and Greek classics. The Southern or Italian Renaissance dates from c. 1300, the Northern or French and German, from c. 1450. The Southern was more secular; the Northern, more conservative and included biblical studies.

The Renaissance and the Sixteenth Century Reformation stand opposed religiously, philosophically and historically. The Renaissance was secular at its core and began the historical process of secularized thinking that resulted in English Deism, French Skepticism and the German Enlightenment. Religiously, these found expression in the various aspects of the rationalistic, historico–critical method.

RESCRIPTUS. (Lat: *rescriptum*, “re–written”). A manuscript which has been re–written over writing that has been erased. E.g., *Ephraemi Rescriptus*, a fifth century ms. See “Palimpsest.”

REVELATION. (1) The Book of Revelation. See “Apocryphal.” (2) Divine revelation which has been inscripturated as the Bible. (3) Divine revelation as opposed to human reason, i.e., as opposed to rationalism.

REVISED STANDARD VERSION. (RSV). A revision (NT, 1946; OT, 1952) of the *English Revised Version*. See “English Revised Version.”

REVISION. A document, text or composition which has been critically reviewed and has undergone necessary changes or corrections.

RHEIMS–DOUAY BIBLE. The standard Roman Catholic Version of the Bible in English (1582–1610). This was the English translation from the Latin Vulgate for English-speaking Catholics by Gregory Martin, who taught in the English expatriate college in Flanders.

It is named from the places of its publication, Rheims and Douay. The New Testament was published at Rheims (1582) and the Old Testament was published at Douay (1609–1610). Richard Challoner successively revised the *Rheims–Douay Bible* (1749–1772), and brought it into more harmony with the King James Version.

This remained the official Catholic English Bible until the Catholic edition of the Revised Standard Version of 1965–1966, which was soon superseded by the *Jerusalem Bible* (1966), and the *Confraternity Version* (1970), with the title *The New American Bible*.

ROMANTICISM. A nineteenth century reaction to Rationalism. Biblically, Romanticism emphasized the Bible’s literary importance and the ability of the Scriptures to transform people’s lives.

SALVATION–HISTORY SCHOOL. (Ger. *Heilsgeschichte*, “Salvation History”). This approach has its roots in Biblical Theology. It holds that the single theme of the Bible is the unfolding of redemptive history. It seeks to ground religious authority on the experience of regeneration, the fact and history of the church, and Scripture. This system, while holding to some aspects of truth, admits the validity of the critical method and is characterized by a subjectivity akin to Neo-orthodox existentialism.

SALVIFIC INERRANCY. A compromise view which holds that the Scriptures are inerrant in matters of faith or salvation, but do contain scientific and historical errors. See “Inerrancy.”

SCHOLASTIC EXEGESIS. The exegesis and hermeneutic of the Medieval Era, generally characterized by the allegorical approach and heavy reliance on the Church Fathers.

SCHOOL OF HILLEL. The more liberal rabbinical school of the Tannaim⁵⁷⁰ phase of Judaism (c. 20 BC–15 AD).⁵⁷¹ This school eventually won ascendancy over Shammai in Rabbinical thought and interpretation. See “School of Shammai” and “Tannaim.”

SCHOOL OF SHAMMAI. The more conservative rabbinical school of the Tannaim phase of Judaism (c. 20 BC–15 AD). See “School of Hillel” and “Tannaim.”

SCRIBAL ERRORS. The science and art of textual criticism are partly based on the presupposition that early scribes at times made certain errors which arose either unintentionally or intentionally.

These have been generally classified as: (1) Errors of the eye, which arose from astigmatism, or failing to distinguish one letter from another; missing, confusing, or repeating two lines of text, etc. (2) Errors of the ear, (3) Errors of the mind, or a faulty memory as the copyist looked from one ms. to his copy, perhaps transposing letters, etc. (4) Errors of judgment committed by copyists who may have been sleepy or unintentionally included glosses in the text, etc. (5) Intentional changes, allegedly due to doctrinal issues or even

⁵⁷⁰ *Tannaim*, or “learners” (תַּנַּיִם [tann’iyim], Chaldee for the Heb. שׁוֹנִיִּים [sōniyim]). This era was characterized by the labors of the *Sopherim* or Scribes, who held to a literal interpretation of Scripture, the *Chakamim*, or Wise Men, and then the *Tannaim*.

⁵⁷¹ “The Jewish proverb expressed the difference between them by saying that ‘Shammai bound and Hillel loosed;’ in other words, Shammai interpreted every legal maxim with the extremest rigidity, while Hillel allowed modifying circumstances.” F. W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, p. 67.

attempts to “correct” a text supposedly “corrupt.” Some heretical groups, as the Gnostics, wrote their own text of the Greek New Testament.

Consider the following: (1) Virtually anyone (believers, heretics, apostates) could copy the Greek New Testament or any portion of it, as its copying was not reserved for any special group, and anyone could copy, quote or paraphrase Scripture in any number of public and private ways—preaching, correspondence, controversy, etc.

(2) Few extant copies existed. Most were evidently fragments used for liturgical purposes. (3) The traditionally–spoken Word may have prevailed over the written Word in the thinking of the scribe, a common occurrence.

Yet the Scriptures have been preserved, and by the process of Textual Criticism, it has been restored, with all significant variant readings listed for anyone’s study. See “Scribe.”

SCRIBE. (Gk: γραμματεὺς a public “scribe, secretary, recorder, or clerk;” Lat: *scriba*, “a writer”). (1) A penman, one who writes or copies a manuscript. (2) The Jews had a professional class of scribes who were both the copiers and interpreters of the Law. (3) With reference to the transmission of the text and the textual criticism of the Greek New Testament, it may refer to anyone—learned or relatively unlearned, young or old, orthodox or heretical—who made copies of the text or any part of it.

There was no professional class of scribes to dutifully or carefully guard the text of the Greek New Testament [for the first three centuries], as there was for the Hebrew Old Testament. See “Scribal Errors” and “Textual Criticism.”

SEMANTICS. (Gk: σημαντικός, “significant,” from σῆμα, “sign,” “symbol”). The branch of linguistics concerned with the nature, structure, meaning and changes in speech forms, including contextual meaning. Semantics is inherently related to Hermeneutics.

SEMITISM. (Gk: Σήμ, Heb: שֵׁם, Shem; Lat: *Semiticus*). A Semitic [Aramaic, Arabic, Hebrew] word or idiom. See “Aramism,” “Hebraism” and “Latinism.”

SENSUS PLENIOR. (“fuller sense”). The Latin term for an alleged hidden or fuller meaning beyond the literal, which is allegedly imbedded in a given text. Such a subject is open to debate and confusion, and must be approached with utmost caution as the terminology may be used diversely. The two extremes of allegorization (a *sensus plenior* in all of Scripture) and denotative literalism (absolutely no *sensus plenior* whatsoever) must be avoided. Who can discern what was in the mind of the human author or exactly how much he really understood?⁵⁷² Conversely, some prophetic language may contain a fuller sense which could only be known by New Testament fulfillment.

SEPTUAGINT. (LXX). (Lat: *septuaginta*, “seventy”). The Greek version of the Old Testament, allegedly and traditionally translated by seventy scribes in c. 260–240 BC in Alexandria, Egypt. The common version of the Old Testament in the Greco–Roman era. See “LXX.”

SIMILE. (Lat: *similis*, “like”). A figure of speech in which one thing *resembles* another. An extended simile is a parable. See “Metaphor,” “Parable” and “Allegory.”

SIMILITUDE. (Lat: *similis*, “like, resembling, similar”). An extended simile. The similitude differs from a parable in that it uses the present tense rather than the past tense, and speaks about a customary or timeless truth whereas the parable focuses on a particular instance.

⁵⁷² E.g., the words of David in Psa. 22, which ultimately referred to our Lord and his crucifixion. We simply do not know how much David himself knew. The human authors, although inspired, were evidently not always exhaustive in their personal knowledge of what they wrote about. It must be noted, however, that there is a great difference between a double fulfillment and a double or multiple interpretation. The former is possible; the latter is impossible.

SITZ-IM-GLAUBEN. (Ger. “faith situation”). The biblical writers were men of faith whose world-and-life view revolved about God, his relationship to his creation, especially sinful mankind, redemption, and the destiny of the world. From this perspective much may be inferred which is not directly spoken. The interpreter must enter into their mind-set to truly understand their writings. Such thinking has validity if the presuppositions are not rationalistic.

SITZ-IM-LEBEN. (Ger. for “life situation”). This is significant for the interpreter of Scripture who must seek to understand the life situation or religious, historical, social and political situation of the biblical writers. This is incomplete without *Sitz-im-Leben*.

SOLECISM. (Gk: σολουικισμός “speaking incorrectly;” Lat: *solacismus*). This refers to an irregularity in speech or diction, a violation of the rules of grammar or syntax.⁵⁷³

SOURCE CRITICISM. A rationalistic critical approach to biblical documents that presupposes their evolution through redaction. See “Documentary Hypothesis.”

SPIRITUALIZE. In Exegesis and Hermeneutics, to give a deeper, esoteric or even arbitrary meaning to Scripture beneath or beyond the literal interpretation considered in the context of the *usus loquendi*.

STEPHANUS TEXT OF 1550. The third edition of the text (1546, 1549, 1550, 1551) printed and published by Robert Estienne in Paris, France in 1550.

It was the first Critical Text of the Greek New Testament and the first to have a critical apparatus. This formed part of the

⁵⁷³ E.g., Jn. 15:26; 16:7–8, 13, 14. The masc. ὁ παράκλητος, ὃν, ἔκεινος, αὐτόν are used with reference to the Holy Spirit. The word “spirit” is neut. (τὸ πνεῦμα), yet our Lord used the masc. gender to note the personality of the Spirit.

basis for the New Testament Greek texts used in the *King James Version*.⁵⁷⁴

The so-called “*Textus Receptus*” was a 1633 edition printed by the Elzevir Brothers taken mainly from Beza’s 1565 edition, and closely related to the *Stephanus Text* of 1550. See “Textus Receptus.”

STICH. (Gk: στίχος, “verse”). The term used for a verse or line in poetic construction. These varying in length from the distich [two lines] to hexastich [six lines] and beyond. Each series of stichs forms a verse or strophe. See “Strophe.”

STROPHE. (Gk: στροφή, from στρέφειν, “to turn”). A stanza or verse division in biblical poetry. See “Stich.”

SUBSTANTIVE. (Lat: *substantia*, “to have substance”—a noun). A noun, adjective, relative participle, or group of words equivalent to a noun.

SYNTAXARIA. (Gk: συναξάριον, an account of the life of a saint). A liturgical book for worship in the Greek Church. See “Lectionary.”

SYNECDOCHE. (Gk: συνεκδοχή, from σύν + ἔδοχή, “a receiving from”). A figure of speech in which one word receives something from another which is internally associated with it by the connection of two ideas.⁵⁷⁵

SYNOPTIC GOSPELS. The Gospel records of Matthew, Mark and Luke, which were written from the same perspective and emphasized the Galilean ministry of our Lord. John, the “Strategic Gospel,” emphasized our Lord Judean and Perea ministry and is supplementary in nature.

SYNTACTICAL MEANING. (Gk: συντάξις, from σύν, “together with,” + τάσσειν, “to put or place.” Lat: *syntaxis*). The meaning of a given word in a given immediate grammatical

⁵⁷⁴ The translators of the KJV also made use of Beza’s 1588–89 and 1598 editions of the Greek New Testament.

⁵⁷⁵ The difference between a metonymy and a synecdoche is that in the former the exchange is between two related *nouns*; in the latter, it is between two related *ideas*.

context. The syntactical meaning may be more specific than the general lexical meaning, as necessitated by the syntax. See “Lexical Meaning.”

SYNTAX. (Gk: συντάξις, from σύν, “together with,” + τάσσειν, “to put or place.” Lat: *syntaxis*. Hence, to join, put together, an orderly or systematic arrangement). The arrangement of words as the elements of a sentence to show their relationship to one another. This includes the interrelationship of words and organization of words into phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs.

TALMUD. (Heb. תלמוד, “Doctrine,” from למד (*lamad*), “to teach”). The written collection of all oral traditions, commentaries and applications of the Torah and the Oral Law (c. 200– AD). It is in turn, composed of two literary works—the *Mishna* (an elucidation of the fundamental text of the Mosaic Law with an immense body of casuistry, related and unrelated cases, and applications) and the *Gemara* (an immense body of expositions, commentaries and illustrations on the *Mishna*). See “Oral Law.”

TANNAIM. The first or pre-Christian phase of Rabbinic Judaism (c. 20 BC–15 AD). This era was characterized by the two Rabbinical schools of Shammai (c. 20 BC–c. 15 AD), which was conservative, and that of Hillel (c. 20 BC–c. 15 AD),⁵⁷⁶ which was more liberal, and eventually won ascendancy in Rabbinical thought and interpretation. During this era the *Targumim* (Aramaic paraphrases of the Scriptures) were probably written.

TARGUM. Pl., *Targumim*. Aramaic [Chaldean] paraphrases of the Hebrew Scriptures. The two great divisions of Jewish literature were the *Midrash* (an exegesis, interpretation, and commentary on and application of the Pentateuch and Five Rolls) and the *Targumim*.

⁵⁷⁶ These schools were probably the result of a continuously developing system that had existed for several centuries since the Restoration Era.

TENSE. (Lat: *tempus*, “time”). Any of the forms of a verb that reveal the time of its action or state of being. The Hebrew has two tenses: perfect [a completed action] and imperfect [an incomplete action]. The essential idea of tense in Greek is *kind of action*. Any thought of past, present or future is secondary. The idea of “kind of action” existed in root–stems before the later tense development and is called *Aktionsart*.

The three aspects of tense are linear, or continuous action (—), iterative action (- - -), as represented by the present and imperfect; punctiliar, or action considered without reference to its progress, i.e., as a fact (•), as represented by the aorist and future; or a combination of the two aspects (—•), (—•), (—•—), (•—•), as represented by the perfect and pluperfect. See “Aktionsart.”

TESTAMENT. (Gk: διαθήκη, “will or testament”). (1) A disposition one makes for himself, a will. (2) A basic division of the Scriptures, i.e., Old Testament and New Testament, not to be confused with the Old and New Covenants.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM. (Gk: κριτής “judge,” κριτική, “critic”). That department of Exegetical Theology which is concerned with the authenticity of the biblical text, and seeks to establish the original text of ancient manuscripts (in the case of Scripture, of the original autographs).

Also termed “lower criticism,” as the text must be established first, before other questions are approached in the matters of historical or “Higher Criticism.” Because of the radical presuppositions of liberal scholarship, this latter discipline is often referred to as “Radical,” or “Destructive Higher Criticism.” See “Historical Criticism” and “Scribe.”⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁷ Attempts at textual criticism of the Greek mss. of the New Testament date from the early third century. Origen (c.185–254), Julius Africanus (c.160–240), and Lucian of Antioch (d.311) were among the early textual critics. For a complete study of the science and art of textual criticism, Cf. the works on the textual criticism of the New Testament by the following authors: J. W. Burgon, Frederic G. Kenyon, Bruce M. Metzger, Eberhard Nestle, A. T. Robertson, B. F. Wescott and F. J. A. Hort, and B. B. Warfield. Cf. also the works on General Biblical

TEXTUS RECEPTUS. (TR). The “Received Text” of 1633 was mainly taken from the 1565 edition of Beza’s Greek Testament and was closely aligned to the *Stephanus Text* of 1550.⁵⁷⁸ The designation was taken from the preface of the Elzevir Brothers, printers in Leiden and Amsterdam, in their second edition (1633), *Textum ergo habes nunc ab omnibus receptum in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*, i.e., “Therefore you now have the text received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted.”⁵⁷⁹

The *Stephanus Text* of 1550 partly formed the basis for the *King James Version*. See “Byzantine Text,” “Critical Text,” “Majority Text,” “Western Text,” “Alexandrian Text,” “Stephanus Text of 1550” and “King James Version.”

THEOPNEUSTOS. (Gk: θεόπνευστος, “God–breathed”). See “Inspiration.”

TORAH. (Heb. תּוֹרָה, *torah*, “law”). (1) The Hebrew word for “law, instruction, commandment, statute.” (2) The designation of the Mosaic institutions, i.e., ‘The Law of Moses.’ (3) The Decalogue. (4) The Pentateuch, or Five books of Moses [Genesis–Deuteronomy], known collectively as “The Book of the Law.”

TRANSLATION. (Lat: *translationem*, from *transfere*, “to transfer”). (1) The process of turning or transferring from one language to another. (2) A copy of the Scriptures or any part thereof from the original language into a second language. See “Version.”

Introduction by H. S. Miller and N. L. Geisler, and W. E. Nix. It is not the science *per se*, but rather the presuppositions of radical, antisupernaturalistic critics that make textual criticism a negative work.

⁵⁷⁸ Robert Estienne spent the final years of his life as a Protestant refugee at Geneva. There his Greek mss. and editions were collated by his son, Henri, and Theodore Beza. The later editions of Beza’s Greek Testament reveal the influence of the Stephanus texts.

⁵⁷⁹ As quoted and translated by B. M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, p. 106.

TRANSLITERATION. (Lat: *translittera*, from *trans*, “across,” and *littera*, “letter”). To replace the letters, words or idioms of one language with those of another.

TRANSMISSION. (Lat: *transmission*, “conveyance”). The process by which the manuscripts of the Greek New Testament have been copied and recopied throughout history.

TÜBINGEN SCHOOL. A very influential German school of rationalistic criticism led by F. C. Baur, and characterized by Hegelian principles and a redactionist approach. See “Historico–Critical Exegesis.”

TYPE. (Gk: τύπος, a figure formed by striking a blow, an impression, and so “an image or figure”). Biblical types are Old Testament persons, places or things that anticipate or prefigure some aspect of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ or New Testament gospel realities.

The fulfillment of the type is called its antitype. Technically, to be a true Old Testament biblical type, the New Testament must contain a reference and explanation. See “Antitype.”

UNCIAL. (Lat: *uncialis*, from *uncia*, “inch”). This refers to manuscripts written in large or capital letters rather than smaller case [minuscule] or cursive letters. The transition from uncial to minuscule mss. began in the seventh century AD. See “Cursive,” “Majuscule,” and “Minuscule.”⁵⁸⁰

USUS LOQUENDI. (Lat., fr. *usus*, “practice,” and *loqui*, “to talk”). The *common usage* of given words, phrases, etc., in a given cultural, social or religious context.

VARIANT READING. *Varia Lectio.* A term used in the discipline of textual criticism to refer to a given reading in the text which is based on one or more variations in the ancient manuscripts of the Scriptures. This would include the variants in the many ancient mss. of the Greek Testament or its parts, the Greek Testament as quoted or referred to by the

⁵⁸⁰ The term “uncial” originally meant the “twelfth part.” The uncial letter occupied about a twelfth part of an ordinary line of writing in the early Greek mss.

early Church Fathers and in other ancient writings such as the *lectionaries* and *menologia*. See “Textual Criticism.”

VERBAL INSPIRATION. (Gk: ῥῆμα, “a spoken word, utterance.” Lat: *verbum*, “a word, verb”). A verb is a word that expresses action or a state of being. See “Substantive.”

VERSE DIVISIONS. (Lat: *versus*, “a line or row”). The Greek Testament was originally written in paragraphs. The *modern chapter* divisions were made in the thirteenth century. The *verse* divisions were first made by Stephanus (Robert Eitenne), a Paris printer (1550) and included in his Greek New Testament.

The first English Bible to have the modern chapter and verse divisions was the Geneva Bible (1560). See “Chapter Divisions” and “Textus Receptus.”

VERSION. (Lat: *version*, from *vertere*, “to turn”). A literary work which has been translated from the original into another language. See “Translation.”⁵⁸¹

VOWEL POINTS. The Hebrew was written without vowels. These were later inserted into the text as a series of diacritical markings by the Masorah (c. 500–1000 AD). The vowel pointings, accents and other diacritical markings in the Masoretic Text number twenty–seven different types. See “Masoretic Text.”

WESCOTT AND HORT. (WH). B. F. Wescott, and F. J. A. Hort, *The New Testament in Original Greek* (1881). The Critical Text which formed the basis for the RV and the ASV. See “Critical Text” and “Nestle–Aland.”⁵⁸²

⁵⁸¹ The difference between a translation and a version is that (1) The translation tends toward the original language in construction, while the version tends toward the secondary language in grammar, idiomatic expressions and ease of reading. (2) The version is any one of a series of revisions of a translation in the secondary language.

⁵⁸² The science of Textual Criticism in the last half–century has turned back in some places from the theories of Wescott and Hort in their approach to the variant readings.

WESTERN OR LATIN SCHOOL. A North African school of biblical exegesis and interpretation of the fourth and fifth centuries which became a synthesis of the Alexandrian and Antiochene approaches, i.e., partly historico–grammatical and partly allegorical.

WESTERN TEXT. This represents a “text family,” or a type of text which arose in certain geographical areas with variations in style, tendencies, and readings. This type of text represents the area of Gaul, Italy and North Africa. It is characterized by a “fondness for paraphrase” in its differences with other text–types. See “Byzantine Text,” “Caesarean Text,” “Critical Text,” “Majority Text,” and “Textus Receptus.”

ZEUGMA. (Gk: ζεύγμα, “a yoke.” Hence, to yoke together). A figure of speech in which one verb is yoked to two subjects while it strictly belongs only to one of them.

Appendix I

Why Study The Original Languages of Scripture?

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a
workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly
dividing the word of truth.

This appendix has been added to provide a stimulus for the study of the original languages. There is simply no substitute for a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. The perusing of this appendix may provoke some to engage in such a study.

I

The Prejudice of Modern Religion

Most Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christians see no reason for taking the time, making the effort, or disciplining themselves to study the Scriptures in their Original Languages. Such study, we are often told, is too time-consuming. Our time and efforts could be better spent in some evangelistic, ecclesiastical or church-related social activity. After all, we are to be interested in *souls* and *people*. Most simply believe that serious language or Bible study is unnecessary. Many strongly hold that the *King James Version* is completely adequate for any Christian, evangelist, preacher or pastor.

Others think that with all the modern translations and versions in the English language, the study of Greek or Hebrew would simply be “re-inventing the wheel.” Still others think that it is wasting time that ought to be spent “soul-winning,” reducing the calling and task of the believer to personal evangelism.

Some among the traditionally Reformed groups also deprecate the necessity for a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. These believe that, as we possess the great Creeds and Confessions, which are based on scriptural exegesis and sound theology, we do not need to carefully examine the Scriptures through an exegesis of the Original Languages.

Such thinking—or rather, non-thinking—has helped to produce the relatively weak, ignorant, inconsistent and worldly state of present Christianity. Evangelicalism, which prides itself in being identified with the Bible, is relatively ignorant of the very Bible which is supposed to characterize its very existence and distinctives.

Modern Fundamentalism, which prides itself in “Believing the whole Bible and not a Bible full of holes,” suffers, at times, from an astounding ignorance of the truth of Scripture and a failure to consistently apply it. Reformed tradition has a tendency at certain points to resort to the Creeds and Confessions rather than directly to the Scriptures, and thus suffers by erecting a barrier between itself and the Holy Word of God.

It needs to be stated at the outset that we do not deprecate the English Bible. It is rather the inadequacies of the English language—or any secondary language—that is our concern. No version of a translation—however close it seeks to equate the original—will suffice. It is simply impossible. And in this impossibility lays the critical area which makes a study the original languages a perpetual necessity.

II

The Original Languages and Divine Inspiration

It is common for beginning or relatively uneducated Bible students to believe that a study of the original languages of Scriptures is unnecessary. The truth is, that the nuances and intricacies of the original languages can never be transferred through a translation or version, and to the extent that such elements of the language, grammar and syntax are not transferred or in some way obscured, they are lost to the student limited to his English Bible.

Doctrine depends on Divine revelation, and Divine revelation depends on language, and language depends on grammar and syntax, and grammar and syntax are considered only by careful exegesis in the original language.

There is a direct relationship among verbal, plenary inspiration, a study of the original language, biblical exegesis and

interpretation. Divine inspiration presupposes the inspiration of the very grammar, syntax, nuances and idioms of the original language. To discount biblical exegesis in the original language is to necessarily, though, perhaps inadvertently, deprecate Divine inspiration itself. The grammar, syntax and peculiarities of any secondary language are not inspired.

III

The Necessity of and Basis for An Accurate Study of The Bible

Reasons for a Study of The Original Languages

Why should Christians, study the Scriptures in the original languages? We suggest the following reasons: first, God evidently had his reasons for giving and inscripturating his Divine revelation in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. These reasons have not changed with time. To deprecate the study of these languages as an essential part of biblical studies is to corrupt the reality and force of Divine inspiration, disregard the most essential elements of Divine revelation, neglect the very language and text in which God has revealed himself, and fail to maintain a proper basis for interpretation and application.

Second, every human being, converted or unconverted, is a sinner, and as such suffers to a given degree from the noetic effects of sin.⁵⁸³ Access to and some knowledge of the original languages help to offset one's natural misunderstanding of the inscripturated Word of God.

Third, spiritual illumination—the possession of every true believer (1 Cor. 2:9–16; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27)—is not infallible, i.e., is not equivalent to inspiration. Neither is such spiritual illumination static. It may regress through refusal to believe

⁵⁸³ “Noetic” derives from the noun νοῦς “mind” [the seat of reflective consciousness, perception, understanding, judging or determining], and the corresponding verb νοέω “to think, understand, perceive, judge, intelligently determine.” The noetic effects of sin refer to the effects of the Fall [apostasy] upon the mind or intellectual ability of man as a sinner. Cf. Mk. 12:24; Rom. 1:18–20; 8:7–8, 26; 1 Cor. 2:14; 8:2; Eph. 4:17–19; Heb. 5:11–14.

certain aspects of truth or apply such to the life (Heb. 5:11–14).⁵⁸⁴ Great and godly Christians have been greatly mistaken because of their ignorance, presuppositions, bias, traditional teaching, or limitation to the English Bible.

Fourth, the Bible is our exclusive and inclusive textbook for both faith and life (2 Tim. 3:16–17). As most Confessions of Faith state or strongly infer, the Scriptures are our sole rule of both faith and practice. They are our one objective standard and touchstone for doctrinal truth and for practical application. Everything else—our presuppositions, experience, tradition, speculation, emotions—is ultimately subjective and relative.

Fifth, according to the Scriptures, we are to give the utmost diligence to be approved or well-pleasing to God as skilled craftsmen who are able to correctly and skillfully handle [exposit, interpret and expound] the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15). Our primary obligation in the study, interpretation and exposition of the Scriptures is God-ward. Consistent hermeneutics, or the interpretation of the Word of God, is seriously crippled, if not outright impossible, to any given degree without and apart from the original languages.

Sixth, there is absolutely no substitute for a knowledge of the original languages. No translation or version can equal the original languages of Scripture. There are three major reasons:

(1) a translation or version is necessarily in the grammar and idiom of the secondary language, and thus loses the inspired grammatical and syntactical constructions, nuances and emphases of the original language—and both doctrinal and practical truth often hinge on such. One must realize and remember that the grammar and syntax of text of the original languages are Divinely inspired. The orthodox doctrine of Divine inspiration is technically concerned only with the “autograph manuscripts,” or the original copies of Scripture. Thus the Scriptures in the

⁵⁸⁴ Note *γεγόνατε...γεγόνατε...* “*ye have become and continue to be dull of hearing...and have become and continue to be such...*” Both verbs (v. 11 and 12) are perf., and evidently emph. a regression to a lesser state of spiritual perception.

original languages, as they have been providentially [Divinely] preserved, are in the form [language, grammar, syntax] given by God (Matt. 5:17–18; 2 Tim. 3:16–17,⁵⁸⁵ 2 Pet. 1:21)—that of any secondary language is not. Unless a translation or version is framed on the often inexplicable and ever foreign constructions and idioms of the original, it is necessarily to a given degree a paraphrase at best. Even the so-called “word-for-word translation” found in a Greek or Hebrew interlinear miserably fails to convey the grammar, syntax, nuances and idioms of the original. The English language by comparison is relatively bankrupt of expression as compared to either the Greek or the Hebrew. Thus, one may give an exegesis of the text in the original language, but only an exposition of the text in a translation or version.⁵⁸⁶

(2) our English Bible is not a translation, but a version of a translation, and so adheres much more to the secondary language with its peculiarities and limitations than to the original. This accounts for the continued publications of various “versions” of the Bible in the English language. Were any one of these versions the full, final word, others would not be necessary.

(3) translation necessarily involves a given amount of interpretation and accommodation, and these are unavoidably colored by some degree of subjective misunderstanding, and also cultural, historical and doctrinal presuppositions.

Seventh, even great and godly men have erred greatly in their attempts to understand the Scriptures, largely because they did not have access to the Scriptures in the original languages.

⁵⁸⁵ “All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος... Lit: “every [particle, aspect, nuance] of Scripture is God-breathed...” This necessarily includes every aspect of grammar and syntax.

⁵⁸⁶ Exegesis means to bring out of the text the meaning, nuances, idioms of the original language. An exposition is akin to an analysis of the text either grammatically or doctrinally. An exegesis in a secondary language tends to misunderstanding and error, as it ignorantly or knowingly assumes the inspiration of the grammar and syntax of the secondary language

This is evident in the writings of the Church Fathers and other early Christian writers who were largely limited to the Old Latin translation and the later and more influential Latin Vulgate Version.⁵⁸⁷

An absence of the knowledge of the original languages ultimately became a void filled with speculation, superstition, tradition, allegorization—and thus a corrupt theology, church, worship, religion and society. Such error is sadly evident today in many of the devotional works and commentaries for readers limited to the English language.

Eighth, the Church of Rome grievously erred for over a millennium in giving a unique, divinely-inspired status to the *Latin Vulgate*—a version of a translation. Many modern Fundamentalists and Evangelicals are little different—a mentality which we may refer to as “the infallibility of ignorance.” The idea that the exclusive use of the King James Version—a version of a translation—is sufficient, is relatively recent among evangelical Christians.⁵⁸⁸ This attitude, based largely on emotions and prejudice—not rational, historical or linguistic arguments, or an orthodox view of Divine inspiration—arose in the late 1800s and early 1900s as an anti-intellectual reaction to Rationalistic Biblical Criticism and “Modernism.”

This was accompanied by a disdain for the ancient, so-called “dead” languages and the rise of modern humanistic or secularized, “progressive” education which emphasized experience over educational discipline and rote learning.

Further, the “Bible School” movement was designed to replace theological seminaries with their required study of the original languages. Because corruption had entered through Rationalistic Biblical Criticism, it was believed that men could be adequately prepared for the gospel ministry and kept from the influence of error through the study of the English Bible alone.

⁵⁸⁷ An example of misinterpretation: the *Latin Vulgate* by Jerome (c. 406) interpreted “repentance” by “penance.”

⁵⁸⁸ The Church of Rome has held the *Latin Vulgate* (ca. 406)—a version of a translation—to be Divinely and fully inspired for centuries.

All biblical scholarship became suspect. Before this era, a study of the original languages was considered vital to the ministry, and any lack in this area was thought to be a serious hindrance.

Ninth, men called to the gospel ministry, above all others, need to be well-versed in the Scriptures—and there is no substitute for the ability to work through the text in the very languages given by God. The minister who is bereft of such skill is seriously crippled in his Divine calling, yea, such is inexcusable in this day and age when an abundance of tools and opportunities are available for such study.⁵⁸⁹

Tenth, Hermeneutics and Theology are sacred sciences: they are organized areas of study which rest upon certain principles and strive for certain conclusions. As sacred sciences, they must, as any science, rest upon original sources for their authority, data and materials. For Christianity, for Christian Theology, for the Christian ministry, for the individual believer, the ultimate source is the inscripturated Word of God, and to delve into the Word of God fully and accurately, one needs a knowledge of the original languages.

Eleventh, not only has the text of the English Bible at times furthered misunderstanding, but many professing Christians fail even to come to terms with the truth clearly taught in the Scriptures, in whatever language it is taught.

Eisegesis⁵⁹⁰ is a viral infection of the religious mind. Such is the natural opposition of man to biblical truth that even the clear, consistent teaching of Scripture is often denied, circumvented or modified, and humanistic assumptions are read into the Scriptures. This is certainly true of such glorious truths as the sovereignty of God, Divine election, predestination, the covenant

⁵⁸⁹ Computer language programs put the Greek and Hebrew within the reach of the average pastor with little preparation. It is possible with some programs, such as *BibleWorks*, to exegete the text in either Greek or Hebrew with a minimal amount of preparation in either language. Cf. *Bibleworks*. by Hermeneutika (www.bibleworks.com).

⁵⁹⁰ *Eisegesis* means to read into the text something that is not there. It is the opposite of exegesis.

nature of the atonement and kindred truths. A study of the original languages emphasizes the relation between the text and its doctrine, and so enforces truth as no translation or version can.

Finally, not only heretical teachers and cults, but many others—including well-meaning evangelical Christians—often err in basing their theological assumptions, doctrinal teaching and practical application on the text of the English Bible.

No doctrine or practice can be made to stand upon the grammar or syntax of a secondary language alone, i.e., upon a translation or a version of a translation, without departing from the Word of God to a given extent and at times falling into error and even outright heresy. Divine inspiration only pertains to the text [grammar and syntax] of the original. Yet many base their beliefs on the grammar of the English Bible.

Examples of Inadequate Translation

Translations and versions in any secondary language are necessarily filled with inadequate translations or interpretations of the original. This derives from several sources, including such things as the necessity of keeping the wording as brief as possible to avoid becoming a general paraphrase of the original; using various additional words of explanation, which are often necessary to transfer the full connotation; word-order, and other devices of expression lacking in the secondary language. The following are taken by way of very general example:

- The Hebrew concept of time, as expressed in its two “tenses”—perfect and imperfect—is that of either completed or incomplete action. Cf. Psa. 1:1, from the Hebrew, reads, “Oh (Interjection) the [complete] blessedness of the man who has never walked (perf.) in the counsel of the ungodly, nor in the way of sinners (emph. pos.) has ever stood (perf.), nor in the assembly of the scornful (emph. pos.) has ever sat!” (perf.) The use of the perfect tense (completed action) and the emphatic position of words give this statement much greater force.

- The Greek has the idea of a punctiliar [an event]⁵⁹¹ or linear [a process] action, or a combination of both. Often such concepts are not or cannot adequately be transferred to a secondary language, e.g., Jn. 2:19–21. The Jews’ retort to our Lord’s claim that he would raise this temple [of his body] in three days was that “forty and six years was this temple in the building!” Exactly what was emphasized in their retort?⁵⁹²
- The Hebrew language has seven verbal “stems,” Qal and Niph’al or simple active and passive (or reflexive), Pi’el and Pu’al, intensive active and passive, Hiph’il and Hoph’al, causative active and passive, and Hithpael, the intensive reflexive.

The nuances and force of these various verbal distinctions are often necessarily omitted in translation. E.g., Ex. 32:19, “...and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.” The word “brake” is Pi’el [active intensive], and is literally, “utterly dashed them to pieces!”⁵⁹³ The full force of Moses’ intense action as expressed in the Hebrew is lacking in the English language and therefore in the bare translation of the facts.

Another example may be taken from 2 Sam. 11:4, “And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her

⁵⁹¹ The aorist or punctiliar tense, views something without reference to its progress or time, i.e., usually, as an event or as an action considered as a whole.

⁵⁹² τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἕξ ἔτεσιν οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος. The words “forty and six years was in building” are emphatic by position, before the subject, “this temple.” One would expect the imperf. tense to be used, stressing the length of time as process, or, perhaps a periphrastic const. to emphasize duration, but the ptc. is aor. pass., which signifies punctiliar action, an event, or views the whole time of forty–six years as a single block of time. The Jews’ retort was to take the whole long duration of the temple’s construction and push it in our Lord’s face as one huge, ponderous fact or lump of time.

⁵⁹³ וַיִּשְׁבֵּר (way^eshaber). Pi’el imperf. with Waw consec.

uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.” The sense is probably that “she cleansed herself” (Hithpa’el, intens. reflex. ptc.)⁵⁹⁴ after their illicit sexual act, which had made them ceremonially unclean until evening (Lev. 15:16–18). They kept the “letter of the Law,” but blatantly committed adultery!

- At times, participles are translated as verbs and verbs as participles, shifting the force of a given statement in the secondary language, e.g., Matt. 28:19 and the command of the “Great Commission” to “Go...”—a “command” which is simply not there.⁵⁹⁵ Quite often through brevity of language compound words are inadequately translated, e.g., Rom. 1:18, “holding [habitually suppressing] the truth in unrighteousness.”⁵⁹⁶
- The Greek of the New Testament has four past tenses— aorist, imperfect, perfect and pluperfect—each distinctly used in conveying Divine truth, e.g., Jn. 8:7. The Jews who brought the woman taken in adultery kept taunting our Lord repeatedly with, “But you—what do you say?!” “But you— what do you say?!” etc.⁵⁹⁷ E.g., Jn. 19:30, “It is finished!”

⁵⁹⁴ 2 Sam. 11:4, **וְהָיָא מִתְקַדְשֵׁת מִטְּמֵאָתָהּ**. This probably referred to the law of the “seed of copulation” [male sperm] and not to menstrual uncleanness.

⁵⁹⁵ See Exegesis of Matt. 28:18-20. The same is true of Mk. 16:15, πορευθέντες [aor. pass. ptc.] εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε [aor, imp. vb.] τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει. Lit: “Having gone into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature!” The force is on the verb “preach.” That Christians are to “go” is presupposed by the ptc.

⁵⁹⁶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων, “the truth in unrighteousness [emphatically] habitually suppressing.” κατεχόντων is a pres. ptc., from ἔχω, to hold and κατὰ, down, and so “to constantly hold down or suppress.”

⁵⁹⁷ Jn. 8:5 “But what sayest thou?” σὺ οὖν τί λέγεις; Note the emph. pers. pron. “you.” Jn. 8:7, “they continued asking him.” ἐπέμεινον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, (a periphrastic const. comprised of an imperf. vb. and a pres. ptc.), i.e., “they persisted in [repeatedly] asking him.” Further note that if she were taken in the very act, then the man also, according to

Note: Jn. 19:30, τετέλεσται. perf., stressing in the fullest sense the fulfillment of the promises, types and shadow, and the completion of our Lord's redemptive work, which would then stand forever. The perfect tense denotes something that is done in an event and then continues on in a finished state. The culminative perfect denotes that which comes to culmination and then exists in a completed state. Both are applicable here. How could anyone think that this was a cry of defeat and not of victory?

- The publican in the parable of Lk. 18:9–14 continually smote his breast, repeating the words, “God be merciful to me the sinner!”⁵⁹⁸ In Gal. 3:24, the verb is in the perfect tense, and ought to be translated, “...the law ‘has become and continues to be’ our pedagogue unto Christ...”⁵⁹⁹ In Acts 17:23, Paul makes reference to “an ancient altar with its ‘faded inscription,’” which had stood as a witness to their sense of the Divine nature.⁶⁰⁰
- The Greek also uses periphrastic expressions to emphasize various actions. These are usually a verb and a participle combined for giving a certain emphasis.⁶⁰¹ Cf. Matt. 16:19, and the use of the periphrastic fut. perf., “...whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have been already bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have already been loosed in heaven.”⁶⁰² Such characteristic linguistic

Mosaic law, would have been brought. Perhaps they themselves were guilty of this very sin (as the context implies), as this was clearly a set-up intended to publicly embarrass our Lord.

⁵⁹⁸ ...ἀλλ’ ἔτυπτεν τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ λέγων... An imperf. verb with a pres. temporal ptc., connoting a repetitive or continual action.

⁵⁹⁹ ...ὁ νόμος παιδαγωγὸς ἡμῶν γέγονεν εἰς Χριστόν...

⁶⁰⁰ Acts 17:23, εἶρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγράπτο· ἄγνωστω θεῷ. the pluperf. tense denotes a period of time in the past.

⁶⁰¹ E.g., Acts 1:14; 2:42, Ἦσαν δὲ προσκαρτεροῦντες... The combination of an imperf. verb and pres. ptc., “And they were continuing steadfastly [obstinately, without slacking]...”

⁶⁰² Matt. 16:19, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν δήσης ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, καὶ ὃ ἐὰν λύσης ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς.

nuances are all but missing in the English language, or omitted through brevity, and therefore often missing in an English translation or version of the Scriptures. Such misunderstanding gave Peter papal power in the teaching of the Romish Church.

- The original languages have an abundance of synonyms which are often brought into the English Bible without their necessary distinctions, lessening the force and clarity of the text in the secondary language. For example, the Hebrew has several words for “man,” each emphasizing some aspect of humanity in its strength, weakness, mortality, relationship with others, etc.

The Greek New Testament has two different terms for “love,”⁶⁰³ seven for “servant,” six for “power,” three for “knowledge” and at least two for “form.” These all have both doctrinal and practical nuances and often hermeneutical implications which are somewhat nebulous without recourse to the original language.

- An example of the failure to mark distinctions between synonyms is the statement of Paul in the English version of Gal. 1:6–7, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.” Some have lessened Paul’s very stringent warning, saying that “It really wasn’t ‘another’ gospel,” taking the words “which is not another” as a diminishing comment.

The very opposite is true, as not only noted by the context, which imprecates damnation upon those who preach “another gospel,” but in the very terms used, i.e., “...another gospel [of an altogether different kind], which is not [at all] another [gospel of the same kind]...!”⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰³ The third Gk. term, ἔρως, sexual love does not occur in the New Testament.

⁶⁰⁴ Gal. 1:6–7, ...εἰς ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον, ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλο...

- The Hebrew and Greek languages have various devices for expressing emphasis. The Hebrew, for instance, reserves a special place for the emphatic imperative, e.g., Gen. 39:7, "...his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, 'Lie with me!'" The verb "lie" (a euphemism for sexual intercourse) is in the emphatic imperative. Both the Hebrew text and the Septuagint show the full emphasis,⁶⁰⁵ as they do Joseph's inherent moral recoil and emphatic response.⁶⁰⁶

The Hebrew infinitive absolute is usually reserved for intensifying the verb or making it emphatic.⁶⁰⁷ The participle in Hebrew is reserved for continuity of action without intermission, making it more continuous than the imperfect.

The Hebrew makes great use of independent [emphatic pers. prons.] E.g., Gen. 3:7, Eve became fixated with the fruit as a means of obtaining wisdom. The Hebrew attaches an independent [emph.] pronoun to the noun "something to be desired [greatly coveted]..."⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁵ וְיָנִי שְׁכַבָּה Qal. emph. imp. "Lie with me!" The LXX reads: ...κοιμήθητι μετ' ἐμοῦ. κοιμήθητι is aor. imp. ἐμοῦ (emph. pron.) "Sleep with me!" Both the Heb. and Gk. are in the imp.—the Heb. in the emph. imp., and the Gk. in the aor. imp., both connoting a determined and urgent entreaty.

⁶⁰⁶ Gen. 39:9, "...how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Heb: אַעֲשֶׂה הָרָעָה הַגְּדֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְהִטְאַתִּי לְאֱלֹהִים וְאֵיךְ "..." LXX, πῶς ποιήσω τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ ποιητὸν τοῦτο [this thing, this evil—this!] καὶ ἁμαρτήσομαι ἐναντίον [contrary, opposed to] τοῦ θεοῦ.

⁶⁰⁷ E.g., Ex. 20:8, the Fourth Commandment: The first command, "Remember," is an inf. absol.; the second, "to keep it holy," is a Pi'el inf. const. This is grammatically the strongest Commandment of the Decalogue! The Fifth Commandment, to honor one's parents, the other positive command, is in the Pi'el imp., and the eight negative Commandments are all framed in the imperf. with the neg. אַל, giving the force of a perpetual prohibition.

⁶⁰⁸ Gen. 3:6, וְכִי תֹאמַר הִנֵּה הוּא, The emph. pers. pron הוּא attached by Maqqeph to the word for emph., implying that Eve was completely

- The Greek possesses two imperatives, present and aorist.⁶⁰⁹ The English does not differentiate and so the English Bible almost always fails to give the full connotation. Consider the present imperative of prohibition, which commands the cessation of an action in progress, and is to be translated, “Stop...!” E.g., Eph. 4:30, “Stop grieving the Spirit of God...!” Col. 3:9, “Stop lying to one another...!”

E.g., Matt. 7:7, “Keep on asking...keep on seeking...keep on knocking...”⁶¹⁰ E.g., Matt. 28:19, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...” The command to “Go” is non-existent, being a participle and not a verb of command. The very nature of Christianity implies a missionary imperative. The command is rather “with a sense of urgency and with all determination, make disciples!”⁶¹¹

E.g., of the aorist imperative in 2 Tim. 4:2, 5. There are eight aor.imps., each denoting an urgent, determinate action. The only pres. imp. in this list is “watch thou in all things...” The same holds true for the present and aorist prohibitions. The present imperative of prohibition means to stop an action already in progress, e.g., Phil. 4:6, “Be careful for nothing...” This denotes “Stop being anxious about even one thing!”—and even this translation fails to take into account the emphasis of word-order.⁶¹²

absorbed with the fruit as a means to wisdom. $\text{N}\bar{\text{N}}\bar{\text{N}}$ a common pron. in Books of Moses. Fem. form occ. only 11 times.

⁶⁰⁹ The pres. imp. commands “keep on doing something” (Matt. 7:7, $\text{A}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\dots\zeta\eta\tau\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\dots\kappa\rho\bar{\text{u}}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\dots$ “Keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking...”) that has already been reality. The aorist imperative commands the commencement of an action with a sense of urgency and determination. 2 Tim. 2:15, “Study,” $\sigma\text{p}\bar{\text{o}}\bar{\text{u}}\bar{\text{d}}\bar{\text{a}}\sigma\text{o}\bar{\text{u}}$, aor. imp. i.e., give the utmost diligence!”

⁶¹⁰ Matt. 7:7, $\text{A}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\ \kappa\alpha\bar{\text{i}}\ \delta\text{o}\bar{\theta}\bar{\eta}\bar{\sigma}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{a}}\ \bar{\upsilon}\bar{\mu}\bar{\iota}\bar{\nu},\ \zeta\eta\tau\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\ \kappa\alpha\bar{\text{i}}\ \epsilon\bar{\upsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{\eta}\bar{\sigma}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}},\ \kappa\rho\bar{\text{u}}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\ \kappa\alpha\bar{\text{i}}\ \bar{\alpha}\bar{\nu}\bar{\text{o}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\kappa}\bar{\eta}\bar{\sigma}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{a}}\ \bar{\upsilon}\bar{\mu}\bar{\iota}\bar{\nu}$

⁶¹¹ $\text{p}\bar{\text{o}}\bar{\text{r}}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{u}}\bar{\theta}\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\varsigma}\ \sigma\bar{\text{u}}\bar{\nu}\ \mu\bar{\alpha}\theta\eta\tau\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\upsilon}\bar{\sigma}\bar{\alpha}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}$, “Having gone, make disciples...!” This is not an imperatival ptc.

⁶¹² $\mu\bar{\eta}\delta\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\nu}\ \mu\bar{\epsilon}\bar{\rho}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\mu}\bar{\nu}\bar{\omega}\bar{\text{t}}\bar{\text{e}}\dots$ Lit: “About even one thing, stop being anxious!”

The aorist subjunctive of prohibition means “do not even begin to,” e.g., Matt. 3:9, “And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father...” The force of John the Baptist’s argument is, “Do not even let it enter your mind!” Do not even begin to think to say!”⁶¹³

- The Hebrew often uses repetition for emphasis, e.g., Isa. 26:3, where “perfect peace” is the interpretation of the repetitive word for “peace.”⁶¹⁴
- In Hebrew, the infinite absolute, derives from the same root as the finite verb, and occurring before it, serves to intensify the verbal idea, Gen. 2:17, which is literally “dying thou shalt die!”⁶¹⁵ Cf. also Gen. 3:4, Satan’s vehement denial of the Divine, perpetual prohibition, “you shall absolutely not die!”⁶¹⁶ This was the exact negative counterpart to God’s original positive statement, “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
- There are various forms of emphatic particles and other constructions in both Hebrew and Greek, which are often not translated, and thus their force is lost to the reader of a secondary language.⁶¹⁷ E.g., the emph. part. אַךְ, which occurs

⁶¹³ καὶ μὴ δόξητε λέγειν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· πατέρα ἔχομεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ. Lit: “And do not even begin to think to say within yourselves, A Father [emphatically] we have in Abraham!”

⁶¹⁴ שְׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם, or lit: “peace, peace.”

⁶¹⁵ E.g., Gen. 2:17, “...in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” מוֹת תָּמוּת, “dying thou shalt die!” מוֹת, the inf. absol. of the same root as the vb., and occurring immediately before תָּמוּת is used for emph.

⁶¹⁶ Gen. 3:4, לֹא־תָמוּת, the inf. absol. is used as in God’s positive statement, but made even more emph. by the use of the neg. לֹא before the inf.

⁶¹⁷ Cf. Psa. 1:2, 4, both of which contain a “but if” or exceptive const. (כִּי אִם). V. 2, “But if he has any delight at all, it is in the law of the LORD...” V. 4, “But if the wicked are like anything at all, they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away!” Cf. also the many μέν...δέ consts. in Greek, “on the one hand, but on the other...”

twice as “beseech” in Jonah 1:14, “And they said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man’s life!”⁶¹⁸

- English is not an inflected language,⁶¹⁹ and therefore is limited in and by its word–order. In an inflected language (such as Hebrew and Greek), word–order is usually reserved for emphasis.

In Hebrew, a Semitic language, the verb (in a verbal sentence) usually occurs first. If a word or phrase is placed before the verb, it is emphatic. E.g., Job. 1:21, “...The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.” In each statement, the name of Jehovah [Yahweh], or the “LORD” is placed first for emphasis. This is then a profound statement of Job’s faith.⁶²⁰

E.g., Gen. 3:10, Note the emphatic position of the direct object, “voice”: “And he said, Thy voice I heard in the garden...”⁶²¹ E.g., Gen. 3:10–11. Note the present sense of Adam’s sinful consciousness of being naked before God, emphasized by the word–order and emphatic personal pron., “...because naked I am!” And God’s question, “Who told you that ‘naked you are?’”⁶²²

⁶¹⁸ Jonah 1:14, אַנְה יְהוָה אֱלֹנָא נֹאבְדָהּ בְּנַפְשׁ הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה, וַיֹּאמְרוּ.

⁶¹⁹ An inflected language is formed on root words or word stems to which are added a pattern of endings [suffixes] or preformatives [prefixes] to denote various grammatical elements. Thus, words may occur in a different order for emphasis without affecting the essential meaning.

⁶²⁰ יְהוָה נָתַן וַיְהוּה לָקַח יְהוָה שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבֹרָךְ, lit: “Jehovah hath given, Jehovah hath taken, Jehovah’s name be blessed!”

⁶²¹ Gen. 3:10, וַיֹּאמֶר אֶתְקַלְהָ שְׁמִיעִתִּי בְּגִן, “Voice” a def. dir. obj, placed before the verb for emphasis.

⁶²² Gen. 3:10–11, הַגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עִירָם אַתָּה...כִּי עִירָם אֲנִכִּי מִי

- The Greek also uses word–order for emphasis. The usual word–order, however, is Subject–verb–Object. E.g., Jn. 3:16, which places emphasis on the verb, “For so loved God the world...”⁶²³

Another example from the Greek is found in Jn. 8:33–37:

We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever.³⁶ If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.

That there was an exchange of words between our Lord and the Jews which must have been emotional is without doubt. The word–order and emphasis of v. 33 and 37 reveals it clearly in the original language and Greek text, “‘Seed of Abraham’ are we!” To which our Lord retorted, “I know that ‘Seed of Abraham’ are ye!”⁶²⁴

E.g., 2 Tim. 4:7, Paul’s epitaph: “The good fight I have fought [unfaltering right up to the very end], the course I have finished [unfaltering right up to the very end], the faith I have kept [unfaltering right up to the very end]!”⁶²⁵

A final example may be taken from 2 Cor. 9:7, “...for God loveth a cheerful giver.” Even this seemingly simple statement and truth cannot be adequately expressed in English! The word–order makes almost every part of this statement emphatic, with the adjective modifying the direct

⁶²³ Jn. 3:16, οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον...

⁶²⁴ σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐσμεν...Οἶδα ὅτι σπέρμα Ἀβραάμ ἐστε. The whole passage is highly charged with emotion which the English language largely fails to communicate.

⁶²⁵ 2 Tim. 4:7. τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα ἠγωνίσαι, τὸν δρόμον τετέλεκα, τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα. In each clause, the dir. obj. is place first for emph. Each vb. is perf., connoting a culminative action which leads up to a given point.

object placed first, the direct object next, and then the verb placed before the subject.⁶²⁶

- Repeatedly, some slight nuance is necessarily left out of translation because of the inadequacy of the English language and idiom, and therefore the English version of the Bible. This means that various shades of expression are totally lacking for the English reader.

For example, the personalities of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, are contrasted in one being too busy with serving to listen, and the other sitting at our Lord's feet intently listening (Lk. 10:38–42). Mary evidently had a more sensitive nature than Martha, who was more practical and active.

This same distinction is preserved in the Greek text when the English reads the same in the statement from both sisters after the death of their beloved brother, Lazarus, “Lord if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died” (Jn. 11:21, 32). Although identical in the English, they are different in the original, revealing the grief of both but the heightened degree of sensitiveness and loss of Mary.⁶²⁷

- Phraseology and clauses, such as contained in the various conditional sentences are vital to the understanding, and often fail in translation.⁶²⁸ Note the subtlety of Satan in the

⁶²⁶ ἰλαρὸν [cheerful, hilarious] γὰρ [for] δότην [giver] ἀγαπᾷ [loves] ὁ θεός [God].

⁶²⁷ Martha said, κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὦδε οὐκ ἂν ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός μου. “Lord if you had been here *had not died* my brother!” The verb “had not died” is in the emph. pos. Mary said, κύριε, εἰ ἦς ὦδε οὐκ ἂν μου ἀπέθανεν ὁ ἀδελφός. “Lord, if you had been here, *my would not have died* [the] brother.” The word–order is awkward in English. Martha put the words “had not died” emphatically forward; Mary not only does the same, but puts the possessive “my” even before the emphatic position of the verb, revealing much more than Martha her personal sense of loss.

⁶²⁸ There are four types of conditional sentences in Greek, each one containing an “if” clause [protasis] and a conclusion [apodosis]. The first assumes something to be true, the second, something to be false, the

wilderness temptation, “Since you are the Son of God, command these stones to bread to become!” (Matt. 4:4).⁶²⁹

The temptation was not to prove to Satan that Jesus was the Son of God, that was already assumed. The temptation was to act independently, to fulfill a legitimate appetite or need, as our Lord had the power and prerogative to do so. This was, in principle, the same temptation that caused the fall of the First Adam—to act independently of God and his Word (Gen. 3:1–7).

- Both Hebrew and Greek have two negatives, which are used in specific constructions.⁶³⁰ The English has but one. In the New Testament, these negatives imply either a positive or negative answer in rhetorical questions,⁶³¹ and when used together [the double negative], are emphatic.⁶³²
- Such seemingly simple things, as use of the definite article in both Hebrew and Greek, may be filled with nuances which are highly significant, yet untranslatable.

third is contingent [probable future action], and the fourth, less probable action. Each of these has a definite grammatical const.

⁶²⁹ Matt. 4:3, εἰ υἱὸς εἶ τοῦ θεοῦ, εἰπέ ἵνα οἱ λίθοι οὗτοι ἄρτοι γένωνται. A first class cond. sent. assumes the condition to be true, and so ought to be translated “since you are...”

⁶³⁰ When used in commands, the Heb. negs. are **לֹא** with the imperf. to denote an absolute, abiding or perpetual command (see eight of the Ten Commandments), and **אַל** to denote a command with immediate, but not necessarily abiding implications.

⁶³¹ Nicodemus actually said, “A man cannot be born the second time old [emph.] being...he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb can he and be born? Of course not! πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὄν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δεύτερον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι; The neg. μὴ implies a “No” answer.

⁶³² E.g., Heb. 13:5, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.” οὐ μὴ σε ἀνῶ οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ σε ἐγκαταλίπω. There are five negs. here in the occurrences of both οὐ and μὴ and the term οὐδ’, and also an emph. word–order, and so, lit: “Never ever [by no means] you [emph.] will I ever [never] [I mean never by any means] leave you!”

The presence of the definite article in Greek stresses identity; its absence stresses quality or character, thus the English may insert the definite article when the Greek would omit it. E.g., Rom. 1:17, “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed...” This is *anarthrous* [absence of the definite article] in the Greek text, stressing the quality or character of Divine righteousness. It is inexplicable that some modern translations and versions insert the indefinite article “a,” completely obscuring the thought. By omitting the definite article, the stress is given to the truth that the focal-point of the gospel is on that very righteousness which God demands.⁶³³

The anarthrous use of the definite article with the emphatic word-order is significant in Jn. 4:24, there the correct translation would be “God is spirit,” referring to the nature or essence of God. Lit: “Spirit God is [as to his essence or nature]!”⁶³⁴

- One or more words may occur between the definite article and its antecedent, marking them out in a descriptive manner which is untranslatable, but greatly significant. E.g., Jude 3, “...the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”⁶³⁵

⁶³³ δικαιοσύνη γὰρ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, καθὼς γέγραπται· ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεως ζήσεται. Note further that the word “righteousness” is emphatic by position, the verb is in the perfect tense, denoting “stands revealed,” ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, means “by faith from start to finish,” and in the quotation from the Old Testament, ἐκ πίστεως is emphatic by position.

⁶³⁴ Jn. 4:24, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός... Our Lord emphasized the essence of God and then drew a good and necessary consequence that true worship derives from and corresponds to the essence of God, i.e., it must also be in spirit and in truth.

⁶³⁵ τῇ ἅπαξ παραδοθείσῃ τοῖς ἁγίοις πίστει. The def art. τῇ is construed with πίστει. The words gathered between are emphatically descriptive of this kind of faith. It is the faith [doctrinal content] unique to Christianity, which was one time (ἅπαξ, once-for-all) delivered to Christians. In English we would hyphenate all into one word as a single grammatical unit or term, i.e., “the-‘once-for-all-delivered-unto-the-saints’-faith.”

E.g., Rom. 10:3, 6, "...God's righteousness...the righteousness which is of faith..." Here the terms are held between the definite article and the noun [its antecedent] in a close syntactical unit which is more definite and forceful than the English can convey.⁶³⁶

- The Greek has some idioms or figures of speech which bear close scrutiny. One is *Chiasmus* [cross], in which the first and third phrases correspond and the second and fourth, e.g., 1 Pet. 3:7, which construes knowledge and weaker vessel, and giving honor with being heirs together: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, as unto the weaker vessel, and giving honour unto the wife, as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."⁶³⁷
- There are a host of nuances denoted by participles, the use of case, number and gender, word-order, phraseology, conditional sentences, etc., which can never be reproduced in translation. These have been termed "untranslatable riches," and are such—a wealth of linguistic significance which must remain with the original languages. Some may be rather insignificant, but many are very significant, and failing to understand such may have great hermeneutical and doctrinal consequences.

Take, for example, "number," i.e., singular or plural. These may well change the significance and thus the interpretation of a given statement: such seemingly minor issues as number [singular or plural] often have great significance, e.g., Lk. 14:16–24, and the Parable of the Great Supper.

⁶³⁶ Rom. 10:3, τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην, "the 'of-God' righteousness." Rom. 10:6, ἡ...ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη, "the 'out-of-faith' righteousness."

⁶³⁷ 1 Pet. 3:7 Οἱ ἄνδρες ὁμοίως, συνοικοῦντες κατὰ γνώσιν ὡς ἀσθενεστέρῳ σκεύει τῷ γυναικείῳ, ἀπονέμοντες τιμὴν ὡς καὶ συγκληρονόμοις χάριτος ζωῆς εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐγκόπτεσθαι τὰς προσευχὰς ὑμῶν.

The context has the Lord of the supper speaking to his servant to go out and compel people to come to the feast, then he states in v. 24, “For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.” But the word “you” is plural.⁶³⁸ It is no longer the Lord who made the Great Supper speaking to his servant, but our Lord applying his parable to those who were sitting and listening at that moment.

E.g., Lk. 22:31, “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not...” The first “you” is plural; the second is singular. Satan desire to have all the disciples to sift them as wheat, but he has to single out Simon Peter, and our Lord specifically prays for him.⁶³⁹

Examples of Mistranslation and Misinterpretation Based on the Latin Language

The early centuries of Christianity witnessed the transition from Greek to Latin as the language of Christianity and of Christian writings and theology (c. 200—). Many of the Church Fathers were deficient in their knowledge of Greek and relied solely on the Latin Versions [*Old Latin Version, Latin Vulgate*]. Only a very few of the Church Fathers and other early Christian writers had any knowledge of Hebrew at all.

This meant the ascendancy of a secondary language, Latin, in the place of the original Hebrew and Greek, and also the universal use of a version of a translation for faith and practice. From this transition to the Latin came a variety of misunderstandings and mistranslations. Two will suffice for examples:

⁶³⁸ Lk. 14:24, λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν...

⁶³⁹ Lk. 22:31–32, Σίμων Σίμων, ἰδοὺ ὁ σατανᾶς ἐξητήσατο ὑμᾶς (pl.)...Satan has desired to have all of you...ἐγὼ δὲ ἐδεήθην περὶ σοῦ (sing.), but I have prayed concerning you...

- The biblical word and doctrine of “adoption,” which occurs five times in our English Bible.⁶⁴⁰ The theological meaning of this term has been based on the Latin, *adoptio*, not the Greek. The doctrine of adoption, we are told, is that declarative act of God as our spiritual Father, simultaneous with justification, whereby he brings into his family and constitutes us as his children or sons. Thus, the *ordo salutis* [order of salvation] is Effectual Calling, Regeneration, Conversion, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification and Glorification.

The Greco–Roman significance of adoption, however, dealt with legal status, and included not only those brought into the family, but also true, natural sons as well. The Greek is literally “placing as a son,” i.e., recognizing one as the legal heir to an estate and to the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship. This alone adequately explains Rom. 8:23, where our adoption is the future glorification of the body and final restoration of creation.⁶⁴¹

- The biblical and theological idea of justification. The Hebrew terms mean “to pronounce just or right.”⁶⁴² The Greek terms can both mean either “to make righteous” or “to declare righteous.”

Note: The New Testament terms are: δικαίω, “justify,” used forensically 30 times, e.g., Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24, 28; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9. δίκαιος, “just” or “righteous,” used forensically some 43 times, e.g., Matt. 9:13; Rom. 1:17; 3:10; 8:30; Jas. 5:16.

⁶⁴⁰ Rom. 8:15 (υιοθεσίας), 8:23 (υιοθεσίαν), 9:4 (ἡ υιοθεσία), Gal. 4:5 (τὴν υιοθεσίαν) and Eph. 1:5 (υιοθεσίαν).

⁶⁴¹ At the time of his majority, a young man was presented to the city dignitaries and was dressed in his *toga virilis*, or manly garment. He was then given full citizenship rights and assumed full responsibility as the heir to the estate. This finds its parallel in our future glorification.

⁶⁴² The Heb. root קָדַשׁ is used in the Hiph'il (causative) קִדְּשׁוּ in the sense of declaring or pronouncing a person just or righteous, e.g., Dt. 25:1; Prov. 17:15. The LXX follows suit with δικαιώσωσιν in Dt. 25:1 and ὃς δίκαιον κρίνει τὸν ἄδικον ἄδικον δὲ τὸν δίκαιον ἀκάθαρτος in Prov. 17:15.

δικαιωσύνη, “righteousness,” used forensically over 40 times, e.g., Rom. 1:17; 4:3, 5–6, 9, 11, 13; 10:3–4, 10; 1 Cor. 1:30. δικαίωσις, “justification,” occ. twice, Rom. 4:25; 5:18. δικαιοῶ is used both in the LXX and in the New Testament. Leon Morris notes that Gk. “verbs ending in –ῶ and referring to moral qualities have a declarative sense; they do not mean ‘to make—’.” He then gives a series of examples.⁶⁴³

The Latin terms are *justificare* and *justificatio*, and may mean either “to pronounce just or righteous” or “to make just or righteous.” This ambiguity has resulted in the false teaching that justification is an infused righteousness [*justitia infusa*] rather than an imputed righteousness [*justitia imputata*].

This error began with the Latin Church Fathers, who missed the forensic nature of the biblical texts and usage, and this became the Romish doctrine which has combined and confused justification with sanctification.

Because of this ambiguity, the meaning of justification must derive from the use of the biblical terms themselves, and not simply their etymology.⁶⁴⁴ Exegesis, hermeneutics and theology are inseparably linked—and all begins with the reading of the text—its words, grammar and syntax.

Examples of Mistranslation and Misinterpretation Based on the English Language

The following examples are taken from varying degrees of misunderstanding or mistranslation of the Greek. The Old Testament Hebrew and the Septuagint [Greek Old Testament] are

⁶⁴³ Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Academic Books, 1986, p. 70.

⁶⁴⁴ Failure in this area has entered into such recent controversies as the “New Perspective on Paul” and the “Federal Vision” Theology which has turned to an infused righteousness and justification by both faith and faithfulness, i.e., a mixture of grace and works. This is a radical break with Evangelical and Reformed Christianity and a turn toward Rome.

not referred to, although they form a distinct body of study in mistranslation and misinterpretation.⁶⁴⁵

Some are examples of grave doctrinal departures, others are less important, and some are simply illustrative of grammatical issues. The common element is that they rely on either the English language in general or the English grammar in particular.

- The Roman Catholics hold the *Latin Vulgate* of Jerome (406 AD)—the version of a translation of the Old Latin, which was itself a translation—to be inspired, as though it were the original language.

The Mormons [“Latter–Day Saints”] publicly promote the *King James Version* of the Bible—and hold it—a version of a translation—to be inspired as the final authority. They have no concept of the nature or importance of the original languages of Scripture.

Some Fundamentalists hold the *King James Version* of the Bible to be Divinely inspired as though it were the original language—a view which is utterly irrational—and thus see no need of or for a study of the original languages.

Note: The view known as “King James Only–ism” is characteristic of some within Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism. Many hold that the KJV was based on the *Textus Receptus*, and so is the only “pure” Bible. This view is both unhistorical and irrational, and based on ignorance.

The Greek text of Erasmus (1516), a Roman Catholic,⁶⁴⁶ was an eclectic text comprised of various manuscripts gathered together uncritically to form almost enough to complete the

⁶⁴⁵ We take but one example from the Heb. of Ruth 3:15, “and she went into the city,” the English Bible referring to Ruth. The text reads **וַיֵּכֵן הָעִיר**, 3 pers. masc. sing. referring to Boaz, i.e., “He went into the city.” The LXX is nebulous (καὶ εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν πόλιν), perhaps taking “her” as the nearer possible antecedent? Boaz was in love and acted immediately, arriving before the elders had assembled at the city gate to sit in judgment on any transaction (Cf. Ruth 4:1–2ff).

⁶⁴⁶ That Desiderius Erasmus was a Romanist is only mentioned because of some who believe that the KJV is “pure,” and all other versions have been tainted or corrupted by Romish writers and influences.

New Testament. Erasmus himself translated the final verses of Revelation from Latin into Greek to complete the work.

This eclectic text became the *Stephanus Text* of 1550, and was the text which served as a basis for the *King James Version* of 1611. This text was later edited again with emendations from Beza's Greek text and in 1633 was described in its publication as "the text received by all," hence the idea of *Textus Receptus*.

The facts of history plainly reveal three issues: first, the so-called *Textus Receptus* is itself an eclectic text. It was the "critical text" of its day, i.e., the best which then contemporary scholarship could produce from the best available sources. It was not a single, mysterious, perpetual text which had been kept "pure" for many centuries.

Second, when the Waldenses made their version in vernacular, the *Romount Version* in 1180, it was translated from the Latin Vulgate. They evidently did not possess the Greek mss. Which has supposedly been kept pure for centuries.

Third, the so-called *Textus Receptus*, as an entity, did not exist until 1633, over twenty years after the King James Version was in print. To assert that the KJV was based on the *Textus Receptus* betrays an ignorance of historical facts and is an anachronism. To say that there is a preserved text is one thing; to say that the text has been preserved is quite another.

Whatever one's belief in such matters, he must take into account the facts of history as well as the preservation of God's Word. Even liberal critics such as Wescott and Hort have admitted that the true text does exist, has been preserved in the existing mss., and has been collated by the process of textual criticism. The text of the Greek New Testament, even by alleged liberal scholars, is about 99.99 percent restored.⁶⁴⁷

Whatever one's views are on textual "families," the Byzantine or Majority Text, or the eclectic, Critical Text, it should be well-thought through and ought to take into account textual, historical the theological issues. Often all the

⁶⁴⁷ See the following for the purity of the Greek text of the NT: B. B. Warfield, *Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, pp. 12–14; H. S. Miller, *General Biblical Introduction*, p. 280; Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, p. 365–6.

truth is not necessarily in one view or another. Pride, prejudice and irrationality make their way even into scholarly circles.

- The Russelites [“Jehovah’s Witnesses”] mistranslate the final clause of John 1:1 as, “...and the word was a god,” denying the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁶⁴⁸ The rules of Greek grammar are misunderstood and thus misapplied, and the English rules of grammar are followed, inserting the indefinite article “a” and thus obscuring the opposite meaning of the Greek idiom [anarthrous use of the def. art.], which actually emphasizes the Deity of our Lord.
- The Campbellites [“Church of Christ” Church] teach that water baptism is essential to salvation from Acts 2:38, “...repent and be baptized...” The two verbs are taken as equal or compound verbs according to the rules of English grammar, giving the argument that “repentance plus baptism equals salvation.”⁶⁴⁹ But the verbs are not equal in the Greek.
- The Pentecostal or Charismatic idea that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is expressed by speaking in “unknown tongues,” i.e., ecstatic utterances, is based on a word added by the English translators and so italicized. The idea is that of foreign languages, not an ecstatic non-linguistic, non-

⁶⁴⁸ The wording of the three independent clauses in John 1:1 are in reality, arguments for His eternity, equality and Deity. The final clause reads, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. The absence of the definite article before θεός, called the “anarthrous use,” in the Greek idiom stresses quality or character. The words are emphatic by position. The clause ought to be translated, “and the word as to his essence was [existed as] [emphatically] God.”

⁶⁴⁹ The Eng. [KJV] of Acts 2:38 grammatically makes “Repent” and “be baptized” compound verbs and thus equal—the classic argument of the Campbellites, but the Greek reads (Μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν). “Repent” is aor. imp. act. pl. “be baptized” is aor. pass imp. sing. i.e., “All of you with a sense of urgency and all determination, Repent!...and [then] let each one of you be baptized.” The former receives the emphasis and the latter has the permissive sense of “let.”

intelligent flow of syllables.⁶⁵⁰ It is not only dangerous, but irrational to base one's doctrine on italicized words added by translators!

- Italicized words are those added to the English text for clarification. However, sometimes added words, not in the Greek text, have been added in the English through a faulty interpretation—and *not* italicized, implying that they do occur in the original language. E.g., Hebrews 2:9, "...should taste death for every man."⁶⁵¹ The word "man" does *not* occur in the Greek—in any text or manuscript. The words "every one" [ὑπὲρ παντός] must be interpreted by the context, and necessarily refer to the "many sons" of v. 10, "they who are sanctified" and the "brethren" of v. 11, "my brethren" of v. 12, "the children which God hath given me" of v. 12. Yet this has become a proof-text for arguing the universality of the atonement, an argument largely based on a non-existent word.
- An example of misunderstood gender in Ruth 3:15. After Ruth and Boaz meet on the threshing floor, and she is laden down with grain, the KJV reads, "and she went into the city," referring to Ruth. The verb, however, is masculine, referring to Boaz.
- Temporal participles are subservient to the main verb. The English may translate a verb as a participle and a participle as a verb,⁶⁵² thus shifting the whole force of a given

⁶⁵⁰ "Pentecostalism" is itself a misnomer, as Pentecost witnessed Spirit-filled men speaking distinctly in other, previously unlearned languages, which the hearers clearly understood. The Corinthian tongues were dubious in nature, and may have been ecstatic utterances. They were, of course, the least of the gifts in that era of temporary spiritual revelation. Those who do not make the necessary distinction between the tongues of Pentecost and Corinth greatly err.

⁶⁵¹ Hebrew 2:9, ὑπὲρ παντός γεύσεται θανάτου. Lit: on behalf of every one [sing.] he might taste [experience] death.

⁶⁵² The Gk. of the New Testament abounds in the use of ptcs. A ptc. is a verbal adjective, and so, if used with a temporal significance, is always subordinate to the main verb.

statement, or fail to properly carry the relationship between a participle and a verb.⁶⁵³

- At times, possibly because of a euphemism [phrasing something in a more pleasing or acceptable way, and avoiding harsh or offensive terms], some words may *not* be translated into English. Cf. Rom. 9:10, which reads in the KJV, “And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac...” The word “one” in English seems to refer to Isaac. The full, correct translation, however, would be “...by one sexual act [or emission of sperm]...”⁶⁵⁴ The emphasis is on the minuteness of Divine predestination that in one emission of sperm. From Isaac, two nations and destinies were determined through the conception of the twins.
- Does the Bible command that women wear “modest apparel” in 1 Tim. 2:9? Traditionally, this has been the great proof-text for such teaching. The command is rather for suitable apparel and modest behavior, i.e., the term “modest” is to be construed with “behavior” and not with clothing as the

Note in Heb. 1:1–2, “God...spake...hath spoken...in [his] son...” The first vb. in Eng., however is a ptc. in Gk., putting the stress upon the main vb. which occurs in v. 2, emph. the progressive nature, finality and uniqueness of the Divine revelation in the Lord Jesus Christ, (ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας... ἐλάλησεν... ἐν υἱῷ) i.e., “God...having spoken...spoke...in [his] son...” Note that the words “in son” use the loc. sense, and “son” is anarth., i.e., God spoke *through* the prophets, but in a unique and final way *in* the Lord Jesus Christ who is his “Son.” Our Lord was and *is* the unique revelation of God. It was an “in son” kind of revelation—a subtlety completely lost in the Eng.

⁶⁵³ E.g., Matt. 28:19 (πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε), “having gone, therefore, make disciples!” Lk. 18:11 (σταθεὶς...προσηύχeto), “having taken his stance...began [and continued] to pray.” Acts 17:22 (Σταθεὶς δὲ [ὁ] Παῦλος...ἔφη), “then Paul, having taken his stand [assumed the stance of an orator with his hand outstretched, palm upward, to address the court]...said.”

⁶⁵⁴ Rom. 9:10, ἐξ ἑνὸς κοίτην. Lit: out of one sexual act [emission of sperm].

English Bible assumes.⁶⁵⁵ Modesty begins with one's behavior, not with one's dress. This strengthens rather than weakens the mandate.

- Most Christian churches have women Sunday School or Bible teachers, never questioning the scriptural teaching of 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 or 1 Timothy 2: 8–15.

Yet the Scriptures are very clear that men are to assume the leadership and women are to remain silent and be in submission. Some would interpret 1 Tim. 2:12 to mean simply that women should not teach men, but the Greek does not support this argument, forbidding to women a teaching position altogether in the context of the church.

Note: But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. Note that the comma after "teach" is an attempt to equate the Greek, which teaches that: (1) the woman is not to be in a teaching position within the sphere of the church, (2) she is not to usurp authority over the man, and (3) She is to remain in silence. Note: διδάσκειν δὲ γυναικὶ οὐκ ἐπιτρέπω οὐδὲ ἀυθεντεῖν ἀνδρός, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ. This ought to be literally translated: "But to teach [emph.], a woman [emph.] I do not allow [permit], nor to usurp authority over a man [be in a position of leadership or authority in the church], but [quite the opposite] to be in silence [quietness]."

Modern thinking, however, has replaced biblical teaching to such an extent that truth is ridiculed at the very thought that women should not teach in the sphere of the church.

The compromise idea that a "Sunday School" is not part of a church and its ministry is utterly absurd. If "Sunday School" is not an essential part of the church's ministry, then what church would be scriptural? The answer must be, the church that does not have a "Sunday School." Such reasoning leads to absurdities. Whatever one's view, it must be aligned to the

⁶⁵⁵ 1 Tim. 2:9, "...Ὡσαύτως [καὶ] γυναικάς ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης..." "suitable or proper clothing," καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ, i.e., orderly. "with modesty and sound judgment [decency]," μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης refers to one's behavior.

Scriptures, and not simply based on tradition, religious politics or accomodation.

- Another example of English punctuation obscuring the meaning of the text occurs in Eph. 4:11, where apostles, pastors, teachers, etc., are given by Christ “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry...” The comma after “saints” ought to be omitted. Saints are to be equipped through the preaching and teaching ministry for the service of Christ.⁶⁵⁶
- The translation or interpretation of certain words as “perfect” rather than “mature,” “complete,” “completely developed,” or “finished,” has led some to espouse a “Christian” or “sinless” perfectionism.”

Note: The statements which may be construed to buttress the doctrine of perfectionism are listed after the following Greek terms or their cognates. All which refer to human beings in a spiritual sense ought to be translated as follows: (1) τελειόω, τελειώσις, τελειότης, τέλειος, ἐπιτελέω connote “coming to an end, and thus completion, being finished, mature, adult,” e.g., Matt. 5:48; 19:21; Jn. 17:23; 1 Cor. 2:6; 2 Cor. 12:9; Gal. 3:3; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 3:12, 15; Col. 1:28; 4:12; Heb. 5:9; 10:1; 11:40; 12:23; Jas. 1:4; 2:22; 3:2; 1 Jn. 4:17–18; (2) ἄρτιος, καταρίζω, καταρτισμός, κατάρτισις connote “to be fully-limbed, symmetrically developed, completed, outfitted,” e.g., Lk. 6:40; 2 Cor. 13:11; 2 Tim. 3:17; Heb. 13:21; 1 Pet. 5:10; (3) πληρόω means “to fill up” and so “to complete,” Rev. 3:2.

Such teaching began with John Wesley as a rather relative “Christian perfectionism” which was a complete dedication of love to Christ and later developed into the Oberlin or sinless perfectionism of Asa Mahan and Charles Finney, and then furthered in a modified form by A. B. Simpson.⁶⁵⁷ Some elements of modern evangelicalism retain a non–Pentecostal

⁶⁵⁶ Eph. 4:12, πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας... “for the equipping [outfitting] of the saints for [unto] the work of ministering or service.”

⁶⁵⁷ For a history of perfectionism and its distinctives, see B. B. Warfield, *Perfection and Perfectionism*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, 1971. 464 pp.

modified form of perfectionism as “The Higher Life” Movement and the “Keswick Movement.”

- The words of our Lord to Mary Magdalene in John 20:17, “Touch me not...” have been alleged to mean that because he, as our Great High Priest, had not yet ascended to offer the sacrifice, she must not pollute him by any physical contact, are without sufficient foundation.

This argument has been used to counter the seeming contradiction of Matthew 28:9, where the two Marys are described as having “held him by the feet and worshipped him.” Actually, the present imperative of prohibition ought to be translated, “Stop clinging to me” rather than “touch me not.”⁶⁵⁸

- It is commonly thought and taught that the pronoun “it” in Romans 6:12 refers to “sin,” which is the subject of the sentence. “It,” however, refers to “body,” not because it is the nearer antecedent, but because it agrees grammatically in gender with “body.”⁶⁵⁹
- What does the word “which” refer to in Hebrews 12:14? Does it refer, as in English, to both “peace...and holiness” as compound direct objects, or to one or the other?⁶⁶⁰ Is a kind of pacificism included as a requirement “to see the Lord”? The Greek grammar is decisive.
- Eph. 6:19, “...that I may open my mouth boldly...” is often used as a prayer request for boldness in opening one’s mouth

⁶⁵⁸ μή μου ἄπτου, pres. imp. of prohib. “Stop clinging to me!” It was not out of fear of contamination as the Great High Priest sanctified to offer sacrifice, but as the Great High Priest who was not to be detained.

⁶⁵⁹ Μὴ οὖν βασιλευέτω ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶν σώματι εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ. “It” [αὐτοῦ] is neut. sing., as is “body” [σώματι]. “Sin” [ἡ ἁμαρτία] is fem. sing. The body is no longer the boss of the truly converted individual.

⁶⁶⁰ Εἰρήνην διώκετε μετὰ πάντων καὶ τὸν ἁγιασμόν, οὐ χωρὶς οὐδεὶς ὄψεται τὸν κύριον... The word “which” [οὗ] is masc. sing., referring to “sanctification” [τὸν ἁγιασμόν], not “peace” [Εἰρήνην] which is fem. Holiness is the one great requirement for heaven.

to proclaim the gospel. The word “boldly,” however, is not to be construed with opening one’s mouth, but rather with the following, “to make known the mystery of the gospel.”

This may not be vitally important, but it is an example as to the influence of the English text and punctuation upon one’s theology and thus upon one’s thought and prayers.⁶⁶¹

- The word “whosoever” in John 3:16 is non-existent—despite its being a focal-point for modern evangelism, which seeks to be as all-inclusive as possible. The wording is actually intensely personal and emphasizes an intensely personal and persevering faith. The Greek is emphatically definite where the English is somewhat indefinite by evangelistic implication.

Note: John 3:16 is an exegetical or explanatory statement appended to the preceding, v. 14–15. Our Lord approaches Nicodemus on the presuppositional level, destroying his religious presuppositions—physical descent from Abraham, circumcision and law-righteousness.

Our Lord, taking the Old Testament reference to Moses and the serpent of brass (Numb. 21:4–9), prophesies of his own sacrificial death and emphasizes that one has eternal life through faith alone—an intensely personal, persevering faith. Note the parallel between v. 15 and 16 and the reading, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν, “in order that [a final clause] every single one without exception constantly or characterized as exercising faith [the singular relative participle ὁ πιστεύων with πᾶς] into him...” “To believe in[to]” [πιστεύων εἰς] was a technical expression of that culture and era that clearly denoted utter, unreserved commitment to someone or thing.

- It is widely taught that believers need to “die to sin” in their experience. This is not only common to such traditions as the “Higher Life” movement, the Keswick [non-Pentecostal]

⁶⁶¹ Eph. 6:19, καὶ ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ [and for me], ἵνα μοι δοθῆ λόγος [in order that to me might be given a word, utterance] ἐν ἀνοίξει τοῦ στόματός μου [in the act of opening my mouth], ἐν παρρησίᾳ γινώρισαι [with boldness or unreservedness of speech to make known] τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελίου...

holiness movement, and to many in the Evangelical tradition, it is also taught in some of the old Reformed and Baptist Catechisms.⁶⁶²

Such teaching is based on passages such as Romans 6:1–10; Galatians 5:24 and Ephesians 4:22–24, making dying to sin, or becoming “dead to sin” an experience to be sought by those who desire to become preeminently spiritual.

This, however, is a teaching based on an inaccurate and inadequate translation of the Greek. Note the following: first, the words referring to “being dead” to sin in Rom. 6:1–10 are all in the aorist tense, denoting a past event, a punctiliar action, and ought to be translated “died,” not “dead.” The believer’s union with Christ has changed his relationship to sin.

Note: Cf. Rom. 6:2, μὴ γένοιτο. May it never be! οἵτινες ἀπεθάνομεν τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ, such ones as we are (qualitative. pers. pron.) who died to sin, πῶς ἔτι ζήσομεν ἐν αὐτῇ; How shall we live any longer in it?! Cf. aor. ἀπεθάνομεν “died.” (Every occ. of “dead” is aor., and should be so translated from v. 2–10).

Second, this past event (denoted by the aorist tense) was our union with Christ in his death and resurrection–life at regeneration, which means for the believer that the reigning power of sin has been broken, and he now lives in the context of the resurrection–life and power of the Holy Spirit, necessitating a converted life (Romans chapter six, the entire passage).⁶⁶³

⁶⁶² The *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, followed by those of Keach and Spurgeon, reads:

Q. 35. What is sanctification?

Ans. Sanctification is the work of God’s free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.

⁶⁶³ What exactly is the believer’s relation to sin if he “died to sin” and yet still sins? The necessary distinction must be made between living in sin (under its dominating or reigning power) and committing acts of sin. The believer no longer *lives* under ἁμαρτήσωμεν, the reigning power of

Third, Romans 6:11 uses a different term, “corpse,” a noun, not a verb.⁶⁶⁴ Believers are to reckon themselves to be “corpses” with respect to sin, i.e., having already “died” by virtue of their union with Christ. We are to reckon ourselves to be, as it were “corpses” [totally, wholly unresponsive] to the solicitations of sin, which was once our ruling master but has now been dethroned. Note the remarks in the preceding paragraph, and also the context of the entire chapter.

Fourth, the passages in Eph. 4:22–24 and Col. 3:9–10 are parallel, both containing the use of the aorist infinitive of result,⁶⁶⁵ i.e., *believers have already put off the old man and put on the new by virtue of their union with Christ*. Thus, both statements (Col. 3:9–10 being translated correctly in the English version) refer to a past event and present fact, not to an exhortation to be realized in one’s experience. Thus, a body of erroneous and widely–accepted teaching has arisen because it is based solely on the English text and grammar.

sin, but he still commits acts of sin (Cf. Rom. 6:15, and 1 Jn. 2:1 ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτητε. καὶ ἂν τις ἀμάρτη... Both are aor., and so ref. to acts of sin). Modern Fundamental and Evangelical Christianity, with their doctrine of the “carnal Christian” heresy, unwittingly deny the necessary and practical implications of the believer’s union with Christ.

⁶⁶⁴ Rom. 6:11, ὑμεῖς λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς [εἶναι] νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἀμαρτία... οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογίζεσθε ἑαυτοὺς [εἶναι] νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἀμαρτία ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

This statement, the first practical admonition or application in the Roman Epistle, declares that believers are to be totally unresponsive to their old master because they have been brought into union with Christ, which means a new sphere of life and activity. Sin, though no longer our ruling master, yet seeks to recruit, as it were, our members to wage a “guerilla warfare” against the reign of grace.

⁶⁶⁵ Eph. 4:22–24, ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον...καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον... Col. 3:9–10, ἀπεκδυσάμενοι τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον... καὶ ἐνδυσάμενοι τὸν νέον... See John Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, pp. 202–221 for a thorough discussion of the use of the aor. inf. of result and also of the experiential aspects of the believer’s union with Christ.

- It is traditional to speak and sing about the “fiery trials” of our faith (1 Pet. 4:12). Part of the scriptural basis for this traditional saying is found in 1 Peter 1:7, and the words, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” What does the pronoun “it” refer to? “faith” or “gold?” It refers to “gold,” not “faith”—although some trials are called “fiery” by Peter.⁶⁶⁶
- An example of *eisegesis*—reading a foreign meaning into the text—is found in the idea of the “backslidden Christian.” It is commonly accepted by Christians of almost every doctrinal persuasion that a believer can “backslide,” i.e., slide or gradually slip back into former sinful ways or habits. The major proof-text for such a doctrine is Proverbs 14:14, “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways...”

The whole idea pictured by “backsliding” is erroneous. The term and its cognates occur seventeen times in Scripture, all in three books of the Old Testament: Proverbs (once), Jeremiah (twelve times) and Hosea (three times). With the possible exception of the statement in Proverbs, every instance refers to the rebellion and apostasy of Israel.

The English term is an *interpretation* of four Hebrew terms and a variety of Greek terms in the LXX.⁶⁶⁷ The comprehensive picture is one of turning back, open rebellion,

⁶⁶⁶ ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ἡμῶν τῆς πίστεως πολυτιμότερον χρυσίου τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου διὰ πυρὸς δὲ δοκιμαζομένου... “Faith” [τῆς πίστεως] is fem. sing.; “gold” [χρυσίου] is neut. sing. and the words “though it be tried” are also neut. sing. [τοῦ ἀπολλυμένου]. The grammatical gender determines the antecedent of the pronoun.

⁶⁶⁷ (1) The most common term [10 times] מְשֻׁבָּה, “to turn back, apostatize” (Jer. 2:19 [LXX, ἡ ἀποστασία σου]; 3:6, 8, 11, 12; 5:6; 8:5; 14:7; Hos. 11:7; 14:4). (2) The next most common term [5 times] שׁוּבָב, “back-turning, apostasy” (Jer. 3:14, 22 [LXX: ἐπιστράφητε υἱὸ ἐπιστρέφοντες]; 8:5; 31:22; 49:4). (3) סְרִיָּה, Qal. ptc., “characterized as rebellious or stubborn” (Hos. 4:16). (4) סִיג, Qal. ptc., “a characteristic turning back, being recreant, proving faithless, apostate (Prov. 14:14).

a refractory shoulder which throws off the yoke, and apostasy. The idea of sliding or skipping backwards, or the common preaching *simile* of a cow sliding back into a mud hole while trying to get out is based on a thought conjured from the English language.

It is diametrically opposed to the idea of the Hebrew. While a Christian may be taken in sin, a mere professing believer may eventually apostatize, but it is highly questionable to import an Old Testament doctrine into the New Testament by a process of eisegesis. If “backsliding” is equated with apostasy, there may be some correspondence.

- The Greek has its share of idiomatic expressions. One is the objective genitive,⁶⁶⁸ i.e., “when the noun in the genitive receives the action, being related as the object to the verbal idea contained in the noun modified.”⁶⁶⁹ E.g., “the preaching of Jesus Christ” [τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ] (Rom. 16:25). It is not our Lord who is preaching, but rather the one being preached about.

Mk. 11:22, “Have faith in God” [ἔχετε πίστιν θεοῦ], i.e., it is not God’s faith, but our faith in God, i.e., God is the object of our faith. E.g., Rom. 10:2, “have a zeal of God” [ζήλον θεοῦ], not God’s zeal, but the traditional religious zeal of the Jews.

Cf. Rom. 3:3, “make the faith of God of none effect” [τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργήσει], it is faith in God, not God’s faith, which is made of none effect.

⁶⁶⁸ See Dana–Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 72–83. See also: A. T. Robertson, *Shorter Grammar*, pp. 224–232; A. T. Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, pp. 491–551; Blass–Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, pp. 89–100; J. H. Moulton, *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, I, pp. 72–74; III, pp. 207, 210–212; IV, p. 84; C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom–Book of New Testament Greek*, pp. 39–41; and Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 92–95.

⁶⁶⁹ Dana–Mantey, *Loc. cit.*, p. 78.

The importance of this idiomatic use is seen in such passages as: Rom. 3:22; Gal. 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph. 3:12; Phil. 3:9. In each of these passages, the KJV reads, "...the faith of Christ."

The correct translation of the objective genitive is "faith in Christ." From a misunderstanding [ignorance] of the obj. gen., has derived the irrational idea that one is saved "by Christ's faith." Aside from being a denial of a recognized idiom, such would have a profound effect on the Deity of our Lord (a "lesser deity"?).

If Mk. 11:22, an objective genitive, is translated, "Have faith in God," rather than "Have God's faith," then why not these other passages referring to Christ? It would also work great confusion concerning our justification by faith and other major doctrines.

IV

Testimonies from the Past concerning the Importance of Studying the Original Languages⁶⁷⁰

Striving for a practical working knowledge or even a basic acquaintance with the Greek New Testament and some knowledge of the Hebrew may indeed be the single most important and significant effort of your Christian life and experience. It will open to you the very Word of God, and not merely a version of a translation. It will enable you to meet with the triune God in his Word without a translator or an interpreter. It will enable you to experience the very conviction, fervency, emotion, and force of the truth that the very first readers experienced.

It will determine your whole approach to the study of the Scriptures. It will give consistency, depth, maturity and discernment to your perspective of doctrine, theology and Christian experience.

⁶⁷⁰ Notes: (1) Italics or bold print have not been used, except as they might be used by the authors themselves, as the entire quotations should be read and contemplated. (2) In some cases, the exact location of the quoted material is unknown.

It will largely determine what books you will purchase, and what you will read. It will necessarily change your life in the context of its truth. It will make you a stronger, and a more intelligent and consistent Christian because the vital force of the truth you study will necessarily transform your life through the Spirit and grace of God.

Martin Luther

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was the German leader of the Protestant Reformation, who, by the study of the Scriptures in their original languages, found the grace of God and the freedom from sin that only comes by that grace. On this ground, he became convinced that reading Greek and Hebrew was one of the greatest privileges and responsibilities of the Reformation preacher, so as to preserve a pure gospel.

Whoso is armed with the Text, the same is a right Pastor, and my best advice and counsel is, that we draw water out of the true Fountain; that is, diligently to read in the Bible. He is a learned Divine that is well-grounded in the Text; for one text and sentence out of the Bible is of far more esteem and value than many writings and glosses, which neither are strong, sound, nor armour of proof.

Few arguments for the importance of biblical languages are clearer than Luther's 1524 treatise, "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools." The following is an excerpt from this work.

And let us be sure of this we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which this jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments. If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall...lose the gospel...

Experience too has proved this and still gives evidence of it. For as soon as the languages declined to the vanishing point, after the apostolic age, the gospel and faith and Christianity itself declined more and more...On the other hand, now that the languages have been revived, they are bringing with them so bright a light and accomplishing such great things that the whole

world stands amazed and has to acknowledge that we have the gospel just as pure and undefiled as the apostles had it, that it has been wholly restored to its original purity, far beyond what it was in the days of St. Jerome and St. Augustine...

Yes, you say, but many of the fathers were saved and even became teachers without the languages. That is true. But how do you account for the fact that they so often erred in the Scriptures?...Even St. Augustine himself is obliged to confess...that a Christian teacher who is to expound the Scriptures must know Greek and Hebrew in addition to Latin. Otherwise, it is impossible to avoid constant stumbling; indeed, there are plenty of problems to work out even when one is well versed in the languages.

There is a vast difference therefore between a simple preacher of the faith and a person who expounds Scripture, or, as St. Paul puts it, a prophet. A simple preacher (it is true) has so many clear passages and texts available through translations that he can know and teach Christ, lead a holy life, and preach to others.

But when it comes to interpreting Scripture, and working with it on your own, and disputing with those who cite it incorrectly, he is unequal to the task; that cannot be done without languages. Now there must always be such prophets in the Christian church who can dig into Scripture, expound it, and carry on disputations. A saintly life and right doctrine are not enough.

Hence languages are absolutely and altogether necessary in the Christian church, as are the prophets or interpreters; although it is not necessary that every Christian or every preacher be such a prophet, as St. Paul points out in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4...

Since it becomes Christians then to make good use of the Holy Scriptures as their one and only book and it is a sin and a shame not to know our own book or to understand the speech and words of our God, it is a still greater sin and loss that we do not study languages, especially in these days when God is offering and giving us men and books and every facility and inducement to this study, and desires his Bible to be an open book.

O how happy the dear fathers would have been if they had had our opportunity to study the languages and come thus prepared to the Holy Scriptures! What great toil and effort it cost them to gather up a few crumbs, while we with half the labor—yes, almost without any labor at all—can acquire the whole loaf!

O how their effort puts our indolence to shame! Yes, how sternly God will judge our lethargy and ingratitude!

Here belongs also what St. Paul calls for in I Corinthians 14, namely, that in the Christian church all teachings must be judged. For this a knowledge of the language is needful above all else. The preacher or teacher can expound the Bible from beginning to end as he pleases, accurately or inaccurately, if there is no one there to judge whether he is doing it right or wrong.

But in order to judge, one must have a knowledge of the languages; it cannot be done in any other way. Therefore, although faith and the gospel may indeed be proclaimed by simple preachers without a knowledge of languages, such preaching is flat and tame; people finally become weary and bored with it, and it falls to the ground. But where the preacher is versed in the languages, there is a freshness and vigor in his preaching, Scripture is treated in its entirety, and faith finds itself constantly renewed by a continual variety of words and illustrations. Hence, Psalm 129 likens such scriptural studies to a hunt, saying to the deer God opens the dense forests; and Psalm 1 likens them to a tree with a plentiful supply of water, whose leaves are always green.⁶⁷¹

Ulrich Zwingli

Ulrich Zwingli, an older contemporary of Luther, and the leader of the Swiss Reformation, was said to have memorized the entire Greek New Testament. It was his strong conviction that the Scriptures form the sole authority of the Christian's life, and thus emphasized their study in the original languages. In his day, Latin was the official academic, ecclesiastical and diplomatic language, thus he emphasized Latin among the languages to be mastered. His comments are, however, still pertinent for this day. The following is from his treatise, *On the Education of Youth*.

Once a young man is instructed in the solid virtue which is formed by faith, it follows that he will regulate himself and richly

⁶⁷¹ "To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany That They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," in *Luther's Works*, ed. W. Bran and H. Lehman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1962), pp. 357–366. Quoted in part from Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew*, pp. 118–120.

adorn himself from within: for only he whose whole life is ordered will find it easy to give help and counsel to others.

But a man cannot rightly order his own soul unless he exercises himself day and night in the Word of God. He can do that most readily if he is well versed in such languages as Hebrew and Greek, for a right understanding of the Old Testament is difficult without one, and a right understanding of the New Testament is equally difficult without the other.

But we are instructing those who have already learned the rudiments, and everywhere Latin has the priority. In these circumstances I do not think that Latin should be altogether neglected. For an understanding of the Holy Scripture it is of less value than Hebrew and Greek, but for other purposes it is just as useful. And it often happens that we have to do the business of Christ amongst those who speak Latin. No Christian should use these languages simply for his own profit or pleasure: for languages are gifts of the Holy Ghost.

After Latin, we should apply ourselves to Greek. We should do this for the sake of the New Testament, as I have said already. And if I may say so, to the best of my knowledge the Greeks have always handled the doctrine of Christ better than the Latins. For that reason, we should always direct our young men to that source. But in respect of Greek as well as Latin we should take care to garrison our souls with innocence and faith, for in these tongues are many things which we learn only to our hurt: wantonness, ambition, violence, cunning, vain philosophy and the like. But the soul...can safely steer past all these...

I put Hebrew last because Latin is in general use and Greek follows conveniently. Otherwise, I would willingly have given Hebrew precedence, for in many places even amongst the Greeks those who are ignorant of Hebrew forms of speech have great difficulty in attempting to draw out the true sense of Scripture...

If a man would penetrate to the heavenly wisdom, with which no earthly wisdom ought rightly to be considered, let alone compared, it is with such arms that he must be equipped. And even then he must still approach with a humble and thirsting spirit.⁶⁷²

⁶⁷² Quoted in part from Gary D. Pratico and Miles V. Van Pelt, *Ibid*, pp.135–136.

Herman Witsius

Herman Witsius, a seventeenth century Dutch scholar and theologian wrote:

Let him apply himself diligently to the acquisition of different languages, and especially to those which God has distinguished by making them the channels of conveyance for His heavenly oracles, that he may understand God when He speaks, as it were, in His own language, that he who acts as the interpreter of God and hears the word at His mouth, may not require an interpreter for himself.⁶⁷³

John Owen

John Owen was one of the greatest of the Puritan writers and preachers. He was also Vice Chancellor of Christ's College, Oxford, during the Cromwellian Era.

There is in the originals of the Scripture a peculiar emphasis of words and expressions, and in them an especial energy, to intimate and insinuate the sense of the Holy Ghost unto the minds of men, which cannot be traduced into other languages by translations, so as to obtain the same power and efficacy.⁶⁷⁴

...a great help for the investigation of truth is the diligent study of the Holy Scriptures in those languages in which they were written by the Holy Spirit. Not only is this the only well from which we can draw the original force and meaning of the words and phrases of Divine utterance, but also those languages (especially the Hebrew) possess a weight of their own—a vividness which brings to the understanding fine shades of meaning with a power which cannot survive the passage into another tongue.⁶⁷⁵

C. H. Spurgeon

C. H. Spurgeon was one of the greatest and most widely used preachers ever called and gifted by God. His attainments were largely through self-effort, yet he personally studied the Scriptures in the original languages.

⁶⁷³ Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Divine Covenants between God and Man*.

⁶⁷⁴ John Owen, *Works* IV, p. 270.

⁶⁷⁵ John Owen, *Biblical Theology*, p. 701.

A man to comment well should be able to read the Bible in the original. Every minister should aim at a tolerable proficiency both in the Hebrew and the Greek. These two languages will give him a library at a small expense, an inexhaustible thesaurus, a mine of spiritual wealth.

Really, the effort of acquiring a language is not so prodigious that brethren of moderate abilities should so frequently shrink from the attempt. A minister ought to attain enough of these tongues to be at least able to make out a passage by the aid of a lexicon, so as to be sure he is not misrepresenting the Spirit of God in his discourses, but is, as nearly as he can judge, giving forth what the Lord intended to reveal by the language employed.

Such knowledge would prevent his founding doctrines upon expressions in our version when nothing at all analogous is to be found in the inspired original.⁶⁷⁶

J. M. Reu

John Michael Reu was a professor of Homiletics at Capital Seminary, and noted the great importance of the original languages as a basis for preaching.

If the preacher, owing to defective preparation, has no Hebrew, he may find a...stopgap...As for the preacher incapable of using the Greek New Testament, he will have difficulty to prove his right to exist.⁶⁷⁷

Thomas Murphy

Thomas Murphy, a nineteenth century pastor and author of a volume on Pastoral Theology, devotes a chapter to “The Pastor in the Study,” and in this chapter, a section on “The Study of Hebrew and Greek.” His comments are worthwhile:

It is to be feared that most pastors, as soon as they leave the theological school and enter upon the hard work of the ministry, drop the study of the original languages. At the very time when they are ready to enjoy the reading of the sacred word in the tongues in which it was first written, and to profit by it, and to go on improving in the exercise, they lay it aside, in very many cases to be taken up no more.

⁶⁷⁶ C. H. Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*, pp. 24–25.

⁶⁷⁷ J. M. Reu, *Homiletics*, p. 340.

By so doing, they lose, in a great measure, the advantages of an important study of the previous years. The commencement of one's ministry is the time, and the only time, for averting this danger. The knowledge already acquired should be carefully kept up. It should be increased until the sacred languages could be read with ease and pleasure. Some plan for persevering in this study should be adopted at the beginning.

It need not take much time. Want of time arising from the pressure of other duties is generally the great obstacle. But there need not be many hours spent in it. One hour a week devoted to the Hebrew and one to the Greek will serve to keep up that knowledge of them already attained, and even to make a little progress....

The knowledge which is at first fresh is easily retained, and then, if ever so little is added to it from week to week, it will gradually grow into a grand attainment in years. The systematic study may be very much aided by the careful examination in the original of each text with its context which is taken up for sermon or lecture. Some ministers keep up their knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek fairly in this way.

The slowness of the progress, and the imperfect knowledge of these languages already attained, very often at first discourage from attempting further effort. It is so tedious to search out the interpretation of a passage, there is so little satisfaction in the operation, and there is such a mountain to be overcome before the task will be much easier, that it is frequently given up in despair.

But is it not much if, even with difficulty, a passage can be traced back into the very language in which it was written by men inspired of God? And if present difficulties should be ever so great and present improvement ever so slow, yet what will not steady progress at length achieve? What will not an hour a week, of even the slowest advance, amount to in ten years? The rule should be to keep up what has been already attained, and aim after some improvement, no matter how little.

The advantages...of being acquainted with the original languages of the Scriptures are very great.

1. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Bible can be better understood through the aid of this knowledge than it can possibly be without it....

2. We get nearer to the mind of the Spirit in this way. Every version must necessarily be a remove from it....

3. Out of all the possible languages of the world these were the ones which were providentially chosen for conveying the will of God to man....

4. It must be an unspeakable pleasure to get at the very terms which were written by inspired pens, the very sounds that were uttered by Jehovah, and heard from his lips by his highly-favored servants....

5. To be skilled in these languages gives one an independence in interpreting the Scriptures and an authority in expounding them which cannot be too highly valued....

6. Some of the best modern commentaries on the Scriptures cannot be used to full advantage without a knowledge of these languages....

How much it is regretted by multitudes of older pastors that in the beginning of their ministry they did not undertake and rigidly pursue this study!They feel the great want at every turn in their studies, and mourn that they had not understood it an earlier day and provided against it.⁶⁷⁸

B. B. Warfield

Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield was a professor at Princeton Seminary, continuing the legacy of Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge. He wrote:

Extremes meet. Pietist and Rationalist have ever hunted in couples and dragged down their quarry together. They may differ as to why they deem theology mere lumber, and would not have the prospective minister waste his time in acquiring it. The one loves God so much, and the other loves him so little, that he does not care to know him. But they agree that it is not worthwhile to learn to know him. The simple English Bible seems to the one sufficient equipment for the minister, because in the fervor of his religious enthusiasm, it seems to him enough for the renovating of the world, just to lisp its precious words to man. It seems to the other all the theological equipment a minister needs, because in his view the less theology the better.

He considers him ill employed in poring over Hebrew and Greek pages, endeavoring to extract their real meaning—for what does it matter what their real meaning is?...If the minister is simply an advance agent of modern culture, a kind of University—

⁶⁷⁸ Thomas Murphy, *Pastoral Theology: The Pastor in the Various Duties of His Office*, pp. 129–134.

Extension lecturer, whose whole function it is to “elevate the masses” and “improve the social organism”—why, of course art and literature should take the place of Greek and Hebrew, and “sociology” the place of Theology in our seminary curriculum.

If the whole function of the minister is “inspirational” rather than “instructional,” and his work is finished when the religious nature of man is roused to action, and the religious emotions are set surging, with only a very vague notion of the objects to which the awakened religious affections should turn, or the ends to which the religious activities, once set in motion, should be directed—why, then, no doubt we may dispense with all serious study of Scripture...

But, if the minister is the mouth-piece of the Most High, charged with a message to deliver, to expound and enforce; standing in the name of God before men, to make known to them who and what this God is, and what his purposes of grace are, and what is his will for his people—then the whole aspect of things is changed....No second-hand knowledge of the revelation of God for the salvation of a ruined world can suffice the needs of a ministry whose function it is to convey this revelation to men, commend it to their acceptance and apply it in detail to their needs...⁶⁷⁹

Kenneth Wuest

Kenneth Wuest was professor of Greek at Moody Bible Institute and the author of several volumes on Greek studies. He noted that

The simple application of the rules of Greek grammar and syntax will often lead to the discovery of some tremendous truth which would be passed by unnoticed in the use of the English translation...⁶⁸⁰

“Questions that are answered in hours of wading through commentaries, can often be answered in five minutes by recourse to a Greek lexicon.”⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁹ B. B. Warfield, *Shorter Writings*, I, pp. 371–372.

⁶⁸⁰ Kenneth Wuest, *The Practical Use of the Greek New Testament*, p. 39

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

A. T. Robertson

A. T. Robertson was professor of New Testament Greek at Louisville Seminary and author of several massive, practical works on New Testament Greek.

There is nothing like the Greek New Testament to rejuvenate the world, which came out of the Dark Ages with the Greek Testament in its hand. Erasmus wrote in the preface to his Greek Testament about his own thrill of delight: "These holy pages will summon up the living image of His mind. They will give you Christ Himself, talking, healing, dying, rising, the whole Christ in a word; they will give Him to you in an intimacy so close that He would be less visible to you if He stood before your eyes."

The lexicon may point the way to life...Grammar is a means of grace...

...the Greek Testament....There is no sphere of study where one is repaid more quickly for all the toil expended....the real New Testament is the Greek New Testament. The English is simply a translation of the New Testament, not the actual New Testament....there is much that cannot be translated. It is not possible to reproduce the delicate turns of thought, the nuances of language, in translation. The freshness of the strawberry cannot be preserved in any extract....

It is possible for one to teach himself the elements of Greek so as to get a great deal of benefit from the study of the Greek New Testament....One does not have to be a gifted linguist to follow a course of study like this. It requires only a half hour a day and the determination to stick to it steadily, and one will win out and be glad of it all his life.

The trouble with all translations is that one's mind does not pause long enough over a passage to get the full benefit of the truth contained in it. The Greek compels one to pause over each word long enough for it to fertilize the mind with its rich and fructifying energy. The very words of the English become so familiar that they slip through the mind too easily. One needs to know his English Bible just that way, much of it by heart, so that it will come readily to hand for comfort and for service. But the minute study called for by the Greek opens up unexpected treasures that surprise and delight the soul.⁶⁸²

⁶⁸² A. T. Robertson, *Preface to A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research and The Minister and His Greek New Testament*, pp. 15–21.

Bernard Ramm

The interpreter who interprets Scripture in his modern language is always working with a linguistic veil between himself and the original texts. And he never knows how thin or thick this veil is.⁶⁸³

Concluding Note

There is no greater or more vital study for the Christian than the inscripturated Word of God. To know God's Word as thoroughly and intimately as possible, to know and love its doctrinal propositions, and to consistently apply it to one's life by the grace of God—this is the core and substance of Christianity.

Our love to and service for the Lord Jesus Christ, our faithfulness in every sphere of life, our joy in trial, our strength in temptation, and our glorious anticipation of future glory in the very presence of God, all hang upon our relationship to God's Word. A careful study of the Scriptures, seeking to develop some knowledge of and skill in the original languages, ought to become an integral part of the Christian's practical experience.

⁶⁸³ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, p. 107.

Appendix II: Opening The Text

Verbal, Plenary Inspiration: A Necessary Implication

All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:16⁶⁸⁴

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. Divine inspiration is both verbal [extending to the very choice of words, grammatical constructions and syntactical relationships in the original languages] and plenary [full or extending to every part]. This is the uniform witness of all orthodox Christianity. It is the essential presupposition of true Christianity from which all else derives. Apart from the authority of Scripture in its exactness, one is left with tradition, subjective experience or imagination, none of which are infallible or authoritative.

A necessary implication of verbal, plenary inspiration is that the preacher must open the text.⁶⁸⁵ This must be the inspired source through which he feeds his flock and evangelizes the unconverted. Preaching ought to indulge itself to a given degree when necessary in both exegesis and hermeneutics to open and explain the text and its meaning. Yet this is rarely the case. Sadly, in most pulpits one might merely hold to inspired concepts, as one

⁶⁸⁴ 2 Tim. 3:16, πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος... The reading is singular “every word, nuance, grammatical construction, syntactical relation of Scripture is God–breathed...” Cf. Matt. 4:4. ...It stands written with undiminishing authority [γέγραπται]...Not upon bread alone shall live the Man [οὐκ ἐπ’ ἄρτω μόνῳ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος], but by every word [ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι] that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

⁶⁸⁵ Preaching is to be consistently grounded in biblical doctrine. Biblical doctrine derives from and depends on Divine revelation. Divine revelation depends on language. Language depends on grammar and syntax, and the grammar and syntax of the very Word of God are properly considered only by a careful exegesis in the original language. This is the necessary and logical manifestation of belief in verbal, plenary inspiration. Such a belief and conviction must under gird all preaching.

hears, not careful scriptural exposition, explanation and hermeneutical clarification, but mere general references and proof-texts thrown into the sermon—and often without substantial comment. The emphasis is on an outline, illustrations or the emotions rather than opening the inspired Word of God and expounding it as the basis for the message. The preacher is a prophet—God’s spokesman—one who declares the Word of God. Thus, he must seek to make this Word clear and understandable.

Homiletically, there are essentially two types of sermons: textual and topical, i.e. one either opens and expounds a given passage or finds a text to introduce a given subject. Either way, the text should be opened, i.e., exegeted, expounded and clarified or made plain.

The sermon should flow from the text. Every text mentioned from the pulpit should be commented upon in some way so it suitably fits into the scheme of the message and the people may be fed and taught. Further, a careful distinction ought to be made between interpretation and application. The failure to do so is one of the gravest faults of the pulpit ministry.

The Christian ministry is an instructional ministry—didactic, evangelistic, polemic and apologetic. The minister’s task is not only to declare the gospel, but to educate the congregation. Sitting under a sound, well-rounded ministry in the ordinary church services should be a biblical and doctrinal education. If not, then there is necessarily a given amount of failure in the very nature of that ministry itself. Sitting under a godly, expository ministry for several years ought to approach the character of a seminary education.

What is the testimony of Scripture regarding opening or expounding the text? Moses was not only the first author of Scripture, he was also the first expository preacher. His orations in Deuteronomy were largely an exposition of the Moral Law.⁶⁸⁶ Was

⁶⁸⁶ Dt. 1:5, “...began Moses to declare this law...” “Declare” is בָּאֵר, Pi’el intensive, “to expound, make distinct, clear.” LXX: διασαφήσαι, “to make plain, explain, unfold.”

not this the personal occupation of the “blessed man” in Psa. 1:2?⁶⁸⁷ Consider David and his pondering the meaning and force of the Law (Psa. 119:9, 11, 18, 27). Take careful note of the studies and searching of Daniel in the prophecies of Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2).

Was this not the ancient method adopted by the scribes under Ezra during the Era of Restoration (Neh. 8:1–8)? They “caused the people to understand the law...they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.” The returning remnant from the Babylonian Captivity spoke Aramaic, an ancient Chaldean dialect. The Scriptures were written in Hebrew. The Scribes had to open or expound the text and give the sense so the people could understand the Word of God exactly.

They evidently engaged in both exegesis, or what the text said, and hermeneutics, or what the text meant. The exact meaning of Scripture is of the utmost importance. Our very salvation, doctrinal convictions, Christian experience and hope of eternity rest upon it! This is the essence of the time-worn truth that “the Bible is our sole rule of both faith and practice.” Thus, it behooves us to know it thoroughly.

This was the very approach our Lord took with the Lawyer (Lk. 10:25–26). “What is written in the Law? How readest thou?” This necessarily implies both a careful exegesis and also an interpretation of the text.

The entire passage, which contains the “Parable of the Good Samaritan,” encompasses the whole of expository preaching, from the “What is written in the Law? How readest thou? To the “Go and do thou likewise!” Did not our Lord do the same with his disciples (Matt. 13:52; Lk. 24:25–27, 32, 44–47)?

Note: Matt. 13:52 implies both an instructional ministry and a progression in that ministry. Lk. 24:27 [διερμήνευσεν], unfold the meaning, expound. V. 32 [διήνοιγεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφάς] to

⁶⁸⁷ Psa. 1:2, “...in his Law doth he meditate day and night.” יהגיה, to continually growl, mutter; LXX, μελετήσει, “take pains with, practice.” He carefully mulls over the meaning of the words of the Law constantly until they are memorized.

unfold the sense completely. V. 45 [τότε διήνοιξεν αὐτῶν τὸν νοῦν τοῦ συνιέναι τὰς γραφάς] to open the thought–process completely to comprehend the meaning of the Scriptures.

He completely opened the Scriptures to their understanding, and his “text” was the entire Old Testament! What a great, enlightening sermon that must have been—and no one complained about its depth or length.

Was not the Apostle concerned with an exact exegesis of the text (e.g., Gen. 12:1–3; 22:18; Rom. 1:17; 3:9–18; 4:3,7–9, 13, 16–18; Gal. 3:16)? He took the Abrahamic Covenant in its essence (Gen. 22:18), even to the use of the singular reading in the Hebrew and showed that it referred, not to the “seed of Abraham” in the plural, i.e., the Israelitish people, but in the singular; it referred to the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16).⁶⁸⁸ Did not the Apostle urge Timothy in the strongest language to do a careful exegesis and exposition of the very text of Scripture in 2 Timothy 2:15?⁶⁸⁹

This was also the inspired, customary model of the Apostle Paul (Acts 17:2–3).⁶⁹⁰ This is a graphic illustration of inspired preaching. It ought to be studied closely. This was Paul’s customary method of reaching out to the Jews in the synagogue ministry. The Jews knew their Scriptures, yet were blind to the saving truth contained therein. This the Apostle carefully laid out before his critical audience through a careful exegesis and

⁶⁸⁸ Gen. 22:18, “...in thy seed” is sing. בְּרִצְיָאָה, [LXX: ἐν τῷ σπέρματί σου] as it is in Gal. 3:16, τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ.

⁶⁸⁹ 2 Tim. 2:15. σπουδάσον, aor. imp. Give the utmost diligence! ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας, cutting straight the word of truth, i.e., carefully opening the text and laying it out. Paul knew how to cut a straight line as a worker in *cilicium*, and applied this figure to the text of Scripture. Nothing could be clearer.

⁶⁹⁰ Acts 17:2–3, κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἶωθός, according to his habit or custom, i.e., Paul’s usual method of preaching. διελέξατο αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, aor. verb. “reasoned, thoroughly declared.” διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος. These pres. ptcs. explain the aor. verb. He completely opened [exegeted] the text and then from this he brought forth his reasons. Paul always opened the text as the basis for his preaching. See an instance of this in Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16.

interpretation of the text. What an example to modern preachers who must stand and declare the Word of God to unbelievers and often to those who have been mistaught and need exact instruction and correction!

Some objection might be made against this pervasive principle by appealing to such passages as Acts 17:22–34 and Paul’s address to the Areopagus at Athens. In the greater context of v. 16–34 this address, the first recorded confrontation between Christianity and Greek philosophy, Paul quoted not one passage of Scripture.

The answer is that he had been preaching “Jesus and the resurrection,” i.e., the gospel, for several weeks in the synagogue and on a daily basis in the agora.⁶⁹¹ This address, a culminative and summary statement in the form of a Christian World–and–Life View, was meant to put “Jesus and the resurrection” in their proper historical and redemptive context. Every statement he made was thoroughly grounded in Scriptural truth, although such was not explicitly stated.

Others may object by stating that exegetical and expository preaching would be “over their people’s heads.” The fault lies with the preacher who does not systematically instruct his people in the Word of God. The people will grow in grace, knowledge and spiritual appetite if the preacher himself grows and progresses in his studies, and his studies then develop and enrich his ministry. Rich expository preaching develops the spiritual appetite of God’s people. Remaining limited to spiritual “milk” is a picture of spiritual degeneration, not one of spiritual advancement (Heb. 5:10–14).⁶⁹²

⁶⁹¹ Acts 17:18. συνέβαλλον...ἔλεγον...εὐηγγελίζετο. The use of the imperf. verbs reveal a length of time or a continual confrontation as Paul preached the gospel with authority [καταγγελεὺς]. His was a biblical ministry. The final address only served to put the truth in the context of both world history and a Christian world–view.

⁶⁹² Heb. 5:10–14. Mark the two perf. verbs, “are dull” and “are become” (γεγόνατε...γεγόνατε), both implying a state of degeneration in the knowledge of Divine truth.

The preacher who opens the text will be constantly educated in the Scriptures himself and in corresponding spiritual growth and knowledge. Such a preaching ministry will have at its disposal an infinite store of truth and an inexhaustible room for the growth of the hearers if the text of Scripture is always opened. One should be constantly edified and educated under the ministry.

Conversely, ministers who do not habitually open the text deprive themselves and their hearers of spiritual understanding and growth. One may sit under such a deprived ministry for years and learn very little. May we strive to open the text and seek to make the meaning plain for our hearers. Did not our Lord command, not only to “feed my lambs,” but also to “feed my sheep”?

Appendix III: An Introductory Lecture on our Bible The Importance and Blessing of The Bible

Possessing the Word of God in one's own language is the greatest of all privileges afforded to man. Its study will dispel all superstitious ignorance, enable one to truly know God, himself and the world about him, the future, the present and the past in terms of a Christian Theistic World—and Life View.

The Bible will give him the key to understand himself as the image-bearer of God living at a given point in history. It reveals God in all His Divine attributes, man in his sinfulness and the Lord Jesus Christ in all His redemptive work and glory. The Bible makes perfectly clear the blessed truth of redemption and salvation. All this awesome truth is given in understandable language and meant to be our sole rule of both faith and practice (Psa. 1:2; 119:11, 105).

What Is The Bible?

The Bible⁶⁹³ is one unified Book by One Divine Author, comprised of sixty-six integral or cohesive parts [the various "books" of the Bible]. It is the very Word of God inscripturated [written down]. The Bible is the inspired, authoritative, infallible and inerrant self-revelation of the Triune God to man.

As such it is authoritative in every sphere of life and is to govern every sphere of life—the spiritual, religious, moral, ethical, social, political and physical realms. Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord of this universe and his Word is the believer's law. Thus we may refer to the Bible as the Law—Word of God

If the Bible is the very Word of God preserved in written form [inscripturated]—and it is—then there are certain things that are necessarily true: The Bible is the *inspired* Word of God, not merely the work or words of men. Divine inspiration not only pertains to

⁶⁹³ "Bible," from βίβλος, "book." The opening word of our N.T.: Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ Δαυιδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.

the human authors God used, but the very writings themselves (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20–21).⁶⁹⁴

As the very of God inscripturated, it is self-authenticating through its contents and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Because the Bible is the very Word of God, it is authoritative—the very highest *authority*.⁶⁹⁵

As the very Word of God inscripturated, it is *infallible*—incapable of error and without deceit. As the inspired, authoritative, infallible Word of God inscripturated, it is necessarily *inerrant* or without error and wholly true in every respect.

Because the Bible is the very Word of God and completely trustworthy in every respect, it is *sufficient* as our only rule of both faith [what we are to believe] and practice [how we are to live].

God has seen fit to authenticate and preserve certain books and no others. Together these form the *canon*⁶⁹⁶ or body of Divine truth we call “the Bible” or “the Scriptures.” The process by which only these certain books were duly recognized is called the *canonization* of Scripture.

The Bible is also known as “Scripture,” or “The Scriptures.” The word means “writings”⁶⁹⁷ and refers especially to the Word of God in written form—the Word of God *inscripturated* and

⁶⁹⁴ There were over 31 human authors of the various biblical books, writing over the space of some 1,600 years. Yet their writings were “God-breathed” [θεοπνεύστος, *theopneustos*] through Divine inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16) and coherent. This is verbal, plenary inspiration.

⁶⁹⁵ We presuppose the Bible is the Word of God upon its own testimony. What may be alleged to credential the Scriptures, must have more authority and validity than the Scriptures themselves—the inherent contradiction or incoherence of Evidential Apologetics.

⁶⁹⁶ The word *canon* is derived from the Greek [κανὼν, *canōn*], and originally signified a measuring staff or straight rod. It was probably a derivative of the Hebrew [קָנֶה, *kaneh*], or reed, an Old Testament term for a measuring rod [a reed used as a measuring instrument]. By the time of Athanasius (c. 350), the term “canon” was applied to the Bible, both as the rule of faith and practice, and as the body of inspired and authoritative truth.

⁶⁹⁷ Gk. γραφαί, *graphai*, source of our Eng. “graph–.”

preserved for us. The various formulas, “Scripture says,” “God says,” or “It says” are thus synonymous. The formula found seventy-one times in the New Testament, “It is written”⁶⁹⁸ means that it stands written with full and undiminishing authority.

The Bible is not a book about history, although it comes to us in an historical format.

The Bible is not a book about ethics or morality, although the moral self-consistency [absolute righteousness] of God is predominant and the Christian ethic is a necessary element.

The Bible is not a book about science, although it speaks concerning creation, the universe, the earth, the heavens, plants, animals, man and spirit-beings.

The Bible is not a book about philosophy, although it deals with Epistemology [the science of knowledge and meaning], Metaphysics [ultimate questions concerning God, reality, meaning, life, death, etc.], a distinct World-and-Life view and Ethics [a standard of conduct and moral judgment].

It also speaks about and gives operative principles concerning such diverse issues as civil government, the environment, monetary inflation, sanitation and public welfare.

The Bible is essentially about *salvation*—the history of the eternal, redemptive purpose of the triune God to save sinners from the curse, the reigning power of sin and its ultimate consequences.

The History of our English Bible

The Scriptures were originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic [Chaldee]⁶⁹⁹ and Greek. The Jewish Scriptures, our Old Testament, were translated into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt about 246 BC. This Greek translation, the *Septuagint* [LXX]⁷⁰⁰ was the translation of

⁶⁹⁸ Γεγράπται, *gegriptai*, perf. tense, which connotes an action which commences and is then continuous, i.e., it stands written.

⁶⁹⁹ Aramaic, spoken in and after the Babylonian exile, is called “Hebrew” [Εβραϊς] in the N.T., e.g., Acts 22:2.

⁷⁰⁰ LXX, the designation and abbreviation for the *Septuagint*, stands for the number 70, the traditional number of its translators.

the Scriptures used during our Lord's earthly day and ministry. In the second century of Christianity, the predominate language shifted from Greek to Latin. Various Latin translations became prominent, including the *Old Latin* (c. 200 AD) and especially Jerome's *Latin Vulgate* (c. 406 AD).⁷⁰¹ This latter version would hold sway over institutionalized Christianity⁷⁰² until *Erasmus' New Testament* (c. 1516)⁷⁰³ and the Protestant Reformation (1517–1648).

The history of our English Bible began with the *Wyclife Bible*, an English translation from the *Latin Vulgate* (c. 1384–1395). This was handwritten and copied before the day of the printing press. [The following Bibles were all in printed form and thus widely distributed].

The next major translation in English was the *New Testament* by William Tyndale, translated from the Greek (c. 1525). After his martyrdom, his work on the Old Testament (c. 1530–31) was taken up and published in the *Coverdale Bible* (1535), then the *Matthew's Bible* (1537), the *Great Bible* (1539) and the *Bishop's Bible* (1568).

An English translation was published at Geneva, the *Geneva Bible* (1557–1560). These all had their influence on and were brought to their height of expression in our *King James Version* (1611). The KJV became the most influential and formative book in the English language.

Note: Modern versions of the English Bible or New Testament include: The *English Revised Version* (1881, 1885), *American Standard Version* (1901), *Weymouth N.T.* (1902), *Moffat Bible* (1913, 1924), *Goodspeed Bible* (1923, 1927), *Revised Standard Version* (1946, 1952), *Phillips N.T. in Modern English* (1958), *Berkley Version [Modern Language Bible]*, (1959), *New English Bible* (1961), *Anchor Bible* (1964), *New American Standard Bible*

⁷⁰¹ The *Latin Vulgate* is held by the Church of Rome to be the inspired Scripture, yet it is but a version of a translation, as is the King James Version.

⁷⁰² By "Institutionalized Christianity" is meant the Romish or state church.

⁷⁰³ The Greek N.T. of Erasmus marked the first return to the original languages of Scripture since the second century. The Protestant Reformation came forth with Erasmus' Greek Testament in its hands!

(1966), *New English Bible* (1970), *The Living Bible* (1971), *Good News Bible* (1976), *New International Version* (1979), *New King James Bible* (1982) and the *English Standard Version* (2001).

Note: A version differs from a translation in that it is a version of a previous translation in a second language, uses the grammar, syntax and idioms of that second language and makes much greater allowances for smoothness of reading and expression of thought. In short, a translation holds more closely the original language while a version holds more closely to the second language.

To the extent that a given translation or version expresses the thought and truth of the original language, such a translation or version is the authoritative Word of God. This necessarily takes into consideration the idiomatic expressions of a language, the incapacity of some secondary languages to express the fullness of the original, and a determined faithfulness to the grammar, syntax, context and theology of the text.

Note: Some modern versions are mere paraphrases, not based upon any given text or texts of the original languages. It is vitally important that we have, as nearly as possible, the very Word of God in exact form, as far as translations and versions will allow. There is, however, no substitute for a study of the original languages.

The Structure of our English Bible

It is of primary importance to understand that our English Bible is *not* arranged in chronological order. Rather, the various books are grouped together in an interrelated arrangement.

The English Bible contains 1, 189 chapters; 31, 173 verses; 773, 693 words and 3, 536, 489 letters. The present format of our English Bible into chapters and verses for ease of reference, however, is *not* inspired. The Hebrew Old Testament had various paragraph divisions in the Masoretic Text.⁷⁰⁴ Modern chapter divisions were made in the thirteenth century and the present verse

⁷⁰⁴ Masoretic Text (c. 1100 AD). The standardized pointed Hebrew text, the work of the Massoretes or ancient Hebrew scribes (c. 400–900 AD). The Masoretic Text is divided into 452 lessons. The whole MT has ancient paragraph divisions.

divisions in 1555.⁷⁰⁵ One must read the flow of thought and not allow chapter and verse divisions to obscure any truth.

The Old and New Testaments

The major division in our Bible is that of the Old and the New Testaments. Throughout the Bible runs a principle of progressive revelation. God progressively reveals Himself and His creative and redemptive purposes. These all coalesce in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and the consummation of both creation and redemption (Rev. 4:11; Gen. 3:14–19; Eph. 1:9–11; 2 Pet. 3:7–13). This principle may be generally stated as follows:

The Old Testament is the Shadow—or Preparation⁷⁰⁶

The New Testament is the Substance—or Realization

The interrelation of the two Testaments can be generalized as follows:

The New is in the Old Contained,
The Old is by the New Explained

This principle of progressive revelation is vitally important! It points to the great watershed in Christianity, even among those who claim to believe the Bible is the very Word of God. Some view the Scriptures as merely continuous, thus holding that the New Testament is a mere extension or continuation of the Old. These, as it were, stand in the Old Testament and look at the New Testament through Old Testament eyes, i.e., an Old Testament mentality.

We stand, as it were, in the New Testament and look at the Old Testament through New Testament eyes, i.e., we have a New Testament mentality. This is determinative of our view the Covenant of redemption and grace, salvation, our view of the spiritual nature of the family and the nature of the church and its ordinances.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁵ The modern chapter divisions are the work of Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury (c. 1227). The modern verse divisions were made by Stephanus in his Greek NT (1555).

⁷⁰⁶ Cf. Heb. 10:1, “shadow,” σκίαν, a dim outline.

⁷⁰⁷ All these issues may be noted between Baptists and Reformed paedobaptists.

Viewing the Bible as a progressive unity, we may summarize its arrangement under five headings:

1. Preparation (Old Testament). The entire OT in its history, poetry, types and prophecies points to the coming Messiah and Savior.
2. Manifestation (The Gospels). Matthew, Mark, Luke and John comprise a four-fold composite portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ as the manifestation of God in the flesh, the promised Messiah, effecting our redemption.
3. Propagation (The Acts of the Apostles). This describes the work of the Holy Spirit through the inspired Apostles and the spread of the gospel. The principles of evangelism and missions are revealed for our perpetual obedience and conformity.
4. Explanation (The Epistles). The doctrine given in its basic form by our Lord is amplified and applied by the Apostolic writers, who explain the scope of redemption and how it relates to our experience.
5. Consummation (The Revelation). This is the conclusion of redemptive history and the creative and redemptive purpose of God.

Let us reverence, love and cherish the Holy Word of God inscripturated! Apart from the Scriptures, we have but tradition, experience and emotions—and these will inevitably lead us astray.

