

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

BOOK II

The Doctrine of Revelation

Notes Compiled

By

Dr. Danny Akin

The Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

Wake Forest, NC

Table of Contents

Book II

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page</u>
Bibliology: An Overview	1
<i>When Manuscripts Collide</i> (Wendy Murray Zoba)	2A
Canonization	3
The Bible: The Book for the Ages	18
Revelation: <u>General</u> & <u>Special</u>	19
<i>What About the Heathen?</i> (Justice Anderson)	30A
Donald Bloesch on Revelation & Scripture	31
The Doctrine of Scripture in Historical Perspective	38
Theology and Critical Study of the Bible	60
Emil Brunner on the Bible	61
Episcopalians and the Bible (A tract)	61A
<i>Theological Study Committee of the SBC</i>	62
Doctrine of Inspiration I	65
Jesus and the Scriptures	71
Doctrine of Inspiration II	73
<i>What We Mean When We Say It's True</i> (Timothy George)	74A
Doctrine of Inerrancy I	75
Doctrine of Inerrancy II	81
Criticisms of Inerrancy	91
The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy	99
The Jesus Seminar (chart)	107
<i>The Problem of Error in Scripture</i> (William Dembski)	107A
<i>The Gospel According to the Jesus Seminar</i> (Robert Yarbrough)	108
The Nature of the Bible: A Detailed Summary	116

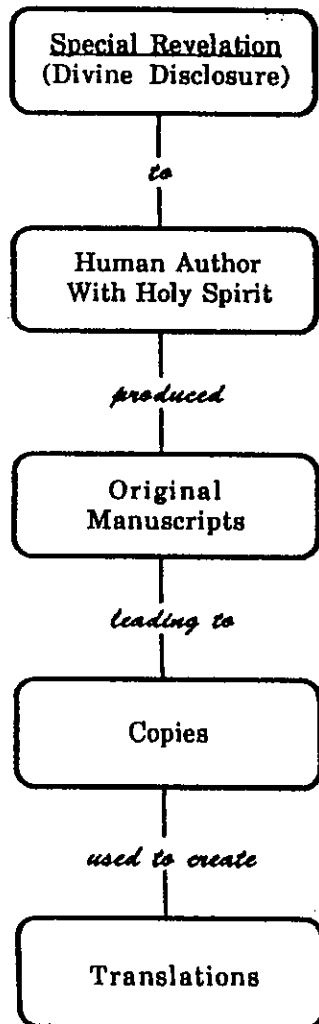
Table of Contents
Book II (cont.)

The Nature of Hermeneutics	126A
Hermeneutics: The Exegetical Process	137
<i>The Nature and Criteria of Theological Scholarship</i>	160A
Stranded Theologically: Tracking Clark Pinnock (R. Albert Mohler, Jr.)	161
<i>Kisses and Veils</i> (Craig Keener)	164
A Summary of the Issues Concerning the Inspiration of the Bible	166
<i>Spiritual Trends Affect Nation's Vision</i> (Mark Knox)	167
<i>Divine Revelation: Fifteen Theses</i> (Carl Henry)	168
<i>The Meaning of Inerrancy</i> (Carl Henry)	170
<i>Positive Statement of the Doctrine of Inspiration</i> (Basil Manly, Jr.)	172
Bible Study in the Life of a Christian (A Study Guide)	173
Sunday School Workers Covenant	200
The Believer and His Bible (An outline of 2 Timothy 3:14-17)	201

Bibliology

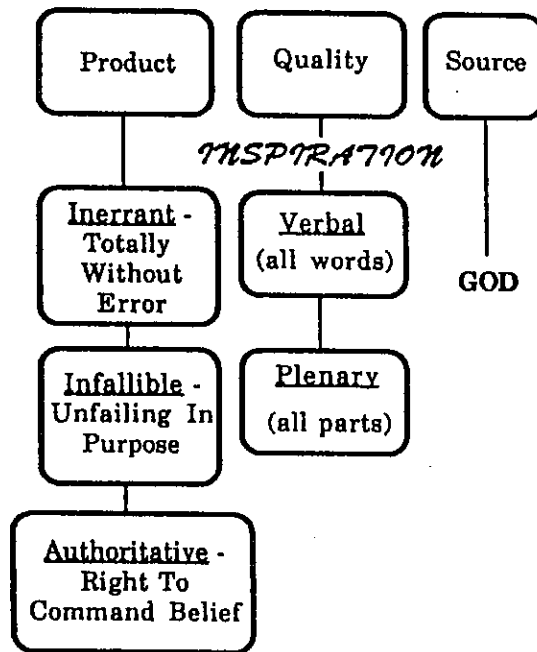
How Did The Bible Come To Us?

ORIGIN



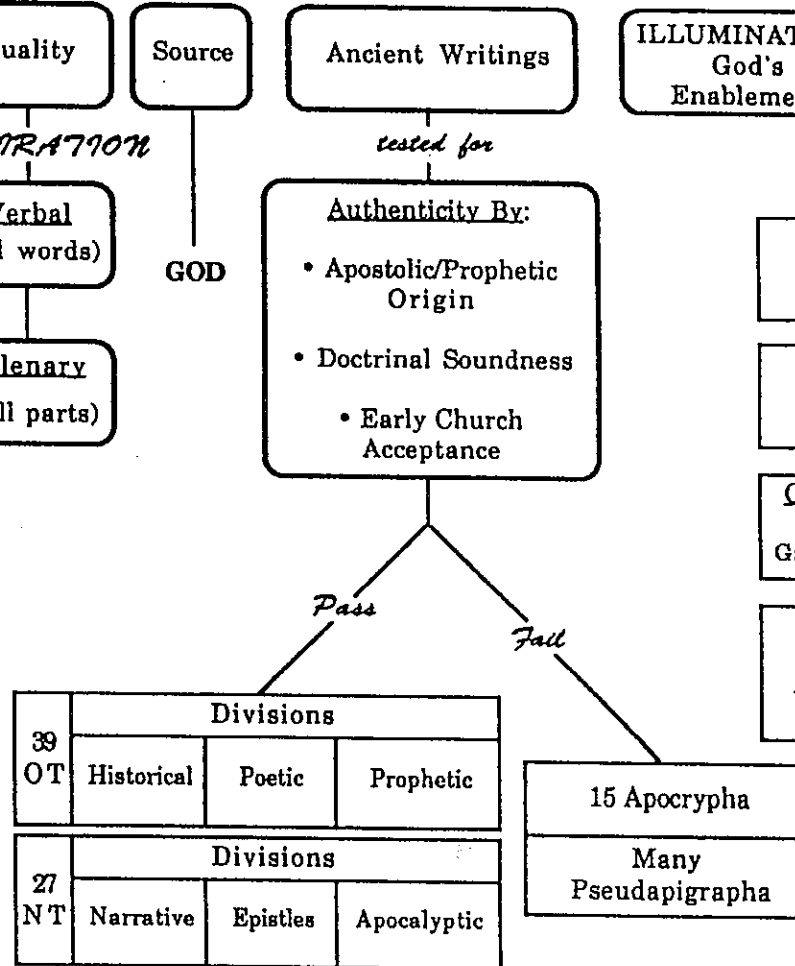
How Do We Know The Bible Is Reliable?

INSPIRATION



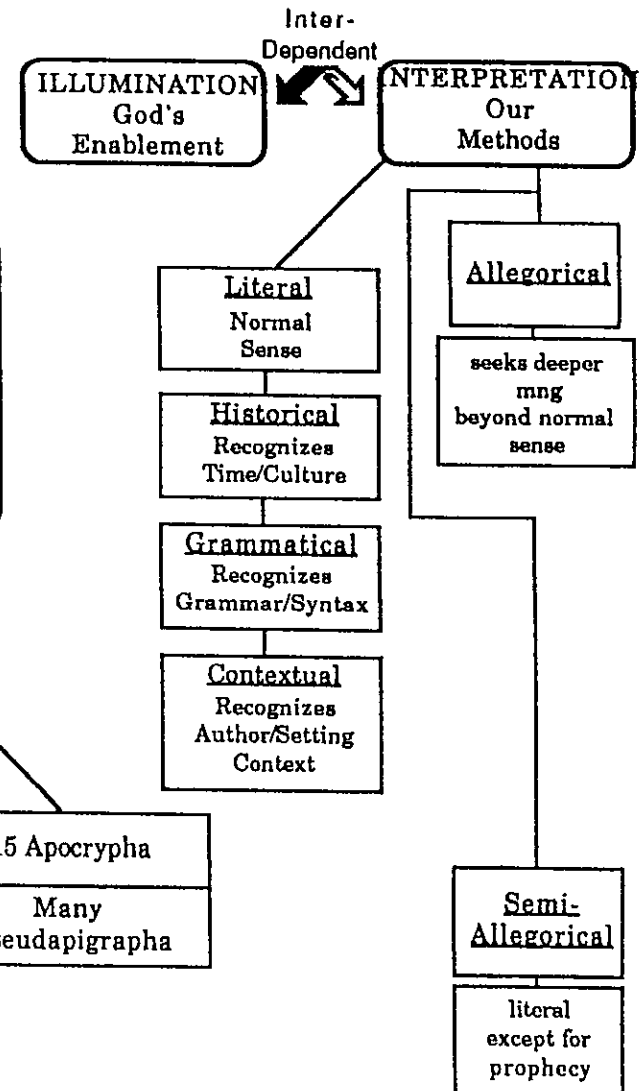
How Did We Select The Books Of The Bible?

CANONICITY

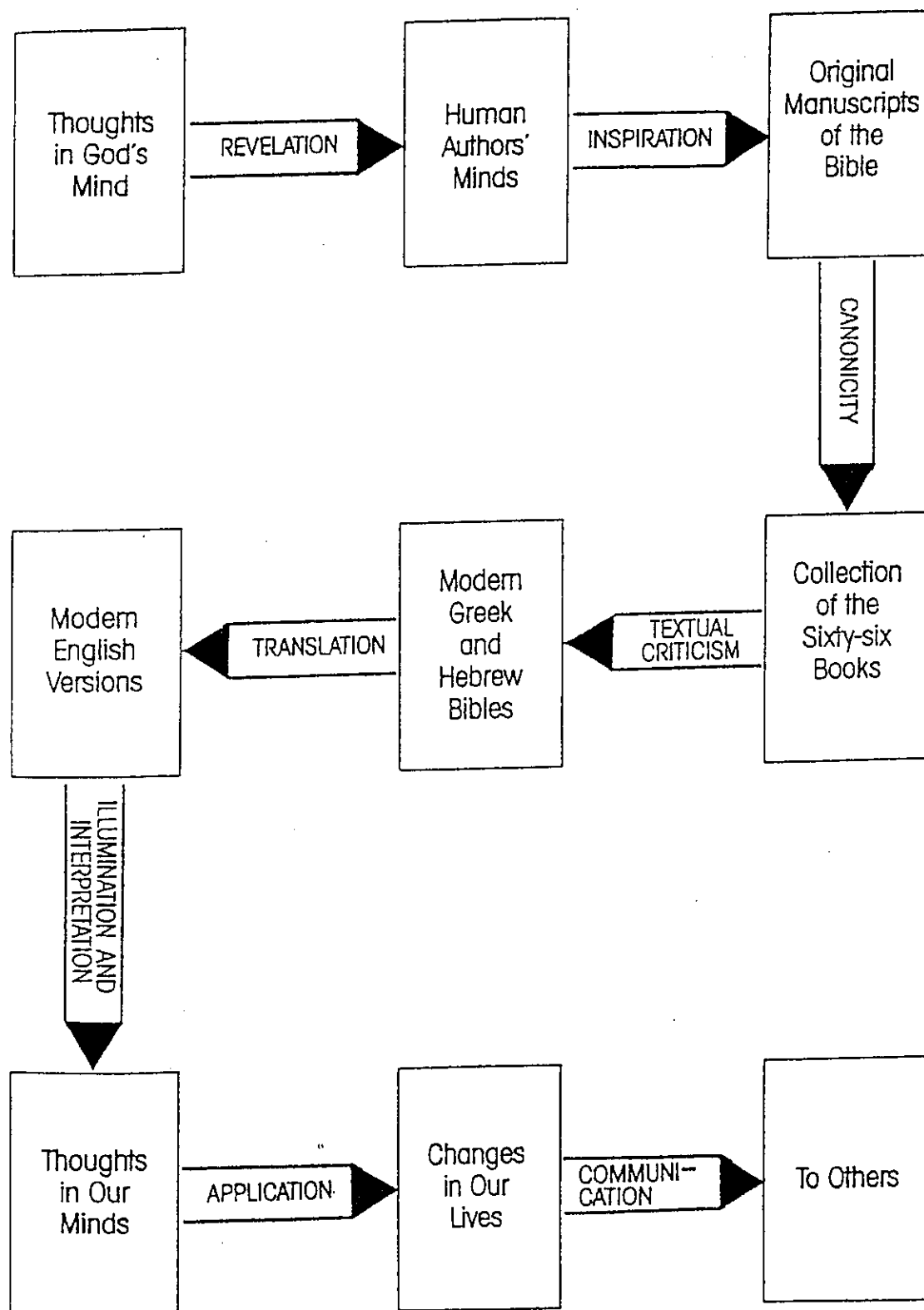


How Do We Interpret The Bible?

INTERPRETATION (Hermeneutics)



HOW OUR BIBLE CAME TO US



WHEN Manuscripts COLLIDE

Why we need the behind-the-translation work of textual critics.

WENDY MURRAY ZOBA

Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great.

*He appeared in a body,
was vindicated by the Spirit,
was seen by angels,
was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
was taken up in glory.*

—1 Timothy 3:16, NIV

reveals a different answer: "And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit . . ."

This verse has been neither "beyond all question" nor "without controversy" in the realm of Bible translation. Some say the first line of the hymn should read, "he appeared" (or better, "he who"), while others say, "God appeared." Why the discrepancy in translation decisions?

The answer lies in an understanding of the biblical discipline known as *textual criticism*, the science that compares all known manuscripts of a given work in an effort to locate the reading that best reflects the words of the author. The original biblical autographs (probably written on papyrus) have been lost, and for the subsequent 14 centuries, every copy of the Bible was reproduced by hand.

Today there exist thousands of ancient New Testament manuscripts. The earliest fragments, *papyrus uncials* (an early style of Greek writing that used all capital letters), date from the second century A.D. Today 98 of these fragments are catalogued. There

Need one ask, "Who was?" Believe it or not, the answer is not as conspicuous as it seems. We can assume that in this passage (which is recognized as an early Christian hymn) Paul was referring to Christ. But consulting the same verse in the King James Version (KJV)

also exist 301 early uncial manuscripts written on vellum (sheepskin), some of which date from as early as the second century. Of these, the only uncial manuscript that contains the entire New Testament is the fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus. Later manuscripts, known as *minuscules* (a form of Greek cursive that could be written more rapidly and compactly, saving time and parchment), came to the fore in the eighth and ninth centuries and outnumber the uncials eight to one. The "Versions," or early translations (Old Latin, Syriac, Coptic, and Sahidic, to name a few), also inform the text-critical discussion, as do the biblical references of the early church fathers, known as the Patristic evidence.

Anyone who has copied a recipe or written down a phone number knows how easy it is to make "a mistake in the transmission." And when it came to the dissemination of the New Testament texts, errors were made, some inadvertent, some intentional. The scribes at the time recognized that these writings were sacred, of course, but they had not yet started to think "canonically."

As a result, during the first and second centuries they felt a great deal of liberty to enhance the biblical authors' intent if a particular reading was difficult, or to "help" the readers understand a passage by glossing a discrepancy. It was not until A.D. 400 or thereabouts that a canonical mentality became entrenched and the free-flowing amendments abated. It should be noted, however, that, as Arthur Patzia writes in *The Making of the New Testament* (IVP): "No significant doctrine of the New Testament hinges on a variant."

The confusion about the two possible renderings in 1 Timothy 3:16, "God" and "he who," can be easily understood when one recognizes the similarity between how they would have looked in the early manuscripts: he who, OC (or *os*, the masculine relative pronoun in Greek uncials); God, *ΘC* (the common abbreviation in Greek uncials for *theos*, or God). A mere two horizontal strokes is all that distinguishes the one from the other.

Defenders of the "God" reading base their argument on the fact that the majority of extant manuscripts reflect this. Writes Wilbur Pickering in his book *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, "Fully 300 Greek manuscripts read 'God' while only eight read something else. . . . So we judge between 97 percent and 2 percent, 'God' versus 'who.'"

Pickering and others would argue that the transmission of the New Testament texts took place under "normal" circumstances and with utmost care, diligence, and faithfulness to the authoritative nature of the original. "Ordinary honesty would require [the scribes] to produce a faithful copy," writes Pickering.

Where changes occur in the witnesses (and these scholars concede that there *are* divergent witnesses), these were largely introduced into the text intentionally to alter the theological meaning behind a given reading, usually for heretical purposes. "Are we to assume that everyone who made copies of New Testament books in those early years was a knave? or a fool?" asks Pickering. "We have the Majority Text [today's KJV] . . . dominating the stream of transmission with a few individual witnesses going their idiosyncratic ways."

But other biblical scholars contest this assumption. We err to presume that changes in the text were attributable to heretical tendencies, argues leading text-critical scholar Gordon D. Fee in "The Majority Text and the Original Text of the New Testament" (*Westminster Theological Journal*, 1979). "For the early Christians," he writes, "it was precisely because the meaning *was* so important that they exercised a certain amount of freedom in making the meaning clear."

Fee and others also argue that to assume the transmission of texts took place under "normal" conditions ignores other important factors that were operative in the transmission process: for example, the literary habits and style of the biblical author, any distinctive proclivities of a given scribe, and the transcriptional probabilities of what the scribe would most likely do in the transmission process. In other words, in each textual decision one must evaluate which variant best reflects (in this case) Paul's style, conforms to the known tendencies of the scribe working on that manuscript, and is consistent with common scribal habits.

But these factors alone are not sufficient grounds on which to make a sound textual decision. Other evidence must also be brought into the discussion. This includes such data as the date of the witness (is it early or late?), its geography (is this particular reading widespread, found in manuscripts in Egypt as well as in Syria or Rome?), and the quality of corroborating witnesses (is one authentic reading backed up by another independent witness with the same reading?).

Some basic "rules of thumb" apply when it comes to evaluating a variant reading based upon these criteria. It is agreed, for example, that a scribe is more likely to add to a text than to take away from it, and to make an awkward reading more readable. Therefore, a shorter, more difficult reading is usually (though not always) preferred as the one nearer to the autograph. At the same time, an earlier variant with a widespread witness geographically offers strong (though not foolproof) evidence for an authentic reading.

So how does one decide whether or not 1 Timothy 3:16 should read "he [who] appeared in a body" or "God appeared in a body"?

First, one must think in Pauline terms. Remember, this is an early hymn. And hymns, in those days, took two basic forms: that of a doxology followed by an explanatory clause (such as Rom. 11:36: "For from him and to him . . .") and that of a hymn that begins with a relative clause where the antecedent is understood to be Christ (such as Phil. 2:6: "Who, being in very nature God . . ."). That Paul made liberal use of the latter is evident also in Colossians 1:13-15.

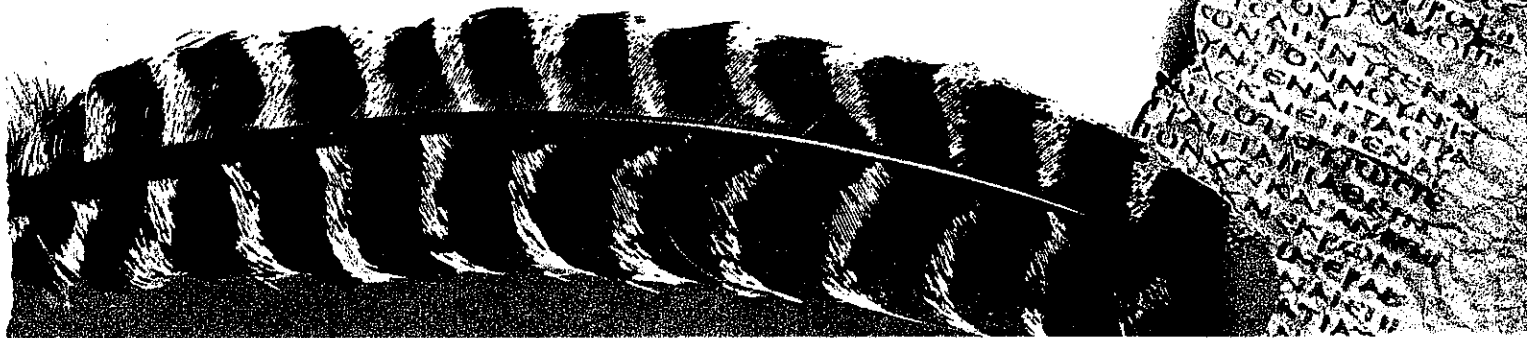
One must also ask which makes more sense in terms of scribal habits: to change an overt reference to God into a relative pronoun, or, with two touches of the quill, to transform a lowly relative pronoun to "God"? Given the nature of the debates about the deity of Jesus Christ that took place during the third and fourth centuries, would that the early manuscripts had read "God"! The debate about Christ's deity would have been resolved like a gavel to the bench. As Fee suggests, "The argument from silence in this case is an extremely telling one."

The relative "he who" is evident as early as the fourth century in the Codex Sinaiticus, which is given, in the words of Bruce Metzger, "primacy of position" when it comes to New Testament manuscripts. In addition, its witness was widespread, "read everywhere in Egypt, all through the West, and elsewhere in the East until the late fourth century" (Fee).

The earliest Greek manuscript to read "God" dates from the eighth century, according to Fee. So even if the manuscript evidence for "God" outnumbered the readings for "he who" a million to one, if that million originated with a corruption, the sheer volume of copies means nothing in terms of authenticity.

So, given its consistency with Pauline usage of hymns, its being the more difficult reading and therefore most likely to be "corrected," its corruption being easily explainable, its presence in an early high-quality manuscript, and its wide geographical dissemination, the preferred reading for 1 Timothy 3:16 is what most Bible translations allow it to be: "He [who] appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit"—and so on.

But in making text-critical decisions such as this, we must not lose sight of the overall testimony of the passage. In the end, whether it is "God" or "he who," the point remains: he appeared, was vindicated, seen by angels, preached among nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in glory. That is good news that is "beyond all question" and "without controversy."





CAN WE TRUST THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Larry Hurtado & F.F. Bruce

Editor's note: One of the questions Christians must often answer when sharing the gospel is whether the New Testament records are accurate. This article provides some reassuring answers to this perennial question.

How many ancient manuscripts do New Testament scholars have?

An overwhelming number of handwritten texts are available for studying the New Testament in the original Greek. A recent count lists nearly 90 papyri (manuscripts made of papyrus, generally the earliest), over 260 uncial manuscripts (written in Greek capital letters, generally on leather), and over 2,700 minuscule manuscripts (written in flowing Greek script, usually later in date than uncials).

In addition, there are more than 2,200 lectionary manuscripts, mostly from the eighth century or later.

How old are the manuscripts?

The earliest complete New Testament manuscript still available is the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which dates from the fourth century. "Codex" is the name for an early form of book made by

sewing leaves of writing material together.

Codex Vaticanus, from which a few leaves are missing, dates from the same period.

Less complete New Testament manuscripts date back as early as the late second or early third century, and one fragment of the Gospel of John dates from approximately AD 130. The Chester Beatty papyri contain parts of the Gospels, Acts, Paul's letters, Hebrews and Revelation, and date from the first half of the third century.

Bodmer Papyrus II, dating from about AD 200, has fragments of John's Gospel; others in this collection, from about AD 175-225, contain parts of Luke and John, as well as the letters of Peter and Jude.

Codex Alexandrinus, from about the fifth century, another important early manuscript containing most of the New Testament, is now in the British Library, London. At Cambridge, *Codex Bezae*, from the fifth century, contains most of the Gospels and Acts, in Greek and Latin on facing pages; *Codex Washingtonianus*, dating from the fourth or fifth century, includes nearly all of the four Gospels.

Can we consider these accurate if they are not the originals?

Perhaps we can appreciate the accuracy of these manuscripts if we compare them with textual material for other ancient historical works.

For Caesar's *Gallie War* (composed between 58 and 50 BC) there are several extant manuscripts, but only nine or ten are good, and the oldest is some 900 years later than Caesar's day.

Of the 142 books of the *Roman History* of Livy (59 BC-AD 17) only 35 survive—these are known to us from not more than 20 manuscripts of any consequence, only one of which is as old as the fourth century AD.

Of the 14 books of the *Histories* of Tacitus (about AD 100) only four and a half survive; of the 16 books of his *Annals*, 10 survive in full and two in part. The text of these existing portions of his two great historical works depends entirely on two manuscripts, one of the ninth century and one of the eleventh.

The *History* of Thucydides (about 460-400 BC) is known to us from eight manuscripts, the earliest belonging to around AD 900, and a few papyrus scraps belonging to about the beginning of the Christian era. The same is true of the *History* of Herodotus (488-428 BC).

Yet no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest usable manuscripts of their works are over 1,300 years later than the originals.

But how different is the situation of the New Testament in this respect?

The earliest New Testament fragment, a papyrus codex containing John 18:31-33 & 37, is dated around AD 130. That is within 100 years of Christ's death and resurrection, not 1,300 years as in the histories written by Herodotus or Thucydides.

How do these manuscripts help scholars determine the original text?

Scholars examine these Greek manuscripts in the following ways:

- By attempting to date and place a manuscript by its style of writing and other clues.
- By looking for any divergences in its text from other manuscripts.
- By discovering relationships between manuscripts, they work out to what extent they agree with each other. More exact methods for measuring the amount of agreement between manuscripts have recently been developed.

Manuscripts with significant amounts of agreement are then grouped into "text-types." So far, three main "text-types" have been found: the Neutral or Alexandrian text-type; the Western

text-type—much less clearly defined; and the Byzantine text-type (also called the Syrian or Ecclesiastical text-type) which seems to have given rise to the relatively standard New Testament text used by most later manuscripts.

The aim of all this detailed work is to establish a Greek text which is as close as possible to the wording of the original New Testament documents.

In addition, scholars try to discover how differing viewpoints in the history of the church may have affected the copying of the New Testament text.

The overwhelming mass of variations in manuscripts consists of accidental spelling differences or omissions. But some variations are clearly deliberate. Most of these appear to be attempts to "improve" the style, to remove ambiguity or sometimes to harmonize parallel accounts in different books.

A few of the variations appear to be caused by a copyist's concern about doctrine. For example, in Mark 3:21, the original text suggests that Jesus' friends or relatives were worried about his sanity.

This apparently embarrassed some scribes: so in some early manuscripts they changed the wording so that it is the crowd that tries to seize Jesus, and the worry is about the excitement of the crowd rather than Jesus' sanity. Because of its rather non-literary Greek, Mark's Gospel appears to have been affected most by these attempts at deliberate alteration during copying.

Clearly the New Testament writings were considered important in the early church, since many copies were made for private reading as well as church use. However, this importance did not always guarantee scrupulous, exact copying.

Several translations of the New Testament were made at an early date. The most important are the Syriac, Latin and Coptic. There was an intense interest in making the New Testament available to different language-groups in the Roman world. These versions often show how the New Testament was interpreted during the second and third centuries and later, but they were not always prepared by people with a good command of Greek.

From the time they were first produced, the New Testament writings were always closely linked with worship and evangelism. The Church was concerned to make Scripture widely available, and that is the concern of believers to this day.

The aim of all this detailed work is to establish a Greek text which is as close as possible to the wording of the original New Testament.

This enlightening article is adapted from the *Lion handbook*, *The History of Christianity: Revised*, edited by Dr. Tim Dowley. Copyright 1990 by Lion Publishing Corporation, Batavia, Illinois. Used by permission. All rights reserved. You may order your copy of this valuable reference work by using the envelope bound into this copy of FAITH.

THE LITERARY-CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (ca. 250 B.C. - A.D. 200)

Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament by F.F. Bruce is a helpful secondary source.

A. Selected "Greco-Roman Historians"

1. Greek Historians

- a. Herodotus (484-425 B.C.)
"Father of History"
Wrote The Histories
- b. Thucydides (460-400 B.C.)
Useful analytical style/model.
Wrote The History of the Peloponnesian War
- c. Xenophon (430-355 B.C.)
- d. Polybius (ca. 203-120 B.C.)
Went to Rome in 167 B.C.
Wrote a 40-volume history of Rome's development and destiny.
- e. Diodorus of Sicily (died ca. 21 B.C.)
A contemporary of Julius Caesar and Augustus who wrote a treatise on the career of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.
- f. Strabo (63 B.C. - A.D. 21)
Greek historian and geographer
Wrote a 47-volume series of historical works (referred to by others but is itself now lost to us) and 17 volumes on geography in which he describes Palestine. Josephus used his works.
- g. Plutarch (A.D. 50 - ca. 120)
Wrote Vita (Lives) - sketches of Roman statesmen exhibiting a high degree of research.
- h. Dio Cassius (A.D. 155 - ca. 230)
Proconsul of Africa
Wrote a complete Roman history in 80 volumes of which only 18 are extant.

2. "Roman Historians"

- a. Cicero (106 - 43 B.C.)
Wrote a history of Syria
- b. Livy (59 B.C. - A.D. 17)
Wrote a complete Roman history in 35 volumes all of which are extant (from 753 B.C. to 9 B.C.). This is a primary source for Roman history and is valuable for the early Maccabean Era.
- c. Tacitus (A.D. 55 - ca. 120)
Acknowledged as one of the most reliable of Roman historians.
Wrote The Annals (A.D. 115) in which he sketched the reigns of the Caesars from Tiberius (A.D. 14) to Nero (A.D. 68) and a History in which he continued the narrative from Nero to Domitian (A.D. 96). He made various allusions to Jews and Christians. In reference to the severe persecution of Christians by Nero he wrote:
"Their name comes from Christus, who in the reign of Tiberius as emperor was condemned to death by the procurator Pontius Pilate" (Annals 15.44). This is the second earliest Gentile reference to Jesus of Nazareth.

- d. Pliny the Younger (ca. A.D. 62 - ca. 113).
Governor of Bithynia, Asia Minor.
Wrote a letter to Emperor Trajan in A.D. 112 in which he sought advice on how to handle Christians who had been increasing in numbers throughout his province. He noted that Christians were accustomed to assemble together regularly on a certain day and "to sing responsively a hymn to Christ as if to a god" (Epistle 10.96).
He is the earliest Roman (Latin) author to refer to Jesus Christ.
- e. Suetonius (A.D. 69 - ca. 121?)
Beneficiary to Emperor Trajan and secretary to Hadrian.
Wrote The Lives of the Twelve Caesars (A.D. 120) which are biographies of Roman emperors from Julius Caesar (44 B.C.) to Domitian (A.D. 96). He included history, customs, and chronology. In the section on Claudius (chap. 25) he makes reference to the expulsion from Rome of the Jews "who had been continually stirring up trouble under the influence of Chrestus."

B. Jewish Literary Sources

Though the prophetic office was in abeyance during the intertestamental period (400 silent years), history moved on and was recorded. An extensive body of literature of all types came into being among the Jews.

1. OT Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (250 B.C. - A.D. 100)

a. Description

- 1) The Apocrypha ("hidden, secret") is a collection of 15 Jewish writings which are not included in the Masoretic Hebrew text. All 15 except II Esdras are included in the Septuagint (LXX). These writings written mostly between 250 B.C. - A.D. 100 enjoyed wide popularity among the Jews.
- 2) The Pseudepigrapha ("falsely inscribed") is a heterogeneous collection of 15 Jewish writings written mostly between 200 B.C. - A.D. 200 which are not included in the OT canon or the apocrypha. Some were composed in Hebrew/Aramaic (Palestinian origin) and some in Greek (non-Palestinian origin: many are Alexandrian).

Some writings bear the names of long-deceased, famous OT personalities to achieve an appearance of authority (e.g. Enoch, Moses, Solomon, Baruch). Some are anonymous. Some are highly apocalyptic (revealing cataclysmic future events) in an effort to encourage the Jews to endure persecution by promising the soon arrival of the messianic kingdom. Repeated disappointments of their hopes eventually brought an end to such literature.

b. Literary categories according to subject matter (Representative examples)

- 1) Historical
 - a) I Esdras (ca. 150 B.C.)
 - b) I Maccabees (ca. 100 B.C.)
 - c) II Maccabees (ca. 100 B.C.)
- 2) Fictional romances/novels/apologies
These works extol the virtues of the Jews and their way of life. They contend that God blesses and rewards His people who are faithful to Him.
 - a) Tobit (ca. 200 B.C.)
 - b) Judith (ca. 150 B.C.)

- c) Letter of Aristeas (ca 150 B.C.)
- d) Susanna (ca 100 B.C.)
- e) Bel and the Dragon (ca. 100 B.C.)
- f) 3 Maccabees (late 1st C B.C.)
- g) Sibylline Oracles (1st C A.D.)

3) Wisdom literature (didactic)

The literature of Jewish sages (wise men) exercised almost as much influence in personal and national life as did the priest and the prophet.

- a) Ecclesiasticus (or: Sirach) (ca. 190 B.C.)
Most notable for NT parallels in thought. Most like Proverbs. 1600 two-line verses.
- b) Wisdom of Solomon (ca. 50 B.C.) "Gem of the Apocrypha"
It leads men to true wisdom which pleases Yahweh.

4) Apocalyptic literature

This literature purports to reveal the future. It is highly symbolic and has extensive figurative imagery. It views the "present evil age" growing worse and worse until God dramatically intervenes and establishes "the coming age" (the Messianic Age). This literature had wide popularity and flourished due to the Jews' long experience of foreign domination. It declared that God had not forgotten His people.

- a) I Enoch (Ethiopic Enoch ca. 150 B.C.)
- b) 2 Esdras

5) Devotional-liturgical Literature

- Prayer of Mannaseh; Song of Three Young Men
- Psalms of Solomon

6) Epistolary literature

* No Gospels. It is a unique literary creation of the Church.

c. Significance of this literature

- 1) Primary sources for intertestamental Jewish history and cultural milieu (almost depressing reading)
- 2) Primary sources for origins of Jewish sects and religious institutions. Shift from covenant nation status to religious community
- 3) Provides the theological milieu of the Jews by NT times and shows the development of doctrinal beliefs.
 - a) God dealing with His people through intermediaries
 - b) Exaltation of the Law, esp. among the priestly sects
 - c) Dualistic perspective of this world and the world to come
 - d) Future life, bodily resurrection are important
 - e) Apocalyptic ideas: Divine intervention, new world order is popular

- 4) Provides possible background for a number of NT terms (e.g. "son of man") images (e.g. apocalyptic imagery) and ideas (e.g. doctrine of the two ages).
- 5) Backdrop for various literary forms: epistolary
- 6) Balance to later Rabbinic writings which are sometimes reacting to Christianity

2. The Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran Library)

The Qumran community had used OT books as the basis for their teaching and created an extensive literature of their own. Their thought exhibited Pharisaic theology tempered by apocalyptic ideas.

a. The Qumran Library - DSS (Dead Sea Scrolls)

- 1) Discovery of the manuscripts in caves near Kirbet Qumran, NW of the Dead Sea shoreline, in 1947-1956.
- 2) Contents of the manuscripts
 - a) O.T. Books
 - b) Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphic texts
 - c) Commentaries on OT books
 - d) Collections of OT passages on a theme
 - e) Sectarian writings of the Qumran community
 - 1) Manual of Discipline (IQS)
 - 2) Damascus Document (CD)
 - 3) War Scroll (IQM)
 - 4) Thanksgiving Hymns (IQH)
 - 5) Temple Scroll (IIQ Temple)

b. Basic beliefs of the Qumran community (cf. Manual of Discipline)

- 1) Committed to intense study of the Torah and a devout life
- 2) Sovereignty of God
- 3) Believed they were living in the end times and held strong messianic expectations.
- 4) Communal life and ritual fostered legalism
- 5) Dualism of a flesh/spirit type

c) Contributions of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovery

- 1) Information on the life customs, history, beliefs of the Qumran community
- 2) Opened up the study of Hebrew manuscripts, script, and orthography from the 3rd century B.C. to the 2nd century A.D. Prior to this discovery these years were represented by only one scrap of papyrus!
- 3) Our knowledge of the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible has been extended back by 1000 years -- a Samuel manuscript from Cave 4 dates back to 225 B.C.

Prior to this discovery the oldest extant Hebrew manuscript of an OT book was from the A.D. 800's.

- 4) Our knowledge of the Pseudepigrapha, Jewish religious writings between 200 B.C. and A.D. 100 have been greatly enhanced. This has aided our understanding of Jewish history, religion, and culture in the NT era and following.
- 5) No NT manuscript fragments have been discovered in any of the Qumran caves; and no NT book mentions the Essene Qumran community. Despite parallels between Qumran Essenism and Palestinian Christianity, no direct impact one on the other can be proved. Both represent two independent movements whose goals are similar at some points.

3. Josephus (A.D. 37/38 - ca. 94)

- a. The son of a Jewish priest name Mattathias who claimed kinship with the Hasmonean dynasty.
- b. He joined the Pharisee party at 19 but was only a nominal member.
- c. After the Fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70) he went to Rome as the friend and pensioner of Emperor Vespasian.
- d. In Rome he wrote:
 - 1) The History of the Jewish War Against the Romans in A.D. 77
 - 2) The Antiquities of the Jewish People in A.D. 93 (20 volumes)
 - 3) His autobiography
 - 4) A treatise entitled Against Apion, a defense of the Jews against Apion, an erudite Gentile critic.
- e. Josephus makes the earliest non-Christian witness to the historicity of Jesus Christ in his Antiquities 20.9.1 (a short passage) and 18.3.3 (a long passage which is disputed as a later interpolation by a Christian scribe).
- f. In the short passage (20.9.1) he refers to the trial of James before the Sanhedrin calling him " the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ."

4. Rabbinic Literature

This literature includes a vast amount of rabbinic interpretive material that circulated as oral tradition for several hundred years and was finally collected, classified and written down ca. A.D. 200-500. There are only about six mainly derogatory references to Jesus in the Talmud.

CANONICITY

Definition and Development

I. DEFINITION OF CANONICITY

- A. Root meaning -- from Greek κανων, meaning rod, ruler, standard for measure.
- B. Theological -- rule, standard, norm -- normative writings (cf. Gal. 6:16).

II. DESCRIPTION OF CANONICITY

- A. Sacred books -- Deut. 31:24-36 (cf. II Tim 3:15, 16).
- B. Prophetic writings -- Zech. 7:12, Luke 24:27 (cf. II Peter 1:20-21).
- C. Apostolic writings -- Eph. 2:20 (cf. Acts 2:42); Eph. 3:5.

III. DETERMINATION OF CANONICITY

- A. Inadequate views:

- 1. Age determines canonicity.

Reply: (a) Many ancient books are not in the canon (Wars of the Lord -- Numbers 21:14); (b) Many new books were placed in canon immediately (Deut 31:24; Dan 9:2).

- 2. Language determines canonicity (e.g., Hebrew).

Reply: (a) Not all of the OT is in Hebrew (Dan. 2:4b - 7:28; Ezra 4:8 - 6:18; 7:12 - 26 are in Aramaic); (b) Not all Hebrew books are in the canon (e.g., Jasher [Joshua 10], The Apocrypha).

- 3. Agreement with Torah.

Reply: (a) This is a test for exclusion not inclusion; (b) Not even all the things that Jesus said and did are included (cf. John 21:25).

- 4. Religious value.

Reply: (a) Not all inspiring books are inspired; (b) Confuses cause (inspired) and result (inspiring).

5. Christian usage.

Reply: (a) Also confuses cause and result (usage); (b) Then *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Imitation of Christ* should be in the canon too.

NOTE: Common mistake of inadequate views: they confuse determination (by God) and recognition (by men).

B. Adequate View: Inspiration determines canonicity.

1. God determines canonicity; man discovers it.
2. Books receive canonicity from God and recognition from the people of God.

IV. DISCOVERY OF CANONICITY (5 important questions)

- A. Was it written by a prophet? An apostle? An association of an apostle? (Heb. 1:1; II Pet. 1:20-21).
- B. Were the writers confirmed by an act of God? (John 3:2; Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:3).
- C. Does it tell the truth about God? (Deut. 18:22; Gal. 1:8).
- D. Does it have the power of God? (Heb. 4:12).
- E. Was it accepted by the people of God? (Dan. 9:2; I Thess. 2:13; II Pet. 3:15).

V. DEVELOPMENT OF CANON

A. Progressive development of the OT canon.

1. Moses wrote (Deut. 31:24).
2. Joshua added (Josh. 24:26).
3. Samuel added his writings (I Sam. 10:25).
4. Prophets were collected (Dan. 9:2; Zech. 7:12).
(Note: Later prophets quote earlier ones).
5. The OT Canon was the Bible affirmed by Jesus (Luke 24:27, 44). The Jewish canon was Jesus' canon.

B. Progressive Development of the NT canon.

1. NT refers to OT law and prophets (Matt. 5:17; Luke 24:27).
2. Paul quotes Luke as Scripture (I Tim. 5:18).
3. Paul's letters circulated among the churches (Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27).
4. Peter had at least some of Paul's letters and called them "Scripture" (II Peter 3:16).

C. Conclusion.

1. Inspired books were circulated and collected into the growing canon as they were written.
2. Later disputes should not be confused with the original acceptance.

D. Antilegomena (lit. "to speak against") -- Books rejected by some and why.

1. Hebrews - anonymity, Jewishness.
2. James - veracity, Jewishness, apparent conflict with Paul.
3. II Peter - genuineness.
4. II John - awareness.
5. III John - awareness.
6. Jude - awareness, apocryphal citations.
7. Revelation - authenticity, difficult genre.

VI. THE PERFECTION (COMPLETION) OF NEW TESTAMENT CANON

A. In "former days" God spoke through prophets (Heb. 1:1).

B. But in the "last days" God spoke through His Son (Heb. 1:1).

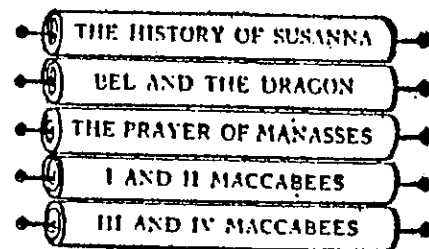
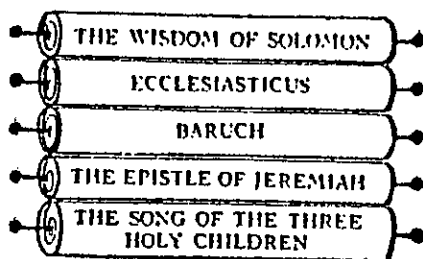
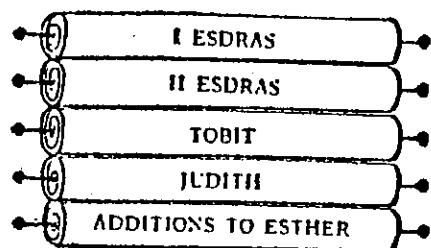
1. Christ and the Apostles lived in the "last days" (Heb. 1:1; I John 2:18).
2. Christ is God's last word in the last days (Heb. 1:2f).
 - a. Christ fulfilled "all things" (Matt 5: 17-18).
 - b. Christ promised "all truth" to his apostles (John 14:26; 16:13).
3. Christ's 12 Apostles are the only official channel of His eyewitness teaching (Luke 1:1-2; John 15:27; Acts 1:21,22; Heb. 2: 3-4).
4. The eyewitness Apostles lived only in the first century (John 15:27; Acts 1:21-22).
5. The 27 books of the New Testament are the only apostolically confirmed literature extant about Christ.
 - a. Many books were written by eyewitness apostles (Matthew; John; I & II Peter; I,II,III John; Revelation).
 - b. Paul's letters were confirmed by Apostles teaching (Acts 15; Gal. 2; II Pet. 3:15-16).
 - c. Hebrews was confirmed by the Apostles (Heb. 2:3-4).
 - d. Mark was disciple and secretary of Peter (I Peter 5:13).
 - e. Luke (Luke, Acts) was an associate of Paul (Acts 16f; Col. 4:16).
 - f. James and Jude were associates of Apostles [and half brothers of Christ] (Acts 15; Jude 1; James 1:1).

6. Therefore, the 27 books of the New Testament are God's last words in these last days (i.e., the canon is closed).

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Which Books Belong In The Bible</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">by: Norman L. Geisler</p>	
The books agreed upon by all Christians	39 Old Testament Books 27 New Testament Books
The books disputed by some Christians <i>These books are not accepted by Protestants. Catholics accept 11 of these which are the ones starred(*) or 12 if you count Baruch and the letters to Jeremiah separately.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Book of Wisdom * 2. Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) * 3. Tobit * 4. Judith * 5. I Maccabees * 6. II Maccabees * 7. Esther: additions of 10:4-16 & 16:24* 8. Daniel: addition of Prayer of Azariah (Dan. 3: 24-90 in Catholic Bibles. This is not to be confused with Dan. 3: 24-30 in Jewish and Protestant Bibles).* 9. Daniel: addition of Susanna (Dan. 13 in Catholic Bibles).* 10. Daniel: addition of Bel and the Dragon (Dan. 14 in Catholic Bibles).* 11. Baruch 1-6 - (Baruch 1-5; Letter to Jeremiah in Baruch 6, considered No. 15 by some).* 12. Prayer of Mannasseh. 13. I Esdras (called III Esdras by Catholics). 14. II Esdras (called IV Esdras by Catholics).

At the time of Christ, the OT canon included the 39 OT books as they are found in today's Protestant Bible. It was not until 1546, at the Council of Trent, that the Catholic Church decreed that the 11 (12 if the Letter of Jeremiah is counted separately) books, listed above with (*), should be included in the canon.

THE BOOKS OF THE APOCRYPHA



The word APOCRYPHA means hidden, or secret.

ORIGIN. The term Apocrypha is generally applied to a collection of books, from eleven to sixteen in number, which appeared in the interim between the Old and New Testaments.

They have come down to us in more or less close connection with the canonical books of the Bible.

They have had a strange history. Ecclesiastical opinion in different periods has differed widely as to the value of the literature.

The Jews of the Dispersion in Egypt placed a high estimate upon these books, and included them in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, but they were rejected from the Hebrew canon by the Jews of Palestine.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH in the Council of Trent, 1546 A.D., declared eleven of the books to be canonical, and they appear in the modern Catholic edition of the Scriptures.

THE VIEW OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

It is commonly agreed that some of these books contain material of literary merit, and historical value.

But their canonicity has been rejected, and they have been

gradually omitted from the modern editions of the Protestant Bibles, for the following reasons:

1. They are never quoted by Jesus, and it is doubtful if they were ever alluded to by the apostles.
2. Most of the early Fathers regarded them as uninspired.
3. They did not appear in the Ancient Hebrew canon.
4. The inferior quality of most of the writings as compared with the canonical books, stamps them as unworthy of a place in the sacred Scriptures.

CHARACTER OF THE BOOKS

Authorities differ as to the classification of these books.

The Epistle of Jeremiah is often incorporated in the Book of Baruch, and III and IV Maccabees are often omitted.

HISTORIC;—I and II Maccabees and I Esdras.

TRADITIONAL;—Additions to Esther, Susanna, Song of the Three Holy Children, Bel and the Dragon, Judith and Tobit.

PROPHETIC;—Baruch and the Prayer of Manasses.

APOCALYPTIC;—II Esdras and IV Esdras in the Latin Vulgate.

INSTRUCTIVE;—Ecclesiasticus, and the Wisdom of Solomon (in style like the Proverbs).

Selected List of Early Christian Noncanonical Gospels, Apocalypses, and Other Writings

Works formerly appearing in some New Testament lists

The Epistle of Barnabas (attributed to Paul's Jewish-Christian mentor)

The Didache (supposedly a summary of the twelve Apostles' teachings on the opposing ways leading to life or death)

1 Clement (letter by the third bishop of Rome to the Corinthians)

Apocalypse of Peter (visions of heaven and hell ascribed to Peter)

The Shepard of Hermas (a mystical apocalyptic work)

Gospels possibly preserving some of Jesus' teachings or other historical information about him

The Gospel of Thomas (a compilation of 114 sayings of Jesus found in the Nag Hammadi library)

The Gospel of Peter (a primitive account of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection ascribed to Peter)

The Secret Gospel of Mark (two excerpts from an early edition of Mark preserved in a letter from Clement of Alexandria)

The Egerton Papyrus 2 (fragment of an unknown Gospel that may have provided a source for some of the Johannine discourses)

The Apocryphon of James (a private dialogue between Jesus and two disciples, Peter and James)

Other Gospels, most surviving only in fragmentary form

The Protoevangelium of James

The Dialogue of the Savior

The Gospel of the Egyptians

The Gospel of the Hebrews

The Gospel of the Nazaraeans

The Gospel of the Ebionites

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas

Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 840

Miscellaneous other works

The Acts of Pilate

The Acts of John

The Epistula Apostolorum

2 Clement

The Epistle to Diognetus

Other important early Christian writings

The Epistles of Ignatius:

To the Ephesians

To the Magnesians

To the Trallians

To the Romans

To the Philadelphians

To the Smyrnaeans

To Polycarp

The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians

The Martyrdom of Polycarp

Apocryphal NT (Greek: adj., hidden; also called "The NT Apocrypha" in contradistinction to the [OT] Apocrypha, that is, Jewish writings of the inter-testamental period). Uncanonical writings dating from the second to the sixth centuries, written in the form or carrying the name of gospels, acts (histories), letters, and apocalypses, and purporting to tell of events, teachings, and prophecies (apocalypses) related to Jesus and the early apostles but not recorded in the canonical Scriptures. These writings contain little of historical value in terms of the subjects with which they deal (the birth of Mary, the childhood of Jesus, etc.), but they are of inestimable value in understanding the mind of both orthodox and heterodox Christianity of the early centuries.

For the English texts of the following, see M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924; rep. 1950), or Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963; London: SCM Press, 1974); the latter includes writings not listed below.

Gospels: Arabic Gospel of the Infancy; Armenian Gospel of the Infancy; Assumption of the Virgin; Gospel of Bartholomew; the Book of the Resurrection of Christ by Bartholomew; Gospel of Basilides; Gospel of Cerinthus; Gospel of the Ebionites; Gospel According to the Hebrews; Protoevangelium of James; History of Joseph the Carpenter; Gospel of Marcion; Gospel of the Birth of Mary; Gospel of Philip; Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew; Gospel of Thomas.

Acts: Apostolic History of Abdias; Acts of Andrew; fragmentary Story of Andrew; Acts of Andrew and Matthias; Acts of Andrew and Paul; Acts of Barnabas; Ascent of James; Acts of James the Great; Acts of John; Acts of John by Prochorus; Martyrdom of Matthew; Acts of Paul; Passion of Paul; Acts of Peter; Acts of Peter and Andrew; Acts of Peter and Paul; Passion of Peter and Paul; Acts of Philip; Acts of Pilate; Acts of Thaddaeus; Acts of Thomas.

Epistles: Epistles of Christ and Abgarus; Epistle of the Apostles; Third Epistle to the Corinthians; Epistle to the Laodiceans; Epistle of Lentulus; Epistles of Paul and Seneca; Apocryphal Epistle of Titus.

Apocalypses: Apocalypse of James; Apocalypse of Paul; Apocalypse of Peter; Revelation of Stephen; Apocalypse of Thomas; Apocalypse of the Virgin.

Apostolic Fathers is the title given by general consent to those Christian authors of the 1st and 2nd cent. whose works, though ultimately deemed non-canonical, were often read and valued by the early Church. The term, first used in the 17th cent., designates no firm corpus, varying from eight to twelve in number, viz.: I Clement (ca. 95), II Clement (ca. 150), the Epistle of Barnabas (2nd cent.), Epistle of Diognetus (late 2nd or 3rd cent.), the (seven) Epistles of Ignatius (ca. 115), the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (ca. 150), the Shepherd of Hermas (ca. 145), the Didache or the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles (late 1st or early 2nd cent.); the Martyrdom of Ignatius and the Martyrdom of Clement are sometimes included. (See: *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. R. M. Grant [New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965].)

Didache; The Didache (Greek: teaching; cf. English: didactic). A common t.t. for the instructional material of the early Church in contrast to *kerygma* or preaching; for example, cf. 1 Cor. 7:1-40 (esp. vs. 10 containing a teaching of Jesus) with the kerygmatic passage in Acts 2:22-24.

The D.; or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles is usually described as an early 2nd cent. manual of church instruction, although its first section (chs. 1-6), known as "The Two Ways" (one of life and the other of death), may go back to a 1st cent. Jewish document. These chapters, however, appear to be related in some way to the Epistle of Barnabas, a 2nd cent. Christian writing, the direction of dependence being disputed. The second section (chs. 7-15) contains a series of instructions and admonitions on baptism, worship, the Eucharist, the treatment of apostles and prophets, etc. The only extant Greek copy, dating from A.D. 1056, was discovered in 1875 by P. Bryennios in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery of the Holy Sepulchre in Constantinople.

THE NT APOCRYPHA
A.D. 100 - 600

No church group regards any of these works as canonical.

APOSTOLIC FATHER
A.D. 95 - ca. 150

THE DIDACHE
A.D. 95 - 120?

Gospel of Thomas (Greek Text B)

The Apocryphal New Testament, Trans. by
Montague Rhodes James (Oxford, 1924).

The Writing of the holy Apostle Thomas concerning the conversation of the Lord in his childhood.

I. I. Thomas the Israelite, have thought it needful to make known unto all the brethren that are of the Gentiles the mighty works of childhood which our Lord Jesus Christ wrought when he was conversant in the body, and came unto the city of Nazareth in the fifth year of his age.

II. 1 On a certain day when there had fallen a shower of rain he went forth of the house where his mother was and played upon the ground where the waters were running: and he made pools, and the waters flowed down, and the pools were filled with water. Then saith he: I will that ye become clean and wholesome waters. And straightway they did so. 2 But a certain son of Annas the scribe passed by bearing a branch of willow, and he overthrew the pools with the branch, and the waters were poured out. And Jesus turned about and said unto him: O ungodly and disobedient one, what hurt have the pools done thee that thou hast emptied them? Thou shalt not finish thy course, and thou shalt be withered up even as the branch which thou hast in hand. 3 And he went on, and after a little he fell and gave up the ghost. And when the young children that played with him saw it, they marvelled and departed and told the father of him that was dead. And he ran and found the child dead, and went and accused Joseph.

III. 1 Now Jesus made of that clay twelve sparrows: and it was the sabbath day. And a child ran and told Joseph, saying: Behold, thy child playeth about the brook, and hath made sparrows of the clay, which is not lawful. 2 And he when he heard it went and said to the child: Wherefore dost thou so and profanest the sabbath? But Jesus answered him not, but looked upon the sparrows and said: Go ye, take your flight, remember me in your life. And at the word they took and went up into the air. And when Joseph saw it he was astonished.

IV. 1 And after certain days, as Jesus passed through the midst of the city, a certain child cast a stone at him and smote his shoulder. And Jesus said unto him: Thou shalt not finish thy course. And straightway he also fell down and died. And they that were there were amazed, saying: From whence is this child, that every word which he speaketh becometh a perfect work? 2 But they also departed and accused Joseph, saying: Thou wilt not be able to dwell with us in this city: but if thou wilt, teach thy child to bless and not to curse: for verily he slayeth our children: and every thing that he saith becometh a perfect work.

V. And as Joseph sat upon his seat, the child stood before him: and he took hold upon his ear and pinched it sore. But Jesus looked upon him earnestly and said: It sufficeth thee.

VI. 1 And on the morrow he took him by the hand and led him to a certain teacher, Zacchaeus by name, and said unto him: Take this child, O master, and teach him letters. And the other said: Deliver him unto me, my brother, and I will teach him the scripture, and I will persuade him to bless all men and not to curse them. 2 And when Jesus heard that he laughed and said unto them: Ye speak that ye know, but I have knowledge more than you, for I am before the worlds. And I know when the fathers of your fathers were begotten, and I know how many are the years of your life. And every one that heard it was amazed. 3 And again saith Jesus unto them: Marvel ye because I said unto you that I know how many are the years of your life? Of a truth I know when the world was created. Behold, now ye believe me not: when ye shall see my cross, then will ye believe that I speak truth. And they were astonished when they heard all these things.

VII. 1 Now Zacchaeus wrote the alphabet in Hebrew, and saith unto him: Alpha. And the young child said: Alpha. And again the master said: Alpha, and the young child likewise. Then again the third time the master said: Alpha. Then Jesus looked upon the teacher and said: Thou that knowest not the Alpha, how canst thou teach another the Beta? And the child beginning at the Alpha said of his own accord the two and twenty letters. 2 And thereafter saith he: Hear, O master, the ordinance of the first letter, and know how many incomings and lines it hath, and marks, common, going apart, and coming together. And when Zacchaeus heard such designations of the one letter he was amazed and had nothing to answer; and turning about he said unto Joseph: My brother, this child is of a truth not earthly born: take him away therefore from me.

VIII. 1 And after these things one day Jesus was playing with other boys upon the top of an house of two stories. And one child was pushed down by another and thrown down to the ground and died. And the boys which were playing with him, when they saw it, fled, and Jesus was left alone standing upon the roof whence the boy was thrown down. 2 And when the parents of the boy that was dead heard of it they ran weeping, and when they found the boy lying dead upon the earth and Jesus standing alone, they supposed that the boy had been thrown down by him, and they looked upon him and reviled him. 3 But Jesus, seeing that, leaped down straightway from the upper story and stood at the head of him that was dead and saith to him: Zeno, did I cast thee down? Arise and tell. For so was the boy called. And with the word the boy rose up and worshipped Jesus and said: Lord, thou didst not cast me down, but when I was dead thou didst make me alive.

IX. 1 And a few days after one of the neighbours was cleaving wood and did cut off the sole of his foot with the axe, and by loss of blood was at the point to die. 2 And much people ran together and Jesus came thither with them. 3 And he took hold on the foot of the young man that was smitten, and healed him forthwith, and saith unto him: Arise, cleave thy wood. And he arose and worshipped him, giving thanks, and cleft the wood. Likewise also all they that were there marvelled and gave thanks unto him.

X. Now when he was six years old, Mary his mother sent him to fetch water from the spring: and as he went his pitcher was broken. And he went to the spring and spread out his upper garment and drew water out of the spring and filled it and took it and brought back the water to his mother. And she, when she saw it, was amazed and embraced him and kissed him.

XI. 1 And when he came to the eighth year of his age Joseph was required by a certain rich man to build him a bed, for he was a carpenter. And he went forth into the field to gather wood, and Jesus also went with him. And he cut two beams of wood and wrought them with the axe, and set one beside the other and measured and found it too short; and when he saw that he was vexed and sought to find another. 2 But Jesus seeing it saith unto him: Set these two together so that the ends of both be even. And Joseph, though he was perplexed concerning this, what the child should mean, did that which was commanded. And he saith again unto him: Take firm hold of the short beam. And Joseph took hold on it, marveling. Then Jesus also took hold of the other end and pulled the [other] end thereof and made it also equal to the other beam, and saith unto Joseph: Be no more vexed, but do thy work without hindrance. And he when he saw it was exceedingly amazed, and said within himself: Blessed am I for that God hath given me such a son. 3 And when they departed into the city Joseph told it to Mary, and she when she heard and saw the wonderful mighty works of her son rejoiced, glorifying him.

CANONICITY Discovery of Old Testament Summary
--

I. PRINCIPLE(S) OF DISCOVERY

- A. Was it written by a man of God?
- B. Was he confirmed by an act of God?
- C. Did it tell the truth about God?
- D. Did it have the power of God?
- E. Was it received and collected by the people of God?

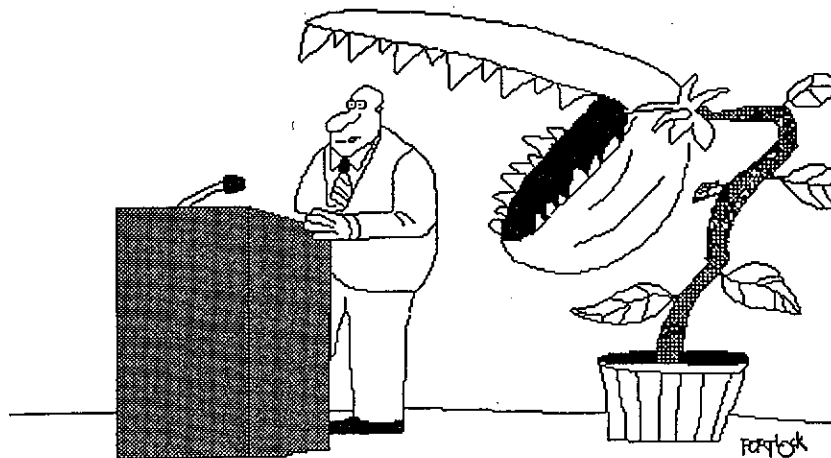
II. PROBLEM OF DISCOVERY OF OT

- A. *Homologoumena* - Books always accepted by all (all OT books except the OT "antilegomena").
- B. *Antilegomena* - Books later disputed by some (with an evangelical/orthodox response).
 - 1. Song of Solomon - thought to be *sensual* (speaks of sex in marriage).
 - 2. Ecclesiastes - thought to be *skeptical* (3:20,21 views life without God).
 - 3. Esther - thought to be *unspiritual* (absence of God's name; God is sovereignly present).
 - 4. Ezekiel - thought to be *anti-mosaical* (a millennial period, fulfillment eschatologically of the Mosaic covenant).
 - 5. Proverbs - thought to be *illogical* (26:4-5; value judgments and general principles for life's various situations).
- C. *Pseudepigrapha* - Books rejected by all.
 - 1. **Legendary**
 - a. The Book of Jubilee
 - b. The Letter of Aristeas
 - c. The Book of Adam and Eve
 - d. The Martyrdom of Isaiah
 - 2. **Apocalyptic**
 - a. I Enoch
 - b. The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs
 - c. The Sibylline Oracles
 - d. The Assumption of Moses
 - e. II Enoch, or the Book of Secrets of Enoch
 - f. II Baruch or The Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch

3. Didactical
 - a. III Maccabees
 - b. IV Maccabees
 - c. Pirke Aboth
 - d. The Story of Ahikar
4. Poetical
 - a. The Psalms of Solomon
 - b. Psalm 151
5. Historical
 - a. The Fragment of Zadokite Work

D. The Apocrypha ("doubtful", "hidden")

1. Reasons for rejecting the Apocrypha as canonical:
 - a. Judaism has never accepted it as inspired.
 - b. Great Jewish leaders of old rejected it (Philo, Josephus, the Jamnia scholars).
 - c. Jesus and apostles did not accept it.
 - d. Most early church fathers rejected it.
 - e. Great Roman Catholic biblical scholar, Jerome, rejected it.
 - f. Augustine accepted it [for wrong reasons] and misinfluenced others.
 - g. Roman Catholic acceptance of it in 1546 was:
 - (1) By wrong group (church rather than Jews).
 - (2) At wrong time (1600+ years later).
 - (3) For wrong reasons (Christian usage rather than propheticity).
 - h. Apocrypha does not claim inspiration but even disclaims it (I Mac. 9:27).
 - i. Apocrypha has no predictive prophecy or additional Messianic truth.
 - j. Apocrypha has unbiblical teaching (prayers for the dead, II Mac. 12:45 [46]).



"I'd like to thank the board for the lovely plant after our disagreement this week."

<p style="text-align: center;">CANONICITY Discovery of New Testament Summary</p>

I. THE PROMISE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

- A. Jesus promised "all truth" to the Apostles (John 14:26; 16:13).
- B. The Apostles claimed this promise (Acts 1:1; 2:42; Eph. 2:20).
- C. The Apostolic Church recognized their authority (Acts 8, 15).

II. THE PROGRESS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

- A. Gospels were written by eyewitnesses or associates (Luke 1:1).
- B. Epistles quote gospels as Scripture (I Tim 5:18).
- C. Apostle Peter accepted Paul's epistles as Scripture (II Peter 3: 15-16).
- D. First century church read and circulated books (Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27; I Tim. 4:13; Revelation 1:4).
- E. Last book of the New Testament was written before the end of the first century.
- F. Every New Testament book quoted as Scripture in the second century (except 3 John).
- G. Some books were later doubted by some in the second and third centuries: problems were basically 1) historical, 2) heretical, 3) geographical distribution, and 4) competition and confusion of pseudepigraphal writings.
- H. All books were accepted by virtually all by the fourth century (A.D. 397, Carthage).

III. THE PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

- A. *Homologoumena* -- Books accepted by all (20).
 - 1. All but seven "disputed" books (antilegomena).
 - 2. Philemon, I Peter, and I John were more omitted than disputed.

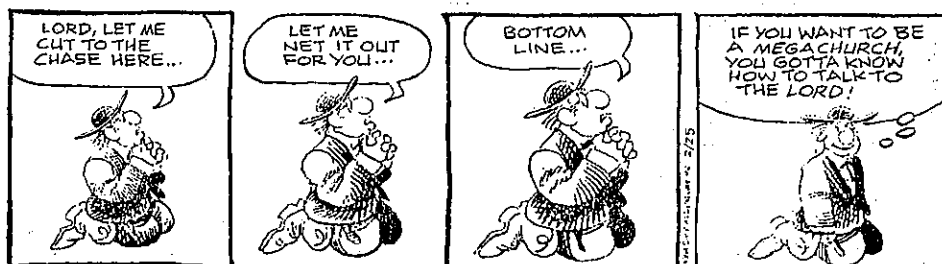
- B. New Testament *Pseudepigrapha* -- Books rejected by all (mostly 2-4th century frauds and heresies).
- C. New Testament *Apocrypha* -- Books accepted by some:
1. *Barnabas, Hermes, Didache, Clement, Polycarp, Gospel of Hebrews* etc;
 2. Their nature:
 - a. Sub-apostolic, most second century.
 - b. Rise of heresy (e.g., Baptismal regeneration, allegorization).
 - c. There was only local and temporary acceptance of them.

Early Father's Quotations of The New Testament

WRITER	GOSPEL	ACTS	PAULINE EPISTLES	GENERAL EPISTLES	REVELA- TION	TOTAL
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Ireneaus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement Alex.	1,017	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,922
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
GRAND TOTAL	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

If I speak in the tongues
of men and of angels . . .

Kudzu



1 Corinthians 13:1a

The New Testament As It Gained Acceptance by the Early Church

A.D. 100	A.D. 200	A.D. 250	A.D. 300	A.D. 400
<p>Different parts of our New Testament were written by this time, but not yet collected and clearly defined as 'Scripture'. In some instances, however, a status of Scripture was being applied (cf. 1 Tim. 5:18; 2 Peter 3:16). Early Christian writers (for example Polycarp and Ignatius) quote from the Gospels and Paul's letters, as well as from other Christian writings and oral sources.</p> <p>Paul's letters were collected in the latter part of the first century. Matthew, Mark and Luke were brought together by AD 150.</p>	<p>New Testament used in the church at Rome (the 'Muratorian Canon')</p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I & II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians I & II Thess. I & II Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>James I & II John Revelation of John Revelation of Peter Wisdom of Solomon</p> <p>To be used in private, but not public, worship:</p> <p>The Shepherd of Hermas</p>	<p>New Testament used by Origen</p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I & II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians I & II Thess. I & II Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>I Peter I John Revelation of John</p> <p>Disputed</p> <p>Hebrews James II Peter II & III John Jude The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Teaching of Twelve(Didache) Apostles Gospel of the Hebrews</p>	<p>New Testament used by Eusebius</p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I & II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians I & II Thess. I & II Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>Hebrews James I Peter I John Revelation of John (authorship in doubt)</p> <p>Disputed but well known</p> <p>James II Peter II & III John Jude</p>	<p>New Testament fixed for the West by the Council of Carthage (397)</p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans I & II Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians I & II Thess. I & II Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>Hebrews James I & II Peter I, II, & III John Jude Revelation</p> <p>To be excluded</p> <p>The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Gospel of the Hebrews Revelation of Peter Acts of Peter Didache</p>

FORMING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON						
Other Books Being Written			e.g., Pseudepigraphal, Apocryphal Books			
		140 - "Canon of Marcion" The <u>Gospel</u> - shortened Luke The <u>Apostle</u> - 10 edited Pauline epistles (less Timothy & Titus) - all OT references omitted		303 - EDICT OF DIOCLETIAN		
X	AD 100	AD 140	AD 170	AD 230	AD 315	AD 367
♥THE GOSPEL According to Matthew According to Mark Etc. ♥THE APOSTLE To Romans Etc. ♥PLUS (Acts: Pivotal Book) ----- = 27 Books		PERIOD OF ANTILEGOMENA AND PROGRESSIVE DEFINING OF CANON				
	Church began to see necessity of defining the canon. 1. 4 Gospels not 1 2. 13 Paul's Epistles not 10 3. Acts 4. Writings of some other Apostles	Muratorian Canon- 170 "Counterblast to Marcion" -Omits Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter	ORIGEN -Does not enumerate all 27 as authentic	EUSEBIUS -States some of 27 to be disputed by some Christians	ATHANASIUS -First known list of the 27 (AD 367) Jerome & Augustine (both affirm the 27) 393-Council of Hippo 397-3rd Cn of Carthage 419-4th Cn of Carthage	

CANONIZATION

I. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES IN THE FORMATION OF THE SCRIPTURE

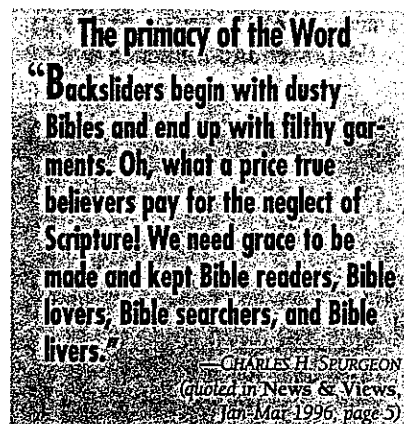
1. Practice of the early Christians in their worship (patterned after the synagogues). N.T. memoirs of the apostles were read along with the O.T. side by side (in history there was a continuous and growing acceptance and usage by a large number of churches over a long period of time).
2. Quotations from apostolic writings in the 2nd century added support.
3. Presence of heresy caused them to see the need for a canon.
4. Persecution cause some writings to receive higher standing (which writings are you willing to die for?).
5. Method of book making (Codex allowed binding of several books). This aided in distribution and circulation of the N.T. books.

II. INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Rule of faith (core of doctrine from which one cannot depart).
2. The real or related (contact with an apostle) apostolic origin of a book.
3. Internal witness of Scripture by the Spirit.

III. ATTEMPT TO CANONIZE OFFICIALLY

1. Made first by Marcion about A.D. 140 (accept part of Luke and ten Pauline letters).
2. A.D. 170 Muratorian fragment (Hebrews, James, III John, I & II Peter not included).
3. A.D. 367 Athanasius set forth a list expressing the canon as it now stands. Widely accepted; 393 and 397 reaffirmed under leadership of Augustine (came into official being because of heresy; authoritative because of its apostolic origin; enduring because of the witness of the Holy Spirit).



NEW TESTAMENT

I. WHY THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS COLLECTED

- A. Authoritative words of Christ needed preserving.
- B. Need for a New Covenant Document to complement the Old Covenant.
- C. Apostles were dying and their testimony needed to be preserved.
- D. Troubles in churches required authoritative instruction.
- E. Persecution necessitated a collection of the books for which one would suffer.

II. HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WERE COLLECTED

- A. Tests of Canonicity
 - 1. Inspiration
 - 2. Apostolicity
 - 3. Doctrinal Purity
 - 4. Genuineness
 - 5. Catholicity
- B. Things That Slowed the Process
 - 1. Position of the Old Testament
 - 2. Slow Communication / Travel
 - 3. Lack of Church Sponsor
 - 4. Poor Internal Evidence
- C. History of Process
 - 1. Apostles to A.D. 140 -- Dissemination, collection, and regional recognition
 - 2. A.D. 140-180 -- Developments toward a fixed canon
 - 3. A.D. 180-240 -- Universal confirmation and final agreement

"The Christian movement hasn't seriously examined the question of canon since the 15th century. It's time for academic scholars to raise the issue."

Robert Funk
Head of the Westar Institute
Sonoma, CA
U.S. News & World Report
November 8, 1993

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANON**PRINCIPLES GUIDING CANONICITY:****Inadequate views:**

- ? age determines canonicity
- ? language determines canonicity
- ? agreement with the Toral
- ? Religious value
- ? Christian usage
- ? NOTE: Common mistake of inadequate views: **they confuse DETERMINATION (by God) and RECOGNITION (by men)**

ADEQUATE VIEW:

1. **GOD DETERMINES CANONICITY; MAN DISCOVERS IT**
2. **BOOKS RECEIVE CANONICITY FROM GOD AND RECOGNITION FROM THE PEOPLE OF GOD.**

PRINCIPLES GUIDING:**A. WAS IT WRITTEN BY A**

- ✓ **PROPHET?**
- ✓ **APOSTLE?**
- ✓ **AN ASSOCIATION WITH AN APOSTLE?**
- ✓ **Heb. 1:1; 2 Peter 1:20-21)**

B. WERE THE WRITERS CONFIRMED BY AN ACT OF GOD?

(John 3:2; Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:3)

C. DOES IT TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD?

(Deut. 18:22; Gal 1:8)

D. DOES IT HAVE THE POWER OF GOD? (Heb. 4:12)**E. WAS IT ACCEPTED BY THE PEOPLE OF GOD? (Dan. 9:2; 1 Thes 2:13; 2 Pet 3:15)****ANTILEGOMENA - Books rejected by some and why**

1. **Hebrews** - anonymity
2. **James** - veracity, Jewishness, apparent conflict with Paul
3. **2 Peter** - genuineness
4. **2 John** - awareness
5. **3 John** - awareness
6. **Jude** - awareness, apocryphal citation
7. **Revelation** - authenticity, difficult genre

Antilegomena - Books disputed by some

Song of Solomon

Ecclesiastes

Esther

Ezekiel

Proverbs

Pseudepigrapha - Books rejected by ALL**EXTERNAL INFLUENCES IN THE FORMATION OF SCRIPTURE**

1. Practice of the early Christians in their worship. New Testament Memories of the apostles were read along with the Old Testament side by side.
2. Quotations from apostolic writings in the 2nd century added support
3. Presence of heresy caused them to see the need for a canon.
4. Persecution caused some writings to receive higher standing (which books are you willing to die for?)
5. Method of book making (Codex allowed binding of several books) This aided in distribution of the NT books.

INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE FORMATION OF SCRIPTURE

1. Rule of faith (core of doctrine from which one cannot depart)
2. The real or related (contact with an apostle) apostolic origin of a book
3. Internal witness of Scripture by the Spirit

ATTEMPT TO CANONIZE OFFICIALLY**A.D. 140 - FIRST MADE BY MARCION (A HERETIC- he was reacting)****A.D. 170 - MURATORIAN FRAGMENT**

****A.D. 367 - ATHANASIUS SET FORTH A LIST EXPRESSING THE CANON AS IT NOW STANDS.** Widely accepted; 393 and 397 reaffirmed under leadership of Augustine.

Came into official being BECAUSE OF HERESY

Authoritative because of its APOSTOLIC ORIGIN

Enduring because of the WITNESS of the HOLY SPIRIT

CANONICITY

WHY THE NEW TESTAMENT WAS COLLECTED:

17

- a. Authoritative Word of Christ needed preserving
- b. Need for New covenant Document to complement the Old Covenant
- c. Apostles were dying and their TESTIMONY needed to be preserved
- d. Troubles in churches required authoritative instruction
- e. Persecution necessitated a collection of THE BOOKS for which one would suffer

TESTS OF CANONICITY

- ✓ INSPIRATION
- ✓ APOSTOLICITY
- ✓ DOCTRINAL PURITY
- ✓ GENUINENESS
- ✓ CATHOLICITY

HISTORY OF PROCESS:

Apostles to A.D. 140 - dissemination, collection, and regional recognition

A.D. 140-180 - Development toward a FIXED Canon

A.D. 180 -420 - Universal Confirmation and Final Agreement

But since we have referred to the heretics as dead, and to us as having the divine scriptures unto salvation, and as I fear, as Paul wrote to the Corinthians, lest some few of the simple may be led astray by deceit from simplicity and purity by the wiles of men, and finally may begin to read the so-called apocrypha, deceived by the likeness of the names to those of the true books... Since some have turned their hand to draw up for themselves the so-called apocrypha, and to mingle these with the inspired writ, concerning which we are informed fully, as those handed down to the fathers who were from the beginning directly seers and servants of the word, *it seemed good also to me*, urged by true brethren, and having learned from time gone by, *to set forth in order from the first the books that are canonized* and handed down and believed to be divine, so that each, if he has been deceived, may detect those who have misled him, and the one remaining pure may rejoice at being put in mind of it again...[the books are listed]. These are the wells of salvation, so that he who thirsts may be satisfied with the sayings in these. In these alone is the teaching of godliness heralded. Let no one add to these. Let nothing be taken away from these...

Athanasius' 39th Festal Letter
Easter A.D. 367

This book contains: The mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be holy.

It contains light to direct you, food to support you and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveller's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's charter.

Here, Heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. **Christ is its grand subject**, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given you in life, will be opened at Judgement, and be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward faithful labor, and condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

*'Tis the Book that has for ages
Lifted man from sin and shame,
That great message on its pages,
Will forever be the same.*

Never compare the Bible with other books. Comparisons are dangerous. Books speak from earth; the Bible speaks from Heaven. Never think or say that the Bible contains the Word of God. It **IS** the Word of God. Supernatural in origin, eternal in duration, inexpressible in value, infinite in scope, divine in authorship, regenerative in power, infallible in authority, universal in interest, personal in application, inspired in totality. Read it through. Write it down. Pray it in. Work it out. Pass it on. **It is the Word of God.**

-Selected

"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." II Timothy 3:16-17

"Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in Heaven" Psalm 119:89

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" Psalms 119:11

Bibliology Key Word and Concept

what

REVELATION

"The act of God by which He has made known what was otherwise unknowable."
apokalupsis - "to unveil, to uncover"

GENERAL

"God's witness to Himself through creation, history,
and the conscience of man."

SPECIAL

"God's disclosure of Himself in Salvation History
(revelation in a person) and in the interpretive word
of Scripture (revelation in proposition)."

HISTORY

Judges
Ruth

CREATION

Psalm 19:1-3
Rom. 1:18-20

CONSCIENCE

Romans 1:19
Romans 2:14-15

WRITTEN

I Corinthians 2:10-13
II Peter 1:19-21

LIVING

John 1:18
Hebrews 1:1-3

how

INSPIRATION

"The act of God by which He superintended/controlled the human authors of the 66 books of the Bible so
that using their own individual personalities they composed and recorded without error, His revelation to
man in the words of the original."
II Timothy 3:15-16; II Peter 1:16-21

result

INERRANCY

"The quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake which safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is
entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions."
Matthew 5:17-18; John 10:35; 17:17

result

INFALLIBILITY

"The quality of neither misleading or being misled which safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure,
safe and reliable guide in all matters."

responsibility

INTERPRETATION

"The process of determining the biblical author's intended meaning."

resource

ILLUMINATION

"The work of the Holy Spirit, which assists the reader in gaining both the sense and significance of God's
written revelation."
John 16:12-15; I Corinthians 2:9-16

response

APPLICATION

"The process of determining the current relevance of Scripture and then actively responding."
James 1:19-27

DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

DEFINITION: The act of God by which He has made known what was otherwise unknowable. It is the truthful disclosure of God to His creation.
Apokalupsis = "to unveil, to uncover; to reveal"

GENERAL REVELATION

God's witness to Himself through Creation, history,
and the conscience of man
(Natural Revelation)

Romans 1:18-32

Romans 2:1ff

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." Romans 1:20

SPECIAL REVELATION

God's disclosure of Himself in
SALVATION HISTORY preeminently in Jesus Christ
(revelation in a person) and in the
Word of Scripture (revelation as proposition)

WRITTEN

(the Scriptures)

1 Corinthians 2:10-13

2 Peter 1:19-21

LIVING

(the Son)

John 1:18

Hebrews 1:1-3

INSPIRATION

The act of God by which He superintended (guided) the human authors of the 66 books of the Bible so that **using their own individual personalities** they composed and recorded without error, His revelation to man in the words of the original.

**FOUR SCRIPTURES THAT SPEAK TO
INSPIRATION**

Matthew 5:17-18 (Jesus' View)

John 10:35

2 Timothy 3:15-17 (Paul's View)

2 Peter 1:16-21 (Peter's View)

Jesus' View of Scripture**MATTHEW 5:17-18**

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

JOHN 10:35

"... the scripture cannot be broken..."

Paul's View of Scripture**2 Timothy 3:15-17**

"...and how from infancy you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Peter's View of Scripture**2 Peter 1:16-21**

"...And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."
(vss 19-21)

INERRANCY

The quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake which safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.

Matthew 5:17-18

John 10:35

John 17:17 - "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

INFALLIBILITY

The quality of neither misleading or being misled which ensures that the truth of Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable guide in all matters to which it speaks.

INTERPRETATION

The process of determining the biblical author's intended meaning.

ILLUMINATION

The work of the Holy Spirit, which assists the reader in gaining both the sense and the significance of God's written revelation.

John 16:12-15 "I have much more to say to you than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of truth comes he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you."

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 "...but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God..."

APPLICATION

The process of determining the current relevance of Scripture and then actively responding.

Jamews 1:19-27 "...Do not merely listen to the word...Do what it says. ...[For He who forgets is] like a man looking at his face in a mirror and ...immediately forgetting...But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this... he will be blessed in what he does."

NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR REVELATION**1. The Existence of God**

COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT - Romans 1:19-20 - Creator/Creation

ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT - that "Being" of which no greater can be conceived

MORAL ARGUMENT - Romans 2:12-14 - law/lawgiver, universal awareness of God and the presence of moral law in all cultures

HISTORICAL ARGUMENT - God has revealed Himself clearly and decisively in the historical process

CHRISTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT - John 1:1, 14, 18 The person and work of Christ is evidence of the God who exists and has revealed Himself.

2. The nature of Man

Created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27) Man is capable of receiving God's revelation

Fallen in sin (Gen. 9:6, 1 Cor. 2:14-16) Man is certain of misunderstanding God's revelation (without the aid of the Holy Spirit.)

CHARACTERISTICS OF REVELATION**A. It is distinct from illumination**

Revelation is objective - **disclosure** of truth

Illumination is inward and subjective - **discovery** of truth revealed

B. It is distinct from inspiration

Revelation is the what, the content, the message, the product

Inspiration is the how, the conveyer, the means, the process

C. In Biblical Usage: Revelation

1. It is **INTELIGIBLE**

2. It is often **VERBAL**

3. It is **VERBALIZABLE**

4. It is **PERSONAL** in Christ (John 1:14)

TWO EVANGELICAL VIEWS OF REVELATION TODAY:

Normative Revelation - in the Bible only, for ALL believers, provides general guidance

Private Revelation - Bible PLUS experience, for individuals only, provides special guidance

(this view is not biblical; it is dangerous, unnecessary, the origin of cults, it can be reduced to the absurd)

VARIOUS VIEWS OF INSPIRATION

1. **NATURAL THEORY** - no supernatural element in Scripture. The Bible is simply an "inspiring" book or piece(s) of literature.
2. **ILLUMINATION** - (mystical) "Spirit inspired" writings on the same level as any of history's or today's Spirit inspired writings.
3. **DYNAMIC** - (Partial) "CONTAINS" the Word of God and is without error in areas of doctrine and salvation. It may be, however, in error in the areas of science, history, etc.; (Infallibility of purpose)
4. **NEO-ORTHODOX** - Inspired, *but not without error due to human element*. The Bible BECOMES the Word of God in existential encounter, but it IS NOT the Word of God.
5. **MECHANICAL DICTATION** - Writers were *passive instruments* in the hands of God like a typewriter to a typist.
6. **VERBAL/PLENARY** - GOD SUPERINTENDED THE HUMAN AUTHORS SO THAT IN THEIR OWN WORDS VIA THEIR INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITIES THEY WROTE THE SCRIPTURES AND THEY ARE INSPIRED FULLY, TO THE VERY WORDS, AND ARE WITHOUT ERROR IN ALL THAT THEY AFFIRM.
 INERRANT: without error
 INFALLIBLE - Incapable of teaching non-truth or leading one astray
 INSPIRATION - God breathed.

INSPIRATION EXTENDS TO...

1. The writing (not merely the idea)
2. The words (not simply the word)
3. The tenses of verbs - Mt. 22:31-32
4. The letters of words - Gal. 3:16
5. The smallest parts of letters - Matt. 5:17-18

A HELPFUL CLARIFICATION

"Phenomenal" language = language in the phenomenal perspective is from the vantage point of the viewer... i.e. how it was observed, not necessarily the technical/analytical view. (Eg. Sunrise/sunset - the sun actually does neither! But that is our observation)

God

revelation

inspiration



**Human
Author**

writes



**Inerrant
Scripture**

interpretation

illumination

testimony of
the Holy Spirit



**Modern
Reader**

Definition of Revelation

I. NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR REVELATION

- A. The existence of God (Theism) -- He must be there in order to reveal Himself.
1. Cosmological argument (Rom. 1:19-20) -- cause/effect; Creator/creation
 2. Teleological argument (Psalm 19:1f) -- design/designer; watchmaker/watch
 3. Moral argument (Rom. 2:12-14) -- law/lawgiver; universal awareness of God and moral law in all cultures.
 4. Ontological argument -- God is that being of which no greater can be conceived. There is a universal, innate awareness of a supreme being(s).
 5. Historical argument -- God has revealed Himself clearly and decisively in the historical process (e.g., the Exodus).
 6. Christological argument -- The person and work of Christ is evidence of the God who exists and has revealed Himself (John 1:18), especially in the resurrection.
- B. The nature of man (Anthropology)
1. He is created in God's image - (Gen 1:26-27) hence He is fit for receiving revelation. This is affirmed by biblical teaching.
 2. His is fallen (sin effaces [mars], not erases God's image, cf. Gen 9:6; James 3:9). Hence revelation cannot be received and understood adequately and accurately apart from God's intervention and the work of the Holy Spirit (cf. I Cor. 2:14-16).

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF REVELATION

- A. It is distinct from Illumination

Revelation	Illumination
It is objective	It is inward and subjective
It is a disclosure of truth	It is a discovery of truth revealed

B. It is distinct from Inspiration

Revelation	Inspiration
The what	The how
The content	The conveyor
The message	The means
The product	The process

C. In Biblical usage

1. Revelation is intelligible (we can understand and comprehend God who is communicating to us).
2. It is often verbal (I Cor. 2:10-13 "words taught by the Holy Spirit").
3. It is verbalizable. It can be communicated from one person to another.

III. A SHORT DEFINITION

A disclosure, an unveiling, the act of God making Himself known to people. This revelation is both of a general and special nature (cf. Romans 1:18 - 3:2).



"Let's face it, sir. What I'm really looking for is a list of good scriptures to memorize in case I get into a violent religious argument and need something to say!"

Models of Revelation

Model	Adherents	Definition of Revelation	Purpose of Revelation
Revelation as Doctrine*	Patristic fathers Medieval church Reformers B. B. Warfield Francis Schaeffer International Council on Biblical Inerrancy	Revelation is divinely authoritative and is conveyed objectively and propositionally through the exclusive medium (words) of the Bible.** Its propositions generally assume the character of doctrine.	To elicit saving faith through acceptance of the truth as revealed ultimately in Jesus Christ.
Revelation as Historical	William Temple G. Ernest Wright Oscar Cullman Wolfhart Pannenberg	Revelation is the demonstration of God's saving disposition and capacity as witnessed by his great deeds in human history.	To instill hope and trust in the God of history.
Revelation as Inner Experience	Friedrich Schleiermacher D. W. R. Inge C. H. Dodd Karl Rahner	Revelation is the self-disclosure of God by his intimate presence in the depths of the human spirit and psyche.	To impart an experience of union with God that equates with immortality.
Revelation as Dialectical Presence	Karl Barth Emil Brunner John Baillie	Revelation is God's message to those whom he encounters with his Word in the Bible and with Christ in Christian proclamation.	To generate faith as the appropriate meta-revelatory completion of itself.
Revelation as New Awareness	Teilhard de Chardin M. Blondel Gregory Baum Leslie Dewart Ray L. Hart Paul Tillich	Revelation is one's arrival at a higher level of consciousness as one is attracted to a more fruitful sharing in the divine creativity.	To achieve the restructuring of perception/experience and a concomitant self-transformation.

*The doctrine model acknowledges "natural revelation" (that which may be discerned of God through reason or observing creation) apart from special biblical revelation. It is regarded to be of minor importance, however, since it is not salvific (it merely "pricks" the conscience). This model considers miracles and apostolic signs confirmations of revelation.

**Roman Catholic theologians adhering to this model add to this definition the words "or by official Church teaching."

This chart is based on Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1992). Used by permission.

Models of Revelation (continued)

Model	General View of the Bible	Relation to History	Means of Human Apprehension
Revelation as Doctrine	The Bible <i>is</i> the Word of God (both in form and content).	Revelation is <i>trans-historical</i> (it is discrete and determinative with regard to its contiguity with history).	Illumination (by the Holy Spirit)
Revelation as Historical	The Bible is an <i>event</i> . It is conjunctive with God's self-revelation as disclosed indirectly through the totality of his activity in history. It is never extrinsic to either the continuity or particularity of that history.	Revelation is <i>intra-historical</i> (the Bible reveals history <i>within</i> history).	Reason
Revelation as Inner Experience	The Bible <i>contains</i> the word of God (intermingled with the human elements of error and myth: the Bible is a "husk" wrapped around the "kernel" of truth). That truth can be apprehended (experienced) only by personal illumination.	Revelation is <i>psycho-historical</i> (it relates to history as a mental image of human continuity).	Intuition
Revelation as Dialectical Presence	The Bible <i>becomes</i> the word of God to us (revelation is not static but dynamic and has to do with the contingency of human response) as it is empowered by the Holy Spirit.	Revelation is <i>supra-historical</i> (the Bible reveals "history <i>beyond</i> history").	"Transactional" reason (interaction with faith intrinsic to revelation)
Revelation as New Awareness	The Bible is a paradigm—a mediator through which self-transformation and transcendence may be achieved (but the Bible is only a human effort using "limping" human language pursuant to this end).	Revelation is <i>ahistorical</i> (history is rendered practically irrelevant as it is subjected to ongoing reinterpretations of personal transcendence).	Rational/mystical meditation

Models of Revelation (continued)

Model	Basic Hermeneutic	Purported Strengths	Purported Weaknesses
Revelation as Doctrine	Induction (objective)	<p>It derives from the Bible's own testimony to itself.</p> <p>It is the traditional view from the patristic fathers to the present.</p> <p>It is distinctive by virtue of its internal coherence.</p> <p>It provides the basis for consistent theology.</p>	<p>The Bible does not claim propositional infallibility of itself. Early and medieval exegetes were amenable to allegorical/spiritual interpretations. The variety of literary terms and conventions argues against this model.</p> <p>Modern science refutes biblical literalism and other notions attached to this model.</p> <p>Its hermeneutic ignores the suggestive power of biblical context.</p>
Revelation as Historical	Deduction (objective/subjective)	<p>It has pragmatic religious value because of its concreteness. It identifies certain biblical themes minimized or ignored by the propositional model (Revelation as Doctrine).</p> <p>It is more organic in its approach and points to a pattern of history.</p> <p>It is nonauthoritarian and is thus more plausible to the contemporary mentality.</p>	<p>It relegates the Bible to a "phenomenon" status. It is virtually destitute of theological undergirding. Notwithstanding its alleged plausibility, it does not foster ecumenical dialogue.</p>
Revelation as Inner Experience	Eclecticism (subjective)	<p>It offers a defense against a rationalistic critique of the Bible.</p> <p>It promotes devotional life.</p> <p>Its flexibility encourages inter-religious dialogue.</p>	<p>It "picks and chooses" from the Bible.</p> <p>It substitutes natural elitism for the Biblical concept of election. It divorces revelation from doctrine by its emphasis on experience.</p> <p>Its experiential orientation also risks excessive introspection on the part of the devotionalist.</p>
Revelation as Dialectical Presence	Induction (subjective)	<p>It seeks to base itself on a biblical foundation.</p> <p>It evidences a clear, but not orthodox, Christological focus. Its emphasis on paradox removes many objections as to the implausibility of the Christian message. It offers the possibility of encounter with a transcendent God.</p>	<p>Though biblically based, it lacks internal coherence. Its paradoxical language is confusing.</p> <p>Its abstruseness with regard to relating the Christ of faith to the historical Jesus undermines its validity.</p>
Revelation as New Awareness	Ultra-eclecticism (extremely subjective)	<p>It escapes inflexibility and authoritarianism. It respects the active role of the person in the revelatory process. It harmonizes with evolutionist or transformationist thinking.</p> <p>Its philosophy satisfies the need of worldly fruitfulness.</p>	<p>It does violence to Scripture through its unorthodox interpretations.</p> <p>It is a neo-gnosticism that is inadequate to meaningful Christian experience.</p> <p>In its totality, it denies the cognitive/objective value of the Bible.</p>

The Doctrine Of Revelation

I. Source of Revelation - God (Heb. 1:1)

A. Through various means

1. Dreams (Gen. 37)
2. Visions (Dan. 7)
3. Audible Voice (I Sam. 3)
4. Inner Voice (Hos. 1; Joel 1)
5. Angel (Gen. 19)
6. Miracles (Ex. 3; Jud. 6)
7. Lot (Prov. 16:33)
8. Urim & Thummim (Ex. 28)
9. Nature (Ps. 19:1ff)

B. Primarily through the prophets

1. Characteristics of a prophet

- a. Man of God (I Kings 12) - chosen by God
- b. Servant of the Lord (I Kings 14) - faithful to God
- c. Messenger of the Lord (Is. 42) - sent by God
- d. Seer (I Sam. 9) - insight from God
- e. Watchman (Ezek. 3) - alert for God
- f. Prophet (throughout the OT) - speaker for God.

2. Function of a prophet

- a. Amos 3:8 - "The Lord has spoken; who can but prophesy."
- b. Num. 22:18- "I could not go beyond the command of the Lord."
- c. Exodus 4:30- one who speaks "all the words which the Lord has spoken."
- d. Deut. 4:2- "You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take away from it."
- e. Deut. 18:18- "I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him."

II. Spheres of Revelation

A. General Revelation - in nature

1. Gen. 1 Creation is good like God; man resembles God.
2. Job 12:7ff Birds and beasts speak of God.
3. Job 20:27 Heavens reveal man's iniquities.
4. Ps. 14:1 Only a fool does not believe in God.
5. Ps. 19:1 Heavens declare God's glory
6. Ps. 97:6 Heavens declare God's righteousness.
7. Ps. 65:8 There are natural signs.
8. Ps. 94:9-11 Man's being reflects God's knowledge.
9. Ecclesiastes Natural knowledge of God under the sun.
10. Is. 14:12 Greatness of Creator (through creation).
11. Is. 45:6,22 All ends of the Earth know God.
12. Acts 14 Pagans know God through nature.
13. Acts 17 Greek philosophy used to argue to God.
14. Rom. 1:18ff All men know God through creation.
15. Rom. 2:12ff Moral law written in the hearts of man.

B. Special Revelation - in Scripture

1. In times past (OT) - God spoke through prophets (Matt. 5: 17-18; Heb.1:1).
2. In last days (NT) - God spoke through Christ and the Apostles (Heb.1:1-3; 2:3-4) and Scripture (II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:21).

C. Comparison

General	Special
Given to all of rational capability	Given to <u>all</u> believers and <u>some</u> unbelievers
Apparently sufficient only for condemnation	Sufficient for salvation
Declares God's greatness	Declares God's saving grace and goodness

D. Importance of Revelation

1. General revelation
 - a. Provides common ground with unbelievers.
 - b. Provides sphere for pre-evangelism.
 - c. Provides background for special revelation.

2. Special revelation

- a. Overcomes sin's obscuring general revelation.
- b. Discloses God's plan of salvation.
- c. Provides clearer and more detailed revelation of God's will.

III. Substantiation of Revelation

A. Tests for a true prophet?

1. Do they utter false prophecies? (Deut. 18:22)
2. Do they use objects of divination? (Deut. 18:10,12)
3. Do they contact spirits? (Deut 18: 9-14)
4. Do they preach another gospel? (Gal. 1:8)
5. Do they follow another god? (Deut. 13:2, 18:2)
6. Do their prophecies center in Christ? (Rev. 19:10)
7. Do they deny Christ is Lord? (I Cor. 12:3)
8. Do they confess Christ is human? (I John 4:1ff)
9. Is the fruit of their teaching good? (Matt. 7:15ff)
10. Do they have a new revelation since the time of the apostles? (Jn. 14:26, 16:13; Acts 1:21-22; Heb. 1:1, 2:3ff)

B. Confirmation of a true prophet - miracles

1. Moses Exodus 4:1ff
2. Elijah I Kings 17:1ff
3. Christ John 3:2; Acts 2:22
4. Apostles II Cor. 12:12-13; Heb. 2: 3-4

REVELATION						
General Revelation				Special Revelation		
Nature	History	Experience		Salvation History	Christ	Scripture
Creation	Providence	Conscience		Old Covenant	Preliminary Revelation (Eternal Logos)	Inspiration
Preservation	Judgment	Existence		New Covenant	Final Revelation (Incarnation)	Illumination ----- Interpretation

Is There Revelation Today?

Two Evangelical Views

I. NO NEW NORMATIVE REVELATION, ONLY PRIVATE REVELATION

A. Distinction made.

NORMATIVE REVELATION	PRIVATE REVELATION
In the Bible only	In the Bible plus experience (e.g., dreams, visions, voices, impressions)
For all believers	For individuals only
Provides general guidance	Provides special guidance

B. Problems with this view. It is:

1. Not biblical (since the biblical examples cited are from the period of special revelation).
2. Dangerous (can't draw a clear line and it is easy to slip over it. God gets blamed for things He does not approve).
3. Unnecessary (Bible is sufficient for faith and practice).
4. Origin of cults (which begin with "private" revelation which then go "public").
5. Can be reduced to the absurd (do we need special guidance for choice of food, clothes, colors, etc.?).
6. "Revelations" (of the private type) are often wrong (cf. Deut. 18:22).

II. NO NEW NORMATIVE OR PRIVATE REVELATION TODAY

A. The Bible gives complete guidance for all of life (II Tim. 3:16-17).

B. Prayer, etc. brings no new revelation, but it sensitizes us (illumination) to the normative/final revelation in the Bible.

C. "Special" guidance is a result of obedience to God's revealed will, and in using our gifts in the most faithful and fruitful way.

1. God is primarily interested in our spiritual condition (holiness and faithfulness).
2. The "right" job, spouse, location, school, etc. is one where we can be the most faithful to God's Word and effective in His Work (with our gifts).

REVELATION: Adaption or Accommodation?

ADAPTION	ACCOMMODATION
Adaption to Finite Understanding	Accommodation to Finite Error
Finitude of Man	Sinfulness of Man
Partial Truths	Actual Errors
Truth <u>Disclosed</u> in Human Language	God's Truth <u>Disguised</u> in Human Language
Condescension of God's Truth	Compromise of God's Truth
Anthropomorphisms Necessary	Myths Necessary
Can Know God's <u>Nature</u>	Can Know God's <u>Activity</u>
Can Know What <u>Really</u> Is	Can Know What <u>Seems</u> To Be

GOD'S WORD SAYS....

The Eternal Word

Psalm 119:89 *Your word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.*

Isaiah 40:8 *The grass withers and the flowers fall; but the word of our God stands forever.*

Matthew 5:17-18 *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.*

Mark 13:31 *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.*

God's Word Is Perfect

II Samuel 22:31 *As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless*

Psalm 12:6 *And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.*

Proverbs 30:5-6 *Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.*

Power of God's Word

Isaiah 55:11 *...my word that goes out from my mouth; it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

Matthew 22:29 *Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God."*

God Speaks To Man

Exodus 24:4 *Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said.*

Exodus 32:16 *The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.*

Deuteronomy 4:2 *Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.*

Deuteronomy 29:29 *The secret things that belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of the law.*

Jeremiah 30:2 *This is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: "Write in a book all the words that I have spoken to you."*

I Thessalonians 2:13 *And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it*

actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

II Timothy 3:16-17 *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Hebrews 1:1-2 *In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

Rule For Judgement

Acts 17:11 *Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*

I Corinthians 14:37 *If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's commands.*

Hebrews 4:12 *The word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

God's Word Rejected

Isaiah 8:19-22 *When men tell you to consult with mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn...they will be thrust into utter darkness.*

Isaiah 30:9-11 *These are rebellious people, deceitful children, children unwilling to listen to the Lord's instruction. They say to the seers, "See no more visions!" and to the prophets "Give us no more visions of what is right! Tell us pleasant things, prophesy illusions. Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!"*

Jeremiah 8:9 *The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have?*

Jeremiah 23:29-30, 36 *"Is not my word like fire," declares the Lord, "and like a hammer that breaks rock in pieces? Therefore, declares the Lord, "I am against the prophets who steal from one another words supposedly from me." But you must not mention 'the oracle of the Lord' again, because every man's own word becomes his oracle and so you distort the words of the living God, the Lord Almighty, our God.*

Zechariah 7:11-12 *But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the Lord Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So they Lord Almighty was very angry.*

Mark 7:9,13 *And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down."*

Luke 16:31 *He said to him, if they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.*

John 5:46-47 *But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?*

John 8:37b-38 *Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.*

John 12:48-50 *Then Jesus cried out..."There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words: that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. For I did not speak of my own accord, but the father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the father has told me to say."*

Growth and Guidance

Joshua 1:8 *Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

Psalms 119:9 *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.*

Psalms 119:10 *I seek with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.*

Psalms 119:11 *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

Psalms 119:16 *I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.*

Psalms 119:36-37 *Turn my heart toward your statutes and not toward selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; renew my life according to your word.*

Psalms 119:67 *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word.*

Psalms 119:105 *Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light for my path.*

Matthew 4:4 *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live by bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

John 17:17 *Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*

Prophecy

John 2:22 *After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.*

Acts 1:16 *Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus.*

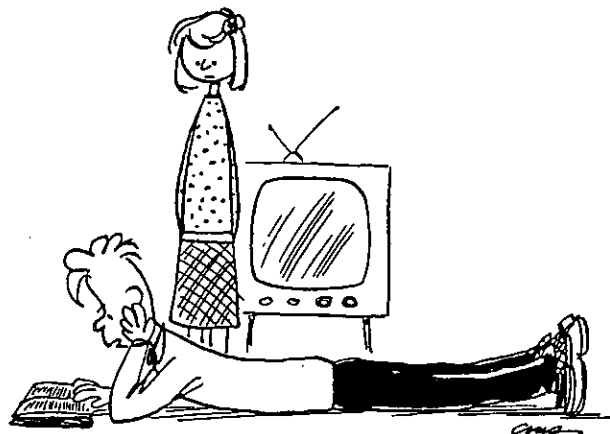
II Peter 1:20-21 *Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its own origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

Healing and Hope

Psalms 107:19-20 *Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them: he rescued them from the grave.*

Psalms 119:28 *My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.*

Romans 15:4 *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*



DON'T BOTHER ME...

I'm looking for a verse of scripture to back up one of my preconceived notions!

But all I said was,



Understanding you is like trying to understand the Book of Revelation!

TYPES OF DIVINE REVELATION

TYPE	MANIFESTATION	SCRIPTURE	SIGNIFICANCE
General Revelation	In Nature	Ps. 19:1-6	Reveals God exists. Reveals God's glory.
		Rom. 1:18-21	Reveals God is omnipotent. Reveals God will judge.
	In Providence	Matt. 5:45	Reveals God is benevolent to all people.
		Acts 14:15-17	Reveals God provides food for all people.
		Dan. 2:21	Reveals God raises up and removes rulers.
	In Conscience	Rom. 2:14-15	Reveals God has placed his law within the hearts of all people.
Special Revelation	In Christ	John 1:18	Reveals what the Father is like.
		John 5:36-37	Reveals the Father's compassion.
		John 6:63; 14:10	Reveals that the Father gives life to those who believe in the Son.
	In Scripture	II Tim. 3:16-17	Reveals all the doctrine, rebuke, correction, and guidance that the Christian needs for good living.
		II Peter 1:21	Reveals all that God has chosen to disclose through human authors directed by the Holy Spirit.

What About The Heathen?

by Justice C. Anderson

In every significant period of the history of Christian missions, the age-old question rears its disturbing head: What about the heathen? Or more simply stated, what happens to those who die, or have died, without having the opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ? Through no fault of their own are they destined to eternal damnation? Is there not some way these can be saved outside a knowledge of Jesus Christ?

This question is really one small aspect of the contemporary interest in a theology of religions which is, perhaps, the most incandescent, challenging theme confronting systematic and missionary theologians today: A shrinking, pluralistic

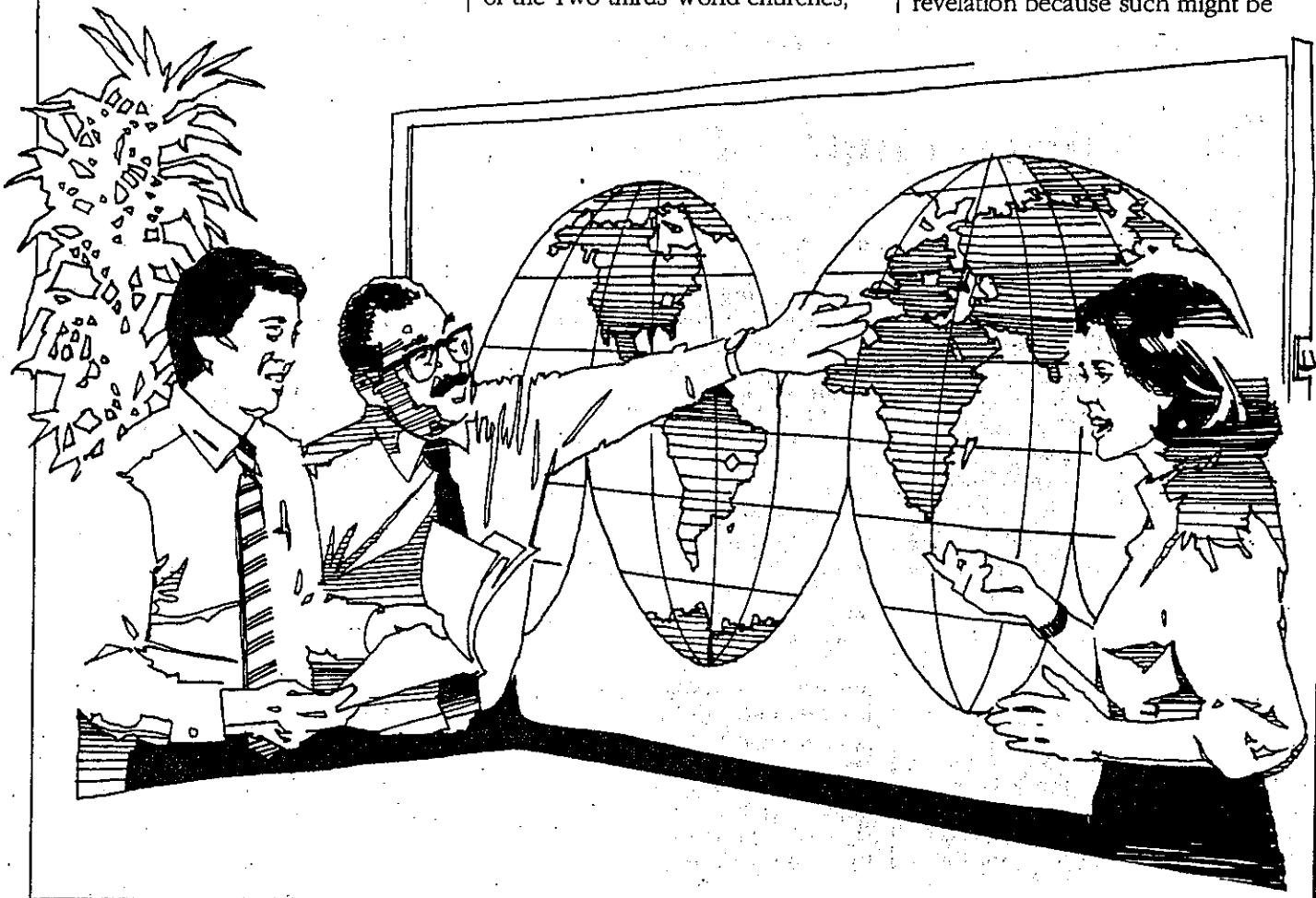
world, plus sudden paradigm shifts, are shaking the foundations of conservative theology and evangelical missiology.

A shrinking, pluralistic world, plus sudden paradigm shifts, are shaking the foundations of conservative theology and evangelical missiology.

In the West, the Enlightenment, modern science, 19th century theological liberalism and the emergence of the comparative study of religion have encouraged a spirit of tolerance and relativism. In the wider world, the demise of Western colonialism; the rise of the modern missionary movement; the rapid growth of the Two-thirds World churches;

and the large scale contacts of Christians with adherents of other religions have fanned the flames of religious pluralism. Due to the amazing advances in communication and transportation, there is a real encounter between the living religions. Muslims come to our meetings, Sikhs are clerks in our stores, Buddhists are our chefs and waiters and Jews are our best friends! Where do they stand before God? Many of their co-religionists in other parts of the world are the heathen referred to in our question.

The end of the colonial era has brought a cultural revival in Asia and Africa, and, on the other hand, has left a heritage of guilt in the West which affects Christian attitudes toward other religions. This sense of guilt causes Christians to down play any theological conviction of the finality of the Christian revelation because such might be



misunderstood as an attitude of cultural or religious superiority. Anyway, the present encounter is a challenge to Christian theology and missiology comparable to the great intellectual controversies of the past. It is no surprise, then, that a voluminous literature — Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Mainline Protestant and Evangelical — is being produced which, in general, espouses one of three positions on this question, namely: exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism, each with its view of the fate of the heathen.

Exclusivism maintains that the central claims of Christianity are true, and that where they clash with claims of other religions the latter are to be rejected as false. The exclusivist holds that God has revealed himself definitely in the Bible and finally in Jesus Christ, the unique incarnation of God, the only Lord and Savior. Historically, exclusivism remained the dominant position of the Christian churches until the 19th century. It is impossible to understand the Catholic missions of the 16th and 17th centuries, or the remarkable Protestant missionary movement of the 19th century, without appreciating the fundamental assumption of both, namely: salvation is to be found only in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and those who die without having made a commitment to Christ face an eternity apart from God.

During the heyday of the modern missionary movement dramatic changes were taking place in Europe which laid the foundation for a second position — one which is causing such a stir today in Catholic, Protestant and even evangelical sectors — it is called inclusivism. Unlike the radical discontinuity inherent in exclusivism, inclusivism sees a continuity across the whole religious spectrum. It both accepts and rejects other faiths. Its adherents try to insert Jesus Christ into other religious systems and claim that he works incognito through them. It strives to integrate other faiths into Christian theological reflection by believing that all non-Christian religious truth belongs ultimately to Christ, but, at the same time, it subordinates Christ to God,

christology to theology, the incarnation to creation and special revelation to general revelation — thus effecting what some inclusivists call a Copernican Revolution in systematic theology. The inclusivist would say that our heathen would be able to find an anonymous Christ in other religions; or that he might meet Christ after death, or be saved through some personal, mysterious encounter with the salvific will of a benevolent God.

A third prevalent position is much easier to define. Pluralism rejects outright the suggestion that Christian faith is in any sense superior to other religious traditions. Pluralists deny that Christianity is unique, normative or superior. Salvation is said to be a reality in all major religions and no single religion can be considered normative. Pluralism has practically eliminated Christology and radically altered the doctrine of the incarnation. Its ranks include some of the most influential theologians of our day. They would claim that our heathen has multiple ways to be saved without knowing about Christ.

As a basis for answering the question, What about the heathen?, this writer would like to recommend a respectful, polite exclusivism which assesses other religions in accord with Christian ethics, but stands firm on the finality of Jesus Christ — an exclusivism based on Jesus Christ as the unique and sufficient revelation of God and the Bible as the inspired word of God. He is aware that the Bible teaches that even the heathen is made in the image of God, and therefore, consciously or unconsciously, longs for a relation with God. He knows the Bible also speaks of a general revelation in nature and the eternal conscience which has provided the heathen with a witness. He knows also from personal experience that the heathen is the object of the redemptive activity of God — but, categorically, he believes that same Bible states that sinful man has so consistently spurned and perverted the progressive revelation of God culminated in Jesus Christ that now there is only one way and one name by which we must be saved.

W. T. Conner, venerable professor of systematic theology at SWBTS, used to shock his students when asked about the possibility of salvation outside of Jesus Christ. He would say, yes, I think a man could be saved if he lived up to the revelation of God in nature and conscience — but where is that man? Trot him out! In other words, theoretically, if a man repents and throws himself on the mercy of God unknowing of Christ, similar to the Old Testament saints and righteous men like Cornelius, he might be accepted by God; but the Bible and universal history attest that, practically, because of the sin principle, man does not respond positively to God's general revelations. He distorts them.

*Why, in this world of
instant communication
and rapid transportation,
have the heathen
not heard?*

What about the heathen? In summary, he is the object of the salvific will of the one Holy God, but he is lost without a response to God revealed in Jesus Christ. This is the nerve of evangelism and missions. Surely the God revealed in Jesus Christ will be just in His judgment of those who have never heard; but why, in this world of instant communication and rapid transportation, have the heathen not heard?

Helen Jean Parks once said, "If we ask, 'Are persons really lost without Jesus Christ as Savior?', we are asking the wrong question. The proper question is, 'Are we really saved if we do not tell them of His love?'"

Perhaps, our speculative question, What about the heathen?, should give way to a practical question, even more disturbing, What am I doing about the heathen?

Justice C. Anderson is George W. Bottoms Professor of Missions and Director, World Evangelism Center, Southwestern Seminary.

scendent knowledge, faith is not sight. The truth in the Bible is revealed because it has a divine source, but it is at the same time partial and broken because it has a historical matrix. It throws light on the human situation, but light that is adequate only for our salvation and the living of a righteous life, not for comprehensive understanding. As biblical Christians we are neither gnostics (fully enlightened) nor agnostics but pilgrims who nevertheless have a compass (the Word of God) that can guide us to our destination.

Revelation and the Bible

The paramount question in discussions on divine revelation is, How is revelation related to the Bible? In my perspective the original reception of revelation is a component part of revelation. The biblical writers and their writings participated in the event of revelation. Yet revelation is not to be equated with the objective verbal representation of this reception. It is the difference between "thought-in-encounter" and "thinking-about-it" (Brunner).³⁶

We need to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit guided the prophets in their reflection, but their articulation of this reflection is at least one step removed from the revelation itself. Their witness points to revelation, but it also mediates revelation, since the Spirit acts through the persons and words that he inspires.

The content of the Bible is indeed God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, but this content comes to us in the form of a historical witness to this event or constellation of events. To know this content we need to get beyond "the right human thoughts about God" to "the right divine thoughts about men" (Barth).³⁷

The biblical witness is binding because the prophets and apostles were ear- and eyewitnesses to what God did for us in the sacred history culminating in Jesus Christ. Moreover, these persons were guided by the Holy Spirit in their reflection and in their writing, and their writings now function as the vehicle of the Holy Spirit.

In our reading of the Bible and in our hearing of the biblical message,

we become, through the miraculous action of the Holy Spirit, contemporaneous with the moment of revelation. We experience the power and impact of the gospel directly through the word that we hear. In another sense, however, our experience of Jesus Christ is indirect, since it is mediated through the outward means of preaching and hearing.

The Bible is not in and of itself the revelation of God but the divinely appointed means and channel of this revelation. It comprises the sacred writings that give us "the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ" (2 Tim 3:15 NASB). In Paul's epistle to the Romans, "the revelation of the mystery" of the gospel is clearly distinguished from "the prophetic Scriptures" through which this mystery is made known (Rom 16:25-26 NKJ). In Colossians the mystery that constitutes the Word of God is identified with "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (1:25-27). The distinction between the Word of God and the words of Scripture is also evident in Psalm 119:18 (GNB): "Open my eyes, so that I may see the wonderful truths in your law."

The Word of God transcends the human witness, and yet it comes to us only in the servant form of the human word. God's Word is not a spiritual idea or ideal of which the human word is only a sign. Maximus the Confessor betrayed a Platonic thrust when he distinguished between the "spirit" and the "flesh" of Scripture and then advocated abandoning what is corruptible and cleaving to that which is wholly incorruptible.³⁸

There is indeed an inseparable connection between the revealed Word of God or the "mind of Christ" and the Bible. We can even speak of a unity or identity of witness and revelation, but it is an indirect identity, not a property of the witness but a matter of divine grace. I hold that the Word of God or the truth of revelation is embedded in Scripture because Scripture is encompassed by the presence of the Spirit of Christ. It is possible to argue that there is a direct identity between the substance or matter of the Bible and the transcendent Word and an indirect identity between the letter (*gramma*) and the Word. There is an inseparable relation but not an absolute identity between God's Word and the scriptural witness (cf. Ex 4:14-16; Ps 139:6; 1 Pet 1:10; 1 Cor 7:12, 25).

begs the question: Moving towards a dynamic or limited inerrancy view.

What of 2 Pet. 1:21? This is classic / neoorthodoxy.

No problem

Big problem!

Mirrors the text. See what Jesus said in Matt. 5:17-19; John 10:35.

Bible is God's thoughts about himself thru human instrumentality.

When the letter is separated from the Spirit who brings us life and salvation, it becomes a written code that kills (2 Cor 3:6). *Not what this text is saying at all.*

Barth argued cogently that while there is not an identity or coalescence between the written Word of God and the revealed Word (as in a major strand of Protestant orthodoxy), there is nevertheless a correspondence by virtue of the inspiring work of the Spirit. Yet this correspondence is imperceptible to reason; it can be grasped only by faith. My own preference is to speak of a conjunction between the Word of God and sacred Scripture by the action of the Spirit. What we hear is not simply an echo or reverberation of the Word of God but the very Word of God who speaks in and with the biblical preacher—not by necessity but by an act of free grace.

The scriptural writings are not stenographic notes of God's audible voice. They constitute a human witness that becomes at the same time a divine witness through the revealing action of God on the writers, the writings and the readers. It is possible to read the Scriptures, even memorize them, and still fail to perceive the mystery of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ (Jn 5:39).

Straw man. I ignore the doctrine of progressive revelation of the Bible.

If we make an absolute identity between the words of the Bible and the Word of God, then every command in Scripture becomes a universal or absolute command. We would then have divine sanction to put witches to death (cf. Ex 22:18). *Yes!* I cannot accept James Packer's view that "the biblical writers' thoughts" are, "strictly and precisely, the communicated thoughts of God."³⁹ Not every idea expressed in Scripture is the "mind of Christ," but every idea can become the vehicle of the mind of Christ. *Not sufficient*

The Bible is an instrumental norm for faith but not an absolute norm. Yet it is a real norm and not one that can be summarily dismissed. It communicates binding truth but truth that is not at our disposal. I reject the position of Auguste Sabatier: "As soon as the distinction is made in our consciousness between the word of God and the letter of holy Scripture, the first becomes independent of all human form and of all external guarantee."⁴⁰ This may be true for some theologians, but to

hold to it in an absolute fashion manifestly contradicts the wisdom of the Reformers as well as the fathers of the church. *Not so! He has not read history correctly.*

The proclamation of the church is likewise an instrumental norm and must be distinguished from the Word of God itself. Yet the sermonic witness, if it is grounded in Scripture, is inseparable from the Word of God. Paul rejoiced that when the Thessalonians received the Word of God, they accepted it "not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers" (1 Thess 2:13). In 1 Peter 1:25 "the good news which was preached to you" is identified with the Word of God. The Second Helvetic Confession is unequivocal: "The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God" (chap. 1).⁴¹ The sermon is distinct from the Word but inseparably connected with it.

One might say that the Bible is the Word of God in a formal sense—as a light bulb is related to light. The light bulb is not itself the light but its medium. The light of God's truth is ordinarily shining in the Bible, but it is discerned only by the eyes of faith. Even Christians, however, do not see the light in its full splendor. It is refracted and obscured by the form of the Bible, but it nonetheless reaches us if we have faith. *His illustration*

Warfield gave the helpful illustration of light (the divine Word) filtering through a stained-glass window in a cathedral.⁴² I wish to carry it further. I see the light of the sun illuminating the biblical figures or pictures on the window. But these pictures are also flawed by blemishes and shadows, reminding us of their participation in the real world of decay and death. It is up to the biblical exegete to distinguish between the overall picture or story and markings that are only incidental to this story. *And when they disagree...? For example: The Virgin Birth*

Again who decides?

Some conservatives (for example, John Warwick Montgomery), trying to show the inseparable unity of the Bible and revelation, have seized on Marshall McLuhan's dictum that the medium is the message. The medium is indeed part of the message, but it is an instrument, not the source, of the message. I hold that the message of revelation is explicit in some parts of the Bible and implicit in others. All parts bear witness to it, for there is nothing superfluous in the Bible, as even Schleier-

Theological Fallacy.
What The Bible
says God ~~does~~ say!

• HOLY SCRIPTURE •

macher acknowledged on rare occasions.

Where?
how?

Yet our final authority is not what the Bible says but what God says in the Bible. To be sure, God says what his witnesses say, but he says much more. Indeed, some things that his witnesses say fall short of the full picture that God invites us to see (cf. 1 Pet 1:10-11).

This point is made poignantly clear by Gregory of Nyssa:

I have heard the Divinely inspired Scriptures disclose marvellous things about the transcendent Nature—yet what are they compared with that Nature Itself? For even if I were capable of grasping all that the Scripture says, yet that which is signified is more. . . . So it is also with the words said about God in Holy Scripture, which are expounded to us by men inspired by the Holy Spirit. If measured by our understanding, they are indeed exalted above all greatness; yet they do not reach the majesty of the truth.⁴³

Again, he
begs the
question and
ignores a
plthora of
statements in
their view of
the Bible.

The qualitative transcendence of divine truth over the earthen vessels by which it is made known was an abiding theme of the magisterial Reformers. Calvin often described the Word of God as the heavenly doctrine of Scripture, and Scripture as the garment in which Christ comes to us. Indeed, "the highest proof of Scripture derives in general from the fact that God in person speaks in it."⁴⁴ Luther made a distinction between the inner and outer word: the latter is the Scripture and the former the revelation of Christ. Thus the Bible is the cradle wherein Christ is laid and the swaddling clothes in which Christ is wrapped. Or the Word of God is the water that comes to us through the pipes (the written witness). For Heinrich Bullinger it is the teaching of the apostles that "is the doctrine of God and the very true word of God."⁴⁵ Scripture, he said, is called the Word of God not because of the printed letter or the human voice that can be comprehended by the flesh but "because the meaning, which speaks through the human voice or is written with pen and ink on paper, is not originally from men, but is God's word, will and meaning."⁴⁶

Many Anabaptists also drew this distinction between the Word of God and the Bible. Hans Denck wrote in 1528: "I hold Holy Scripture above

• THE MEANING OF REVELATION •

Christ?!

all human treasures, but not so high as the Word of God, which is living, powerful and eternal; . . . for it is as God himself is, Spirit and not letter."⁴⁷ Eberhard Arnold, founder of the Bruderhof, depicted the Word of God as living before the Bible was even written.⁴⁸

This critical demarcation between spirit and letter is also characteristic of the Puritans and Pietists. Richard Sibbes regarded "the word of God" as "ancienter than the Scripture," which is "but that *modus*, that manner of conveying the word of God."⁴⁹ According to John Goodwin, Christian faith is based not on any book or books but on the gracious counsels of God concerning the salvation of the world by Jesus Christ, "which indeed are represented and declared both in Translations and Originals, but are essentially distinct . . . from both."⁵⁰ For Philipp Spener, the luminary of German Pietism, the Bible contains an outer word (the printed page) and an inner Word (the understanding given by the Holy Spirit).⁵¹ "The Word of God is that which shows, impresses, and brings the mind of Christ into our hearts."⁵² Similarly, Charles Spurgeon cautioned that the mere letter in which the promise is put profits us nothing: "it is the spirit of the promise; it is the life of the Spirit running through the veins of the promise that alone can profit you."⁵³

This
word
all do
not deal
with the
crucial
questions
which all
these authors
address.

For Jonathan Edwards "God's Word is really *God's* Word when it is accompanied by the Spirit dwelling in the human heart; when unaccompanied by the Spirit it is simply another natural, human word."⁵⁴ In his view the human words of Scripture effect faith not by their own power but by a divine cause operative in them.

Accepting Scripture both as the Word of God and as the carrier and vehicle of the Word, Abraham Kuyper, nineteenth-century Dutch Calvinist evangelical, placed the accent on its instrumental character. His break with rationalism was decisive: "At no single point of the way is there place . . . for a support derived from demonstration or reasoning."⁵⁵ He spoke of the inspiration of the biblical writers and the content of their witness but disclaimed the magical rendition of sentences. He was critical of both subjectivistic Pietism and barren scholastic orthodoxy. The latter lost sight of the fact that "the inspiring motive for

but it is
not irrational
but supra-
rational!

theology must always come from the subject."⁶⁶

This same reluctance to identify Scripture and the Word of God was discernible in the evangelical Holiness preacher Joseph Smith. According to Delbert Rose,

Smith cautiously distinguished between the Word of God and the Scriptures. The Word of God existed prior to and in some instances apart from the Scripture for centuries, and even Jesus' words . . . were not in written form at first. . . . Having the *body* of Scripture without the Spirit who inspired them is to be without the Word of God. To have the Word of God one must have both the letter of Scripture and the living Spirit illuminating that letter to the believing mind.⁶⁷

One can see that Barth's typology of the three forms of the Word of God—the living Word, the written Word and the proclaimed Word—rests on solid Christian and evangelical tradition. This very distinction originated during the Reformation with Bullinger.⁶⁸ Barth insisted that only when the written or proclaimed word is united with the revealed Word does it become revelation. At the same time he affirmed something like a perichoresis between the forms of the Word of God, for the living Word, Jesus Christ, encompasses both Scripture and the sermon based on Scripture.⁶⁹ As I have indicated in a previous volume, this typology should be extended to include the inner word, the voice of conscience, for this too when united with Jesus Christ becomes an infallible criterion for faith and practice.⁶⁰

With considerable acumen George Eldon Ladd defined revelation as an event plus the inspired interpretation.⁶¹ My one criticism is that he left out the third necessary ingredient: inward illumination. Revelation has three facets: historical, propositional and experiential. The culmination of revelation, says Daniel Stevick, "is not a book but a believing person, not sentences but the new society in Christ."⁶² Revelation reaches its goal in the life history of the reader and hearer. There is no revelation apart from the incarnate Word and the written Word. But likewise revelation does not exist unless the Holy Spirit brings the meaning and impact of this Word to bear on human beings, and this means

impacted!

the creation of a holy community—the fellowship of love.

The Bible is both the revelation and the means and bearer of revelation. It is revelation cast in written form and the original witness to revelation.⁶³ It is a component of revelation and a vehicle of revelation. It objectively contains revelation in the sense that its witness is based on revelation, but it becomes revelation for us only in the moment of decision, in the awakening to faith. Scripture is not simply a pointer to revelation (as Torrance sometimes describes it) but a carrier of revelation. Scripture is the mediate source of revelation, but only Jesus Christ is the original or eternal source.

Truth and Error in Protestant Orthodoxy

Protestant orthodoxy signified a valiant attempt to conserve the truths rediscovered in the Reformation by bringing philosophical resources to the aid of faith. Already in the sixteenth century Philipp Melancthon tried to show that Aristotle could help the Christian articulate the formative principles of faith and ethics. In his *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* Melancthon declared that "Aristotle wrote concerning civil morals so learnedly that nothing further concerning this need be demanded."⁶⁴ In sixteenth-century orthodoxy, reason was still for the most part subordinated to revelation. In the seventeenth century reason acquired growing importance as an instrument for interpreting scriptural truth. It was never the primary norm, but it now functioned as a secondary norm. In the eighteenth century it became an independent norm for many theologians.

While trying to remain true to *sola Scriptura*, Protestant orthodoxy could at the same time seek rational and empirical supports for faith. The Bible and human reason came to function as dual authorities for the Christian. The certainty of faith was transposed into an intellectual certainty. The witness of the Spirit in our hearts was not enough: evidence was garnered to show that the affirmations of Scripture corresponded to reality. Faith was presented in a manner calculated to appeal "to the mind's desire for symmetry, harmony, and comprehensive-

Yes! But this is not what has been affirmed previously

It was First Luther's typology

A good def.

This again begs the question concerning the nature of Scripture divinely inspired and recorded.

It is God's Word whether received as such or not!

Models of Scriptural Authority (3 Fold in his view)

In my study of how theologians past and present have interpreted the Bible, I have come to the conclusion that at least three models of biblical authority are pertinent to the discussion today. They are related to different theological methodologies as well as to conflicting philosophical understandings of truth.

These models can be described as the ^①sacramental, the ^②scholastic and the ^③liberal or modernist. The first sees the Bible as well as the church and the sacraments as an instrument or channel of divine activity. It envisages God as working through human and material instrumentality in relating himself to humanity. It does not deny the infinite qualitative difference between divinity and humanity but insists that the human is capable of bearing or conveying the divine. I find this model in Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Forsyth and Barth (at least in his middle period).

By the scholastic I mean that kind of theology that emphasizes the accessibility of the infinite to the finite and the possibility and indeed the desirability of systematizing the body of revealed knowledge given in Scripture. I detect this model especially in Protestant orthodoxy, though it is also partially present in such pillars of Catholic theology as Peter Lombard and Aquinas. It is particularly noticeable in the orthodoxy associated with the Princeton school of theology (Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge and Benjamin Warfield) and today in the writings of evangelical theologians like Carl Henry, Millard Erickson, Ronald Nash and R. C. Sproul.

The third model is associated with the liberal theology that has its immediate source in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though it was anticipated in the spiritualists and mystics through the ages. It stresses the inseparability of the infinite and the finite and sees the infinite as residing in the finite as its ground and depth. Liberal theology focuses on God's immanence rather than his transcendence. Its goal is to bring Christian thought into dialogue with modernity, to mediate between Christ and culture in order to establish

the credibility of Christian faith to its modern cultured despisers. Its orientation is anthropological and psychological rather than theological in that its primary concern is the effect of the divine on humanity rather than the nature of divinity as such. It is also inclined to see faith as standing in need of philosophical conceptualization and elucidation. Such renowned theologians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, Wilhelm Herrmann and Ernst Troeltsch as well as Horace Bushnell, Shailer Mathews, Douglas Clyde Macintosh, Shirley Jackson Case and William Newton Clark in this country typify what I mean by liberal theology. This tradition resurfaces in Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich, Langdon Gilkey, Henry Nelson Wieman, Harvey Cox, John Cobb, Peter Hodgson and Rosemary Ruether, though some of these would prefer the designation neoliberal or even postliberal.

These models are ideal types, in the sense used by Max Weber, Ernst Troeltsch and H. Richard Niebuhr. No one theologian or system of theology can be completely identified with any one model. Yet this kind of typology is helpful in clarifying the tensions that exist among different schools of theology on the subject of biblical authority.

The sacramental model sees the Bible as a divinely appointed medium or channel of revelation. The Bible is the earthen vessel in which we have a hidden treasure or the swaddling clothes in which the Christ child is laid (Luther). A distinction is often made between the sign (the letter of Scripture) and the thing signified (God's self-revelation in Christ). We do not have Christ apart from the sign, which, by the power of the Spirit, is effectual in communicating the mystery of Christ to us. The Bible is seen as both a human witness to divine truth and God's self-revelation through human authors. The relationship between the two sides—the human and the divine—is viewed in paradoxical fashion, a paradox analogous to the coexistence or coinherence of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ. It is a paradox that can be apprehended only in faith. The Bible can therefore be spoken of as "the Word of God" and "the word of man" at the same time. *Yes it can!*

*BUT
Christ
human
nature is
Faultless!
His analogy
defects his
argument.*

*Misplaces
Augustine,
Calvin, and
Luther*

straw man.
The Spirit's
illumination is
necessary!

The scholastic model holds the Bible to be the written revelation of God, a revelation ascertainable by human reason, though efficacious only for faith. There is said to be a virtual or actual identity between the Bible and revelation. The Bible becomes a book of revealed utterances or divine oracles. Faith assents to what reason can already know. The truth can be procured by a scientific or historical investigation of the Scriptures, but it can have no saving effect in one's life apart from the gift of faith—an illumination by the Spirit.

In the liberal view the Bible is a record of the religious experience of a particular people in history. In the words of J. G. Herder: "Its language is human . . . its meaning, its whole purpose and use."²⁶ It is helpful to us because of the abiding values it transmits or the reproducible experiences it describes. Its conceptual categories may be archaic, but its ethical precepts or its principles for cultivating the spiritual life have an enduring quality.

The sacramental model understands revelation as God in action, God revealing the depth of his love and the mystery of his will to the eyes of faith. Revelation has a personal, a propositional and an experiential pole. What is revealed is a personal presence in conjunction with a spoken or written witness and received by a believing heart. This view also holds that God is hidden in his revelation, that the truth of God is not directly available to human perception or conception. God can be known only as he gives himself to be known (Barth). Or as Augustine said, the truth can be apprehended by the mind only if the will has been converted by the Spirit of God.

The scholastic understands the Bible as a book of revealed truths or revealed propositions. The knowledge given in revelation is suprarational, but it is held to stand in continuity with natural knowledge. Reason may not be able to fathom this truth, but it can understand or make sense of this truth. *God is not irrational*

For the liberal, revelation is self-discovery (Tillich) or a breakthrough into self-understanding (Bultmann). Or it is a reflection of God in human consciousness (Teilhard de Chardin), or an experience of the infinite

The Bible is both the event, expression, and explanation of Revelation

depth and ground of all being (Tillich), or an awakening to God-consciousness (Schleiermacher) or an intuitive apprehension of the Eternal Now (Gerald Heard). The Bible is an aid in making contact with the deepest within the self, but it is not indispensable for this experience of oneness with God. What is given in revelation is not information concerning the nature of God or the plan of salvation but a new awareness of ourselves in relation to the divine and to fellow humanity.

Different understandings of faith are also evident in the three models. In the sacramental model faith is an existential commitment to the personal God revealed in Jesus Christ.²⁷ In scholastic theology faith is basically an intellectual assent to propositional truth. In the liberal approach faith is a venture of discovery that enables us to make contact with the creative power at work in nature and history. Or it is the stretching forth of the mind toward an insight not yet given. In the first model faith is included in the event of revelation. In the second, revelation is prior to faith. In the third, revelation tends to be subordinated to faith.

On the relation of humanity and divinity in Bible, church and sacrament, the sacramental approach sees the human as the instrumentality of the divine. The scholastic theologian views the human as an aspect of the divinity of the object in question. In the liberal or modernist model, humanity is a pointer to divinity, or the occasion by which we come to know divinity within us. Or, it is said, in order to find divinity, we must get beyond humanity.

On the infallibility of Scripture, the sacramental model teaches a derivative infallibility. The Bible does not have infallibility within itself, but through the power of the Spirit it carries the infallibility of the very truth of God. We may also speak of the Bible as having a functional infallibility in its role as the supreme rule of faith, conduct and worship. At the same time, it would not infallibly convey the truth of faith unless it had an infallible basis and goal. The Bible bears the stamp of infallibility through its unique inspiration and transmits infallible truth through the ongoing illumination of the Holy Spirit to people of faith. According to scholastic

No, in God who is its author!
"complete"
theology the Bible has absolute infallibility or total inerrancy. The authority of the Bible is now grounded in itself, in its mode of writing or its revelatory language rather than in God's self-communication through the historical events the Bible records. Liberal theology considers the Bible a fallible human record of experiences that can be duplicated or reenacted in every age.

Not surprisingly there are substantial differences in the way theology itself is understood. In the sacramental view, theology is the systematic reflection on the mysteries of divine revelation for the purpose of presenting a viable and intelligible witness to this revelation in our time. In the scholastic model, theology consists in harmonizing the axioms of Scripture in order to arrive at a comprehensive life- and worldview. In the liberal-modernist approach, theology is an interpretation of our experiences of God in the light of the modern historical consciousness. It signifies basically a reconstruction of the biblical witness. For Herrmann, theology becomes thinking out our experience of God, not thinking out what God tells us about himself in Scripture. As Reinhold Niebuhr described it, theology is the elucidation of personal faith rather than an explication of God's self-communication in Scripture.²⁸

true
One can see that the sacramental model has much more in common with the scholastic model than with the liberal one, for the first two are united in affirming the reality of an objective, absolute revelation of God in history. The important difference is that the sacramental model recognizes that this absolute Word of God is mediated through the relativity of human witness. We do not have the absolute except in the form of the relative. Yet this does not mean that the absolute remains apart from us; on the contrary, it makes contact with us through the work of the Spirit so that we can claim to have "the mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16). By attempting to make the mysteries of faith conducive to human understanding, scholastic theology virtually loses sight of the mystery and paradox in faith that the Bible indicates so abundantly must characterize the Christian walk in this life. *Not necessarily*

In its classical setting evangelical theology is sacramental, but in its

His view
varied expressions in history it has often taken the form of a rationalizing of divine revelation. I contend that evangelical theology will regain its vitality and relevance when it rediscovers the sacramental understanding of truth, authority and revelation—an understanding found not only in the Bible itself but in the fathers of the church through the ages, particularly in the mainstream of the Protestant Reformation.

His misreads history. Ask

Krispe Lake.

*Pages 164-170 From
Holy Scripture by
Donald Bloesch.
IVP, 1994.*

** His is a
Neo-evangelical
or Neo-orthodox
perspective, contra
that of Erickson
or myself.*

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SCRIPTURES IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

I. INTRODUCTION

John Hannah of Dallas Seminary has said, "Pilate's inquiry before our Lord, What is truth?, has been repeatedly asked and challenged throughout the history of the Christian church. Indeed every great crisis, including those current within Evangelicalism [and the SBC], is ultimately epistemological in nature." It could be added that ultimately, it becomes Christological as well, and impinges even on the doctrine of Theology Proper. Hence the doctrine of Scripture in the history of the church is vital for our understanding of the contemporary theological situation.

II. THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION IN THE ANCIENT CHURCH

A. Klotsch writes (pp. 44-45): "The Fathers of the ancient church, then, were all agreed that the Scriptures were inspired but differed in their views as to the "how." Some maintained that the state of inspiration is the state of ecstasy, or at least a state from which all human agency is to be excluded. Others recognized the human element in the biblical writings though they never questioned the divine origin nor the inerrancy of the Scriptures." (underlining mine).

1. The Church Fathers speak of inspiration in very general terms, and they do not give definite explanation regarding the manner. In this context they simply employ the phrase "says the Spirit Holy".
2. Justin Martyr (c.100-165) is the first writer to more specifically delineate the manner of inspiration. He maintained that the writers were passive though not unconscious instruments controlled by God; they are his pens rather than his penmen. Justin does refer to the extent of inspiration as verbal and plenary (***Apology***, 36).

"But when you hear the utterances of the prophets spoken as it were personally, you must not suppose that they are spoken by the inspired themselves, but by the Divine Word who moves them. For sometimes He declares things that are to come to pass, in the manner of one who foretells the future; sometimes He speaks as from the person of God the Lord and Father of all; sometimes as from the person of Christ; sometimes as from the person of the people answering the Lord or His Father, just as you can see even in your own writers, one man being the writer of the whole, but introducing the persons who converse...." The soul of the inspired writer is likened to a musical instrument and the Spirit the musician. "I consider it reasonable to recur to our progenitors...who have taught us nothing from their own private fancy, nor differed with one another, nor attempted to overturn one another's positions, but without wrangling and

contention received from God the knowledge which also they taught to us. For neither by nature nor by human conception is it possible for men to know things so great and divine, but by the gift which then descended from above upon the holy men who had no need of rhetorical art, nor of uttering anything in a contentious or quarrelsome manner, but to present themselves pure to the energy of the Divine Spirit."

N.B.-Hagenbach, Klotz and others note that this came perilously close to Montanus' view of inspiration - a state of ecstasy in which sensation and self-consciousness are lost.

3. Athenagorus (2nd cent., Apology 7, 9) maintained the same passivity and verbal plenary view which he felt was crucial to inerrancy and infallibility (Apology, 9).

"....prophets, who, lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the Divine Spirit, uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit making use of them as a flute-player breathes into a flute..."

4. Clement of Alexandria (c.155-220) writes Gonzalez (I.199): "never doubts that the Scriptures are inspired of God. His assurance on this point is such that he never develops a theory of inspiration. God speaks in the Scriptures, and the manner in which this fact is related to the men who actually wrote the sacred text is not a problem of primary importance."
5. Ireneaus (fl. c.175-195) stressed plenary inspiration but recognized also a human factor in production (**Adv. Her** IV, 9). "Being most properly assured that the Scriptures are indeed perfect, since they were spoken by the Word of God and His Spirit" (Adv. Her II, 28.2).
6. Augustine (354-430) though not blind to the human side of Scripture, stressed inerrancy so emphatically that he could be accused of excluding, or at least diminishing too severely, any human factor in the composition (Ep. 82, Sermon I).

Polman writes (p. 40): "Together with the entire Church of his day, St. Augustine was firmly convinced that the Bible was divinely inspired, and was greatly heartened in his belief by the unanimous witness of the Church from Apostolic times onwards....The Bible was both the exclusive work of the Holy Spirit alone and at the same time the exclusive work of biblical writers. Beyond that St. Augustine did not theorize." Augustine ascribed clearly to verbal, plenary inspiration, but he was more interested in the issue of the canon. Because his influence is so immense, we shall note his testimony at some length.

"But in consequence of the distinctive peculiarity of the sacred writings, we are bound to receive as true whatever the canon

shows to have been said by even one prophet, or apostle, or evangelist. Otherwise, not a single page will be left for the guidance of human fallibility.... **Reply to Faustus the Manichaeon** 11.5.

"Those who allege contradictions in the Bible 'examine only those testimonies of Scripture which support their peculiar view, regardless of the full and perfect meaning of such passages as exhibit the opposite side of the truth'." **Commentary on Romans** 111.7.

"There is nothing in it contradictory: somewhat there is which is obscure, not in order that it may be denied thee, but that it may exercise him that shall afterward receive it."

Expositions on the Book of Psalms 147.10.

"We must fear, lest the divine precepts should be contrary to one another. But no: let us understand that there is the most perfect agreement in them, let us not follow the conceits of certain vain ones, who in their error think that the two Testaments in the Old and New Books are contrary to each other." **Sermons on New Testament Lessons** 32.8.

"I do not say this in order that you may recover the faculty of spiritual sight, -- far be it from me to say that you have lost it! -- but that, having eyes both clear and quick in discernment, you may turn them towards that from which, in unaccountable dissimulation, you have turned them away, refusing to see the calamitous consequences which would follow on our once admitting that a writer of the divine books could in any part of his work honorably and piously utter a falsehood." **Letters** 40.4

"For I confess to your Charity that I have learned to yield this respect and honor only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone I do most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. And if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to me opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the manuscript is faulty, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it." **Letters** 82.3

"If we are perplexed by an apparent contradiction in Scripture, it is not allowable to say, The author of this book is mistaken; but either the manuscript is faulty, or the translation is wrong, or you have not understood." **Reply to Faustus the Manichean** 11.5

"For if you once admit into such a high sanctuary of authority one false statement as made in the way of duty, there will not be

left a single sentence of those books which, if appearing to any one difficult in practice or hard to believe, may not by the same fatal rule be explained away, as a statement in which, intentionally, and under a sense of duty, the author declared what was not true." **Letters** 28.3

"Manifestly, therefore, Peter was truly corrected, and Paul has given a true narrative of the event, by the admission of a falsehood here, the authority of the Holy Scriptures given for the faith of all coming generations is to be made wholly uncertain and wavering. For it is neither possible nor suitable to state within the compass of a letter how great and how unutterably evil must be the consequences of such a concession."

Letters 40.4.

"Let him, therefore, who proposes to inquire why the prophet Jonah was three days in the capacious belly of a sea monster, begin by dismissing doubts as to the fact itself; for this did actually occur; and did not occur in vain." **Letters** 102.33.

7. John Chrysostum (c.344/354-407) (Matt. homily I) and Jerome (c. 345-419) (Gal III, 5) recognize differences in style and diction but never question plenary inspiration. their view differs in no real sense from the others of the Patristic Period.
8. Gregory the Great (540-604) maintained the strictest theory of inspiration (Mor I.1.2).

B. The Concept of Tradition

Notwithstanding the high esteem in which Scripture was held, the authority of tradition as a vital corollary was not put in the background. In confronting heretics (principally Gnostics) the approach was two-fold: Bible and Apostolic history (Rule, Faith, Succession, i.e. Tradition).

C. Conclusion

The canonical books were conceived to be of both verbal and plenary integrity although the exact mode or manner of inspiration was unresolved. Tradition, however, was not negated. Tradition, because it faithfully mirrored the Bible, such as the Old Roman Symbol (Rule of Faith) was given in many quarters equal standing with the Bible. The mode of interpreting the Bible, due to the dominate influence of a Greek world-view, was increasingly the allegorical method that built on a historic, literal approach.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH (500-1500)

The issue of the extent, not inspiration, of the canon, was a prime consideration in the Medieval Church, as was the relationship of tradition to authority. The complete truthfulness and veracity of the Holy Writ was universally affirmed.

IV. THE DOCTRINE OF THE SCRIPTURE IN THE REFORMATION CHURCH (1500-1648)

- A. Martin Luther (1483-1546) speaks of the Bible as the Word of God. Heick writes of him (I.347): "Scripture is the Word of God because it is the original witness to the redemptive work of God and because it participates in the nature of that which it records."

"But everyone, indeed knows that at times they (the Fathers) have erred as men will; therefore I am ready to trust them only when they prove their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred." WA. 7.315.

"The Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, written and lettered and formed in letters." W. 9. 1770.

"When you read the words of Holy Scripture, you must realize that God is speaking them." SL. 3. 21.

"Consequently, we must remain content with them and cling to them as the perfectly clear, certain, sure words of God, which can never deceive us or allow us to err." LW. 47.308.

"The Bible is God's Word written -- presented in letters, as Christ is the eternal Word presented in human nature." WA. 48. 31. 4.

- B. John Calvin (1509-1564) specifically speaks to the issue of the method of determining authority, by removing it from tradition to the witness of the Spirit. Though the context of some of the following quotes is canon, Calvin's view of inspiration is also present.

"...the certain and unerring rule" (Psalm V II).

"...the Scriptures are the only place in which God has chosen to record his truth for a perpetual reminder, the full authority in which the believer ought to hold them is not recognized unless they are thought to have come from heaven as distinctly as though God has spoken them."

"It is essential to pay attention to the point I have already made, that we cannot rely on the doctrine of Scripture until we are absolutely convinced that God is its Author. Its best authentication is the character of the one whose Word it is."

"...our conviction of the truth of Scripture must be derived from a higher source than human guesswork, opinions and arguments, namely the hidden witness of the Spirit."

"...the Scripture shows clear proof of being spoken by God, and consequently of containing his divine truth."

"...if we study it with clear eyes and unbiased judgment, it will immediately display such divine authority as will quell our impertinent attacks and compel us to pay homage."

"But although we may defend God's holy Word against all opponents, it does not follow that we can establish in their hearts the conviction which faith demands. Unbelievers think that religion is a matter of opinion and so demand rational proof that Moses and the prophets were divinely inspired, if they are to have sufficient ground for belief. My reply is that the testimony of the Spirit is superior to reason. As God alone can truly bear witness to his own words, so these words will not be given complete acknowledgement in the hearts of men, until they are sealed by the inner witness of the Spirit."

"A most pernicious error has very generally prevailed-viz: that Scripture is of importance only in so far as conceded to it by the suffrage of the Church; as if the eternal and inviolable truth of God could depend on the will of men. With great insult to the Holy Spirit, it is asked, Who can assure us that the Scriptures proceeded from God; who guarantee that they have come down safe and unimpaired to our times...But what is to become of miserable consciences in quest of some solid assurance of eternal life, if all the promises with regard to it have no better support than man's judgment?"

Calvin's ultimate basis for sustaining the authority of the Scripture as the Word from God is two-fold: the witness of the Spirit and the conscience of the godly. He writes (I, 7.5): "Let it therefore be held as fixed, that those who are inwardly taught by the Holy Spirit acquiesce implicitly in Scripture; that Scripture, carrying its own evidence along with it, deigns not to submit to proofs and arguments, but owes the full conviction with which we ought to receive it to the testimony of the Spirit. Enlightened by him, we no longer believe, either on our own judgment or that of others, that the Scriptures are from God; but in a way superior to human judgment, feel perfectly assured...that it came to us, by the instrumentality of men, from the very mouth of God." (The Institutes)

V. THE REFORMED CONFESSIONS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

A. The First Helvetic Confession (1536)

"The holy, divine, Biblical Scripture, which is the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit and delivered to the world by the prophets

and apostles, is the most ancient, most perfect and loftiest teaching and alone deals with everything that serves the true knowledge, love and honor of God, as well as true piety and the making of a godly, honest and blessed life."

B. The Gallican Confession (1559)

"We believe that the Word contained in these books has proceeded from God and receives its authority from him alone." (Art. 5).

C. The Belgic Confession by Guy de Bray (1561)

"We confess that this Word of God was not sent nor delivered by the will of man but that ***holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost***, as the Apostle Peter saith...Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures." (Article III).

D. William Ames was an English theologian, a student of William Perkins at Cambridge, who has given us an excellent Systematic Theology in the early seventeenth century (d. 1633). He is an heir of the Reformation in regard to the integrity of the Scripture. A very excellent statement on inspiration is given by Ames as follows:

1. "They received from God the command to write. This was partly outward and general, as when they were commanded to teach, and sometimes special, as when specific writings was called for."
2. "They also wrote by the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit so that the men themselves were at the point, so to speak, instruments of the Holy Spirit."
3. "But divine inspiration was present among those writers in different ways. Some things were altogether unknown to the writer in advance, as appears in the history of past creation or in the foretelling of things to come. But some things were previously known to the writer, as appears in the history of Christ written by the apostles."
4. "In all those things made known by supernatural inspiration, whether matters of right or fact, God inspired not only the subjects to be written but dictated and suggested the very words in which they should be set forth. But this was done with a subtle-tempering so that every writer might use the manner of speaking which most suited his person and condition."
5. "Therefore, Scripture is often attributed to the Holy Spirit as the author with no mention of the writers. Heb. 10.15, 'Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us'."

E. James Arminius (1560-1609), although at opposition with Calvin and Luther over the interpretation of the Bible, was in agreement with them over the nature of the Bible.

He argues that the validity of the Scriptures ultimately rests on the character of God (Disput I.II): "II. The authority of any word or writing whatsoever depends upon its author, as the word "authority" indicates: and it is just as great as the veracity and the power, that is the αὐθεντία, of the author. But God is of infallible

veracity, and is neither capable of deceiving nor of being deceived; and of irrefragable **power**, that is, supreme over the creatures. If, therefore, He is the Author of Scripture, its authority is totally depended on Him alone. (i). **Totally**, because He is the all-sufficient Author, all-true and all-powerful.

(ii). On Him alone, because He has no associate either in the truth of what he says, or in the power of his right. For all veracity and power in the creature proceed from him; and into his veracity and power are resolved all faith and obedience."

His confidence in the scriptures is clearly manifested when he writes (Disputation II, xxiv): "XXIV. We conclude, then, that all things which have been, are now, or to the final consummation will be necessary for the salvation of the church, have been of old perfectly inspired, declared and written; and that no other revelation or tradition, than those which have been inspired, declared and contained in the scriptures, is necessary to the salvation of the church" (2 Tim iii, 16; Matt. iv, 3, 4; xxii, 29; Acts xviii, 28.)

- F. John Wesley (1703-1791) - "If there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth" (Journal, Wed., July 24, 1776).

The Protestant Reformation (and its aftermath) and the equally significant Catholic counter-Reformation, was a period of tremendous theological activity in the area of Bibliology. However, the quality of the Scriptures was assumed even when the canon and its proper authority and interpretation was not.

In the Post-Reformation era the quality of the Scripture sources were questioned (outside of the context of the "Great Awakening." See for example Wesley's representative position above) as man's worldview was dynamically altered and the world became viewed as a "closed-system." The philosophical shift, as well as the effect of that shift on theology (particularly Bibliology) was traumatic and revolutionary.

VI. THE PHILOSOPHICAL SETTING OF THE POST REFORMATION AGE (1600's ff)

The roots of a philosophical shift from a Christian Theistic worldview to that of deism, then atheism, agnosticism and pantheism, was not sudden, nor tragically planned by those opposed to theism. The sources of the shift ultimately are found in the prominence of the Renaissance that gave rise to both the rebirth of man in the Reformation and the reconstruction of man in the advent of Enlightenment Humanism. Interest in the world and the human mind

constituted two currents of thought that became the focus of the Post-Reformation era.

Galileo (1564-1642) and Bacon (1561-1626) laid the foundation for modern science and technology in the field of natural phenomena without invading the religious sphere. The naturalistic tradition, however, will apply those concepts to religion with devastating effect.

- A. Rene Descartes (1596-1650). Descartes philosophically was a naive theist of Jesuit training, who was deeply influenced by Galileo and was deeply surprised that his mentor was condemned in the Inquisition. Epistemologically, Descartes began his system in universal doubt (not skepticism for he knew facts existed) that became for him an essential maxim for getting at truth. Since it is impossible to doubt his own existence he began there (cogito ergo sum! [I think therefore I am]). The existence of God is sustained from his idea that God exists and it is God's existence which validates his own existence as well as his clear and distinct ideas rationally apprehended.

N.B. Descartes believed that his method defended Orthodox beliefs, but after him philosophers used his system to erect entire systems on reason alone.

- B. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). An Englishman, Hobbes sought to construct a philosophy on a totally rational basis beginning with sense perception (empiricism), and not ideas the mind discovers within itself (Cartesianism). His epistemological key was deduction in the midst of change, hence a changeless God is unrelated to "true knowledge" because he is unknowable.

N.B. Deeply influenced by Descartes was the Jewish Philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1633-1677) who carried Cartesian logic to pantheism and fatalist determinism. Gottfried Leibnitz (1646-1716) carried Descartes in another direction in his Monadology, which is also a type of pantheism, but is a form somewhat different than that of Spinoza.

- C. John Locke (1632-1704). Locke, although preceded by Bacon and Hobbes, is usually credited with giving British empiricism its most cogent expression. Locke rejected the concept of "innate ideas" (Cartesianism) and stated that knowledge comes from empiricism (revelation is not denied but it must be experienced). The mind is a tabula rasa (blank slate) which has information imputed thru sensory perception, experience, and reflection.

N.B. The ultimate theological expression of Lockeanism is Deism, but the empiricist tradition went beyond showing the reasonableness of Christianity to show the rationality of natural religion. David Hume (1711-1776) showed the inadequacies of empiricism; he sounded the death knell for Deism.

- D. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). The Konigsberg philosopher proved that Deism, was as rationally questionable as any appeal to revealed

truth. Kant rejected Cartesian innateness and pure Lockean empiricism for a position between them. He felt that knowledge results from an interplay between incoming sense perceptions (empiricism) and the mind of ideas (rationalism). Phenomenal knowledge (things about us) is knowable; noumenal knowledge (spiritual) is not. Religion becomes little more than morality.

N.B. The rejection of rationalism opened the gates for new options in ethics and religion: Kierkegaard's leap of faith; religious morality as in Ritschl; Anthro-theism in Schleiermacher; Hegel's vast cosmic mind in the dialectic of progress (also the ideologies of Baur, Strauss, Darwin, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud).

N.N.B.B. The point of this philosophic survey is to reveal that the mind was set free from revelation and developed a worldview that left God out (closed system). Man, not God, became the center or focus of meaning. There was a shift from a theocentric cosmos to an anthropocentric one. To follow F. Schaeffer, autonomous man was moved to the upper story of ultimate reality once occupied by God. The results epistemologically have been far reaching.

VII. THE GERMAN THEOLOGIANS AND THE SCRIPTURES

The influence of Kant's philosophy set the framework for the nineteenth century. Kant, at once, elevated both the mind (rationale) and empiricism that provided the foundation for theological quest. Man is at the center and is the starting point for doing theology. Experience is now decisive.

A. Frederick Schleiermacher

1. His life (1768-1834). The son of a Reformed army chaplain connected to the Moravians. After schooling among the Moravians (pietism) he went to the University of Halle where he became deeply enmeshed in Kantianism. As a Reformed pastor in Berlin he was deeply influenced by the Romantic Movement. His major work, ***The Christian Faith***, was published in 1821.
2. His thought. Mackintosh summarized Schleiermacher as follows: "It would be roughly true to say that he has put discovery in the place of revelation, religious consciousness in the place of the Word of God, and the mere 'not yet' of imperfection in the place of sin." The concept of an objective, external revelation is lost and self-realization within a closed system, is salvation.
 - a. Scripture is interpreted as not historical, but an expression of one's God consciousness. Sin is a prevention of God-consciousness in the individual and in the world.
 - b. Scripture is essentially conceived within a Kantian framework. Orr writes (Progress, p. 314): "Schleiermacher placed the essence of religion wholly in feeling, and subordinated knowledge to that as a secondary product." Scripture was being minimized in the nineteenth century!

3. "The authority of Holy Scripture cannot be the foundation of faith in Christ; rather must the latter be presupposed before a peculiar authority can be granted the Holy Scriptures" (C.F. II, 591). He confesses that the integrity of the Bible is not innate, but imputed by man although he realizes in his day he stood alone in this opinion (p. 591). "I. The polemical first part of this proposition is solely due to the fact that what we here deny is actually asserted. Possibly as a matter of fact is it more widely held than definitely stated, for all text-books and Confessions which put the doctrine of Scripture as the source of Christian faith in the foreground seem distinctly to favor this view. Hence it is necessary thoroughly to expose the underlying misconception."
4. Faith in Christ is antecedent to belief in the Scriptures; indeed faith authenticates the Scriptures. Thus faith comes quite apart from a belief in the Bible (p. 592). "But where the need of redemption is really felt, the faith that makes alive may spring even from a message about Christ which is no way bound up with the conviction that the books of Scripture possess a special character, but may rest on any other sort of witness that is accompanied by real perception of Christ's spiritual power-may rest, that is, simply on oral tradition."
5. The Bible is an imperfect witness to Christ's person and the preaching of the disciples (p. 593): "On the contrary, faith might arise in the same way though no more survived than testimonies of which it had to be admitted that, in addition to Christ's essential witness to Himself and the original preaching of His disciples, they also contained much in detail that had been misinterpreted, or inaccurately grasped, or set in a wrong light owing to confusions of memory."

B. David Strauss and the Scriptures

1. (1808-1874). Educated at Tübingen University. A disciple of Hegel he went to the University of Berlin where he heard Schleiermacher with discomfort. Afterwards he lectured at Tübingen and in that context wrote his Leben Jesu (Life of Jesus, 1835). After his dismissal from Tübingen he became a private scholar.
2. Harris writes: "The presupposition on which the whole life of Jesus was written was a denial of the miraculous and supernatural in the world. The traditional supernatural interpretations of the events of the Gospels had no place in Strauss' view of the world, and God's activity was possible only indirectly through laws of nature." The scriptures of the New Testament were conceived as myths (legends). Strauss finds it egotistic of Jesus to insist upon his divine nature, but he even concludes that had Jesus really uttered such assertions, then he must have been out of his mind (L.J. III. 255).

Therefore Christ is the product of dreams (p. 383): "The more the disciples became convinced of this necessity, the more they made themselves believe that Jesus must have performed miracles...And so in their enthusiastic fancy (underlining mine) without intending to deceive, they began to adorn the simple picture of Christ with a rich garland of miraculous tales, especially applying to him all the characteristics of the Messiah...till at length the real history was entirely covered, and in fact, destroyed by the 'parasitic plants'."

N.B. Strauss was not the philosophical thinker as was Kant and Hegel, he was practical, revealing the root results of the Enlightenment approach to religion. The Bible was discounted.

3. His influence was enormous upon the entire theological process of the nineteenth century. Orr writes (Faith, p. 42): "Three quarters of a century ago an able and determined assault (italics mine) was made upon the Gospels, first by Strauss, in his Life Of Jesus, then by what is known as the Tubingen school of criticism (under Baur). The result of this assault (underlining mine) was, in Strauss' case, to resolve the whole content of the Gospels into myth, and, in the hands of Baur and his followers, to carry down most of the literature of the New Testament to the second century, and to discredit its historical worth. Then came the reaction, till, step by step, the Gospels and Epistles were reinstated in their place of honor, and the Tubingen school and its methods were themselves discredited."
- a. Strauss set in motion the famed "quest" for the historical Jesus (a picture of Christ obtained by so-called scientific methods). But interpretation is only as firm as the facts upon which they rest! This method has little place for facts.
- b. Strauss occasioned a great critical examination of biblical sources since they were now deemed non-apostolic and unhistorical. First the Gospels were discredited, then Baur and his disciples encompassed the entire N.T. It was because Strauss, Baur, and others rendered Scripture so uncertain that theology sought to flee from history and take refuge in ethical or existential categories (Schaeffer's Upper Story). Bultmann will follow a similar program in the 20th Century
- c. Strauss plunged the OT under the same critical evaluation through his friend Wilhelm Vatke who disciplesd Julius Wellhausen (Documentary Hypothesis/JEPD).

N.B. Demythologization did not begin with Bultmann although he is the twentieth century expression of that approach. Strauss was the first to carry out a consistent demythologization of the Gospels.

Harris concludes (pp. 281-2): "Strauss' **Life of Jesus** was the most intellectually reasoned attack which has even been mounted against Christianity. There have been other assaults more radical and bitter, others expressed in more vituperative language--one needs only to think of Voltaire, Bruno Baur and Beuerbach, Kalthoff and Drews, Nietzsche and Overbeck, or on the more absurd explanations proposed in our own day, which are usually written either in the hope of gaining public attention, or alternatively, money--but no one since Strauss has so acutely concentrated on the crucial cardinal issues which must be dealt with. Strauss confronted theology with an either/or: either show that the Christian faith is historically and intellectually credible, or admit that it is based on myth and delusion. That was the alternative. Nothing less was and is at stake than the whole historical and intellectual basis of Christianity. If Strauss cannot be convincingly answered, then it would appear that Christianity must slowly but surely collapse."

N.B. The Bible far from being divine was trampled in the dust of nineteenth century religious "rationalism."

Parenthesis: The History of Religions School is a direct linkage to Strauss through Bauer at Tubingen University. Its major advocates were Herman Gunkel (1862-1932), Wilhelm Bousset and Adolph von Harnack. Von Harnack (1851-1930) reduced the essence of Christianity to a "kernel" which he thought was Jesus in the synoptics--all else in the Bible is errant Hellenism. From that "kernel" he deduced three principles or facts as true revelation.

1. A kingdom of God as taught by Jesus (individualized).
2. The fatherhood of God (universal).
3. The brotherhood of Men.

C. Karl Barth, Neoorthodoxy and the Scriptures

1. His life (1886-1968). Barth was raised in the Reformed Church (liberal wing) and after several universities, sitting under Hermann and Von Harnack, he settled in a small pastorate at Safenwil. There he became increasingly discontent with Liberalism and wrote his Romerbrief (1919), the greatest theological shock since Leben Jesu. In 1921 he accepted a call to teach at Gottingen, then Munster, Bonn and Basel.
2. Barth's theological framework is important to grasp. First, God is unknown unless he takes the initiative to reveal Himself (He is wholly other). Second man is without the knowledge of God (even if he has the Bible) until he is directed to the place that God reveals himself (Theology of Crisis). Third, the self revelation of God is always in the Christ event. C. Brown writes (Philosophy, 251-52). "In a sense Barth's position was the exact opposition from John Robinson's in **Honest to God**."

Whereas the latter rejects the idea of God 'out there' and wants to find Him in the processes of nature and human life, Barth sees God as utterly transcendent. He is not to be identified directly with anything in the world, not even the words of Scripture. Revelation comes to men in the same way as a vertical line intersects a horizontal plane, or as a tangent touches a circle. Because it is contact with the **Wholly Other** we cannot even describe it. All we can do (and all that the biblical writers can do) is to describe what they felt like after it."

3. Barth and the Bible. Barth was a helpful corrective to the anthro-theism of the 19th century, yet his view of Scripture was not delivered of the devastating effect of Kant and Ritschl.

- a. Inspiration - Barth traces the doctrine of inspiration to the Reformers stating that they held to verbal, plenary views (Doctrine of the Word, pp. 517f). Barth holds to verbal inspiration, but only in the self-authenticating Christ event. At once (and for a moment) the word of man becomes the Word of God. He writes (Doctrine, p. 533): "Verbal inspiration does not mean the infallibility of the biblical word in its linguistic, historical and theological character as a human work. It means the fallible and faulty human word is as such used by God and has to be received and heard in spite of its human fallibility."

When asked how his view differs from the fundamentalist, Barth replied (Godsey, Barth, p. 26): "For me the Word of God is a happening, not a thing. Therefore the Bible must become the Word of God, and it does this through the word of the Spirit." Inspiration is not an attribute of Scripture but an event in which God uses the Scripture to communicate revelation" (i.e. an existential encounter which appears to be totally non-verifiable).

- b. Fallibility - Barth describes the authors of Scripture as "fallible, erring men like ourselves." This, he argues, presupposes his case for errancy. He writes (p. 529): "The prophets and apostles as such, even in their office, even in their functions as witnesses, even in the act of writing down their witnesses, were real, historical men as we are, and therefore sinful in their action, and capable and actually guilty of error in their spoken and written word."

N.B. - Barth has no problem living with a fallible Bible because of his view of revelation. Since the Bible is only a witness to revelation and not revelation itself, errancy makes no difference. The importance of Holy Scripture is its use by the Holy Spirit in an encounter to communicate the Word of God. As long as the Bible becomes the Word of God, the question of errancy remains irrelevant.

- c. Authority - since the Bible is not equated with the Word of God in a strict sense, it is not the Scriptures but Christ, followed by Scripture and the Church, who is authoritative.

"Karl Barth on the Bible"

Church Dogmatics, Vol. I, Section 2, pp. 463-510

"We have here an undoubted limitation: we distinguish the Bible as such from revelation."

"Therefore when we have to do with the Bible, we have to do primarily with this means, with these words, with the witness which as such is not itself revelation, but only--and this is the limitation--the witness to it." (p.463)

"The men whom we hear as witnesses speak as fallible, erring men like ourselves. What they say, and what we read as their word, can of itself lay claim to be the Word of God, (but never sustain that claim). We can read and try to assess their word as a purely human word. It can be subjected to all kinds of immanent criticism, not only in respect of its philosophical, historical and ethical content, but even of its religious and theological. We can establish lacunae, inconsistencies and over-emphases." (p. 507)

"We have to face up to them and to be clear that in the Bible it may be a matter of simply believing the Word of God, even though it meets us, not in the form of what we call history, but in the form of what we think must be called saga or legend."

"But the vulnerability of the Bible, i.e. its capacity for error, also extends to its religious or theological content."

"There are obvious overlappings and contradictions--e.g., between the Law and the prophets, between John and the Synoptists, between Paul and James." (p. 509)

"For within certain limits and therefore relatively they are all vulnerable and therefore capable of error even in respect of religion and theology. In view of the actual constitution of the Old and New Testaments, this is something which we cannot possibly deny if we are not to take away their humanity, if we are not to be guilty of Docetism." (p. 510)

VIII. THE AMERICAN THEOLOGIANS AND THE SCRIPTURES

A. Nineteenth Century German Liberalism

1. The influence of Tubingen Biblical Criticism became discernible in this country as early as 1850 as New England Congregationalists and Unitarians questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. By the 1890's such views had swept into the major seminaries precipitating the heated Modernist-Fundamentalist clash of the

1920's. Under the leadership of men such as Shailer Matthews (Faith of a Modernist and New Faith for Old), Walter Rauschenbush, William N. Clarke, Harry E. Fosdick (all Northern/American Baptist!) and many others, the theological fabric of American theology was rent a la Strauss and Bauer.

2. The optimism of Old Liberalism was blunted by two world wars, but revived in the 1940's as Neo-Liberal, a somewhat chastened Old Liberalism.

B. Twentieth Century German Thought

1. Barthian thought has penetrated America since 1945 through the writings of Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr and (most recently) Dietrich Bonhoeffer and has swept many liberal institutions into the use of traditional terms, but devoid of traditional content. Modern theology often uses a biblical vocabulary but a modernist dictionary.
2. Barthian thought has more recently made large inroads into the Evangelical seminaries of our country leading to a denial of infallibility and inerrancy as integral to the construction and defense of the Faith.

C. Southern Baptist

It remains popular for some to say that Southern Baptist have always held to an authoritative inspired Bible, but not an infallible, inerrant one. Indeed, in this context one prominent Southern Baptist, a former seminary president, said "Calls to historical correctness [read "inerrancy"] fall on deaf ears when they fail to point us to historic Baptist theologians whose work shaped 20th century theology for Southern Baptists. Every generation must state its theology for itself or we relegate faith to the role of an antique relic which we admire on the shelf but which has little use in daily life." This individual had in mind particularly E. Y. Mullins and W. T. Conner, Southern Baptist theologians in the early and mid 20th Century.

There can be no doubt Mullins and Conner were significant contributors to Baptist life at Southern and Southwestern respectively, nor can it be denied that they gave substantial attention to the experiential aspects of the religion. Furthermore, it is true that they did not use the term "inerrancy" in their writings. This has led to the additional charge that the word "inerrancy" is a relatively new player in Southern Baptist life only recently utilized as a "political watchword." What can be said of those charges? Do the facts support the accusations?

First, it is important to note that Mullins was a contributor to the famous tract The Fundamentals which grew out of the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy of the 1920's. Furthermore, he made it clear he affirmed Biblical creation and supernaturalism in all its fullness. Second, one will look in vain for an ascription of error in Scripture by either Mullins or Conner. Third, the cry that the term "inerrancy" is a "Johnny come lately" to

the Biblical authority debate in Southern Baptist life is historically false. Indeed, as the following quotes demonstrate, the word has been found on the pen of Southern Baptist going back over 100 years! And, it might be added, the idea that "inerrancy" communicates is the view of the Bible that Southern Baptist have always held until the invasion of destructive criticism into the camp in the late 19th (Crawford Toy) and 20th century. In fact, one is hard pressed to find any Baptist prior to 1850 who doubted in any way the complete truthfulness, infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible; show me any Southern Baptist in our early history who doubted the inerrancy of Scripture who was not dealt with for doctrinal error (eg. Toy). The almost universal testimony of Baptists is, "the Bible is the infallible and inerrant, verbally, plenary inspired Word of God." Let those of history speak for themselves.

John A. Broadus - Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Homiletics, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1859-1895):

"The inspired writers learned many things by observation or inquiry, but they were preserved by the Holy Spirit from error, whether in learning or in writing these things... Those who concede errors in the Scriptures as to matter of fact, in order to remove conflict with some scientific opinions of our time, may tell us that they have great satisfaction in being at peace with science. But there are two drawbacks upon such a peace. It is the peace of sheer submission... And it is only a partial and temporary peace. Other scientific men at once make still further demands, tending ever toward the complete abandonment of the supernatural... If we assume that the inspiration of the Bible is only partial where are we to stop? Every man must then select an ad libitum what portions of the Bible's teachings he will accept as true. (A Catechism of Bible Teaching, 1893; Three Questions as To The Bible, 1883)

B.H. Carroll - First President, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (1908-14).

"...These modern devotees of higher criticism must wait each week for the mail from Germany to know what to believe or preach, to find out how much, if any, of their Bible remains..." (Theological Seminaries and Wild Gourds).

"If the words [of the Bible] are not inspired, how am I to know how much to reject, and how to find out whether anything is from God? When you hear the silly talk that the Bible 'contains' the word of God and is not the word of God, you hear a fool's talk... The inspiration of the Bible does not mean that God said and did all that is said and done in the Bible; some of it the devil did and said. Much of it wicked men did and said. The inspiration means that the record of what is said and done is correct." Inspiration of The Bible.

A.T. Robertson - Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1895-1934).

"(God) gave a revelation to make it free from errors. I believe He first made it inerrant as He made nature so. Hence, I boldly hold that the analogy of nature is in favor of inerrancy of

God's original Scriptures...Why in the world is it that there is such a terrible contention by destructive higher critics?...I think I can tell. The school wants to change the whole order...they wish to get an entering wedge by having it admit that there were inaccuracies...in order to shift and change the order of the Word to suit themselves." **The Relative Authority of Scripture and Reason.**

Walter T. Conner - Professor of Systematic Theology, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (1910-49).

"The Scriptures...are God's Work. He produced the Scriptures. He was in the events of history and experiences out of which the Scripture records grew and He was in the producing of the records. **Revelation and God: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine.** (It is readily admitted this is a rather weak statement.)

Basil Manly -Founding Professor of Biblical Introduction and Old Testament Interpretation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Drafted SBTS Abstract of Principles, President of Georgetown College, First President of the Sunday School Board.

"The doctrine which we hold is that commonly styled Plenary inspiration, or Full Inspiration. It is that the Bible as a whole is the Word of God, so that in every part of Scripture there is both infallible truth and divine authority. **The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration(1888).**

"The difference between an inspired and an uninspired Bible is of a momentous character...An uninspired Bible, whatever excellence might be, would have three serious defects:

First. It would furnish no infallible standard of truth. It would leave us liable to all the mistakes incident to failure of the writers, to their errors in judgment, or their defective expressions of correct thought. It would furnish no principle of accurate discrimination between the true and the false, the divine and the human.

Second. It would present no authoritative rule for obedience, and no ground for confident and everlasting hopes...It would give no firm ground on which to base our convictions, to build our hopes, or to order our life.

Third. It would offer no suitable means for testing and cultivating the docile spirit, for drawing man's soul trustfully and lovingly upward to it's Heavenly Father."

From **The Doctrine of Inspiration Explained and Vindicated.**

Charlotte Diggs "LOTTIE" Moon - Southern Baptist Missionary to China, Namesake for the Foreign Mission Offering.

Lottie Moon rejected the proposal of marriage from Crawford Toy due to his acceptance of

German higher criticism. Toy would die a Unitarian, Lottie Moon would die alone. Her rejection of Darwinism was complete, her affirmation of the Bible absolute.

"Words do fail to express my love for this Holy Book, my gratitude for it's author, for His love and goodness; How shall I thank Him for it."

Found in the margin of Lottie Moon's Bible.

E.Y. Mullins - President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1899-1928), President, Southern Baptist Convention (1921-24), President, Baptist World Alliance (1928).

"Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. He was the Divine and eternal Son of God. He wrought miracles, healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead. He died as the victorious atoning Savior for the world and was buried. He rose again from the dead. The tomb was emptied of its contents. In His risen body He appeared many times to His disciples. He ascended to the right hand of the Father. He will come again in person, the same Jesus who ascended from the Mount of Olives. We believe that adherence to the above truths and facts is a necessary condition of service for teachers in our Baptist schools. **Address to 1923 Southern Baptist Convention.**

Jeremiah B. Jeter - First President of the SBC Foreign Mission Board; editor of Virginia's *Religious Herald*.

"[It is] generally held by evangelical Christians...that God not only communicated truth to the minds of His servants, but exercised over them an influence by which they were enabled to reveal it, by speech or writing, without any mistake, and in the manner best suited to secure the end of the revelation...The manner of inspiration...is such as to preclude the possibility of error in the Scriptures...

We should seek to harmonize these apparent contradiction of the Scriptures, not denying their inspiration, or that of any portion of them; but subjecting them to a fair and faithful application of the laws of exegesis. These seeming inconsistencies usually vanish before candid investigation, as mist before the rising sun. If there be some which do not yield to exegetical laws and to our limited investigations, it may be well for us to call to remembrance our own ignorance and liability to err...

On the whole, the more carefully the Scriptures are examined, the more obviously their entire inspiration appears. It is really wonderful to notice how, amid the conflicting systems of science, philosophy and politics, the inspired writers steered their course, without falling into errors, which would have discredited their inspiration... Let us, then, reverently receive the Scriptures as an authentic and perfect revelation from God, interpret them by the laws which common sense and careful study apply, and live according to their directions, and we shall not fail to secure a blessed immortality." "**The Inspiration of The Bible**" in **Baptist Doctrines.**

Charles H. Spurgeon - England's foremost 19th century preacher. He withdrew from Baptist Union of Britain because a majority refused to correct theological errors the source of which Spurgeon said was "a want of adequate faith in the divine inspiration of the sacred Scriptures" - in the denomination:

"One might suppose that believers in Plenary Inspiration were all idiots; for their opponents are most benevolently anxious to remind them of facts which none but half witted persons could ever forget. Over and over they cry, 'But there is a human side to inspiration.' Of course there is; there must be the man to be inspired as well as the God to inspire him. Whoever doubted this? The inference which is supposed to be inevitable is -the imperfection is, therefore, to be found in the Bible, since man is imperfect. But the inference is not true. God can come into the nearest union with manhood, and he can use men for His purposes, and yet their acts may not in the least degree restrain his purposes with moral obliquity....The human side has communicated no taint whatever to the Holy Spirit. Every Word of God is pure and sure, whether viewed as the utterance of man or as the thought of God." From "The Human Side of Interpretation" in The Sword and Trowel.

John R. Sampey - Professor, "Chief" of Faculty, and President of Southern Seminary. Elected to three terms of SBC Presidency.

"Radicals deny the presence of the supernatural in history. A miracle to such critics would seem a monstrosity, rather than a sign. They have an aversion to the supernatural. All narratives recounting miracles are thereby discredited. Conservatives accept the doctrine of miracles in both Testaments, believing in the Incarnation and the resurrection. They believe in the miraculous guidance of Israel through the wilderness, the ascension of Elijah, etc. Some of the moderate liberals would not deny the presence of supernatural events in the Old Testament, but the supernatural is reduced to a minimum.

As to the inspiration of the Bible, conservatives hold that the writers were preserved from all error by the inbreathed Spirit guiding them. Radicals reject such a theory with scorn. Some liberals believe in a sort of inspiration which heightened the spiritual perceptions of the spiritual writers, but did not preserve them from error." (Taken from syllabus of Old Testament Study).

H. E. Dana - Professor of New Testament at Southwestern Seminary 1919-1938; President of Central Baptist Seminary, 1938-45

"Destroy man's confidence in the truth of the Bible as a revelation from God and you stifle every religious emotion which its pages have inspired. The best in man can never be stirred by a conscious delusion. If the pages of the Bible represent the product of honest, but misguided religious fancy, or the fabrication of a religious enthusiasm, it contains but a very slight appeal to the holier emotions of the soul. When men cease to believe the Bible they will cease to weep over its pages, to strive toward its ideals, to hail with blazing fervor its message, and to die in serene reliance upon its promises." The Authenticity of The Holy Scriptures.

**James P. Boyce - First President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1872-79);
President, Southern Baptist Convention 1888.**

"How came it (the Bible) to be written? God inspired holy men to write it. Did they write it exactly as God wished? Yes; as much as if he had written every word himself. Ought it, therefore, to be believed and obeyed? Yes; as much as though God had spoken directly to us." From A Brief Catechism of Bible Doctrine.

"You will infringe the right of no man, and you will secure the rights of those who have established here an instrumentality for the production of a sound ministry. It is no hardship to those who teach here, to be called upon to sign the declaration of their principles, for there are fields of usefulness open elsewhere to every man, and none need accept your call who can not conscientiously sign your formulary (the Seminary Abstract of Principles)..."

J.M. Frost - Corresponding Secretary, Baptist Sunday School Board

"we accept the Scriptures as an all-sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice, and insist upon the absolute inerrancy and sole authority of the Word of God. We recognize at this point no room for division, either of practice or belief, or even sentiment. More and more we must come to feel as the deepest and mightiest power of our conviction that a 'thus saith the Lord' is the end of all controversy." In Baptist: Why and Why Not (1900) published by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

J.B. Tidwell - Chairman, Bible Department, Baylor University (1910-46)

These writers certainly claimed that what they say is of God. To them inspiration is not just plenary but verbal. They were not left to choose their words promiscuously. Their individuality was preserved, but the words used were given to them of God. Not just the thought came from God, but every word with every inflection. Every verse and line and even every tense of the verb, every number of the noun, and every little particle they regarded as coming from God and demanded in the pain of grave disaster that we should preserve in its entirety. From Thinking Straight About The Bible or Is The Bible The Word of God (1935), published by Baptist Sunday School Board.

X. CONCLUSION

The modern/post-modern philosophical worldview has been both secularized and rationalized (and lately "derationalized") within the "closed system." From Schleiermacher to Barth the Bible has ceased to be the inerrant, infallible, verbal-plenary, self-authenticating Word of God and has become a subjective witness to religious experience at best. Barth's understanding of the Scriptures was an attempt to explain the relationship of a transcendent God to human communication (revelation) but the Word, while elevated, is still flawed and subject to existential interpretation. The influence of 19th century German thought penetrated America precipitating the Fundamentalist-Modernist clash of the 1920's, while Barth's influence is increasingly seen today in American Evangelicalism. In Southern Baptist life, Barth's

influence was present and growing until the Conservative resurgence of the 1970's. History reveals the resurgence is a return to where Southern Baptists were before neoorthodoxy slipped into the family. Indeed the early Clark Pinnock's definition of Biblical inspiration was accurate as to where Southern Baptist have been, are, and going.

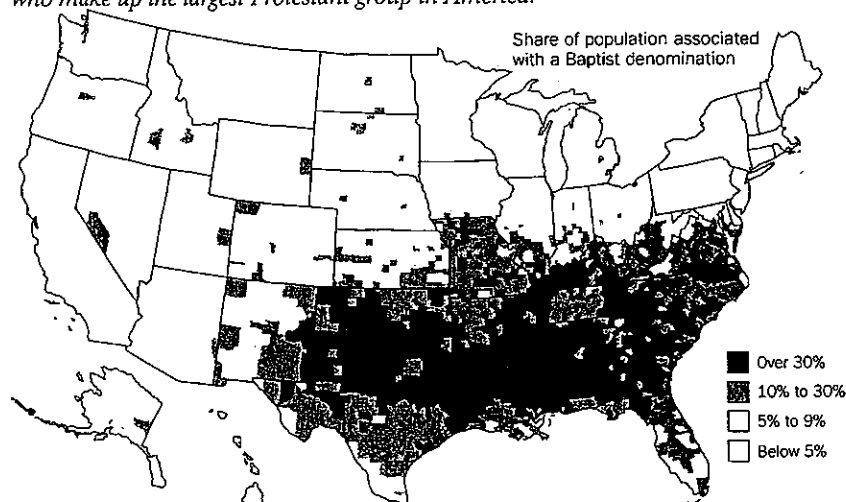
"The Bible in its entirety is God's written Word to man, free of error in its original autographs, wholly reliable in history and doctrine. Its divine inspiration has rendered the Book "infallible" (incapable of teaching deception) and "inerrant" (not liable to prove false or mistaken). Its inspiration is "plenary" (extending to all parts alike), "verbal" (including the actual language form), and "confluent" (product of two free agents, human and divine). Inspiration involves infallibility as an essential property, and infallibility in turn implies inerrancy. This threefold designation of Scripture is implicit in the basic thesis of Biblical Authority." A Defense of Biblical Infallibility

NOTE: Classnotes by John Hannah of Dallas Seminary provide the broad outline and some significant content of this section on Scripture in historical perspective.

FACE OF THE NATION

WHERE BAPTISTS ABOUND

Baptists have worshiped in America since forming a church in Rhode Island in 1639. They helped add the First Amendment to the Constitution, guaranteeing religious freedom. Over the years, they splintered into numerous denominations, with the biggest split—over slavery, in 1845—creating the Southern Baptist Convention. More than 30 million Americans are counted as Baptists, including the 15.4 million Southern Baptists who make up the largest Protestant group in America.



USN&WR—Based on data from Churches and Church Membership in the United States, 1990. Glenmary Research Center, Decatur, Ga.

MAP BY RODGER DOYLE FOR USN&WR

THEOLOGY AND CRITICAL STUDY OF THE BIBLE

TYPES OF CRITICISM

TEXTUAL CRITICISM - (*lower criticism*) attempt to determine the original text of the Bible by comparing various extant manuscripts.

LITERARY/SOURCE CRITICISM - seeks to determine various literary sources upon which books of the Bible are based, or from which they are derived. Usually applied to the Pentateuch and the Synoptic Gospels.

FORM CRITICISM - endeavors to get behind the written sources of the Bible to the period of oral tradition, and to isolate oral forms that were behind the written sources. (Sometimes known as tradition criticism)

REDACTION CRITICISM - a study of the activity of the biblical authors in shaping, modifying, or even creating material for the final product which they wrote.

HISTORICAL CRITICISM - employs all of the above and, in addition, draws upon archeological and secular historical sources. Usually addresses questions of authorship, recipients, date and purpose(s) for writing.

COMPARITIVE RELIGIONS CRITICISM - works from the premise that religions follow certain common patterns of development. (Often assumes that religions develop from polytheism to monotheism.)

STRUCTURAL CRITICISM - attempts to investigate the relationship between the surface structure (grammar/syntax) of the writing and the deeper implicit structures (semantics) that belong to literature as such.

Emil Brunner on the Bible

Brunner claims that believing the Bible is "the 'Word of God' exclusively - is actually a breach of the Second Commandment: it is the deification of a creature, bibliolatry." Revelation and Reason, 120.

Revelation

"The Bible itself, when it speaks of revelation, points beyond itself to an event, to which indeed it bears witness, but which is not the Bible itself." Revelation and Reason, 12.

"He who identifies the letters and words of the Scriptures with the word of God has never truly understood the word of God; he does not know what constitutes revelation." The Theology of Crisis, 19.

Inspiration

"The Apostolic writings never claim for themselves a verbal inspiration of this kind ('this kind' is to note the difference between verbal inspiration and Brunner's understanding of 'divine inspiration'), with the infallibility which it implies." Revelation and Reason, 128.

"Just as we cannot say that this divine guidance rules out human search, human weakness, and the possibility of mistakes in action and in behavior, so it cannot be intended that the Scriptures are so completely under the control of the Spirit that this rules out all human activity of reflection and enquiry. Human research, such as Luke mentions as the author of the Gospel narrative, does not exclude inspiration, but it does exclude automatic dictation and verbal inspiration, with its claim to an oracular divine infallibility." Revelation and Reason, 128.

Infallibility and Inerrancy

"Our attitude to the individual words and facts of Scripture is entirely different from that of the orthodox view. The Words of Scripture, which serve to witness Christ to us, are not Christ Himself, despite the fact that we only know Him through these words. Taken by themselves they are human words." The Philosophy of Religion, 154-55.

The Bible "is full of errors, contradictions, and misleading views of various circumstances relating to man, nature, and history." The Philosophy of Religion, 155.

Illumination

"It is a knowledge which takes place in the fact that the Spirit of God Himself unveils to me the truth of the witness of the Bible to Christ, and so illuminates the eyes of my heart that I now can see for myself." Revelation and Reason, 179.

"Scripture is only revelation when conjoined with God's Spirit in the present."
The Philosophy of Religion, 151.

"Bible without Spirit is orthodoxy; Spirit without Bible is mysticism or rationalism."
The Word and The World, 90.

EPISCOPALIANS AND THE BIBLE

by Carl G. Carlozzi

All Christians, whether they be Episcopalians, Lutherans, Roman Catholics, fundamentalists, or members of other traditions, are called by the Holy Spirit to share and hold in common the positive affirmation that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God.

What, however, does the phrase "Word of God" mean to Episcopalians? Does it mean that God dictated the words of scripture to the writers of the Bible as an inerrant record of his thoughts and teachings, without the cultural conditioning and prejudices and naive scientific understanding of the writers entering in?

Or does "Word of God" mean something far less restrictive, but nonetheless true, in its underlying message—a message which contains the truth of God as told by fallible human authors in, as St. Paul would say, "earthen vessels"?

First there are the Hebrew Scriptures, in which the people of Israel come to know and believe in an unseen God through the events of their history and, in that knowing and believing, anticipate the eventual entrance of this God into their world of time and space as the Messiah.

Second, there is the New Testament, in which the Messiah comes in the incarnate person of Jesus Christ and enables people to enter into a personal relationship with him and enjoy the fruits of his redemption. But alas, he leaves this world, and the chance for personal encounter seems to become just as dead as the printed words in the Bible which declare this historical fact.

Were it not for Christ's promise of the coming and living presence of the Holy Spirit, there would be no opportunity today of participating in Christ's life. In short, the coming of the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to continue in Christ's life now in a personal way, just as the Bible recounts the disciples' participating in Christ's life then.

Accordingly, it can be said that Episcopalians walk by the Spirit and are led by the Spirit, with the Bible as their road map and guide in the "continuing testament" of the Bible. In so doing, Episcopalians worship their living Lord and not a deified road map.

Living in the Spirit, for Episcopalians, is finding God, not in a book, not in some preacher's eloquence, and not in our emotional imagining, but rather in finding God

The Episcopal Church, along with the Roman Catholic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the majority of the mainline Protestant churches, holds to this latter view of the "Word of God." In short, the Episcopal Church believes that God "inspired" the writers of the Bible to tell his story in their words and frame of reference, rather than conveying his dictated message to them in an inerrant and infallible record (see Catechism, Book of Common Prayer, p. 853).

The Episcopal Church Catechism further states the question: "How do we understand the meaning of the Bible?" Answer: "We understand the meaning of the Bible by the help of the Holy Spirit, who guides the church in the true interpretation of the scriptures."

But what is the "true interpretation" of the scriptures? Does any church or denomination have a monopoly on the truth which is made known in Jesus Christ? The answer is no; for God speaks to all of us in different ways, through his Spirit, as distinct and yet equally valid and necessary members of his Body (see 1 Corinthians 12:13).

Our part of the Body of Christ, known as the Episcopal Church, interprets the scriptures by the express command and understanding of the Holy Spirit's voice to us, with our individual interpretations being tested and corrected by Tradition and Reason (which includes the spiritual gift of biblical scholarship). We call this understanding and interpretation the "doc-

and being found by him through the power of the Holy Spirit in our personal, corporate, and liturgical lives.

And once being found by God and knowing his presence in our lives, we live out this "continuing testament" with just as much assurance, just as much validity, and just as much of God's presence, as did the followers of Jesus in the New Testament.

Reading the Bible in Christ

Episcopalians, then, stand in Christ and read the Word. We do not stand in the Word and read about Christ. The advantage for us in this is that it frees us from the narrow constraints of a biblical literalism which finds itself unable to deal with the reality of scientific discovery without impugning the integrity of God, especially relating to the creation of the world.

Episcopalians say, yes, most definitely, God is the Creator of the world. But to believe that God created the world according to the Adam and Eve story is a bit naive for us. God may have created the world through evolution, and indeed we may find through further scientific inquiry that he did it some other way.

However, what is fundamental for us is this: no matter how the world came into being, it is still our God who is the source and author of this Creation. This is what we believe the writers of Genesis were attempting to affirm, given their understanding of the nature of the universe.

Episcopalians further rejoice, as they are called by God in an historical-critical

61A

trine" to which we refer in our ordination vows and in the Constitution and Canons of our church.

Not to be true to this understanding and interpretation would be to call the Holy Spirit a liar and deny the very voice of God in our lives as called parts of his Body. Equally important is that we respect the voice of the very same Spirit to other members of Christ's Body, as the Holy Spirit endeavors to carry out his purposes in their lives, according to his will and not our own.

While the Episcopal Church says quite clearly that the Bible is the Word of God, it does not hold, however, that the Bible contains all of the Word which God has spoken. For in each new day, God continues to reveal himself in and through the ongoing inspiration of the Holy Spirit to his people.

The Three Testimonies

Bishop Phillips Brooks, one of the most eloquent preachers in the history of the Episcopal Church, once commented, "The Bible is like a telescope: look through it and you can see distant worlds; look at it and you see only a telescope." Accordingly, Episcopalians do not believe that God would ever allow himself to be confined to the paper and ink of a holy looking book called the Bible. In short, Episcopalians do not confuse the Word of God (Christ/Logos) with the words of scripture. In fact, the Episcopal Church sees three testimonies to the Bible.

method of Bible study which finds its base in an exegetical, as opposed to eisegetical, approach to scripture. Exegetical inquiry means that we attempt to "read out of" scripture the original meaning intended, while eisegetical inquiry means "reading into" scripture a meaning which may not have been intended by the author.

Accordingly, the Episcopal Church's reading of the apocalyptic literature in scripture, most notably the Book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation, is far different from that of our fundamentalist brethren, who read into the "Beast" of Revelation, for example, (which was and always will be, for Episcopalians, the Roman Empire) a whole host of contemporary nations and personages which have nothing whatsoever to do with the original meaning intended by the authors of these books.

This is but one example among many of what might be called the new wave of fundamentalist, eisegetical apocalyptic projections which seek to make the Bible speak and relate to things which were never intended. Indeed, while Episcopalians firmly believe in the Second Coming of Christ and the Last Judgement, we say, with Christ, "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

Therefore, when Episcopalians read the Book of Genesis or the Book of Revelation or find in scripture concepts and views not in accord with Christ's teaching of agape, such as the literal Pauline view of the subjugation of women, Episcopalians take heart

in knowing and believing, as do many of their fellow Christians, that Christ came to take away our sins and not our God-given rational thought processes.

An Answer to Fundamentalism

Episcopalians are Christians who have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior and who are carrying out the specific call which the Holy Spirit has extended to them and bestowed upon them as a vital part of his Body at the time of their baptism. Therefore, as Episcopalians, we need not be intimidated by zealous fundamentalists who imply or state directly that we need something more than Christ has already given us through the power of the Holy Spirit at baptism, through his sacrifice on Calvary for our sins, and by our acceptance of him as Lord and Savior.

For Episcopalians the term "born-again Christian" is theologically redundant because, as the Holy Spirit teaches us, a non-believer who accepts Christ as Lord and Savior becomes "born-again" as a Christian at the time of his or her baptism and is fully empowered for ministry. To use the term "born-again Christian" is to say something like "Christian-Christian" (see Holy Baptism, BCP, pp. 306-307).

It is time for us to stand firm and confident in the faith which has been delivered to us by the power of the Holy Spirit and to exercise our ministry as a vital part of Christ's Body. In faithfulness to St. Paul's teaching in the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, let us respect and honor the other

parts of Christ's Body as we carry out our mission.

But let us never mutilate that Body by endeavoring to become a part which God has not called us to be or to allow some other part of Christ's Body to convince us that our part of the Body is unnecessary or in need of amputation.

Our commission as Episcopalians is from the Lord himself; we should be humbled and honored to serve him just as we are, just as he calls us.

Episcopalians and the Bible is taken from an article in *The Living Church*, titled **The Third Testament**, and is reprinted here by permission of *The Living Church*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53202. Carl G. Carlozzi, D.Min., is rector of All Saints' Church and Day School, Phoenix, Arizona, as well as author of numerous books and articles.



Eighth Printing

Forward Movement Publications, 412 Sycamore Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45202. Printed in U.S.A.

Part I

In every generation, the people of God face the decision either to reaffirm "the faith" which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) or to lapse into theological unbelief. Precisely such a challenge now confronts that people of God called Southern Baptists.

As we approach the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention, we are presented with unprecedented opportunities for missionary outreach and evangelistic witness at home and abroad. We must bear a faithful gospel witness to a culture in decline; we must be the salt and light in a society which has lost its moral compass. We must also pass on to the rising generation the fundamentals of the Christian faith and a vital sense of our Baptist heritage. To meet these goals, we seek to move beyond the denominational conflict of recent years toward a new consensus rooted in theological substance and doctrinal fidelity. We pray that our effort will lead to healing and reconciliation throughout the Southern Baptist Convention and, God willing, to a renewed commitment to our founding purpose of "eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort, for the propagation of the gospel."

Baptists are a people of firm conviction and free confession. Southern Baptists have expressed and affirmed these convictions through *The Baptist Faith and Message* confessional statements of 1925 & 1963.

This committee affirms and honors *The Baptist Faith and Message*, as overwhelmingly adopted by the 1963 Convention, embraced by millions of faithful Southern Baptists and their churches, affirmed by successive convention sessions and adopted by SBC agencies, as the normative expression of Southern Baptist belief. Therefore, this committee declines to recommend any new confession or revision of that statement.

However, each generation of Southern Baptists faces unique and pressing challenges to faithfulness which demand attention and test the integrity of our conviction. This report addresses several issues of contemporary urgency in a spirit of pastoral concern and a commitment to the unity of our Baptist fellowship as well as the integrity of our doctrinal confession. These emphases are intended to illuminate articles of *The Baptist Faith and Message*, consistent with its intention and content, and are thus commended to the Convention, its agencies, its churches, and the millions of Bible believing, cooperating Southern Baptists who freely join this Convention in its sacred work. We seek to clarify our historic Baptist commitment to Holy Scripture, the doctrine of God, the person and work of Jesus Christ, the nature and mission of the church, and biblical teaching on last things. We reaffirm our commitment to these great theological tenets since they are assailed, in various ways, by subtle compromise, blatant concession, and malign negligence.

We also affirm the historic Baptist conception of the nature and function of confessional statements in our religious and denominational life. Baptists approve and circulate confessions of faith with the following understandings:

□ **As an expression of our religious liberty.** Any group of Baptists, large or small, has the inherent right to draw up for itself and to publish to the world a confession of faith whenever it wishes. As a corollary of this principle, we reject state-imposed religious creeds and attendant civil sanctions.

□ **As a statement of our religious convictions.** We affirm the priesthood of all believers and the autonomy of each local congregation. However, doctrinal minimalism and theological revision, left unchecked, compromises a commitment to the gospel

itself. Being Baptist means faith as well as freedom. Christian liberty should not become a license for the masking of unbelief.

□ **As a witness to our confidence in divine revelation.** The sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is the Bible, God's Holy Word. It is the supreme standard by which all creeds, conduct and religious opinions should be tried. As in the past so in the future, Baptists should hold themselves free to revise their statements of faith in the light of an unchanging Holy Scripture.

None of these principles, sacred to Baptists through the ages, is violated by voluntary, conscientious adherence to an explicit doctrinal standard. Holy living and sound doctrine are indispensable elements of true revival and genuine reconciliation among any body of Christian believers. Desiring this end with all our hearts, we commend the following report to the people of God called Southern Baptists.

Part II Article One Holy Scripture

Southern Baptists have affirmed repeatedly and decisively an unswerving commitment to the divine inspiration and truthfulness of Holy Scripture, the Word of God revealed in written form. We believe that what the Bible says, God says. What the Bible says happened, really happened. Every miracle, every event, in every one of the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments is true and trustworthy. In 1900, James M. Frost, first president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, declared: "*We accept the Scriptures as an all-sufficient and infallible rule of faith and practice, and insist upon the absolute inerrancy and sole authority of the Word of God. We recognize at this point no room for division, either of practice or belief, or even sentiment. More and more we must come to feel as the deepest and mightiest power of our conviction that a 'thus saith the Lord' is the end of all controversy.*"

The Baptist Faith and Message affirms this high view of Scripture by declaring that the Bible "*has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter.*" The chairman of the committee who drafted this statement, Herschel Hobbs, explained this phrase by reference to II Timothy 3:16 which says, "*all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.*" He explained: "*The Greek New Testament reads 'all'—without the definite article—and that means every single part of the whole is God-breathed. And a God of truth does not breathe error.*"

Recent developments in Southern Baptist life have underscored the importance of a renewed commitment to Biblical authority in every area of our denominational life.

In 1986 the presidents of the six SBC seminaries issued the *Glorieta Statement* which affirmed the "*infallible power and binding authority*" of the Bible, declaring it to be "*not errant in any area of reality.*" The miracles of the Old and New Testaments were described as "*historical evidences of God's judgment, love and redemption.*"

In 1987 the SBC Peace Committee called upon Southern Baptist institutions to recruit faculty and staff who clearly reflect the dominant convictions and beliefs of Southern Baptists concerning the factual character and historicity of the Bible in such matters as:

- (1) the direct creation of humankind including Adam and Eve as real persons;
- (2) the actual authorship of biblical writings as attributed by Scripture itself;
- (3) the supernatural character of the biblical miracles which

occurred as factual events in space and time;

(4) the historical accuracy of biblical narratives which occurred precisely as the text of Scripture indicates.

In 1991 the Baptist Sunday School Board published the first volume of the *New American Commentary*, a projected 40-volume series of theological exposition on every book of the Bible. The commentary was intended to reflect a "commitment to the inerrancy of Scripture and 'the classic Christian tradition.'" *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* was adopted as a guideline fore fully expressing for writers the intent of Article I of The Baptist Faith and Message.

In light of these historical commitments, we call upon all Southern Baptists:

- ☐ to foster a deep reverence and genuine love for the Word of God in personal, congregational and denominational life;
- ☐ to use the Scriptures in personal evangelistic witnessing, since they are "able to make one wise unto salvation;"
- ☐ to read the Bible faithfully and to study it systematically; and
- ☐ to encourage the translation and dissemination of the Bible throughout the world.

We commend to all Baptist educational institutions and agencies the *Report of the Peace Committee* (1987), the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* (1978) and the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics* (1982) as biblically grounded and sound guides worthy of respect in setting forth a high view of Scripture. We encourage them to cultivate a biblical world view in all disciplines of learning and to pursue a reverent, believing approach to biblical scholarship that is both exegetically honest and theologically sound. There need be no contradiction between "firm faith and free research" as long as both are exercised under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in full confidence of the truthfulness of His Word.

Article Two

The Doctrine of God

The God revealed in Holy Scripture is the sovereign God who created the worlds and all therein, the God who called Israel out from the nations as a witness to His name, the God who spoke from a burning bush, and the God who decisively and definitively revealed Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ, through whom He brought redemption and reconciliation.

Baptists, and all evangelical Christians, recognize the centrality of biblical theism: We honor and worship the one true God and our first act of worship is to acknowledge Him even as He has revealed Himself.

This means that we affirm God's nature as revealed in Holy Scripture. He alone has the right to define Himself, and He has done so by revealing His power and His grace, seen in His absolute holiness and love.

The biblical doctrine of God has been compromised in recent years as efforts to redefine God have rejected clear biblical teachings in the face of modern challenges. Southern Baptists cannot follow this course. As a fellowship of evangelical Christians we must recommit ourselves to the eternal truths concerning God, even as He has freely, graciously, and definitively revealed Himself. As Norvell Robertson, one of our earliest Southern Baptist theologians wrote: "*The Word of God is truth. What He says of Himself is true...He alone knows Himself.*"

Thus, we must submit ourselves to the knowledge God has imparted concerning Himself and His divine nature.

First, Baptists affirm that God is limitless in power, knowledge, wisdom, love, and holiness. He suffers no limitations upon His power or His personality. He is not constrained by any external force or internal contradiction. We reject any effort to redefine God as a limited deity.

Second, Baptists affirm that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is none other than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Sarah, and Rachel, and Ruth. God's self-revelation in Scripture is progressive, but fully consistent. He is the universal Creator and thus deserves universal recognition and worship as the one true God.

Third, Baptists affirm that God is one, and that he has revealed Himself as a Trinity of three eternally co-existent persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We acknowledge the Trinity as essential and central to our Christian confession, and we reject any attempt to minimize or compromise this aspect of God's self-disclosure.

Fourth, Baptists affirm that God has revealed himself as the Father of the redeemed. Jesus characteristically addressed God as His Father, and instructed His disciples to do the same. We have no right to reject God's own name for Himself, nor to employ impersonal or feminine names in order to placate modern sensitivities. We honor the integrity of God's name, and acknowledge his sole right to name himself even as we affirm that no human words can exhaust the divine majesty. But God has accommodated Himself to us by naming Himself in human words.

Fifth, Baptists affirm that God is the sovereign Creator of the universe, who called all things into being by the power of His Word, and who created the worlds out of nothing. His creative acts were free and unconstrained by any other creative force.

Sixth, Baptists affirm that God is sovereign over history, nature, time, and space, and that His loving and gracious providence sustains and orders the world.

These statements, based upon Scripture and undergirded by historic Baptist confessions, force our attention to contemporary compromises which threaten the fidelity and integrity of our faith.

We call upon the Southern Baptist Convention, its churches and its institutions, to beware lest revisionist views of God such as those popularly modelled in process and feminist theologies, as well as the esoteric doctrines of the New Age movement, compromise our faithful commitment to biblical truth.

Article Three

The Person and Work of Christ

Jesus Christ is the center and circumference of the Christian faith. The God of heaven and earth has revealed Himself supremely and definitively in the Son, and the most fundamental truth of Christianity is that "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.*" (II Cor. 5:19).

Jesus Christ is the sole and sufficient Savior of the redeemed throughout the world and of all ages. He is the divine Word by which the worlds were created; He is also the unique and solitary Savior in whom alone there is redemption and forgiveness of sins. From beginning to end the Bible proclaims salvation through Jesus Christ and no other. The Church is commanded to teach and preach no other gospel.

In His incarnation--an event in historical space and time--Jesus Christ was the perfect union of the human and the divine. He was truly God and truly man, born of a virgin and without sin, remaining sinless throughout His earthly incarnation. He was crucified, died, and was buried. On the third day, He rose from the dead, the first fruits of the redeemed. He ascended to the Father and now rules as King and Judge. He will consummate the age by His physical return to earth as Lord and King.

Scripture bears faithful and truthful witness to Jesus Christ. The words and deeds of Christ set forth in the New Testament are an accurate record of what He said and did, even as the Old Testament prophetically revealed His identity and His purpose of redemption. The miracles of Jesus as revealed to us in Scripture were historical events which demonstrated Christ's identity and His power over sin, death and Satan.

All human beings, marked by original sin and their own individual sins, are utterly helpless before God and without excuse, deserving of eternal punishment and separation from God. Nevertheless, in Jesus Christ and His cross, God revealed both the extent of our lostness and the depth of His redemptive love. All human beings--in all places and of all ages--are lost but for salvation through Jesus Christ. He is the only hope of salvation and the only Savior.

Christ's redemption was wrought by His atonement which was both penal and substitutionary. Christ died in our place, bearing in His body the penalty for our sin and purchasing our redemption by His blood.

The cross of Christ is thus the apex of God's plan of redemption, revealing God's absolute holiness and infinite love. The gospel of that cross is the only message which can and does save.

The redeemed are justified before God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, trusting in Him alone for their salvation and acknowledging Him as Savior and Lord.

Therefore, Baptists must reject any effort to deny the true nature and identity of Jesus Christ or to minimize or to redefine His redemptive work. Baptists must reject any and all forms of universalism and bear faithful witness to salvation in Jesus Christ, and in Him alone. Furthermore, Baptists must join with all true Christians in affirming the substitutionary nature of Christ's atonement and reject calls--ancient and modern--for redefining Christ's reconciling work as merely subjective and illustrative.

Article Four The Church

We acknowledge Jesus Christ not only as personal Savior and Lord, but also as the Head, Foundation, Lawgiver, and Teacher of the church which is His building, body, and bride. The person who despises the church despises Christ, for "*Christ...loved the church, and gave himself for it*" (Eph. 5:25).

In the New Testament the word "church" sometimes refers to all of the redeemed of all ages but, more often, to a local assembly of baptized believers. Until Jesus comes again the local church is a "*colony of heaven*" (Phil. 3:20), a "*sounding board*" of the gospel (I Thes. 1:8), and a fellowship through which God's people carry out the Great Commission of their Lord. The central purpose of the church is to honor and glorify God; the central task of the church is to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism and missions.

In light of this mandate, we call upon all Southern Baptists to reaffirm our commitment to these distinctive principles of our Baptist heritage:

□ *The priesthood of all believers.* Every Christian has direct access to God through Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, the sole mediator between God and human beings. However, the priesthood of all believers is exercised within a committed community of fellow believers--priests who share a like precious faith. The priesthood of all believers should not be reduced to modern individualism nor used as a cover for theological relativism. It is a spiritual standing which leads to ministry, service, and a coherent witness in the world for which Christ died.

□ *The autonomy of the local church.* A New Testament church is a gathered congregation of baptized believers who have entered into covenant with Christ and with one another to fulfill, according to the Scriptures, their mutual obligations. Under the Lordship of Christ, such a body is free to order its own internal life without interference from any external group. This same freedom applies to all general Baptist bodies, such as associations and state and national conventions. Historically, Baptist churches have freely cooperated in matters of common interest without compromise of beliefs. We affirm the wisdom of convictional cooperation

in carrying out our witness to the world and decry all efforts to weaken our denomination and its cooperative ministries.

□ *A free church in a free state.* Throughout our history Baptists have not wavered in our belief that God intends for a free church to function in a free state. Since God alone is Lord of the conscience, the temporal realm has no authority to coerce religious commitments. However, the doctrine of religious liberty, far from implying doctrinal laxity or unconcern, guarantees the ability of every congregation and general Baptist body to determine (on the basis of the Word of God) its own doctrinal and disciplinary parameters.

We declare our fervent commitment to these distinctive convictions of the Baptist tradition. We also call for a renewed emphasis on the faithful proclamation of God's Word, believers' baptism by immersion, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper as central elements of corporate worship.

Article Five Last Things

With all true Christians everywhere, Baptists confess that "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again." The God who has acted in the past, and is acting even now, will continue to act bringing to final consummation his eternal purpose in Jesus Christ. Our faith rests in the confidence that the future is in his hands.

While detailed interpretations of the end times should not be made a test of fellowship among Southern Baptists, we affirm with confidence the clear teaching of Holy Scripture on these essential doctrinal truths:

□ *The return of Jesus Christ in glory.* Christians await with certainty and expectancy the "blessed hope" of the outward, literal, visible and personal return of Jesus Christ to consummate history in victory and judgment. As E. Y. Mullins put it, "*He will come again in person, the same Jesus who ascended from the Mount of Olives.*"

□ *The resurrection of the body.* In his glorious resurrection, Jesus Christ broke the bonds of death, establishing his authority over it, and one day he will assert that authority on our behalf and raise us. The righteous dead will be raised unto life everlasting. The unrighteous dead will be cast into hell which is the second death (Rev. 20:14-15).

□ *Eternal punishment and eternal bliss.* Following the resurrection and judgment, the redeemed shall be forever with the Lord in heaven, a place of light and glory beyond description, and the lost shall be forever with the devil in hell, a place of utter darkness and inexpressible anguish. Nowhere does the Bible teach the annihilation of the soul or a temporary purgatory for those who die without hope in Christ.

The second coming of Christ is the blessed, comforting, and purifying hope of the church. We call upon all Southern Baptists to claim this precious promise in every area of our life and witness, and thus "*to live holy and godly lives as we look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.*" (II Peter 3:11).

Timothy George, Co-chairman
Roy L. Honeycutt, Co-chairman
William Bell
J. Walter Carpenter, Jr.
Mark Coppenger
Stephen Corts
Carl F. H. Henry
Herschel H. Hobbs
Richard Land
R. Albert Mohler, Jr.
William Tolar

INSPIRATION

I. Inspiration - Descriptions

1. **Natural** - There is no supernatural element to Scripture. The Bible is simply an "inspiring" book or piece(s) of literature.
2. **Illumination** (Mystical) - The Bible is Spirit-inspired writings on the same level as any of history's or today's spirit-inspired writings.
3. **Dynamic*** (Partial) - Bible contains the Word of God and is without error and true in areas of (1) Doctrine (2) Salvation. It may be in error in areas of science, history, etc.
4. **Neoorthodox** - Bible is inspired but not without error due to the human element. The Bible becomes the Word of God but it is not the Word of God. It becomes God's Word to us in existential encounter. This view usually invokes a bifurcation of (1) historical critical study of the Bible and (2) the faith teachings of the Bible.
5. **Mechanical Dictation** - The biblical writers were passive instruments in the hands of God like a typewriter to a typist.
6. **Verbal/Plenary** - God superintended the human authors so that in their own words via their individual personalities the Scriptures are inspired fully, to the very words, and are without error in all that they affirm.

* Sometimes called inspiration/infallibility of purpose.

A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF CRUCIAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Inspiration is God's superintending of the human authors so that, using their own personalities, they composed and recorded without error in the words of the autographs His revelation to humanity.

Inerrant - Without error

Infallible - Incapable of teaching non-truth or leading one astray

Inspiration - God-breathed. (cf. 2 Tim 3:16) The source and ultimate author of Scripture is God.

*Inerrancy and infallibility do not claim there are no problems in the study of Scripture but that with proper interpretation and knowledge all problems can and will be solved. The nature of the God of the Bible is the basis for this confidence.

Quotes by Dr. Clark Pinnock

Pinnock, Clark H. "Southern Baptist and the Bible."
Christianity Today 10 (May 27):30-31.

"What the Scripture says, God says" expresses biblical teaching. This is the trustworthy utterance of the living God. The Bible does not err, because God cannot lie. Its accuracy is guaranteed by the trustworthiness of God (John 10:35)." (p.31)

Pinnock, Clark H. "Our Source of Authority: The Bible."
Bibliotheca Sacra 124 (Apr.-Ju.1967):150-156.

"The chaos of American theology today can be traced back to its roots in the rejection of Biblical infallibility." (p.151)

"The question of inspiration is then not the plaything of the theological specialist; it is the eminently practical foundation on which the gospel rests." (p.151)

"To move off from the pages of Scripture is to enter into the wastelands of our own subjectivity." (p.151)

"An unreliable Bible would rob us of our hope." (p.151)

"In the same way, the nature of Biblical authority for a Christian is decided once and for all by the conception held and taught by Jesus and His apostles." (p.152)

"Inspiration does not refer to the impression made upon the mind of the person reading the Bible. It refers solely to the impeccable text which God breathed." (p.152)

"When the infallibility of Scripture is set aside, sentimentality becomes the actual canon." (p.154)

Pinnock, Clark H. "Baptists and Biblical Authority." Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 11 (Fall 1974):193-205.

"The historic Baptist doctrine of biblical authority is one with the historic view of the church. It is a simple historical fact that all the great doctors of theology as well as the mass of Christian faithful have maintained the highest possible regard for the written Word of God. Only for a hundred years or so has there been any significant dissend in this matter." (p.194)

"The dissolution of the traditional doctrine of Scripture constitutes a crisis at the very foundation of modern Protestant theology." (p.197)

"We are therefore faced with a choice between two versions of Christianity: one that depends on what God has spoken, and one which rests on human judgments." (p.202)

"This fatal dualism between a reliable and sure gospel or theology, and an unreliable and unsure Bible is intolerable, unbiblical, and unworkable. The Bible is a holistic book. Its 'real' message is not floating like soap on murky waters of human fallibility." (p.203)

Gregory, Joel ed. "Parameters of Biblical Inerrancy." [replies by Adrian Rogers and John Lee] The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy Nashville:Broadman 1987.

"I ask no one else to admit what I am about to say but it is important: the deep reason I defended the strict view of inerrancy in my earlier years was because I desperately wanted it to be true. I wanted it to be true so badly that I passed over the obvious problems in the theory and put the best face on them that I could. What helped me most to become more honest in the face of the realities of Scripture was simply the realization that absolute rational certainty was not something which I could have or even needed to have. The witness of the Spirit to the saving gospel of God was all I really needed then and now." (p.96)

Pinnock, Clark H. "Fire, then nothing." [with reply by Dr. D. F. Wells] Christianity Today 31 (March 1987): 40-42.

"But what about the 'eternal punishment' of Matthew 25:46? That is precisely what it is-not everlasting punishing, but eternal punishment." (p.40)

"The fire of hell does not torment, but rather consumes the wicked. As Paul put it, the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23)." (p.40)

Pinnock, Clark H. "The destruction of the finally impenitent." Criswell Theoloical Review 4 (Spring 1990):243-259.

"Let me say at the outset that I consider the concept of hell as endless torment in body and mind an outrageous doctrine, a theological and moral enormity, a bad doctrine of the tradition which needs to be changed." (p.246-247)

"Surely a God who would do such a thing is more nearly like Satan than like God, at least by any ordinary moral standards, and by the gospel itself." (p.247)

"I myself will take the position that the finally impenitent wicked suffer extinction and annihilation." (p. 248)

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION AND REVELATION

VIEW	NAME	PROPONENTS	REVELATION	ERRORS IN ORIGINALS?	ERRORS IN COPIES?	MEANS OF INSPIRATION	DEGREE OF AUTHORITY OF BIBLE
Mechanical Dictation	Hyper-Fundamentalism	Muslims Spiritists Some uneducated Hyper-fund.	In Words	None	None	By Dictation	Infallible and Inerrant
Verbal Dictation	Fundamentalism	John R. Rice	In Words	None	Few	By Supernatural Molding of Writer's Styles	Infallible and Inerrant
Verbal Inspiration	Fundamentalism Evangelicalism	Warfield Schaeffer ICBI	In Propositions and Words	None	Few	Unknown Supernatural Process	Infallible and Inerrant
Conceptual Inspiration	Neo-Evangelicalism	D. Beegle J. Rogers	In Concepts (Not in Words)	None Spiritual Some Factual	Few	Revealed Ideas Author's Own Words Used	Infallible Not Inerrant
Instrumental Revelation	Liberal Evangelicalism	C.S. Lewis	Through Words (Not in Words)	Some (in both areas)	Some	Author's Words Elevated by God	Authoritative Not Inerrant
Personal Revelation	Neo-Orthodoxy	Karl Barth Emil Brunner	In Acts & Events (Not Words)	Some (in both areas)	Many	Revealed Acts Author's Record	Usually Reliable - Not Inerrant
Illumination	Liberalism	Harold DeWolf	No Revelation Only Illumina- tion	Many (in both areas)	Many	Divine Actualization of Natural Powers	Often Reliable Not Inerrant
Intuitionism	Humanism	H.W. Van Loon	No Revelation Only Intuition	Many (in both areas)	Largely	Purely Natural Powers	Not Reliable Not Inerrant

Adapted from N.L. Geisler

II. Inspiration - Definition

1. BIBLICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF INSPIRATION

A. Two basic texts

1. Spirit-moved writers-2 Peter 1:20-21 (Emp. here is on the writers of Scripture)
2. God-breathed writings-2 Tim 3:16 (Emp. here is on the words of Scripture)

B. Other supportive text

1. Deut. 18:18 - "I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command"
2. 2 Sam 23:2 - "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was on my tongue"
3. 2 Chr 34:14 - "The book of the law of the Lord given by the hand of Moses"
4. Isa 59:21 - "My words which I have put in your mouth"
5. Zech 7:12 - "The words which the Lord of host has sent by His Spirit through the former prophets"
6. Matt 22:43 - How does David in (by) the Spirit call him Lord [in Psa 110]?
7. Acts 4:24-25 - "God...who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David...didst say...."
8. Heb 4:7 - "He [God]...saying through David...said before:"

2. THEOLOGICAL DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION

A. Some sample definitions

1. Warfield: "Inspiration is the supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Holy Spirit of God, by virtue of which their writings are given divine trustworthiness."
2. Gaussen: "Inspiration is that inexplicable power which the Divine Spirit put forth of old on the authors of Holy Scripture in order to give them guidance even in the employment of the words they used, and to preserve them alike from all error and from all omission."

B. Essential elements of a definition

1. Divine origin (from God)
2. Human agency (thru men)
3. Written, verbal (in words)
4. Autographs (in original words)
5. Final authority, normative (for believers)
6. Inerrant (without error)
7. Only 66 books (limited and completed canon)

C. Suggested definition

Inspiration is the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit who, through the different personalities and literary styles of the chosen human authors, invested the very words of the original 66 books of Holy Scripture, alone and in their entirety, as the very word of God without error in all that they teach (including history and science) and is thereby the infallible rule and final authority for faith and practice of all believers.

3. THE THEOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF SCRIPTURE

- A. Sanctity (holy) - 2 Tim 3:15,16
- B. Indestructibility - Mt 5:17,18
- C. Infallibility (unfailing) - Jo 10:35
- D. Authority (divine) - Mt 4:4, 7, 10
- E. Indefatigability (power) - Heb 4:12
- F. Indefeasibility (carry thru) - Isa 55:11
- G. Inerrancy (errorlessness) - Matt 22:29; Jo 17:17

FOUR VIEWS OF THE WORD OF GOD

(A Summation)

Liberal View

The Bible is man's word about God and other religious matters. It contains experiences and stories of pious men and can be described as a collection of religious experiences and insights.

Neo-Orthodox View

The Bible becomes the Word of God. It is a record of man's encounters with God and is a combination of divine truth and human error. It is an imperfect but unique book which God uses as a means to encounter man. The Bible becomes God's Word to an individual as he or she experiences its reality in his or her life.

Limited Inerrancy View

The Bible is the Word of God and the word of man. The parts which concern salvation, faith and practice are God's words. Those parts which speak to culture, science and history are man's words. It is left to the individual to decide which are God's words and which are merely man's opinions.

Evangelical View

The Bible is the Word of God. God is the author of the whole Bible. It is inspired by him but written through human agents. It is true in every area in which it speaks regardless of man's response to it. It is the Word of God written in the words of men.

III. Inspiration - Defended

1. AN OUTLINE OF THE OVERALL ARGUMENT BY THEOLOGICAL DEDUCTION

- A. God exists (supported from general revelation and history).
- B. Miracles are possible (since God exists).
- C. Miracles confirm Christ to be God (especially the resurrection).
 - 1. New Testament documents are historically reliable.
 - a. New Testament manuscripts are reliable copies.
 - b. New Testament writers are reliable witnesses.
 - 2. New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God.
 - 3. Therefore, Jesus did claim to be God.
 - 4. Miracles confirm Jesus' claim to be God.
 - 5. Therefore, Jesus is God.
- D. Whatever God teaches is true.
- E. Jesus (=God) taught that Scripture is the Word of God.
- F. Therefore, the Bible is the Word of God.

2. DETAILS OF THE CENTRAL PREMISE OF THE ARGUMENT

- A. Jesus affirmed the Old Testament:
 - 1. Authority - Mt 22:43
 - 2. Reliability - Mt 26:54
 - 3. Finality - Mt 4:4, 7, 10
 - 4. Sufficiency - Lk 16:31
 - 5. Indestructibility - Mt 5:17, 18
 - 6. Unity - Lk 24:27, 44
 - 7. Perspicuity - Lk 24:27
 - 8. Historicity - Mt 12:40
 - 9. Facticity (scientifically) - Mt 19:2-5
 - 10. Inerrancy - Mt 22:29; Jo 3:12; 17:17
- B. Jesus promised the New Testament (Jo 14:26; 16:13; cf. Acts 2:42; Eph 2:20).
- C. Hence, both the Old Testament and the New Testament are the Word of God.

3. TWO COMMON OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

- A. Accommodation theory
 - 1. Theory stated: Jesus did not *affirm* inspiration but simple accommodated Himself to the (false) Jewish worldview of that day.
 - 2. Reply: Jesus did *not* accommodate to false beliefs. To do so would be to lie and promote a falsehood, something God cannot do.
 - a. Mt 5:21, 28, 32, etc.
 - b. Mt 15:1-9

- c. Mt 22:29
- d. Mt 23
- e. John 2:13f
- f. John 3:10f

B. Limitation view

1. Theory stated: Since Jesus was human, He was limited in knowledge, and, hence, ignorant on numerous topics.
2. Reply:
 - a. As the perfect Godman, all that Jesus would affirm would be true.
 - b. Jesus had supernatural knowledge as a man (Jn 1, 4).
 - c. Jesus said, "Verily, verily" 25 times in John, giving unique authority to His words.
 - d. Jesus emphasized His authority in His "I say unto you" statements (Mt 5:21, 28, 32, 34, 38, 44).

C. Conclusion

1. If Christ is God, the Bible is the Word of God because He gave it full authority.
2. If the Bible is not the Word of God, Christ is not God(or his status as such is certainly in question).
(*Logically*, Christ's deity and the Bible's authority are directly related).
3. When Christ challenges the OT, it is the erroneous rabbinic interpretation(s) that is denied, not the Scriptures (Matt 5:17-18).

Jesus' Perspective on Scripture

There are many reasons for believing that the Bible is God's infallible, inerrant written revelation of Himself to mankind. We could survey the evidence from textual criticism, fulfilled prophecy, history, archeology, miracles, or the Bible's power to change lives, but for Christians, there can be no stronger argument for the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures than the fact that Jesus Himself attests to those truths. As God the Son, the One to whom all authority is given (Matt. 28:18), whatever He speaks is the absolute truth. What did our Lord believe about the Scriptures? 1. **Jesus believed in verbal inspiration-** He believed that the very words of Scripture were inspired, not merely the writer's thoughts or ideas (Matt. 5:17-18). 2.

Jesus believed in the inerrancy of Scripture- In John 10:35, He said, "The Scripture cannot be broken." It can contain no falsehoods, since it comes from the God whose every word is truth itself (John 17:17). 3. **Jesus believed in the historical reliability of the**

Old Testament accounts - Although some treat those events as myths, Jesus confirmed their reality. Among the Old Testament events confirmed by our Lord are the creation of Adam and Eve as the first humans (Matt. 19:4-5), the existence of Noah and the flood (Matt. 24:37), the existence of Abraham (John 8:56), and the story of Jonah (Matt. 12:40). Those who hold that the Bible contains errors must believe either that Jesus did not know that there were errors, or that He did know. In either case, He could not have been God. If He didn't know there were errors, He was not omniscient--yet God knows everything. If He did know, He was dishonest--yet God cannot lie.

The only reasonable conclusion for the Christian to arrive at is that Jesus, being God and therefore omniscient, knew that the Scriptures are God's perfect revelation of Himself. (For an excellent study of Jesus' view of the Bible see Christ and the Bible by John Wenham, IVP, 1972.)

Jesus and the Scriptures

Full inerrancy is consistent with Jesus' attitude toward Scripture. (The following material is adapted from John Wenham, Christ and the Bible, Downer's Grove IL: Intervarsity, 1972.) In fact, the issue of Bibliology is ultimately an issue of Christology.

1. Jesus consistently treated the historical narratives of the Old Testament as straightforward records of fact. He referred to Abel (Luke 11:51), Noah (Matt. 24:37-39), Abraham (Jn 8:56), Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 10:15, 11:23-24), Lot (Luke 17:28-32), Isaac and Jacob (Matt. 8:11), the manna (Jn 6:31), the wilderness serpent (Jn 3:14), David (Matt. 22:43), Solomon (Matt. 6:29, 12:42), Elijah (Luke 4:25-26), Elisha (Luke 4:27), Jonah (Matt. 12:39-41) and Moses (Matt. 8:4), among others.
2. He often chose as the basis of his teaching those very stories that many modern skeptics find unacceptable (e.g., Adam and Eve, Noah's flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and Jonah).
3. For Jesus, Scripture was the final court of appeal in his disputes with the Pharisees and Sadducees. It is worth noting that both Jesus and Satan accepted scriptural statements as arguments against which no further argument was possible (Matt. 4:4-11). Jesus might set aside or reject the Rabbinic or Pharisaical interpretation of the Old Testament, but He never questioned its authority or truthfulness.
4. He taught that Scripture could not pass away (Matt. 5:17-18) or be broken (Jn. 10:35).

Jesus did not distinguish between revelatory as opposed to nonrevelatory matters. His attitude was unquestioning acceptance of the whole of Scripture.

Many who deny biblical inerrancy agree that Jesus viewed Scripture as inerrant. H.J. Cadbury declared that he was far more sure as a mere historical fact that Jesus held to the common Jewish view of an infallible Bible than that Jesus believed in his own messiahship. Adolph Harnack insisted that Jesus was one with his apostles, the Jews and the entire early church in its confidence of the complete dependability of Scripture (cited by Harold Lindsell, Battle for the Bible, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976, pp. 43-44). Emil Brunner acknowledged that the "doctrine of Verbal Inspiration was already known to pre-Christian Judaism and was probably also taken over by Paul and the rest of the Apostles" (Christian Doctrine of God, vol. 1 of his Dogmatics, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950, p. 107). Rudolf Bultmann (Jesus and the Word, New York: Scribner's, 1934, pp. 60-61) agreed that Jesus accepted the common notion of his day regarding the full trustworthiness of Scripture.

Some General Objections:

Objection one: Jesus used the Old Testament stories in a nonliteral fashion, meaning them for illustrative purposes only. However, in the majority of the cases cited, the illustrations make more (only!) sense if taken as actual historical events. For example, with regard to Matt. 12:41, should one "suppose him [Christ] to say that imaginary persons who at the imaginary preaching of an imaginary prophet repented in imagination, shall rise up in that day and condemn the actual impenitence of those his actual hearers" (citing T.T. Perowne, Obadiah and Jonah, Cambridge: University Press, 1894, p. 51)?

Objection two: Jesus knew there was error in Scripture but accommodated to the ignorance of his time. However, it is hardly like Jesus not to repudiate human error. Also, if he knew Scripture contained human error, he can hardly qualify as a great moral teacher if he misled his followers by his insistently positive attitude toward it.

Objection three: Biblical writers intended to convey truth about spiritual matters (2 Tim. 3:15-16), so no one should claim freedom from errors for those areas incidental to the author's primary purpose. However, while 3:15 certainly teaches that the primary intent of Scripture is to teach men spiritual truth, 3:16 asserts that "All Scripture is God-breathed."

Objection four: Some biblical passages seem to contradict each other or to be contradicted by modern science. However, there are ways of explaining most discrepancies between biblical accounts and one should remember that "science" constantly changes--its "facts" of today become its "follies" tomorrow!

Objection five: Inerrancy is proved by circular argument: inerrantists assume Scripture is inerrant; show that Jesus and its writers considered it inerrant; and then conclude that it is inerrant. However, a more rigorous logical rationale can be made (following R.C. Sproul, "The Case for Infallibility: A Methodological Analysis," in God's Inerrant Word, pp. 242-261).

Premise A: The Bible is basically reliable and historically trustworthy.

Premise B: On the basis of this reliable document, the evidence shows that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and offered adequate evidence to prove it.

Premise C: As the Son of God, Jesus is a completely trustworthy authority.

Premise D: Jesus taught that Scripture is the Word of God and completely trustworthy.

Premise E: On the basis of Christ's authority, the church accepts the Bible as utterly trustworthy.

IV. Inspiration - Development

1. THE LOCUS OF INSPIRATION-VERBAL (i.e., the very words)

Inspiration extends to:

- A. The writing (not merely the idea)
Mt 4:4, 7, 10, etc.
2 Tim 3:16
2 Pet 3:15,16
- B. The words (not simply the Word)
Ex 24:4
Deut 18:18
Jer 26:2
1 Cor 2:13
- C. The tenses of verbs - Mt 22:31,32
- D. The letters of words - Gal 3:16
- E. The smallest parts of letters - Mt 5:17, 18

2. THE EXTENT OF INSPIRATION - PLENARY

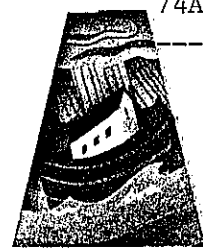
- A. What inspiration does guarantee--the truth of all that the Bible teaches, implies, or entails (spiritually or factually)
 - 1. All sacred Scripture - 2 Tim 3:16
 - 2. All prophetic writing - 2 Pet 1:20-21
 - 3. All apostolic writing - Jo 14:26; 16:13; Eph 2:20
- B. What inspiration does not mean:
 - 1. That every part of a parable is conveying a truth (rather than the point) the parable is illustrating. Luke 18:2.
 - 2. That everything said in the Bible is true (rather than only what is taught or affirmed) Gen 3:4.
 - 3. That no exaggerations (or hyperboles) can be used - Col 1:23.
 - 4. That all statements about God and creation are purely literal - Job 38:7; Heb 4:13.
 - 5. That all factual assertions are technically precise (as opposed to rounded numbers for example). 2 Chr 4:2.
 - 6. That all statements about the universe must be from a modern astronomical perspective (as opposed to mere observational (phenomenological) language. Josh 10:12.
 - 7. That all citations of Scripture must be verbatim (as opposed to faithful).
 - 8. That all citations of Scripture must have the same application as the original, (Hos 11:1 = Matt 2:15) rather than the same interpretation (meaning).
 - 9. That the same truth can be said in only one way (as opposed to many ways).
 - 10. That whatever a writer personally believed (as opposed to merely what he affirmed in Scripture) is true.

11. That truth is exhaustively revealed or treated (as opposed to adequately presented). 1 Cor 13:12.
 12. That quotations imply the truth of the whole source (rather than the part quoted). Titus 1:12.
 13. That grammatical construction will always be the customary one rather than an adequate one to convey the truth.
3. **THE DEGREE OF INSPIRATION - EQUAL.**
 (The truth may vary in importance but not in degree; all is equally true.)

SOMEONE SAID

On the table side by side
 is the Holy Bible and the T.V. guide.
 One is well worn but cherished with pride,
 not the Bible, the T.V. guide.
 One is used daily to help folks decide,...no!,
 it is not the Bible, it is the T.V. guide.
 As pages are turned, what shall they see,...oh!,
 what does it matter, turn on the T.V.
 So they open the book in which they confide, no,...
 not the Bible, it's the T.V. guide.
 The Word of God is seldom read,
 maybe a verse...ere they fall into bed.
 Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can be,
 not from reading the Bible, but from watching T.V.
 So then, back to the table side by side,
 is a Holy Bible and the T.V. guide.
 No time for prayer, no time for the Word,
 the Plan of Salvation is seldom heard,
 forgiveness of sin is so full and free
 it is found in the Bible and not on T.V.

**Interpretation of the Bible demands
 involvement of the whole person.**



WHAT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY *It's True*

TIMOTHY GEORGE

Evangelicals are gospel people and Bible people. Indeed, as their critics might put it, they are hot gospelers and Bible thumpers. The gospel they proclaim is news so good they feel compelled to share it: it is the message of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. And what they declare about Jesus Christ—the gospel—they learn from what God has told the world about himself, using human language, in a collection of ancient documents providentially preserved and revered by Christians everywhere as the Holy Scriptures. As evangelicals celebrate God's love in redemption, so they celebrate God's wisdom in providing a sure source of knowledge about it. The authenticity of the gospel is established by the authority of the Bible.

Evangelicals agree with Martin Luther and John Calvin that the Bible is the standard by which all other religious authorities must be judged. They also believe with John Wesley that the Scriptures are "a most solid and precious system of divine truth, wherein is no defect, no excess. It is the fountain of heavenly wisdom." In the two centuries since Wesley's death, evangelical theologians have defended the truth-telling character of biblical revelation against both accommodationist theologies and destructively critical methodologies of various types. Carl F. H. Henry's *God, Revelation and Authority* (1976–83) remains unsurpassed as a theological epistemology and epitome of the evangelical case against these skeptical trends.

In recent years, discussion of biblical authority has moved from revelation and inspiration to interpretation. And yet, if the study of the Bible is the soul of theology, as the Second Vatican Council says, and if the first task of the preacher is to

listen for and expect to find the Word of God in the charter documents of the Christian faith, then we cannot sidestep the uniqueness of the Bible as the definitive expression of God's truth, nor can we stop making an issue of asserting it.

Perhaps the most widely attested affirmation of biblical authority among evangelicals over the past generation is the statement found in Article 2 of the Lausanne Covenant (1974):

We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written Word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God's Word to accomplish His purpose of salvation. The message of the Bible is addressed to all mankind. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. He illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to preserve its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole church evermore of the many-colored wisdom of God.

According to this definition, the Bible is a divinely inspired disclosure from God, a revealed message that, in its very givenness, is noninterchangeable ("the only written Word of God"), irreducible ("the only infallible rule of faith and practice"), and universal ("addressed to all"). The Bible is also declared to be totally truthful, "without error in all that it affirms." For the past hundred years, the common term for total truthfulness has been *inerrancy*. Biblical truthfulness was carefully elucidated in the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978), followed by the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics (1982).

Some evangelical thinkers prefer not to employ the word

inerrancy at all since its proper use requires such careful definition and nuancing. But this is hardly a telling objection since all of our words about the Bible must be just as carefully qualified and defined. The Bible, we say, is inspired, but not in the same way that a Shakespearean sonnet can be said to be inspired. Again, the Bible is infallible, but not in the sense in which Roman Catholics hold *ex cathedra* pronouncements of the pope to be infallible. The Bible is also authoritative, but not in the way that Muslims invest authority in the Qur'an. The care with which the two Chicago statements define inerrancy encourages exegetical honesty in the context of a clear affirmation that biblical assertions are true, and that no view that contradicts such assertions can possibly be right. These statements have gained strong, if not universal, support among evangelicals, and they remain helpful benchmarks for Bible-believing Christians.

HISTORIC AFFIRMATIONS

Recognition of the total trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is not, as many critics allege, a modern notion foisted upon the Bible by latter-day theological fiat. Rather, it is the consensus of ancient Christian writers represented in the East by Gregory of Nyssa ("Whatsoever the divine Scripture says is the voice of the Holy Spirit") and in the West by Augustine (who in his *Confessions* [13.29] has God say, "O man, what my Scripture says, I say"). Moreover, this historic Christian affirmation conforms to the Bible's own witness about itself.

James Barr doubts whether Bible writers wished to teach anything about the nature of Scripture, remarking that "St. Paul was able to write essential theological letters like Galatians and Romans without spending much time on the nature of biblical authority." However, as F. F. Bruce observed, in both of these letters (Rom. 9:17; Gal. 3:8; 3:22) Paul hinges a key argument on a personifying of Scripture, treating it "more or less as an extension of the divine personality." This is a remarkable figure of speech, but Paul's language must be understood this way or it makes no sense at all. How can an inanimate object, a written text, "say" or "foresee" anything? Obviously what Paul meant was "God, as recorded in Scripture, said." He was expressing, and thereby teaching, his conviction that Scripture as such has a compelling validity and normativity precisely because it is God who speaks through it. Clearly Paul meant his readers to bow to his own teaching the same way, as did the other New Testament writers with regard to theirs; so for the church to treat apostolic writings as completing the biblical canon is totally in line with the apostle's own mind. It meshes, too, with the mind of Christ, who sent and equipped the apostles to write authoritatively about himself. We do not worship the Bible itself, but we do submit to Scripture because we submit to Jesus Christ. This is, as John Stott has said, a test of our loyalty to him.

HOW TO INTERPRET?

But now the pressing question is: How am I to interpret the Bible? What are the right principles for understanding the biblical text? While the Bible is the self-revelation of God and therefore carries with it the "scent of truth" in all that it affirms, we should not imagine that a manuscript of it was delivered fresh from heaven to the printing press! No, the Bible was written over a millennium of time in scores of documents by dozens of human authors from various cultural backgrounds, using a wide variety of styles and literary genres. As the author of Hebrews puts it, God spoke "at many times and in various ways" (1:1). Thus we do no honor to Holy Scripture by minimizing the historical particularity of its parts, nor by defending its integrity with respect

to claims that it never makes about itself.

The Bible was inspired in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—and everyday Greek, at that. Because the Christian faith can be expressed within all cultures, the meaning of the Holy Scriptures is universally translatable. Today the Bible displays "the many-colored wisdom of God" in many renderings for hundreds of people groups throughout the earth. Yet the very success of modern Bible-translation projects has given fresh urgency to the interpretive task.

Martin Luther set the direction for sound hermeneutics when he declared that "the Holy Spirit is the plainest writer and speaker in heaven and earth and therefore his words cannot have more than one, and that the very simplest sense, which we call the literal, ordinary, natural sense." Interpretation must first aim to recover the original meaning and truth-intention of the biblical text through careful use of what is nowadays called the grammatical-historical method. Among evangelicals, no one speaks more clearly on this than Walter Kaiser, who distinguishes between the normative meaning of the biblical text and its deeper, fuller significance that is brought out through exposition and application.

In the reader-oriented interpretive theories set forth by philosophers of language such as Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur, the locus of meaning is the understanding of the interpreter. "Meaning" here signifies not what the document meant as communication from the writer to his envisaged readership, but what it means when there is a "fusing of horizons" (that is, an enlarging communicative impact and rapport) between the biblical writer and the contemporary reader. These thinkers, and those who follow them, use the word *meaning* to signify "significance" in Kaiser's sense.

Evangelicals can gain important insights for the study of the Bible from the sociology of knowledge and contemporary literary analysis, which alerts us to how the presuppositions we bring to the text can decisively shape the result of our study. Dieter Georgi, for example, has shown how both pre-World War I and present-day scholarly efforts to fabricate the "real" Jesus—understood variously as the child of the goddess Sophia, a Galilean social revolutionary, or a wandering Cynic philosopher—all reflect "the evolution of the bourgeois consciousness." The ideological commitment and social location of the revisionist scholars involved distorted their judgment of evidence and so skewed their portrayals of Jesus. While their conclusions are frequently paraded as the "assured results" of objective scrutiny, the claim is unwarranted and invalid.

SELF-CONSCIOUS AND SELF-CRITICAL

But when we say this about eccentric revisionists, we should not imagine that Bible-believing Christians come to the Scriptures with unbiased blank minds, unaffected by their own context and presuppositions. To be faithful biblical interpreters, we must all become both self-conscious and self-critical about our prior commitments, subjecting them both to the searching light of Scripture itself and to the wider witness of the Christian family to which we belong.

Thomas Oden's clarion call for contemporary theology to return to the rich exegetical tradition of ancient Christian orthodoxy is one of the most encouraging developments of our time. It will not suffice merely to have our New Testament in one hand and the latest word from current biblical scholarship (even if it comes from our favorite evangelical press!) in the other. We must also learn to "read alongside" the church fathers, reformers, and theologians of ages past. None of their interpretations is inerrant, and we must subject them all—

along with our own—to the divine touchstone of Holy Scripture itself. Still, the Holy Spirit did not abandon the church with the death of the apostles. As we prayerfully listen for what the Spirit is saying to us today, we will do well to heed what he has been saying to the people of God throughout the history of the church. The massive consensus of thoughtful Christian interpretation of the Word down the ages (and on most matters of importance there is such a thing) is not likely to be wrong.

The role of the community is crucial both in understanding how the Bible came to be recognized as canon and in appropriating its message today. The Enlightenment model of the Bible student as a Lone Ranger, out on his own away from the church as he seeks truth, inevitably leads to distorted, if not heretical, conclusions. A renewed appreciation of the Bible as the book of the church should make us more aware of our need to explore it in and with, rather than without and apart from, the larger Christian fellowship.

Those who seek wisdom in the Bible will not find it as long as they sidestep the Bible's declarations of fact and ignore what Scripture tells us about the world and its history as such. The Scriptures do not present themselves in a cultural-linguistic cocoon or as a self-contained aesthetic object to be studied and admired as one religious book among many. The narrative structure of the Bible itself, from Creation to the world's forthcoming end, makes the imperious claim to be the one true story in the light of which all other stories—and indeed, the reality of the universe itself—must be understood. The post-modern flight from the cognitive content of biblical truth, and the revamping of it as a system of symbols with subjective significance only, is a form of theological suicide that leaves the believer with nothing but a warm-tub feeling to present as “good news” to a lost world.

The reality of Jesus, in particular, cannot be reduced to a language game or a literary construct. The Word did not become “a text” but *sarx*, flesh, something unmissably, historically concrete. Because this is true, the “story of Jesus,” when canonically understood as including everything from Genesis to Revelation, is dissimilar from all other stories and cannot be explained as anything less than the last word about this world and God's plan for it.

Evangelicals have always insisted that the historicity of biblical events be taken seriously because the soteriological essence of Christianity demands this. As Geerhardus Vos, among others, has argued, if Christianity were a philosophical system aimed at the spiritual enlightenment of humankind, or a code of ethics to be used as an instrument of moral suasion, then it would make little difference whether its founder were born of a virgin, walked on the water, healed the sick, or rose from the dead.

AN OFFENSIVE MESSAGE

But the Christian message declares something altogether different. We confess, in the words of the Creed of Nicaea, that the Lord of eternity, “God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God . . . for our salvation came down . . . and was incarnate . . .” A space-time crucifixion of the incarnate Lord was followed by a space-time resurrection, a space-time outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and a space-time spread of the gospel and the church, which still goes on. Christianity must be seen as a historically continuous fellowship in which all enjoy a salvation that was won for them in Palestine on a certain date nearly two millennia ago. The historical claims of the Christian primary documents must therefore be acknowl-

edged as true, and true not just “for me,” but true for all persons everywhere.

Admittedly, this is an offensive message for a culture that magnifies local consensus above any notion of objective public truth and that prizes pluralism and relativism as the reigning orthodoxy of the day. But we should not imagine that the scandal of biblical particularism is a greater burden for us than it was for Elijah at Mount Carmel, Paul on Mars Hill, or William Carey in Calcutta. Because of who God is and what he has done, we can only say, on the basis of the commission we have received, “If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”

What is the ultimate alternative to a reverent, if also discerning and even properly critical, engagement with Holy Scripture as the message of divine achievement, promise, and command? It is the kind of intellectual nihilism that reduces the Christian faith to the sum total of our dreams, fantasies, and self-projections, “a God who looks like me,” to quote the title of a recent book. Following the lead of Feuerbach and Nietzsche, Sigmund Freud described this outcome with glaring precision at the beginning of the present century:

Fundamentally, we only find what we need and only see what we want to see. We have no other possibility. Since the criterion for truth—correspondence with the external world—is absent, it is entirely a matter of indifference what opinions we adopt. All of them are equally true and equally false. And no one has the right to accuse anyone else of error.

Contrary to this outcome, evangelicals affirm that the Bible can be trusted to be totally reliable on its own terms: its history is historical and its miracles are miraculous, and its theology is God's own truth. But what is the source of such confidence in the truth-telling character of Holy Scripture? How do we know that the Bible is the Word of God? The Reformers of the sixteenth century faced this question. They could accept nei-

**As we listen for what the Spirit is saying
to us today, we do well to heed what
he has been saying all along throughout
the history of the church.**

ther the magisterial authority of the Church of Rome, which made knowledge of the divinity of the Scriptures depend on ecclesiastical tradition, nor the radical individualism of certain mystics who were so enamored of the Spirit that they saw little need for the written Word. Luther and Calvin pursued a different path. They stressed the coinherence of Word and Spirit—that is, the objectivity of God's revelation in Holy Scripture and the confirming, illuminating witness of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

The Belgic Confession declares that the Scriptures carry within themselves the evidence of their own divinity and authority (article 5). The self-authenticating nature of the Bible is an important principle for Christians to remember both in our witness to unbelievers and in our dialogue with skeptical critics. There is no neutral ground, no independent epistemological platform, on which we can stand and decide

for or against the Bible. Skepticism about it is natural to our hearts, and only as God opens our eyes to discern divinity in Scripture do we ever come to trust it. Our assurance of its veracity comes only as the same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles enlightens our minds and confirms the truths that have been revealed in these sacred texts.

There is a kind of evidentialist apologetic that overrates the receptive capacity of fallen human reason and plays down the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. Calvin's words to

"Have we to await a comment from Tübingen or a telegram from Oxford before we can understand the Bible?"

those who demanded "rational proof" that Moses and the prophets were inspired are still relevant today:

The testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason. For as God alone is a fit witness of himself in his Word, so also the Word will not find acceptance in men's heart before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit. The same Spirit, therefore, who has spoken through the mouths of the prophets must penetrate into our hearts to persuade us that they faithfully proclaimed what had been divinely commanded. (Institutes 1.7.4)

Thus the Holy Spirit, the divine author of Scripture, authenticates the prophetic and apostolic word to our consciences. Through the Spirit's illumination earnest believers find that the Scriptures are marked by what Huldrych Zwingli called "prevenient clarity" or perspicuity. Each day Zwingli began his Bible lectures in Zurich with the following prayer, which became a model for other ministers in the Reformed tradition: "Almighty, eternal, and merciful God, whose Word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path, open and illuminate our minds, that we may purely and perfectly understand thy Word and that our lives may be conformed to what we have rightly understood, that in nothing we may be displeasing to thy majesty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

THE LUCID WORD

The doctrine of the Bible's perspicuity is one of the historic hallmarks of the evangelical understanding of Scripture. Fundamentally it means that, as was shown above, the Bible is not an obscure conundrum or cryptogram that must be decoded by a team of specialists before it can be understood and applied. On the contrary, in all matters that are necessary for salvation, the Bible is so lucid that laypersons as well as theologians, mechanics as well as academics, can sufficiently understand and appropriate its teachings. The acceptance of this principle underlies the widespread use of the so-called inductive method of Bible study and the high regard for the Scriptures from the church's earliest days as the communal treasure of the entire body of believers.

But the perspicuity of Scripture can itself be misunderstood in a number of ways. It does not mean, for example, that there are no difficult passages or "hard sayings" that continue to baffle the best and most spiritually alert students of the Bible. Not everything in Scripture is equally plain or evidently clear to all. Neither should this principle be equated with the "right of private judgment," where that motto is

used to justify the kind of individualism that reduces biblical meaning to a matter of personal taste.

We should also guard against using the clarity of the Bible as an excuse to undermine rigorous and reverent scholarly work on the text. To be sure, vast numbers of evangelicals can relate to the question asked a hundred years ago by the English Congregationalist pastor Joseph Parker: "Have we to await a comment from Tübingen or a telegram from Oxford before we can understand the Bible?" No doubt

there are many tributaries that spill into the reservoir of resentment against technical biblical scholarship. Anti-intellectualism and unreflective piety (substituting emotional fervor for disciplined thought) are two examples. And an even greater problem during the past 150 years has been the gaping chasm that opened in so many centers of learning between the academic study of the Bible on the one hand, and the life and mission of the church on the other. It is hard to overstate the destructive impact of "unbelieving criticism," that is, scholarship shaped by the ethos and presuppositions of the secular academy.

To scholars of this bent we might well apply Jesus' description of the "experts in the law" of his day: "You have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not go in yourselves, and those who were on their way in, you stopped" (Luke 11:52, NEB). Such scholarship, unhappily, is with us still.

But it would be tragic if evangelicals spent so much time lamenting destructive criticism that they ignored the impressive achievement during the past half-century of Bible-believing scholars who are deeply committed to Jesus Christ and his church and who seek to be faithful ministers of the divine Word. Such men and women of learning and faith stand in worthy succession to the great English biblical scholar J. B. Lightfoot, who once said: "I cannot pretend to be indifferent about the veracity of the records which profess to reveal him whom I believe to be not only the very Truth but the very Life." The learning of exegetes and theologians such as this can only contribute to the building up of God's people.

A MEANS OF GRACE

Evangelicals today have a rich legacy of cherishing the Bible as the Word of God, defining its authority and defending its veracity against both secular critics outside the church and religious modernists of various types within. Over the past two generations, evangelical Bible scholars have moved beyond a defensive posture to engage the wider world of thought. Their careful research and interaction with current trends in biblical scholarship have made them a vital resource for the church as well as a significant presence in the academic world. At the same time, we must also confess that evangelicals have often worked in isolation from the wider community of faith, the body of Christ extended throughout time as well as space. We have frequently been bound more to the biases of our culture than to the unadulterated Word of God. And we have sometimes used the Bible as a hammer in our fractious conflicts with one another, forgetting, as Francis Schaeffer reminded us, that harshness does not equal holiness, and that we are always to speak the truth in love.

After his appreciative survey of the recent evangelical renaissance in biblical scholarship, Mark Noll wisely urged that Bible-believing Christians "move beyond the external examination of Scripture to an internal appropriation of its message." Committed as we are to the truth of God's Word, we should never for a moment imagine that the Bible is a mere compendium of neutral, albeit accurate, information about God and his dealings with humankind. The Bible, as

vivified by the Spirit, is a divinely appointed means of grace, a medium of encounter with the living God. John Bunyan had this in mind when he asked, "Have you never a hill Mizar to remember? Have you forgot the close, the milk house, the stable, the barn, and the like, where God did visit your soul? Remember also the Word—the Word, I say, upon which the Lord hath caused you to hope."

The true measure of evangelical identity is that we delight in the Bible as fully as we believe in it. Where this is so, our congregations will be characterized by an atmosphere of hospitality to scriptural truth. Our pulpit work will be marked by faithful expository proclamation. The public reading of the Scriptures will again assume a place of honor in our corporate worship. And our personal devotional life will also be transformed. The standard fare of sound-byte spirituality will be replaced by what the Cistercians called "divine reading" (*lectio divina*), that is, the sustained reading of the Word of God leading to meditation, contemplation, and prayer. In each of these activities we shall approach the Bible, as the late Merrill Tenney put it, in a spirit of eagerness seeking the mind of God, in a spirit of humility listen-

ing to the voice of God, in a spirit of adventure pursuing the will of God, and in a spirit of adoration resting in the presence of God.

Thus, with all persons who love and cherish the Holy Scriptures as God's gift of revelation about himself, with all who recognize and adore Jesus Christ as the center and sum of the Bible, and with all who study the inspired words of Holy Writ seeking the illumination of the Spirit, we shall ever pray in the words of this Advent collect:

Blessed Lord, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience, and comfort of Thy Holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which Thou has given us in our Savior Jesus Christ. **CT**

Timothy George is a senior adviser for CHRISTIANITY TODAY and dean of Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, in Birmingham, Alabama.

Cruising the Electronic Bible

A colleague told me about an elderly woman in his church who was forever comparing him to Jimmy Swaggart. On numerous occasions she asked, "Pastor, why don't you preach like Jimmy Swaggart?" One evening she phoned my colleague with a different question. She was ill and asked, "Pastor, could you please take a little time and come visit me?" He was tempted to respond: "Madam, why don't you call Jimmy Swaggart?"

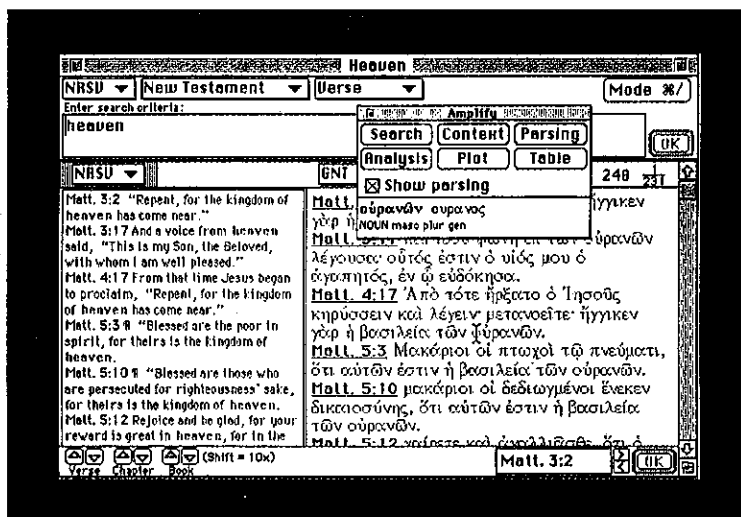
We local pastors often pale in comparison with the oratorical pyrotechnics of our media counterparts. Many of them have the luxury of a research staff to chase down quotes, an administrative staff to manage the minutiae of ministry, and a pastoral staff to address the time-consuming demands of the sick and needy. We small-church pastors fantasize that if only we had the same resources, we too could preach a home-run sermon every week.

Computer technology now offers the hope of leveling the playing field. I recently received **acCordance**, a software program for biblical studies from the Gramercy Institute. My approach to sermon preparation has been forever revolutionized.

Imagine it—completing an exhaustive word search at the touch of a finger! I started my search with *heaven*. Within seconds, all 490 instances of the word

were up and ready for my perusal. The Options menu permitted me to display *heaven* in one of a dozen different colors—yes, colors—like cyan and magenta. (Okay, that is "Mac" overkill, but still, it's very cool.) What a rush—to see *heaven* in emerald green all over my screen!

In addition to the various English versions of the Bible, I also installed the Greek New Testament module, a lifesaver for the time-pressed exegete.



It enables me to display the English and Greek texts in tandem for instant translating. So, too, if your parsing ability has atrophied, not to worry: the "amplify" feature of the program analyzes every Greek word, at the touch of the cursor, right down to its mood, voice, person, and gender. Or if you prefer to know the statistical incidence

of the search-word as it appears in each book of the Bible, just click the appropriate Tool palette. Or how about a graphic display of that same data? Push a button: been there; done that.

For the rigorous exegete, simply open the **acCordance Construct** Window, where you can examine all the instances in the Bible where your search-word appears along with other related words, prepositions, or other parts of speech. Admittedly, this feature is a bit more complicated and, alas, it required a glance at the manual. But once mastered, it has been tantamount

to having a dozen graduate students at my command. Talk about leveling the playing field!

While most pastors avoid parading scholarship, still, good preaching is predicated upon good exegesis, and even that won't necessarily make us great preachers. But the Bible software now available will allow us to rightly divide the Word into units, subunits, and "nano-

bytes"—in warp speed. Which will in turn free us to spend more time with our shut-ins and infirm parishioners since, chances are, Jimmy Swaggart isn't going to make it.

By Robert V. Zoba, a pastor in the Chicago area. The Gramercy Institute may be reached at (360) 576-3000.

INERRANCY

1. INERRANCY - DEFINED

I. THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF INERRANCY

A. The nature of the prophet - He or she is God's mouthpiece.
(Ex 4:30; Deut 4:2; 18:18; Num 22:18, Jer 26:2)

B. The Scriptures testify to their divine authority.

1. "It is written" (Mt 4:4, 7, 10) - 92 times in New Testament
2. It is unbreakable (Jo 10:35)
3. It is imperishable (Matt 5:17, 18)

C. The Scripture is called God's Word.

1. It is the "Word of God" (Jo 10:34; Heb 4:12)
2. It is "breathed out" of God (2 Tim 3:16)
3. It is the "oracles of God" (Acts 7:38; Rom 3:2)

D. Scripture is seen as completely true.
(Psa 119:16; Prov 30:5; Jo 17:17)

E. God is revealed as completely truthful.
(Num 23:19; Rom 3:4; Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18; 1 Jo 1:5,6)

F. The Bible as historically and scientifically true is demonstrated on numerous occasions. (Mt 12:40; 19:4; 24:34f; Jo 3:12)

G. Scripture is equated with God's authority: "What the Bible says, God says" (and vice versa)

<u>God said</u>	=	<u>Scripture Said</u>
Gen 12:3		Gal 3:8
Ex 9:16		Rom 9:17

<u>Bible Said</u>	=	<u>God Said</u>
Gen 2:24		Matt 19:4,5
Psa 95:7		Heb 3:7
Psa 2:1		Acts 4:24, 25
Isa 55:3		Acts 13:34
Psa 16:10		Acts 13:35
Psa 2:7		Heb 1:5
Psa 97:7		Heb 1:6
Psa 104:4		Heb 1:7

H. The Analogy of Christ and Scripture

1. The Similarities between Christ and the Bible.

- a. Both are divine as well as human.
- b. In both the divine and human are united in one medium (John 17:17; Heb 4:15).
 - i. Two natures of Christ are united in the same person.
 - ii. Two natures of Scripture are united in the same propositions. So the Bible is a theanthropic book as Christ is a theanthropic person.
- c. In both the human side is without error too.
- d. Both are the Word of God.

2. The Differences between Christ and the Bible.

- a. There is a difference in the kind of revelation.

BIBLE	CHRIST
Human Language	Human Life (I John 1:1)
Propositions	A Person (Jn 14)
Symbols	A Son (Heb 1:2)
A Book	A Body (Heb 10:5-7)

b. The Result of the difference.

- i. Propositions express God; Person of Christ is God.
- ii. Bible is Word of God; Christ is the God of the Word.
- iii. Scriptures are not worshiped; the Son is worshiped.

THE WORD OF GOD: TWO LIVING REVELATIONS			
LIVING INCARNATE WORD		LIVING WRITTEN WORD	
JESUS CHRIST		THE BIBLE	
HUMAN PARENTS	HOLY SPIRIT OVERSHADOWING	HUMAN AUTHORS	HOLY SPIRIT SUPERINTENDING
WITHOUT SIN		WITHOUT ERROR	

<u>CHRIST</u>		<u>BIBLE</u>	
Human/Divine		Human/Divine	
didn't sin	can't sin	didn't err	can't err
a mystery!		a mystery!	

The One Book Which Has Stood The Test

In all of my reading and searching after truth, I have had the abiding conviction that the Bible is the truth given to us from God. I have never doubted its teaching. I have stood upon its truth, and this faith has held my soul as an anchor. I am more convinced than ever that it is the one Book among all others that can be trusted.

The Bible has stood the test of the centuries. There is no Book in all the world that has been given a more thorough test than the Bible. Every jot and tittle has been examined under the microscope.

Many times it has been studied, not only by its friends, but also by its foes. They studied it not with the idea of accepting it, but with the purpose of trying to discount it.

Some of the keenest minds of the past and present have tried to rule it out of court. Bob Ingersoll went up and down the land lecturing against the Bible. Someone said he made \$500 a night lecturing on the mistakes of Moses, but you could not make 50 cents a night lecturing on the mistakes of Bob Ingersoll. While Bob has died and passed on and is now almost forgotten, yet Moses still speaks to this generation, and will speak to the generations to come. His message abides.

It is said that Voltaire once declared that the time would come that if you wanted to find a Bible you would have to go to a museum to find one. But the time came when the house that Voltaire lived in was used for the purpose of printing and distributing the Word of God. Many little hammers have been worn out on this old anvil, but the anvil still stands and will stand.

Men have been willing to give their lives to be able to translate this Book into the language of the people. Others have been willing to die at the stake for its truths. Millions have read it and believed it. They have put their trust in its teaching and have gone down their

tomorrows with transformed lives.

Dying saints have pillowed their heads on its promises, and have gone out into eternity with the Word on their lips. They gave the testimony that it had not failed them.

Still others today love and cherish this grand old Book. Millions of copies of it sell every year. While many books of science have passed into the limbo and have been forgotten, the Bible still stands like the Rock of Gibraltar, and it will stand as long as time shall last. It is God's Word and it will not pass away. I refuse to give it up for the wild guesses of science, falsely so-called. Even though I may not understand all of it, yet I believe it.

I have not written this message with any idea of trying to discount real science. I have written this message with the hope that I may say something that will help young people who are being exposed to the blatant unbelief of this day, and help them see that there is something that they can hold to. I want to plead with them not to give up their faith in the eternal verities of God's Word for the wild guesses of some teachers that are making sport of their faith, and who take delight in shattering the faith of the young people that come under their influence.

Young people, just remember that this Book has stood for more than 2,000 years against all the attacks of its enemies, and that it will continue to stand.

Hold on to your Bible. Read and study it. Fill your minds with its great truths. Commit portions of it to memory and it will enrich your life. Accept its truths and teachings, and accept the Christ who stands in the center of this great Book, and you will never regret it.

The psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." He declared, "The entrance of they words giveth light..." Jesus said, "Ye shall know

the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

If you will study this Book and believe it, it will keep you out of sin. But sin will keep you away from this Book; in fact, that is one reason why so many people hate the Bible so much. They "Love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Many people are not having head trouble. It is heart trouble that bothers them.

Jesus laid down a challenge that is just as reasonable and sound as it can be; He said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." This is a sound challenge. It is as sound as any test you can go into the lab and run a test and know for yourself.

I challenge any honest searcher after truth to try it. He will be convinced and will be willing to bow at the feet of Jesus and say, "My Lord and my God."

--John R. Church, in *Exchange*

II. BIBLICAL NATURE OF INERRANCY: IT MEANS

A. Defined: The Bible is wholly true (true in whole and in part), without error in everything that is affirmed (not just "spiritual" or "redemptive truth").

B. Contrast:

Neo-Evangelicals	Evangelicals
True in whole not all parts	True in whole and in all parts
True spiritually not always historically	True spiritually and historically
True morally not always scientifically	True morally and scientifically
True in intention not in all affirmations	True in intention and in all affirmations
Bible is infallible not inerrant	Bible is infallible and inerrant
Bible is instrument of God's revelation	Bible is intrinsically a revelation
Bible is record of God's revelation	Bible is God's revelation
God speaks through the words of the Bible	God speaks by the words of the Bible
Human language is inadequate to communicate God (because he is utterly transcendent)	Human language is adequate but not exhaustive
Much of higher criticism may be accepted	Limited amount of higher criticism is accepted
Faith is opposed to reason	Faith is not opposed to reason

I. NEO-EVANGELICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST INERRANCY-Clark Pinnock, Beegle

1. To err is human.
2. The Bible is a human book.
3. Therefore the Bible contains errors.

Response: The Bible is a divine/human book (II Peter 1:21)

II. NEO-ORTHODOX ARGUMENT AGAINST INERRANCY

1. Humans are totally depraved.
2. Everything human reflects total depravity.
3. Language of the Bible is a human expression.
4. Therefore, the language of the Bible and its expressions are totally depraved.

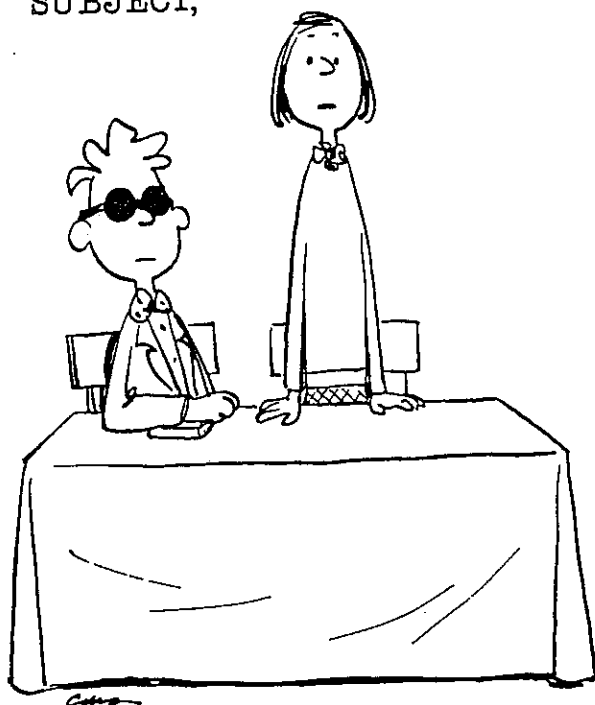
Response: This position ignores the divine element and overemphasizes the human.

INERRANCY: THREE MODELS

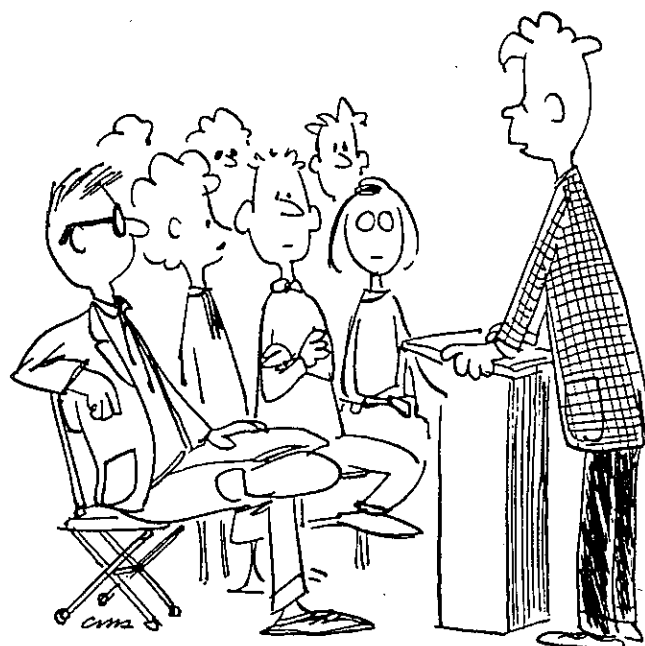
	HYPER-FUNDAMENTAL	NEO-EVANGELICAL	EVANGELICAL
BASIC MODEL	Secretary	Witness	Prophet
WRITING	Verbally Dictated	Reliably Recorded	Verbally Inspired
GOD'S ROLE	Deterministic	Directional	Providential
MAN'S ROLE	Passive Channel	Active Source	Active Agent
GOD-MAN RELATION	Mechanical	Dynamic (Influence)	Mysterious

BIBLICAL BASIS FOR PROPHETIC MODEL:
HEB 1:1,2; 2 PETER 1:20, 21

...and he will be speaking to us
on the
SUBJECT,



"Did Joshua really make
the SUN STAND STILL?"



"All right. A motion has been made and seconded that even though Fred, here, interprets the story of Jonah and the fish allegorically, he can still be permitted to attend our youth fellowship picnic."

EVIDENCE FOR THE HUMAN NATURE OF THE BIBLE

1. It is written in human language.
2. It manifests time bound (dated) human linguistic forms.
3. It uses different human languages. (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, Latin)
4. It was written by some 35 different human authors.
5. It reflects human grammatical irregularities (which has no bearing on truth).
6. It manifests different human literary styles.
7. It shows human interests (2 Tim 4:13).
8. It utilizes fallible human memory (1 Cor 1:15-16).
9. It incorporates distinct human cultures (1 Thess 5:26).
10. It speaks from the human observers perspective (Josh 10:12-13).
11. It reflects common human differences of perspective (Gospels).
12. It even speaks of God from a human perspective (anthropomorphism).

VATICAN CONDEMNS APPROACH TO BIBLE

A Vatican committee studying Biblical interpretation issued a document deploring the fundamentalists' approach, calling it "dangerous."

By Daniel J. Wakin
The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY-- A new Vatican document on how to interpret the Bible condemns the fundamentalist approach as distorting, dangerous and possibly leading to racism.

The 130-page document, presented Friday, is the Roman Catholic Church's latest commentary on trends in biblical study. Some of its language is unusually harsh.

"Without saying as much in so many words, fundamentalism actually invites people to a kind of suicide," said the document, written by the Pontifical Biblical Commission.

"The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church" also takes a dim view of the feminist and liberation theology approaches to studying scripture, although it says those

methods can contribute to understanding the Bible.

The publication affirms the validity of studying biblical texts from historical and literary points of view, as long as scholars do not lose sight of the Bible as a document of faith and God's word.

The commission authors saved their harshest language for Christian fundamentalist denominations.

"The fundamentalist approach is dangerous, for it is attractive to people who look to the Bible for ready answers to the problems of life."

2. INERRANCY - DEFENDED

Objections raised:

I. IT IS NOT TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE.

Answer: Yes it is. Jesus, Paul, and Peter affirm the complete truthfulness and reliability of Scripture (Matt 5:17,18; John 10:35; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21). The words may be different, but the idea is the same. We affirm inerrancy then because it was the position of Jesus. His Lordship demands we hold His view of Scripture.

II. IT IS DERIVED DEDUCTIVELY NOT INDUCTIVELY.

Answer: It is derived via both methods.

- A. It is based on an "inductive" study of Scripture, i.e. Scriptures' testimony about itself.
- B. It is deduced from the nature of God and the need for a trustworthy revelation.

III. IT IS NOT IMPORTANT, CERTAINLY NOT ESSENTIAL.

Answer: It is of the utmost importance.

- A. It is an epistemological fundamental (viz., Scripture and its reliability is the source of all other fundamentals). An impure source cannot yield pure doctrine.
- B. Denial of inerrancy:
 - 1. It is an attack on the authenticity of the Father -- who originated it.
 - 2. It is an attack on the authority of the Son -- who affirmed it.
 - 3. It is an attack on the activity of the Spirit -- who inspired it.
 - 4. It undermines the stability of Church -- which is built on it.

IV. IT IS A RECENT (RATIONALISTIC) INVENTION, NOT TAUGHT BY EARLY CHURCH FATHERS.

- A. Early Fathers affirmed the complete reliability of Scripture.
- B. Early Fathers defended the complete reliability of Scripture.

V. IT IS TO BE LIMITED IN SCOPE (TO SPIRITUAL TRUTHS).

Answer: This is logically and rationally and biblically untenable.

- A. The historical and spiritual are inseparable (virgin birth, the cross, salvation resurrection, glorification).
- B. The New Testament affirms the historical and factual truth of the O.T.
- C. Jesus affirmed the connection between the historical and the spiritual - John 3:12.

VI. IT INVOLVES A NON-EXISTENT (ORIGINAL) AUTHORITY.

Answer: This is actually not the case at all.

- A. For example, the loss of the original constitution would not affect our liberty (we have good copies).
- B. Original exists in good copies.
 - 1. We have accurate copies resulting in 105 - 110% of the autographs!
 - 2. We have 100% of the doctrinal truth of the original. No central doctrinal truth is in textual dispute.

VII. WHY MUST THERE BE FLAWLESS ORIGINALS IF FLAWED COPIES ARE SUFFICIENT?

Answer:

- A. Because God cannot utter error and He uttered the original!
- B. God can permit error (sin) but not produce it.
- C. Illus.: God cannot create a fallen Adam (but He can create a perfect Adam and allow him to fall).
- D. An impure original (source) guarantees impure copies. The source must be one of purity else all that flows forth from it will be impure.

VIII. WHY DID GOD NOT PRESERVE THE COPIES FROM ERROR?

Answer:

- A. He did preserve it from all doctrinal error.
- B. He did preserve it from all substantial error.
- C. Why did not God preserve man from sin?
(Answer is the same: He had some good purpose for doing so. Perhaps to avoid true Bibliolatry.)

IX. INERRANCY DIES BY A THOUSAND QUALIFICATIONS

Answer: No, there are simple clarifications necessitated by rationalistic attacks and neoorthodox doublespeak.

- A. There are only three qualifications:
 - 1. Only the originals are inerrant.
 - 2. Only what is taught as true, is true.
 - 3. Scripture is to be naturally and plainly understood.
- B. All others are misunderstandings/improper readings.

X. IT IS A BAD TERM BECAUSE:

- A. It is negative. Response: Negative terms are often clearer. Most of the Ten Commandments are negative.
- B. It is an unbiblical term - so is the term "Trinity."

- C. It implies scientific precision. Response: It need not and does not in context.

The term "Inerrancy" is negotiable: the truth of Inerrancy is not. We do not argue for the term, but the truth.

XI. IT IS A DIVISIVE DOCTRINE.

Answer:

- A. All doctrines divide believers from unbelievers (substitutionary atonement, salvation by grace thru faith, deity of Christ, second coming, etc.).
- B. Not everything that divides is divisive (depends on how it is used).
- C. It is better to be divided by truth than united by error.
- D. If anyone is divisive, the errantists are, since they deny the Historical Biblical Position.

XII. ONE CAN BE SAVED WITHOUT BELIEVING IN INERRANCY.

Answer:

- A. Explicitly "yes," but it is inconsistent. One has denied the view of Scripture of the one they call Lord.
- B. One can be saved without explicitly believing in the virgin birth, bodily (pre-mill) return of Christ. That does not mean these are not important.
- C. It should be a test of evangelical consistency and leadership.

XIII. IT MINIMIZES THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE IN OUR HANDS.

Answer: No. It maximizes it, for the Bible in our hands derives all its authority from the original inerrant one.

XIV. INERRANCY IS AN UNFALSIFIABLE POSITION.

Answer:

- A. Not so, if one finds an unquestionable error in either a good copy or in an original it would falsify our beliefs. (Cf. I Cor. 15:12f, v.12, disproof of the resurrection would falsify Christianity).
- B. The Errantist's view is really unfalsifiable, since only the "spiritual" (non-verifiable) aspects are considered to be true.

XV. INERRANCY IS BASED ON A WRONG FOUNDATIONALIST EPISTEMOLOGY.

(viz., one that argues that if there is one error in Bible then none of it can be accepted or true).

Answer: Not so. We argue that if there is one error in Bible then it undermines

its claim to be the Word of God (since God can't speak even one error) -- even if (much of) the rest of the Bible happens to be true.

XVI. THERE ARE CONTRADICTIONS AND ERRORS IN BIBLE
(See following notes)

XVII. INERRANCY IS BUILT ON A RIGID PROPHETIC MODEL THAT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE WHOLE BIBLE.

Answer:

- A. See Heb. 1:1, 2; II Peter 1:20-21.
- B. One doesn't have to be conscious of being a prophet (nor have a prophetic office) to be God's mouthpiece.
 - 1. Amos.
 - 2. Balaam's donkey.
 - 3. Caiaphas.

INTERPRETATION AND SOLVING BIBLICAL PROBLEMS

General principles of interpretation to keep in mind which affect the resolving of scriptural problems:

1. God is the ultimate author of the Bible and He has given us the Bible in order to communicate with us.
2. Although the Bible is from God, it is nevertheless communicated through human authors: so it has a dual authorship, unlike any other book ever written.
3. Since God has given the Bible in order to communicate with us, the Bible is clear and understandable in its essential messages and general outlines.
4. Since God is the ultimate author, the Bible is a harmonious whole.
5. Scripture is the best and only sure interpreter of Scripture. Generally, the New Testament interprets the Old Testament; the Epistles interpret the Gospels; teaching passages interpret historical and poetic passages.
6. Since the Bible is also a human book, consideration must be paid to the author's language, style, historical perspectives and other matters. The way into the mind of God is through the minds of the human authors via the text.
7. God communicates with us in order to have us come to know and obey Him. This means that obedience and knowledge go together and support one another.
8. God gives Christians the Holy Spirit to assist our understanding. We must pray and ask for understanding if we would know God.

The Steps of A Comprehensive Method of Doing Systematic Theology and Its Implications For Biblical Inerrancy

METHODOLOGY	PROCEDURE	RESULTS	TESTED BY	WHAT IS EXPLAINED
1. Inductive study [of Scripture/doctrine(s)]	Exegesis (of all relevant texts)	1. God cannot err 2. Bible is God's Word	1. Hermeneutical principles	Biblical <u>basis</u> for inerrancy
2. Deductive conclusions (from doctrine)	Deduction (of another doctrine)	3. Therefore, Bible cannot err	2. Logical laws	Logical <u>validity</u> of inerrancy
3. Retroductive use of: a. <u>Data</u> of Scripture b. Other <u>doctrines</u> of Scripture c. Other <u>facts</u> in the world	Critical comparative study of: a. Data of Scripture b. Other Doctrines of Scripture c. Relevant facts outside Scripture	4. Original manuscripts are unavailable 5. Some actual contradictions and errors in available texts 6. Human literary forms are used 7. Culture of the day is reflected 8. Analogy of Christ and the Bible provides model	3. Comprehensiveness 4. Consistency 5. Adequacy (For Life)	Factual <u>basis</u> of inerrancy
4. Abductive (term coined by Geisler)	Insight from investigation (develop a model)	9. Hence, inerrancy means Bible is: a) both human & divine b) yet without error in autographs	1-5 plus 6. Creativity (insightfulness)	Psychological <u>source</u> (origin) of inerrancy doctrine
5. Systematic	Systematize the doctrine into a balanced and defensible system	10. Bible is God's inerrant Word in original manuscript in terms of culture and literary forms of its day	1-6 above	Theological <u>understanding</u> of inerrancy
6. Practical	Obedience	11. Transformed Life	7. Fruit of the Spirit ("Good Works") and growth in Christlikeness	Practical <u>Applicability</u>

Adapted from Norm Geisler

WORD ALERT

Inerrancy--the idea that when all the facts are known, the Bible (in its autographs, that is, the original documents), properly interpreted in light of the culture and the means of communication that had developed by the time of its composition, is completely true in all that it affirms, to the degree of precision intended by the author's purpose, in all matters relating to God and His creation.

Normative Scripture--a term indicating that Scripture's power is not limited by temporal or contextual matters. It indicates that the message of Scripture has binding authority for the contemporary church.

Infallibility--the view that the Bible is incapable of error and cannot deceive or mislead. Some contemporary scholars want to apply the term infallible only to the message of the Bible to avoid the affirmation that the Bible is also truthful in matters relating to history, geography, and related matters.

Harmonization--an attempt to rearrange historical materials as they are presented in such books as Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, the Gospels, and Acts so that similar accounts present a unified meaning.

Hermeneutics--from the Greek word hermeneuein, meaning *to explain, to express, to translate, or to interpret*. Basically, the term refers to the theory of interpretation. Traditionally, hermeneutics has sought to establish the principles and

WORD ALERT

methods needed to interpret written texts, particularly sacred texts.

Theopneustos--a Greek term translated *divinely inspired* or *God-breathed* (2 Tim 3:16), indicating that the Scriptures are the product of God's creative breath and thus divine.

Concursive inspiration--a term communicating that inspired Scriptures are at the same time divine and human words. Since Scripture has a dual authorship, it is the product of God as well as of human authors.

Contextual--a term denoting that some portions of Scripture have adapted certain life situations or cultural or temporal contexts to communicate their message.

Linguistics--the scientific study of language.

Enlightenment philosophy--a philosophical movement during the 17th and 18th centuries, sometimes identified as the Age of Reason. Characterized by rationalism and self-sufficiency, it rejected external authorities as the Bible, the church, and the state.

Plenary--a Latin term meaning *full*. When applied to the concept of inspiration, it means that the Bible is inspired in all its parts.

Taken from The Doctrine of the Bible by David Dockery

FACTS CONCERNING BIBLICAL INERRANCY

1. All Scripture is of equal inspiration, but not of equal importance or applicability. All of it, however, is profitable (2 Tim 3:16).
2. Inerrancy implies natural interpretation of Scripture recognizing, for example, historical context, literary genre and linguistic devices.
3. Inerrancy means that the Bible is true in what it says in all areas.
4. Inerrancy **does not deny** the use in Scripture of summation, approximation, phenomenal language or cultural linguistic devices common to the time of writing. (example of NT authors citing OT passages and paraphrasing)
5. Inerrancy does not demand the application of modern Western/scientific standards on ancient (OT) or first century documents (NT ex. Matt 27:3ff).
6. The Bible teaches truth and thus is completely authoritative.
7. While recognizing the epistemological contributions of experience, reason, tradition, and the church, inerrancy affirms that the ultimate religious and spiritual authority for the Christian is Scripture interpreted by the historical/grammatical hermeneutic. The plain sense of Scripture is to be sought, affirmed, and obeyed.

WHY INSIST ON INERRANCY?

A SUMMATION

1. The necessity of a sure word from God.
2. The nature of God. (If the Bible is God's Word and God is true, the Bible must be true.) This is a deductive argument.
3. The testimony of Scripture. (Matt 5:17-18; John 10:35; II Tim 3:16; II Pet 1:21). This is an inductive argument.
4. The analogy of the Living Word (Christ) and the Written Word (the Bible). Both are fully human and fully divine. Both are perfect.
5. Fulfilled prophecy.
6. Archaeological confirmation.
7. The testimony of Jesus. His view of Scripture must be our view if we are to live under His Lordship (Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:35).

INERRANCY - DIFFICULTIES

I. HANDLING ALLEGED CONTRADICTION IN THE BIBLE

- A. The burden of the proof rests on the critics. One's starting point and philosophical presuppositions is often crucial and decisive.
 - 1. We have good reason for believing the whole Bible is inspired.
 - 2. Hence, we need only to show a possible (probable) reconciliation (i.e., that there is no necessary contradiction).
- B. Like an American citizen, the Bible is "presumed innocent until proven guilty." It's proven reliability demands that it receive this judgment.
- C. Like a reliable friend, we give the Bible the "benefit of the doubt" (until proven otherwise).
- D. As a scientist presupposes unity of science even in the face of unexplained anomalies, so a biblical scholar presupposes the harmony of the Bible even in the face of apparent contradictions. The nature of God and Scriptural testimony requires this.
- E. Assuming no errors has heuristic (practical) value; it prompts research to find a solution for difficult passages.

II. GUIDELINES FOR RECONCILIATION/UNDERSTANDING THE TRUE NATURE OF THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY

- A. Not all citations are exact quotations and such is not necessary. They must be faithful to the meaning not necessarily identical to the wording. (Ps 40:6-8; cf. Heb 1)
- B. Not everything recorded in the Bible is approved by it (e.g. David's sin, 2 Sam 11).
- C. No writer gives all (exhaustive) truth. He gives only truth but not all the truth (e.g., gospel accounts of the inscription on the cross).
- D. Divergent accounts can be complementary not necessarily contradictory (Matt 28; John 20).
- E. A partial report is not necessarily a false report. What is reported must be true, and what is omitted must not intentionally lead one astray or into error, by its' absence.
- F. Unreconciled texts do not necessarily imply unreconcilable truths. Further research and future information may provide a solution. This has happened numerous times in the past.
- G. Some errors may be in transmission (i.e., in copying; 2 Chrn 22:2).

- H. Language about the world is observational (phenomenal), not technical (Isa 40:22; Josh 10:22). This is the common practice of even our day.
- I. Verbal dissonance does not necessarily mean actual contradiction (the same truth can be put in different words ["fret not" = "don't be anxious"]). The key is semantic equivalence.
- J. The same word can have different meaning in different contexts (Acts 19:32, "church" = "mob").

III. SOME ALLEGED PROBLEMS: A Sampling

- A. Paul's memory lapse - 1 Cor. 1:16. (Shortcoming is Paul's, not Scripture!)
- B. Paul's opinion on marriage - 1 Cor 7:6f. (Note the full context: he is under inspiration)
- C. Stephen's so-called "mistakes" in his Acts speech (careful analysis reveals no error i.e. see the Believer's Study Bible)

(See also Gleason Archer's Bible Difficulties for an exhaustive treatment of alleged difficulties and possible reconciliations)

IV. SOME GOOD BYPRODUCTS OF ALLEGED CONTRADICTIONS

- A. It is productive of greater scholarship (why try to find an answer if one prejudges there is no possible explanation?).
- B. It increases our understanding of Scripture (cf. the genealogies of Matt 1 and Luke 3).
- C. It tests our faith and makes us stronger (cf. John 6:66).
- D. It helps us value the essential over the trivial (cf. Matt 23:23).
- E. It increases the credibility of the biblical authors (no collusion) and copyists (who copied even errors accurately).

INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE: THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <i>REVELATION</i>
HEBREWS 1:1 | GOD REVEALING
HUMANITY <u>LISTENING</u> |
| 2. <i>INSPIRATION</i>
2 TIMOTHY 3:16 | GOD CONTROLLING
HUMANITY <u>RECORDING</u> |
| 3. <i>AUTHORITY</i>
JOHN 10:35 | GOD ENFORCING
HUMANITY <u>OBEYING</u> |
| 4. <i>CANONICITY</i>
JUDE 1:3 | GOD PRESERVING
HUMANITY <u>RECOGNIZING</u> |
| 5. <i>ILLUMINATION</i>
I CORINTHIANS 2:10-12 | GOD CLARIFYING
HUMANITY <u>UNDERSTANDING</u> |
| 6. <i>INTERPRETATION</i>
I CORINTHIANS 2:12 | GOD ENABLING
HUMANITY <u>DECLARING</u> |



"The Bible contains 3,566,480 letters and 773,893 words.
How's that for a bit of useless theological information?"



"I find the gospel very easy to understand. What confuses me is theology!"

I. THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF INERRANCY

A. THE NATURE OF THE PROPHET - HE IS GOD'S MOUTHPIECE/SPOKESMAN
(EXODUS 4:30; DEUT 4:2; 18:18; NUM 22:18; JER 26:2)

B. THE SCRIPTURES TESTIFY TO THEIR DIVINE AUTHORITY

1. *"IT IS WRITTEN..."* (MAT. 4:4, 7, 10) - 92 TIMES IN NEW TESTAMENT
2. IT IS UNBREAKABLE (JOHN 10:35)*
3. IT IS IMPERISHABLE (MATT. 5:17-18)*

C. THE SCRIPTURE IS CALLED GOD'S WORD

1. IT IS THE "WORD OF GOD" (JOHN 10:34, HEB. 4:12)
2. IT IS "BREATHED OUT" (GR. *THEOPNEUSTOS*) OF GOD (2 TIM. 3:16)*
3. IT IS THE VERY "ORACLES OF GOD" (ACTS 7:38; ROM. 3:2)

D. SCRIPTURE IS SEEN AS COMPLETELY TRUE (ITS TRUSTWORTHINESS IS NEVER DOUBTED).

E. GOD IS REVEALED AS COMPLETELY TRUTHFUL (AND THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD).

F. THE BIBLE AS HISTORICALLY AND SCIENTIFICALLY TRUE IS DEMONSTRATED ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS.

G. SCRIPTURE IS EQUATED WITH GOD'S AUTHORITY

What the Bible Says

=

What God Says

H. The analogy of Christ and Scripture

1. Similarities between Christ and Bible (Both are divine/human and the Word of God)
2. Differences between Christ and Bible (Christ is living; the Bible is written)
(Christ is a person ; the Bible is propositions)

BIBLICAL INERRANCY

DEF: The Bible is completely true (in whole and in part), without error in everything that is affirmed (not just "spiritual" or "redemptive" truth but "all truth")

THE EVANGELICAL POSITION:

- ✓ True in whole and in all parts
- ✓ True spiritually and historically
- ✓ True scientifically
- ✓ True in intention and in all affirmations
- ✓ Bible is infallible and inerrant
- ✓ Bible IS intrinsically a revelation
- ✓ Bible IS God's revelation
- ✓ God speaks by the words of the Bible
- ✓ Human language is adequate in expressing truth but does not reveal truth exhaustively
- ✓ Limited amount of higher critical methods is accepted

✓ Faith is not opposed to reason

THE DEFENSE OF INERRANCY

1. IT IS TAUGHT IN THE BIBLE (MATT 5:17-18, JOHN 10:35; 2 TIM 3:16; 2 PETER 1:21)
2. IT IS DERIVED BOTH INDUCTIVELY (THE SCRIPTURES TESTIMONY OF ITSELF) AND DEDUCTIVELY (FROM THE NATURE OF GOD AND THE NEED THE FOR A TRUSTWORTHY REVELATION)
3. INERRANCY IS AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL FUNDAMENTAL - (AN IMPURE SOURCE CANNOT YIELD A PURE STREAM OF DOCTRINE)
A DENIAL OF INERRANCY IS ...
 - ✓ AN ATTACK ON THE INTEGRITY OF THE FATHER - WHO ORIGINATED SCRIPTURE
 - ✓ AN ATTACK ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE SON - WHO AFFIRMED SCRIPTURE
 - ✓ AN ATTACK ON THE ACTIVITY OF THE SPIRIT -- WHO INSPIRED SCRIPTURE
 - ✓ TO UNDERMINE THE STABILITY OF THE CHURCH -- WHICH IS BUILT ON SCRIPTURE.
4. THE EARLY FATHERS BOTH AFFIRMED AND DEFENDED THE COMPLETE RELIABILITY OF SCRIPTURE
5. THE NEW TESTAMENT AFFIRMS THE HISTORICAL AND FACTURAL TRUTH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. JESUS ALSO AFFIRMED THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE HISTORICAL AND THE SPIRITUAL - JOHN 3:12
6. THE ORIGINAL EXISTS IN GOOD COPIES - **5338 GREEK MANUSCRIPTS**
WE HAVE ACCURATE COPIES RESULTING IN 105-110% OF THE AUTOGRAPHS!
WE HAVE 100% OF THE DOCTRINAL TRUTH OF THE ORIGINAL.
NO CENTRAL DOCTRINAL TRUTH IS IN TEXTUAL DISPUTE.
7. QUESTION: WHY MUST THERE BE FLAWLESS ORIGINALS IF FLAWED COPIES ARE SUFFICIENT?
 - A. BECAUSE GOD CANNOT UTTER ERROR AND HE UTTERED THE ORIGINAL!
 - B. GOD CAN PERMIT ERROR (SIN) BUT HE CANNOT PRODUCE IT.
 - C. AN IMPURE ORIGINAL (SOURCE) GUARANTEES IMPURE COPIES. THE SOURCE MUST BE ONE OF PURITY OR ELSE ALL THAT FLOWS FORTH FROM IT WILL BE IMPURE.
8. GOD PRESERVED THE COPIES FROM ALL DOCTRINAL ERROR, AND FROM ALL SUBSTANTIAL ERROR.
9. **THREE QUALIFICATIONS OF INERRANCY**
 1. Only the originals are inerrant
 2. Only what is taught as true, is true
 3. Scripture is to be naturally and plainly understood
10. The term inerrancy affirms the complete truthfulness of Scripture. The term "inerrancy" is negotiable: the TRUTH of inerrancy is not.

FACTS CONCERNING BIBLICAL INERRANCY

1. All scripture is of equal inspiration, but not of equal importance or applicability. All of it, however is profitable. (2Tim. 3:16)
2. Inerrancy implies natural, historical/grammatical interpretation of Scripture, recognizing, for example, historical context, literary genre and linguistic devices.
3. Inerrancy means that the Bible is true in what it says **in all areas**.
4. Inerrancy **does not deny** the use in Scripture of summation, approximation, phenomenal language or cultural linguistic devices common to the time of writing.
5. Inerrancy does not demand the application of modern western/scientific standards on ancient (OT) or first century documents (NT - ex. Matt. 27:3ff)
6. The Bibel teaches truth and thus is completely authoritative.
7. **While recognizing the epistemological contributions of experience, tradition, reason and the church, inerrancy affirms that the ultimate religious and spiritual authority for the Christian is Scripture interpreted by the historical/grammatical hermeneutic. THE PLAIN SENSE OF SCRIPTURE IS TO BE SOUGHT, AFFIRMED, AND OBEYED!**

WHY INSIST ON INERRANCY?

- ✓ The necessity of a sure word from God
- ✓ The nature of God
- ✓ The testimony of Scripture
- ✓ The analogy of the Living Word (Christ) and the Written Word (The Bible). Both are fully human and fully divine. Both are perfect.
- ✓ Fulfilled prophecy
- ✓ Archaeological confirmation
- ✓ The Testimony of Jesus. His view of Scripture must be our view if we are to live under His Lordship (Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:35)

NEGATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY

The doctrine of Biblical inerrancy has not universally been affirmed by contemporary Southern Baptists of recent days. Some, no doubt, have avoided the use of the term for genuinely theological convictions. This was true for most of the faculty of SBTS prior to 1992. Others, perhaps, felt it was politically expedient to avoid the term. My own experience has been, almost without exception, that those hesitant to use the word inerrancy do so because (1) they misunderstand how the term is consistently used by inerrantists or (2) they actually believe the Bible contains error.

Russell Dilday, former President of SWBTS and now on faculty at Truett Seminary on the campus of Baylor University, wrote the book The Doctrine of Biblical Authority. He raises several questions in attempting to find the best terms to describe the nature of the Bible:

"Judged according to its purpose, the Bible is a perfectly sufficient and reliable authority. The problem, as we have already seen, is, how can that authority be best expressed given the unique nature of the book? Since I believe the Bible is absolutely true, trustworthy, and perfectly sufficient, how can I explain my position clearly? What words or terms can I use that are least likely to be misunderstood and most likely to describe accurately the Bible's authority?"

Dilday takes note of the "Chicago Statement on Inerrancy" and then addresses what he perceives are differences of opinion on how the word "inerrancy" is used simply because 1) inerrantists (all I might add) affirm differences in an account do not necessitate error and 2) terms acceptable to inerrantists also include "infallibility," "truthworthiness," "plenary inspiration," "inerrant as to teaching" and "inerrant in all it affirms." He proceeds to argue in a somewhat puzzling manner:

"Since even avowed inerrantists cannot agree on the full meaning of the term, it is obvious that inerrancy has limited value as a designation for the authority of the Bible. Its weakness is found in the necessity for so many conditions or qualifications to explain its meaning -- so many qualifications that its original meaning is often lost (underlining mine). Most inerrantists qualify the word in one more of the following ways:

1. Inerrancy does not refer to presently existing Bibles but only to the originals.
2. Inerrancy is qualified to exempt such minor problems as grammatical errors, misspellings, and errors in form.
3. Inerrancy does not apply to things a Bible writer did not *intend* to say. When Jesus said the mustard seed was the "smallest of all seeds" (Matt 13:31-32 RSV), he was not *intending* to make a strictly accurate statement about botany (there are smaller seeds than the mustard seed, although Jesus' hearers may not have been aware of any smaller seed). The main point of Jesus' teaching was true -- his teaching about the kingdom of Heaven.

4. Inerrancy does not always require exact precision. The precision of the wording is not so important as the truth which the author wanted the readers to understand.
5. Inerrancy is qualified to excuse approximations in the Scriptures. Instances where a writer rounded off a number, even if it disagrees with another writer's count, is not an error. Imprecise quotations of Old Testament Scriptures are not regarded as errors under this qualification.
6. Inerrancy refers primarily to error in the sense of an intentionally misleading statement, not error in the sense of technical inaccuracy.
7. Inerrancy is qualified so that it does not consider as errors those contradictions in the Bible that might ultimately be harmonized. Just because two reports of the same event are different does not mean necessarily that there is an error or a contradiction.
8. Inerrancy is used with the qualification that some problems in the Scriptures which cannot be solved now may be resolved someday as more information is given."

From these observations Dilday then says, "With such qualifications, it is hard to see how any problem in the Bible could pass the tests and be recognized as an error. Also, it seems likely that, given the qualifications, no Bible-believing Christian would object to the general concept conveyed by the term *inerrant*. The problem is, of course, that the term usually stands by itself without the list of qualifications and can, therefore, be confusing." It should be pointed out that Dr. Dilday's analysis is heavily dependent on the book The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible by Jack Rogers and Donald McKim.

Dr. Morris Ashcraft, former Dean of the Faculty at SEBTS argues in a similar fashion when he says, "What does it mean to speak of the inerrancy of the autographs if one must qualify: 1) no modern text or translation is inerrant, only the original manuscripts; 2) inerrancy does not apply to all of the statements in the Bible; just those in which the author was intentionally teaching a view; 3) human authors used their own languages, cultural terms and the like which were not inerrant; 4) "innocent errors" such as rounded-off numbers in historical sections are not errors; 5) when New Testament writers quoted incorrectly, or inexactly from the Old Testament these are not errors; 6) apparent errors will probably be clarified in the future; 7) grammatical errors are not errors; and 8) an error would have to be an intentionally misleading statement." (Proceedings, p. 538).

Ashcraft concluded this critique by saying, "When I read the qualifications above, I wonder if they don't mean trustworthiness of Scripture, or the unfailingness of the Scriptures in matters of Faith?" (Ibid.)

Dr. Ashcraft summarizes his rejection for inerrancy by 7 questions:

1. Is the doctrinal foundation of fundamentalism true?

2. Is the claim of inerrancy of the scripture the accurate way to state the view of inspiration being described?
3. Does not the Fundamentalist claim of inerrancy of Scripture move the foundation of theology from the Incarnation to a theory of inspiration?
4. Why are biblical statements on inspiration inadequate? (citing 2 Tim 3:16 and 2 Pet 1:21)
5. Does not this exclusive claim for the Bible suggest a subtle possibility of a hint tending toward idolatry? Ashcraft notes, "The Chicago Statement says, 'What Scripture says, God says'. I wish the order had been reversed" (p. 539).
6. Does not the militant, exclusivistic stance of Fundamentalism do something quite damaging to all expressions of biblical inspiration and authority different from its own?
7. Does not the narrowing tendency of Fundamentalism do damage to the beautiful diversity of the Christian faith and its doctrinal illustration? (Proceedings, pp. 538-540).

Dilday does have some positive words for the idea of inerrancy. He affirms that "it is a strong term with emotional power to convey a deeply held conviction....It does describe an unwavering position one may take against the opponents of the Bible." He then adds, "Some Christians, therefore, use the term in this nontechnical sense because it affirms their unqualified commitment to the Bible as our sole rule of faith and practice." What Dilday means by "nontechnical" is crucial to understanding his position.

Dilday then proceeds to identify additional weaknesses of the term:

1. It is so easily misunderstood. Even among inerrantists it is difficult to get a unanimous definition. It has been so heavily qualified that it loses its original meaning. To people who do not know the qualifications and definitions the word by itself implies a precision that is alien to the nature of the Bible and is not really intended by the inerrantists.
2. The word implies a mechanical-dictation theory of inspiration.
3. It implies that one admitted insignificant error in the Bible would destroy one's confidence in the whole biblical revelation.
4. It places confidence in the originals, which no one can see, rather than in the Bible we have now.
5. It directs attention away from the message of salvation, leading us to work at defending obscure points in the Scripture when we should be proclaiming its message to the lost world.
6. It implies a rationalistic necessity to protect the Bible by an airtight intellectual argument rather than relying on the Bible's own power to stand.
7. It is a word with emotional implications that weaken its effectiveness because it tends to identify one as a member of a certain party in a debate. It often is a divisive word used as a weapon against fellow Christian conservatives.

8. So many passages of Scripture cannot even be discussed with such terms as *errant* or *inerrant*. How can one judge verses like "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord" as errant or inerrant? The terms are irrelevant here.
9. It is based on the claim that inerrancy is a biblical term and is the traditional terminology of the Christian church through the ages. In fact, the term is not in the Scriptures at all and has been only rarely and lately used in Christian statements of faith. [It must be interjected at this point that Dr. Dilday is both right and wrong, but mostly wrong. He is correct that inerrancy is not a biblical term, anymore than is the term Trinity. He is, however, in error in his history. Inerrancy is a word that was in use in 1900. The idea it conveys has been the orthodox position of the church throughout its history].
10. It overlooks the obvious fact that for two thousand years Christians have been using copies of the Bible. If God did not see fit to preserve the originals or keep all copyists from making mistakes, it seems obvious God did not think it was vital that we have the original biblical text. Why argue so vehemently about something God himself obviously did not consider essential?

Dilday offers alternate terms or phrases:

"Are there other words that may be better than inerrant? The term *infallible* is preferred by some, even though in most dictionaries that term would be a synonym for inerrant....many feel that it too carries many of the same weaknesses.

Less emotionally charged words with clear definitions are *dependable*, *reliable*, *sufficient*, and *trustworthy*. A phrase may be better than a single word. That is why most Baptists have preferred the description "truth without any mixture of error for its matter." B.H. Carroll, founder of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, both began and concluded his book on the inspiration of the Bible with a clear statement of his belief in the Bible's authority. He chose to use the phrase "truth without any mixture of error for its matter" in both places."

[Though Dr. Dilday is "technically correct" concerning how Carroll begins and closes his book, anyone familiar with his Inspiration of the Bible knows that it is beyond question that Carroll affirmed the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture in the strongest possible way. Again, inerrantists are not concerned about the words used, but with what one means. Dilday here is either ignorant or he misrepresents the facts.]

Dr. Dilday concludes his argument against the term inerrancy with the following summation:

"Jesus' pronouncements about Scripture were not framed in the context of the twentieth-century debate on authority, but his trust in the Scripture is clear.

If Jesus accepted the authority of the Bible without using the term *inerrancy*, surely today one can believe the full authority and truthfulness of the Bible without being expected to use *inerrant* or any other current popular human term.

My own personal commitment to the Bible is based on faith that it is God's Word, not ultimately on rational evidence or empirical tests. My relationship to the Bible is not mechanical, analytical, or mystical. Rather, it is pervasive, foundational, practical."

Dilday begs the question at this point. Inerrantists affirm all of these as well. Furthermore, Jesus did not use the term Trinity. Did he not believe in its truth? (See Matt 28:19-20).

Russell Dilday's argument is flawed logically and historically. Indeed some of his his objectives are difficult to take seriously. He misunderstands or misrepresents the inerrantist position and historically he is simply in error. He is simplistic on one hand and revisionistic on the other. Furthermore, both he and Dr. Ashcraft frame the discussion in the worst possible light, and as a result, do not accurately portray the inerrantist position. They do not give it a fair hearing. It is they who wish to press the term "inerrancy" into some modern scientific category that is not appropriate for modern man as to the way he naturally or normally communicates.

Evaluating Dr. Ashcraft is more complex. One suspects that he grasps better than Dr. Dilday the greater philosophical and theological issues at stake. One also can surmise that his own epistemological presuppositions are more existential and pluralistic, though he claims ultimate authority in Jesus Christ. He also is guilty of historical error. In his Theology entitled Christian Faith and Belief he writes,

"The Spirit inspired the prophets and apostles, who stood as witnesses to the revelatory events, to understand and record God's Word to his people. Between them and us are those throngs who lived on the meaning of this Word of God in the presence of the Spirit. When we read and worship today, we hear God's Word only because others kept alive the understanding of the meaning of the symbols on the pages and because the Holy Spirit works with us just as he did with the first witnesses.

The Bible is and will remain the primary source of knowledge for the faith of Christians (underlining mine). As long as it is read under the guidance of the Spirit and in the fellowship of believers, it will be the Word of God to them...." (pp. 84-85).

This is a pure neoorthodox position. The question to contemplate is this, "if the Bible is not the Word of God to me or anyone else, does it cease to be the Word of God? Is its divine nature somehow contingent on the affirmation of the hearers and his/her acceptance of it?

Dr. Ashcraft says further, in the context of authority, "...the authority of the Bible is more than a theory of inspiration of the Bible as many appear to think...in Christian faith and theology, the final authority is God. Since we know God through his revelation in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ as God's revelation is the authority for our faith and the theological doctrines we develop about that faith."

Again a quite logical and obvious questions arises: How do we know Jesus Christ? Have we somehow obtained a sure word about Him through any other medium than Scripture? And, if this medium is an uncertain one, a fallible one, where are we epistemologically? Is there a sure and certain word from God about Jesus Christ?

Ashcraft is quite concerned with the concept of authority, and he notes both the pros and cons of the Reformation dictum of *sola scriptura*.

"In Christian faith, authority must be seen in the personal and spiritual sense. Authority derives from Jesus Christ, the revelation of God who has ultimate authority over all....The Reformers, in seeking to break the authoritarian control of the institutional church over the minds and lives of people, elevated the Bible as the supreme authority....The emphasis of *sola scriptura*, the Scripture alone, was declared in the context of the Roman Church's claim that its councils and creeds had binding authority over believers because of the authority of the Church.

Obviously, *sola scriptura* led to an excessive emphasis on the authority of the Bible at the expense of the church and the Spirit. In some cases, it also led to the rejection of tradition altogether (underlining mine).

In the Fundamentalist controversy of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this claim of total authority for the Bible took a new form. [This is historically inaccurate] The Princeton Theology, developed by Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, A.H. Hodge, B.B. Warfield, and J. Gresham Machen, focused on three ideas: the biblical writings were verbally inspired; the Bible is inerrant; and the inerrancy applies to the autographs, the original writings of the biblical books.

The Fundamentalist controversy, and the contemporary version of its continuations, reduced the question of authority to a theory of the inspiration of the Bible. The solution has not been satisfying."

Then comes a most important statement by Ashcraft:

"The subject of authority in faith and theology is a matter of encounter with God....we speak of the impact of God's revelation in Jesus Christ to beget faith and obedience. This encounter with God, like encounters with human persons, is complex; it cannot be reduced to a single "cause."

In Christian faith, Jesus Christ as the revelation of God has authority over all others. The Bible is a trustworthy record about him; we would be impoverished without it. We go to the Bible to learn information about Jesus Christ and his disclosure of God. Christians, however, knew and witnessed about him before they had the New Testament records. That Word had authority before it was written, and the witnesses of that message were the living presence of the church. So there is authority related to the church and the tradition. Then and now, the Word of Christ has authority because

the Spirit of God illumines the minds of the hearers. Consequently, it seems to follow that the Bible is not alone and should not be considered "the only authority" for Christian faith and thought. (underlining mine)

To be sure, it is the primary authority among the sources of information available to us. We have reason to be hesitant about the persons who claim to have the Spirit to support their views unless those views are consistent with the Scripture. We also have reason to distrust the ecclesiastical institution that claims things for itself which are not clearly taught in Scripture. The authority of Scripture, however, is ultimately the authority of Jesus Christ. And back of all other temporal authorities stands the authority of Jesus Christ as God's fullest revelation."

Much of what Ashcraft says can be affirmed. Indeed the problem is not so much with what he says as it is with what he does not say. Yet the critical errors of his positions are quite clear: (1) It is having a canon within the canon; (2) It is seeing the Bible as a witness to revelation but not revelation; (3) It is the elevation of other means of religious and theological knowledge to a position of authority that is out of keeping with 1st century Christianity and the free church wing of the Reformation. Experience, tradition, reason, and the church all influence and inform us. However, they are not primary or decisive. Dr. Ashcraft seems to recognize this, but he could be more clear. (4) It is affirming the ultimate authority of the Word of God in Christ (which is correct) without recognizing that our knowledge of this truth has been revealed and mediated only through Scripture. Scripture certainly has a derived authority, but it is an authority derived not from men and their witness to revelation, but from the God who has revealed Himself through Scripture. This has always been the position of the church as Kirsopp Lake has so clearly stated:

"It is a mistake often made by educated persons who happen to have but little knowledge of historical theology to suppose that fundamentalism is a new and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the kind; it is the partial and uneducated survival of a theology which was once universally held by all Christians. How many were there, for instance, in Christian churches in the eighteenth century, who doubted the infallible inspiration of all Scripture? A few, perhaps, but very few. No, the fundamentalist may be wrong; I think that he is. But it is we who have departed from the tradition, not he; and I am sorry for anyone who tries to argue with a fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The *Bible* and the corpus theologicum of the Church are on the fundamentalist side." (The Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow, p. 61).

Baptists like Russell Dilday and Morris Ashcraft envision a different theological agenda for Southern Baptists. Their understanding of the nature of the Bible and its authority has more in common with the neoorthodoxy of Karl Barth and mainline Protestantism than it does with evangelicalism and historic Baptist teaching. It is a theology that drains the life out of the church and is disastrous for the program of missions and evangelism. It is destined to herald an uncertain sound. It is certain to undermine "the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

Q:\SHARED\CHRISTHE\REVELA\BAPBIBLE.DOC

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy

Preface

The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

The following Statement affirms this inerrancy of Scripture afresh, making clear our understanding of it and warning against its denial. We are persuaded that to deny it is to set aside the witness of Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit and to refuse that submission to the claims of God's own Word which marks true Christian faith. We see it as our timely duty to make this affirmation in the face of current lapses from the truth of inerrancy among our fellow Christians and misunderstanding of this doctrine in the world at large.

This Statement consists of three parts: a Summary Statement, Articles of Affirmation and Denials, and an accompanying Exposition. It has been prepared in the course of a three-day consultation in Chicago. Those who have signed the Summary Statement and the Articles wish to confirm their own conviction as to the inerrancy of Scripture and to encourage and challenge one another and all Christians to growing appreciation and understanding of this doctrine. We acknowledge the limitations of a document prepared in a brief, intensive conference and do not propose that this Statement be given creedal weight. Yet we rejoice in the deepening of our own convictions through our discussions together, and we pray that the Statement we have signed may be used to the glory of our God toward a new reformation of the Church in its faith, life and mission.

We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we purpose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word.

We invite response to this statement from any who see reason to amend its affirmations about Scripture by the light of Scripture itself, under whose infallible authority we stand as we speak. We claim no personal infallibility for the witness we bear, and for any help which enables us to strengthen this testimony to God's Word we shall be grateful.

Drafted October 26 – 28, 1978
Summit I
International Council on Biblical Inerrancy
Chicago, Illinois

A Short Statement

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's Divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

Articles of Affirmation and Denial

Article I

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition or any other human source.

Article II

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

We deny that Church creeds, councils or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

Article IV

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's Work of Inspiration.

Article V

We affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive.

We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Article VI

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration.

We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII

We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.

We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight, or to heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

Article VIII

We affirm that God in His Work of Inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.

We deny that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article X

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that, far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

Article XII

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of materials, variant selections of material in parallel accounts or the use of free citations.

Article XIV

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.

We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.

We deny that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

Article XVI

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.

We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by Scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

Article XVII

We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.

We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

Article XVIII

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching or rejecting its claims to authorship.

Article XIX

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics

Summit I of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy took place in Chicago on October 26 – 28, 1978 for the purpose of affirming afresh the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture, making clear the understanding of it and warning against its denial. In the four years since Summit I, God has blessed that effort in ways surpassing most anticipations. A gratifying flow of helpful literature on the doctrine of inerrancy as well as a growing commitment to its value give cause to pour forth praise to our great God.

The work of Summit I had hardly been completed when it became evident that there was yet another major task to be tackled. While we recognize that belief in the inerrancy of Scripture is basic to maintaining its authority, the values of that commitment are only as real as one's understanding of the meaning of Scripture. Thus, the need for Summit II. For two years plans were laid and papers were written on themes relating to hermeneutical principles and practices. The culmination of this effort has been a meeting in Chicago on November 10-13, 1982 at which we, the undersigned, have participated.

In similar fashion to the Chicago Statement of 1978, we herewith present these affirmations and denials as an expression of the results of our labors to clarify hermeneutical issues and principles. We do not claim completeness or systematic treatment of the entire subject, but these affirmations and denials represent a consensus of the approximately one hundred participants and observers gathered at this conference. It has been a broadening experience to engage in dialogue, and it is our prayer that God will use the product of our diligent efforts to enable us and others to more correctly handle the word of truth.

Council

Gleason L. Archer
William N. Garrison
Harold W. Hoehner
Roger R. Nicole
Earl D. Radmacher
R. C. Sproul

James M. Boice
Norman L. Geisler
A. Wetherell Johnson
James I. Packer
Moishe Rosen

Edmund P. Clowney
Jay H. Grimstead
Kenneth S. Kantzer
Robert D. Preus
Frederic R. Schatz

Advisory Board

Jay E. Adams
Gregory L. Bahnsen
Wm R. Bright
Robert K. DeVries
Donald E. Hoke
D. James Kennedy
Fred H. Klooster
Harold B. Kuhn
Harold Lindsell
Allan A. MacRae
Harold J. Ockenga
Paige Patterson
Robert L. Saucy
Morton H. Smith
G. Aiken Taylor
Larry L. Walker
Luder G. Whitlock

John W. Alexander
Nelson C. Bennett, III
L. Russ Bush
Charles L. Feinberg
Paul C. Johnson
Jay L. Kesler
George W. Knight
Samuel R. Kulling
Walter A. Maier
Josh D. McDowell
Raymond C. Ortlund
Adrian P. Rogers
Francis A. Schaeffer
Jack Sonneveldt
Merrill C. Tenney
John D. Walt
Bruce H. Wilkinson

Hudson T. Armerding
Henn A. G. Blocher
W. A. Criswell
John H. Gerstner
David E. Kelby
Frank N. Kik
Hendrik Krabbendam
Gordon R. Lewis
John F. MacArthur
William E. Nix
Luis Palau
Lorne C. Sanny
Joseph R. Shultz
Raymond C. Stedman
Fred G. Wacker
John F. Walvoord

Articles of Affirmation and Denial

Article I

We affirm that the normative authority of Holy Scripture is the authority of God Himself, and is attested by Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church.

We deny the legitimacy of separating the authority of Christ from the authority of Scripture, or of opposing the one to the other.

Article II

We affirm that as Christ is God and man in one person, so Scripture is, indivisibly, God's Word in human language.

We deny that the humble, human form of Scripture entails errancy any more than the humanity of Christ, even in His humiliation, entails sin.

Article III

We affirm that the person and work of Jesus Christ are the central focus of the entire Bible.

We deny that any method of interpretation which rejects or obscures the Christ-centeredness of Scripture is correct.

Article IV

We affirm that the Holy Spirit who inspired Scripture acts through it today to work faith in its message.

We deny that the Holy Spirit ever teaches to anyone anything which is contrary to the teaching of Scripture.

Article V

We affirm that the Holy Spirit enables believers to appropriate and apply Scripture to their lives.

We deny that the natural man is able to discern spiritually the Biblical message apart from the Holy Spirit.

Article VI

We affirm that the Bible expresses God's truth in propositional statements, and we declare that Biblical truth is both objective and absolute. We further affirm that a statement is true if it represents matters as they actually are, but is an error if it misrepresents the facts.

We deny that, while Scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, Biblical truth should be defined in terms of this function. We further deny that error should be defined as that which willfully deceives.

Article VII

We affirm that the meaning expressed in each Biblical text is single, definite and fixed.

We deny that the recognition of this single meaning eliminates the variety of its application.

Article VIII

We affirm that the Bible contains teachings and mandates which apply to all cultural and situational contexts and other mandates which the Bible itself shows apply only to particular situations.

We deny that the distinction between the universal and particular mandates of Scripture can be determined by cultural and situational factors. We further deny that universal mandates may ever be treated as culturally or situationally relative.

Article IX

We affirm that the term hermeneutics, which historically signified the rules of exegesis, may properly be extended to cover all that is involved in the process of perceiving what the Biblical revelation means and how it bears on our lives.

We deny that the message of Scripture derives from, or is dictated by, the interpreter's understanding. Thus we deny that the "horizons" of the Biblical writer and the interpreter may rightly "fuse" in such a way that what the text communicates to the interpreter is not ultimately controlled by the expressed meaning of the Scripture.

Article X

We affirm that Scripture communicates God's truth to us verbally through a wide variety of literary forms.

We deny that any of the limits of human language render Scripture inadequate to convey God's message.

Article XI

We affirm that translations of the text of Scripture can communicate knowledge of God across all temporal and cultural boundaries.

We deny that the meaning of Biblical texts is so tied to the culture out of which they came that understanding of the same meaning in other cultures is impossible.

Article XII

We affirm that in the task of translating the Bible and teaching it in the context of each culture, only those functional equivalents, which are faithful to the content of Biblical teaching, should be employed.

We deny the legitimacy of methods which either are insensitive to the demands of cross-cultural communication or distort Biblical meaning in the process.

Article XIII

We affirm that awareness of the literary categories, formal and stylistic, of the various parts of Scripture is essential for proper exegesis, and hence we value genre criticism as one of the many disciplines of Biblical study.

We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on Biblical narratives which present themselves as factual.

Article XIV

We affirm that the Biblical record of events, discourses and sayings, though presented in a variety of appropriate literary forms, corresponds to historical fact.

We deny that any event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the Biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated.

Article XV

We affirm the necessity of interpreting the Bible according to its literal, or normal, sense. The literal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning which the writer expressed. Interpretation according to the literal sense will take account of all figures of speech and literary forms found in the text.

We deny the legitimacy of any approach to Scripture that attributes to it meaning which the literal sense does not support.

Article XVI

We affirm that legitimate critical techniques should be used in determining the canonical text and its meaning.

We deny the legitimacy of allowing any method of Biblical criticism to question the truth or integrity of the writer's expressed meaning, or of any other scriptural teaching.

Article XVII

We affirm the unity, harmony and consistency of Scripture and declare that it is its own best interpreter.

We deny that Scripture may be interpreted in such a way as to suggest that one passage corrects or militates against another. We deny that later writers of Scripture misinterpreted earlier passages of Scripture when quoting from or referring to them.

Article XVIII

We affirm that the Bible's own interpretation of itself is always correct, never deviating from, but rather elucidating, the single meaning of the inspired text. The single meaning of a prophet's words includes, but is not restricted to, the understanding of those words by the prophet and necessarily involves the intention of God evidenced in the fulfillment of those words.

We deny that the writers of Scripture always understood the full implications of their own words.

Article XIX

We affirm that any preunderstandings which the interpreter brings to Scripture should be in harmony with scriptural teaching and subject to correction by it.

We deny that Scripture should be required to fit alien preunderstandings, inconsistent with itself, such as naturalism, evolutionism, scientism, secular humanism, and relativism.

Article XX

We affirm that since God is the author of all truth, all truths, Biblical and extrabiblical, are consistent and cohere, and that the Bible speaks truth when it touches on matters pertaining to nature, history or anything else. We further affirm that in some cases extrabiblical data have value for clarifying what Scripture teaches, and for prompting correction of faulty interpretations.

We deny that extrabiblical views ever disprove the teaching of Scripture or hold priority over it.

Article XXI

We affirm the harmony of special with general revelation and therefore of Biblical teaching with the facts of nature.

We deny that any genuine scientific facts are inconsistent with the true meaning of any passage of Scripture.

Article XXII

We affirm that Genesis 1 – 11 is factual, as is the rest of the book.

We deny that the teachings of Genesis 1 – 11 are mythical and that scientific hypotheses about earth history or the origin of humanity may be invoked to overthrow what Scripture teaches about creation.

Article XXIII

We affirm the clarity of Scripture and specifically of its message about salvation from sin.

We deny that all passages of Scripture are equally clear or have equal bearing on the message of redemption.

Article XXIV

We affirm that a person is not dependent for understanding of Scripture on the expertise of Biblical scholars.

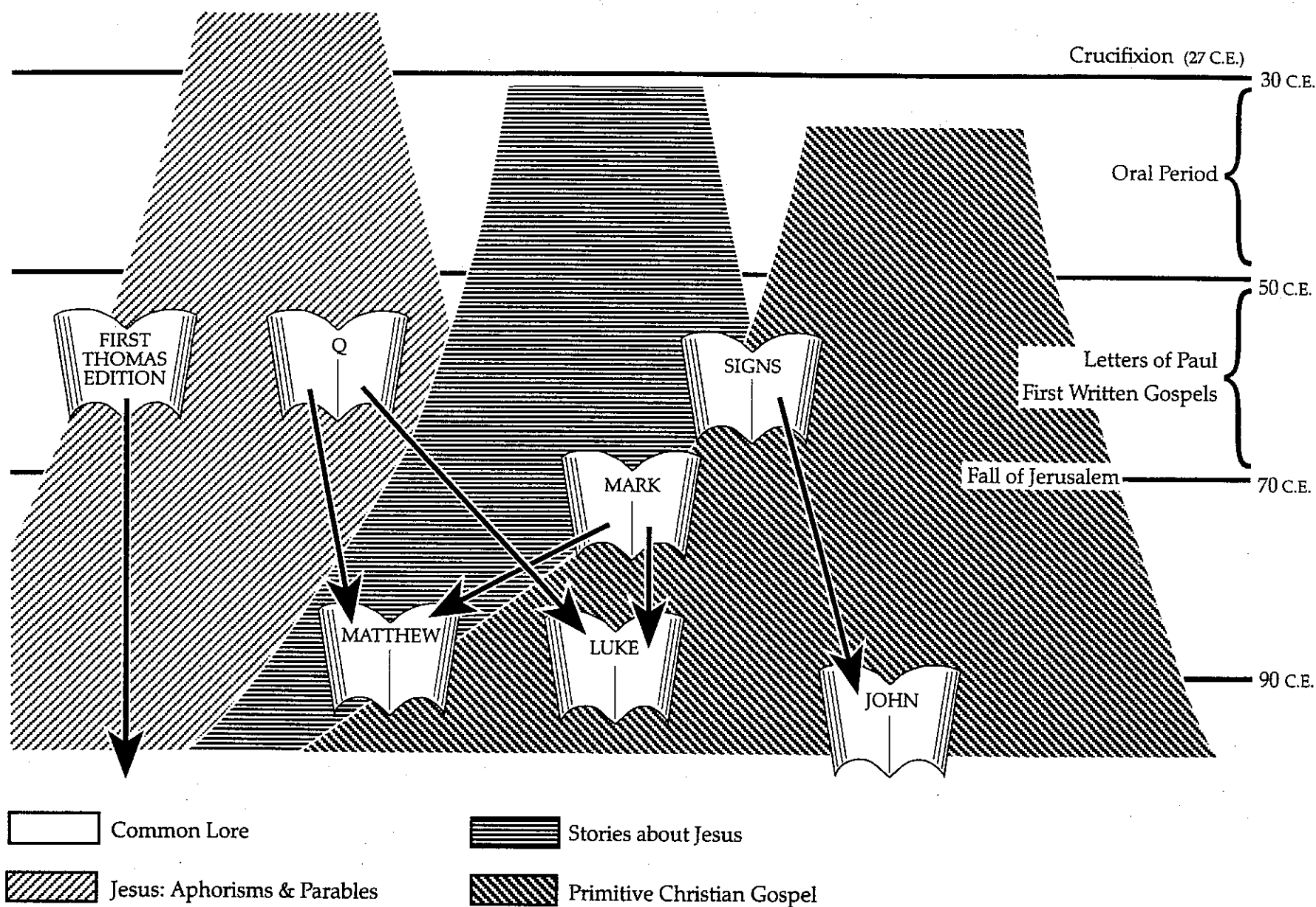
We deny that a person should ignore the fruits of the technical study of Scripture by Biblical scholars.

Article XXV

We affirm that the only type of preaching which sufficiently conveys the divine revelation and its proper application to life is that which faithfully expounds the text of Scripture as the Word of God.

We deny that the preacher has any message from God apart from the text of Scripture.

The Growth of the Jesus Tradition



TRANSACTIONS

CENTER FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

VOL. 3 • NO. 3 • NOV./DEC. 1995

The Center for Interdisciplinary Studies is located in Princeton, New Jersey, and is a branch of the Trinity Institute, a non-profit educational foundation based in Tehuacana, Texas. For further information contact

Center for Interdisciplinary Studies
66 Witherspoon St. • #1000
Princeton, NJ • 08542
tel 609/497-1591
email 547wad@ptsmail.ptsem.edu

The Trinity Institute
College at Main • Box 100
Tehuacana, TX • 76686
tel 817/395-4444
email 73741,1266@compuserve.com

THIS ISSUE

The Problem of Error in Scripture

by

William. A. Dembski

THE PROBLEM OF ERROR IN SCRIPTURE by William. A. Dembski

This following talk was delivered at Princeton Theological Seminary on 3 October 1995 as part of the apologetics seminar sponsored by the Charles Hodge Society. The Princeton Apologetics Seminar meets weekly, and provides a forum for students to study Christian apologetics systematically through lectures, debates, and vigorous discussion.

Most of the contemporary debate over the inerrancy of Scripture assumes we all know what error is, and then examines Scripture to determine whether and to what extent Scripture contains error. Taking error as itself an unproblematical notion, inerrantists then go to great lengths to show that (contrary to appearances) Scripture is in fact free from error. Handbooks that try to smooth out Bible difficulties, as they are called, abound. Those passages in the Scripture that are troubling need to be rendered untroubling. Thus we are presented with a tedious pastiche of harmonizations, justifications, and rationalizations. I personally have found handbooks of Bible difficulties largely fruitless, with my most pressing questions left unanswered.

In this talk I want to change the

terms of the debate. Instead of throwing the Scriptures into question and holding our notion of error fixed, I want in tonight's talk to throw our understanding of error into question. As we shall see, error is not nearly as clear a notion as we might first have imagined. My purpose, then, in this talk is to investigate our very notion of error. In so doing, I shall show that error is not a property that can blithely be attributed to Scripture. Indeed, I shall argue that attributing error to Scripture is itself highly problematical—indeed, more problematical than holding to an inerrant Scripture.

The primary matter for investigation in this talk, then, is error. Only after we are clear about the nature of error will we consider what it means for Scripture to contain error. I want therefore to begin this investigation by massaging our intuitions about error. Our natural inclination is to think that error is a perfectly straightforward notion. For example, you get your monthly bank statement. It shows that you have less in your account than is recorded in your checkbook. You investigate the matter and find that when you paid your phone bill two weeks ago, and entered the

amount into your checkbook, you didn't carry a one when computing your new balance. The error is discovered and rectified! What could be simpler than that?

Now I'll grant that errors can be as simple as that. But they need not be. And as we shall see, when it comes to Scripture, they are never as simple as that. In massaging our intuitions about error, let us therefore begin by considering an example where error is not quite so straightforward as in the checkbook example. Consider the following problem. Nine dots are arranged in the form of a square as follows [draw them on the blackboard]:

```

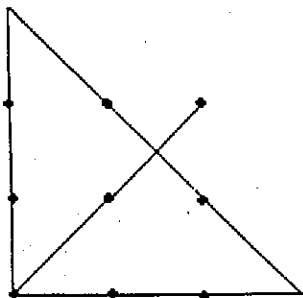
      *      *      *
      *      *      *
      *      *      *
  
```

What is the minimum number of line segments needed to join all nine dots if they are joined continuously? Many of you have probably seen this problem, but if you have, try to imagine how you

approached this problem when it was first presented to you.

For my part, I was about twelve years old when my dad presented this problem to me. We were on the beach in Italy when my dad arranged the nine dots in the sand, and then challenged me to connect the dots with four continuous line segments. I stared at this problem for fifteen or so minutes, trying many different ways to connect the dots, but found I couldn't connect all of them in less than five line segments. Because I figured my dad had a trick up his sleeve, I wasn't about to tell him to his face that he had committed an error in claiming the dots could be joined with four continuous line segments. But privately I doubted whether it could be done. As far as I was concerned, the minimum number of line segments needed was five. Five was the correct answer, four was an erroneous answer. Finally I gave up trying to solve the problem with only four continuous line segments and asked my dad for the solution.

When he showed it to me, the light immediately went on. I had *assumed* that the line segments joining the dots had to be confined to the square implicitly traced by the dots [*indicate this on the blackboard*]. But of course this assumption was entirely gratuitous. My dad had said nothing about confining the line segments I was joining to this implicit square. Once the assumption of confining the line segments to this implicit square was discarded, and the possibility of drawing line segments outside the implicit square was taken seriously, the solution to the problem became perfectly straightforward. Here it is:



There is an important lesson to be learned from this example, and one that is particularly relevant to the problem of error in Scripture. Ordinarily when this nine-dot problem is presented in textbooks, it is to illuminate human problem solving capacities (cognitive psychology texts, for instance, make much of this problem). To be sure, this problem illuminates our cognitive ability to solve problems. Yet for our purposes, it does much more, pointing up a fundamental difficulty whenever we attribute error. On the beach in Italy my dad challenged me to connect nine dots arranged in a square by means of four continuous line segments. Given my assumption that those line segments were also to be confined to the implicit square traced by those dots, I was perfectly right in attributing error to my dad. Indeed, how could he be so stupid to think those dots could be connected with four line segments—at least five were needed. Given my assumption, I was perfectly correct in attributing error to my dad.

But my assumption was itself ill-conceived. I myself was in error for holding an assumption that was not required, and that prevented me from solving the problem in the way my dad had set out. There is an irony here: in attributing error I was myself committing an error. I could of course stick pig-headedly to my assumption that the lines had to be confined to the implicit square traced by the dots. But only when I became willing to relinquish this faulty assumption could I understand the solution that my dad had intended. Error is thus a two-edged sword. In attributing it we may be committing it ourselves.

We can schematize what's at stake in the nine-dots as follows. Consider the case of Alice and Bob in which Alice asserts a certain claim and presents it to Bob. Let's call the claim which Alice asserts "thus-and-so." In asserting thus-and-so to Bob, Alice views thus-and-so against a certain set of background assumptions. At the same time, in hearing thus-and-so from Alice, Bob views thus-and-so according to another, perhaps different, set of background

assumptions. Briefly put, Alice views thus-and-so from one perspective whereas Bob views it from another perspective. Hence for Bob to charge Alice with error for asserting thus-and-so means that *from Bob's perspective* Alice has committed an error. But does it therefore follow that Alice has in fact committed an error? Alice might be in error, but she need not be. If Alice admits that her perspective is congruent with Bob's and that Bob has correctly demonstrated that thus-and-so is incompatible with her perspective, then Alice is right to admit error.

But this is hardly the only possibility. Bob may himself be wrong in thinking that thus-and-so is incompatible with his perspective. Alternatively, Bob may be right in seeing thus-and-so as incompatible with his perspective (much as I was right to think that at least five continuous line segments would be required to connect the dots assuming, as I did, that the line segments had to be confined to the implicit square traced by the dots), but Bob may be employing a perspective nothing like Alice's and therefore missing the truth of what Alice is claiming (in my case, the truth that only four line segments are needed to connect the dots once we allow line segments outside the implicit square traced by the dots). To summarize, Bob may be right to attribute error to Alice, but alternatively he may himself be in error for attributing error to Alice. How is this dilemma to be resolved? To resolve the dilemma Alice and Bob need to communicate with each other, share their thoughts, learn from one another, check out where their background assumptions agree and disagree—in short, they need to enter each other's perspective.

But this raises an obvious question: How does one enter another's perspective? Despite all the talk these days of knowledge being perspectival and distinct perspectives being incommensurable and truth being relative to perspective, the fact remains that we are capable of moving quite freely among diverse perspectives. The following analogy illustrates this point. Near where my

parents have a home in Arizona are two adjacent mountains. Depending on one's perspective, one mountain will look taller than the other. What's more, changing perspectives is simply a matter of changing location. But note that not all perspectives are created equal. One of the mountains actually is taller than the other. A perspective from which the shorter of the two mountains seems the taller is therefore deceptive. Note also that there are privileged perspectives from which it is possible to tell which mountain actually is the taller of the two. Thus, if I were to get into a helicopter and fly between the two mountains, the perspective of flying between the two mountains would allow me to decide conclusively which of the two mountains is indeed taller.

But of course, in treating the subject of error, we are concerned not with physical perspectives, but with epistemic perspectives. Physical perspectives are physical locations from which we view a scene. Epistemic perspectives are conceptual frameworks from which we examine the world. All the same, the preceding remarks about physical perspectives carry over to epistemic perspectives quite nicely. In practice we move quite freely between distinct epistemic perspectives. To return to the nine-dots problem, when my dad presented me with the problem initially, I was operating from a perspective in which any continuous set of line segments connecting the dots had to be confined to the implicit square traced by the dots. My dad, on the other hand, was operating from a perspective in which the line segments were allowed to protrude outside this implicit square. Once my dad pointed this out, I immediately entered into his perspective. Moreover, it's clear that my dad had also entered into my perspective, for he knew precisely why I was having such a hard time solving this problem, namely, because I was limiting my attention to line segments contained within the implicit square.

Let us now move our examples a bit closer to home. Here at Princeton Theological Seminary we learn to move

quite freely among different perspectives from which to view Scripture. Take a course from Professor Diogenes Allen, for instance, and you'll get a fairly classical perspective from which to view Scripture. Take a course from Professor Bruce McCormack and you'll get a Barthian perspective. Take a course from Professor Mark Taylor and you'll get a post-structural perspective. Take a course from Professor Nancy Duff and you'll get a moderate feminist perspective. Take a course from Professor Daniel Migliore and you'll get a mild liberationist perspective. We are confronted here with many distinct perspectives on Scripture. Some of them are helpful for gaining valuable insights into Scripture. Others give us a deceptive view of Scripture.

Before examining the various perspectives available to us here at Princeton Seminary for viewing Scripture (our perspectival options, if you will), I need to stress—indeed overemphasize—that we can and do move quite freely among distinct perspectives. The reason I cannot stress this point strongly enough is because all too frequently in our day we are led to imagine ourselves inescapably imprisoned within our perspectives. Thus we are led to believe that our perspectives are unalterably fixed and that whatever we see is solely a function of the perspective where fate has stuck us. The fact is, however, that much as God has given us mobile bodies with which to change our physical perspective, so too God has given us mobile minds with which to change our epistemic perspective. To change our physical perspective we simply have to move our bodies, an activity to which all normal bodies are ideally suited. So too, to change our epistemic perspective we have to move our minds, an activity to which all normal minds are ideally suited. Of course we don't typically speak of "moving our minds." We have another word for that, and it is called *inquiry*.

We move our minds, or alternatively change our epistemic perspective, through inquiry. Inquiry has two components. One is the gathering of new information. The other is the sorting of previously

gathered information by holding certain pieces of information fixed and throwing others into question. Consider once again the nine-dots example. When my dad initially presented the problem to me, I was operating from the perspective that the continuously joined line segments had to be confined to the implicit square traced by the dots. Operating from this perspective I was unable to solve the problem with only four line segments. But when my dad presented me with the crucial information that the line segments did not have to be confined to the implicit square, I appropriated this information, and at the same time questioned my old assumption about confining the line segments to the implicit square traced by the dots. By doing this, that is, by gathering new information and throwing old information into question, I was able to change my perspective and solve the problem as my dad had initially indicated, namely, with four line segments.

Our minds are ideally suited for inquiry, for changing perspectives and looking at things from different perspectives. Note that inquiry is not to be understood as passive learning, in the sense of passively adding to one's stock of knowledge. Inquiry is not strictly cumulative. As the writer of Ecclesiastes puts it, there is "a time to keep and a time to cast away." The gathering of information is certainly a part of inquiry. But inquiry also has a self-critical aspect. Any information that forms part of one perspective may be thrown into question and rejected when examined from another perspective (and here by information I don't just mean factual claims about the world, but any claims, beliefs, assumptions, or presuppositions whatsoever).

Let me now recap what I have argued for so far in this talk. First, I have argued that we always attribute error in relation of a given perspective. Thus, whether we attribute error to a claim depends crucially on the perspective adopted. Note well that this does not constitute an endorsement of relativism: a perspective does not *determine* what is true or false, but only what one *regards* as

TRANSACTIONS

true or false. Second, I have argued that perspectives are not all created equal. Some may be much better for generating fruitful and trustworthy insights than others, and still others may be downright deceptive. Thus, for example, the perspective of modern molecular biology is extraordinarily fecund for biological research, whereas Aristotelian teleology has proven scientifically sterile. Third and last, I have argued that we can and do move freely among distinct perspectives by means of inquiry, which I characterized in terms of gathering and critically examining information.

One final observation about error needs to be made before we examine the problem of error in Scripture. As I have characterized error thus far, error is merely the flipside of truth. Thus a given claim is in error just in case it is false. Error, however, has an additional, personal component, that is not shared by falsehood, and which does not allow falsehood to serve as a synonym for error. Whereas statements may be false, it is only people—rational personal agents—who can be in error. To be sure, we speak of a statement as being in error, but only by extension, in the sense that the person making the statement claims to know what in fact is not the case. In his work entitled *Human Knowledge* Bertrand Russell elaborates on this point:

Error is not only the absolute error of believing what is false, but also the quantitative error of believing more or less strongly than is warranted by the degree of credibility properly attaching to the proposition believed in relation to the believer's knowledge. A man who is quite convinced that a certain horse will win the Derby is in error even if the horse does win.

Error always consists in overextending oneself, in claiming more than is warranted from the perspective one has adopted. Error is therefore not the same as lying. The liar is intent on perpetrating a falsehood; the individual who commits an error hopes to hit the truth (but unfortunately fails to hit it). Nor is error ignorance. "Ignorance," as Mortimer Adler and Charles van Doren so aptly put it, "is simply a privation of

knowledge unaccompanied by any pretension to know." Error, on the other hand, always entails such pretensions. It is always people who commit errors, and not impersonal detached statements. Moreover, when people commit errors, it is by claiming to know what is not the case, by failing to acknowledge their ignorance, by pretending to knowledge, by presuming competence where they lack it. Although polite society distinguishes excusable from inexcusable errors, depending on whether the individual committing the error is sincere or should have known better, errors are never strictly speaking excusable. Whenever they are discovered, errors are rooted out, unmasked, and rectified. The proper response to error is not rationalization, but eradication.

Error is always a sign of incompetence. It is for this reason that we hesitate attributing error to highly competent individuals when they are speaking in their area of expertise. It is one thing to be told that space is curved by someone just coming off an acid trip. It is another thing to be told that space is curved by Albert Einstein. Our ordinary experience is that lines through space are straight. Ordinary experience seems to confirm that old Euclid got it right. To claim that space is curved is counterintuitive. We are therefore inclined to dismiss as erroneous the claim that space is curved when coming from someone just off an acid trip. A physicist of Einstein's stature making the same claim, however, is a different story. We may scratch our heads, but we probably wouldn't charge him with error.

Let us summarize where we are then as follows: People commit errors when despite intending to assert truth they actually assert falsehood. Committing an error is not the same as lying or ignorance. The person who commits an error has overextended him- or herself, exhibiting a certain measure of incompetence. In committing errors, people always operate from a given perspective. In charging people with error, we must enter their perspective so that we may know precisely what they are

claiming. (For instance, with the nine-dots problem, I assumed my dad wanted me to connect the nine dots with line segments all contained in the implicit square traced by the dots; this assumption was not part of my dad's perspective). Finally, having entered someone else's perspective we must ask, Is the claim being made compatible with that person's perspective? and Does that person's perspective warrant the claims he or she is making? Any charge of error requires an answer to these two questions.

Here ends my discussion of the nature of error. In the remainder of this talk I shall relate this discussion to how we here at Princeton Seminary view Scripture. When it comes to the problem of error in Scripture, we at Princeton Seminary are confronted with three basic perspectives for viewing Scripture. For brevity we shall call these the *divine-inspiration perspective*, the *human-response perspective*, and the *human-constructivist perspective* [write these on the blackboard]. I'm not saying that these perspectives logically exhaust the perspectives from which Scripture can be viewed. Yet in practice these perspectives constitute the three main polarities by which we here at Princeton Seminary orient ourselves. Here is a brief summary of these perspectives.

The *divine-inspiration perspective* is the classic orthodox perspective on Scripture. It assumes that Scripture constitutes the very words of God—the *ipsissima verba Dei*. The divine-inspiration perspective allows that the human writers of Scripture expressed themselves in the full integrity of their humanity, without the slightest diminution of their wills or intellects, but that God, in tandem with their wills and intellects, moved in and through the human writers to express precisely what God intended. The divine-inspiration perspective is encapsulated in 2 Peter 2:21, where the writers of Scripture are described as being moved by the Holy Spirit. According to the divine-inspiration perspective God is fully capable of expressing himself in human language, and of doing so without

TRANSACTIONS

embarrassing himself. According to this perspective, God is not silent; God speaks Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—and all other human languages for that matter; God has thoughts expressible in these languages; and more particularly for our purposes, God can and does express claims which have at least the theoretical possibility of being in error—that is to say, in the revelatory act God puts his neck on the line.

As for what I'm calling the **human-response perspective**, it is also known as the neo-orthodox perspective on Scripture, and is associated most prominently at this seminary with the name of Karl Barth. According to this perspective the human writers of Scripture do not so much experience the divine revelatory act as communication, as get hit over the head with it, and then try to figure out what happened. God acts, and the human writers record their response (or "witness" as it is usually called) to the divine acts. From the classic orthodox perspective what's acceptable about the human-response perspective is that the human writers of Scripture are responding to a real revelation by a real God. Thus the human-response perspective does not reduce Scripture to a merely human construction, but retains an ineliminable transcendent element in Scripture—the human writer of Scripture is responding not to some internal psychological state, but to the revelatory activity of a God whose existence does not depend on whether we like it or not.

Nevertheless, as a human response to a divine revelatory act, Scripture no longer constitutes the very words of God. Rather, Scripture constitutes a fallible human witness to what God has wrought in salvation history. Accordingly, Scripture contains errors, factual and otherwise. Within the human-response perspective any errors in Scripture are not regarded as crucial since Scripture, as a human witness to divine revelation, is not the Word of God in itself (the Word of God in itself being Christ), but rather a vehicle by which the Word of God comes to us. And what's important about a

vehicle is that it get the job done, not that it be error-free. Thus when we hear Scripture read in chapel, we do not literally hear the Word of God, but rather a witness to the Word of God. For this reason we are told to "listen for the Word of God," inasmuch as what impinges on our eardrums is not the Word of God *per se*, but the vehicle that conveys the Word of God.

Last we come to the **human-constructivist perspective**. If the divine-inspiration perspective sits on the ideological right and the human-response perspective sits in the ideological middle, then the human-constructivist perspective sits on the ideological left. Whereas the divine-inspiration and human-response perspectives assume there is a real God who delivers a real revelation to humanity, the human-constructivist perspective assumes none of this. According to the human-constructivist perspective Scripture is a purely human construction conditioned entirely by sociological, political, cultural, biological, and environmental factors. The human-constructivist perspective is thoroughly reductionist. Human beings have a religious impulse, yes, and they regularly give expression to that impulse. But that impulse and its expression is to be understood not by appealing to a transcendent personal God who acts in people's lives, but as a human idiosyncrasy. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments constitute but one expression of that idiosyncrasy. À la Freud we construct our gods to serve our needs. The fact that we are studying Scripture here at seminary is thus more or less accidental. Religion is important not because it is true, but because people find it important. Similarly, Scripture is important not because it is true, but because a lot of people have made and continue to make a fuss about it.

This concludes my brief summary of the three basic perspectives that confront us here at Princeton Seminary when we view Scripture. With this summary in hand I want next to examine these perspectives critically, specifically with reference to how they handle the problem

of error in Scripture. Because I am taking it upon myself to critique these three perspectives, the question of perspectives may be turned back on me. Someone may ask, What, pray tell, is the perspective from which you, Bill Dembski, are operating, and from which you are going to tell us which of these three perspectives on Scripture to adopt? The intent behind this question is, of course, to point up that I am not operating from a privileged, neutral perspective, and thus cannot properly adjudicate among the three perspectives I've just laid out.

Let me respond to this objection. The question what perspective am I operating from is a valid one, but hardly does the damage it seeks to do. The perspective from which I'm operating is, not surprisingly, my own personal world view, the one I've hammered out upon reflection over the course of my life. In the grand scheme of things this world view may be inadequate or even ill-conceived, but it is *my* world view, and it is one I believe is substantially correct. In critiquing the three perspectives on Scripture that I've just laid out, I'm inviting you to hear me out, listen to my concerns, study my arguments, and thereby enter my world view (if not fully, then at least to some extent). Perhaps you'll be convinced, perhaps not. My aims are modest. I'm seeking to persuade you. I won't charge you with being irrational, wicked, stupid, or insane (as the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins is apt to do) if at the end of the day you don't see things my way.

First then, let us turn to the human-constructivist perspective. From the human-constructivist perspective the problem of error in Scripture simply does not arise. According to this perspective Scripture is a purely human production that admits no transcendent element. Those who adopt this perspective may disagree violently with Scripture, charging it with androcentrism, logocentrism, patriarchy, misogyny, homophobia, hierarchy, or what have you—the list goes on. But the charge of error in and of itself will not come up

TRANSACTIONS

among these charges. To be sure, those who currently hold to the human-constructivist perspective typically see Scripture as riddled with logical inconsistencies, as well as scientific and factual errors. But all such errors are beside the point. The truth of the Scripture is not at issue. Conditioned by their context, the writers of Scripture simply wrote what they wrote. Within the human-constructivist perspective, critical, hermeneutical, and literary methods have but one aim, not to determine the truth in Scripture, but to appropriate the Scripture for the present day so that it may serve the contemporary context by either advancing or challenging its ideals. Yes, I say advancing *or* challenging. Thus we'll find process theology baptizing the secular paganism of our age, whilst liberation theology challenges its capitalist ideals. The point to realize is that whether furthering or challenging the status quo, the Scripture is being used as a pragmatic tool, and not as an authority to which we are required to bow the knee.

The chief problem with the human-constructivist perspective is, of course, that it is non-Christian. In making this claim, I am not being uncharitable, but simply asserting a fact. Just as Naugahyde is not leather and never can be leather, so all the various theologies that take a human-constructivist approach to Scripture are not Christian and never can be Christian. To be sure, we can artificially stipulate the meaning of words, and make the word "Christian" mean something it doesn't mean. But Christianity has always presupposed a realist metaphysics in which a real God does real things in the world—one of those things being to reveal himself in Scripture. But the human-constructivist perspective has no place for this fundamental presupposition of Christianity. The fact that there are process, liberationist, and feminist theologies that appeal to the Bible and appropriate its terminology is simply not enough to make their theologies Christian. Christian theology properly so-called is impossible within a human-

constructivist perspective.

Next, let us turn to the human-response perspective. At first blush the problem of error in Scripture does not seem to arise for the human-response perspective either. Indeed, one will find Barth in his headier moments claiming that the more radical and disturbing the results of critical studies of the Bible, the better. Nevertheless, error does remain a problem for the human-response perspective. To see this, it is not enough to consider some minor historical glitch about the life of Jesus. The human-response perspective is ever ready to accommodate small errors, but it is incapable of accommodating massive error. Perhaps it doesn't matter whether Jesus performed this or that miracle attributed to him in the Gospels. But if Jesus never lived at all (as was the official party line in Ceausescu's Romania), then there is no Word of God Incarnate to which the Scriptures, as the Word of God Written, can bear testimony. Thus we may conclude that while small, niggling errors are not a problem for the human-response perspective, massive errors are.

An obvious question now arises: How do we distinguish small errors from massive errors in Scripture? Is there a criterion by which to decide which errors are important and which are trifling? Unfortunately, those who hold to the human-response perspective have yet to furnish such a criterion. Indeed, it is a safe bet that they will never furnish such a criterion. Rather, they will hold that the Holy Spirit, in guiding the community of faith, can be trusted to convey God's revelation through the Scripture, preserving the community from massive error, and rendering minor errors innocuous. This is of course fideism—faith without reason—and it is very comforting for those who can buy into the system. Rational argumentation goes by the board, and you can go on believing what you've always believed, regardless of the challenges that science or historical-critical studies or postmodernity throws your way.

But there is a price to be paid for the comfort of insulating yourself against

rational argumentation. And in my view the price is far too high. There is a long list of things I find unacceptable about the human-response perspective: it is parasitic on the divine-inspiration perspective; it hinders us from worshipping God fully with our minds; it revels in the inscrutability of God; it is far too ready to trust historical-critical studies of Scripture and the claims of evolutionary biology; it totalizes proclamation at the expense of persuasion; the list goes on, with each item on the list requiring considerable expansion. Since we shall be discussing Barth's view of Scripture later in the term, I shall leave the discussion here. Unlike the human-constructivist perspective, one can do Christian theology properly so-called within the human-response perspective. As far as I am concerned, however, the human-response perspective gives away the store, if not now, then a generation down the road.

Finally let us turn to the divine-inspiration perspective. Whereas the problem of error did not arise at all for the human-constructivist perspective, and arose for the human-response perspective only when confronting the problem of massive error, the divine-inspiration perspective leaves no room for error whatsoever. In making this claim I am not seeking to be provocative. An omniscient God intent on communicating truthfully by means of human language is simply not going to err. As was argued earlier, errors are always committed by persons, and always signal a lack of competence. Of course if one believes in an incompetent deity, then one is free to attribute error to Scripture even from a divine-inspiration perspective. But every coherent doctrine of God that I know ascribes a host of perfections to God, and one of those perfections is certainly the competence of God to accomplish his intentions. Thus, when God intends to state the truth about some matter, we can rest assured that God will be successful in stating the truth, and won't state a falsehood. To reiterate, the divine-inspiration perspective combined

with any reasonable doctrine of God is going to yield inerrancy for its revelatory texts.

Well now, that certainly seems to settle matters, doesn't it? The human-constructivist perspective is not even Christian, and the human-response perspective is highly problematical. By default it therefore seems to follow that the divine-inspiration perspective must be correct. Yes? Of course things are not quite that simple. The three perspectives do not exhaust the space of logical possibilities. Moreover, the divine-inspiration perspective may be sufficiently problematical in its own right so that the other two perspectives, despite their faults, may not look so bad on second thought. What I propose to do then in the remainder of this talk is show that the divine-inspiration perspective is tenable, that it is capable of withstanding the main criticisms that have been brought against it to date, and that it can hold its own against the other two perspectives.

Because the very idea of an inerrant Scripture is so alien to the contemporary theological scene, let's start by removing some misconceptions. First off, let's be clear that error is not a necessary feature of human language-use. To err is certainly human, but not an essential feature of our humanity. To employ an analogy (and it is only an analogy), Jesus, the incarnate God, was fully human, but did not sin. So too, Scripture, the divine revelatory text, is a fully human production, but without error. We all are capable of making true assertions and of stringing true assertions together. One can even write a computer program that will generate infinitely many true assertions, none of which will be in error (e.g., $0 < 1$, $0 < 2$, $0 < 3$, ...). The wide prevalence of error in human practice is an accidental, not an essential feature of human practice. There is therefore nothing inherently absurd about an inerrant Scripture.

Nor is it absurd to think that God might actually be capable of communicating with humanity in language understandable to humanity.

Calvin saw God's revelation in Scripture as an accommodation of the divine majesty to our human frailty. Certainly God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts, and there are many thoughts God has which are not expressible in human language. But God also has thoughts which are accessible to us and which he means to communicate with us, not the least of which is that we are to love him and our neighbor. To deny that God can speak to us in human language is an entirely gratuitous requirement imposed on theology since the Enlightenment. God's "wholly otherness" is not destroyed by God communicating with us in human language. Just as a shepherd is not "sheepified" by tending sheep, so God is not anthropomorphized by speaking to us in human language. God is not wholly other because he is inscrutable and can't properly express himself in human language. God is wholly other precisely because as God of the whole universe he condescends to communicate with creatures made of clay. Potentates, tyrants, and sages may revel in inaccessibility and inscrutability. But this is not how God is revealed in Christ. The God in Christ is Abba, Father. I know of no father who does not speak the language of his children.

But if God is capable of speaking in human language and has actually spoken in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, why is the Scripture riddled with so many inconsistencies, repetitions, scientific bloopers, moral monstrosities, and historical glitches? In short, why are there so many errors? Before calling in the results of our earlier examination of error to answer this question, it is best to address an evasion that all too frequently comes up at this point and muddies the waters. Within evangelical circles it is common to distinguish an inerrancy view of Scripture from an infallibility view, with inerrancy being the stronger view. As far as etymology is concerned, the meaning of inerrancy and infallibility should of course be the same. Inerrancy derives from the Latin noun *error*, meaning error

or mistake, whereas infallibility derives from the Latin verb *fallo*, meaning to deceive or lead astray. Given these root meanings, it's clear that infallibility and inerrancy should mean substantially the same thing. That they don't derives from some fancy footwork.

Within evangelical circles the idea that Scripture does not err in matters of faith and practice, but can err in other matters has gained wide currency. It is this view that goes by the name of infallibility. Though perhaps initially appealing, infallibility so-defined constitutes an incoherent view of Scripture. The problem is that within Scripture, matters of faith and practice are inextricably tied together with matters of history and science. Presumably the Ten Commandments are the very words of God, but the divine command to exterminate all the Amalekites was not. Infallibilists have no clear criterion for distinguishing the things that Scripture gets right from the things it gets wrong. Thus in practice the infallibilist ends up conflating the divine-inspiration perspective and the human-response perspective, appealing to one or the other as convenience dictates. But these perspectives are fundamentally incompatible. If God is verbally communicating through Scripture, then attributing error to Scripture is incoherent. Alternatively, if Scripture is merely the record of human responses to divine actions, then errors can be imputed just as readily at the level of faith and practice as at the level of science and history.

Well then, what are we to make of all the errors in Scripture? By now it's clear that the worst thing one can do in responding to this question is itemize all the problematic passages in Scripture, and then point by point try to argue that these passages are free from error. This strategy cannot succeed. That the Scripture contains problematic passages has been recognized by the Church from its inception. Even Scripture itself acknowledges as much, for we read in 2 Peter 3:16 that the apostle Paul wrote "things hard to be understood." Orthodox

theologians throughout church history have recognized that Scripture contains problematic passages which remain thoroughly unresolved. Thus when confronted with the charge of error against Scripture, we have a three-fold choice: we can admit error, we can resolve the supposed error, or we can admit perplexity. Often a supposed error in Scripture can be resolved, with the charge of error then being decisively refuted (recall, for instance, the charge by Biblical scholars last century that the Hittites had ever existed). But if a problematic passage does not yield to our attempts to resolve it, what shall we do then? Our choice then becomes two-fold: we can either admit error, or admit

perplexity.

But doesn't admitting perplexity become a cop-out after a while? Isn't it more honest just to admit that Scripture represents the bumbling efforts of a bunch of middle-eastern rubes? But this line of attack is easily turned around: Isn't charging the Scripture with error simply a sign of our own self-assertion, elevating our own 20th century secular perspectives against the perspective from which God views the world. Yes, God is a rational personal agent who operates from a perspective of his own, what philosophers refer to as a God's eye point of view. Since academic philosophers these days largely dismiss God, they tend also to dismiss the notion of a God's eye

point of view. But as good Christian theists we ought not to have a problem with a God's eye point of view. God, as the author of Scripture, operates from an infinite perspective that incorporates all our finite perspectives. Our hermeneutic task then is, as far as is possible with the aid of the Holy Spirit, to enter the divine perspective, and thereby understand what God is teaching his Church by Scripture. If we take this approach, we won't find any error in Scripture. But if we don't, we can't help but find error in Scripture. The choice then is up to you, which perspective you are going to trust, yours or God's.

Politically correct Bible

Can the Bible be politically correct — recast so it offends no one?

Oxford University Press takes a stab at that task this week, but its new PC version of the Bible is sure to anger at least as many people as it pleases. *The New Testament and Psalms, An Inclusive Version* neuterizes the gender of God and Christ, the roles of women and men, and references offensive to people of color and people with disabilities.

God is "father-mother." Christ is "human one" or "child of God." The human one dying on the cross says, "Father-mother, into your hands I commend my spirit."

Women are advised to be "committed" instead of "subject" or "submissive" to their husbands. Children should "heed" instead of "obey" their parents. Dark is no longer a metaphor for evil. And the dis-

abled are not identified solely by their afflictions, as in "the blind."

In deference to left-handers, the PC Bible even changes references to the "right hand" of God to the "mighty" hand.

This no doubt will have traditionalists yowling — some with anger, others with laughter. Fair enough. But if some people prefer this latest version, why should anybody be concerned?

The Bible has been translated into nearly 400 languages and undergone innumerable revisions. There are versions for children, for adults who can't read well and even a rap version. Scholars continue to discover ancient documents that might even influence the 384-year old King James Version that remains the most popular.

Few are likely to pray the awkward metaphor "Our Father-mother who are in heaven," or recite "God is my shepherd."

But surely all gain when even the holiest of writings tries to make it possible for more people to grasp its truths and values — secular as well as spiritual.

"Father-Mother, hal-
lowed be
your name.
May your
dominion
come."

Luke 11:2

USA...Today...Editorial...Page...09/12/95

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO THE JESUS SEMINAR

Robert W. Yarbrough*

A recent *Time* magazine cover story chronicles a startling scholarly claim: Jesus never said most of what the four gospels attribute to him.¹ *Time* is not alone in reporting these findings.² While some may dismiss such talk as just another example of critical skepticism, others are sure to struggle with new and persistent doubts. Are the gospels really dependable? Is their historical testimony credible? Is it simply the habit of church tradition, the unthinking prejudice of gullible believers, that has caused millions of Christians for nearly two millennia to venerate the four gospels? What did Jesus really say?

Below we examine the new book that prompted the *Time* article: *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*.³ We will proceed by 1) noting that book's importance and strengths,

*Bob Yarbrough holds a Ph.D. in New Testament from the University of Aberdeen and is Associate Professor of New Testament at Covenant Theological Seminary. This essay is a slightly revised version of a lecture to the Francis Schaeffer Institute public forum entitled "What Did Jesus Really Say?" held on February 24, 1994, at Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. Other forum speakers, all representing St. Louis area institutions, included Dr. Stephen Patterson (Eden Seminary), Rev. Jeff Gibb (Concordia Seminary), and Father Jay Harrington (St. Louis University).

¹Richard N. Ostling, "Jesus Christ, Plain and Simple," *Time*, January 10, 1994, 38-39.

²See, e.g., Jeffery L. Sheler, "Cutting Loose the Holy Canon: A Controversial Re-examination of the Bible," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 8, 1993, 75; Kathryn Rogers, "Scholars Sift Wheat of Jesus' Sayings," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Saturday, January 8, 1993, Section D, 6. Radio and television broadcasts have aired similar reports.

³By Robert Funk, Roy Hoover, and The Jesus Seminar (New York: Macmillan, 1993). The Jesus Seminar is a small group of scholars who have made news in recent years by gathering periodically to vote on how likely Jesus is to have uttered each individual saying recorded in the gospels. They publish their findings in color-coded format: red for words most probably spoken by Jesus in a form close to the one preserved in the canonical gospels; pink for words perhaps from Jesus, but perhaps not, or words modified in transmission; gray for words not from Jesus, though they perhaps reflect his ideas; and black for words that Jesus definitely never said.

2) examining the seven pillars on which the authors base their work, and 3) presenting additional considerations suggesting that the book ultimately fails to make its case. In the end, it will be urged, the best available criterion for determining what Jesus actually said remains the four gospels contained in the New Testament.

IMPORTANCE AND STRENGTHS

It should be stressed at the outset that the question before us—what did Jesus really say?—does matter. True, some argue that historical facts and matters of faith have no connection. This view is popular among such disparate groups as New Age advocates, on the one hand, and historical-critical biblical scholars⁴ who use sophisticated critical weaponry to repudiate Christian faith's historical moorings, on the other. It may even be an unconscious working assumption of evangelical Christians whose view of Christian faith owes more to an existentialist mindset, or perhaps an inadvertent but ignoble anti-intellectual fideism, than to historic Christian understanding of the relation between spiritual truth and historical reality.

Serious theologians, however, know better. Oxford theologian John Macquarrie reminds us that "when some reputable historian has cast doubt on some particular [biblical] tradition, the theologian will avoid placing weight on that tradition."⁵ In other words, casting doubt on 82% of Jesus' words (one of the controversial outcomes of *The Five Gospels*) could yield 82% less Jesus in Christian theology. At some point it would seem necessary to cease calling "Christian" a theology that thrives on the negation of Jesus' words. This calls in question from the outset the credibility of *The Five Gospels* to be mediating an understanding of the gospels that the Christian community should embrace.

Yet on four scores we may hail *The Five Gospels* as a commendable publishing event. First, it contains a fresh translation of the four traditional gospels. This will be of interest to all serious students of the Bible who seek the best possible translation of the Greek originals.

Second, it focuses on Jesus—though admittedly a Jesus different from the one recognized by Christians through the centuries and around the world. Still, given the power of Jesus' heritage to shape history in the past, those who think his influence has been generally favorable can find renewed focus on him encouraging even if it results in a drastically pared-down portrait. Jesus Christ has changed some lives through as limited a portion of his reported teaching as John 3:16.

⁴See n. 39 below.

⁵*Jesus Christ in Modern Thought* (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Trinity Press International, 1990), 23.

Third, it focuses on the Bible. True, it gives the Gospel of Thomas,⁶ a document that most scholars would say is from the second century, an authority equal to that of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and considerably greater than that of John. And it applies criteria to gospel accounts and claims that cast most of what they say in grave doubt. Still, given the transformative power of the Bible in countless lives and communities over the millennia, any scholarly inquiry that dignifies it by attending closely to what it says has potential for good.

And finally, the book is critical. That is, it subjects material transmitted to us through historical processes to rigorous and discerning scrutiny, wary of received opinion and fairly flushed with the prospect of shedding new light on old questions through its labor. We may agree with the outcome of the book, or we may beg to differ. But we should recognize that the call to faith, any faith, is at the same time a call to consider, to reason, to compare, to investigate. We can hardly affirm with conviction that which we have not taken time to study and understand.

On four counts, then—a new translation, focus on Jesus, focus on the Bible, and at least a kind of critical rigor—we have grounds to commend this new book and the years of toil that produced it.

SEVEN PILLARS EXAMINED

Yet even someone sympathetic to the Jesus Seminar's aims may, upon perusing *The Five Gospels*, find himself feeling like one of the children of Israel on Jordan's banks facing Joshua's stern summons: "Choose you this day whom you will serve." For the book's introduction confronts the reader first of all with a set of assumptions, "seven pillars of scholarly wisdom" as they are termed,⁷ that blitz the reader with the demand to choose between two scenarios.

The first scenario, categorically unacceptable to the authors of *The Five Gospels*, is to read the gospels as they stand. It is to wrestle with what all can see with their own eyes in the ancient documents (or modern translations of them) and what many observers all the way back to the earliest strata of tradition have seen: a sober call to affirm personal allegiance to a human yet simultaneously divine Jesus, the anointed deliverer of God's people, crucified for their sins, resurrected for their justification, and ascended to the right hand of God the

⁶The text of this apocryphal "gospel" along with informative critical discussion is available in *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 1, ed. W. Schneemelcher and R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge/Louisville: James Clarke/Westminster/John Knox, 1991), 110-133, or in *The Nag Hammadi Library*, ed. James M. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 124-138.

⁷*The Five Gospels*, 2-5

Father in heaven, from which believers—yes, and many scholars among them—await his return.

The other scenario is to interpret the gospels with the spectacles that the Jesus Seminar provides for a safe reading, one that prevents attributing words to Jesus that he allegedly never said. This is a Jesus preformed, as we will suggest below, very little by apostolic testimony but very much by post-Enlightenment philosophical and religious commitment. It is the Jesus upheld by the seven pillars to which the opening pages of *The Five Gospels* allude. These pillars are to a large degree the crux of the book. For if the pillars are steady, the book's vastly shrunken Jesus has plausible justification. But if they are not, it may be the book's underlying methods, not the gospel accounts and Christian confessions based on them, that need radical overhaul.

The first pillar states: the historical Jesus is not the "Christ" confessed by the church through the centuries. Reimarus, an 18th century rationalist, is a primary source of this view, though we can trace similar versions of it back at least as far as the pagan skeptic Celsus in the second century.⁸ (The notion that rejection of the New Testament's human-divine Christ is the novel discovery of a few visionary modern scholars relying on scientific methods needs to be identified as the myth that it is.) Celsus and Reimarus were entitled to their opinion, as are moderns who wish to follow their lead. But we should mark well the cornerstone of their doctrine. In Reimarus' words, "the apostles strayed completely from their master in their teaching and in their lives, abandoning his religion and his intention and introducing a completely new system."⁹

Reimarus, proponent of English deism who facetiously rejected all supernatural aspects of Christian faith, thus suddenly becomes a more reliable guide for knowing about Jesus than, say, Paul. But Paul was alive at the same time and in the same part of the world as Jesus. He spoke the same languages as Jesus.¹⁰ He lived in the same major city, Jerusalem, that Jesus frequented.¹¹ Like Jesus, Paul was Jewish, in contrast to the often Marcionite and sometimes anti-Semitic intellectuals of the post-Enlightenment West. Paul certainly knew of Jesus' message and claims, persecuted Jesus' disciples, encountered Jesus

⁸*Celsus on the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians*, trans. R. J. Hoffmann (New York/Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987).

⁹H. S. Reimarus, *Reimarus: Fragments*, ed. C. H. Talbert, trans. R. S. Fraser (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 102.

¹⁰I.e. Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. On Jesus' knowledge of Greek see S. E. Porter, "Did Jesus Ever Teach in Greek?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 44/2 (1993), 199-235.

¹¹On the theological significance of Jerusalem for both Jesus and Paul see Tom Wright, "Jerusalem in the New Testament," in *Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God*, ed. P. W. L. Walker (Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1992), 53-77.

on the Damascus Road, and in one of history's great acts of humility, became Jesus' follower. Over the last hundred years even those who reject the church's historic Christ have shied away from placing so much faith in Reimarus' discredited rationalism. The first pillar of the book before us is, then, that Jesus as he existed in history is not and cannot be the Jesus confessed by Paul, John, Peter, other biblical writers, the ancient church, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism through the centuries. This may be a truism in some quarters of gospel criticism, but it is a view open to serious question.¹²

The second pillar avers that John's gospel presents a "spiritual" Jesus unlike the one found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Never mind that John's gospel itself is at pains to assert its own eyewitness foundations, as for example in 19:35 at the foot of the cross: "The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe." Never mind that we find Johannine-sounding phrases in the synoptics, for example Mt 11:27.¹³ Modern studies by men of as diverse background and expertise as Adolf Schlatter, Raymond Brown, and John A. T. Robinson have undermined this second pillar.¹⁴ Robinson, while denying orthodox christology, still concludes that John got both the history and the theology right, just as right if not more so than the synoptics. Of course this does not in itself prove that *The Five Gospels* is wrong. It does however remind us that its conclusions are open to well-founded doubt at this point.

Pillars three and four may be taken together. Matthew and Luke, it is urged, are derived in large measure from Mark. It is at best a ruse when Luke claims to be conveying things "just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word ... so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught" (Lk 1:2, 4). This reduces the synoptic tradition from three early testimonies to just one: Mark. And now the fourth pillar: a hypothetical document called Q (about 225 vv. common to Matthew and Luke and absent from Mark) is placed alongside of Mark as the other independent witness to Jesus. Q consists of sayings and in the nature of the case does not include the passion narrative or Jesus' resurrection. As gospels scholar William Farmer has commented, the hypothetical Q

¹²For a recent scholarly challenge to the "Jesus of history/Christ of faith" dichotomy, see M. Bockmühl, *This Jesus* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994).

¹³"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

¹⁴Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Johannes* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1975); Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966-70); Robinson, *The Priority of John* (Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1987).

document, which then by the miraculous power of critical conjecture gets reified into a living community, is used to suggest that "the death and resurrection of Jesus was ... of little or no importance" to his earliest disciples.¹⁵ Farmer rightly calls this "bizarre." The problem with both these pillars is the logical leap they make from the possibility that early gospels shared material to the assertion that they made up most of what they record.¹⁶ Once more, this leap is so embedded in recent religious-studies tradition that it may seem reactionary to question it. But in the name of critical integrity we should. There is good reason to doubt, if not pillars three and four themselves, then at least the use to which they are put by the Jesus Seminar in its work that resulted in *The Five Gospels*.

The fifth pillar is especially intriguing: Jesus was not an "eschatological" figure.¹⁷ This means many things, but *The Five Gospels* puts it well: "The Jesus of the gospels is an imaginative theological construct, into which has been woven traces of the enigmatic sage from Nazareth—traces that cry out for recognition and liberation from the firm grip of those whose faith overpowered their memories."¹⁸ We could have learned this from Reimarus two and a half centuries ago. Jesus was an enigmatic sage, not the messianic end-time herald and sacrifice for the sin of the world. He never said, as Mk 1:15 claims, "The time has come; the kingdom is at hand. Repent and believe the good news!" He never forgave a paralytic's sins, as Mk 2:5 records. He never called followers to take up their cross, never warned Jerusalem of coming judgment, never stated that heaven and earth would pass away but his words would not.¹⁹ While a good many scholars past and present have found a ragged eschatological edge to virtually all Jesus' words and deeds, we now have a Jesus who says mainly this-worldly and often nice things: "Love your enemies ... turn the other cheek ... blessed are the poor ... give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's ... consider the lilies" (all printed in red in *The Five Gospels*). The immediate question this raises is why

¹⁵Quoted in Richard N. Ostling, "Jesus Christ, Plain and Simple," *Time*, January 10, 1994, 39.

¹⁶On this and numerous other dubious moves that characterize the methods informing *The Five Gospels* see V. P. Long, *The Art of Biblical History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

¹⁷In the public forum alluded to in n. 1 above, Rev. Jeff Gibbs gave extensive evidence that this opinion, while held by a few, is by no means the majority opinion in mainstream life of Jesus scholarship. [Ed.: an edited version of Gibbs' presentation follows in this journal.]

¹⁸*The Five Gospels*, 4.

¹⁹In *The Five Gospels* all these sayings of Jesus are marked in black, signifying that they are inauthentic. Beginning with the quote from Mk 1:15 above, see respectively *The Five Gospels*, 40, 43, 353, 244, 250.

anyone would want to put him to death. What threat did he pose? What Jewish ways did he violate? What Roman fears could such statements have prompted?

Space precludes extended scrutiny of pillars six and seven. Six sketches a contrast between the oral culture of Jesus and modern print culture and alleges that we now have means to isolate what Jesus could have said from what he could not have said. Suffice it to say that substantial research demonstrates that Jesus' oral culture could well have reliably transmitted what he taught his band of disciples.²⁰ Pillar seven is the sweeping assertion that the gospels are assumed to be false in matters of history unless they can be shown to the modern skeptic's satisfaction to be true.²¹ One wonders how much of history in general, ancient or modern, would be accessible if such a Troeltschian hermeneutics of suspicion were consistently applied.²² Martin Hengel's caveat has point here: "It is remarkable that where there is radical mistrust of the ancient sources because of their 'bias,' the possibilities of the scholar's own biased imagination extend all the further because all the boundary posts have been taken down."²³

So far I have summarized the seven pillars of the Jesus Seminar's latest crowning achievement *The Five Gospels*. I have also interspersed interrogative commentary that makes it clear why I find the pillars a shaky basis for rejecting the plain historical, and yes, theological claims that the four gospels make about the words that Jesus spoke and the person that he was. The Jesus Christ of the gospels is hard to understand and humbling in his call that we repent of our sins and look to his cross for deliverance, I admit. But faced with the choice of bowing down before Christ, on the one hand, or the seven pillars, on

²⁰See, e.g., R. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 31988).

²¹"... the gospels are now assumed to be narratives in which the memory of Jesus is embellished by mythic elements that express the church's faith in him, and by plausible fictions that enhance the telling of the gospel story for first-century listeners Supposedly historical elements in these narratives must therefore be demonstrated to be so" (*The Five Gospels*, 4-5). One notes here that virtually all of the canonical gospels contain organic historical ties at every turn, while virtually none of the Gospel of Thomas does. In that sense Thomas is not really a gospel. This ahistoricism may be one of the reasons why Thomas fares so well in Jesus Seminar deliberations: since it makes no historical claims, it requires no historical proof for its assertions.

²²Not much, suggests A.T. Hanson; he shows that form critical criteria applied to documents of secular history "could be used to discredit the accuracy of almost any historical document" (D. Hall, *The Seven Pillories of Wisdom* [Macon, GA: Mercer, 1990], 106, referring to Hanson, "The Quandary of Historical Skepticism," in *Vindications*, ed. A. T. Hanson [London: SCM, 1966], 94).

²³*The Pre-Christian Paul* (London/Philadelphia: SCM/Trinity Press International, 1991), 8.

the other, there are good reasons for choosing Christ. Some broader evaluative remarks may clarify why I say this.

CRITICAL CONSENSUS AND HISTORICAL QUERIES

First, it should be underscored that each of the seven pillars finds *substantial contradiction in scholarly literature*.²⁴ By itself this fact does not prove that the pillars are unstable, but it does call in question the way that *The Five Gospels* prefaces its findings, which strikes one as smug, and the condescending way it tends to dismiss all dissenting opinion as fundamentalist, which appears unscholarly and sensationalistic.

For example: anyone who questions the pillars is "held captive by prior theological commitments."²⁵ Is the matter really so simple as this? Is everyone on earth and throughout history held captive except those who agree with this book? I would rather hold out the possibility that many are at least trying not to be "held captive" in a reactionary sense. But the claim that theological commitments necessarily disqualify one from learned discourse on the gospels is, if true, a sword that cuts two ways. For in that case all of *The Five Gospels* authors are held captive, too, since none is without prior theological commitments. But I do not think the claim is true as stated; it is not a question of some (i.e., Christian believers) having theological commitments and others (i.e., "scholars") having none. The question is rather whose commitments can make the best case for being grounded in the full range of pertinent data, and my contention is that the onesided and sometimes flippant way in which *The Five Gospels* frames its presentation has more tenuous footing in solid academic learning than it claims.

²⁴On Gospel reliability the available bibliography is extensive and growing. Representative of a broad range of approaches and aims are C. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1987); I. H. Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977); N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (forthcoming). On scholarship's errant tendencies see, e.g., D. R. Hall, *Seven Pillories*; E. Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology?* trans. R. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990); idem, *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* trans. R. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992). More constructively see, e.g., J. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (Guildford, Surrey, England: 1993); idem, *Redating Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992).

²⁵*The Five Gospels*, 5. Hall (*Seven Pillories*, 115) may put his finger on part of the problem here: "Scholars write mainly for academic audiences. They can easily come to believe that, because their audience shares their presuppositions, those presuppositions must be true. If people outside their field of specialization find it difficult to accept the conclusions built upon those presuppositions, that is taken as an indication that those outsiders are unwilling to accept the truth."

To put the point of *The Five Gospels'* limited scholarly credibility more broadly, I would suggest that *critical scholarship does not support their findings in the way the book implies*. It has not developed in a methodical, cumulative fashion, with the Jesus Seminar standing atop a heap of assured results. It can be argued that the only essential widespread agreement among critical scholars since the Enlightenment has been that the surface claims of the gospels are wrong—Jesus was not the Christ. In any case, virtually all areas of critical study of the New Testament are currently in disarray.²⁶ It is thus somewhat misleading for the Jesus Seminar to present the history of the discipline as a history that furnishes it with an impregnable platform on which to stand, which is what I find the opening pages of the book attempting to do.²⁷

Second, the book claims to have been steered by the dictum, "Beware of finding a Jesus entirely congenial to you."²⁸ It may be asked if *The Five Gospels* sufficiently heeds this advice. Perhaps all the sources going as far back as we know, except Q and parts of some gnostic sources like Thomas, present a "mythical" Jesus. On the other hand, the Jesus Seminar may have fallen prey to the very cultural subservience it warns of by seeing in the gospels primarily what the surrounding post modern culture permits.²⁹ It is hardly coincidental that in the midst of mainline academia's this-worldly egalitarian liberationist theologies we suddenly learn that Jesus was a this-worldly egalitarian liberationist (note for example the Gospel of Thomas' anti-hierarchical invitation³⁰).

²⁶See E. Epp and G. MacRae, eds., *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia/Atlanta: Fortress/Scholars, 1989).

²⁷To the objection that more traditional Christian theology evinces many contradictions, too, reference may be made to David Lotz, "The Achievement of Jaroslav Pelikan," *First Things* 23 (May 1992) 55-65. Lotz concludes on the basis of Pelikan's magisterial five-volume *The Christian Tradition* that "to speak of 'the Christian tradition' is historically warranted, despite perennial disagreements among Christians about various components of this tradition. There is, in brief, a multifaceted body of Christian doctrine that throughout the centuries has constituted 'the common Christian faith'" (64).

²⁸*The Five Gospels*, 5.

²⁹Wilhelm Herrmann once wrote that Ernst Troeltsch was too much swayed, not by "the growth of dangerous results" generated by fresh discoveries but by the methods by which he chose to highlight and abide. See Herrmann, rev. of Troeltsch, *Die Bedeutung der Geschichtlichkeit Jesu für den Glauben*, rpt. in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 57 (1960) 231-237. Might Herrmann's claim have application in the current discussion?

³⁰Gospel of Thomas 22: "Jesus saw infants being suckled. He said to His disciples, 'These infants being suckled are like those who enter the Kingdom.' They said to Him, 'Shall we then, as children, enter the Kingdom?' Jesus said to them, 'When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside

This leads to a third matter. Many historians will likely conclude that *The Five Gospels'* reconstruction founders on the historian's demand for a cause sufficient to explain the effect of first century events. The rise of the church is undeniable; the preaching of Jesus' resurrection from the dead already in the A.D. 30s is established.³¹ All this raises the stubborn question of what caused the gospels to claim what they do if so little of what they report actually took place. The data must be satisfactorily accounted for. The trained historian, and even the layperson with common sense, demands a cause sufficient to account for the observed effects.

An older study by a French scholar may help us here. Daniel-Rops in his *Jesus and His Times*³² notes that "the whole body of critical writing about Jesus ... divides automatically into two groups, that which accepts the Incarnation as a fact in history and that which does not."³³ He traces those who do not from Reimarus to Lessing to Paulus to Strauss down to what he calls the liberal school, epitomized in thinkers like Wellhausen and Harnack. He characterizes them as "reincarnations" of the ancient Arians, who stripped Jesus of his divine nature, making him "a man, incomparable in his spiritual force and moral grandeur, but only a man all the same."³⁴ He was no eschatological figure, just an ethical and psychological prodigy. In this same era the French scholar Ernst Renan invoked a fifth gospel to explain Jesus—not the Gospel of Thomas, however, but the cultural background of Palestine.

and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same, so that the male not be male nor the female female; and when you fashion eyes in place of an eye, and a hand in place of a hand, and a foot in place of a foot, and a likeness in place of a likeness; then will you enter [the Kingdom]."

³¹New Testament critical literature was canvassed a few years back by a philosopher who found that "virtually all critical scholars who deal with this issue agree" on some eleven facts surrounding Jesus' resurrection. To cite just six of these: 1) Jesus died by crucifixion; 2) his death caused his disciples to despair; 3) shortly thereafter the disciples experienced what they thought were literal appearances of the risen Jesus; 4) the disciples proclaimed Jesus' saving death and resurrection, willing to die for their claims; 5) their message was the core claim of all the earliest church; and 6) their earliest evangelistic efforts centered in the very city where Jesus was well known and publicly put to death: Jerusalem. See G. Habermas and A. Flew, *Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?*, ed. T. Miethe (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 19-20.

³²Trans. R. Millar (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1954), especially 599-610.

³³*Ibid.*, 600.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 603.

All these treatments had in common their implicit scorn³⁵ of the gospels as they stand and Christian theology based upon them. And Jesus, a Jesus of real life who was active and memorable enough to have set in motion the historical effects that we find in ancient sources and express still today in worship and service, fades into vagueness. "What remains," Daniel-Rops asks, "of the tremendous figure which is so real and alive in the Gospel narrative?" We follow the trajectory of this incarnation-denying tradition of belief down to the present and hear the reply: just 18% of what the canonical gospels say, and none that accords him eschatological consciousness, let alone divinity. Daniel-Rops concludes: this "implies a very shabby view of Christianity. If the great religion of the West is nothing more than the deification of a man, the paltry apotheosis of an individual, then it is, for all its wide diffusion, of a very low type; inferior indeed, in the realm of religion, to Judaism or Islam, which were very careful not to exalt Moses or Mohammed as gods."³⁶

But such a view of Jesus is not just theologically insulting; it is historically problematic. It reduces Jesus to a question mark and the church to either an enigma, an absurdity, or a swindle. Daniel-Rops stubbornly demands, "If the Church invented Christ, how did the Church itself come to be born?"³⁷ If we answer: from various cultural and religious strands of the day; then we face Karl Holl's question, "Why should it have been rejected by Judaism and Hellenism as a foreign element, if it had indeed ... grown out of them in historical continuity?"³⁸

But perhaps we smile at Daniel-Rops' charge of Arianism because it is irrelevant in the post modern setting, and deflect his charge of liberalism's historical implausibility with the reply that Christian faith worthy of the name requires no, or very few, facts. This still begs the historian's question. But what should we make of a Christian

³⁵A. Schweitzer's famous comment comes to mind: "For hate as well as love can write a Life of Jesus, and the greatest of them are written with hate: that of Reimarus, the Wolfenbüttel Fragmentist, and that of David Friedrich Strauss. It was not so much hate of the Person of Jesus as the supernatural nimbus with which it was so easy to surround Him, and with which He had in fact been surrounded. They were eager to picture Him as truly and purely human, to strip from Him the robes of splendour with which He had been apparelled, and clothe Him once more with the coarse garments in which He had walked in Galilee" (*The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, trans. W. Montgomery [London: Adam & Charles Black, 1948], 4-5).

³⁶Daniel-Rops, *Jesus and His Times*, 610.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸L. Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament*, vol. 1, trans. J. Alsup (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 262 with n. 14.

faith that calls the gospels historic but not historical, the church's creeds statements of belief but not of fact?

If by that we mean that knowledge of fact alone is not Christian faith, then I agree. If we mean that we dare not reduce God to a function of human reason by equating confession of truths with the full reality to which those truths point, then again I see no difficulty. But at some point we must admit that to the extent an understanding of Christian faith is inimical to history it is inimical to Jesus Christ.³⁹ (This, by the way, is one reason why the ahistorical Gospel of Thomas was never accepted as a Christian document in the mainstream ancient church: its hostility to the material and the historical hopelessly discredits it as a viable witness to the transcendent Creator-God's material and historical reign over this earth.) The resurrection is an historical event without which Christian faith collapses, according to Paul. The gospels, like the Old Testament books they cite, ground their call to faith on historical discourses and events. To call the gospels historic but not historical is to attack their clear affirmations and to declare allegiance to a gospel and Lord that are alien to Old and New Testament alike. Now everyone is entitled to her or his own religion. But at some point it becomes disingenuous to read an ahistorical religious philosophy into the New Testament documents with their emphatic sober stress on Jesus' observed works and words.

CONCLUSION

Measured by the plausibility of its arguments and granted the pillars it rests on, *The Five Gospels* succeeds in presenting a coherent case that what Jesus really said bears little resemblance to what we find on the pages of present Bibles. Measured by the more stringent and balanced standards of a more responsible historical method, however, the arguments fall short of being compelling. This is to say nothing of such weighty considerations as canon, doctrine of inspiration, and the personal authority of God in Christ that make tampering with his inspired written word unwise. But since the Jesus Seminar claims to use historical method, it is warranted to respond primarily on historical

³⁹Gerhard Maier has recently pointed out that modern historical criticism in the Dibelius-Bultmann neo-Kantian vein, very much reflected in Jesus Seminar views, is "unhistorical." One finds in it a discrepancy "between the emphasis on historical biblical exegesis, on the one hand, and the dogmatic move to break free of what is historical, on the other." In this sense it is precisely historical criticism with its avowed aim of being "historical" that "has done the most to devalue history." See Maier's *Biblical Hermeneutics*, trans. R. Yarbrough (Wheaton: Crossway, 1994), 271. Scottish scholar R. S. Barbour has likewise called attention to the "crypto-idealism of much modern biblical scholarship" which belies its professed empirical aims (*Traditio-Historical Criticism of the Gospels* [London: SPCK, 1972], 45).

grounds. I have tried to do so and would like to suggest that if we want to know what Jesus really said, our best indicator is the four-gospel corpus that Christ's earliest followers by the Spirit of Jesus faithfully compiled.

today@chronicle.com, 10:50 AM 12/5/96 , 12/5/96 Daily Report from ACAD

A glance at the November/December issue of "Troika": The problem with law schools

"The public holds lawyers in low esteem -- and for good reason," writes Alan Hirsch, a lawyer and freelance writer. The root of the problem, he contends, lies in the way prospective lawyers are taught. Recent surveys and books show that students emerge from law schools cynical, selfish, and less likely to consider their legal careers as a public service. "What is going on at law schools that produces this lamentable effect?" Mr. Hirsch asks. The main culprit, he writes, is the "case method," the commonly used technique of studying appeals cases via the Socratic method. "The student called on to start the Socratic inquiry is often told by the professor which position to defend, or simply told to take any position willy-nilly, without regard for what she might regard as correct," Mr. Hirsch explains. "The result is usually not to determine whether the case was decided correctly or incorrectly, but to show that it easily could have been decided either way." Students are taught that morals and personal values no longer matter, he concludes, because "thinking like a lawyer means being comfortable arguing for anything." (The magazine may be found at your newsstand or library.)

Scholars mount effort to challenge Jesus seminar conclusions

By Scott Collins

Southwestern Seminar Writer
FORT WORTH, Texas

The battle for the Bible is on and, this time, Baptists are not fighting themselves.

Instead, the target is a group of scholars known as the Jesus Seminar which is attempting to rewrite the New Testament and correct what they say are centuries-old lies promoted by the church about the words of Jesus. The result of the Jesus Seminar is the book, "The Five Gospels."

Jesus Seminar scholars believe Jesus never said 82 percent of what is attributed to him in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They also say Jesus never preached about salvation through his death, never worked any miracles and never rose from the dead.

Furthermore, members of the Jesus Seminar rely on the Gospel of Thomas, a book conservative scholars say is heretical, and a collection of sayings known as "Q," or Quelle, which means "source" in German.

The results of the Jesus Seminar, along with other books released in the past year, have drawn the attention of the secular media. *TIME* magazine featured the seminar's work in January and *U.S. News & World Report* also reported about the group's conclusions.

In December, a Texas businessman donated \$1.5 million to fund continued research by proponents of the Jesus Seminar

movement, prompting one Baptist scholar to call for people who disagree with the group's findings to stand up for their beliefs.

"It's important that people fund similar research projects for the other side of the coin," said Bruce Corley, dean of the school of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Corley and other scholars are mounting an effort to challenge the conclusions of the Jesus Seminar.

Alan Brehm, assistant professor of New Testament at Southwestern and a former Fulbright scholar, said it is important that Bible-believing Baptists hold to the doctrine of inspiration and scriptural authority to answer questions posed by the Jesus Seminar and other groups.

"An understanding of the origin of the Gospels, combined with the belief in their inspiration, helps answer unsettling questions and confirms the confidence we place in the Gospels as authentic accounts of Jesus' ministry and teaching," Brehm said.

Brehm and other conservative scholars question the research methods of the Jesus Seminar.

To determine which passages of Scripture should be authentic, the 74 scholars in the Jesus Seminar meet twice a year and vote on portions of Jesus' words, casting color-coded beads into a box to indicate which words of Christ are more authentic.

Under the system of the Jesus Seminar, a red bead means Jesus undoubtedly said this or something like it; pink means Jesus probably said something like this; gray means Jesus did not say this, but the ideas contained in it are close to his own; black means Jesus did not say this, but the saying represents the perspective or content of a later or different tradition.

In its new translation of the Gospels, the Jesus Seminar credits Jesus with only the first two words of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father."

E. Earle Ellis, research professor of theology at Southwestern Seminary, said the conclusions of the seminar "have little or no historical credibility. It is a simplistic notion to suppose that a collection of nondescript New Testament scholars, who are by no means representative of contemporary scholarship, can determine by majority vote with colored beads the historical probability of a given saying or teaching of Jesus in the Gospels."

Ellis, one of the founders of the Institute for Biblical Research, a think-tank of conservative scholars, said the Jesus Seminar's methods are based on "flawed 19th century historical models" and outdated assumptions by scholars from the 1920s.

Ellis said those scholars assumed that the Gospels were transmitted like folk traditions of a pre-literate society.

But that assumption has been proven to be false by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and by more recent literary studies, Ellis said.

Ellis and other scholars also dismiss the Jesus Seminar's use of the Gospel of Thomas. According to Ellis, the Gospel of Thomas was discovered in Egypt in 1946 and is dated at 350 to 400 years after the time of Jesus. The book is the product of a cultic form of Christianity known as Gnosticism, which placed a premium on knowledge rather than faith.

Among the teachings in the Gospel of Thomas is the belief that a woman must become a male in order to be saved, an idea Ellis said is "cultic and fanciful."

"To use the Gospel of Thomas to understand the historical Jesus is like using the Book of Mormon to understand the origins of Christianity," Ellis said.

Brehm, Ellis and other scholars say it is important for Baptists to hold to their beliefs about the reliability, authority and inspiration of the Gospels.

"Christians have good reason to rely on the Gospels as authentic accounts of Jesus' ministry and teaching and as true interpretations of his identity and mission," Brehm said.

"The Gospels are portraits, not photographs," Ellis said. "Like a good portrait, each Gospel has its special perspective and its unique insight into the person of Jesus."

"The question is which 'historical Jesus' gives the best portrait of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus Seminar or the four evangelists' Jesus?" Ellis said. "The answer should not be difficult."

The Nature of The Bible: A Detailed Summary

I. Its Inspiration

A. Definition of inspiration: "That supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the Scripture writers which rendered their writings an accurate record of the revelation or which resulted in what they actually wrote being the Word of God." (Millard Erickson, Christian Theology, 199).

1. The writers were inspired.

"Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its own origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:20-21).

2. The writings were inspired.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Tim. 3: 16-17).

B. Related terms

1. Revelation - The act and/or process by which through word and deed God disclosed himself and thus truth about his nature and work. It is a divine disclosure, and implies the unveiling of something previously hidden.

2. Illumination - God's Spirit opening human minds to perceive and understand the truth already made known through revelation and recorded in Scripture through inspiration.

C. Leading theories about the nature of inspiration

1. Representative non-evangelical views

a) Natural inspiration - Bible writers are inspired as are all great writers (Theodore Parker, American Unitarians).

b) General Christian inspiration - All Christians experience and manifest the Spirit's inspiration (Schleiermacher, Coleridge).

c) Partial inspiration - Only certain portions of the Bible are inspired, primarily the theological; things generally that the writers could not have known naturally (J.H. Newman, William Sanday, Harry Emerson Fosdick, C.H. Dodd).

* None of these allow for the supernatural, authoritative nature of the biblical revelation.

2. Representative conservative evangelical views

- a) Dictation theory - God spoke the individual words to the writers. The writers were passive vehicles for God's message. This view does not allow room for the individuality of the biblical writers to be expressed (Philo, John R. Rice).
- b) Plenary - Meaning "full," the term emphasizes that every part of the Bible is inspired. Often the word "verbal" is added; "plenary verbal" explicitly extends inspiration to the very words themselves, though the word "plenary" alone implies it.
- c) Dynamic - Biblical writers' personality, spirit, and vocabulary are reflected in their writing, but God ensured that what was written was what he intended.

D. The Inerrancy of Scripture

Definition - "being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit" (Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, article XII).

1. Clarifying Criteria - Most inerrantists clarify what they mean by the word "inerrant" in one or more of the following ways due to neoorthodox ambiguity:
 - a) The doctrine of inerrancy refers only to the autographs. Any existing copy or translation is inerrant to the extent that it reflects the original.
 - b) The doctrine of inerrancy considers as error a deliberate statement of what the writer knew to be false.
 - c) The doctrine of inerrancy excludes grammatical irregularities, misspellings, or variations in form from its definition of error.
 - d) The doctrine of inerrancy excludes things a Bible writer did not intend to say from its definition of error.
 - e) The doctrine of inerrancy does not demand scientific precision in reporting. None of the following is or should be considered an error: using "son" to refer to son, grandson, or other descendent; rounding off numbers; paraphrasing the OT.
 - f) The doctrine of inerrancy exempts apparent discrepancies and contradictions in the Bible which might ultimately be harmonized (for example, two different accounts of the same event).
 - g) Note how David Dockery qualifies his definition of inerrancy: "Inerrancy [is] the idea that when all the facts are known, the Bible (in its autographs, that is, the original documents), properly interpreted in the light of the culture and the means of communication that had developed by the time of its composition, is completely true in all that it affirms, to the degree of precision intended by the author's purpose, in all matters relating to God and His creation (The Doctrine of the Bible, 80, 89-91).

VARIATIONS ON THE DOCTRINE OF INERRANCY**1. ABSOLUTE INERRANCY -**

affirms plenary/verbal inspiration while trying to distance itself from a mechanical dictation view of inspiration.

Affirms the accuracy of the Bible in all matters, including science and history "*to a great degree of precision!*" (Harold Lindsell)

***2. CRITICAL (NATURAL) INERRANCY**

makes cautious use of critical methodologies such as form and redaction criticism;

affirms the truth of everything in the Bible to the degree of precision *intended by the author*.

Usually regards biblical references to scientific matters as **phenomenal** (how they appeared to the writer).

Does not seek to harmonize every detail of Scripture because it recognizes that the authors wrote for different purposes. (Al Mohler; Danny Akin; J.I. Parker; D.A. Carson; Chicago Statement).

3. LIMITED INERRANCY

Affirms the Bible is *inerrant in all matters of faith and practice*, as well as matters which can be empirically verified.

Inspiration does not grant modern understanding; hence the Bible may contain errors of science or history, but it did secure fully truthful teaching about belief and behavior. (I.H. Marshall).

4. NUANCED INERRANCY

affirms that how one understands inerrancy *depends on the type of biblical literature* under consideration.

Some portions, such as TEN COMMANDMENTS, seem to hve been given through a mechanical dictation form of inspiration. The epistles and historical materials might be described as given by verbal inspiration. A book like Proverbs seems to require a more free view (poss. dynamic view). (Clark Pinnock).

5. FUNCTIONAL INERRANCY (Infallibility)

affirms that the purpose of the Bible is to bring people to salvation and growth in grace. The Bible accomplishes its PURPOSE without fail.

Affirms that the Bible is *sufficiently accurate* in factual matters to accompplish its PURPOSE, but seeks to avoid describing the inerrancy of Scripture primarily in terms of FACTICITY.

Instead, it speaks of the Bible in terms of trustworthiness and faithfulness. (Jack Rogers, Donald McKim).

6. SPONTANEOUS INERRANCY (View from the Pew!)

an expression of simple trust and faith in the Bible.

Often marked by little, if any awareness of, or interest in scholarly discussions of the doctrine of inerrancy. (Ma and Pa Baptist).

2. Variations of the doctrine of inerrancy
 (See David Dockery, "Variations on Inerrancy," SBC Today [May 1986]:10-11 and The Doctrine of the Bible, 86-88: John P. Newport, "Southern Baptist and the Bible: Seeking a Balanced Perspective," Southwestern Journal of Theology 34[Spring 1992] 31-42.)
 - a) Absolute (Strict) inerrancy
 - affirms plenary verbal inspiration while trying to distance itself from a mechanical dictation view of inspiration.
 - affirms the accuracy of the Bible in all matters, including science and history.
 - representative: Harold Lindsell, The Battle for the Bible.
 - b) Critical inerrancy
 - makes cautious use of critical methodologies such as form and redaction criticism.
 - affirms the truth of everything in the Bible to the degree of precision intended by the author. Usually regards biblical references to scientific matters as phenomenal (how they appeared to the writer).
 - does not seek to harmonize every detail of Scripture because it recognizes that the authors wrote for different purposes.
 - representatives: Roger Nicole and J. Ramsey Michaels, eds., Inerrancy and Common Sense; D.A. Carson and John Woodbridge, eds., Scripture and Truth.
 - c) Limited inerrancy
 - affirms that the Bible is inerrant in all matters of faith and practice as well as matters which can be empirically verified.
 - inspiration did not grant modern understanding; hence the Bible may contain errors of science and history. But it did secure truthful teaching about belief and behavior.
 - representative: I. Howard Marshall, Biblical Inspiration.
 - d) Nuanced inerrancy
 - affirms that how one understands inerrancy depends on the type of biblical literature under consideration.
 - some portions, such as the Ten Commandments, seem to have been given through a mechanical dictation form of inspiration. Epistles and historical materials might be described as given in a verbal inspiration. Material such as the Proverbs seems to require a more free view of inspiration, such as the dynamic view.
 - because of the close link between inspiration and inerrancy, this approach argues, it is essential to articulate one's view of inerrancy carefully in light of the various literary genre in Scripture.

-representative: Clark Pinnock, The Scripture Principle.

e) Functional inerrancy (infallibility)

- affirms that the purpose of the Bible is to bring people to salvation and growth in grace. The Bible accomplishes its purpose without fail (infallibility).
- affirms that the Bible is sufficiently accurate in factual matters to accomplish its purpose but seeks to avoid describing the inerrancy of Scripture primarily in terms of facticity. Instead, it speaks of the Bible in terms of truthfulness and faithfulness.
- representatives: G.C. Berkouwer, Holy Scripture; Jack Rogers and David McKim, The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible.

f) Spontaneous inerrancy

- an expression of simple trust in the Bible.
- often marked by little, if any, awareness of, or interest in scholarly discussions of the doctrine of inerrancy.

3. Arguments for the doctrine of inerrancy

a) Biblical

(1) God's Character

"Not at all! Let God be true and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge" (Romans 3:4).

(2) Christ's Teaching

"If he called them 'gods,'-to whom the word of God came--and the Scripture cannot be broken--" (John 10:35; cf also Matt 5: 17-18).

(3) The God-breathed nature of Scripture

(II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21).

b) Logical-Inerrantists often employ a deductive mode of argument similar to the following:

Major premise: God does not err.
 Minor premise: The Bible is God's Word.
 Conclusion: The Bible does not err.

c) Historical - Those who have not affirmed the inerrancy of the Bible have frequently gone on to deviate from basic Christian doctrine and have lost their spiritual vitality. Further, it was the universal view of the church until the Enlightenment.

- d) Philosophical - The law of non-contradiction set forth by Aristotle claims that statements are either true or false; hence the Bible is either errant or inerrant.

4. Arguments against the doctrine of inerrancy
(See Stephen T. Davis, The Debate About the Bible, ch. 5 and Fisher Humphreys, "Biblical Inerrancy: A Guide For the Perplexed" in Robison James, ed., The Unfettered Word, 47-60.)

- a) Appealing to the inerrancy of the autographs is confusing.
 - (1) It implies that available Greek and Hebrew texts, as well as modern translations, are not inerrant.
 - (2) The acknowledgement that we have trustworthy but not inerrant versions of the Bible undercuts the argument that inerrancy is epistemologically essential.
- b) The phenomena of Scripture do not support it.
 - (1) Prominent inerrantists themselves admit that the Bible contains "inadvertences," "problem passages," "apparent discrepancies, verbal differences, seeming contradictions," and the like. But they insist that these must not be called "errors." Some examples:

How many charioteers were killed?

"But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there" (II Sam. 10:18).

"But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven thousand of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also killed Shophach the commander of their army" (I Chron. 19:18).

When did Abraham leave Haran?

"After Terah lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. ...Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Haran. So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran" (Gen. 11:26, 32; 12:4).

Acts 7:4 "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living."

From where is Matthew 27: 9-10 quoting?

Mt. 27:9-10 "Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: 'They took the thirty silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potters files, as the Lord commanded me.'"

Zech. 11:12-13 "I told them, 'If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it.' So they paid me thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said to me, 'Throw it to the Potter' -- the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD to the potter."

- c) The appeal to the author's intent does not resolve all difficulties.
 - (1) Example:

"[Jesus] told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch on its branches'" (Matt. 13:31-32).
 - (2) Botanists claim some orchids have seeds smaller than the mustard seed. Is it fair or not to claim that Jesus was intending to teach about seed size in this passage?
- d) Inerrancy emphasizes the wrong tasks, defending the minutiae of the Bible instead of proclaiming its saving message.
- e) It is very difficult to understand how a sophisticated, qualified doctrine of inerrancy differs substantially from the high view of Scripture put forth by some non-inerrantists.

II. Its Authority

A. SBC Statement: "The sole authority for faith and practice among Baptist is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments" (Baptist Faith and Message).

B. Alternative Approaches

1. Roman Catholic - authority rests in the church.

- a) The Church is above the Bible because the Bible was given to and through the Church.
- b) The Bible is authoritative only as it agrees with Church decrees and dogma.

- (1) Irenaeus began the concept of the church as the authoritative interpreter of Scripture and defined correct interpretation as the teaching of the Church:

"True knowledge is the teaching of the apostles, and the ancient order of the Church in all the world, and the form of the body of Christ according to the successions of bishops, to whom they transmitted the Church which is in each place, which has come down to us, guarded without composition of writings by a very thorough treatment (the rule of faith), neither increased or diminished. In it there is a reading without falsification, and a lawful and diligent exegesis of the Scriptures..."

- (2) The Council of Trent (1545-63) reaffirmed the Roman Catholic Church as the authoritative interpreter of Scripture:

"No one shall presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which the holy mother Church hath held and doth hold."

2. Rationalism- final authority rests in the human intellect; theology and the Bible are only valid as they meet logical, rational criteria.
3. Empiricism - final authority rests in human experience; theology and the Bible are valid only as they meet experiential tests.
4. Existentialism - personal experience is the final authority; the Bible is authoritative only as it meets personal needs.
5. Creedalism (also Traditionalism) - creedal statements of belief have final authority for their adherents; the Bible is authoritative only as interpreted in these creeds.

C. Reasons for ascribing authority to the Bible alone

1. Internal evidence

- a) The Bible claims divine authority for itself (II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:21).
- b) Christ claims authority for the OT (Mt. 5:17; Jn. 10:35).
- c) The unity of the Bible.

2. External evidence

- a) Its practical effect-the Bible works in the lives of people
- b) Its cumulative influence
- c) Its remarkable survival
- d) Its confirmation by the findings of archaeology

D. The Bible in the pattern for divine authority

1. Role of the Father

- a) Creator
- b) Final Judge
- c) Foundation for authority

2. Role of the Son

- a) Revealer of the Father
- b) Central figure of Scripture
- c) Supreme depository of the knowledge of God

3. Role of the Spirit

- a) Inspired Scripture
- b) Confirms biblical truth through salvation and inner witness
- c) Empowers biblical truth in Christian life

4. Role of Scripture

- a) Divine-human record of God's historical revelation
- b) Divinely inspired interpretation of that revelation within its historical context.
- c) Indispensable documentary source and final authority for Christian faith and practice

E. Characteristics of biblical authority

- 1. Delegated position--authority from the triune God is delegated to the Bible as the revelation of God. The Bible does not possess an authority of its own; its authority comes from its status as God's word.
- 2. Redemptive purpose--written as means of salvation by the agency of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 20:31).
- 3. Personal power--used by God as means of Christian life and growth (Heb. 4:12).

F. Use of biblical authority

- 1. For knowledge
- 2. For Christian faith and life

III. Its Language

A. A written record--thus requiring literary means of interpretation (textual criticism, grammatical and syntactical analysis, literary genre, etc).

B. A theological record--thus requiring theological formulation of its nature.

1. The attack on the validity of religious and biblical language

a) David Hume, Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding

- (1) Ideas are derived from sense impressions only.
- (2) Truth must be verified by the senses or "logically self-evident." Otherwise truth claims are meaningless.
- (3) Epistemologically this is inadequate. How would one verify, for example, "love?"

b) Logical positivism (the Vienna Circle; A.J. Ayer)

- (1) Verifiability principle--unless a statement can be established as true either analytically or empirically, it is meaningless.
- (2) Thus metaphysical language, especially the Bible, is without scientific, positive meaning.
- (3) Verifiability principle is itself non-verifiable!

c) Language Analysis (G.E. Moore, early Ludwig Wittgenstein)

- (1) Analysis of propositions is the means of determining truth.
- (2) Early Wittgenstein: Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus--scientific analysis of language as means of clarifying language and determining truth.

2. The response of functional analysis

a) Later Wittgenstein -- "language games"

- (1) Rejects earlier scientific approach to language.
- (2) Argues for meaning of language as determined by context; rules are different when "games" are different, thus with language also.

b) Oxford School (Gilbert Ryle and John Austin)

- (1) Clarification of truth by means of context and category.
- (2) Category mistake: "The paper was sharp (insightful). Don't cut yourself, then."

- c) Ian Ramsey -- Bible teaches deeper dimension of reality than the scientific (the "more").
 - (1) Bring a person to discernment of truth which cannot be explained by sense experience (conviction).
 - (2) Bring a person to commitment as response to this truth (repentance/faith).
3. Defense of Bible as meaningful and cognitive -- J.V. Langmead Casserley
- a) "Logic of the singular" - the Bible communicates unique, singular matter, and requires its own method of interpretation.
 - (1) Negation - knowledge of God by what one does not know about him (he is not sinful, etc).
 - (2) Analogy - knowledge of God by meaningful comparison with present experience.
 - (3) Paradox - knowledge of God by unresolved tensions (God is triune and yet one).
 - (4) Indirect communication - non verbal knowledge of God.
 - b) Distinction between myth-symbol and event-symbol
 - (1) Myth-symbol: material intended to convey the transcendent, without historical referent (apocalyptic).
 - (2) Event-symbol: material intended to convey the particular view with historical referent and foundation (Virgin Birth, resurrection).
4. Defense of the Bible as meaningful, cognitive, and unique
- a) W.F. Albright - uniqueness of biblical language
 - (1) Hebrews and Christians superior to the other religions because of inductive logic--were able to see God in their concrete, historical experience.
 - (2) Biblical unique as historical, meaningful revelation of actual events.
 - b) Claude Tresmontant - implicit world view
 - (1) Christians have a different world view, thus a unique approach to God and life.
 - (2) History and time are important as means of God's revelation.
 - (3) Bible best understood when viewed from its implicit world view.

c) John MacMurray - empirical verification

- (1) One knows God through personal surrender
- (2) Cannot know God without walking with him

File Name: ABP11-26.ASC
Date: Wednesday, November 27, 1996

Translations aside, Americans hold the Bible in high regard, the Barna poll revealed. Eighty percent of Americans said the Bible is the most influential book in world history. In that regard, it got 16 times as many votes as its next-closest competitor, Dr. Spock's Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care.

Still, no matter what Americans think about the Bible, many know very little about its contents.

On the positive side, 90 percent of Americans know the Bible teaches "Jesus was crucified, died, rose from the dead and is spiritually alive today; that Jesus was born to a virgin; and that eventually all people will be judged by God," the poll found.

"But there is undeniably a substantial degree of biblical ignorance in America today," Barna asserted.

"For instance, we discovered that three out of four adults (72 percent) believe that people are blessed by God so that they can enjoy life as much as possible," he said. "This is an American cultural lesson, but certainly at odds with Scripture. See Genesis 12:1-3."

Fifty-six percent of U.S. adults think the Bible teaches that taking care of one's family is the "most important task in life," the survey discovered. "Granted, the Bible clearly teaches the importance of responsibility to family, but it states unequivocally that our most important task in life is to know, love and serve God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength," Barna said, citing Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37.

More than 90 million American adults (42 percent) also are confused about the Bible's teaching regarding the nature of Jesus. That's how many said the Bible teaches Jesus sinned while he was on earth. And 8 percent more said they aren't sure whether or not Jesus sinned.

Four out of 10 Americans think "all individuals will experience the same outcome after death, regardless of their religious beliefs," according to the poll. And about 12 percent said they don't know what the Bible teaches about life after death. That makes "a majority of adults who are confused about one of the key teachings in the Bible," Barna said.

So, how can a nation with an abundance of Bibles know so little about its contents? The survey offers three clues, Barna said.

"First, realize that barely one-third of adults read the Bible in a typical week, so lack of exposure is an issue," he said.

"Second, ... few people -- just one in five -- read every page of the Bible during the course of their lifetime," he added. "That indicates that most people do not have a complete context for understanding the Bible."

And third, few people read the Bible systematically, he said. "Among the most popular strategies for choosing a passage to read were flipping through the pages until they spot something that sounds intriguing or simply opening the Bible and hoping that they land on a page that is relevant or interesting. These random reading strategies account for the methods of nearly half of all adults who read the Bible."

HERMENEUTICS

DEF: the science and art of biblical interpretation

Science - guided by rules within a system

Art - the application of rules by skill, not by mere mechanical calculation/formulation

BACKGROUND: derived from Hermes of Greek mythology, who brought the messages of the gods to the mortals, and was the god of science, invention, eloquence, speech, writing, and art. He was the *Interpreter*.

TASK: to determine the meaning of a statement for the author and for the first hearers or readers, and thereupon to transmit that meaning to modern readers or hearers.

TWO KINDS:

General Hermeneutics: those rules which pertain to the interpretation of the entire Bible.

Special Hermeneutics: those rules which pertain to a particular type of literature (parables, apocalyptic poetry, prophecy) within the Bible.

(INTE)RELATED TO:

Exegesis - the word is used to refer both to the process of applying hermeneutical principles to arrive at an understanding of a passage (doing exegesis) and to the written product of the process ("hand in your exegesis"). **Hermeneutics is related to exegesis as theory is to practice.**

Eisegesis - reading one's own ideas into a text; the opposite of exegesis, which focuses on "leading out" the meaning intended by the author of the text. This is a reader oriented hermeneutic.

Exposition - from the Latin word meaning "to set forth," it is sometimes used as almost synonymous with exegesis; in technical usage, *exegesis is generally limited to critical examination of what the text originally meant* and **exposition refers to the proclamation of the text and its significance to modern people.**

Homiletics: the science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated in a *preaching* situation.

Pedagogy: the science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated in a *teaching* situation.

Why the need for hermeneutics?

1) **THE BIBLE COMMANDS IT:** - See 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17

2) **THE NATURE OF THE BIBLE ITSELF DEMANDS IT** - See 2 Peter 3:16ff

The Nature of Hermeneutics

I. Its Definition and Scope

A. Introductory Definition: "Hermeneutics is the science and art of biblical interpretation."

1. Science - guided by rules within a system.
2. Art - application of rules is by skill, not by mere mechanical calculation.

B. Background of the word "hermeneutics"

1. Derived from Hermes of Greek mythology, who brought the message of the gods to the mortals, and was the god of science, invention, eloquence, speech, writing, and art.
2. Use of hermeneuo in its various forms in the NT
 - a. Translation from one language to another, especially in the gospel counts.
"And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, 'you are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated [ἐρμηνεύεται], is Peter)" (John 1:42).
 - b. Translate/interpret the utterances of people who speak in tongues.
"Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret [μὴ πάντες [διερμηνεύουσιν]?" (I Cor. 12:30).
 - c. Explain the meaning of Scripture.
"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he [Jesus] explained [διερμήνευσεν] to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).
3. Related OT terminology and activity
 - a. Pathar, meaning "to interpret" and pithron, meaning "an interpretation," are used primarily in relationship to the work of Joseph (Gen 40-41) and Daniel in interpreting dreams.
 - b. Parash is used in one occurrence (Neh. 8:8) which is similar to modern hermeneutical work.
 - (1) Situation - Israelites had returned from Babylon. Many of them no longer understood Hebrew. The people requested that the scribes and priests read to them from the Scriptures.
 - (2) Person- Ezra is described as skilled in the Scriptures, a man committed to the study and practice and teaching of God's law. It

is no surprise that the hand of God was on him.

"This Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him" (Ezra 7:6). "For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

- (3) Activity - Ezra apparently translated, explained what the passage meant, and indicated how it related to their lives.

"They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read" (Neh. 8:8 - NIV). Cf. the NAS: "And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the meaning."

The NAS has a marginal note indicating that "explaining" is another possible translation for parash. Parash has a basic meaning of "make clear," and it is up to the context to indicate whether the clarification comes through divine revelation (Lev. 24:12), through explication (Num. 15:34), or through translation and (likely) explication, as is Neh. 8:8

- (4) Significance - This is the first clear biblical reference to the science and art of biblical hermeneutics.

C. Task of Biblical Hermeneutics: to determine the meaning of a statement for the author and for the first hearers or readers, and thereupon to transmit that meaning to modern readers or hearers.

D. Two Kinds of Hermeneutics:

1. General hermeneutics: those rules which pertain to the interpretation of the entire Bible.
2. Special hermeneutics: those rules which pertain to a particular type of literature (parables, poetry, prophecy) within the Bible.

E. Relationship of Hermeneutics to Other Fields, Disciplines and Terms

1. Canonicity - the historical process by which some books came to be considered authoritative Scripture and others were excluded. Hermeneutics presumes an authoritative canon.
2. Textual criticism (lower criticism) - the process by which the original wording of a passage is determined. Hermeneutics requires a reliable text.
3. Historical criticism (higher criticism) - the study of authorship, date, historical circumstances, authenticity of contents, and literary unity of the various books of the Bible.
4. Exegesis - the word is used to refer to the process of applying hermeneutical principle to arrive at an understanding of a passage ("doing exegesis") and to the written product of the process ("hand in your exegesis"). Hermeneutics is related to exegesis as theory is to practice.
5. Eisegesis - reading one's own ideas into a text; opposite of exegesis, which

- focuses on "leading out" the meaning intended by the author of the text.
6. Exposition - from a Latin word meaning "to set forth," it is sometimes used as almost synonymous with exegesis; in technical usage exegesis is generally limited to critical examination of what the text originally meant and exposition refers to the proclamation of the text and its significance to modern people.
 7. Interpretation - best used as an umbrella term to encompass both hermeneutics (theory) and exegesis (practice), though this technical distinction is commonly ignored.

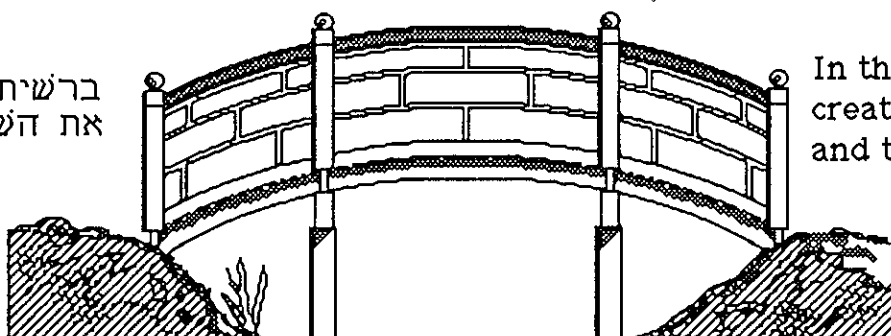
II. Its Importance - Reasons For The Study of Hermeneutics

- A. The Bible commands it: *"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth"* (II Tim. 2:15).
- B. Protestant theological convictions about the Bible require it.
 1. The Bible is sola fidei regula (only rule of faith), the only way of knowing what God has said.
 2. Contrasted with RCC prima fidei regula (first rule of faith), along with the moral unanimity of the Fathers, the ancient creeds, the decisions of the ecumenical councils, and the oral tradition.
- C. The nature of the Bible itself demands it. *"He [Paul] writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letter contain some things which are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction"* (II Pet. 3:16).
 1. Some parts of the Bible are hard to understand.
 2. Misunderstanding the Bible can be very harmful.
- D. Differing interpretation among those affirming biblical authority require it.
- E. The teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit does not eliminate the need for human effort to understand the Bible. As Augustine observed more than 1500 years ago:
 1. We teach languages even though God can enable people to speak in languages they have never studied (Acts 2).
 2. Though God can teach people directly, he often sends us to learn from other people (Paul from Ananias; Cornelius from Simon Peter).
 3. People who think they can understand the Bible without human help have no basis for preaching and teaching--nor do they have the right to expect people to listen to their teaching and preaching.
- F. There are hindrances to understanding the Bible

Interpretation is Bridging Gaps

ברשית ברא אלהים
את השמים ואת הדרץ

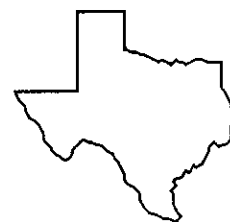
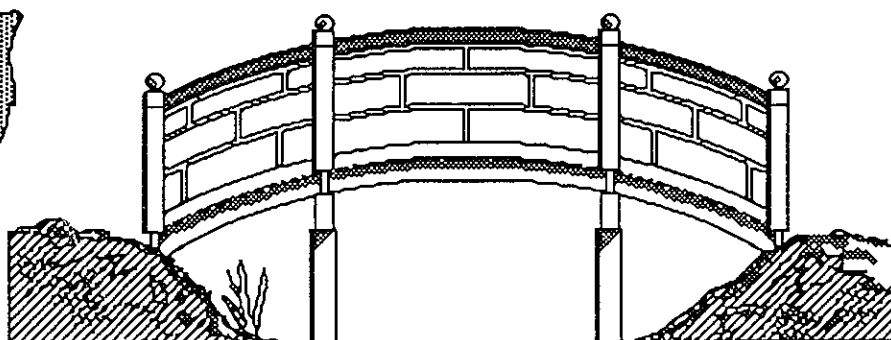
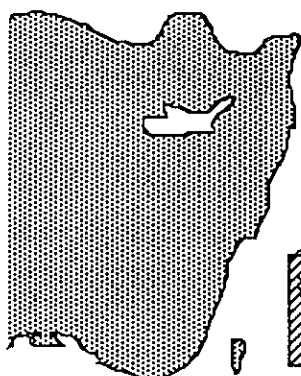
εν αρχη ην
ο λογος



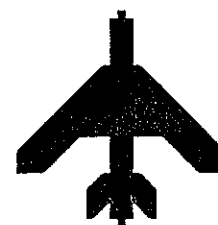
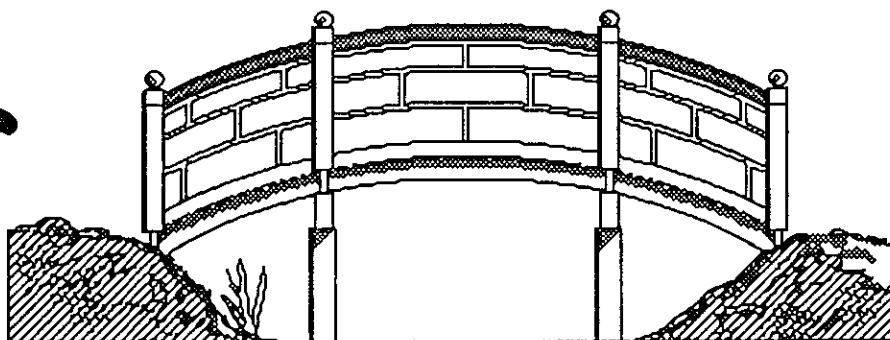
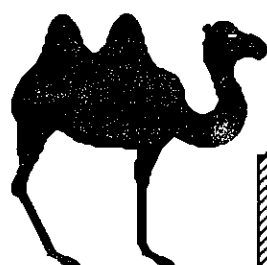
In the beginning God
created the heavens
and the earth.

In the beginning
was the Word

Linguistic/Language Gap

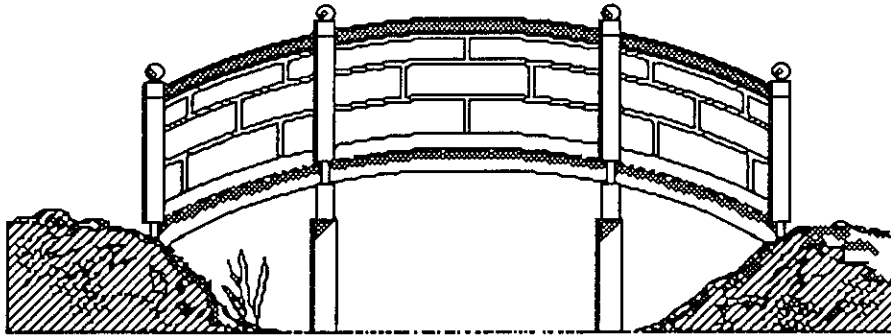


Geographical/Space Gap

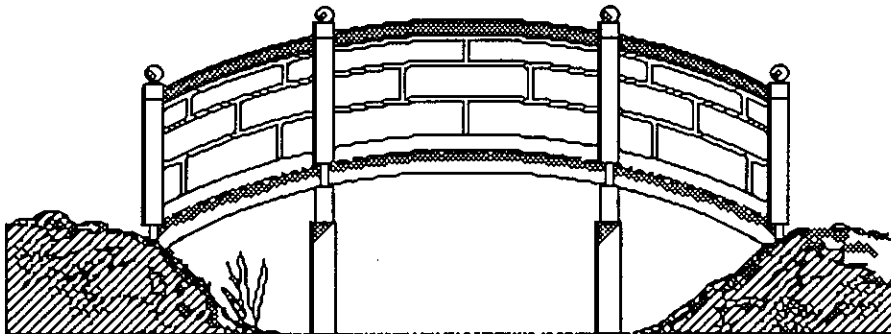


Chronological/Time Gap

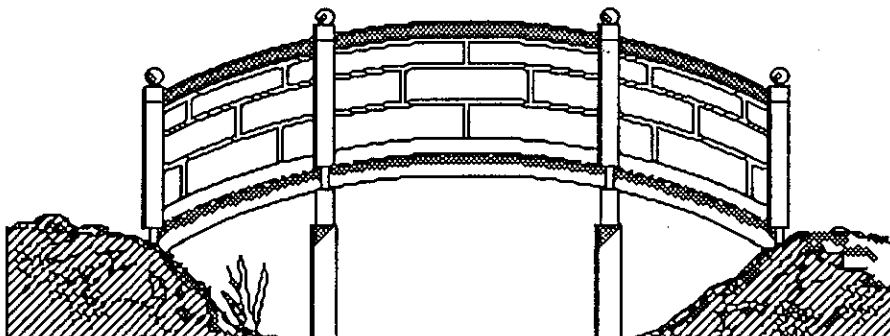
Interpretation is Bridging Gaps



Cultural/Custom Gap



Literary/Style Gap



Supernatural/Spiritual Gap

- G. There are subjective factors influencing our understanding the Bible.

Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?
by Rudolf Bultmann

The question whether exegesis without presuppositions is possible must be answered affirmatively if "without presuppositions" means "without presupposing the results of the exegesis." In this sense, exegesis without presuppositions is not only possible but demanded. In another sense, however, no exegesis is without presuppositions, inasmuch as the exegete is not a *tabula rasa*, but on the contrary, approaches the text with specific questions or with a specific way of raising questions and thus has a certain idea of the subject matter with which the text is concerned.

These factors shape what is sometimes called our pre-understanding or our presuppositions:

1. Influences from our religious heritage

Christian	_____
Evangelical	_____
Baptist	_____
Southern Baptist	_____

2. Psychological needs

White Male	_____
Married	_____
Children	_____

3. Philosophical background and convictions

Christian Theist	_____
Supernaturalist	_____
Inerrantist	_____

- H. The existence of many distorted understandings of the Bible compel us to work to study and understand it correctly.

THE DEFINITION OF HERMENEUTICS: A Summation

Biblical Hermeneutics: the science and art of interpreting the Word of God.

1. Hermeneutics is a science: proceeds with given principles and procedures.
2. Hermeneutics is an art: the application of the rules is a skill to be acquired.

"Hermeneutics, therefore, is both a science and an art. As a science, it enunciates the principles, investigates the laws of thought and language, and classifies its facts and results. As an art, it teaches what application these principles should have, and established their soundness by showing their practical value in the elucidation of the more difficult Scriptures. The hermeneutical art thus cultivates and established a valid exegetical procedure." (Milton S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics [Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, n.d.]p. 5).

"Interpretation is not something new." (Berkley Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible, from his chapter, "Lessons from the Past").

"Few studies are so rewarding in granting insight and perspective into problems as historical studies. This is true of the history of hermeneutics." (Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation, p. 23).

"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 in relation to 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 content." (Milton S. Terry, Biblical Interpretation, (revised edition), p. 31).

"In fact, history shows that erroneous principles have often spoiled the exegetical work of fine men, some of whom were great saints. This should be a warning to us against carelessness in interpretation. There is less excuse for us because we can profit by the lessons of the past." (Berkley Michelson, Interpreting the Bible, p. 20).

TRANSLATION

I. Nouns

A. hermeneia

1. "the interpretation of tongues" (I Cor. 12:10)
2. "an interpretation" (I Cor. 14:26)

B. diermeneutes

"if there is no interpreter" (I Cor. 14:28)

II. Verbs

A. hermeneuo

1. "Cephas, (which translated means Peter)" (John 1:42)
2. "Siloam (which is translated, Sent)" (John 9:7)
3. "by translation, king of righteousness" (Heb. 7:2)

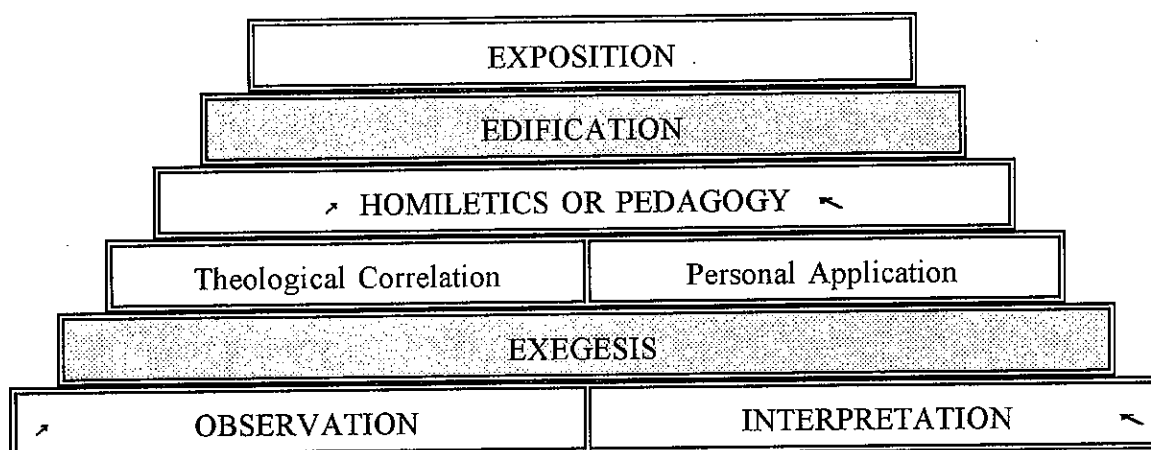
B. diermeneuo

1. "Tabitha (which translated is called Dorcus)" (Acts 9:36)
2. "all do not interpret" (I Cor. 12:30)
3. "unless he interprets" (I Cor. 14:5)
4. "pray that he may interpret" (I Cor. 14:13)
5. "let one interpret" (I Cor. 14:27)

C. methermeneuo

1. "Immanuel, which translated means, God with us" (Matt. 1:23)
2. "Talitha kum! (which translated means...)" (Mark 5:41)
3. "Golgotha, which is translated, Place of Skull"
4. "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which is translated..." (Mark 15:34)
5. "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher)" (John 1:38)
6. "Messiah (which translated means Christ)" (John 1:41)
7. "Barnabas...(which translated means...)" (Acts 4:36)

The Context of Hermeneutics



Additional Definitions and Quotes For Hermeneutics

1. Hermeneutics: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning of the biblical text is determined.

2. Exegesis: The determination of the meaning of the biblical text in its historical and literary contexts (as opposed to eisegesis which is reading meaning into the text).

3. Exposition: The communication of the meaning of the text along with its relevance to present day hearers.

4. Homiletics: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated in a preaching situation.

5. Pedagogy: The science (principles) and art (task) by which the meaning and relevance of the biblical text are communicated in a teaching situation.

Luther and Calvin Quotes

"What I have advised elsewhere I here repeat and shall advise again: the Christian reader should devote his first effort to searching for what is called the literal sense."

Martin Luther
(Works, 14:560)

"The literal sense of Scripture is the whole essence of faith and Christian theology. Every word should be allowed to stand in its natural meaning, and should, not be abandoned unless faith forces us to it."

Martin Luther

Scriptura sui ipsius interpres

(Scripture is its own interpreter.)

"That is the true method of interpretation which puts Scripture along side of Scripture in a right and proper way."

Martin Luther
(Works, 3:334)

"It is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say, instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say."

John Calvin
(Preface to Romans)

"We must ever be on guard against wresting Scripture from its natural setting."

John Calvin
(Psalms, 2:388)

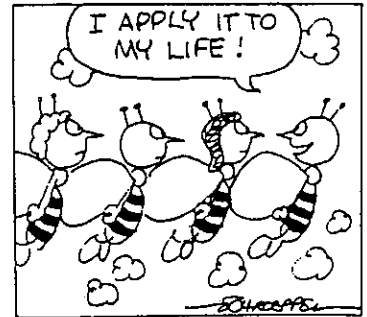
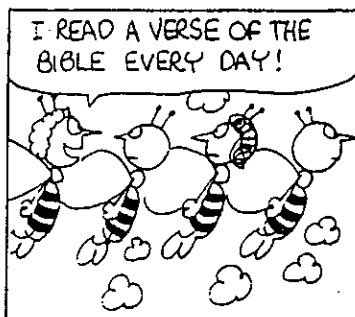
"Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely. Let us not only neglect as doubtful, but boldly set aside as deadly corruptions, those pretended expositions which lead us away from the natural meaning."

John Calvin

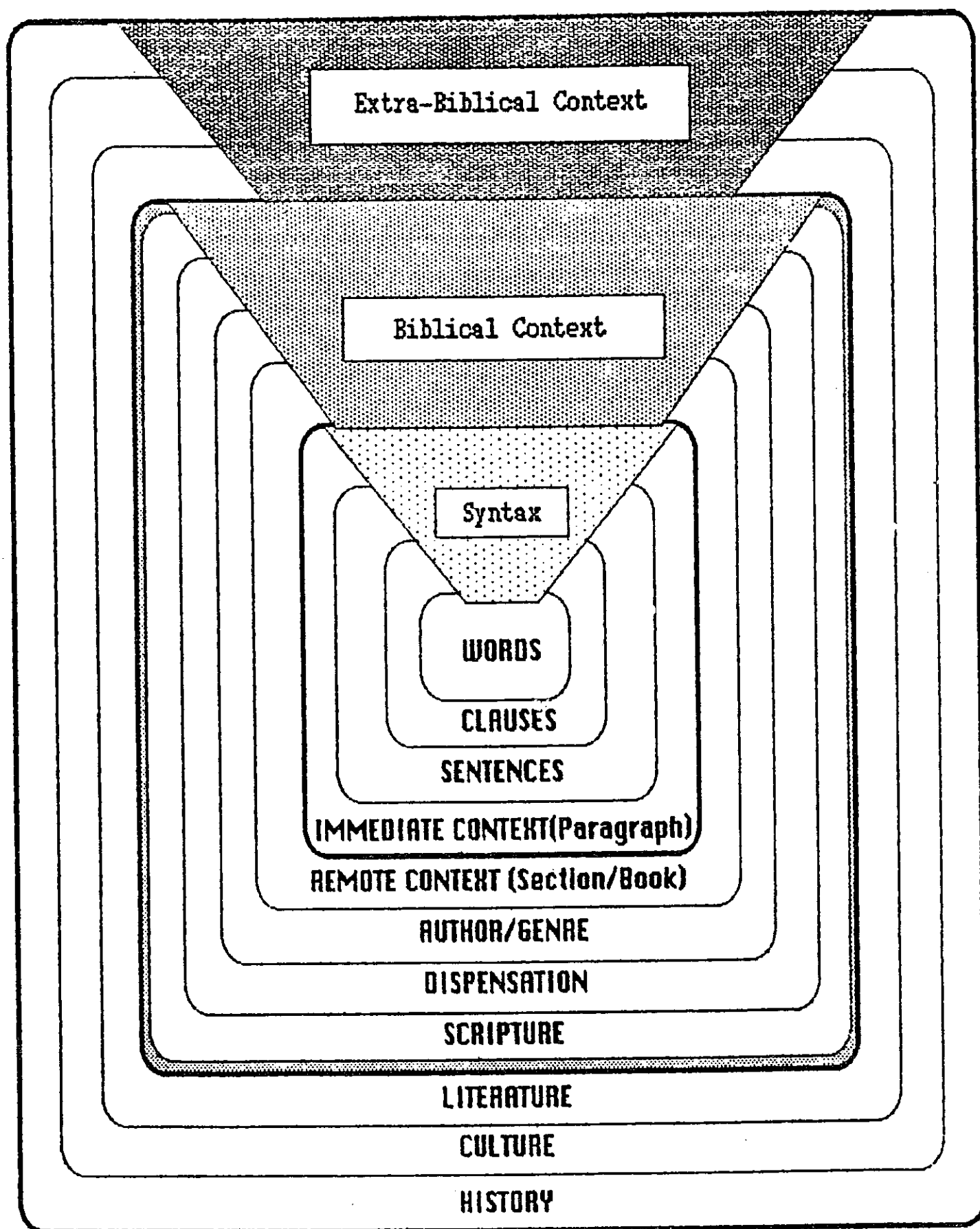
The definition of the meaning of a text changed dramatically in 1946 with the announcement that it is a fallacy to depend on what an author meant to say as a guide to determining what a text means. Since that time, three figures have tended to dominate the continuing refinements or protests to this announced fallacy: Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, and E.D. Hirsch. Gadamer stressed a "fusion of horizons" (almost in a recasting of the Hegelian dialectic in new terms), Ricoeur envisaged a whole new set of operations when communication is written down, while Hirsch claims it was impossible to validate meaning if it was not connected with the author's truth-assertions and distinguished from significances [applications] of a text.

At present there are four main models for understanding the Bible: the proof-text method, the historical-critical method, the reader-response method, and the syntactical-theological method. The first is often naive, the second has been judged sterile, the third is often reactionary to the second, and the fourth is holistic in involving both historical and practical applications.

Amid all this dramatic change, we have come to realize that the word "meaning" is currently used to include the referent, the sense, the author's intention, the significance a passage has, its value, and its entailment.



THE PROCESS OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION



The Christian

10686

Getting the Bible's message right

"Seven keys to understanding Scripture" by Tremper Longman. *Discipleship Journal*, Sep/Oct 1995 (Issue 89). Pages 48-52. Topic: BIBLE INTERPRETATION. See also 10620. 1-800-877-1811.

How can we be sure we are really understanding the Bible and not adding our own spin to what it says?

• **Look for the author's intended meaning.** We must remember that the ultimate author of Scripture is God Himself. The prophet says: "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son" (Hos. 11:1). In this case Hosea is speaking of the nation of Israel, but in Mt. 2:15 these words are applied to Jesus. God is saying: You, Israel, are my child, just as Jesus is my child, and I have brought you both up out of Egypt.

• **Read a passage in context.** With the Bible, as with all good literature, we have to know something of the whole before we can make sense of the parts. Imagine reading only one verse of the Bible (1 Cor. 7:27): "Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife." Is that what Paul is really saying?

Also look for connections in the Bible. Joseph tells his brothers: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Gen 50:20). Peter

uses almost identical words to describe Jesus' death (Acts 2:22-24).

• **Identify the genre of the passage.** The Bible is made up of varying kinds of literature: history, poetry, prophecy, proverb, gospel, parable, epistle, and apocalypse. Be sure you know the type of literature you are reading, so you don't make Cyril of Alexandria's mistake about Song of Songs. He thought the two breasts represented the Old Testament and the New Testament. Today we read the Song as a love poem, but we also know that human love reflects Christ's love for the church.

• **Consider the historical and cultural background of the Bible.** Commentaries can help here. For example, the Old Testament often pictures the Lord as riding on a cloud. A good commentary would explain that Israel's neighbors often described their god Baal as riding a chariot into battle. In the light of this context we see that God's cloud is a chariot taking Him into battle. In Revelation, Jesus is also seen riding a cloud into judgment.

• **Interpret experience in the light of Scripture, not the other way around.** What if sharing my faith makes me uncomfortable. Could I reason (using 1 Cor. 13) that God does not want me to evangelize since it says love does not condemn? If we go by our feelings as a guide, we will often come to wrong conclusions.

• **Always seek the full counsel of Scripture.** Never base doctrine or a moral teaching on an obscure passage. The most important ideas in the Bible are stated more than once. "If one passage seems to teach some-

thing, but another passage clearly teaches something else, we must understand the former in terms of the latter." ☺

What if Goliath had been wearing a crash helmet?



Well, that's a good question.

FAST FACT

10687

Biblical abundance

One of four Americans (27%) owns five or more Bibles.

—Harper's, Sep 1995

A Guide to The Exegetical Process

Introduction:

I. Spiritual Qualifications of an Interpreter of Scripture

- A. Be born again (John 3; I Cor. 2:14-16: cannot understand without being "born again")
- B. Passion to know and obey God's Word (James 1:22-25)
- C. Deep reverence for God (I Peter 1:13-16)
- D. Complete and utter dependence on the Holy Spirit to guide and direct. "To pray well is to study well"(John 14:25)
- E. A total confidence in the Bible as the Word of God (II Tim. 3: 14-17)

II. The Perspective of the Interpreter

- A. The question of critical methods

Summary: Never let any commentary or interpreter place himself in judgment above the Word of God; watch critical interpreters who correct the biblical authors as though they had a superior vantage point and ability. The Revelation of God is superior to the reason of man.

- B. The need for interpretive tools--else:

- 1. A veiled egotism - "I don't need the help of more than 2000 years of spiritual insight, scholarship or interpretation."
- 2. The dangerous confusion of biblical inspiration with biblical illumination
- 3. A caution about interpretive tools; never let them replace your work in the Scriptures.

III. The Exegetical Process

The exegetical process consists of several steps. These steps may overlap somewhat, but it is important to take them one at a time. Followed consistently, these steps will become a good habit. The habit will improve the quality of your preaching and teaching by increasing the thoroughness of your study. It will also help you get started in the study of God's Word on days when you fell like doing something else (or nothing at all!). Furthermore, the steps break the process into manageable pieces that can be done

at various times during the week.

For additional help with the exegetical process, see the bibliography on Hermeneutics; also Gordon Fee, New Testament Exegesis (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983); John D. Grassmick, Principles and Practice of Greek Exegesis (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1974); William D. Thompson, Preaching Biblically: Exegesis and Interpretation (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981); and Robert a Traina, Methodical Bible Study (n.p., 1952), as well as the books on preaching by John MacArthur, Wayne McDill, Haddon Robinson, and Jerry Vines..

Step 1: Selecting a Text

1. Choose a complete text (not a fragment to be used out of its context). See step 2 below.
2. Select a genuine, properly translated text. See step 3 below.
3. Choose a text with a mind that is willing to be stretched and taught by the text.

Step 2: Determining the Limits of the Text

I. The Aim

- A. Seek to identify where a passage of Scripture begins and ends. Look for a complete unit of thought (paragraph or pericope). Remember that chapter and verse divisions are relatively recent additions to the Bible. The original manuscripts had no such divisions.
- B. Try to find the natural breaks in the text. Do not be concerned primarily with cutting the text small enough for you to handle it comfortably. When in doubt, go long!

II. The Procedure

- A. Check the paragraphing indicated in the Hebrew and Greek texts and in English translations using paragraphing. (The New American Standard Bible, for example, indicates a new paragraph by boldfacing the verse number of the first letter in the new paragraph).
- B. Consider how what goes before and after your text (context) influences the interpretation of your text. Would broadening the scope of your text by a verse or two in either direction alter your understanding of the text?
- C. Look for literary clues: introductory statements; indications of time, place, or location; and concluding summary statements. These elements often mark beginnings and endings of units of thought.
- D. Look for thematic elements that hold a passage together and set it off from

surrounding verses.

- E. Consider the way commentators arrange the text into sections.

Step 3: Exploring the Text

1. Read the passage repeatedly from one or more of the more literal translations: New American Standard, Revised Standard Version, Williams New Testament, New International Version, King James Version, New King James Version. If you have the ability, you will want to read from the original languages. Note any significant differences in translation for future investigation.
2. Read the passage aloud several times.
3. As you do these first several readings, jot down quickly whatever observations, questions, initial impressions, and related thoughts that come to mind. Do not worry about evaluating them now. Just record them. Think, feels, and imagine. Listen to the text without concern for "getting up a sermon." Ask God to speak to you through it. Do not bring in commentaries and reference books yet. Let them wait until after you have spent considerable time exploring the passage yourself.

Step 4: Establishing the Text (Textual Criticism)

- I. Definition --"The procedure of checking for any variant or alternative words or phrases in the text and determining which readings is the original." This does not refer to differences in translation: it refers to questions about the actual wording of the Greek or Hebrew manuscripts. This is an issue of transmission not inspiration!
- II. Why Establish the Text
 - A. It shows respect for the Bible by seeking to be true to exactly what God inspired and the author wrote.
 - B. It promotes a habit of honesty in handling the Scriptures, helping you learn to resist the temptation that whispers, "But the congregation would never know the difference."
 - C. It affects what you believe and thus what you teach.
 - D. People in the congregation have study Bibles that point out textual variations. Some will have legitimate questions that need answering.
 - E. It increases your confidence and your effectiveness as a preacher/teacher because

you know you are prepared. You need not dread having someone ask a question at the back door that will expose the shortcuts of your preparation.

III. Methods of Textual Criticism

- A. Nature of the task: you must choose between more than 5000 mss. of various books and fragments of the NT in Greek, more than 10,000 mss. of books and fragments of NT in other languages.
- B. Classification of Greek mss.:
 1. By age
 2. By writing materials
 3. By kind or size of Greek letters (uncials--all caps; miniscules--small letters)
 4. Geographic centers
 - a. Alexandria, Egypt -- Westcott and Hort, 1885, considered manuscripts from this area to be freest from error.
 - b. Caesarea, Palestine
 - c. Antioch, Syria
 - d. Constantinople, Turkey
 - e. Rome, Italy
- C. Considerations:
 1. Chronological appearance of the documents
 2. Agreement between the text and the church fathers
 3. Geographical circulation
 4. Extent of usage
 5. Numbers of a given text in circulation
 6. Historical genealogy of respective textual traditions
 7. Presence of variant readings due to scribal, editorial, and translator error
- D. Process
 1. External study: of relationship of one NT to other NTs
 2. Internal evidence: relationships of one form of a passage to alternative forms of the passage within the manuscripts
 - a. Which reading best suits the context
 - b. Which reading best explains the origin of the others
 3. Conjectural emendation: if neither external nor internal evidence is helpful
- E. Concluding comment: regardless of the manuscript issues, our Bible is still

reliable (F.F. Bruce, The NT Documents: Are They Reliable?, pp. 19-20)

IV. How to Establish the Text

A. Identify the variant readings

1. A good study Bible will call the significant variants to the attention of anyone reading the English Bible by mentioning them in the notes (usually the center column).
2. The footnotes of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures contain a textual apparatus that indicates the various readings.
3. Many passages of Scripture have no significant textual variants. If (after careful research on your part) the passage you are studying does not seem to have any variants, move on the next step.

B. Determine which reading you think is correct

1. The more technical commentaries usually address the important variations and give help in choosing the correct reading using the principles outlined above.
2. Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (United Bible Societies, 1978) discusses significant variations in the text of the Greek New Testament and gives the reasoning behind the decision made by the UBS editors.
3. This is a rather technical discipline in which you may have to accept commentators' judgements until you develop the skill to make a determination for yourself.

Step 5: Studying the Text in Its Contexts

It is at this point that it is helpful to turn to reference books and commentaries. It is important to delay using these works until you have done your own research and had time to think about the passage for yourself. Having done that, it is valuable to compare your first impressions with the conclusions of devout scholars who have given the passage a lifetime of study.

At this stage you may possibly adjust (or reject!) much of what you wrote during the first reading of the text. That is to be expected. What remains may well be valuable material when it comes to writing the sermon. Your first impression may give you a good idea about the first impressions your hearers will have when they hear the text read. Often the things about the passage that intrigued you will make effective sermon introductions. But you will want to be sure that your interpretation squares with the findings of reliable interpreters. Your search will cover several areas.

I. Historical Context

A. Information Sought

1. Identity of the author
2. Date and place in which the book originated
3. Identity and circumstances of the recipients
 - a. Identity
 - (1) Believers or unbelievers
 - (2) Ethnic or religious background
 - b. Problems they faced
 - c. Their manner of life
 - (1) Social customs (Ex.: John 4-scandal of a rabbi speaking to a woman)
 - (2) Material context
 - d. The relationship of author and recipients
 - e. Historical events of that time that have a bearing on the understanding of the passage
 - f. Geographical information

B. Sources of Historical Information

1. Primary source - the Bible itself -- Sometimes this material is stated openly by the biblical writers. Read the beginning and ending portions of that book of the Bible to see if there are statements given about the author, recipients, date, or circumstances. In other cases the information can be gleaned from something elsewhere in the Bible.
2. Secondary sources of information -- Often we find help from extra-biblical sources. In still other cases the best that can be done is to make an educated guess. Recommendations from faculty members teaching in the departments of biblical backgrounds, Old Testament, and New Testament are the best guide to secondary sources of information about the historical context. Be careful to note a scholar's background and theological perspective. The following list will offer an idea of the types of reference books available.
 - a. Bible Dictionaries - definitions of biblical terms, brief biographies of biblical characters, information about people and places, etc.

Example: Harper's Bible Dictionary
 Holman Bible Dictionary
 New Bible Dictionary
 New International Dictionary of the Bible
 Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary
 - b. Bible Encyclopedias - more extensive coverage of subjects found in Bible

Dictionaries plus articles about theological subjects.

Example: International Bible Standard Encyclopedia
Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible
Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible

- c. Bible Atlases - maps, plus information about geography, topography, climate, etc.

Example: Macmillan Bible Atlas
Oxford Bible Atlas
Harper Atlas of the Bible

- d. Old Testament and New Testament Introductions

Use your textbooks or consult textbook lists for current recommendations by faculty members in Old and New Testament departments.

- e. Bible Commentaries

(1) Types as to Arrangement

- (a) One-volume commentaries on the whole Bible, though useful in some respects, are not detailed enough to be fully adequate in the kind of careful study done in sermon preparation.
- (b) Individual commentaries on one or more books of the Bible often are excellent sources of information. The key question is knowing who the writer is, whether his expertise covers this particular part of the Bible, and the theological perspective from which he writes.
- (c) Sets of commentaries in which each volume covers one or more books of the Bible generally have a common format and usually reflect a common perspective, either denominational or theological. The quality of the commentaries often varies considerably from volume to volume, depending on the ability of the author of that particular volume of the set.

(2) Types as to Aim

Commentaries are as unique as the authors who write them. Even within a series they will vary somewhat in emphasis. Yet they can generally be divided into three classes. It is likely that some people would place a given series in a different category. But to give some guidance, the following list is offered:

- (a) Devotional/Sermonic commentaries emphasize the relationship of the passage to modern hearers. Often the volume is the outgrowth of a sermon series. Usually they are written for laymen, pastors

without theological training, and others who are more concerned with the significance of the passage for today than with the historical, linguistic, and grammatical details of the passage. They may help beginning preachers see how to apply the Bible to modern life.

Examples: Barclay's Daily Study Bible
 Communicator's Commentary
 Daily Devotional Bible Commentary
 Interpretation series
 Matthew Henry's Commentary
 Pulpit Commentary
 Proclamation series
 Speaker's Bible

- (b) Exegetical commentaries are written for the pastor with seminary training and for other well-informed readers. They are more detailed in their analysis of the passage's original meaning and they focus less on its contemporary application. They are scholarly, but not written exclusively for scholars. These are an important part of the pastor's library.

Examples: The Bible Speaks Today
 Expositor's Bible Commentary
 Harper's New Testament Commentary
 New American Commentary
 New Century Bible Commentary
 New International Commentary on the N.T.
 New International Commentary on the O.T.
 Old Testament Library
 Tyndale Commentaries
 Word Biblical Commentary

- (c) Technical commentaries assume an audience with considerable theological background, including at least some knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. They focus on some of the finer points of interpretation and usually deal with matters of history, linguistics, theology, and grammar and syntax more completely. They often are a source of information not found in other commentaries.

Examples: Augsburg series of commentaries
 Hermeneia Commentary
 International Critical Commentary
 New International Greek Testament Commentary

- (3) Selecting Commentaries - This is a highly individual matter,

depending on your skill with Hebrew and Greek and your familiarity with the Bible. Once again the recommendations of faculty members in the Old and New Testament departments are invaluable.

A guide you may find helpful is "Commentaries on the Books of the Bible: A Selected List for Bible Students" by D. David Garland and Bruce Corley (2d ed., 1987). It is an inexpensive booklet available in the seminary bookstore. The authors list approximately a dozen of the best commentaries on each book of the Bible. They also indicate which they consider best for beginning students and which are more suited to advanced students possessing more language skill. D.A. Carson, New Testament Commentary Survey, 3d ed. (Baker, 1988) analyzes more than five hundred volumes and twenty five series on the NT. Other similar books are listed in Garland and Corley's work. Remember too, that some very fine commentaries on individual books of the Bible are not part of any commentary set. If you use only sets, you will miss some treasures.

You will want to work with the exegetical and technical commentaries. Avoid the exclusive use of the devotional/sermonic commentaries. Otherwise you may be tempted to take their sermonic treatment for your own. That would rob you of the joy of formulating your own message. Additionally, the focus of the exegetical process is determining what the author intended to say to the original hearers. The text's significance for today is not the primary aim at this stage of the process.

II. Literary Context

A. Genre identification (See Fee and Stuart, How to Study the Bible for All Its Worth for extensive discussions of the literary genre of Scripture and the unique hermeneutical questions relating to the different genre).

1. Identifies the literary form or method used in a given passage. Is the passage a historical narrative? A parable? A prophecy? Poetry? An epistle?
2. Determining the type of literature being studied helps you know whether to take language in the passage as figurative or in a more straightforward sense. It also can help you see how verses relate to one another.

B. The purpose of the book

Sometimes this is explicitly stated, as in Luke 1: 1-4 and John 20:31. More often the purpose is discerned by reading the whole book and noticing recurring themes and emphases. Outlining the book of the Bible being studied is often helpful in seeing the purpose of the book. The outline need not be excessively detailed: as a beginning point, see if you can summarize each chapter in one sentence, then each

paragraph.

C. The author's method of presenting the material

1. Usually the sequence in which materials are presented is significant.
2. Sometimes the author speaks directly; sometimes the message comes indirectly, between the lines.
3. Sentence flow diagrams of didactic passages are excellent helps in this regard. They give a visual depiction of the flow of the passage, showing how ideas relate to one another. Narrative texts can be "plotted"; describe the scenes, action, characters, etc.

D. The relationship of the text to the overall flow of the book.

1. Some books of the Bible are tightly woven arguments in which every paragraph has a clear function.
2. Narrative portions of the Bible often have an essential unity that gives each section a clear reason for being there.
3. Some stories, especially in the Gospels, do not have as obvious a connection with their context. Yet even there it is wise to look and see if there is a connection. There probably is one.
4. The outline done previously is an excellent way of seeing how the passage being studied relates to the book as a whole.

III. Linguistic Context

In this stage of studying the text, the point is to understand what the words mean as they work together to form sentences.

A. Lexical Study

1. Nature- It deals with the origin and development of word meanings. While origins of words are important--and often fascinating--what you want to know is what it meant the way this particular writer used it in this particular place.
2. Need for lexicography- Most words which survive long in a language acquire denotations (specific meanings) and connotations (additional implications); these must be distinguished and defined.
3. Methods of determining word meanings-
 - a. Definitional procedure: understand the word by the way it is formed; i.e. prefixes, suffixes, and combinations of words.
 - (1) episkopos (bishop): from "epi" (upon or over) and "skopeco" (to look); thus an overseer
 - (2) apostle : from "apo" (away from) and "stello" (to send); an apostle

is a sent one, delegated one, official representative of an important body.

b. Contextual procedure:

- (1) Definitions by the author himself (II Tim. 3:16-17 for "perfect")
- (2) Explanation by subject and predicate
- (3) Parallelism if it occurs (1/3 of the OT is poetry)
 - (a) Synonymous parallelism: second repeats the first (Ps. 103:10)
 - (b) Antithetic parallelism: idea of second line sharply contrasts with that of the first (Ps. 37:21)
 - (c) Synthetic parallelism: second line carries further or completes idea of the first (Ps. 14:2)

c. Etymological procedure: analysis of the historical roots of the word (cf. Kittel); cautions:

- (1) Historical roots are often conjectural
- (2) Meanings of words often change radically with the passage of time, so that there is little connection between earlier meaning and present usage.
- (3) Avoid etymology of English words as basis for interpretation of original language; ex.: "blessed" in Beatitudes in English from wide background ("blod" - blood, consecrated by blood sacrifice; "benedicere" - to speak well of; "bliss" - happy) -- don't project these into the Greek "makarios"

d. Comparative procedure: use Hebrew or Greek concordance to discover all the occurrences of the word in the Bible-- shows the "polymorphous" (many meanings) nature of many words in the Bible ("flesh" for Paul: substance of the body, contrasted with spirit, as identified with sin, as human existence).

e. Cultural procedure: study of cultural practice operating behind a word -- ex.: "compelled" to go one mile, should go two (Matt. 5:41): well-known Persian custom, taken over by the Romans.

f. Translation procedure: comparison with cognate languages and other translations (Septuagint for Hebrew studies).

4. Reference books for use in word study

a. Old Testament (Hebrew)

Brown, Driver, and Briggs (BDB), A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament.

Botterweck, G. Johannes, and Ringgren, Helmer. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament. Translated by John T. Willis. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.

Harris, R. Laird; Archer, Gleason; and Waltke, Bruce, eds. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament. 2 vols. Chicago: Moody, 1980.

b. New Testament (Greek)

Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich and Danker (BAG), A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature

Brown, Colin, ed. New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975-78.

Earle, Ralph. Word Meanings in the New Testament. 6 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974.

Robertson, A.T. Word Pictures in the New Testament. 6 vols. Nashville: Sunday School Board of the SBC, 1930.

Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gergard, eds. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-75.

Vincent, Marvin. New Testament Word Studies. 4 vols. New York: Scribners, 1887-1900.

Vine, W.E. Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. London: Oliphants, 1939-41.

Wuest, Kenneth. Word Studies in the Greek New Testament. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973.

B. Grammatical and Syntactical Study

1. Nature - Grammar and syntax deal with the way words work together to convey meaning. "Syntax" is derived from two Greek words, "syn" (with) and "tassein" (to put in order). Therefore, "syntax" means "to put together in order." Syntax is the study of sentence structure, the arrangement of word forms to show their mutual relationships in the sentence.

a. Two kinds of syntax:

- (1) Analytic: word order as guide (English)
- (2) Synthetic: word-endings or case endings as guide (Greek)

b. Importance

- (1) Martin Luther: "at its root, theology is grammar"
- (2) Hebrew Example: Genesis 3:12

- (a) Translation: the woman / the man / and he said / with me / you gave / whom / the tree from / to me she gave / she / and I / ate:

"And he said the man the woman, whom you gave to me, she gave to me from the tree and I ate."

- (b) Significance: use of the personal pronoun "she", subjective case, before verb, places focus not on the action but on the person performing the action; thus Adam is directly and emphatically blaming Eve for his action.

(3) Greek Examples:

- (a) John 1:1 - "and God was the word." Sharp's rule of order states that the definite article before one noun connected to another noun by an indicative governs both; thus "the word was God," "The word was the God." Vs. Watchtower Bible "a god".
- (b) I John 3:9 - "doth not commit sin" = "does not continue in the habit or pattern of sin"
- (c) Matt. 28:19 - "go into all nations" = "as you are going in to all nations"

c. Tools:

- (1) Hebrew: J. Weingreen's Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew
- (2) Greek: Robertson's Grammar of the Greek NT in the Light of Historical Research

Step 6: Stating the Theological Context of the Text

I. Get The Big Picture of The Passage As a Whole.

At this point in your study of the passage, you are backing away from the details of grammar and syntax to see the big picture and understand what the passage as a whole is affirming. Like a repairman, you know that the job is incomplete until the parts are properly reassembled. Fitted together, the words and phrases have a theological message.

II. Understand How The Author's Message Flows.

Identify the key affirmations of the passage. Then see how the writer supports those affirmations with evidence and arguments. Write a paraphrase of the passage, trying to capture the essence of the passage in modern terminology. Then expand the paraphrase by elaborating on the various ideas involved.

III. Identify The Key Theological Assertions and Related Implications

Tell what the passage has to say about God and His nature, what it indicated about humankind, what it indicates about Christ, the gospel, the nature and mission of the church, last things, etc. You may find yourself answering some of the questions you asked in the initial reading of the passage.

IV. Compare Scripture With Scripture - Theological Principle of the Analogy of Faith

A. Definition: Scripture is best interpreted by Scripture, viewing the Bible as a whole.

1. Presuppositions:

- a. The Bible is unified, as God is a unity
- b. The Bible is coherent: no contradiction between Paul and James, for example
- c. The Bible is inspired, of divine origin
- d. The whole Bible is profitable for edification
- e. The whole Bible is completely true and trustworthy

2. General Principles:

- a. Obscure passage give way to clear
- b. No major doctrine should be based on one verse or a few miscellaneous verses--thus the time of the rapture should not be a test of orthodoxy
- c. Points of doctrine not settled by specific reference may be settled by the general tenor of Scripture
- d. Doctrines are more secure as they are taught in many verses and various parts of Scripture
- e. If two biblical doctrines humanly appear to contradict, like freedom/predestination, we must accept both (antinomy).
- f. Passages which are brief should be studied in light of passages of greater length - Acts 2:38 in light of Romans

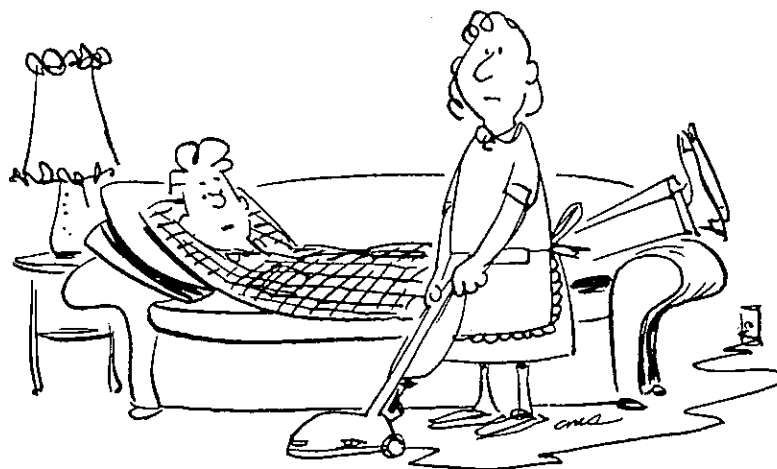
3. Specific Principles:

- a. NT is norm for interpreting OT
 - (1) OT moral laws are still to be followed (Matt. 5:17-28)
 - (2) Dietary laws are rejected (Acts 15 council)
 - (3) Some civil laws are rejected or reinterpreted (eye-for-eye)
 - (4) OT is body, NT is head
- b. First three gospels and historical portions of Acts should be interpreted in light of the Epistles - Jesus: "many things I cannot teach you now"

4. Priority of systematic passages over incidental; when purpose of passage is to teach a doctrine, should take precedence over incidental allusions.
 - a. I Cor. 15:29-30 baptism for the dead not mentioned anywhere else; but cf. elaborate Mormon system of this
 - b. I Peter 3:19, "preach to those imprisoned," must consider Hebrews 9:27, "as it is appointed unto all men once to die, then the judgment"
5. Seek universal principles in the midst of local ceremonies
6. Teaching passages are helpful for the meaning of symbolic passages (I Thess. 4: 15-17)
7. Each part of the Bible should be seen in light of its overall emphasis: God's salvation of man

Step 7: Contextualizing (Applying) the Text

- I. Identify cultural elements present in the text.
- II. Evaluate cultural elements in the text as to their influence on the theology and ethics of the passage.
- III. Use principles of contextualization to determine the application of the text to modern recipients. The teaching may transfer directly or may require adaption of some sort. Specify which and why.
- IV. Specify culturally-relevant beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that should flow from the teaching of the passage.

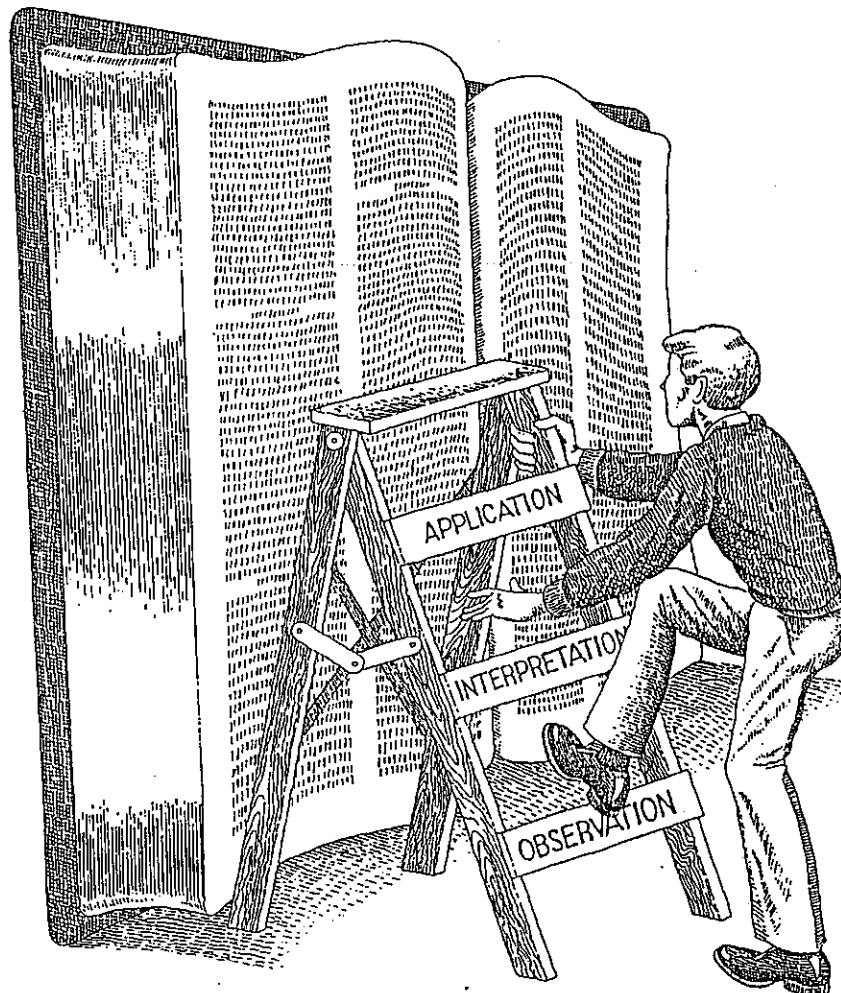


"If we won't have mothers and fathers up in heaven, mom, what do you think you'd like to have me call you?"

Principles For Interpreting Prophecy

1. Follow the normal hermeneutic of historical-grammatical-rhetorical interpretation. The historical element means that the cultural background and circumstances of the prophets are considered. The grammatical element means (a) that words are taken in their normal sense unless it is evident that a figure of speech or symbol is used, and (b) that words are considered in the light of their immediate and broad context. The rhetorical element considers the special features of apocalyptic and prophetic genres and considers the place of figurative and symbolic language.
2. Compare parallel passages, and fit all prophetic passages together in a unified whole. An understanding of the Book of Revelation, for example, is aided by an understanding of the Book of Daniel.
3. Recognize the principle of "foreshortening" or perspective, in which events separated by many years are seen together (e.g., Is. 9: 6-8; 61: 1-2).
4. Recognize the several themes of both fulfilled and unfulfilled prophecy.
5. Follow consistency in interpreting prophecy.
6. Determine if the predictions are conditional or unconditional.
7. Determine if the predictions are fulfilled or unfulfilled.

Dr. Roy B. Zuck



Apocalyptic Literature

A. The Characteristics of Visionary Literature (Biblical Apocalyptic)

1. Structure: pictures a kaleidoscopic structure of self-contained units.
2. Symbolism: communicates historical realities through ideological rather than literalistic symbols.
3. Supernatural: portrays a supernatural or transcendental world with Divine, demonic, and/or angelic agencies.
4. Scope: transforms the known or present state of things into a situation which can only be imagined at the time of writing.
5. Subjects: includes the familiar in juxtaposition to the unfamiliar of both people and places.
6. Scenic: reveals cosmic rather than localized scenes.
7. Strangeness: characterizes people, settings, and events in extraordinary descriptions of reality.

B. Principles For Interpreting Visionary Literature

1. Visionary material should be interpreted in relation to its own self-contained unit and then related to the larger context of the section or book in which it is found.
2. Biblical symbols should be interpreted according to the "analogy of faith" (in comparison with other usages and symbols).
3. Visionary literature anticipates the divine intervention of God for the salvation or judgement of men and nations.
4. Visionary literature is primarily futuristic in its reference and uses various images to reveal the unknown future, especially as they relate to the Day of the Lord.
5. Familiarity with the whole of prophetic literature in the Bible protects from individual spiritualization and gives one the ability to distinguish near and far fulfillments.
6. National and cosmic implication are more frequent than individual ones.
7. Not every detail of extraordinary descriptions have interpretive significance.

TYPOLGY

1. The vocabulary of typology in the New Testament

- a. Type (Gk. -tupos, 14x)
- b. Antitype (Gk. -antitupos, 2x)
- c. Example (Gk. -hupodeigma, 6x)
- d. Shadow (Gk. -skia, 7x)
- e. Figure (Gk. -parabole)

2. The definition of a type (as distinguished from an illustration)

A type is a person, event, or thing, which while having a historical reality in the Old Testament was designed by God to prefigure (foreshadow) in a preparatory way a real person, event, or thing so designated in the New Testament that corresponds to and fulfills the type.

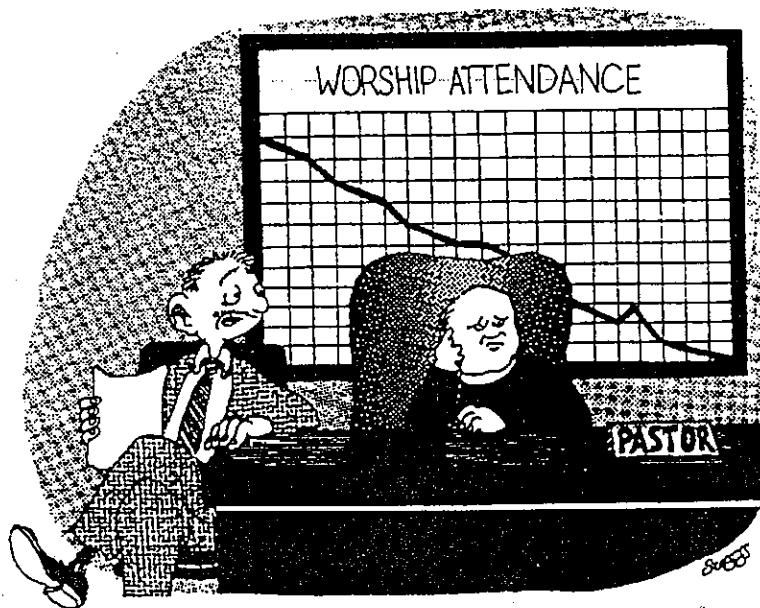
An illustration is a person, event or thing having historical reality, that pictures (is analogous to) some corresponding spiritual truth in a natural and unforced way and is not explicitly designated in the New Testament as a type.

3. Designated types in the New Testament

	Type	Antitype	Scripture
P E R S O N S	1. Melchizedek	Christ's perpetual priesthood	Hebrews 7:3, 15-17
	2. Aaron	Christ's priestly ministry	Hebrews 5: 4-5
	3. Adam	Christ	Romans 5:12ff
E V E N T	4. Passover	Death of Christ	I Corinthians 5:7
T H I N G S	5. Tabernacle	Way of access to God thru Christ	Hebrews 8:5; 9:23,24
	6. Veil	Access to God thru Christ	Hebrews 10:20
	7. Sacrifices	Christ is our sacrifice	Hebrews 9: 8-9
	8. Sabbath	Spiritual rest in the finished work of Christ	Colossians 2:17 Hebrews 4: 3, 9, 11

4. Principles for the interpretation of types

- a. Identify the literal meaning of the item in its historical context.
- b. Look for the major area of resemblance between the type and the antitype.
- c. Ascertain the purpose and function of both the type and the antitype in their respective contexts.
- d. Recognize the points of difference and contrast between the type and the antitype.
- e. Guard against overpressing the analogy in seeking what is farfetched and vague (allegorization).
- f. Distinguish between types and illustrations.
- g. Avoid using types to prove doctrine.
- h. Recognize that types look back from the N.T. advantage as a way of bringing into sharper focus the person and work of Christ.



"I'm no expert, Joe, but perhaps you shouldn't close each sermon with 'But then again, what do I know?' "

"The Task of the Interpreter"

The interpreter must bridge the gap between the cultural elements that are present in the text of Scripture and those in our own times. One proposal to bridge this gap is called ethnohermeneutics, which recognizes three horizons in cross-cultural interpretation: 1) the culture of the Bible, 2) the culture of the interpreter, and 3) the culture of the receptor. Care must be exercised not to let the second and third horizons dictate the message of the first horizon.

The early church fathers used the terms "condescension," "accommodation," and "acculturation" to deal with cultural matters in the text. In their view, the cultural aspects of the Scriptures were meant to make the truth more accessible and to assist us in applying the text to our own day.

When interpreting cultural aspects of Scripture, three options are available. We may (1) retain the theology taught along with the cultural-historical expression of that principle, or (2) retain the theology of a passage, but replace the expression of the behavior, or (3) replace both the principle and the practice. Five guidelines for doing this are (1) to observe the reason given in the text for a cultural element, (2) to modify the cultural form but retain the content, (3) to avoid all practices integral to pagan culture, (4) to retain practices grounded in the nature of God, and (5) to adjust when the circumstances alter the application of a law or principle. But above all, be hesitant and humble in all cases where we are uncertain.

This was taken from Ann Landers column. It was first printed in the Vancouver Sun and contains real answers given on a Bible knowledge test.

1. Noah's wife was Joan of Ark
2. Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day and a ball of fire by night.
3. Moses went to the top of Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments.
4. The seventh commandment is "thou shalt not admit adultery.
5. Joshua led the Hebrews in the battle of Gwritol.
6. Jesus was born because Mary had an immaculate contraption.
7. The people who followed Jesus were called Decibels.
8. The espistles were the wives of the apostles.
9. One of the opossums was St. Matthew.
10. Salome danced in seven veils in front of King Herrod.
11. Paul preached acrimony, which is another name for marriage.
12. David fought the Finkelsteins, which a race of people who lived in Bible times.
13. The Jews had trouble throughout their history with unsympathic Gentials.
14. A Chtistian should have only one wife, this is called monotony.

Anybody catching up with their Bible study?

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Figurative (meaning) - *"the representation of one concept in terms of another because the nature of the two things compared allows such an analogy."*

(B. Mickelsen, p. 179)

A. Short Figures of Speech

1. **Simile** (resemblance) - an explicitly stated comparison using the words "like" or "as"

- a. I Peter 1:24
- b. Luke 10:3

2. **Metaphor** (representation) - a comparison by direct assertion or description

- a. Isaiah 40:6
- b. Luke 8:21

3. **Metonymy** ("change of name") - the substitution of one word for another

- a. The cause for the effect: Luke 16:29
- b. The effect for the cause: Isaiah 22:22

4. **Synecdoche** (transfer) - the substitution of related ideas one for another

- a. The part for the whole: Psalm 87:2
- b. The whole for the part: Luke 2:1

5. **Personification** - ascribing of personal characteristics to animals or objects

- a. Isaiah 55:12
- b. Psalm 114

6. **Apostrophe** - a direct address to a thing as if it were a person

- a. Judges 5: 3,4
- b. Zechariah 13:7

7. **Ellipsis** - the omission of a word or phrase necessary for the complete thought

- a. Acts 18:6
- b. Romans 8:3

8. **Hyperbole** - a conscious exaggeration by the author for heightened effect

- a. John 21:25
- b. Deuteronomy 1:28

9. **Litotes** - an understatement or negative to express an affirmation

- a. Acts 1:5
- b. I Thessalonians 2: 14,15

10. **Irony** - using language in an opposite or different meaning than stated for the purpose of ridicule

- a. I Kings 18:27
- b. Job 12:2

11. **Paradox** - a statement of truth in what appears a contradiction of ideas

- a. Matthew 13:12
- b. Mark 8:35

12. **Anthropomorphism** - ascribing human characteristics to God

- a. Psalm 19:1
- b. Isaiah 59:1

13. **Anthropopathism** - ascribing human emotions to God

- a. Psalm 95:10
- b. Zechariah 8:1

14. **Euphemism** - the substitution of a less direct or offensive word for one more graphic

- a. Judges 3:24
- b. Acts 1:25

15. **Rhetorical Question** - a question asked which does not expect a verbal response but one which forces the responder to consider the implications mentally

- a. Jeremiah 32:37
- b. Romans 8: 31-34

B. Distinguishing the Figurative and The Literal

1. Always use the literal sense unless there is some good reason for departure.

Example: Revelation 7: 1-8

2. Use the figurative sense when the passage is stated to be figurative.

Example: Zechariah 12:6

3. Use the figurative sense if the literal involves an impossibility.

Example: Jeremiah 1:18; Revelation 1:16

4. Use the figurative sense if the literal commands immoral action.

Example: John 6:53

5. Use the figurative sense if the expression fits into one of the classes of the figures of speech.

Example: Zechariah 12:2

6. Use the figurative sense if the literal is contrary to the context and scope of the passage.
Example: Zechariah 13:1; Matthew 5:42; Revelation 20:1 (chain)
7. Use the figurative sense if the literal is contrary to the general character and style of the book.
8. Use the figurative sense if the literal is contrary to the plan and purpose of the author.
9. Use the figurative sense if the literal involves a contradiction with a parallel passage.
10. Use the figurative sense if the literal involves a contradiction of doctrine.

C. Summary Principles For Interpreting Figurative Language

1. Determine if a figure of speech is used.
2. Determine the image and referent.
3. State the purpose for the figure.
4. Don't assume a figure always means the same thing.
5. Place limits of control by the use of logic and language.

D. Sample Procedure

Figure	Image	Referent	Point of Comparison
Simile (Psalm 1:3)	Tree	Believer	Growth, Fruitfulness, Stability

"A Word About Devotional Bible Study"

The devotional method of studying the Bible is rooted in a strong desire to apply the Bible to one's everyday life. It correctly presumes that the words of Scripture are clear enough to be understood in the basic message, but it does not demand that all Scripture be equally clear and perspicuous. The reader is dependent on the Holy Spirit for the work of illuminating those Scriptures used in a devotional study. Especially included in the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit are the issues of application, the ministry of encouraging the downcast, and the task of convicting all of the presence of sin as readers are exposed to the Scriptures.

Central to the devotional method is the act of meditating on the Word of God. Meditation does not have as its goal self-abnegation, as it usually does in oriental religions and some of the contemporary cults. Instead, biblical meditation seeks to establish communion with and the worship of the living God by involving the entirety of one's person--body, soul, and mind. It uses the Scriptures as the place where meditation is centered.

THE NATURE AND CRITERIA OF THEOLOGICAL SCHOLARSHIP

(Insights Into Contemporary Hermeneutical Thinking)

A Synopsis of an Article by Don Browning in
Theological Education, Autumn 1995

Hermeneutic theory has had a profound impact on all fields of human inquiry during the last three decades. Focus has been on the theories of human understanding and interpretation and the works of Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, and now Derrida and the Deconstructionist. It asks how humans understand their world and how human understanding or interpretation is related to human action.

Human understanding is seen as engaged, situated, historically conditioned, and dialogical. Gadamer accepted Heidegger's view, and for that matter so did Bultmann, that all efforts by humans to understand something must necessarily begin with [and be contrasted to] the pre-understandings, pre-judgments, and "prejudices" that we bring to the understanding process. Rather than pre-judgments getting in the way of understanding, as Enlightenment and empiricist epistemologies claimed, Heidegger and Gadamer held that they are essential to it. We only understand something in relation to the pre-understandings and prejudices (read "Worldview") that we bring to what we are attempting to understand.

Understanding is analogous to a conversation or dialogue. Our pre-understandings function like questions put to texts, events, life, and these texts and events respond in light of the questions we ask. According to Gadamer, the "to and fro" process of interpretation has the qualities of "dialogue" and "play," indeed the qualities of playful dialogue.

These pre-understandings are shaped by the historical traditions in which we stand. These traditions become a part of our experience, our thinking and feeling, even if we do not know this history cognitively, conceptually, and consciously. Our history has been a part of our experience and shaped our way of thinking long before we critically reflect on that history and consciously study it. Gadamer refers to this as "effective history."

When we try to understand a classic text or artifact from the past, there is a sense, to use a phrase of Paul Ricoeur's, in which we "already belong" to what we are trying to understand more deeply. Furthermore, it follows from this concept that when we study a phenomenon totally outside our cultural tradition, we study it partially in light of that to which we belong from our own effective history, no matter how strenuously we aspire for objectivity. To quote Bultmann, "exegesis without presuppositions is impossible."

Gadamer tried to show the impossibility of complete objectivity. Ricoeur, however, speaks of objectivity with the metaphor of "distance." Ricoeur outlines a variety of distancing procedures which interpreters can use--procedures that never achieve full objectivity but that may give us distance, points of comparison, critical leverage, and new angles for evaluation. Within this framework, critical distance becomes more modest in its ambitions, more relative to its own beginning points, and indeed, less heroic.

Gadamer argues further that "application is neither a subsequent nor a merely occasional part of the phenomenon of understanding, but co-determines it as a whole from the beginning." In other words, there is an element of practical engagement and interest on the part of the scholar, no matter how faint it is or difficult to discern.

Contemporary hermeneutics then is more concerned to increase critical self-understanding about the religious traditions that have formed our culture, institutions, and moral sensibility than it is about "truth." Indeed, truth is mentioned only very quietly and with as little fanfare as possible. Still, we should test text internally seeking to distinguish authentic from inauthentic expressions. We should test these traditions externally by analyzing their adequacy in light of various models of experience, reason, and the claims of other religious traditions. Revelation is downplayed, if not dismissed. All alleged objectivity (or distance) is relative and partial. The distance or objectivity that theological studies achieves comes out of a prior faith that the Christian tradition has brought insight and wisdom--indeed revelation--to the human predicament and therefore requires deeper understanding as well as transmission to others.

It is at this stage that concern for a diversity of contexts comes into view. The situations of women, alienated males, Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, the poor, and the disabled should be carefully described in an effort to give full accounts of their questions being brought to theological reflection. Comprehending the self-understanding of these groups is also fundamental to the understanding process. Description is never neutral but is itself a situated endeavor that has the properties of a dialogue--a dialogue in which the religious horizon of the individual interpreter is acknowledged as part of his or her pre-understanding.

Students should learn to reflect critically on the central themes of the Christian traditions. They should learn to test the external adequacy of these themes to experience, reason, and generally accepted states of knowledge. Although all inquiries start from historically situated and tradition-saturated beginning points, there are ways to gain relative degrees of distance from our embeddedness in these situations. There are also fragmentary ways in which science, reason, and experience can further test and refine them. This task is commonly the responsibility of what we call systematic theology.

In this context we are admonished to follow Gadamer's view of understanding, i.e., that understanding is a thoroughly practical task in which a concern with application drives it from the beginning. This is what is meant by the practice-theory-practice model of theological reflection in contrast to the theory-practice model.

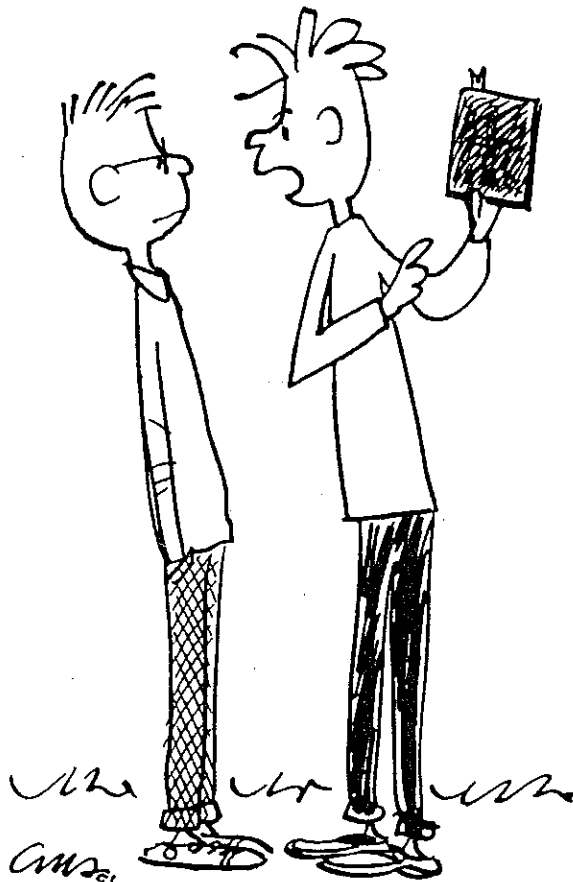
THEOLOGICAL INSIGHT: AN EVANGELICAL APPRAISAL

It is time that both religious studies programs and departments of theology in seminaries come to terms with the fact that theology is a unique academic enterprise with its own distance subject matter--God; its own methodological premise--revelation; its own method of inquiry into its unique subject matter--the exegesis of the revealed word of God; its own criteria of accountability--responsible handling of the biblical text within the context of the witness of

the Holy Spirit and the conciliar work of the church over the ages; its own way of analyzing culture--with an appreciation of divine providence and an appropriate bracketing of worldly powers; and its own logic--an internal consistency with the revealed truth of God verified by all the external evidences from natural revelation including the historical, logical, literary, existential, and scientific.

Such a description of nature and criteria for doing theology should not appear to be any more remarkable, say, than requiring that study in a department of mathematics should demand that talk not be about social criticism or drama, but about things like theorems and equations of arithmetic. For close to three decades now, too many "shirttail" subjects to theology and extraneous methodologies have been masquerading as legitimate substitutes for the decent study of theology. This has contributed in no small way to our present crisis and dilemma.

Walt C. Kaiser, Jr.
Theological Education
 Autumn, 1995, p.64.



"Oh, yeah? Well, I'll bet my Bible has more passages underlined than your Bible!"

Stranded Theologically: Tracking Clark Pinnock

by: R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

Convention to ruin.

Twenty-five years ago, a young, lanky and articulate theology professor stood before the Southern Baptist Convention Pastor's Conference and called for "A New Reformation" as Southern Baptists were challenged to confront the modern theological crisis and unite under a banner of biblical fidelity.

The essence of modernity is change, and most modern theologians celebrate doctrinal change as the spirit of the age. The contemporary era has seen the rise of such theological aberrations as process theology, feminist theology, various liberation theologies, and revisionist models ranging from neo-evangelical to others clearly post-Christian.

Two contrasting pilgrimages

But the present era has also witnessed the noteworthy pilgrimages of two significant theologians, whose theological positions have shifted markedly during the past fifteen years. Thomas Oden, who teaches at the Drew University Theological School, has repudiated his prior commitments to what he terms "addictive accommodationsim" which allowed him to ride every theological movement in sight. He has now turned to embrace classical Christian orthodoxy as the only faithful and viable option for believing theologians. His pilgrimage is fascinating and instructive--and his books demand attention.

The other noteworthy pilgrimage is that of Clark H. Pinnock, now professor of theology at McMaster University Divinity School in Hamilton, Ontario. He was the young theology professor who addressed the SBC Pastor's Conference twenty-five years ago, and his progression deserves the attention of all thoughtful Southern Baptists, for he was once one of us.

Clark Pinnock first rose to prominence as an articulate defender of the faith as a young professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in the 1960s. Influenced by both Francis Schaeffer and F.F. Bruce (his doctoral supervisor), Pinnock warned of the doctrinal compromise which threatened to lead the Southern Baptist

Pinnock defends revelation

Addressing the Pastor's Conference in Houston, Pinnock, then at Neo Orleans Seminary, spoke prophetically of the threat of modern theological variants: "At this moment the Christian Church faces the greatest crisis of her history... In the past false teachers attacked this doctrine or that, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, or the reality of judgment. Now, however, it is not an aspect of revelation which is under attack, but revelation itself. The foundation of all revealed truth is being undermined."

What was Pinnock's prescription? A return to biblical inerrancy and authority. In fact, during this era Pinnock authored two of the most significant works in defense of biblical authority, *A Defense of Biblical Infallibility* and *Biblical Revelation*. Of the latter, no less than J.I. Packer crowned it "a little classic of fundamental theology."

Pinnock was then known as a stalwart conservative, and many accused him of a caustic and accusatory style. But those who know Clark Pinnock know him to be one of the most gracious and kind-spirited theologians on the contemporary scene. He is generous in spirit and gentle in speech. His humility of approach is remarkable in a world of titanic egoism among intellectuals.

Pinnock's stature as a defender of the evangelical faith was enhanced by his public speaking and by his determination to inject these issues into denominational debate. But, he did not remain

long within the SBC, and he moved successively to Trinity Evangelical School, Regent University and McMaster University.

An ominous shift in emphasis

But Pinnock's professional moves were also revealing of significant theological moves as well--and in these moves are lessons we dare not miss. By the early

1980s, Pinnock had shifted from a firm pro-inerrancy position in the classical Princetonian mode to what he identified as a more "moderate" position (a designation, we should note, which had no relation to movements within the SBC).

By the late 1980s, Pinnock argued for a "simple biblicism" over what he identified as "elaborate biblicism," which designated the detailed defense of biblical inerrancy. Pinnock produced the most thorough presentation of his shift on the issue of biblical inerrancy in *The Scripture Principle* (1984), which sought to affirm the full trustworthiness and authority of the Bible

without the defense of traditional arguments in favor of biblical infallibility and inerrancy.

Pinnock seeks a new center

But the most significant marker of Pinnock's theological pilgrimage

What Pinnock is actually proposing is a radical re-envisioning of Scripture and divine revelation. Theologians, he now admonishes, should give greater attention to the fundamental story contained in Scripture, rather than the defense of the story's authority.

is *Tracking the Maze: Finding Our Way Through Modern Theology From an Evangelical Perspective*, his 1990 cry of the heart and proposal for the future. The volume stands as one of the most revealing theological documents written by a North American evangelical, and it indicates the scope of Pinnock's fundamental shifts.

Pinnock is clearly seeking a new center. After moving out of the house of authority constructed by a line of theologians from Augustine to Carl F.H. Henry, Pinnock seeks a moderate posture between liberalism and traditional evangelicalism. Such a posture, he admits, is problematic. "Progressives are comfortable with modernity and perform surgery on the tradition. Conservatives are comfortable with the tradition and try to ignore the revolutionary changes of the past few centuries. But how do moderates manage when they persist in liking both the historic faith confession of the Church and the modern world, refusing to let go of either? This can be a wrenching experience for sensitive people and a painful dilemma."

The shift made clear

From his new vantage point, Pinnock now reviews his earlier proposals with regret. Gone is the emphasis upon the defense of biblical inerrancy. The later Pinnock is concerned that "Divine inspiration should not be over-supernaturalized. There is no reason to deny that inspiration is, at least in part, a perfectly natural response to the need to perpetuate revelation and that many



Dr. Albert Mohler

of the people involved in writing Scripture depended upon the familiar charisms enjoyed in the believing community even today. I think we have exaggerated the supernaturalness of inspiration."

The revolutionary nature of this quotation may first escape the reader. What Pinnock is actually proposing is a radical re-envisioning of Scripture and the process of divine revelation. Theologians, he now admonishes, should give greater attention to the fundamental story contained in Scripture, rather than the defense of the story's authority.

This story is described by Pinnock as a "eucatastrophe," borrowing a phrase from

Tolkien-- a story of salvation through Christ which is at once both factual and existential. Further, he warns that theologians should give primary attention to narrative theology rather than to more propositional

statements. What then is orthodoxy and what is heresy? The later Pinnock can suggest only that "sound theology" is that which enhances and preserves the story and "unsound theology" is "that which spoils the story for the hearers."

Stranded theologically

Gone is the earlier Pinnock's concern for the preservation and perpetuation of traditional evangelical certainties. While Pinnock has no intention of joining the ranks of traditional liberals, he has clearly moved outside the evangelical mainstream into a revisionist model far removed from his earlier positions. This has hardly escaped attention among evangelicals, and the strange pilgrimage of Clark Pinnock is a constant of conversation in the evangelical academy. Helpfully, Pinnock himself speaks and writes of these shifts. He recently reflected, "I admit that openness to theological change has its painful aspects. Not only am I often not listened to, I am also made to feel stranded theologically; being too much a free thinker to be accepted by the evangelical establishment and too much a conservative to be accepted by the liberal mainline. Sometimes I do not know where I belong. But I am not discouraged by this, because, being a creature of hope, I can imagine a future where evangelicals and liberals mature and come around to more sensible middle positions."

Pinnock's "middle position"

But what would such a "middle position" look like? In Pinnock's case, it has meant a seismic shift away from Christian exclusiveness toward an inclusive model which seemingly allows for salvific revelation through other world religions and hope-

fulness concerning the plight of those who have not heard the gospel of Christ. He assails what he labels the evangelical "fewness doctrine" and calls for recognizing "a wideness in God's mercy" which holds that Jesus is the only Savior of sinners, but that He may be working through other world religions and means other than the Church and its mission.

Hand in hand with this shift is Pinnock's embrace of annihilationism-- the proposal that those outside of salvation in Jesus Christ are annihilated upon death and judgment, and do not suffer eternal punishment and torment.

How are these shifts to be explained?

What is orthodoxy and what is heresy? The later Pinnock can suggest only that "sound theology" is that which enhances and preserves the story and "unsound theology" is "that which spoils the story for the hearers."

How did one of the most articulate and insightful defenders of Christian orthodoxy find himself now "stranded" between orthodoxy and liberalism? First, we must candidly admit that Pinnock is not as stranded as he thinks. An honest assessment of his significant shifts places him far closer to traditional liberalism than he can himself see. He has abdicated the evangelical house of authority and now seeks to take refuge in a half-way house which has a leaky room and a shaking foundation.

Instructive warnings to SBC

In this pilgrimage we must see instructive warnings for the Southern Baptist Convention and its future. First, the very notion of a half-way position between classical orthodoxy and modern revisionist theologies is dubious. It has been tried before, and the middle positions have perpetually fallen. Neo-orthodoxy progressively forfeited its orthodoxy and its second generation largely surrendered any claim to classical Christian orthodox commitments.

"Half-way houses" cede too much

Such half-way houses require the surrender of biblical inerrancy, which inevitably leads to an erosion of biblical authority within the community of faith. Third generation evangelicals are almost impossible to find where the second generation has abdicated biblical inerrancy in favor of more moderate approaches.

A few years ago, Roger Nicole warned of Pinnock's "precarious balance between open-mindedness and doctrinal instability." Given Pinnock's shift on the issue of Christian exclusiveness, it is time we admit that the balance has been lost.

Second, Pinnock's progression reveals that a shift on the issue of biblical revelation

and authority is indicative of far deeper and more pervasive shifts. In Pinnock's case, this shift was a move away from the Reformed tradition to a fully Arminian posture. As Pinnock has reflected, his was a pilgrimage "from Augustine to Arminius." Few have noted the direct impact this shift had on Pinnock's doctrine of the Bible. Rejecting the Reformed affirmation of God's sovereignty and control over world process and events, Pinnock has largely removed His control from the process of biblical inspiration as well.

A more fundamental shift

In a fascinating reflection, Pinnock states: "During the seventies it was my impression that all I was doing was adjusting an old paradigm to make it work better. Now I see that something more fundamental than that may have been going on. The key thing to remember is that during the same period in which I was questioning the Warfieldian paradigm in these ways, I was also moving away from its larger framework of Calvinism itself to more dynamic ways of thinking theologically."

What does this mean? "I was giving up the view according to which God is thought to relate primarily to us as all-determining monarch and law-giver and shifting to the paradigm in which God related to us primarily as parent, lover and covenant partner." What has happened here? Pinnock the defender of orthodox Christianity against the liberal threat has now embraced the very language of the liberal revision of God's nature and power.

This means that God's inspiration of Scripture must be revised. As Pinnock writes: "The inspired scriptures do not suddenly appear by an abrupt charism but arise from the breathing of God's Spirit in the whole community." Gone is the traditional notion of God's sovereignty and concurrence in His process of revelation. This explains Pinnock's warnings against inflated supernaturalism in relation to inspiration. It also indicates just how far from the classical evangelical position Pinnock has now moved.

Southern Baptists have historically included strict Calvinists and modified Calvinists. These Baptists have argued over issues ranging from election and predestination to the freedom of the will, and that debate will continue. But

Pinnock's pilgrimage is a clear warning against a Southern Baptist defection into genuine Arminianism-- for Pinnock has correctly and consistently applied the Arminian principle, and one does not need an

continued bottom of next page

continued from last page

inerrant Bible or propositional truth to press this principle to the fullest. God is left to a significant degree an innocent bystander as His own Word is written and His own purposes accomplished or thwarted.

Biblical inerrancy is not enough

Third, the pilgrimage of Clark Pinnock reveals that biblical inerrancy is essential, but not sufficient to ensure orthodoxy. Put bluntly, inerrancy becomes an irrelevancy if one does not believe in a God who would be zealous and determinative of the total truthfulness of His own Word. The substructure of theological affirmations related to who God is and how He acts and

related to His world will eventually determine one's real position on biblical authority, inspiration, inerrancy and applicability.

Fourth, Pinnock's progression is a warning against taking modern claims with too much seriousness. We must be fully aware of the challenge of modernity, and willing to defend the "faith once delivered" against modern threats. But, as Thomas Oden has eloquently asserted, the Church has been through equally difficult challenges before. The believing Church must hold fast to its deposit of biblical doctrine even--and especially--against the spirits of this age. To allow modernity to set the rules of debate is to surrender the Christian truth claim at the onset.

Pinnock was right when he stood in Houston in 1968 to address the SBC Pastor's Conference. We do stand at a crisis moment in the evangelical Church--and as Southern Baptists. This is a crisis far more apparent now than twenty-five years ago and far more significant than any denominational controversy can reveal. Southern Baptists will either unite around a confident confession of the eternal truths of the Christian faith, or we will deservedly follow others into denominational oblivion. We cannot allow ourselves to be trapped in a theological maze.

Dr. Mohler is president-elect of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Southern Baptist WATCHMAN

★14★

1993 Convention Edition

Avoiding the seven Bible study pitfalls

"The seven deadly sins of Bible study (and how to avoid them)" by Jack Kuhatschek. *New Man*, Jan/Feb 1995 (Vol 3, No 1). Pages 39-41+. Topic: BIBLE STUDY. See also 10620. 1-800-877-5334.

Serious students of God's Word will want to be aware of the "seven deadly sins" of Bible study and how to avoid them:

- **Proof-texting.** Realize the Bible was written as literary units—books, letters, and poems—meant to be read from beginning to end. To avoid proof-texting—taking a verse out of context—read the author's statements in their broader context rather than in isolation.

- **Being too literal.** Recognize that biblical authors communicated in a variety of ways—through metaphors, similes, and symbols—and through a variety of literary genres, such as history, proverbs, parables, letters, poems, and prophecy. To correctly

interpret the Word, be sensitive to the type of language and literature the author is using.

- **Ignoring the Bible's background.** Become knowledgeable about a passage's historical and cultural background, sometimes critical to proper understanding and interpretation.

- **Relying on faulty translations.** Make sure your interpretation is based on what the author actually said. Because there are inaccuracies in all translations, read a passage in a variety of translations, paying close attention to the differences in words, grammar, and sentence structure.

- **Reading into Scripture.** Overcome the temptation to read your own ideas into Scripture by avoiding the "deadly sins" discussed above. Let the Bible say only what the author—and ultimately the Lord Himself—wants to communicate.

•Thinking you can do it all.

Follow Paul's advice to Timothy: "Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this." (2 Tim. 2:7). Think about what you are reading and make use of all the study tools and resources available. Since it is God who grants understanding, dare not study the Bible without asking His help.

- **Failing to apply what is learned.** You must allow biblical teaching to filter down into your everyday life for true growth to occur. Employ diligently what is learned and enjoy the enormous impact on both your Bible study and your walk with the Lord. ☉

Kisses and Veils

Should we insist that the practice of exchanging "holy kisses" (1 Cor. 16:20) be restored? Should women be compelled to wear head coverings in church (1 Cor. 11:5)? Shouldn't Christian parents take charge of their children's marriage plans and draw up contracts with other "biblical thinking" parents (Gen. 24)?

In my desire to uphold scriptural authority, I once pondered these possibilities seriously. But I no longer do so for the reasons enumerated below.

The longer I studied the Bible, the more I realized that each passage was part of a whole book written to a specific group of people (say, the church in Corinth) and that usually addressed particular issues they needed to hear about. The biblical authors shared many cultural assumptions with their original audiences, but these assumptions they took for granted are often foreign to us. If we do not understand much about the world the Bible originally addressed, we tend to read it in light of our own world.

On the other hand, knowing the background helps us understand the Bible in a number of ways.

First, cultural background can clarify a text that seems obscure. Many of the symbols in the Book of Revelation made

perfect sense to ancient readers. The city on "seven mountains" or "hills" (Rev. 17) had long been a title for Rome. We may debate today where the final Antichrist will come from, but without a doubt, the chief persecutor of Christians in John's day was Rome, and John, in Revelation, used the images of his day to communicate the point.

Second, cultural background can illuminate aspects of a text that we think we understand, but don't. When the crowds were "amazed" that Jesus cast out demons merely by his command (Mark 1:27), this was due in part to the fact that most exorcists in his day tried to expel demons by other methods. (They invoked more powerful spirits against them or tried to gag the demon by sticking smelly roots up the possessed person's nose.) Likewise, when Jesus made it publicly known that a woman with a flow of blood had touched him, the depth of his compassion becomes evident once we realize that observers of the Law would believe this contact would render him impure (Mark

5:30-34; Lev. 15:25-27).

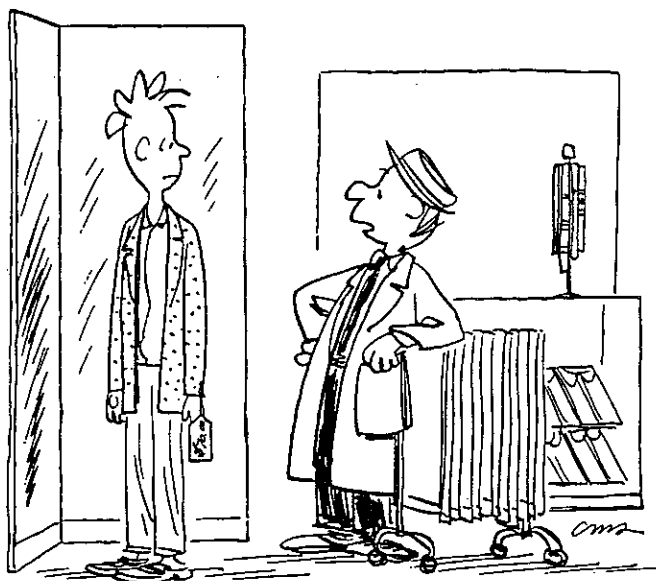
Third, cultural background often addresses what may seem to be discrepancies in the Bible. For example, some have struggled with Jesus' warning in his end-times discourse that his prophecies would be fulfilled within a generation (Matt. 24:34). It helps to know that some 40 years after Jesus uttered these words, the Roman armies destroyed Jerusalem's temple and worshiped Caesar's insignia atop its ruins. This does not resolve all of the questions raised in this discourse, but it does help the reader to see that Jesus' promise of judgment was, in part, fulfilled.

Fourth, cultural background can explain why the Bible did not always challenge practices of its day that violated its moral principles. One might wonder why Paul did not demand the abolition of slavery when he wrote to the slaves in Ephesians: "Obey your earthly masters with respect and

fear" (6:5, NIV). A century and a half ago, American slave holders quoted Paul's command as if he supported slavery; abolitionists, by contrast, bolstered their point of view by appealing to the fact that Paul was addressing a different historical situation.

The fact is, Paul wrote in a culture where urban household slaves often had

**Finding what
the Bible means
by knowing
what it meant.**



"Sure, I know all about that beautiful coat that Jacob gave Joseph, but I'll bet you that Joseph didn't already have seven sport coats at home!"

more economic and social mobility than free peasants. So Paul did not have much reason to address the institution of slavery; slave revolts had repeatedly proved unsuccessful, and freed slaves normally acquired slaves of their own when they could afford them.

Instead, Paul focused on how to live in a way that would avoid bringing reproach on the gospel in a culture where slavery was almost always a given. Yet, his words imply that he had no commitment to the system of slavery since, after he told slaves to obey their masters, he then exhorted masters to "do the same things to them, because you have a master in heaven" (Eph. 6:9). In the case of nineteenth-century slavery in America, understanding the cultural background Paul addressed could have made a life-and-death difference.

Fifth, cultural background helps us understand that the truths in the Bible are for all time, but not every example set forth in the Bible pertains to all circumstances. When Paul told the women in Corinth to cover their heads, this did not mean that women today must wear hats or veils to church. But the principle behind Paul's injunction remains valid: to avoid what some members of the worshipping community might regard as symbols of seduction and ostentation. Knowing the cultural situation helps us understand the difference between Paul's specific instructions to the congregation and the universal principle that leads to those instructions. Uncovered hair in the Eastern Mediter-

anean culture was associated with "availability," which was considered appropriate only for women still seeking husbands. Married women, then, would cover their hair. In Paul's context, many well-to-do Greek women felt that wearing veils was inhibiting. So when the "progressive" and "conservative" members of the congregation came together, they experienced what we often have in churches today: a clash of values. The way Paul attempted to make peace gives us guidance today. We need to recognize that those parts of the Bible addressed to other people are examples for us that illustrate principles we can learn from (1 Cor. 10:11).

Sixth, understanding the background of a text will better communicate the impact the author intended. When we read about homosexual behavior in Romans 1, it helps to know that Greek men were often bisexual, whereas Jewish people considered such behavior a distinctively Gentile sin. Paul condemned sins that Jewish people would have regarded as someone else's (Rom. 1:21-27). But just when the Jewish part of his audience was saying, "Amen!" he reminded them that they, too, had committed various "mortal" sins (1:28-2:29). Paul used this progression of thought to make his point to a Roman church divided along Jewish-Gentile lines. In so doing he demonstrated that *all* have sinned (Gentiles and Jews), and *all* need to approach God on the same terms, finding forgiveness through

Jesus Christ. Today, while agreeing with Paul that homosexual behavior is sinful, Christians must face the same biblical truth: all have sinned and need God's grace.

Finally, we need to admit that knowing the background does not solve all questions. Most of us would agree that Paul's teachings about women's and slaves' roles were progressive in his culture. After all, he said that in Christ there is "neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). But should we argue (as I think we should) that had Paul been writing in our culture, he would have been progressive today, too? Or should we argue instead (as some of my friends have) that Paul would have preserved his specific mandates for his culture (women wearing head coverings, for example) as normative for today?

Understanding cultural background does not settle all the questions, because we may not all apply the background information in the same way. But knowing the cultural context of the Bible does offer us a fresh way of hearing its message, helps us avoid prejudicing our interpretation, and enables us to expound better its message anew to our contemporary audiences. **CI**

By Craig S. Keener, professor of New Testament at Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury, North Carolina, and the author of The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament.



"I think maybe I've discovered my trouble with getting out of bed, mom. I think I'm allergic to morning!"

A Summary of The Issues Concerning The Inspiration of The Bible

- 1) God has adapted His revelation for finite human minds; He has not accommodated it by human error in the inspiration process
- 2) The church in general, and Baptist in particular, have affirmed their confidence in the complete truthfulness and trustworthiness of Scripture. This affirmation has been almost universal, with many actually using the terms inerrant, infallible, verbal and plenary
- 3) The Bible's inerrancy is a logical corollary to its inspiration by God. This is a deductive type of argument
- 4) Scripture testifies to its inspiration by God and its truthfulness:
 - a) Jesus - Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:35
 - b) Paul - 2 Tim. 3:16
 - c) Peter - 2 Peter 1:21
- 5) Inerrancy applies directly to the autographs (the source) and indirectly to copies and translations (the streams) to the degree that they (the copies) accurately reflect the source
- 6) Inspiration extends to the words of Scripture (verbal) and the fulness or completeness of Scripture (plenary)
- 7) Inerrancy attaches natural clarifications to it, but not unreasonable qualifications
- 8) The Christological analogy is a powerful argument for the inerrancy of Scripture
- 9) Objections to inerrancy can reasonably be answered and the doctrine confidently affirmed
- 10) The issue is not could God reveal Himself via a flawed instrument, but did He? This is crucial both theologically and epistemologically. Our doctrine of God and Scriptures own testimony argue for inerrancy

Spiritual trends affect nation's vision

By Marv Knox
Associate Editor

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Food and fashion don't have a monopoly on trends in America.

Religious researcher George Barna cited several "spiritual trends of significance" in a recent national seminar. They include:

◆ Increased spiritual interest. "More people are doing things related to religious stuff," Barna reported. "People are searching for handles to make sense of change" swirling about them. "They're seeking stability."

Unfortunately, that doesn't translate into a trend toward Christianity, which is seen as "one of the competitors in the religious marketplace," he noted.

◆ Attitudes toward Christianity. Eighty percent of Americans have a positive image of Christianity, making it the highest-ranked faith group in the nation, he said.

However, non-Christians have a much lower perception of Christian individuals, he added. "This is really hurting the church. Non-Christians say the biggest difference between them and Christians is (1) Christians go to church more and (2) Christians are more judgmental."

Barna's research has shown that only 9 percent of non-Christian adults believe Protestant churches are "very sensitive" to their own needs.

"This is most damaging of all," he said. Christians must "rethink the whole reality of what it means to be inviting to people."

◆ Denominational decline. Southern Baptists aren't the only Christians who have faced denominational difficulty, according to Barna's studies.

An increasing number of churches "don't think they're getting something back from the denomination," he said. And outside the fold, Americans hold denominations in low esteem. The percentages of adults with a "very favorable impression" of denominations ranges from 29 for Baptist to 18 for Methodist and 12 each for Presbyterian

and Lutheran.

◆ Unorthodox theology. While most people believe good things about Jesus, almost half think He sinned, Barna has discovered.

Biblically Illiterate America

Believe "God helps those who help themselves" is from the Bible

82%

Say there is no absolute truth

72%

Can't name the four gospels

63%

Can't name half or more of the Ten Commandments

58%

Don't know Jesus was born in Bethlehem

39%

Two-thirds think all people of all faiths pray to the same God, and the same percentage believe the different religions all teach basically the same thing, he said. Most people people think God gives them a choice in how to get to heaven—faith in Jesus or good works—while 60 percent don't believe in hell.

Americans increasingly are becoming "biblically illiterate," he said. For example: 63 percent cannot name the four gospels, 58 percent cannot name half or more of the Ten Commandments and up to 12 percent believe Noah's wife was Joan of Arc.

◆ Weak leadership. The way Protestants do church "puts enormous pressure on the senior pastor," Barna insisted. "This model sets up pastors for failure" because most are unable to meet expectations.

Most pastors believe they have the gift of teaching and preaching, but not leadership, he said. Less than 4 percent can articulate a vision for the church, he added, noting pastors need to spend

time cultivating their leadership skills.

◆ Syncretism. "People are integrating all kinds of faith stuff and calling it 'Christian,'" Barna reported. Eighty-four percent of Americans call themselves Christians, and more than two-thirds think of America as a "Christian nation."

But on an average Sunday, "54 percent of the people in the pews are not Christian," even though the majority have attended church for a decade or more.

"Somehow, we are inoculating people to the Christian faith," he lamented of the church's ability to cause people to think they're Christian when they can't even explain what that means. "They sit there year after year, and it doesn't make sense to them."

Carl F. H. Henry

Divine Revelation: Fifteen Theses
God, Revelation and Authority, II-IV

Thesis One: A Supernatural Initiative

Revelation is a divinely initiated activity, God's free communication by which he alone turns his personal privacy into a deliberate disclosure of his reality.

Thesis Two: For Man's Benefit

Divine revelation is given for human benefit, offering us privileged communication with our Creator in the kingdom of God.

Thesis Three: Divine Transcendence

Divine revelation does not completely erase God's transcendent mystery, inasmuch as God the Revealer transcends his own revelation.

Thesis Four: Coherent Disclosure

The very fact of disclosure by the one living God assures the comprehensive unity of divine revelation.

Thesis Five: An Amazing Variety

Not only the occurrence of divine revelation, but also its very nature, content, and variety are exclusively God's determination.

Thesis Six: God Names Himself

God's revelation is uniquely personal both in content and form.

Thesis Seven: Historical Revelation

God reveals himself not only universally in the history of the cosmos and of the nations, but also redemptively within this external history in unique saving acts.

Thesis Eight: God's Personal Incarnation

The climax of God's special revelation is Jesus of Nazareth, the personal incarnation of God in the flesh; in Jesus Christ the source and content of revelation converge and coincide.

Thesis Nine: The Mediating Logos

The mediating agent in all divine revelation is the Eternal Logos—preexistent, incarnate, and now glorified.

Thesis Ten: Revelation as Rational-Verbal Communication

God's revelation is rational communication conveyed in intelligible ideas and meaningful words, that is, in conceptual-verbal form.

Thesis Eleven: The Bible as the Authoritative Norm

The Bible is the reservoir and conduit of divine truth.

Thesis Twelve: The Spirit as Communicator and Interpreter

The Holy Spirit superintends the communication of divine revelation, first, by inspiring the prophetic-apostolic writings, and second, by illuminating and interpreting the scripturally given Word of God.

Thesis Thirteen: The Spirit, The Bestower of New Life

As bestower of spiritual life, the Holy Spirit enables individuals to appropriate God's revelation savingly, and thereby attests the redemptive power of the revealed truth of God in the personal experience of reborn sinners.

Thesis Fourteen: The Church as the New Society

The church approximates the kingdom of God in miniature; as such she is mirror to each successive generation the power and joy of the appropriated realities of divine revelation.

Thesis Fifteen: God and the End of All Ends

The self-manifesting God will unveil his glory in a crowning revelation of his power and judgment; in this disclosure at the consummation of the ages, God will vindicate righteousness and justice, finally subdue and subordinate evil, and bring into being a new heaven and earth.

Carl F. H. Henry

The Meaning of Inerrancy
God, Revelation and Authority, IV

Negatively, Scriptural inerrancy does not imply the following:

1. *Inerrancy does not imply that modern technological precision in reporting statistics and measurements, that conformity to modern historiographic method in reporting genealogies and other historical data, or that conformity to modern scientific method in reporting cosmological matters, can be expected from the biblical writers.*
2. *Inerrancy does not imply that only nonmetaphorical truth or nonsymbolic language can convey religious truth.*

3. *Inerrancy does not imply that verbal exactitude is required in New Testament quotation and use of Old Testament passages.*
4. *Inerrancy does not imply that personal faith in Jesus Christ is dispensable since evangelicals have an inerrant book they can trust.*
5. *Scriptural inerrancy does not imply that evangelical orthodoxy follows as a necessary consequence of accepting this doctrine.*

**The best way to protect the text
from self-centered manipulation
is to interpret it under the shadow
of the cross of Christ.**

Carl F. H. Henry

*The Meaning of Inerrancy
God, Revelation and Authority, IV*

Positively, verbal inerrancy does imply the following:

1. *Verbal inerrancy implies that truth attaches not only to the theological and ethical teaching of the Bible, but also to historical and scientific matters insofar as they are part of the express message of the inspired writings.*
2. *Verbal inerrancy implies that God's truth inheres in the very words of Scripture, that is, in the propositions or sentences of the Bible, and not merely in the concepts and thoughts of the writers.*
3. *Verbal inerrancy implies that the original writings or prophetic-apostolic autographs alone are error-free. The theopneustic quality attaches directly to the autographs, and only indirectly to the copies.*
4. *Verbal inerrancy of the autographs implies that evangelicals must not attach finality to*

contemporary versions or translations, least of all mere paraphrases, but must earnestly pursue and honor the best text.

**If we only use the Bible as a mirror
to see ourselves, we may wind up seeing
more of a reflection of our own self-interests
than a revelation of God's interests.**

Basil Manly Jr.

“Positive Statement of the Doctrine of Inspiration”

This may be briefly comprehended in three points:

- 1. The Bible is truly the Word of God, having both infallible truth and divine authority in all that it affirms or enjoins.*
- 2. The Bible is truly the production of men. It is marked by all the evidences of human authorship as clearly and certainly as any other book that was ever written by men.*
- 3. This twofold authorship extended to every part of Scripture, and to the language as well as to the general ideas expressed.*

*Or it may be summed up in one single statement:
The whole Bible is truly God's Word written by men.*

Bible Study In The Life Of A Christian (a brief practical synopsis and summary)

Reasons why we aren't "IN" the Bible

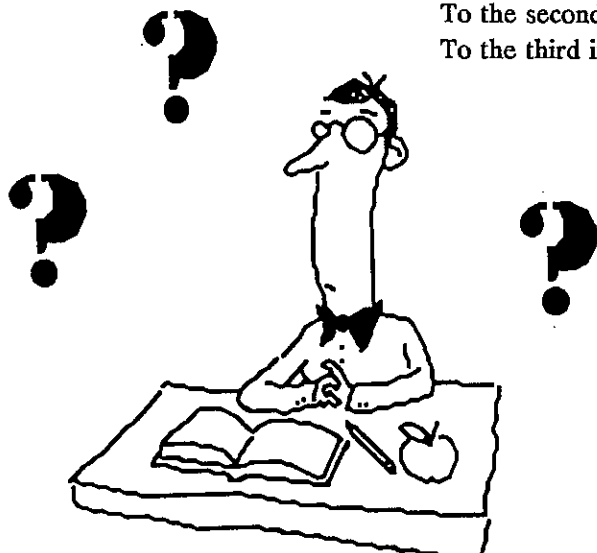
1. Problem of motivation; we don't see the necessity of why we should study.
2. Problem of priorities; too busy, lack of time.
3. Problem of technique; we don't know how.
4. Problem of preoccupation; we just don't get around to it.

Why study the Bible

1. Hebrews 5: 11-14 -- It's the means to develop spiritual maturity and Godly wisdom - the ability to see life from God's perspective and react and respond to it with His mind (Phil 2:5).
2. I Peter 2:2 -- Scripture is the only means of spiritual growth. Our aim should be to be like Jesus.

Howard Hendricks says, "There are three kinds of Bible students:

To the first it's like castor oil -- bitter and hard to take.
To the second it's like shredded wheat -- dry but nourishing.
To the third it's like peaches & cream -- can't get enough."



Ever feel like this when it comes to studying the Bible? You want to study it but you just don't feel like you know how.

3. II Timothy 2:15 -- The Bible gives the only guidelines to follow for presenting ourselves to God in a manner approved by Him (Rom 12: 1-2).

The bottom line of Christian experience is how we answer three questions we should ask ourselves daily:

1. Is the Lord well pleased?
2. Is the work well done?
3. Is the Word well used?

II Timothy 3: 16-17 tells us that:

All Scripture is profitable for:

1. Doctrine, for teaching
2. Rebuke, for where you're out of bounds
3. Correction, for conforming to image of Christ
4. Training in righteous living.

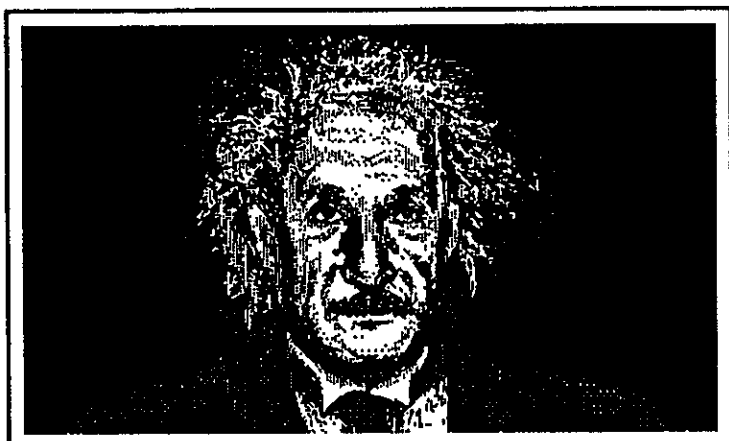
The overall purpose -- so we may be thoroughly equipped for God's work (cf. Eph 4: 11-16).

4. Study is a necessary means of being able to serve Christ.

We need to develop four skills in order to read the Bible and it mean something in our lives!

The skills are:

1. Observation - "What do I see?"
2. Interpretation - "What does it mean?"
3. Correlation - "How does it fit together (integrate)?"
4. Application - "How does it work? How can I translate it to my own experience?"



**You don't have to be an
EINSTEIN**



**You need to be a
SHERLOCK HOLMES**

The First Major Step Is OBSERVATION

I. Developing the ability to see and determining what the text says.

Observation is taking a good hard look at what is in the text.

Why don't we get more?

1. We don't know how to read.
2. We don't know what to look for.

A. Learn to read.

Observation requires concentration. It is not a difficult procedure. It is not a complicated process. It can be mastered with practice and diligence.

RULES FOR READING THE BIBLE

1. Learn to read better or faster.
2. Learn to read as for the first time (the advantage of reading the text in the original languages).
3. Learn to read as a love letter (personal).

B. We need to read the Bible:

thoughtfully
repeatedly
often at one sitting
start at the beginning
patiently
sometimes selectively

OBSERVATION

C. When we read the Bible we need to ask these six questions:

what
do I
see ?



• WHO ?

- _ Who is the author of the book?
- _ To whom is the book written?
- _ Who are the characters in the book?
- _ Who is speaking?
- _ To whom is he speaking?
- _ Etc. Etc. Etc.

• WHAT ?

- _ What is the atmosphere of the book or passage? Friendly? Chastening? Loving?
- _ What is the author's general topic? What is he saying about his topic?
- _ What is the CONTEXT?
- _ What are the key words? What do they mean?
- _ What? What? What?

• WHEN ?

- _ When was the book written?
- _ When did this event happen in relation to this other event?
- _ When was this prophecy fulfilled or has it been?
- _ "When" questions are important to ask especially in narrative literature such as the Gospels. This will help give you the time perspective.

• WHERE ?

- _ Where was the book written?
- _ Where were the recipients of the book living?
- _ Can you locate the places mentioned on a map?
- _ Where else does this topic appear in Scripture?

• WHY ?

- _ Why was the book written?
- _ Why does he include this material and not other things?
- _ Why does the author give so much space to that topic and so little to another?

• HOW ?

- _ How many? How many times does the author use the same word in this book, chapter, passage, verse?
- _ How long?
- _ How much?
- _ How does he do this? Say this?
- _ How does this relate to the preceding statement? ...to the succeeding statement?

As we read, we are to read:

Prayerfully:	recall God's promises and claim them.
Imaginatively:	identify with it.
Reflectively:	meditatively; take time.
Purposefully:	what's the purpose in light of....
Acquisitively:	how can I hold on to it?
Telescopically:	in light of the whole.

II. Learn What To Look For:

1. Look for key terms
(i.e. the verbs, significant concepts, repetition)
2. Look for structure -- the relation and interrelation of terms

Look For: things that are emphasized
 things that are repeated
 things that are related and how
 things that are alike
 (uses words "as" or "like")
 things that are unlike
 (contrasting words such as "but")
 Things that are true to life

3. Look for atmosphere.
 Last words are lasting words. Last words are usually of a deep concern.

THE CRUCIALITY OF STRUCTURE

178

Observation involves two propositions

#1 - Learn to read

#2 - Learn to detect structure

DEFINITION

Structure involves the relation and interrelation of component parts.

* Whenever you have two of anything (terms, phrases, clauses, prepositions, connectives, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, etc.) you have structure.

THEREFORE we are looking for

1) What God has said (content)

2) How God has said it (form)

- relationships

- arrangement ..

KINDS

1. Grammatical - an author communicates his mind through his grammar
 - a. Verbs
 - b. Subject/Object
 - c. Modifiers
 - d. Dependent and independent clauses
 - e. Phrases - especially prepositional
 - f. Connectives
2. Literary - a book presupposes unity.

SPHERES

1. Within a paragraph - primarily grammatical
2. Between paragraphs - primarily literary

PRINCIPLES

1. Recognition that the paragraph is the basic unit of study and thought
 - a paragraph is a group of related sentences/ideas dealing with one leading topic or idea.
 - * May be sub-thoughts but they are always united.
 - not inspired, therefore evaluate and, if necessary, change
2. Devise a title for each paragraph.
 - Value: a handle; a means of review and recapitulation
 - Characteristics:
 - a. Brief
 - b. Personal
 - c. Memorable
 - d. Unique to one paragraph
 - Goal: develop "at homeness" in the book
3. The thought patterns of a writer are carried forward by means of five primary factors.
 - a. Key persons - Biographical structure
 - b. Key places - Geographical structure
 - c. Key events - Historical structure
 - d. Key ideas - Ideological structure
 - e. Key times - Chronological structure
4. Always look for elements of commonality that integrate a passage (paragraph, segment, or book).

Bible Study Methods

S T R U C T U R E

- 1) **COMPARISON**
- 2) **CONTRAST**
- 3) **REPETITION**
- 4) **CONTINUITY**
- 5) **CLIMAX**
- 6) **CRUCIALITY**
- 7) **PARTICULARIZATION**
- 8) **GENERALIZATION**
- 9) **CAUSATION**
- 10) **LAW of PROPORTION**

CONNECTIVES AND LINKING WORDS

TIME WORDS

- after - as - before - now - then - until
- when - while

PLACE WORDS

- where - at - in - by - on - toward
- around - near - beside

COMPARISON WORDS

- also - as - so - just as - likewise - so also
- more than - greater

CONTRAST WORDS

- although - but - much more - nevertheless - otherwise
- yet

EMPHASIS WORDS

- indeed - only

LOGICAL WORDS

- REASON: - because - for - since
- RESULT: - then - therefore - thus
- PURPOSE: - in order that - so that
- CONDITION: - if

The Second Major Step is INTERPRETATION

This is the science of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the study of the methodological principles of interpretation which allows us to take what we see and determine what it means.

Truths to remember:

1. It takes time -- to expose oneself to the brilliance of revealed truth. There is more there than we can grasp in one or many readings. Infinite, eternal true has this nature.
2. It takes practice and experience -- skills to develop an understanding of the text with accuracy.

* There will always be problems with understanding.

Basic Principles of Interpretation - What does it mean?

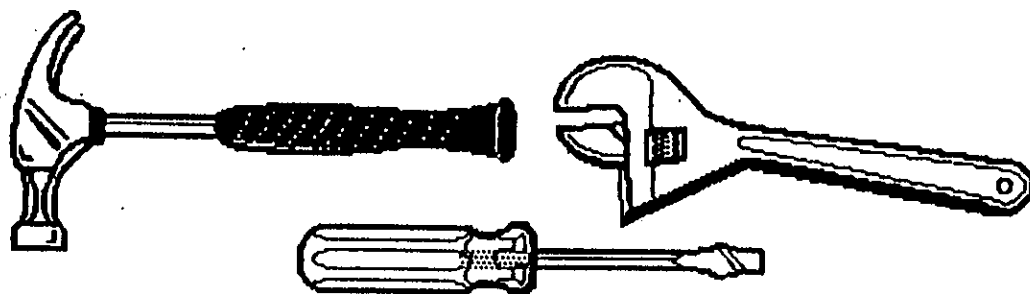
INTERPRETATION



1. **Content:** What is actually before you in the text. It is discovered by the results of your observational study. How to read and what to look for is the key (difference between seeing and reading).
Clue: The more time spent in observation, the less time in interpretation and the more accurate the results of your interpretation.
2. **Context:** What goes before and after? (There is both a near and a far context.)
3. **Comparison:** Compare with other Scripture.
* Remember the parts always take on meaning in the light of the whole.
4. **Culture:** What was the social setting at that time? What was the historical situation? What was the Chronos, language, customs, political environment?
5. **Consultation:** Use resource tools. (After you have done personal study.) This includes dictionaries, atlases, concordance, commentaries, etc.; check your interpretation with other great women and men of God. If you are the only one to see the text a certain way, you are probably wrong.
6. **Construction:** Build an exegetically and homiletically sound outline that arises clearly out of the text. Let the text determine the structure of your outline.

First comes God's Word, then secondary sources!

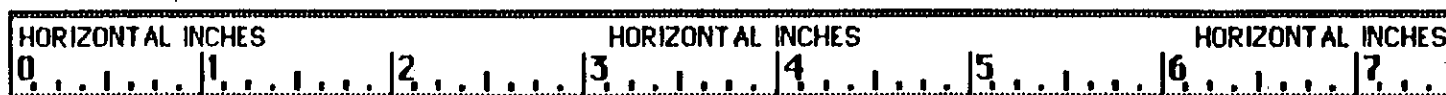
INTERPRETIVE TOOLS



Accomplishing almost any task requires the proper use of the proper tools. Bible Study is no different. There are some basic tools which will be of great assistance in helping you to determine with accuracy an author's intended meaning when studying a passage of scripture.

1. ***A basic study Bible.***
2. ***Other translations and paraphrases for comparison.***
3. ***A word study book.***
4. ***A concordance.***
5. ***A Bible dictionary/encyclopedia.***
6. ***A commentary.***

INTERPRETIVE RULES



Just as there must be the proper use of the proper tools, there must also be the observance of some simple rules if accurate interpretation is to take place. Remember that hermeneutics is both an art and a science; a science because there are rules and principles.

1. Work from the assumption that the Bible is authoritative.

2. Interpret difficult passages in the light of clear passages. Let the Bible interpret itself.

3. Interpret personal experience in the light of Scripture and not Scripture in the light of personal experience.

4. Scripture has only ONE MEANING and should be taken LITERALLY.

• One Meaning •

• Figures of Speech •

5. Interpret words and passages in harmony with their meaning in the time of the author.

INTERPRETATION IS BRIDGING THE GAPS

The _____ Gap The _____ Gap

The _____ Gap The _____ Gap

The _____ Gap The _____ Gap

6. Interpret Scripture in light of its PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.

7. You must understand the Bible grammatically before you can understand it theologically.

8. A doctrine cannot be considered biblical unless it includes all the Scriptures say about it. Do not practice "selective citation."

9. Distinguish between the PROVERBS and the PROMISES of God.

10. When two doctrines taught in the Bible appear to be contradictory, accept both as Scriptural in the confident belief that they resolve themselves in a higher unity.

What It Meant

Surface Meaning
(Exegesis)

Deep Structure Principle
(Biblical theology)

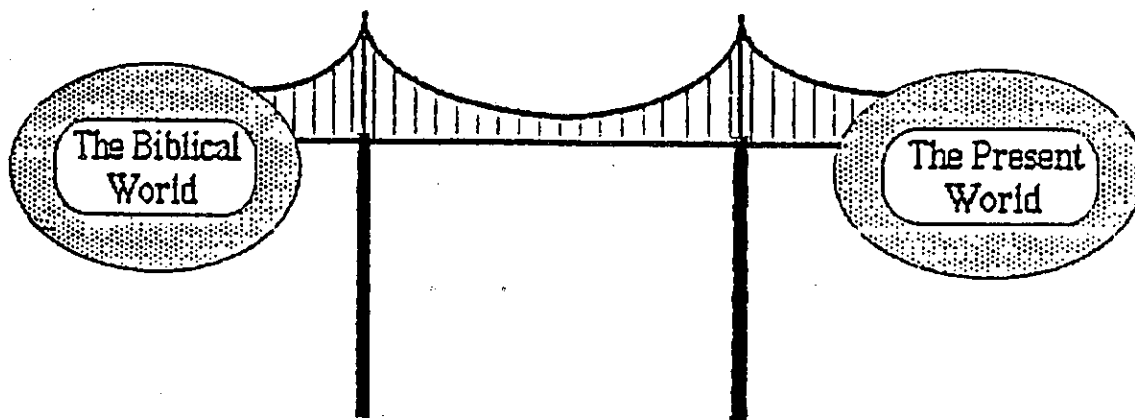
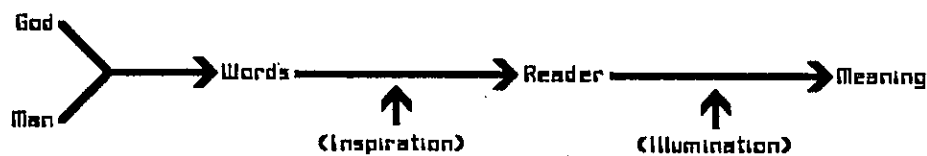
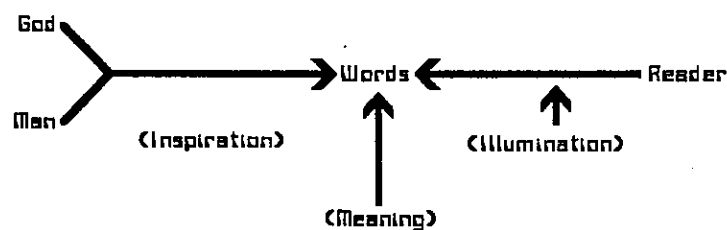
Original Situations
(Backgrounds)

What It Means

Specific Contextualization

General Contextualization

Parallel Situation

HERMENEUTICS IS BRIDGING THE GAPS**SUBJECTIVE VS. OBJECTIVE
INTERPRETATION****SUBJECTIVE (Wrong Way)****OBJECTIVE (Right Way)**

Suggestions for Interpreting the Text of Scripture

(A Summation)

I Study the book as a whole.

- 1) Consider the questions of date, authorship, recipients, and purpose (general matters of introduction).
- 2) Develop an outline of the entire book (study Bibles and commentaries will be helpful).
- 3) Examine the relationship of the passage under consideration to the book as a whole.

II Establish the best textual base possible.

- 1) Use the original language if you can.
- 2) Compare various versions and translations.

III Investigate the text linguistically (eg. word by word).

- 1) Make a lexical (definitional) study of crucial words.
- 2) Research the passage for key words, phrases, and ideas.
- 3) Track the verbs!

IV Examine the form or forms of the material in the passage.

- 1) What is the literary type (history, poetry, prophetic, apocalyptic)?
- 2) Is there any indication of the life situation from which the material came?

V Analyze the structure of the passage.

- 1) Determine if the material constitutes a literary unity.
- 2) Is there a logical sequence of ideas present?
- 3) Isolate the basic themes or emphases.
- 4) Outline the passage you are studying. Use the outline as the framework for your teaching.

CORRELATION/COMMUNICATION

"Preparing Irresistible Meals"

Introduction

1. Correlation is the coordinative, integrative step of interpretive.
2. It is the climax of the inductive procedure -- though it occurs all along the process.
3. Goal: Generalizations -- the outgrowth of particularizations.
4. It is the final product.

A. Justification - *Can we get along with it?*

Three things demand correlation

1. The nature of Biblical revelation.

God has revealed Himself.

- a. The Bible is truth.
- b. All truth is coherent, correlated, and consistent.
- c. Therefore, the Bible is coherent, correlated and consistent.

2. The nature of Biblical hermeneutics.

Two laws in hermeneutics justify it:

- a. The law of integration.
The Bible is not an isolated mass of material but an integrated message from God for man. It is the Word of God written in the Words of Men.
- b. The law of continuity.
The Scriptures unfold the Scriptures: it is related by (1) context and (2) comparison.

3. The nature of the human mind.

Three facts:

- a. A new truth never reveals all of itself on first exposure (or for that matter second, third, fourth, etc;)
- b. A lapse of time changes our perspective.

- c. Association of the mind is in accordance with the way the mind works.

B. Benefits -- *What will it do for us?*

It will enable you:

1. To complete knowledge -- to bring it to maturity

This helps avoid the danger of partial thinking and hobby-horse theology

This helps avoid the danger of scattered rather than structured thinking.

2. To confirm knowledge.

Much is lost because it is unrelated in our minds.

This serves as a nailing down process to prevent leakage.

3. To command knowledge.

Scriptural information becomes packaged and on tap for use at hand. Scripture becomes available to relate to any need.

C. Goal -- *Where will it lead?*

Will develop:

1. A Biblical theology (THINKING Biblically)
2. -- A Biblical view of life (LIVING Biblically)
The whole of the Bible is for the whole of life.

All the bucks of the Bible

Americans annually spend something like \$400 million on Bibles. They have plenty of different versions to choose from. *Publisher's Weekly* estimates there are 450 translations or paraphrases of all or parts of the Bible.

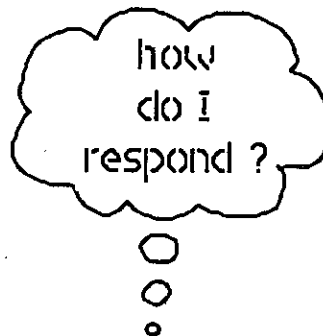
APPLICATION
"Clothing Truth with Overalls"
 (How can this change my life?)

Procedural steps -- Application is always built on interpretation. If the interpretation is wrong, the application will be wrong. Caution! Never attempt to apply before observing and interpreting.

A. Be aware of the problems to application

1. We stop the hermeneutical process before it is complete! Observation and Interpretation without Application is Abortion!
 - * "Let the Baby Go Full Term."
 - * "The Bible Was Not Written To Make Us Smart Sinners, But Holy Saints."
2. We substitute knowledge for experience.
 - * "Do I Know A Lot More, Or Do I Live A Lot Better?"
3. We apply to areas we already are working on and neglect new avenues of need.
4. Rationalizing the process to fit my present lifestyle.
5. An emotional experience is substituted for a volitional decision.
6. Pressures from society cause us to compromise what we know to be true.
7. Our prejudice and spiritual truth come into conflict.
 - * "Most Of Us Don't Think We Just Rearrange Our Prejudice."
8. Ignorance.

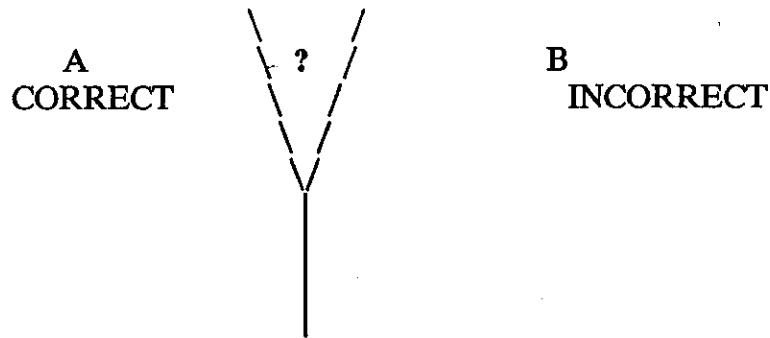
APPLICATION



**get ready to
THINK**

- B. Know the interpretation of the text bridging the hermeneutical horizons (gap).

Beware of the error of the fork. To take the wrong path is to diverge more and more from the truth.



- C. Know your applicational situation. Remember: the interpretation is one but the application is many.

1. Know Yourself (1 Tim 4:16)
 - a. Your strengths/assets. It will build confidence.
 - b. Your weaknesses/inabilities. (Rom 12:3) It will encourage humility and build faith.
2. Your people -- age, background, individual needs, etc.

- D. State your application in the form of a principle.

N.B. principalize rather than spiritualize.

Definition: -- A succinct, polished statement of a universal.

Illustration: Psalm 37

Ultimate principle to remember: the solution to your problem is a person (Jesus Christ)

7 Steps to Studying and Teaching the Bible

(A Summation)

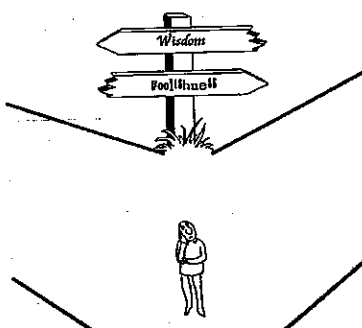
1. Observation What do I see?
2. Interpretation What does it mean?
3. Correlation How does it fit together?
4. Application How do I put this into practice?
5. Illustration How has this principle worked in other areas and
in other people's lives?
6. Proclamation How do I communicate this truth to others?
7. Motivation How do I encourage others to love God by obeying
God?

1. Be in line with the needs, interests, questions and problems of today. This is the key to relevance in preaching.

There are two histories and you must bridge the horizons.

Original History			Our History	
Truth Revealed	Colossae A.D. 62	Colossians		Truth Reborn
out of		(between two worlds)	into	
Principle Bridges				

2. Be in harmony with the general tenor of Scripture. The analogy of faith: Scripture will not contradict Scripture.
3. Be specific enough to indicate a course of action. 13 Questions to ask:
 1. Is there an example for me to follow?
 2. Is there a sin to avoid/confess?
 3. Is there a promise to claim?
 4. Is there a prayer to repeat?
 5. Is there a command to obey?
 6. Is there a condition to meet?
 7. Is there a verse to memorize?
 8. Is there an error to mark?
 9. Is there a challenge to face?
 10. Is there a principle to apply?
 11. Is there a habit to change - i.e. start or stop?
 12. Is there an attitude to correct?
 13. Is there a truth to believe?

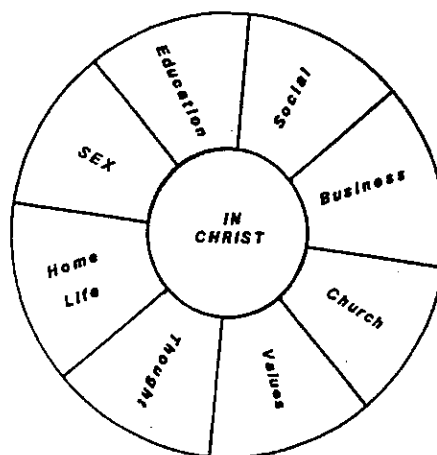


E. Saturate your mind in terms of relationships.

Proposition: Christianity is best understood as a series of new relationships.

APPLICATION

A dynamic process
of change



cf. 2 Cor 5:17
Jesus invades and changes
every area of our life

1. Probe your passage with questions regarding the relationships of life.
2. Take the leash off your mind and let it run freely.

N.B. Relation of quantity and quality. See how many relationships can be affected by this truth.

3. Forget the critical. Examine every possible area even if it seems trivial.
4. Plug into real life.

- (a) Be realistic -- concentrate on the concrete vs. abstract thinking
- (b) Think vicariously - see thru the eyes of others
- (c) Expose yourself to people and life

5. Evaluate in terms of purpose.

F. Consciously practice.

1. Remember -- you have not applied until you have practiced.

There is a great danger of trafficking in un-lived truth. Vance Havner said, "What we live is what we believe. Everything else is just so much religious talk."

2. The practice itself will be a commentary on your understanding of the truth.
3. You cannot adequately apply to others what you have not applied to yourself.
4. You cannot be diligently applying everything but you should be consciously applying something.

Two questions:

- a. What am I trusting God for right now?
- b. What is my plan of action?

N.B. Fenelon -- "The essence of Christianity resides in the will."

Maturity is not a mechanical process of addition but a dynamic process of growing. One reason why people do not change is they have no plan of action.

Think in terms of:

- (a) Interpretation
- (b) Practicality
- (c) Need -- your objective and your audience

In summation: How should my character, conduct, or conversation be effected by the Word of God?

Application requires a decision and a specific plan of action in order to allow the Holy Spirit to make scriptural principles part of us.

- * A word about habits: Here is where the "rubber meets the road." It takes about three months to change a habit and the enemy knows this very well. Be ready for conflict and failure mixed with success. The Lord has, however, predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son, so...keep plugging!

DR. HOWARD G. HENDRICKS
DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

APPLICATION

The Christian life is best understood as a series of new relationships (2 Cor. 5:17) involving:

YOUR RELATION TO GOD

- FELLOWSHIP TO ENJOY
- COMMANDS TO OBEY
- PROMISES TO CLAIM
- PRAYERS TO EXPRESS

YOUR RELATION TO YOURSELF

- PAST BACKGROUND AND HERITAGE
- PRESENT EXPERIENCE
- PERSONAL VALUES, PRIORITIES, STANDARDS
- FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

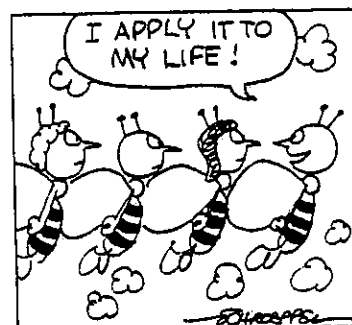
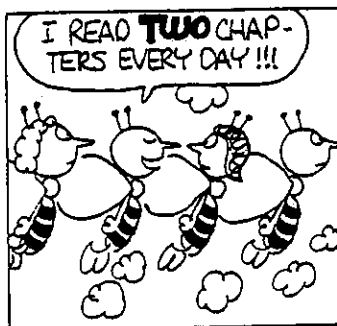
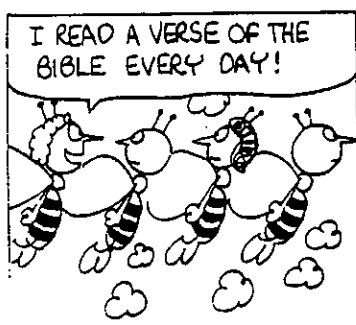
YOUR RELATION TO OTHERS

- IN THE HOME
- IN THE CHURCH
- IN SOCIETY
- IN THE WORLD

YOUR RELATION TO THE ENEMY

- A PERSON TO RESIST
- DEVICES TO RECOGNIZE
- SINS TO AVOID
- ARMOR TO WEAR

ADAPTED FROM IRVING L. JENSEN'S ENJOY YOUR BIBLE (MOODY).



In bringing the Scriptures to life, view your life as a series of new relationships:

WITH GOD

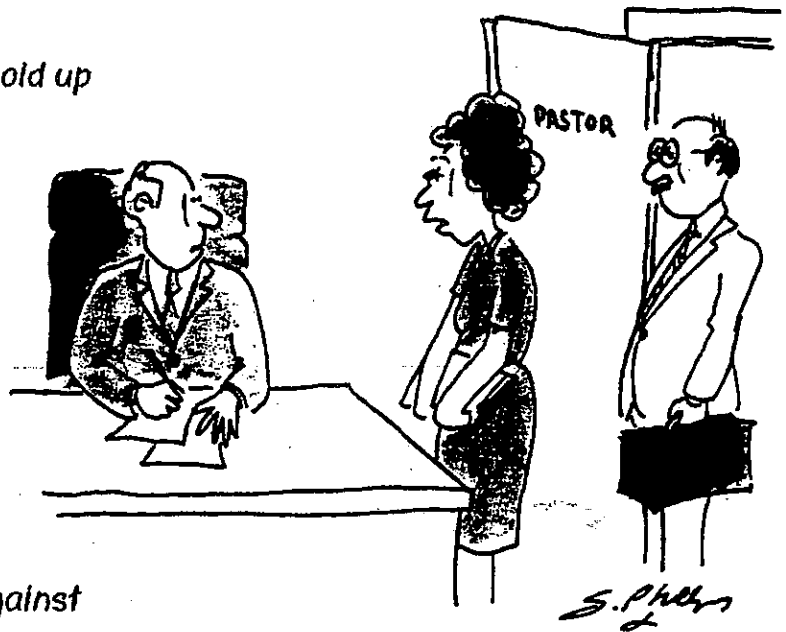
- A truth to understand
- A command to obey
- A prayer to express
- A challenge to heed
- A promise to claim
- A fellowship to enjoy

WITH YOURSELF

- A thought or word to examine
- An action to take
- An example to follow
- An error to avoid
- An attitude to change or guard against
- A priority to change
- A goal to strive for
- A personal value or standard to hold up
- A sin to forsake

WITH OTHERS

- A witness to share
- An encouragement to extend
- A service to do
- A forgiveness to ask
- A fellowship to nurture
- An exhortation to give
- A burden to bear
- A kindness to express
- A hospitality to extend
- An attitude to change or guard against
- A sin to forsake



WITH SATAN

- A person to resist
- A device to recognize
- A temptation to resist
- A sin to avoid and confess
- A piece of spiritual armor to wear

"Brother Helvey is here with the black box from last night's sermon to see if we can find out what went wrong."

Adapted from Unlocking the Scriptures by Hans Finzel

NINETY-THREE VERBS THAT HELP LEAD SCRIPTURAL APPLICATIONS
INTO SPECIFIC ACTION

Accept
Admit
Analyze
Ask
Ask myself
Avoid
Be sensitive
Be willing
Build
Buy
Choose
Claim
Collect
Commit
Compliment
Comply
Confess
Confront
Control
Count
Create
Decide
Develop
Direct
Discuss
Do
Eliminate
Encourage
Enjoy
Evaluate
Exemplify

Experiment
Find
Follow
Forgive
Give
Go
Guard
Help
Invite
Isolate
Keep
List
Listen
Look for
Look up
Love
Meet with
Memorize
Organize
Plan out
Praise
Pray about
Pray to
Pray with
Prefer
Pursue
Read
Realize
Record
Rejoice
Repair

Respond
Sacrifice
Save
Schedule
Select
Send
Share
Show
Sing
Spend time
Stay away
Stop
Study
Substitute
Take
Talk with
Teach
Telephone
Thank
Think about
Trust
Value
Visit
Wait
Wake up
Walk
Watch
Witness
Work on
Write down
Write to

Guide to Interpretation of Biblical Texts

	Descriptive What does it mean?	Rational Why was this said here?	Implicational What is the significance?
Terms	<p>What is meant by the term?</p> <p>How does it function in this sentence?</p> <p>What key words need word study?</p>	<p>Why is this term used? (generally)</p> <p>Why is this term used? (specifically)</p> <p>Why is this a key term in the passage?</p>	<p>What are the dominant truths taught in the passage?</p> <p>What do these truths imply about how God acts or wants believers to act?</p>
Structure	<p>What kind of sentence is it?</p> <p>What laws of structure are used?</p> <p>contrast cause/effect comparison summation/explanation repetition question/answer proportion general/specific climax interchange/inversion</p> <p>What are the major connector words?</p>	<p>Why was this style of sentence used?</p> <p>What are the causes, effects, or purposes reflected in the clauses?</p> <p>Why is this order of words, phrases, or clauses used?</p> <p>Why are the stated relationships as they are?</p>	<p>What are the abiding truths taught in the main statements?</p> <p>What major motivations or promises do the subordinate clauses reveal?</p> <p>What major ideas are emphasized by the order of the words or phrases?</p> <p>What limitations are found?</p>
Literary Form	<p>What literary form is used?</p> <p>What are its characteristics?</p> <p>How does this literary form convey the meaning of the author?</p> <p>Is the language literal or figurative?</p>	<p>Why is this literary form employed?</p> <p>Why are the figures used as they are?</p>	<p>What is the significance of this form of literature as related to the truth conveyed?</p> <p>What light is shed on the truth by the figures of speech used?</p>
Atmosphere	<p>What aspects of the passage reveal the atmosphere?</p> <p>What emotional words are used?</p> <p>How is the author's attitude developed in the text? the readers'?</p>	<p>Why does this kind of atmosphere dominate this particular passage?</p> <p>Why is this atmosphere essential to the effective presentation of this passage?</p>	<p>What is the significance of atmosphere to the argument of the passage?</p> <p>Is encouragement or rebuke the major tenor of the passage?</p>

SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKERS COVENANT

1. Be a born-again believer, having trusted in Christ alone for my salvation (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
2. Believe the Bible to be the divinely inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God (Matt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21).
3. Keep with the principles of the New Testament and seek the help of the Holy Spirit, that I may be faithful and effective in my work (Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:18).
4. Be regular and punctual, arriving before class time to prepare myself for the day (2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Peter 3:15).
5. Prepare through weekly self-preparation, attending any scheduled worker's planning/training meetings (James 3:1; 1 Peter 3:15).
6. Use the Bible to help my people to understand, love, and apply it; and to love the Lord which it reveals (Psalm 119:11; Isaiah 40:8).
7. Visit prospects faithfully and contact persons who are absent early in the week (Gal. 6:1-2).
8. Make evangelistic witnessing part of my visits to the lost and part of my total approach to Sunday School (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Romans 10:9-10,13).
9. Seek to discover and meet the needs of my people through my personal ministry, calling on the church staff when needed (Gal. 6:1-2).
10. Be loyal to the church's ministry by my attendance in all worship services (Heb. 10:24-26).
11. Apply the teachings of Christ in moral and social issues in my everyday life. **BE AN EXAMPLE!** (Matt. 5-7; John 13:15)
12. Plan and execute through team meetings social activities, fellowship, etc., on a regular basis (Acts 2:42; Phil. 1:5).
13. Rely on others for assistance wherever needed. No problem is too small to ask for help (Gal. 6:2).
14. Set the example through faithful and joyous giving to the church (2 Cor. 9:6-7, 8-15).
15. Have a daily time of Bible study and prayer in my own life (Matt. 6:6).

I, _____, to the best of my understanding believe and commit unto God to follow the above precepts and principles as a Sunday School worker of my church.

DATE

The Believer and His Bible
(Sunday School and the Scriptures)

2 Timothy 3:14-17

I. The Word of God is **Precious** 3:14-15

- 1) We should continue in it. 3:14
- 2) We should have confidence in it. 3:14
- 3) We are converted by it. 3:15

II The Word of God is **Perfect** 3:16

- 1) It is completely inspired.
- 2) It is verbally inspired.
- 3) It is divinely inspired.

III The Word of God is **Profitable** 3:16

- 1) It is beneficial for doctrine (teaching).
- 2) It is beneficial for discernment (rebuking).
- 3) It is beneficial for direction (correcting).
- 4) It is beneficial for discipline (training).

IV The Word of God is **Powerful** 3:17

- 1) It produces maturity.
- 2) It prepares for ministry.