



for the Church

MIDWESTERN
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Review and Critique

**MIDWESTERN
JOURNAL OF
THEOLOGY**

Spring 2014

Vol. 13 No.

MIDWESTERN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

EDITORIAL BOARD

ISBN: 1543-6977

Jason K. Allen, Executive Editor

~~**Herwald B. Madsen II**~~, Academic Editor

~~**Ronald V. Huggins**~~, Managing Editor

J. Blake Hearson, Book Review Editor

Dan Brown, Assistant Editor

JED
C/O

The *Midwestern Journal of Theology* is published biannually by Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO, 64118, and by The Covington Group, Kansas City, MO. Information about the journal is available at the seminary website: WWW.MBTS.EDU.

The *Midwestern Journal of Theology* is indexed in the *Southern Baptist Periodical Index* and in the *Christian Periodical Index*.

Address all editorial correspondence to: Editor, *Midwestern Journal of Theology*, 5001 N. Oak Trafficway, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo, 64118.

Address books, software, and other media for review to: Book Review Editor, *Midwestern Journal of Theology*, 5001 N. Oak Trafficway, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo, 64118.

All submissions should follow the SBL Handbook of Style in order to be considered for publication.


The views expressed in the following articles and reviews are not necessarily those of the faculty, the administration, or the trustees of the Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

© Copyright 2014

All rights reserved by Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN BIBLICAL STUDIES NEW TESTAMENT AND OLD TESTAMENT

WORD DEDICATED. FACULTY GUIDED. COST EFFECTIVE. STUDENT FOCUSED.



Pursue biblical excellence in New Testament or Old Testament studies with the MBTS faculty. Semi-residential. SBC tuition rates. Open the professional door to the world of academia, theological research, writing and teaching with a PhD from Midwestern Seminary.

Accredited by the
Association of Theological Schools
and the Higher Learning Commission.

Questions? docstudies@mbts.edu



MIDWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Kansas City, Missouri
816.414.3755 | www.MBTS.edu

EDITORIAL:

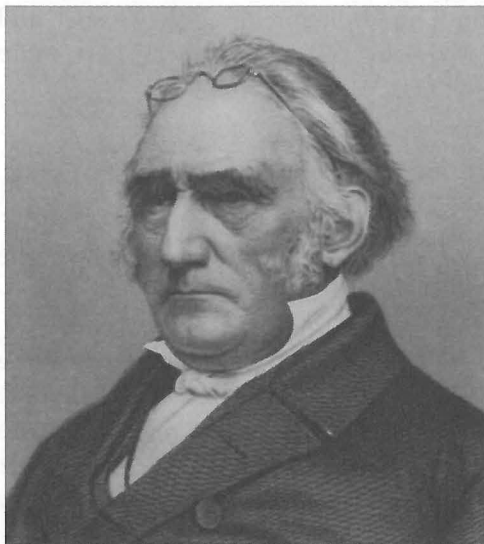
Welcome to the Spring 2014 issue of the *Midwestern Journal of Theology*. Our theme this time is *Review and Critique*. We begin by reprinting a classic sermon by the nineteenth-century Baptist theologian Francis Wayland that exercised a formative influence upon James Petigru Boyce's famous 1856 discourse, "Three Changes in Theological Institutions." Michael A. G. Haykin, Professor of Church History and Director of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, introduces us next to the warm evangelical piety of the eighteenth-century British Baptist John Sutcliff. Continuing the contributions of scholars from Southern, Peter J. Gentry explores the extensive cultural influence and continuing relevance of the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament. Next Fred Sanders, of Biola University, takes a look at the late Evangelical author and theologian Donald G. Bloesch through the lens of his Soteriology. After that we turn to a very practical discussion of the question of how differing views on the Synoptic Problem impact the on-the-ground apologetic task. This is carried out by author and apologist Robert M. Bowman, Jr. Bowman, formerly of NAMB, is the director of the Institute of Religious Research in Grand Rapids Michigan. One of our Old Testament doctoral students, Russell L. Meek, also the associate editor of the *Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament* and Research Assistant to Midwestern President Jason K. Allen, provides a helpful overview and evaluation of the history and development of Historical Criticism. Finally the editor contributes two articles, the first representing a critic of the liberal theologian W. Wrede's early twentieth century idea of the Messianic Secret in Mark and the second magnifying the usefulness and importance of the Second Commandment using his own early religious experience as a lens.

In this issue we include as well a new section featuring favorite quotations and reflections on the life and calling of the Christian scholarship, a number of which were contributed from professors and friends of Midwestern.

Finally we include, as always, a number of relevant and interesting scholarly book reviews.

Tolle lege!

BAPTIST CLASSIC: Francis Wayland, *The Apostolic Ministry* (July 12, 1853)¹



Francis Wayland (1796-1865)

“A wilfully ignorant Christian is a contradiction. He is a barren fig tree.”

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Commenting on the conceptual origins of James Petigru Boyce's epochal 1856 discourse, "Three Changes in Theological Institutions," John A. Broadus reports that Boyce "was accustomed to say, in conversation on the subject, that his ideas had been partly derived from his revered instructor, President [Francis] Wayland, of Brown University."² A key component in this influence was an address Wayland had given three years earlier (1853) at the University of Rochester to the New York Baptist Union of Ministerial Education published that same year under the title "The Apostolic Ministry," which we republish in its entirety here. Wayland, though an unbending abolitionist, was well respected by many early Southern Baptists and

¹ Francis Wayland, *The Apostolic Ministry: A Discourse Delivered in Rochester, N. Y., Before the New York Baptist Union for Ministerial Education, July 12, 1853* (Rochester, NY: Sage & Brother, 1853).

² John Albert Broadus, *Memoir of James Petigru Boyce* (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son / Louisville, KY: Baptist Book Concern, 1893), 142.

was friendly toward them. Our purpose is to reproduce the text of the published version in its original form, including the page numbers of the original publication in brackets.³ In this expansive discourse, Wayland ranges from expounding the nature of the Gospel itself, the ministry and responsibility of the Church in spreading the Gospel, and finally how the shape of Baptist theological education can best equip the church to fulfill its evangelistic task.



DISCOURSE. Mark 16:15. Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

THE
APOSTOLIC MINISTRY:
A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN ROCHESTER, N. Y., BEFORE THE NEW YORK
BAPTIST UNION FOR MINISTERIAL EDUCATION,
JULY 12, 1853.

BY FRANCIS WAYLAND,
PRESIDENT OF BROWN UNIVERSITY.

EIGHTH THOUSAND.

ROCHESTER:
SAGE & BROTHER.
1853.

THESE words, uttered by the Son of God, a few moments before his ascension, contain the last precept which he ever delivered to his disciples. They constitute the commission under which we labor to extend the reign of the Messiah; and they furnish the assurance on which we rely, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. A proper understanding of the text must therefore convey important instruction on the nature and duties of the christian ministry.

The precept in the text is, "Go ye into all [4] the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

I. What is this Gospel which we are here commanded to preach? The Gospel is good news. What good news are we here commissioned to proclaim?

³ Any departures from the original are indicated by either brackets or a footnote. Wayland's footnotes are indicated by an asterisk (*), footnotes introduced by this editor are numbered.

In order to answer this question, let us glance at the moral condition of those to whom the gospel is sent.

In the beginning, God created man in his own image, with a moral constitution perfectly adapted to a holy life, and placed before him every motive which should impel a moral agent to a course of spotless virtue. The law under which we were created was holy and just and good. The probation assigned to us was, however, wholly subjected to the principle of law. Its conditions were two: first, ["the man that doeth these things shall live by them"]; and secondly, ["cursed is every man that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them."] Through the abounding grace of God, eternal life was promised as the reward [5] of obedience, and on the other hand, disobedience to the law, or, rebellion against the moral government of the universe, was punishable with eternal death, banishment from the presence of God, misery everlasting. Under our first probation no provision was made for pardon, and therefore no hope was offered to the guilty. Every thing was to be gained by perfect obedience, every thing was to be lost by a single transgression.

Such were the moral conditions under which we were originally created. But our first parents sinned, and "by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners." Without inquiring here into the manner in which his posterity are affected by the fall of Adam, it is sufficient to state the fact, that, from the date of the first transgression there has not been "a just man on earth who has not sinned." The moral blight fell upon all born of woman. The whole race became rebels against God. "They did not like to retain Him in their knowledge," and preferred to live in open de- [6] fiance of his authority. "The thoughts of their heart became evil, only evil continually." Sin became the irrevocable habit of man.—Though impelled by the constitution of his nature to worship something, he chose to worship birds and four footed beasts and creeping things, nay, the work of his own hands, rather than "God over all who is blessed forevermore." "The earth was filled with violence" and steeped in pollution. In every single individual of our race, unrenewed by the spirit of God, evil tendency assumed the form of fixed and unalterable habit, and thus every man was making himself meet for eternal banishment from all that is holy; while, at the same time, he was "treasuring up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

The conditions of the probation under which we were created having thus been universally violated, nothing remained but for the law to take its course. By the deeds of the law could no man be justified, for we had broken the law [7] during our whole existence. We were thus all

under condemnation. The law contained no provision for pardon. Sentence had been passed upon us, and we were awaiting the day of its execution. Earth had become a mere suburb of hell, into which death was commissioned to sweep the myriads⁴ of our race, from the first sinner Adam to the last of his sin-smitten posterity.

But though all was lost, the compassions of God were not exhausted, and he did not leave us to perish without hope. The terms of our first probation having been violated, eternal life, on the principles under which we were originally created, was impossible. It pleased our Father in Heaven to offer us a second probation on infinitely more favorable conditions, so that, although we had "sinned and come short of the glory of God," we might be "freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." But before this new probation could be offered to us, it was necessary that the law which we had [8] broken should be magnified and made honorable. It must be perfectly and triumphantly obeyed by a being in our nature, and yet one who by his own nature was not under the law of humanity. No other Being than the Son of God himself was competent to assume the work of our redemption, and our "help was laid upon one that was mighty." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The Messiah fulfilled every requirement of the law in our stead, and, "as by the disobedience of one the many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one the many were made righteous." He suffered whatever was necessary to redeem us from the curse of the law. He died for our offences, and offered himself without spot to God in our stead. His offering was accepted, [9] and, to assure us of its acceptance, he was raised from the dead. Having finished the work that had been given him to do, he ascended to "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." Having "humbled himself, and became obedient to death, the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and of things on earth, and of things under the earth, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

By this interposition of the Son of God on our behalf, the destiny of man was changed. A new probation on more favorable conditions was

⁴ Wayland has: "myraids."

granted us. By the conditions of the former probation we were doomed to despair in consequence of a single transgression. Now, through the righteousness of Christ, though guilty of innumerable sins, we may be accepted through the beloved. "God is well pleased for his righteousness sake, for he hath magni- [10] fied the law and made it honorable." On the most merciful conditions, repentance⁵ for sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, every child of Adam may be pardoned, justified, sanctified and raised to a higher glory than that which he had lost by his own wilful transgression. Henceforth the gate of heaven stands as wide open for all born of woman as the gate of hell. The change in our condition is such as the imagination of man could never have conceived. It is a change from darkness to light, from death to life, from pollution to purity, from a dwelling forever in hell with the spirits of the damned, to an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."

Every one must at once perceive that this is the great event in the history of our world. Compared with it, what are the revolutions of nations, what the deliverance of peoples from bondage, what the progress of man from ignorance to knowledge, and from barbarism to [11] civilization! Nay, could we combine in one event all the most stupendous social changes which the world has ever seen, they would all be lighter than the dust of the balance in comparison with the mystery of Christ and him crucified. This is the good news spoken of in the text.

II. Let us in the next place inquire what is meant by preaching this gospel.

The word preach, in the [N]ew [T]estament, has a meaning different from that which at present commonly attaches to it. We understand by it the delivery of an oration, or discourse, on a particular theme, connected more or less closely with religion. It may be the discussion of a doctrine, an exegetical essay, a dissertation on social virtues or vices, as well as a persuasive unfolding of the teaching of the Holy Ghost. No such general idea was intended by the word as it is used by the writers of the New Testament. The words translated *preach*⁶ in our version are two. The one signifies simply to herald, to announce, to pro- [12] claim, to publish; the other, with this general idea, combines the notion of good tidings; and means, to publish, or be the messenger of, good news. From what I have already said of the nature of the gospel

⁵ Wayland has "repentence."

⁶ Italics added.

message, it is evident that no other idea would so well have corresponded with the facts of the case. A great and unexpected change had been wrought in the condition of humanity. Our whole race had been, by a most astonishing act of grace, redeemed from inconceivable misery. They, however, remained ignorant both of their danger and of their deliverance. The knowledge of this act of infinite love had been communicated to a few men who had availed themselves of the gracious conditions of the new covenant, and had consecrated their whole being henceforth to their Redeemer. The rest of the world was wrapt in Egyptian darkness. Mankind still continued under the curse of the law, and were passing by millions to receive in everlasting despair the just demerit of their transgressions. The command was, go abroad every [13] where, proclaim to every creature the news of redemption; tell them of the love of God in Christ Jesus. All things are now ready, bid them come and welcome to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

When the Israelites were bitten by the fiery flying serpents, and the bite was inevitably fatal, Moses was directed to set up a brazen serpent, with the assurance that whosoever that had been bitten, looked upon it, should be healed. You can imagine how the first man who felt its saving efficacy, flew to communicate the news to his brethren, and urge them to avail themselves of the remedy which had delivered him from death. Every man who was healed became immediately a herald of the glad tidings to others. Every one who was saved became a publisher of the salvation, or, in other words, a preacher, until in a few minutes the news spread throughout the encampment; and in this sense every tribe was evangelized.

Allow me to illustrate the meaning of this [14] term, as used by our Lord, by an occurrence of which I was an eye-witness. It so chanced, that, at the close of the last war with Great Britain, I was temporarily a resident of the city of New York. The prospects of the nation were shrouded in gloom. We had been for two or three years at war with the mightiest nation on earth, and, as she had now concluded a peace with the continent of Europe, we were obliged to cope with her single-handed. Our harbors were blockaded. Communication coast-wise, between our ports, was cut off. Our ships were rotting in every creek and cove where they could find a place of security. Our immense annual products were moulding in our ware-houses. The sources of profitable labor were dried up. Our currency was reduced to irredeemable paper. The extreme portions of our country were becoming hostile to each other, and differences of political opinion were embittering the peace of every household. The credit of the government was exhausted. No one could predict when the [15] contest would terminate, or discover the

means by which it could much longer be protracted. It happened that on a Saturday afternoon in February, a ship was discovered in the offing, which was supposed to be a cartel, bringing home our commissioners at Ghent, from their unsuccessful mission. The sun had set gloomily, before any intelligence from the vessel had reached the city. Expectation became painfully intense, as the hours of darkness drew on. At length a boat reached the wharf, announcing the fact that a treaty of peace had been signed, and was waiting for nothing but the action of our government to become a law. The men on whose ears these words first fell, rushed in breathless haste into the city, to repeat them to their friends, shouting, as they ran through the streets, peace! peace! peace! Every one who heard the sound repeated it. From house to house, from street to street, the news spread with electric rapidity. The whole city was in commotion. Men bearing lighted torches were flying to and fro, shouting like [16] madmen, peace! peace! peace! When the rapture had partially subsided, one idea occupied every mind. But few men slept that night. In groups they were gathered in the streets and by the fire-side, beguiling the hours of midnight by reminding each other that the agony of war was over, and that a worn out and distracted country was about to enter again upon its wonted career of prosperity.—Thus, every one becoming a herald, the news soon reached every man, woman and child in the city, and, in this sense, the city was evangelized. All this you see was reasonable and proper. But when Jehovah has offered to our world a treaty of peace, when men doomed to hell may be raised to seats at the right hand of God, why is not a similar zeal displayed in proclaiming the good news? Why are men perishing all around us, and no one has ever personally offered to them salvation through a crucified Redeemer.

This then is, I think, the generic idea of preaching conveyed in the New Testament. [17] It is the proclamation to every creature, of the love of God to men through Christ Jesus.—This is the main idea. To this our Lord adds, according to the other evangelist, “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” The duty then enjoined in our Lord’s last command is two-fold: First, to invite men to avail themselves of the offer of salvation; and, secondly, to teach them to obey the commands of Christ, so that they may become meet for the kingdom of heaven. In so far as we do these, we preach the gospel. When we do anything else, it may, or it may not, be very good; but, in the sense here considered, it is not preaching the gospel.

Hence we see that we may deliver discourses on subjects associated with religion, without preaching the gospel. A discourse is not preaching because it is delivered by a minister, or spoken from the

pulpit, or appended to a text. Nothing is, I think, properly preaching, except the explaining the teachings, or enforcing the commands of Christ and his apostles. [18] To hold forth our own inferences, or the inferences of other men, drawn from the gospel; to construct intellectual discourses which affect not the conscience; to show the importance of religion to the temporal well-being of men, or the tendency of the religion of Christ to uphold republican institutions, and a hundred topics of a similar character, may or may not be well; but to do either or all of them certainly falls short of the idea of the apostle, when he “determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified.”

And moreover, the command of Christ supposes our appeal to be made *directly* to the consciences of men; relying *for success wholly* on the promised aid of the Holy Ghost.—Our Savior gives us no directions concerning any indirect or preparatory labor. The preparation of the heart is a work which the Lord has reserved for himself. We are not to go about making men think well of religion in general, with the intention of afterwards directing them to Christ, and urging them to [19] obey God. The Son of God has left us no directions for civilizing the heathen, and then christianizing them. We are not commanded to teach schools in order to undermine paganism, and then, on its ruins, to build up Christianity. If this is our duty, the command must be found in another gospel; it is not found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are, at once and always, to set before all men their sin and danger, and point them to “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.” And here I would ask, are we not liable to err in these respects? For instance, when we profess to preach the gospel, is it right to take as a text the words of inspiration, and then discourse on something which inspiration never taught? It is not enough that what we say is true; so is geometry, or chemistry, or metaphysics; but is it the truth which Christ came from heaven to reveal? Again, is not our object frequently far too low in preaching? Do we not sometimes preach with the direct design merely of creating in men a respect for [20] religion; and of inducing them to aid us in promoting the objects of religious benevolence, instead of striving to make them, by means of this very sermon, new creatures in Christ Jesus? Do we not labor, as it is called, to build up a good society; that is, to collect around us the rich and the well-conditioned, instead of laboring to save their souls from perdition?—The Almighty God sends us to make known his offer of salvation to sinful men; and we, instead of delivering his message, content ourselves with teaching them to pay a decent respect to us, and to our services. In

the mean time, we allow their immortal souls to go unwarned to eternal perdition. On whose conscience will the blood of these souls rest?

Such, then, is the preaching of the gospel; it is the proclamation of the love of God to men in Christ Jesus. It may be in public or in private, to one or to many, from the pulpit or at the fire-side. Whenever we set before men the message of mercy, and urge them to obey the commands of Christ, then we preach [21] the gospel in obedience to the precept in the text.

III. But who is thus to preach the gospel? What would be the answer to this question, if we listened to the voice of common humanity? When the brazen serpent was lifted up, who was to carry the good news throughout the camp? When the glad tidings of peace arrived in the city, who was to proclaim it to his fellow-citizens? When the news of peace with God, through the blood of the covenant, is proclaimed to us, who of us shall make it known to those perishing in sin? The answer in each case is, *every one*. Were no command given, the common principles of our nature would teach us that nothing but the grossest selfishness would claim to be exempted from the joyful duty of extending to others the blessing which we have received ourselves.

But, besides this, we have, in the text, the command of Christ. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" and, "lo! I am with you always, even [22] unto the end of the world." The command is as universal as discipleship, and it is to continue obligatory till the Son of man shall come.

Does any one say that this command was given only to the apostles? It may or may not have been so; but were they alone included in the obligation which it imposes? The address at the last supper was given to them alone, as were many other of the instructions of our Lord; but were they the only persons to whom the words spoken apply? Is it affirmed that they and those whom they should appoint are alone to preach the word? I answer that Jesus Christ never said so, and we have no right to add to this any more than to any other of his commandments.

But let us see how the apostles themselves understood the precept. Their own narrative shall inform us. "At that time there was a great persecution against the church that was at Jerusalem, and they were scattered abroad throughout all the regions of Judea and Samaria, *except the apostles*." "Therefore, they [23] that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." —Acts viii: 1,4. "Then they that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word

to none but Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake also to the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord." These men were not apostles, nor even original disciples of Christ, for they were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. Yet they went everywhere preaching the word, and in so doing they pleased the Master, for the Holy Spirit accompanied their labors with the blessing from on high. The ascended Savior thus approved of their conduct, and testified that their understanding of his last command was correct.

If we need any farther confirmation of the interpretation which we have given of the pre- [24] cept in the text, we find it in other portions of our Lord's teaching. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." The words here indicate the manner in which the kingdom of Christ is to extend itself. Leaven assimilates the whole mass to itself by the contact of particle with particle—each particle, as soon as it is leavened, communicating its own virtue to all the particles surrounding it. So every disciple of Christ is bound, by proclaiming Christ to those near to him, to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer; and every one who becomes a disciple is bound to make it his chief business to disciple others.

Again, our Lord declares that every one who believes in him shall be the means of imparting salvation to others. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow [25] rivers of living water." This he spake of the Spirit which, not the *apostles*, but *they that believe on him* should receive. Thus, as our Lord is the living fountain from which every believer drinks; so every one who has drunk of this fountain becomes, in this secondary sense, a fountain to all who are about him.

So, in the message to the churches, delivered by the ascended Savior to the Apostle John, we find these remarkable words: "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

You see then, brethren, the nature and duty of the church of Christ. It consists of the whole company of penitent sinners, united to Christ by faith, animated by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit, every one partaking with Christ in that love of souls which moved him to offer up himself, and every one laboring after his example for the salvation of

the world. This [26] is the object for which the believer lives, as it was the object for which Christ lived. This consecration of himself to Christ for this purpose, is a matter of personal obligation. It cannot be done by deputy. It must be done by the man himself. He can no more delegate it to another, than he can delegate faith, or repentance, or prayer, or holy living. Every disciple must be a discipler. Every individual is leaven, and he must assimilate to himself all that comes into contact with him. As he himself drinks of the fountain, he must become a fountain to his fellow men; otherwise, he has not drunk of the fountain himself. If he bear not fruit, he is cut off as a branch, and is withered.

This is the first and primary duty of a disciple, and to it his whole life must be conformed. He may enter upon no calling, he may occupy no station, he may indulge in no amusement inconsistent with this elementary duty of discipleship. A revival of religion represents a church in its normal condition, the condition [27] which Christ always intended it to maintain. Then every believer makes it his great concern to call men to repentance, not as a matter of form, but with earnest and moving persuasion. Every convert is inviting his former companions to turn unto the Lord. But, if this manner of life is appropriate to a revival, it is appropriate to all times; for men are everywhere and at all times sinners hastening to the judgment seat, and they must all perish unless they be redeemed by the blood of Christ.

It would be easy to show that it is by involving this obligation in the very elementary idea of discipleship, that Christ has provided for the universal triumph of his church. On this depends the vitality of personal religion. We can never in earnest call men to repentance, unless we are living holy and penitent lives ourselves. Hence, also, arises the separation of the church from the world, and hence the antagonism which Christ declares must always exist between them. "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the [28] world, therefore the world hateth you." It is under these circumstances that the church has always gained its most signal victories, and when these principles of duty exercise an abiding influence over the life of every disciple, the kingdoms of this world will soon become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.* [29] Such, then, is the privilege, and such the duty of

* There is matter for thought in the following remarks of Neander:

"History teaches us to estimate aright the deep significance of this Christian truth, ['the mediation of Christ'] here developed from the words of the Apostle. The entire dependence of all Christians alike upon this one advocacy, to the exclusion of every other, being based upon this truth; we

every disciple of Christ. It enters into the elementary idea of

accordingly see that whenever it became obscured in the Christian consciousness, that dependence was again, as in the ante-Christian period, transferred to a human priesthood and to a multiplicity of mediations, and again the distinction between priests and laity, between spiritual and secular, found admission. And thus will it ever be, when this reference of the religious consciousness in all believers, to the one mediation through Christ, is cast into the back ground; is obscured or misunderstood."—*Neander on John, translated by Mrs. Conant, p. 57.*

The word 'anointing' suggests to us the ordinances of the old dispensation, from which it was borrowed. Kings, priests, prophets, received their consecration to the office [29] appointed them by God, through an anointing,—the symbol of the power imparted to them by God through his Spirit for the fulfilment of their calling. By the outward and visible was signified that which, in its fulness and completion, was to be wrought inwardly upon the spirit.—Now that which was expressed outwardly under the old dispensation, and by a single act, is in the New Testament converted wholly into the inward and spiritual, and working from within embraces the entire life. That which under the old dispensation was restricted to individuals, entrusted in some manner with the guidance of God's people, —individuals who were thereby separated from the body of the people, —now under the new dispensation belongs to the people of God universally. The limitations of the Old Testament are burst asunder by the spirit of the New.—First of all, its founder himself,—the sovereign in God's kingdom, the Savior,—is called the Anointed, the Christ, as having been consecrated to his work through the fulness of the indwelling Spirit of God; as possessing in himself the fulness, the sum of all those divine powers, which were [30] only imparted singly as special gifts to the prophets of the Old Testament. So, by virtue of their fellowship with him, are all who are redeemed by him made partakers of the Holy Spirit which he imparts. From the fulness of the divine nature, the divine power dwelling in him, he imparts to all. This is the inward anointing, the inward consecration whereby they are inwardly set apart from the world, as those who belong to God through Christ. All are admitted without distinction to the same fellowship with him, and receive from him the same inward consecration to their divine mission through the Holy Spirit. Henceforth there exists no more among the people of God any such distinction, as under the Old Testament between kings, priests, prophets and people; but all collectively are in like manner consecrated to God, have an equal part in that inward consecration, in the illuminating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. It is one royal priestly generation, whose nobility and high office is alike the heritage of all; all are prophets, through that common illumination of the Holy Spirit. Such are the weighty thoughts contained in that single word, that honorable designation of believers." —*Ibid, pp. 126-8.*

discipleship. With this every other subsequent idea must be in harmony. No ecclesiastical system which we form can either liberate a disciple from this obligation, or take away his privilege of thus laboring for Christ. Whatever offices are cre- [30] ated in the church, are created for the purpose of enabling the disciple the better to discharge this duty. They are made for the church, the church is not made for them; and it becomes us ever to be watchful, lest by any error the church of Christ be deprived of this, the mainspring of all its efficiency.

[31] I have thus far spoken of the gifts which are common to every man of a sane mind.—But almost every man has some peculiar gift, that is, some naturally bestowed means of usefulness. This also he is bound in the same manner to consecrate to the service of the Master. A brief allusion to some of them will sufficiently illustrate my meaning. One man may be endowed with uncommon conversational ability, so that in the ordinary intercourse of society, he readily leads the minds of men in any direction he chooses. The disciple of Christ is not at liberty to use this talent for the purpose of attaining to social pre-eminence, or for the gratification of personal vanity; he must use it as a means of winning souls to Christ. Beautiful illustrations of this form of consecration of talent were seen in the lives of the late William Wilberforce and Joseph John Gurney. Another disciple may be endowed with skill in the conduct of mercantile affairs, so that, with ease, he can accumulate a fortune, when other men would [32] merely obtain a subsistence. This talent he has no right to employ for the purpose of hoarding up wealth for himself, or for his children, or of procuring the means of luxurious extravagance, or fashionable display. “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are not of the Father, but of the world.” He must consecrate this gift to God, and remember that he will be called to account for this, as for every other talent. And while such a man should abound in almsgiving, let him be his own almoner, laboring with his own hands, and not the hands of others, in the work of benevolence. Another may have been gifted with skill in managing affairs, in arranging and carrying forward plans for the labor of others, and in guiding masses of men to right conclusions in all matters of public concernment.—This talent should be given to the cause of religion and benevolence. Such men, instead of leaving the charge of all our benevolent institutions to the ministry, should assume it themselves. They can do it better than we, [33] and the gift was granted to them for this very purpose. It belongs to Christ, and to him must it be cheerfully rendered.

These gifts to which I have referred, are bestowed upon Christians for the general service of the church of Christ. There are but few men

who are not endowed with some one of them, which it is their duty faithfully to improve. I must, however, turn to those gifts which have special reference to the ministry of the word.

It frequently happens, that a brother engaged in secular business is endowed with a talent for public speaking. On matters of general interest, he is heard by his fellow-citizens with pleasure and profit. This talent is more largely bestowed than we commonly suppose; and it would be more frequently observed, if we desired to cultivate and develop it. Now, a disciple who is able successfully to address men on secular subjects, is surely competent to address them on the subject in which he takes an immeasurably greater interest. This talent [34] should specially be offered up in sacrifice to Christ. The voice of such brethren should be heard in the conference room, and in the prayer meeting. They have no right to lay up this talent, more than any other, in a napkin. And still more is it incumbent on the churches, to foster and improve gifts of this kind. Thus we arrive at the order of lay preachers, formerly a most efficient aid in the work of spreading the gospel. I believe that there are but few churches among us, in the ordinary enjoyment of religion, who have not much of this talent undiscovered and unemployed. Let them search out and improve it. Every church would thus be able to maintain out-stations, where small congregations might be gathered, which would shortly grow up into churches, able themselves to become lights to the surrounding neighborhood. I know of but few means by which the efficiency of our denomination could be so much increased as by a return to our former practice in this respect.

But, besides this, it seems plainly to be the [35] will of Christ that some of his disciples should addict themselves exclusively to the ministry of the gospel. Such men are called elders, presbyters, bishops, ministers of the word, or stewards of the mysteries of God. If it be asked, under what circumstances may a believer undertake this service?—I answer, the New Testament, as it seems to me, always refers to it as a calling to which a man is moved by the Holy Ghost. No one may therefore enter the ministry, except from the motive of solemn, conscientious duty. If he choose it as a profession, for the sake of worldly advantage, or that he may enjoy a life of leisure, or be enabled the better to pursue some favorite studies, he has mistaken his calling. No man will ever succeed in any undertaking, who pursues it as a means to the attainment of something else; least of all, when he makes a convenience of the service of God in the ministry of reconciliation.

If it be asked how a man may know that he is called of God to this work, I answer, the [36] evidence seems to me to be two-fold. In the

first place, he must be conscious of a love for the work itself, not for what in other respects he may gain by it; and also, there must be impressed on his soul an abiding conviction, that, unless he devote himself to this service, he can in no wise answer a good conscience towards God. With the Apostle, he must be conscious that a necessity is laid upon him, yea, that a woe rests upon him, if he preach not the gospel.—He who is impressed by no such convictions, had, I think, better pursue some other avocation.

This is the first indication of the man's duty. In the next place, he must exhibit such evidences of his call to this work as shall secure for him the approbation of his brethren. Of his own feelings *he* must be the judge; of his qualifications *they* must be the judges. When both he and they, after prayerful deliberation, unite in the same opinion, then he may conclude that he is called of God to the ministerial office. Neither of these evidences alone is [37] sufficient; the union of them is alone satisfactory.

The New Testament, I think, recognizes two forms of ministerial labor; that of evangelists, and that of pastors. Evangelists are specially preachers, or missionaries. Men called to this office are endowed with peculiar gifts for awakening the careless, arousing the secure, directing the attention of men to the subject of religion, and thus planting churches where Christ has not been named. The particular value of such an order of ministers, in such a country as our own, is, I think, apparent. Many of the fathers of the ministry in all this region, the men who laid the foundations of your present prosperity, were, for much of their time, evangelists; and worthily did they fulfil the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus.

Besides evangelists, the New Testament authorizes the appointment of pastors, that is of ministers of the gospel placed over particular churches. The calling of such a man is [38] not to the cure of souls generally; but, first of all, of the souls of that particular people. He believes that Christ has placed him over a separate church; from that church he receives his support; and, for both reasons, he is bound to devote to them his whole service. It is his duty "to warn every man and teach every man, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto he is to labor according to the working that worketh in him mightily."—It is his duty to make known clearly and explicitly, and with tears, the danger and guilt of the impenitent, to arouse the conscience, to point the inquiring soul to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, to unfold the riches of divine love to the believing, to guard the disciples against conformity to the world, to stimulate them by every holy motive to higher attainments in piety and closer

conformity to Christ, to reclaim the backslider, to counsel the tempted, to caution the unwary, to comfort the sick, to speak peace to the dying believer, to suggest to his brethren [39] means of usefulness, to watch over the discipline of the church, in all things showing himself a pattern of good works, and ever doing the same work which he urges upon them.—He is to labor publicly, holding up the cross of Christ before his people on the Sabbath, and on all occasions when he can collect them to hear his message. Wherever he calls them to assemble he should meet with them. He will accomplish but little by urging them to leave their secular business for a meeting for prayer, while he is too much occupied in miscellaneous business to attend it himself. But, besides this, he must follow them to their homes, and press upon them individually the claims of the Most High. With Paul, he must “teach publicly, and from house to house, testifying repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,” if he would “finish his course with joy,” and at the close of his life take his people to witness “that he is pure from the blood of all men.” My brethren, is not this a work great enough for any man? Can any duty [40] vie with it in importance? Doth it not then become us “to give ourselves wholly to it, that our profiting may appear unto all?” Can we have any excuse before God, if we fritter away our lives in miscellaneous business, and give to the work of God the mere shreds and clippings of our time?

You see, then, the means which the Savior has provided for the universal triumph of his kingdom upon earth. He requires every disciple, as soon as he becomes a partaker of divine grace, to become a herald of salvation to his fellow-men. He is a fountain, from which is to flow a river of living water. The doing of this, is the test of his discipleship. If he is a branch that beareth not fruit, his end is, to be cut off. He is “the salt of the earth, and if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted.” It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Secondly, every disciple is bound to employ for Christ every peculiar gift with which he may have been endowed. Thirdly, [41] every man possessed of the gifts for the ministry, mentioned in the New Testament, is bound to consecrate them to Christ, either in connection with his secular pursuits or by devoting his whole time to this particular service.

If this be so, you see that in the church of Christ there is no ministerial caste; no class elevated in rank above their brethren, on whom devolves the discharge of the more dignified or more honorable portions of christian labor, while the rest of the disciples are to do nothing but raise the funds necessary for their support. The minister does the same work that is to be done by every other member of the

body of Christ; but, since he does it exclusively, he may be expected to do it more to edification. Is it his business to labor for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of the body of Christ, so is it theirs. In every thing which they do as disciples, he is to be their example. I know that we now restrict to the ministry the administration of the ordinances, and to this rule I think there can be [42] no objection. But we all know that for this restriction we have no example in the New Testament. In other respects it is difficult to discover, in principle, the difference between the labors of a minister and those of any other disciple, in conversation, or in a sabbath school, or a bible class, or in a conference room. All are laboring to produce the same result, the conversion of men, and by the same means, the inculcation of the teachings of Christ and his apostles. The ministry is made for the church, and not the church for the ministry. We are not Boodhist priests, or Mahomedan dervishes, or members of a papal or any other hierarchy, or a class above or aside from our brethren, but simply ambassadors of Christ, your servants for Jesus sake. The chiefest of the Apostles desired no higher rank, and with it we are abundantly satisfied.

You see then my brethren, what is the New Testament idea of a church of Christ; it is a company of believers, each one united to Christ and pervaded by his spirit, and each [43] one devoting every talent, whether ordinary or peculiar, to the work of evangelizing the world. When a company of disciples is collected together in a particular community, they are the leaven by which Christ intends that whole community to be leavened. By virtue of their discipleship they are called upon to accomplish this work, and it is their duty, in his strength, to attempt it. He did not light that candle to place it under a bushel. Every individual is to become at once a herald of salvation. Those endowed with aptness to teach are to be sent to destitute and forgotten places in the vicinity, to the highways and hedges,⁷ to compel men to come to the gospel supper. The ministry are to devote to this work their whole time, as ensamples and leaders of the flock; surveying the whole field and suggesting to each brother his appropriate sphere of labor. Let the disciples of Christ thus obey the master in the most depraved city among us, and, by the grace of God, its whole population would soon be subdued unto Christ. The [44] moral atmosphere would be purified by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, "the work of righteousness would be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."

⁷ The original has a misprint here that reads "highway sand hedges."

And when the disciples of Christ of every name thus obey his last command, making, as he did, the conversion of the world the great object for which they live, the last act in the great drama of man's redemption will have opened. Private believers will feel their obligation to carry the gospel to the destitute as strongly as ministers. They will then be seen by thousands, like Paul, ministering to themselves with their own hands, while they carry the gospel to regions beyond. Then will ensue that final struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, for dominion over this world. Then will "the heathen be given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Then will the accuser of the brethren be cast out. Then from every people and tongue and nation of a regenerated world will ascend the [45] anthem of salvation to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever.⁸ If now we need any confirmation of the truth of these views, I think we shall find it in observing the manner in which the church of Christ was first planted, under the eye of the Master. It was simply this: One individual, when called of Christ, brought other individuals to him. "John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. One of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah. And he brought him to Jesus. The day following Jesus findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathaniel saith unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip [46] saith unto him, Come and see." Thus, by contact of soul with soul, did

⁸ See also pp. 83-84 of the tract: "Nothing is now wanting to subdue the world unto Christ, but an universal, earnest, self-sacrificing effort of his disciples, in firm reliance upon the Spirit from on high...do you not believe that if all the disciples of Christ in any of our cities or villages thus labored for Christ, they would soon arrest the progress of iniquity, and make it a garden of the Lord?" Wayland here reflects the influence of the then widespread atmosphere of postmillennial optimism regarding the possibility of the total moral transformation of society under the Gospel. Elsewhere Wayland writes: "The church has for two thousand years been praying, 'Thy kingdom come.' Jesus Christ is saying unto us, 'It shall come, if you desire it,'" ("Encouragement's to Religious Effort [Matt vi.10]. Thy Kingdom Come," in Francis Wayland, *Occasional Discourses* (Boston, MA: James Loring, 1833), 154. See Valarie H. Ziegler, *The Advocates of Peace in Antebellum America* [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001], 12).—Editor.

the church of Christ increase. And I may add, if any one will read the gospel with this view, he will be surprised to observe how much of the recorded teaching of Christ consists of conversation addressed to individuals, in the ordinary intercourse of life.

Again, observe that no sooner had our Lord collected a little band of disciples, than he employed a large portion of them as missionaries to announce the approach of his kingdom.—From his small company of followers, he chose first twelve, and then seventy, whom he sent abroad on this errand. If every church among us furnished heralds of the gospel in like proportion, there would be no lack of ministers.

Observe, again, the circumstances under which, after the ascension of our Lord, the church of Christ commenced its victorious march over the then known world. Against it were arrayed not only the interests and lusts and pride of man, but the power of every [47] government, and all the influences emanating from a luxurious, refined and intelligent civilization. On what did Christ rely, as his human instruments, to prostrate this vast fabric of tasteful, venerable and cultivated idolatry?—He made no attempt to undermine and overthrow paganism in general. He published no discourses intended to prepare the public mind for the coming revolution. He sent abroad no schoolmasters, to instil the principles of secular truth into the minds of the young. On the contrary, he met the whole power of the adversary face to face, and brought divine truth into immediate collision with long cherished and much loved moral error. He charged every disciple to proclaim the gospel at once to every creature. He selected those who were to be the first preachers of the word, the first ministers of his church, from the lower and middle walks of life—men destitute of all the advantages of special intellectual culture, whom their enemies reproached as unlettered and ignorant. As cultivated talent was re- [48] quired, it was provided in the person of the Apostle to the Gentiles. As the church commenced, so, to the close of the inspired record, it continued. “Ye see your calling, brethren,” said the Apostle, “how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, things that are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.” Under the conviction of these truths, Paul labored in the ministry. Though a well educated man, who had profited above many that were his equals, yet when he proclaimed the gospel in refined and luxurious Corinth, although the preaching of the cross was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, he resolved to know

nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified. He did from choice, precisely as his uneducated brethren did from necessity. It is [49] surprising to observe the entire simplicity of those efforts, by which, in an incredibly short period, the gospel was planted throughout the whole Roman Empire. We can discover no means employed to accomplish this result, but the proclaiming to all men repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, imposing on every regenerated man the duty, in turn, of proclaiming the good news to his brethren, always relying, and relying wholly, on the power of the Holy Ghost.

But, it may be said, these times were unlike any that the world has since witnessed. But let us ask, does change in social condition render it necessary to adopt any new principles in conducting our efforts for the conversion of mankind? Survey our missionary field, and observe the places where the preaching of the gospel has been attended with the most remarkable success. We number among the Karens, for instance, more converts than in all our other missions together. And how was the gospel preached to them? They live in scattered [50] hamlets along the water courses, in the jungle, whose miasmata are fatal to a foreigner, except for a few months in the year. During this brief interval the missionary traveled among them, preaching Christ to one, or two, or ten, or twenty, as he could collect hearers. The Holy Spirit was poured out, and sinners were converted. Small churches were formed, and, from the necessity of the case, left for the remainder of the year to themselves. With the spirit of primitive Christianity, these rude men pointed their neighbors to the Savior. Ministerial gifts manifested themselves among them as they were needed, and a large number became ministers of the word. The work of God was thus carried forward with remarkable power. The brother whose labors among them have been eminently blessed, worn down by incessant toil, was obliged to leave his station for a year or two, for the recovery of his health. On his return, fearful that his flock had been scattered during his absence, he inquired with trembling solicitude concerning [51] their condition. You may judge of his surprise, when he learned that about fifteen hundred persons were then awaiting baptism.—This blessed result had been accomplished by men hardly elevated at all above their brethren, for they had no knowledge whatever, beyond that contained in the New Testament, and the few books and tracts which, within a few years, had been translated into their language. The contact of soul with soul was thus leavening the lump. Pastors, as they were needed, have been raised up among them; and these are now, in a large measure, supported by the voluntary effort of the brethren. Thus is the religion of Christ

displaying through this whole region its power of self-extension, by the preaching of the gospel attended by the power of the Holy Ghost.

If the question be asked, could this work have been carried on without the aid of men of more cultivated minds and larger knowledge than the Karens?—I answer, certainly not.—But I ask again, could this work have been [52] carried on without the labors of these rude and unlettered men, who went everywhere preaching the word? The answer is the same, certainly not. Our conclusion, then, is that God requires, and that he employs in his vineyard, all classes of laborers; and the union of all is necessary to the accomplishment of his work. In general, I think it will be found that, other things being equal, the preacher of the gospel will be most successful, whose habits of thought are but little elevated above those of his hearers. President Edwards was, I think, without dispute, the ablest theologian of his time. His ministry, for many years, was eminently successful in Northampton and its vicinity; but I have never heard that it was attended with any remarkable results during his missionary life among the Stockbridge Indians.

But it may perhaps be said, that in this case the people to whom the gospel was preached, were ignorant pagans; and that we cannot, from such an example, learn the best manner of extending the church of Christ among men of [53] intellectual culture. Let us then turn to Germany, and inquire for the circumstances under which the gospel has wrought so powerfully there. Among no people on earth has education been more widely diffused, and nowhere has teaching been conducted with more admirable skill. It is the land of Luther and of the reformation, the preceptress of Europe in science and philology. What, then, have been the facts here?

In the year 1835, a Baptist Church of believers was constituted in Hamburg, consisting of seven members, imbued in a remarkable degree with the spirit of Apostolic Christianity. Of this church, Rev. Mr. Oncken was ordained pastor. That church of seven members has already multiplied itself into 42 churches, sustaining 356 stations, numbering 4,215 communicants,* baptized, on profession of their faith, into the name of the Lord Jesus. Each church [54] is supplied with a pastor. Churches and stations are established in Northern Germany, eastward from Hamburg to the borders of Russia; quite extensively through Southern Germany, and to some extent in Sweden and Denmark. On no other churches in Christendom does the smile of

* [53] Exclusive of those who have been removed by death and emigration. Many of them are now residing in our Western States.

heaven so signally rest. They are, emphatically, a field which the Lord has blessed. And how have these results been accomplished? By following the example left us by Christ and his apostles, "the little one has become a thousand, and a small nation a strong people." Every disciple acknowledged the obligation laid upon him by the last command of our Lord. The Holy Ghost bestowed upon the churches ministerial gifts adapted to the work before them. These gifts were cherished, and called into exercise. Preaching was commenced wherever the Lord opened a door. Stations were established, and the men were found to occupy them. These stations grew into churches, by which other stations were [55] sustained. Thus churches were multiplied in every direction; the Holy Spirit was everywhere poured out, and much people was added to the Lord. Some of these churches now contain two or three hundred members. Almost all of them sustain stations, some of them as many as twenty or thirty; and, though it may seem incredible to some of us, all this glorious work has been accomplished, in classical Germany, without the aid of a single classically educated laborer. Would it not be possible for us to learn a lesson from our brethren in Germany?

But it will perhaps be said, this is an example from a foreign country; would the same means for extending the reign of Christ avail us equally here at home? Cast your eyes backward then, and look upon our own condition some fifty or sixty years since. The men are now living, who remember the Baptist denomination when it was the least of the thousands of Israel. We are now among the most numerous, perhaps the most numerous commu- [56] nion in the United States. By what means has our increase been so astonishing? How has it come to pass, that believers in such multitudes have, through our instrumentality, been added to the Lord. I think the answer at once suggests itself, if we call to mind the character of the Baptists of the preceding generation. Though plain men, generally of ordinary education, they were men of prayer, full of the Holy Ghost, each one holding himself in a special manner responsible for making known to those that were around him the truth as it is in Jesus. They were men of conference and prayer meetings, and revivals of religion; who, in barns, in school-rooms, and in private houses, wherever they could collect an audience, preached repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Every talent which a church discovered among its members, was called into the service of Christ. There was scarcely a church amongst us which had not its lay preachers, or, as they were termed licentiates. Of these, many from time to time [57] entered the regular ministry, and thus pastors were supplied in proportion to our

need. Our settled ministers labored not only in their own churches, but made frequent missionary tours in the more destitute regions in their vicinity, thus doing the work of evangelists. While we were thus, with singular earnestness, devoting all the means in our power to the service of Christ, the Lord added to us daily of such as should be saved. And nowhere could I appeal to the result of these labors with greater pleasure, than in the very spot on which I stand. The numerous and flourishing churches that fill the whole of Western New York, this University, with all its strength in the present, and its boundless hopes for the future, all owe their existence to the self-denials, the preaching, the prayers of these plain, pious, venerable and never to be forgotten men. "They have labored, and you have entered into their labors." Of late years our progress has been much less rapid.⁹

"We are taught by Christ, that we are under obligations not only to *use*, but to *improve* every talent committed to us, that we may have the more to consecrate to his service."

Our views in many of these respects have changed. May not this change in our [58] views be connected with the change in our prosperity? These instances seem to me to throw some light upon the teachings of the New Testament on this subject. I fear that we are in danger in this matter of forsaking the instructions of Christ and his apostles, and following the traditions of men, not observing the tendencies to which they lead. The Reformers brought with them many of the errors of the church of Rome. May we not have derived, through them, some erroneous notions respecting the church and the Christian ministry? Can any one fail to perceive, that the views of our Hamburg brethren on this subject are more in accordance with the New Testament, than those of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon, or John Knox?

The doctrines here presented seem to me to have an important bearing on the subject of Christian and ministerial education. The

⁹ Wayland delivered his discourse after the Second Great Awakening had tapered off and before the Businessman's Revival came into full swing in 1858. —Editor.

principles which should govern us in this matter, seem to be something like the following:—

[59] I have said that every disciple of Christ is under imperative obligations to become a herald of salvation to his fellow men, and to beseech them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. This can only be done by the action of mind upon mind. It is a case in which the mind of one man seeks to exert an influence over the mind of another. To accomplish this result, it is obvious that disciplined is more powerful than undisciplined mind. We are taught by Christ, that we are under obligations not only to *use*, but to *improve* every talent committed to us, that we may have the more to consecrate to his service. The slothful servant was condemned because he returned his talent just in the condition in which he had received it. This is the universal condition on which we are allowed to hold every gift entrusted to us. But, if this be the universal rule, how emphatic is its application to intellectual gifts, the most valuable of all the talents with which we are entrusted. Hence, every disciple of Christ is under the most imperative [60] obligations to enlarge his knowledge, to cultivate his faculties, to discipline his mental energies; that he may have the more to devote to the service of the Master. A wilfully ignorant Christian is a contradiction. He is a barren fig tree. He is the indolent servant who returned his talent, which he had kept wrapt up in a napkin. When the Master shall ask what he has gained by trading, what will he reply? Brethren, the law of the Lord is exceeding broad, and it would be well for us if we more frequently contemplated the universality of its application.

When I say this, I beg not to be misunderstood. I do not mean to teach you that Christ requires you all to qualify yourselves for what are sometimes called the learned professions, or to pursue any particular course of mental culture. I mean that every man, whatever be his calling, should avail himself of every means of mental cultivation which Providence has placed within his reach; and that he should strive, with all earnestness, to place such means [61] within the reach of his children. Let our youth, universally, be provided with every opportunity for generous intellectual discipline. I can see no reason why a farmer, or a mechanic, or a merchant, or a manufacturer, should not read as good books, and be as well informed and intelligent a man, as a lawyer, or a minister, or a physician. I have thought, that our institutions of higher education should be organized upon this principle; providing education not for one class, but for all classes, thus enabling all classes to avail themselves of their advantages. To labor for these results seems to me to be our duty as parents, and as citizens, but above all as disciples of Christ. If we are bound to consecrate our all to Him, we are just as much

bound to render that all as valuable as possible, that so we may have the richer gift to lay upon his altar. Looking upon the subject from a Christian point of view, this seems to me to be the principle underlying every other, which should govern all our efforts to educate ourselves, and to provide the means [62] of education for our children. Were this principle universally recognized, is it possible to estimate its effects upon the progress and stability of individual piety, and the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ?

But, secondly, God sometimes bestows upon individuals particular talents, which may be made the means of special usefulness. One has a remarkable capacity for managing affairs, another for mechanical invention, another for philological research, and another for the pursuit of abstract science. In such a case, it would seem that such talent is to be cultivated with special care. It is a means of usefulness which has not been created in vain, and is not to be recklessly thrown away. On the same principle, if a man has been endowed with a talent for public speaking, though employed in a secular calling, he must embrace every opportunity in his power to render this talent serviceable to Christ. Besides availing himself of every means of general culture, he should devote particular attention to the improvement [63] of this special gift. He should give himself to the study of the word of God, and should labor as much as may be in his power, to render his instructions profitable to his fellow men.

“If we are willing to follow, and not lead, the Spirit of God—that is, if we educate no man for the ministry until we are satisfied, not that he *may be*, but that he *has been* called of God to the work of preaching the gospel—we shall always have among our candidates a large number of those who have passed the period of youth, and for whom the studies of youth would be unsuitable, if not useless. Yet these are the very men to whom appropriate culture would be specially valuable.”

But, now, suppose it manifest that God has called a man to devote his whole time to the ministry of the word; it is obvious that the obligation to improve his talent to the utmost, is specially imperative. It is by means of his intellectual faculties that he attempts to influence the minds of his fellow men. This

is the service to which they are exclusively devoted. He is laboring in the cause which employed all the faculties of the Son of God while on earth. For the use and the improvement of his intellectual powers, *he* must render a specially solemn account. The means of improvement, which God has placed in the power of those whom he calls to the ministry, may be very dissimilar; inasmuch as they may vary with age, domestic relations, pecuniary ability, and degree of talent for acquisition. God assigns them conditions as he pleases; all that he [64] requires is, that all that he has given should be faithfully improved, and consecrated to his service. From the views which we entertain respecting the ministry, it is evident that a large portion of our candidates for the sacred office must have attained to some maturity of age. It must certainly be difficult to ascertain whether or not a person in mere youth possesses the qualifications which the Apostle Paul teaches us must be required in a candidate.

If it be then our purpose to provide the means of improvement for those among us who are called to the ministry, it has seemed to me that we should bear in mind these elementary ideas of our denomination on this subject. If we are willing to follow, and not lead, the Spirit of God—that is, if we educate no man for the ministry until we are satisfied, not that he *may be*, but that he *has been* called of God to the work of preaching the gospel—we shall always have among our candidates a large number of those who have passed the period of youth, and for whom the [65] studies of youth would be unsuitable, if not useless. Yet these are the very men to whom appropriate culture would be specially valuable. Others, in various degrees, have been more favored with preparatory education, and the means for more extended discipline. The means and advantages of our candidates must, therefore, be exceedingly dissimilar. If, then we would labor to give to the ministry the means of improvement, we must provide those means for them all. A system of ministerial education, adapted to the condition of but one in twenty of our candidates, commences with the avowed intention of doing but one-twentieth part of its work, and of helping those only who have the least need of its assistance. We should therefore provide for all our brethren whom God has called to this service, the best instruction in our power; adapted, as far as possible, not to any theoretical view, but to the actual condition of the mass of our candidates, leaving each individual, in the exercise of a sound and pious discretion, to determine [66] the extent to which he is able to avail himself of our services. While means should be fully provided for pursuing an extended course of education, we must never lose sight of the large number of our brethren to whom an extended course would be impossible.

But in what way soever a candidate pursues his studies, whether by himself, or under the instruction of an elder brother in the ministry, or in a seminary devoted to this purpose, the question remains to be considered, to what points shall his efforts be directed. In attempting to answer this question, it is important to determine, in the first place, what object he has in view. His object is to prepare himself to be, not a teacher, or a professor, or an agent, or a philological scholar, or a popular writer, but an evangelist or a pastor.* His calling is [67] to

* It is not by any means asserted that these various gifts are not useful, or are not to be cultivated. What I say is, that they are not particularly connected with the ministry, and therefore should be cultivated elsewhere. Least of all should a course of education for the Christian ministry be modified for the sake of preparing men for other and different pursuits. [Editor's note: James P. Boyce differs with his beloved mentor at this point in his *Three Changes to Theological Institutions*, the second change being an insistence that an essential part of the task of such institutions must be to promote, establish, and maintain a solid, credible, believing, Baptist scholarship that freed the Baptist churches in American from servile dependence on European, and especially German, scholarship, much of which was conspicuously un-believing. Here is what Boyce said:

The dissatisfaction to which I refer, has been awakened by the inadequate extent to which all Theological Institutions have pursued their studies, and the consequent lack among us of the scholarship which prevails in some countries abroad. It has been felt as a sore evil, that we have been dependent in great part upon the criticism of Germany for all the more learned investigations in Biblical Criticism and Exegesis, and that in the study of the development of the doctrine of the Church, as well as of its outward progress, we have been compelled to depend upon works in which much of error has been mingled with truth, owing to the defective standpoint occupied by their authors...The Baptists in the past have been entirely too indifferent to the position they thus occupy...They have therefore neglected many of those means which extensive learning affords, and which have been used to great advantage in support of other opinions. It is needless to say, gentlemen, that we can no longer consent to occupy this position. We owe a change to ourselves—as Christians, bound to show an adequate reason for the differences between us and others...Taking the idea from the provision made in some of our Institutions for the degree of Master of Arts, it has occurred to me that an additional course of study might be provided for those who may be graduates of Theological Institutions. This course might extend over one or two years, according to the amount of study the student may propose to accomplish. In it the study of the Oriental languages might be extended to the Arabic and the Syriac. The writing of exegetical thes[e]s would furnish

persuade men to be reconciled to God, and to build up those who are reconciled in their most holy faith. His studies, then, must all bear directly upon this object, for which "it has pleased God to put him into the ministry." The means which he is to use in accomplishing this object, are simple. He is to make known the will of God as it has been revealed in the New Testament, and to urge men to obey it.

It is obvious then, first of all, that the minister of the gospel must be, as thoroughly as possible, acquainted with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles. These contain the precise truth inspired by the Holy Ghost, which he is to communicate to others. He is authorized to make known to men as the commandment of God the whole of this revelation, and nothing whatever beyond it. It is precisely this truth, and nothing else, that the Spirit of God has promised to accompany with his almighty power. Now, I think that a man may be materially assisted to understand the New [68] Testament by improved mental discipline. He needs to acquire the habit of continuous and abstract thought, the power of concentrating his mind upon a subject, and keeping it steady to its work. He must think through the thoughts of the Bible, that he may be able to present them clearly to others. But let me say that this is far from being a merely intellectual process. Simply intellectual power can never attain to it. There is needed, besides this, a devout and holy temper of mind, without which mere mental strength can do but little. These things are "hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes." Of all this you are fully aware from your own

subjects for investigation, and give a more ample acquaintance with the original text, and with the laws of its interpretation. The text books or lectures studied in Systematic and Polemic Theology could be compared with kindred books, the theories of opponents examined in their own writings, and notes taken for future use from rare and costly books. These and similar studies which should be laid down in a well digested course would bestow accurate scholarship, train the student in the methods of original investigation, give him confidence in the results previously attained, and open to him resources from which he might draw extensively in interpreting the Scriptures, and in setting forth the truths they contain. The result would be, that a band of scholars would go forth from almost every one of whom we might expect valuable contributions to our Theological literature. (James P. Boyce, *Three Changes in Theological Institutions: An Inaugural Address Delivered before the Board of Trustees of the Furman University the Night before the Annual Commencement, July 31, 1856* (Greenville, SC: C. J. Elford's Book and Job Press, 1856), 28-29, 31].

experience. When you have been desirous of ascertaining the meaning of any particular passage of the scriptures, in order to impress it more deeply on your fellow men, in what manner have you been most successful, by turning over the works of men, or by the earnest thinking of a soul lying in lowly prostration before the Spirit of infinite wisdom? I do not stand here to dis- [69] parage either human learning, or logical acuteness, but I say that these, without the aid of a holy temper of mind, will enable us but imperfectly to understand the mind of the Spirit. What we need is, to know, not the thoughts of man, but the thoughts of God, and these will be best understood by the soul illumined by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Here I may however remark, in passing, that the revelation given to us consists of ideas, and not of words. These ideas may be expressed in our own language, or in the languages in which they were written. If a man have the opportunity of reading the Bible in its original languages, let him by all means learn to do it, and do it thoroughly. Let him embrace every other opportunity of generous intellectual culture. No man may innocently reject any means by which he may add to the accuracy of his knowledge of the word of God. But if such opportunity as he may desire have not been given him, let him not despair, or think himself set aside as a vessel in whom the [70] Master has no pleasure. Let him study the scripture more earnestly, and pray more devoutly, using every means which God has placed in his power; and the Spirit will assuredly lead him into all necessary truth.

But suppose this truth to have been arrived at; it is then to be presented to the human heart, so as to produce the effect of persuasion. Here is required a knowledge of the human heart, its moral condition, its opposition to God, its subjection to earthly affections, and of all the phases which it assumes when its chambers of imagery are illuminated by the light of divine truth. In order to acquire this knowledge, the man must become acquainted, first of all, with his own moral nature, and the modes of its operation. When he tells what he has himself experienced, he may be assured that in general he speaks the language of humanity. Here also he needs to be in the habit of personal conversation with his fellow men on the subject of religion. Hence it is that no man is ever an effective preacher, who does not visit [71] his people for the sake of urging upon them personally the claims of religion. Have you never observed how pungent the preaching of a minister becomes who has spent a few weeks in the midst of a revival of religion, where his whole time is occupied in intercourse with awakened souls, and how such a minister carries everywhere with him the spirit of a revival? It is thus that we learn to apply the truths of the gospel to the minds of men.

But a minister is to teach publicly, and from house to house.

Under the first of these divisions of his duty must be placed the composition of a sermon. He whose weekly business it is to address men publicly, should, if possible, understand the nature and objects of a discourse, and should learn to construct a discourse correctly. He should acquire the ability to think out a train of thought, which embodies one idea revealed by the spirit of truth, and to lead the minds of men in the direction which he intends.—Thorough, faithful and honest dealing with a [72] candidate, may here be of eminent advantage to his future ministry.

But suppose this train of thought to be thus prepared, shall it be written or unwritten? Each has its advantages, but I am constrained to believe that the value of written discourses has been in this country greatly overrated. Speaking an unwritten train of thought is by far the noblest and most effective exercise of mind, provided the labor of preparation in both cases be the same. I cannot but think that we have been the losers, by cultivating too exclusively the habit of written discourses.

But the discourse having been prepared, it has yet to be delivered. The cultivation of a clear and impressive delivery, free from awkwardness, vulgarity and oddity, and deeply imbued with the tones expressive of natural feeling, is of the greatest importance to a public speaker. It has surprised me that in seminaries, of which the object is to educate preachers, so little time should be devoted to the art of delivery. From want of attention to this [73] subject, good and able men frequently attain to very moderate success, and are shoved aside by men, in other respects, very greatly their inferiors.

But the gospel is to be preached not only publicly, but from house to house. In preparing for this part of his duty a young minister may receive much valuable instruction from an elder brother who has himself been a diligent pastor. The sick are to be visited, the mourner consoled, the thoughtless aroused, the secure alarmed, the convicted urged to decision, the penitent pointed to Christ, the wandering reclaimed, the feeble encouraged; and all this by personal appeal to individuals, and he who has done it successfully, may give much valuable counsel to him who is just entering upon the work. Until a minister has learned not only to perform but to love this part of his labor, he cannot hope to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. I do not know of a more common or a more just ground of complaint against the ministry, than that of the [74] neglect of parochial visitation. It seems strange that a man whose sole calling it is to urge men to repentance, should refuse to perform this duty, in this

particular form, especially when his people themselves invite him to perform it. They desire that he should converse with them individually on the subject of their souls' salvation, and shall he consider such conversation a drudgery and leave his people unwarned? If any one desires to see this subject treated of with great force and eloquence, I ask leave to commend him to the perusal of "Baxter's Reformed Pastor."

Such seems to me, after some reflection, to be the points to which the attention of a candidate for the ministry should be directed. To these I know many others are commonly added, and the number of additions is continually increasing. We, however, seem frequently to forget that the time is rapidly approaching every young man, when, if he would be any thing but a retailer of other men's opinions, he must be a teacher unto himself; and that, the [75] sooner he can be induced to put himself under his own instruction, the sooner will he attain to the stature of a full grown man.

It is possible, my brethren, that in the views I have thus frankly suggested, there may seem to you somewhat of strangeness; but let me respectfully request that you will examine them, not in the light of the opinions and practice of men, but in the light of the teachings of Christ and his Apostles. Believe them and put them in practice in just so far as they conform to the revealed will of God, and no farther. This I may reasonably claim of every disciple of Christ, and I have no desire to claim anything more.

At the present moment, a right understanding of the duties of the private disciples of Christ, and of the ministers, and of the relations which they sustain to the Master and to each other, seems to me of incalculable importance. Since the era of the reformation, Protestantism has made no aggressions upon Popery, and the same geographical lines have [76] for centuries separated the parties from each other. But now it is evident that a contest for the mastery of the world between the powers of light and of darkness is imminent and inevitable. The nations in which the Bible is freely circulated, and the gospel publicly preached, are ranging themselves on the one side; and the nations from which the Bible is prohibited, and where the preaching of Christ crucified is forbidden, are ranging themselves on the other. Within the life-time of men who now hear me, the question will probably be decided, whether the kingdom of Christ is now to proceed to universal victory, or ages of intellectual and moral darkness are again to overspread the earth. It is for such a crisis as this that the disciples of Christ are now called upon to prepare.

But more than this. It is obvious that this question is really to be decided in our own country. So long as the light of true Christianity

shines brightly *here*, the rest of the world cannot be enveloped in darkness. Hence [77] it is that the intention is publicly avowed of overturning our systems of universal education, and thus bringing us under the power of a foreign hierarchy. In aid of this design, immigrants by hundreds of thousands are annually arriving on our shores, who are at once admitted to all the privileges of citizenship, while they are conscientiously bound to obedience to a foreign ecclesiastical potentate.¹⁰ At the same time the press is scattering broadcast over our land the seeds of frivolity and licentiousness. Unbounded prosperity is providing for every class of our people the means of sensual gratification. The rise of prices, consequent upon the increase of the precious metals, is stimulating to yet greater excess the desire of acquisition already sufficiently rife amongst us. But critical as is our position, there would be nothing to alarm us, if the disciples of Christ, holy and self-denying, were, with one accord, ranging themselves under the banner of their Master, and using every means in their power to prepare for the coming onset; [78] and the ministry, in the van of the Lord's hosts, filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, were by precept and example training their brethren for the approaching conflict.

But what is the condition of our churches of all denominations at this critical moment? The disciples of Christ seem to be fast losing the distinctive marks of their profession. Self denial for the cause of the Redeemer will soon become the exception, rather than the rule. In large districts of our country, the admissions to the churches are not as numerous as the removals by death. In the mean time, the number of candidates for the ministry is diminishing, in all denominations, not only relatively, but absolutely. Nay, it is diminishing more rapidly than the figures indicate, for of the reputed number of candidates a considerable portion never enter the ministry; and of those who enter it, a greater and greater number leave it for other pursuits. And what is the remedy proposed in this unusual crisis? It has been recommended, in order to meet this emergency, to [79] reduce the cost of ministerial education, to extend the term of ministerial study, and to increase the pecuniary emoluments of the ministry. In other words, we are told to address stronger motives to the self-interests of men, that so we may induce them to enter upon a calling essentially self-denying. When the whole power of the adversary is thundering at the gates, and the crisis requires every man to stand to his arms, we content ourselves with

¹⁰ Wayland refers to the Pope of Rome—Editor.

offering large bounty to officers, and allow every citizen to retire from the conflict. Was ever a victory gained by strategy such as this?

In our own denomination, it is said that we have 4,000 churches destitute of preachers of the gospel. What is to be done to meet this deficiency? Does all we are doing furnish us with the shadow of a hope that this demand can be supplied? Nay, multiply our present efforts to any practicable extent, and compared with the work to be done, the discrepancy between the means and the end is such as to awaken the feeling of the ludicrous. Is it not [80] time, then, to examine the whole subject from its foundations? May not some light be derived from considering attentively the doctrine and examples of Christ and his apostles?

Is it not evident that if we are attempting to do the work of God, we must do it in obedience to his commandments, and in conformity with the principles which he has established? Ministerial gifts have been bestowed upon the church by Christ ever since he ascended on high, and led captivity captive. He has commanded us to pray the Lord of the harvest to bestow these gifts upon men, and thus send forth laborers into the harvest. These gifts, in whatsoever manner bestowed, we are to receive and cherish and improve. By no rules of our own are we to restrict their number, or diminish their usefulness. We are to accept thankfully all the means which Christ has bestowed upon us for the advancement of his cause. And we are to cultivate a ministry after the example of the apostles, men relying upon prayer and the Holy Ghost, and in self- [81] denial, crucifixion to the world, its maxims, its amusements and its frivolities, setting an example to the flock, while they devote themselves daily to the work of saving souls. To every one whom Christ has thus called let us give every intellectual advantage, which the circumstances of his individual case render suitable. Having done this, we have done all in our power for the improvement of the ministry, and we may reasonably expect on our labors the blessing of God.

But when all this has been done, but little will have been accomplished. If you, brethren, would improve the ministry, you must begin by improving yourselves. Ministerial gifts are not bestowed upon a slumbering, lukewarm and worldly church. And suppose they were bestowed, of what value would they be either to you or to others, if you are surrendered up to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life? The ministry can only labor successfully as you labor with them. If you then really desire to witness the [82] triumph of the cause of the Redeemer, you must begin to live a holy, self-denying life. You men of wealth must cease from accumulation, and devote not only your

income but yourselves to the work of the Lord. You men in active business must be content to accumulate less rapidly, that you may have more of your time to consecrate to the salvation of men. Ye who, professing obedience to Christ, are yet living in subjection to the maxims of the world, eagerly chasing its frivolities, and teaching the lesson to your children, must commence a life of godly simplicity and Christian self-denial. Every disciple, by his mode of life, must show that he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world, When ministers and people thus begin to labor in earnest for Christ, we shall witness results such as the ages have not yet seen.

The nineteenth century since the advent of Christ, is now half completed, and the world still lieth in wickedness. It is high time that the heathen were given to Christ for his inher- [83] itance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Never, from the beginning, have the disciples of Christ enjoyed such advantages for the universal dissemination of the gospel as at present. Let us then go up and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it. Nothing is now wanting to subdue the world unto Christ, but an universal, earnest, self-sacrificing effort of his disciples, in firm reliance upon the Spirit from on high. Thus far we have failed in just so far as we have trusted to our own wisdom instead of the wisdom of the Master. We mourn over the vices of the land. We invoke the majesty of the law, and laws are not executed. We unite in associations, and our associations are rent asunder. We join hands, now with one, and then with another struggling party, and we are sold in the political shambles like brute beasts. Let us then abjure all such vain alliances, and commence the work of reforming the world by obeying the precepts of Jesus. If we can convert men to Christ, the work of reformation [84] will be done. By no other means will the flood of iniquity be stayed. Do you not believe that if all the disciples of Christ in any of our cities or villages thus labored for Christ, they would soon arrest the progress of iniquity, and make it a garden of the Lord? Suppose that we in the same spirit undertook, in solemn earnestness, the conversion of the world; would it not soon be given unto Christ for his possession? Brethren, on whom does the responsibility for the present state of our cities, of our country, and of the world rest? Awake, then, and shake yourselves from your lethargy! Put ye in the sickle and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

"The Principles of a Servant of Christ": The Evangelical Piety of John Sutcliff¹



MICHAEL A. G. HAYKIN
*Professor of Church History
& Biblical Spirituality
Director, the Andrew Fuller
Center for Baptist Studies
Southern Baptist
Theological Seminary
Louisville, KY
mhaykin@sbts.edu*

INTRODUCTION

Among the Calvinistic Baptist figures of the late eighteenth century one of the most important is also one of the least known—John Sutcliff (1752–1814), the pastor of the Baptist church in Olney, Buckinghamshire, for thirty-nine years. An extremely close friend of Andrew Fuller (1754–1815), whom Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–1892) once described as “the greatest theologian of the [nineteenth] century”² and William Carey (1761–1834), the so-called father of the modern missionary movement, Sutcliff played a central part in bringing revival to the English Calvinistic Baptist community, of whose churches far too many were moribund in the mid to late eighteenth century.³

¹ This paper was originally delivered at the National Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Baltimore, MD, Nov 2013.

² Cited Gilbert Laws, *Andrew Fuller: Pastor, Theologian, Ropeholder* (London: Carey Press, 1942), 127.

³ For a complete study of Sutcliff's life and ministry, see Michael A.G. Haykin, *One heart and one soul: John Sutcliff of Olney, his friends, and his times* (Darlington, Co. Durham: Evangelical Press, 1994).

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES

Sutcliff was born on August 9, 1752, to Daniel Sutcliff (d.1794) and his wife Hannah (fl.1735–1773), ardent Baptists, on a farm called Strait Hey, two miles east of Todmorden, West Yorkshire. The Sutcliffs attended a nearby Baptist cause, Rodhill End Baptist Church. But since there was a service at Rodhill End only every other week, the Sutcliffs worshipped at Wainsgate Baptist Church, near Hebden Bridge, on alternate weeks. Sutcliff's parents "were remarkable for their strict attention to the instruction and government of their children,"⁴ and Sutcliff was thus acquainted with the truths of Christianity from an early age. The Christian character of Daniel and Hannah Sutcliff is readily seen in a portion of a letter they wrote to their son in 1773. After telling John, who was then studying at the Bristol Baptist Academy, that smallpox had killed a number of their friends and relatives, they encouraged their son:

Dear son, thy life has been spared through that and other disorders which calls for thankfulness and gratitude. O that it may be devoted to God, spent to His glory and the good of them where His providence may call thee to which end I would suggest a few things...First, be humble, seek not great things for thyself...If thou have [John] Gillies' history near thee read the life of [Richard] Blackerby⁵ and the extract from the life of David Brainerd.⁶ 2nd. Indulge yourself in the happiness of frequent contemplations upon and addresses to the Lord Jesus for light and assistance in all thy studies: consider that this Divine Redeemer's presence is the life and light of thy soul.⁷

⁴ This remark is that of Andrew Fuller in his funeral sermon for his friend Sutcliff: *The Principles and Prospects of a Servant of Christ in The Complete Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, ed. Andrew Gunton Fuller and revised Joseph Belcher (1845 ed.; repr. Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1988), 1:349.

⁵ Richard Blackerby (1574–1638) was a Puritan author, whose life would have been available to the Sutcliffs through a history of revivals written by John Gillies (1712–1796), *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel, and Eminent Instruments Employed in Promoting It* (1754).

⁶ David Brainerd (1718–1747) was a missionary to North American natives in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

⁷ Daniel and Hannah Sutcliff, Letter to John Sutcliff [received on 7 March 1773] (Sutcliff Papers, Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford University).

Sutcliff was converted as a teenager in 1769 through the ministry of John Fawcett (1740–1817), then pastor of Wainsgate Baptist Church, near Hebden Bridge in Yorkshire.⁸ Fawcett himself was a child of the Evangelical Revival, having been converted under the preaching of George Whitefield (1714–1770) and shaped as a young Christian by the Anglican evangelical William Grimshaw (1708–1763).⁹ According to his son, Fawcett kept a portrait of Whitefield in his study and “the very mention of his name inspired the warmest emotions of grateful remembrance.”¹⁰ Baptized by Fawcett soon after his conversion, Sutcliff joined Wainsgate Baptist Church on May 28, 1769. For the next couple of years, Fawcett acted as Sutcliff’s mentor, giving him both academic and spiritual instruction. Sutcliff thus received his earliest nurture in the Christian faith from one who was very appreciative of the Evangelical Revival and its twin focus on Reformation theology and Christian experience.

BRISTOL BAPTIST ACADEMY, 1772-1774

An evident hunger for theological knowledge on the part of Sutcliff, coupled with a desire to put that knowledge into practice, prompted Fawcett and the Wainsgate Church to encourage Sutcliff to pursue formal study at the Bristol Baptist Academy, the sole institution in eighteenth-century Britain for training men for the Baptist ministry.¹¹ The principal teachers at the Academy at that time were Hugh Evans (1713–1781) and his son Caleb Evans (1737–1791), both of whom had

⁸ *Principles and Prospects of a Servant of Christ in Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:350.

⁹ For Whitefield’s influence on Fawcett, see [John Fawcett, Jr.], *An Account of the Life, Ministry, and Writings of the Late Rev. John Fawcett D.D.* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy/Halifax: K. Holden, 1818), 15–19. For that of Grimshaw on Fawcett, see Frank Baker, *William Grimshaw, 1708–1763* (London: The Epworth Press, 1963), 271. On Whitefield’s influence on the Baptists in general, see especially Olin C. Robison, “The Particular Baptists in England, 1760–1820” (D.Phil. Thesis, Regent’s Park College, Oxford University, 1963), 145–153; Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London: The Baptist Historical Society, 1986), 76–82.

¹⁰ *Life, Ministry, and Writings of the Late Rev. John Fawcett*, 15.

¹¹ *Principles and Prospects of a Servant of Christ in Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:350.

a reputation for being evangelical Calvinists.¹² Caleb Evans was also a fervent admirer of the writings of the New England theologian Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758), whom he regarded as “the most rational, scriptural divine, and the liveliest Christian, the world was ever blessed with,”¹³ and whose writings he strongly recommended to students at the Academy.¹⁴

Evans was not the only Calvinistic Baptist of his day to be deeply impressed by Edwards. For instance, in his obituary for Joshua Wood (1734–1794), pastor at Sallendine Nook near Huddersfield in Yorkshire, John Fawcett stated that Edwards was Woods’ “favourite author” and “he read his works with constant attention, approbation, and delight.”¹⁵ Fawcett himself first read Edwards’ works in the 1760s and appears to have encouraged Sutcliff to do the same. Since any encouragement Sutcliff received in this regard from Fawcett would only have been reinforced at Bristol by Evans, it is no surprise to find that after the Scriptures, Edwards’ writings exercised the greatest influence in shaping Sutcliff’s theological perspective.¹⁶ In fact, so great was the impact of Edwards on Sutcliff, that after his death there were some who stated that “if Sutcliff...had preached more of Christ, and less of Jonathan Edwards, [he] would have been more useful.”¹⁷ To these critics, Andrew Fuller replied in defence of his departed friend: “If those who talk thus, preached Christ half as much as Jonathan Edwards did, and were half as useful as he was, their usefulness would be double what it is.”¹⁸ More than any other eighteenth-century author, Edwards showed Sutcliff, and fellow Baptists like Fawcett, Evans and Fuller, how

¹² R. Philip Roberts, *Continuity and Change. London Calvinistic Baptists and The Evangelical Revival 1760–1820* (Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, Publishers, 1989), 127–28.

¹³ *A Catalogue of a few useful Books for a young Minister* in John Rippon, ed., *The Baptist Annual Register* (London, 1793), 1:255.

¹⁴ In his *Catalogue of a few useful Books*, which Evans had drawn up in 1773, four of Edwards’ works were recommended, including *A Careful and Strict Enquiry into the modern prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will* and *A Treatise concerning Religious Affections* (Rippon, ed., *Baptist Annual Register*, 1:255).

¹⁵ “Obituary for 1794. Rev. Joshua Wood” in John Rippon, ed., *The Baptist Annual Register* (London, 1797), 2:226.

¹⁶ *Principles and Prospects of a Servant of Christ* in *Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:350.

¹⁷ John Ryland, *The Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ no Security against Corporeal Death, but the Source of Spiritual and Eternal Life* (London: W. Button & Son, 1815), 34.

¹⁸ Ryland, *Indwelling and Righteousness of Christ*, 34.

to combine a commitment to Calvinism with a passion for revival, fervent evangelism and experiential Christianity.¹⁹

It was in the depth of the winter of 1772 that Sutcliff set out from Wainsgate for Bristol. In order to save money for the purchase of textbooks, he walked the entire distance, a journey of some 200 miles. Afterwards, he often travelled on foot, primarily with a view to saving money for books. Indeed, in his latter years, he had accumulated a considerable library, of which the greater part consisted of choice theological works and which Andrew Fuller once described as “one of the best libraries in this part of the country.” As Fuller further observed, Sutcliff “had a great thirst for reading.”²⁰

During his two and a half years under the tutelage of Hugh and Caleb Evans, Sutcliff had an outstanding academic record. Moreover, he also had occasion to preach in various churches in the neighbourhood of Bristol, one of which, at Trowbridge, unsuccessfully sought to call him as their pastor.

MINISTRY AT OLNEY

Upon leaving Bristol in May of 1774, Sutcliff spent six months ministering at the Baptist Church in Shrewsbury, and then another six at Cannon Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. In July 1775 Sutcliff came to the small town of Olney in Buckinghamshire for a ministry that would last until his death in 1814. He was set apart for the gospel ministry on August 7, 1776. Among the Baptist pastors who took part on this important occasion were John Fawcett, who received Sutcliff's confession of faith, and Caleb Evans, who delivered a charge to Sutcliff based on Hebrews 13:17. It was also during 1776, at the annual meeting

¹⁹ “The most decisive Evangelical influence on the Particular Baptists was that of Jonathan Edwards” (Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978], I, 456). For further discussion of the influence of Edwards on the English Calvinistic Baptists, see especially E.A. Payne, “The Evangelical Revival and the Beginnings of the Modern Missionary Movement”, *The Congregational Quarterly*, 21 (1943), 223–236; Robison, “Particular Baptists”, 162–170; Watts, *Dissenters*, I, 456–461. For Edwards' influence on Fuller, see now Chris Chun, *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards in the Theology of Andrew Fuller* (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, vol.162; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2012).

²⁰ *Principles and Prospects of a Servant of Christ in Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:354.

of the Northamptonshire Association in the spring that Sutcliff first met Andrew Fuller and soon discovered in him a kindred spirit.²¹

The initial years of his ministry, however, were trying ones. Sutcliff's evangelical Edwardsean Calvinism deeply disturbed some of his congregation, who saw it as a departure from the canons of "orthodoxy"—they appear to have had Hyper-Calvinistic tendencies—and they began to absent themselves from the Church's celebration of the Lord's Supper and from Church meetings. But Sutcliff was not to be deterred from preaching biblical truth. Matters came to a head towards the end of 1780. At a Church Meeting on December 7 the dissidents declared that the reason for their conduct was their "dissatisfaction with the Ministry."²² After a long debate, it was agreed to let the matter rest for four months and to drop the matter entirely if the dissidents took their places at the Lord's Table.²³ Although it took more than four months, Sutcliff, "by patience, calmness, and prudent perseverance,"²⁴ eventually won over all of the dissidents. The patience and prudence which he exhibited on this occasion Fuller would later point to as prominent features in his character. As Fuller stated:

Whatever might have been his natural temper, it is certain that *mildness* and *patience* and *gentleness* were prominent features in his character...It was observed by one of his brethren in the ministry, at an Association, that the promise of Christ, that they who learned of him who was "meek and lowly in heart should find rest unto their souls" [Matthew 11:29], was more extensively fulfilled in Mr. Sutcliff than in most Christians.²⁵

Among the few extant manuscripts in Sutcliff's own hand is one that dates from these early days of his ministry at Olney. It consists of six "observations or rules" that Sutcliff drew up to shape his conduct in life. They ran as follows:

1. To view everything in religion as much as possible with my own eyes. Let me examine for myself every text in the Bible & every sentiment in divinity. Let me frequently read and study my

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1:350.

²² "Baptist Meeting at Olney Minutes", December 7, 1780 (Sutcliff Baptist Church, Olney Buckinghamshire).

²³ "Baptist Meeting at Olney Minutes", December 7, 1780.

²⁴ *Principles and Prospects of a Servant of Christ in Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:350.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1:354.

Bible, as if no commentary had ever been written. *January 31, 1783.*

2. To search for truth everywhere in the writings of friends or foes, & seize it as my own property wherever I meet with it, & always follow evidence impartially wherever it leads me. *January 31, 1783.*
3. Let me consider that every increase of religious knowledge should not only make me wiser but better; not only make my head clear, but purify my heart, influence my affections, and regulate my life. *January 31, 1783.*
4. In every sermon let me have some *fixed end* in view and let me keep that object steadily in my eye, both in my study on the Subject and in the delivery of it. *November 2, 1783, Friday afternoon.*
5. Since man is a compound being of judgment and affection, let me remember that each should be addressed in the Gospel ministry. ...*August 20, 1784.*
6. Whatever sentiment I entertain myself, or propose to others let me always put the question *Cui bono?* [To what good?] *September 25, 1784.*²⁶

PRAYING FOR REVIVAL

The 1770s and 1780s also saw Sutcliff's growing involvement in the affairs of the Northamptonshire Association of Baptist churches, which included the Olney church and that which Fuller was pastoring in Kettering. The circular letter that the Association annually sent to its member churches was drawn up by Sutcliff in 1779 on the subject of divine providence, as was that in 1786, which focused on the Lord's Day. And in 1784 he presented to the Association a proposal that was to have far-reaching impact.

Earlier that year there had come into Sutcliff's hands Jonathan Edwards' treatise *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, For the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth*. In this treatise, first published in 1748, Edwards appealed for the establishment of regular prayer meetings where there could be fervent prayer that God "would appear for the help of his church, and in mercy

²⁶ Archives, Bristol Baptist College, Bristol. The spelling has been modernized.

to mankind, and pour out his Spirit, revive his work, and advance his spiritual kingdom in the world.”²⁷ The treatise came to Sutcliff through John Erskine (1721–1803), who had corresponded with Edwards in his younger years and who was the minister of the historic church of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh. Erskine has been well described as “the paradigm of Scottish evangelical missionary interest through the last half of the eighteenth century.”²⁸ From 1780 till his death in 1803 he regularly corresponded with a number of English Baptists, including Sutcliff, and would send them not only letters but also on occasion bundles of interesting publications which he happened to receive.

So it was in April, 1784, Erskine mailed a copy of Edwards’ *Humble Attempt* to a good friend of Sutcliff, John Ryland, Jr. (1753–1825), co-pastor with his father of the Baptist work in Northampton, not far from Olney. Ryland in turn shared it with his friends Sutcliff and Fuller. Sutcliff was so impressed by this treatise that at the next meeting of the Baptist churches of the Northamptonshire Association he proposed that monthly prayer meetings be established to pray for the outpouring of God’s Spirit and the revival of religion. This proposal was adopted by the representatives of the twenty or so churches of the Association and attached to the circular letter sent out that year to the churches there was a call for them “to wrestle with God for the effusion of his Holy Spirit.”²⁹ Practical suggestions as to the way in which to implement these monthly meetings followed. It was recommended that there be corporate prayer for one hour on the first Monday evening of each month. The call then continued:

The grand object in prayer is to be, that the Holy Spirit may be poured down on our ministers and churches, that sinners may be converted, the saints edified, the interest of religion revived, and the name of God glorified. At the same time remember, we trust you will not confine your requests to your own societies [i.e. churches], or to your own immediate connection [i.e. denomination]; let the whole interest of the Redeemer be affectionately remembered, and the spread of the gospel to the most distant parts of the habitable globe be the object of your

²⁷ *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (1834 ed.; repr. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), 2:281.

²⁸ J.A. De Jong, *As the Waters Cover the Sea. Millennial Expectations in the Rise of Anglo-American Missions 1640–1810* (Kampen, The Netherlands: J.H. Kok N.V., 1970), 166.

²⁹ John Ryland, Jr., *The Nature, Evidences, and Advantages, of Humility* (The Circular Letter of the Northamptonshire Association, 1784), 12.

most fervent requests. We shall rejoice if any other Christian societies of our own or other denominations will unite with us, and do now invite them most cordially to join heart and hand in the attempt.³⁰

There are at least three noteworthy points about this call to prayer, which Sutcliff appears to have written.³¹ First, there is the conviction that reversing the downward trend of the Calvinistic Baptists could not be accomplished by mere human zeal, but must be effected by an outpouring of the Spirit of God. As Sutcliff observed elsewhere:

The outpouring of the divine Spirit...is the grand promise of the New Testament...His influences are the soul, the great animating soul of all religion. These withheld, divine ordinances are empty cisterns, and spiritual graces are withering flowers. These suspended, the greatest human abilities labour in vain, and the noblest efforts fail of success.³²

In both this text and that of the circular letter cited above there is evidence of what Richard Lovelace has called “a theology of radical dependence on the Spirit,”³³ a recognition that the Spirit is the true agent of renewal and revival.

Then there is the inclusive and catholic nature of the recommended praying. As the Calvinistic Baptists of the Northamptonshire Association gathered to pray together they were urged to direct their thoughts beyond the confines of their own churches and denomination, and embrace in prayer other Baptist churches and other denominations.

³⁰ Ryland, Jr., *Nature, Evidences, and Advantages, of Humility*, 12. For a detailed study of this influential call to prayer, see especially Ernest A. Payne, *The Prayer Call of 1784* (London: Baptist Laymen’s Missionary Movement, 1941) and Haykin, *One heart and one soul*, 153–171.

³¹ Payne, *Prayer Call of 1784*, 2.

³² *Jealousy for the Lord of Hosts illustrated* (London: W. Button, 1791), 12. See also John Sutcliff, *The Authority and Sanctification of the Lord’s Day, Explained and Enforced* (Circular Letter of the Northamptonshire Association, 1786), 8: “Be earnest with God for the gift of his Holy Spirit, in an abundant measure. Seek his divine influences, to furnish you with spiritual ability, in order that you may be found in the discharge of that which is your indispensable duty. Highly prize his sacred operations. These are the real excellency of all religious duties. Brilliant parts and abilities, natural or acquired, can never supply their place.”

³³ “Pneumatological Issues in American Presbyterianism”, *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 31 (1986): 345–346.

In fact, churches of other denominations, along with those of other Baptist associations, were encouraged to join them in praying for revival. Third, there is the distinct evangelistic or missionary emphasis: the readers of this prayer call are encouraged to pray that the gospel be spread “to the most distant parts of the habitable globe.” This emphasis is rarely found in earlier eighteenth-century English Baptists. It is not surprising that many of their churches at the time were stagnant, if not moribund.

Two years later, near the beginning of the circular letter which Sutcliff wrote for the Northamptonshire Association on the subject of the Lord’s Day, he gave the following progress report and exhortation concerning the prayer meetings that had hitherto been established:

The monthly meetings of prayer, for the general spread of the gospel, appear to be kept up with some degree of spirit. This, we hope, will yet be the case. ...We learn that many other churches, in different, and some in distant parts of the land, and some of different denominations, have voluntarily acceded to the plan. We communicate the above information, for your encouragement. Once more we would invite all who love truth and holiness, into whose hands our letter may fall, to unite their help. Let societies, let families, let individuals, who are friends to the cause of Christ, unite with us, not only daily, but in a particular manner, at the appointed season.³⁴

Not only were Baptists and Christians of other denominations responding warmly to the monthly prayer meetings for revival, but also, as Sutcliff immediately goes on to indicate, God was answering their prayers by providing opportunities for evangelism.

With pleasure we were informed of an open door in many places, for the preaching of the gospel. We request it of our friends, that they would encourage the occasional ministry of the word in their respective villages and neighbourhoods, where they may be situated, to the utmost of their power. Be not backward to appear on God’s side.³⁵

In a later circular letter, which he wrote for the Northamptonshire Association in 1797, Sutcliff again linked prayer and itinerant

³⁴ *Authority and Sanctification of the Lord’s Day*, 1–2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

evangelism: "A readiness to listen to the tidings of the Gospel, evidently exists in many dark, and, until of late, inaccessible villages. There is encouragement for prayer, and matter for praise."³⁶

Behind this emphasis on prayer and itinerant evangelism lies the firm conviction that it is the responsibility of believers to communicate the gospel to the unconverted. This task, however, involved far more than simply opening the doors of the Baptist chapel in the hope that outsiders might enter, be converted under the preaching of the gospel, and become members of what was an established congregation. The task, as envisaged by Sutcliff, required believers to take the gospel to prospective converts, which would entail the formation of new congregations. Priority was being given to expansion, rather than consolidation, which is markedly different from the ethos of earlier eighteenth-century Baptist life.³⁷

In 1789 Sutcliff decided to bring out an edition of Edwards's *Humble Attempt* to further encourage those meeting for prayer. Measuring only six and one quarter inches long, and three and three-quarter inches wide, and containing 168 pages, this edition was clearly designed to be a handy pocket-size edition. In a "Preface" to this edition, Sutcliff re-emphasized that the Prayer Call issued by the Northamptonshire Association five years earlier was not intended for simply Calvinistic Baptists. Rather, they ardently wished it might become general among the real friends of truth and holiness.

The advocates of error are indefatigable in their endeavors to overthrow the distinguishing and interesting doctrines of Christianity; those doctrines which are the grounds of our hope, and sources of our joy. Surely, it becomes the followers of Christ, to use every effort, in order to strengthen the things which remain... In the present imperfect state, we may reasonably expect a diversity of sentiments upon religious

³⁶ *The Divinity of the Christian Religion* (Northampton, 1797), 3.

³⁷ Robert Hall, Jr. (1766–1831), in a sketch of Sutcliff's character that he wrote shortly after Sutcliff's death, could state: "Few men took a deeper interest than our deceased brother in the general state of the church and the propagation of the gospel abroad. The future glory of the kingdom of Christ and the best means of promoting it were his favourite topics, and usurped a large part of his thoughts and his prayers; nor was he ever more in his element than when he was exerting his powers in devising plans for its extension." ("Character of the Rev. John Sutcliff" in *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M.*, eds. Olinthus Gregory and Joseph Belcher [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854], 2:389).

matters. Each ought to think for himself; and every one has a right, on proper occasions, to show his opinion. Yet all should remember, that there are but two parties in the world, each engaged in opposite causes; the cause of God and Satan; of holiness and sin; of heaven and hell. The advancement of the one, and the downfall of the other, must appear exceedingly desirable to every real friend of God and man. If such in some respects entertain different sentiments, and practice distinguishing modes of worship, surely they may unite in the above business. O for thousands upon thousands divided into small bands in their respective cities, towns, villages, and neighbourhood, all met at the same time, and in pursuit of one end, offering up their united prayers, like so many ascending clouds of incense before the Most High!—May he shower down blessings on all the scattered tribes of Zion! Grace, great grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity! Amen!³⁸

JEALOUSY FOR THE LORD OF HOSTS ILLUSTRATED (1791)

A final text that draws together these themes of prayer and evangelism is found in what appears to be Sutcliff's only extant sermon, *Jealousy for the Lord of Hosts illustrated*, which was preached on April 27, 1791, to a gathering of the ministers of the Northamptonshire Association at Clipstone, Northamptonshire. The sermon was based on 1 Kings 19:10, in particular Elijah's statement, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts." Sutcliff first explored the historical context surrounding Elijah's statement. He came to the conclusion that while Elijah's statement contains a "degree of impatience...and murmuring," his jealousy for God is commendable, because such jealousy "enters deep into, and is integrated in the very soul of true Christianity."³⁹

³⁸ "Preface," to Jonathan Edwards, *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, For the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, pursuant to Scripture-Promises and Prophecies concerning the Last Time* (1748 ed.; repr. Northampton: T. Dicey and Co., 1789), iv–vi. On the key role that the republication of this tract played in the ultimate formation of the Baptist Missionary Society, see Fuller, *Principles and Prospects of a Servant of Christ in Works of the Rev. Andrew Fuller*, 1:351.

³⁹ *Jealousy for the Lord of Hosts*, 2.

Sutcliff proceeded to detail the ways in which such a jealousy manifests itself. As he did so, two characteristics came to the fore. First, Sutcliff laid great stress on the vital importance of bringing the entirety of one's beliefs and life into conformity with the revealed will of God as found in the Scriptures. True jealousy for God is accompanied by a reverent obedience to God's Word.⁴⁰ Second, Sutcliff emphasized the visible extension of "the empire of Jesus." True jealousy for God is revealed in a love for men which "can embrace a globe" and which longs that "the earth be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord."⁴¹ Such a longing is first expressed in "[f]ervent prayer for the outpouring of the divine Spirit." As Sutcliff stressed: "Anxious to see the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, you will give vent to your fervent desires by warm addresses at a throne of Grace."⁴² Then it is seen in an evangelistic lifestyle which takes seriously God's desire for his people to be the salt and light of the world. Reflecting on the calling of all of God's people, Sutcliff declared:

Are they not the *Salt* of the earth? It is not proper that the *Salt* should lie all in one heap. It should be scattered abroad. Are they not the *Light* of the world? These taken collectively should, like the Sun, endeavour to enlighten the whole earth. As all the rays, however, that each can emit, are limited in their extent, let them be dispersed, that thus the whole globe may be illuminated. Are they not *Witnesses* for God? It is necessary they be distributed upon every hill, and every mountain, in order that their sound may go into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.⁴³

In commending this balance of ardent prayer and vigorous evangelistic effort Sutcliff was not only describing what he regarded as characteristics of genuine Christianity, but he was also outlining measures he considered essential for revival. When these marks of true jealousy for God are present, he concluded:

This will tend to promote the interests of religion in the world. The cause of Christ will prosper; he must increase; his kingdom shall come. But, though he is indebted to none, he kindly

⁴⁰ Ibid., 5–6.

⁴¹ Ibid., 8.

⁴² Ibid., 12.

⁴³ Ibid., 14–15.

condescends to employ his people in accomplishing these glorious purposes...Under the divine smile, "Satan will fall before you like lightning from heaven" [cf. Luke 10:18]; his power be broken; his policy confounded; while the empire of Jesus shall advance; his kingdom arise; and the crown flourish upon his head.⁴⁴

One cannot help but notice "the mood of expansion and optimism"⁴⁵ which pervades this conclusion to Sutcliff's sermon, a mood that is present throughout much of the discourse. Little wonder then that this sermon was later recognized as a key step on the road to the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society in the following year.⁴⁶

CODA

John Sutcliff was a Baptist, committed as his eighteenth-century forebears had been, to such ecclesiological convictions as congregationalism, separation from the state Church, and believer's baptism.⁴⁷ But these ecclesiological issues were not the fulcrum upon which his theology turned. In the texts from Sutcliff's hand that have been examined in this paper, it can be readily seen that he is a true heir

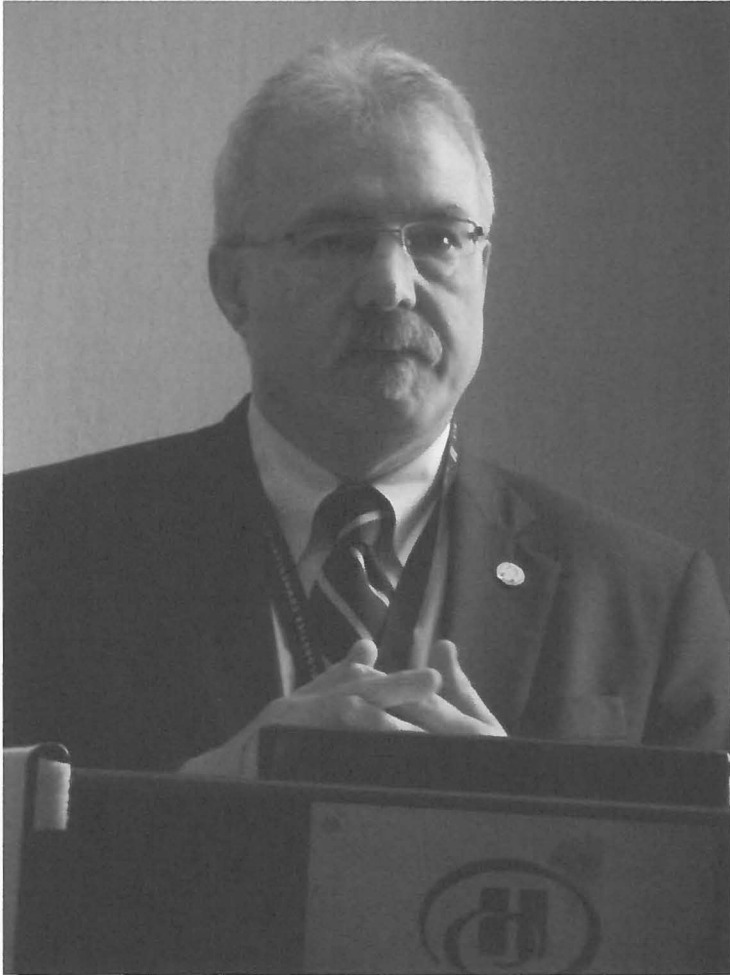
⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 15–16.

⁴⁵ The phrase is from D.W. Lovegrove, *Established Church, Sectarian People. Itineracy and the transformation of English Dissent, 1780–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 19.

⁴⁶ Eustace Carey, *Memoir of William Carey, D.D.* (London: Jackson and Walford, 1836), 62. See the letter by Brian Barker, "BMS bi-centenary", *Baptist Times*, 7355 (April 18, 1991), 15, which describes the meeting at Clipstone as a "watershed" in the formation of the Baptist Missionary Society.

⁴⁷ The continuing strength of Sutcliff's Baptist convictions is amply illustrated by a story conveyed to Thomas Wright by a woman who had known Sutcliff and had attended his funeral. According to this woman: "One Independent minister of high standing came from Newport, five miles distant, on purpose to consult him. Having given his opinion with customary freedom and kindness, to the great satisfaction and pleasure of the visitor, Mr. Sutcliff went to the door with him, and opened it; thereupon the latter, taking his hand, shook it heartily, and said, 'I do love you, brother John, but should love you much better if you were not a Baptist.' Mr. Sutcliff cleared his throat and replied very deliberately and quietly, 'Should you not love Jesus Christ much better if He were not a Baptist? Good morning, sir,' and shut the door to." (*The Town of Cowper* [London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1886], 166–67).

of the Evangelical Revival, which was centered upon the essential principles of the Christian faith, their vigorous propagation, and the bonds of fellowship that these principles established between all genuine believers. Such was the theological centre of gravity needed for revival in the late eighteenth-century community of the English Calvinistic Baptists.



Michael A. G. Haykin

The Great Code: Greek Bible And the Humanities¹



PETER J. GENTRY
*Professor of Old Testament
Interpretation Southern Baptist
Theological Seminary
Louisville, KY
pgentry@sbts.edu*

INTRODUCTION

Northrop Frye was a Professor in the Department of English at Victoria College in the University of Toronto from 1948 until his death in 1991. One of his most influential and significant books was entitled *The Great Code*.² In this work he argued that the Bible is foundational to much of the literature in the western world. In particular, in terms of *language, myth, metaphor, and typology*, the Bible functions as a code providing a system for imagination and metaphor necessary to the correct interpretation of texts. Prior to Frye, for example, the poetry of William Blake was poorly understood because readers did not grasp the system of metaphor derived from Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the Bible upon which Blake's writings were based. Today, my hope is to extend the thesis of Frye to show how the Bible, and in particular the Greek Translation of the Jewish Scriptures, is at the foundation of many disciplines in the humanities.

¹ This lecture was first given as one of the Sizemore Lectures in Biblical Studies at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary November 29, 2012.

² Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982).

Let me begin by describing the Greek Bible in the Jewish and Christian traditions. The translation into Greek of the Jewish Sacred Writings and the Christian First Testament is normally referred to as the Septuagint.

Definition

What is meant by the term Septuagint? A lack of precision is common in both popular and scholarly use of the word. Mainly responsible for this lack of precision are uncertainties about the history of the process of translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. There is general agreement that the books from Genesis to Deuteronomy known as the Pentateuch or Torah, were translated in Egypt early during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285/2-246 B.C.E.), possibly around 280 if we can rely on the testimony of the Church Fathers.³ The books in the “Prophets” and “Writings” sections of the Jewish Canon were translated later, most of them by 130 B.C.E. as is clearly indicated by the Prologue to the Greek Translation of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus). Questions have been raised about the date of translation of each of the books in the collection known as Megilloth (Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther). Some of these may have been first translated after 100 B.C.E. Thus the term Septuagint is applicable in a technical sense only to the Greek Pentateuch, although it is commonly employed in a loose manner of speaking for the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures as a whole. To further complicate matters, long before all the books had been translated, revisions were already being made of existing translations. The process of making systematic, thoroughgoing revisions (called *recensions*) continued from possibly 150 B.C.E. through 200 C.E. The precise line of demarcation between original translations and revisions in this body of texts has, in fact, not yet been clearly established. Scholars are still working to prepare scientific editions of these translations based upon careful study of all available evidence in Greek manuscripts, citations in Church

³ N. L. Collins, “281 BCE: the Year of the Translation of the Pentateuch in Greek under Ptolemy II,” in *Septuagint, Scrolls, and Cognate Writings* (eds. George J. Brooke and Barnabas Lindars; SCS 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 403-503. A recent re-analysis of the *Letter of Aristeas* and the origins of the Septuagint is Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003). Her conclusions do not challenge a date in the early third century B.C. as the proposed time of translation.

Fathers, and early daughter translations. Moreover it should be noted that the Greek Bible originated in Africa.

Purpose

What motivated the task of translation continues to be debated to the present time. Five major hypotheses have been advanced: (1) a generation of Greek-speaking Jews in the Hellenistic period begun by the conquest of Alexander the Great (333-323 B.C.E.) required Greek scriptures for their liturgy, or (2) for the education of their young; (3) the translation was required as a legal document or (4) as cultural heritage for the royal library being assembled in Alexandria; (5) Aristarchus' new edition of Homer around 150 B.C.E. employed textual criticism to produce an authoritative text and served as a model to produce an authoritative text of the Bible for Alexandrian Jews (hence early revisions and *The Letter of Aristeas*).

Origin

A document known as (*The Letter of*) *Aristeas* purports to relate the story of the origin of the Greek Pentateuch. This document is a piece of propaganda written 150-100 B.C.E. to authenticate the Greek version in the face of criticisms circulating at that time—criticisms to the effect that the Greek translation did not adequately reflect the current Hebrew text in Palestine.

The name Septuagint comes from *septuaginta*, the Latin word for seventy. According to *Aristeas*, there were seventy-two translators. The number seventy is an adaptation of seventy-two based on models like the Seventy Elders at Sinai, the Seventy Judges who assisted Moses, the Seventy Elders of the Sanhedrin, etc. (seventy in *Sefer Torah* i.8 and seventy-two in *Sôferim* i.8). Likely there were just five translators for the Pentateuch as the rabbinic versions of the story indicate (*Aboth of Rabbi Nathan* 37, *Sôferim* i.7). While church fathers like Justin Martyr (c. 135 C.E.) refer to the seventy translators, the earliest use of the term Septuagint as a reference to the translation itself is found in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 303 C.E.).⁴

⁴ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.16.1.

Character

In both ancient and modern times different approaches to the task of translation have been adopted. Each language employs a code to 'cut up' and represent the 'pie' of reality. The code of one language may overlap with that of another in multiple ways or perhaps not at all in some aspects. Translations may be characterised in a continuum on a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum the translator seeks to follow as closely as possible the code of the source language where that of the target language will permit. Formal correspondence between the code of source and target languages may be at the clause level, phrase level, word level, or word-component morpheme level.⁵ At the other end of the spectrum, the translator seeks to follow the code of the target language where that of the source language will allow in order to communicate effectively to the readers. Thus the notion of fidelity to the Word of God motivates both ends of the spectrum. When the codes of source and target languages overlap in multiple ways, certainly more than one correct translation is possible. The books in the Greek Pentateuch as well as those in the Prophets and Writings vary widely within this spectrum. Some are literal and represent formal equivalence in the extreme; others are freer and represent many gradations of functional equivalence.

Genesis and Exodus are fairly dynamic translations while Leviticus through Deuteronomy are quite literal. The translator of the book of Job abbreviated many of the long, windy speeches for his Hellenistic readership so that the book is one-sixth shorter in Greek. The translator of Proverbs re-arranged the material to enhance the figure of Solomon. Other books have additions to them such as Esther and Daniel. The Greek Jeremiah differs significantly from the Hebrew Text in both arrangement and text. Most of the books, however, reflect the same Hebrew parent text as that later preserved in the Masoretic Text.

In general, the differences between the Septuagint and the later standard text (Masoretic Text) are due to a number of factors. In some cases, the translators were using a Hebrew parent text which differs somewhat from the Masoretic Text. In other cases, differences are due simply to a different way of reading the same text or understanding the grammar and meanings of words.

⁵ Harry Sysling, "Translation Techniques in the Ancient Bible Translations: Septuagint and Targum," in *A History of Bible Translation* edited by Philip A. Noss (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2007), 285-86.

The Septuagint quickly became popular among the Jews of the Diaspora for whom Greek was the familiar spoken language. When the Christian church began to spread beyond Jewish borders, it adopted the Septuagint as its Bible with minor modifications. For example, the book of Daniel in the Septuagint was considered so deficient by the Christian church that it was rejected and a later Greek translation attributed to Theodotion was used instead. Many of the quotations of the Old Testament in the New are from the Septuagint, or even early revisions of it, and as a result may differ from the Masoretic Text. The differences range from superficial to significant. The existence of differences in the text and different Greek translations does not appear problematic for the strong claim made by Jesus and the Apostles concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures.

INFLUENCE OF THE GREEK BIBLE IN GENERAL

Two approaches will be used to demonstrate the main thesis, i.e. that the Greek Bible is the Great Code for the Humanities. First, a syllogism can establish the point in broad and sweeping terms by showing the debt owed by our civilization in the West to the Bible in general, and by demonstrating that the Greek version of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures was the chief instrument and source for this impact on the humanities. This might be displayed as follows:

Syllogism

1. Humanities in Western civilisation are indebted to the Bible.
2. During the largest part of the past two thousand years, the dominant form of the Bible is the Greek Version.
3. Humanities in Western civilisation are indebted to the Greek Bible.

Recently a brief publication from *Kairos Journal* entitled “Legatees of a Great Inheritance: How the Judeo-Christian Tradition Has Shaped the West” provided a summary of facts illustrating the first point in areas such as the arts:⁶

⁶ What follows is adapted from “Legatees of a Great Inheritance: How the Judeo-Christian Tradition Has Shaped the West,” *Kairos Journal Booklet* (2008),

The Arts

The canon of Western civilization includes such incomparable literary figures and practitioners of the arts as Rembrandt, Shakespeare, Mendelssohn, and Tolstoy. It is a tradition rich in media and genres. Often Judeo-Christian convictions were the inspiration for achievement. Furthermore, people of faith provided the freedom for non-believers to work their craft. These two factors together have been the seedbed for a flowering of artistic culture such as the world has never seen.

Painting and Sculpture

Painting and sculpture have been mainstays in worship centers—from illuminated manuscripts (Book of Kells) to Byzantine icons; from Giotto's murals in the Arena Chapel in Padova to the Vatican Bernini colonnade; from the stained glass of Notre Dame and Sainte-Chapelle to the Marc Chagall windows in the Hadassah-Hebrew University synagogue. Then, beyond the walls of churches and synagogues, the visual arts have flourished in many forms. The European Renaissance gave the world Botticelli and Raphael in the South, Breughel and Dürer in the North. And who can count the various artistic "isms," such as Neoclassicism, Romanticism, Impressionism, and Cubism, emerging in subsequent centuries.

Architecture

The West is home to Gothic, Romanesque, Baroque, Neo-classical, Italianate, Spanish mission, Colonial, Prairie, Federal, Art Deco, Bauhaus, PostModern, and Expressionist architecture. It has given the world the Hagia Sophia, the Spanish Steps, the Ponte Vecchio, the Eiffel Tower, Versailles, and the Royal Albert Hall.

Music

Christianity alone has contributed the oratorio, cantata, hymn, gospel song, requiem mass, Negro spiritual, and Gregorian chant. It has

birthed Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," Handel's "Messiah," and Luther's "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

Western orchestras abound, with music scored for a wealth of finely engineered instruments, from violin to trumpet to oboe. National arts commissions and private patrons underwrite the performance of symphonies, operas, and folk song festivals. Popular music of every sort issues from Western recording studios. Some of it is original, some of it internationally eclectic. But inceptive or hybrid, the production is Western and the audience is worldwide.

Fiction

From the early days of Cervantes (*Don Quixote*) and Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe*), through the days of Dumas (*The Three Musketeers*), Dickens (*Oliver Twist*), and Austen (*Pride and Prejudice*), to the modern work of Orwell (1984) and Hemingway (*The Old Man and the Sea*), the novel has been a mainstay of Western civilization.

Theatre

The theatre has enjoyed unparalleled vitality in the West, with its West End, repertory, summer stock, and touring companies. The names of venues (the Globe in London; the Abbey in Dublin), playwrights (England's Shakespeare; Norway's Ibsen; Russia's Chekov), and dramas (*Tartuffe*; *The Cherry Orchard*) are legendary.

Film

Western films are the gold standard, dominating theaters from Jakarta to Nairobi. Notable is the contribution of Eastern European Jews and their progeny, who founded America's great companies (MGM, Fox, Paramount, Columbia, etc.) and of Italians of Catholic tradition (Fellini, Bertolucci, Zeffirelli, etc.). Europe is dotted with historic studios (Shepperton and Ealing in England, Cinecittà in Italy, Pathé in France) and influential film festivals (Venice, Cannes, Berlin).

Comedy

Comedy rates special notice because it flourishes in free societies of the West. Indeed, the work of satirists, comedians, cartoonists, parodists, caricaturists, clowns, and jesters is a vital check on absurdity, hypocrisy, pomposity, and tyranny. Judaism has been particularly

fruitful in this connection, providing the West with many of its comedic luminaries.

Creativity and Diversity

This is not to gainsay the wonderful contributions of Islamic art. As Sir Ernst Gombrich puts it in his classic *The Story of Art*, Muslim artisans “created the most subtle lacework ornamentation known as arabesques,” and he observed, “It is an unforgettable experience to walk through the courtyards and halls of the Alhambra and to admire the inexhaustible variety of these decorative patterns.” But Muslim theology, whether through disdain for sacred music, figurative depictions, (aniconism), or dissenting expression, has limited creativity and diversity, hallmarks of Western civilisation.

These are illustrations of areas in the Arts that have been deeply shaped by the Judeo-Christian heritage. Only a few considerations are necessary to demonstrate Part Two of the Syllogism, i.e. that the form of the Bible that was the means and source of shaping our heritage was the Greek Version.

It is now widely accepted that Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were all used in Palestine in the First Century C.E. The question as to whether a particular individual or region or town was bilingual or even trilingual is debated.⁷ Outside of Palestine, the Jews of the Diaspora, for the most part, spoke Greek and used the Greek Version of their Sacred Writings. An excellent example of this is Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.E. – 40 C.E.). Additional evidence can be found in the use of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament. The Council in Jerusalem in Acts 15 is a case in point—appeal to the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures settled the matter. We must remember that the Christian Church began as a sect within Judaism.

⁷ See esp. G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, Vol. 5 (Macquarie University: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1989), 19-26.

TEXTS AND VERSIONS USED BY THE EARLY CHURCH

In 1983 Archer and Chirichigno produced an overview of the citations of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament.⁸ Although this work is dated, it does give a helpful picture of the biblical texts used by the Early Church. The authors used categories to describe quotations as follows:

(1) Quotations in the New Testament from the Septuagint when it closely follows our present Hebrew Masoretic Text – 268.

(2) Quotations in the New Testament following the wording of the Septuagint even when it deviates somewhat from our present Masoretic Text – 294.

(3) Quotations in the New Testament closer to MT than to the LXX – 33.

(4) Quotations in the New Testament adhering closely to the LXX against our present Masoretic Text – 22.

(5) Quotations in the New Testament where the New Testament writer appears to have taken liberties in quoting the Old Testament – 13.

It is not hard to see from this short survey that the LXX played an important and significant role in terms of the use of the Old Testament in the New.⁹

Influence of the Septuagint in Jewish Communities

The influence of the Septuagint among Jewish communities continued well into the Middle Ages. Since the Christian Church adopted the Septuagint as Scripture and attempted to demonstrate the claim that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah in Christian-Jewish dialogue based upon this version, several Jewish revisions of the Septuagint were produced in the first two centuries C.E. in an attempt to bring this version into closer alignment with the Hebrew Text and current rabbinic teaching. The main Jewish revisions of the Septuagint are attributed to Theodotion, Aquila, and Symmachus. For the most

⁸ Gleason L. Archer and G. C. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983).

⁹ See further Karen H. Jobes, "When God Spoke Greek: The Place of the Greek Bible in Evangelical Scholarship," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 16.2 (2006): 221.

part, these versions were revisions of the original Greek Translation and not brand new translations. Abraham Wasserstein and his son, David J. Wasserstein, in a recent work, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* trace the influence of the Septuagint, whether directly or indirectly via the Jewish Revisors, among Jewish communities well into the Middle Ages.

At a Conference on the Greek Bible in Byzantine Judaism held in July, 2007 at Cambridge University, I presented an analysis of a fragment of Ecclesiastes from the Genizah in the Old Jewish Synagogue in Cairo, Egypt.¹⁰ This document contains a Greek version of Ecclesiastes written in Hebrew Script. The text is derived from the Septuagint, but updated to reflect the grammar and lexicon of Byzantine Greek and dates to about 1000 C.E. It provides a clear witness to the abiding influence of the Septuagint among Jews in the medieval period.

Influence of the Septuagint in Christian Communities

We have already noted that the Christian Church adopted almost immediately the Greek Version of the Christian Old Testament. Breakdown in relations between Christians and Jews early on meant that the Christian Church was separated from the Semitic sources of its Scriptures as well as from the Jewish background against which they are properly understood. The only important leaders in the Christian Church who could in any measure read the Hebrew Text up to the time of the Renaissance and Reformation were Origen and Jerome.

Not only did the Apostles of the New Testament cite the Hebrew Scriptures from the Greek Version, but the Septuagint exercised a great influence on their grammar and vocabulary just as the King James Version influenced the jargon of Christians in the Twentieth Century. Sidney Jellicoe, a leading scholar of the Septuagint in the third quarter of the last century did not overstate when he claimed: "He who would read the NT must know *Koiné*; but he who would understand the NT must know the LXX" (emphasis original).¹¹ This can especially be seen in the writings of Luke, who in terms of text contributed more to the New Testament than Paul. For example, in the so-called "Parable of the Good Samaritan" (Luke 10) Jesus asks who was a neighbour to the man who

¹⁰ Peter J. Gentry, "The Greek Genizah Fragment of Ecclesiastes and its Relation to Earlier Greek Versions." In *Festschrift for John Lee*, edited by James K. Aitken and Trevor Evans. Forthcoming.

¹¹ Sidney Jellicoe, "Septuagint Studies in the Current Century," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 199.

fell among thieves. An expert in the Torah answers: “the one who did ‘mercy’ with him.” The expression is as strange in Greek as it is in English, but derives via the Septuagint from a Hebrew expression “do *hesed*” for performing acts which fulfill obligations of loyalty and love in a covenant relationship.

Concerning the use of the Septuagint in the Christian Church, Karen Jobes rightly states:

...it was the Greek OT, not the Hebrew, together with the Greek NT that was the Bible for much of the Christian church for fifteen hundred years—either directly in its Greek form or in one of the nine early translations made from the Greek into other languages, such as the Old Latin read by Augustine. In those first crucial four centuries of the church, it was primarily the Greek OT, not the Hebrew, over which the councils deliberated the great doctrines on which our Christian faith rests today. According to Pelikan, Origen was probably the first and perhaps the only ante-Nicene father to study Hebrew, and then only to verify and correct the Greek text used by the church.¹²

And Jaroslav Pelikan writes,

it seems safe to propose the generalization that, except for converts from Judaism, it was not until the biblical humanists and the Reformers of the sixteenth century that a knowledge of Hebrew became standard equipment for Christian expositors of the Old Testament. Most of Christian doctrine developed in a church *uninformed by any knowledge of the original text of the Hebrew Bible* [emphasis mine].¹³

John Sawyer concludes similarly:

Despite the efforts of a few Hebrew scholars down the ages and their claims to be concerned, like St Jerome, with the original Hebrew, it was the Greek Bible that has been most influential in

¹² Karen H. Jobes, “When God Spoke Greek: The Place of the Greek Bible in Evangelical Scholarship,” 221.

¹³ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. Vol. 1: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 21.

the history of Christianity and indirectly in the history of western culture.¹⁴

The Greek Bible continued as the central text in the Eastern Roman Empire and Byzantium until the Fifteenth Century. Moreover, the Bible of the Orthodox Church in Russia is derived from the Septuagint and the Orthodox Church maintained closer ties with Greece than Western Europe. Increasingly, in the West, the dominant language was Latin. Although Jerome produced a translation of the Bible in Latin directly from the Hebrew during the years 390-406, the Old Latin Translation made from the Septuagint continued to be used for a long time and was not quickly replaced by the Vulgate. Augustine mentioned in a letter to Jerome in 403 that a bishop in Oea (Tripoli) had caused a disturbance when he used Jerome's new version instead of the Old Latin.¹⁵ The word *cucurbita* for gourd in Hebrew (*qiqqayon*) had been replaced by *hedera* (ivy). When the lector read the text, the congregation shouted out that the correct word was *cucurbita*.

Augustine's intellectual influence in the West has been immense. Crucial to his epistemology in the area of philosophy is the statement "I believe that I might understand." This is derived from the Old Latin of Isaiah 7:9 where the translation is based on the Septuagint and this meaning cannot be derived from the Hebrew Text. This famous phrase from the Old Latin Bible continued to be quoted by Anselm, Abelard, and many others as the foundation of epistemology, an area of philosophy that is the foundation of many disciplines in the humanities and sciences.

The Old Latin persisted the longest in monasteries in Ireland. The influence of Irish Monks in the intellectual tradition in Europe is enormous, particularly through centres of learning like Lindisfarne in England, a daughter monastery of Iona established by Columba, and St. Gallen in Switzerland, founded by the Irish monk Gallus in the missionary movement beyond Ireland and England led by Columbanus.¹⁶ The humanities in the West, then, before 1500 owe much to the Greek Bible.

¹⁴ John F. A. Sawyer, *Sacred Languages and Sacred Texts* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), 94.

¹⁵ *Epist. Hieronymi* 104,5 and 112,22; *C.S.E.L.* 55 (ed. I. Hillberg), 241, 392, *PL* 22, 833 § 5, 903 § 22; *Comm. In Jonam Prophetam* 4,6; *PL* 25 1202C – 1204B.

¹⁶ See Kurt Aland, *A History of Christianity. Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to the Threshold of the Reformation* (trans. James L. Schaaf; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 238-242.

Influence of the Greek Bible in Particular

The second approach to demonstrate the main thesis, i.e. that the Greek Bible is the Great Code for the Humanities, is to consider individual disciplines in the humanities and illustrate in particular the bearing that the Greek Bible has on that discipline.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND THE HISTORY OF THE TEXT OF JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

The Septuagint is one of the earliest and most significant witnesses to the text of the Hebrew Bible. The oldest **complete** manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible date to c. 1000 C.E. The Greek Pentateuch was translated early in the Third Century B.C.E. To the extent that the translation can be used to determine the parent text from which it was translated, we have a much older testimony to the text of the Hebrew Bible. The parent text of the Septuagint would also pre-date the Dead Sea Scrolls and contains more important variants than the Dead Sea Scrolls as a textual witness.

When considering large-scale differences between various witnesses to the text, Emanuel Tov affirms:

The list of biblical Qumran texts attesting to early redactional stages different from MT LXX S T V is thus rather limited... Consequently, according to this understanding, in addition to MT, the LXX remains the major source for recognizing different literary stages (early and late) of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁷

Three examples are sufficient to show that sometimes the Masoretic Text is superior, and at other times, the parent text of the Greek Bible is superior.

¹⁷ Emanuel Tov, "The Nature of the Large-Scale Differences Between the LXX and MT S T V, Compared with Similar Evidence in Other Sources," in *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible: The Relationship between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuagint Reconsidered*, ed. Adrian Schenker (SCS 52; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2003), 137.

ZECH 1:21[2:4]

MT 1:21

וַיִּבְאוּ אֵלָהּ לְהַחֲרִיד אֹתָם

... לַיְדוֹת אֶת־קַרְנוֹת הַגּוֹיִם

LXX 2:4¹⁸καὶ εἰσῆλθον οὗτοι τοῦ ὄξϋναι
αὐτὰεἰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν τὰ τέσσαρα
κέρατα

And these came to terrify them
by casting down the horns of
the nations...

And these came to sharpen
them—the four horns—into
their hands.

The rendering in the LXX is based upon reading לְהַחֲרִיד from דַּד ‘be sharp’ and is due to the confusion easily made between *dalet* and *resh*. He also vocalised יָדַי ‘hands’ and supplied a possessive pronoun rather than the Piel Bound Infinitive of יָדַה that we find in MT. The number four is supplied from the context. The text offered by the LXX is obviously inferior and can be easily shown to be a secondary development from the text in MT by common errors in textual transmission. At the same time, it is clear that in reality it witnesses to the same text transmitted in MT and is not a witness to a different textual tradition.

Two examples are drawn from Isaiah, where Barthélemy and the Committee of the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project sponsored by the United Bible Societies propose that the parent text represented by the LXX is superior and the text of MT secondary. The first example is Isaiah 19:10. Verses 9 and 10 in MT and v. 10a in LXX provide the context, followed by the analysis of the committee designated by CTAT (*Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*). The sources for the relevant witnesses are cited last.

¹⁸ Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Duodecim Prophetae* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943, 1967).

ISA 19:10

MT

LXX¹⁹

[9] וּבִשּׁוּ עֲבָדַי פְּשִׁתִּים שְׂרִיקוֹת

וְאֲרָגִים חוֹרֵי:

[10] וְהָיוּ שְׂתֵתֶיהָ מְדַכְּאִים

καὶ ἔσονται οἱ διαζόμενοι
αὐτὰ ἐν ὀδύνη

כָּל-עֹשֵׂי שֶׁכֶר אֲגַמִּי-נַפֵּשׁ:

Those who work with combed
flax will despair,
as well as those who weave
white fabric;

And her foundations will be
dejected;

all her wage-earners are people
who are like murky pools.

And those weaving (set the
warp in the loom) them will be
in pain

CTAT: 19,10 cor שְׂתֵתֶיהָ [C] 1Q^a 4Q^b G T // assim Ps 11,3: M שְׂתֵתֶיהָ /
exeg: Th Aq(?) V / deform-int: g t / constr: S

MT

שְׂתֵתֶיהָ

1Q^a

שׁוֹתֵתִיהָ

1Q^b

שׁתֵתִיהָ

4Q^b

שׁוֹתֵתִיהָ

LXX

οἱ διαζόμενοι αὐτὰ

¹⁹ Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Isaias* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939, 1967).

Targ בֵּית־שְׁתֵּי מְחָא (ms Urbinates 1; 1st/2nd Rabbinic Bible)

The excellent analysis and discussion of Barthélemy in *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* and de Waard's *Handbook on Isaiah* need only be summarised here.²⁰ The rendering in the Septuagint is based upon a Hebrew Text in which the consonants are identical to our later Masoretic Text, but a different vocalisation is used: MT read *šātōtehā* (her foundations) while the Septuagint Translator read *šōt^ttehā* (those weaving it).

While the vocalisation of 1Q^b is unknown, the plene spelling of 1Q^a and 4Q^b clearly support the rendering in the LXX and Targum.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, LXX and Targum have preserved the original text at this point. The rarer verb שָׂתָה, 'to weave' is also the harder reading. The vocalisation behind the Dead Sea Scrolls, LXX and Targum was lost early. The renderings in the Syriac, Latin Vulgate, and Jewish Revisors are based on construing the form from the more commonly known root שָׂתָה, 'to drink'. The MT seems to have correlated the text with Ps 11:3, the only other occurrence of the noun שֵׁתָּה, 'foundation':

צַדִּיק מֵה־פָּעַל כִּי הִשְׁתֹּחַת יֵהְרֹסוּן

For the foundations are being demolished
What did/(will?) the righteous do?

Another example, taken from Isa 53:8, concerns the consonantal text and not just a difference in vocalisation. The relevant sources are cited followed by the summary analysis of CTAT:

ISA 53:8

MT מִפֶּשַׁע עַמִּי נִגַּע לְמוֹ

²⁰ Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 2, Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations. Rapport final du Comité pour l'analyse textuelle de l'Ancien Testament hébreu institué par l'Alliance Biblique Universelle, établi en coopération avec Alexander R. Hulst, Norbert Lohfink, William D. McHardy, H. Peter Rüger, coéditeur, James A. Sanders, coéditeur (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/2. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 139-141, and Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah* (Textual Criticism and the Translator 1; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 85-86.

1Q ^{a(c)}	מפּשע עמו נוגג למ'
1Q ^b	מפּשע עמו נגג למ'
4Q ^d	מפּשע עמו נוגג למ'
LXX	ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνομιῶν τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον ²¹
Aq	ἀπὸ ἀθεσίας λαοῦ μου ἤψατο αὐτῶν
Sym	διὰ τὴν ἀδικίαν τοῦ λαοῦ μου πληγὴ αὐτοῖς
Theod	ἀπὸ ἀθεσίας τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἤψατο αὐτῶν
MT	because of the transgression of my people, the blow was <u>his/theirs</u>
LXX	because of the sins of my people he was led <u>to death</u>

CTAT: 53,8B cor תּוֹמָהְ נַגַּג [C] G // err-graph: 1Q^a(corr) מ' נוגג →
 harm-int: M 1Q^b 4Q^d Sym; מ' נַגַּג, ThAq V S T: clav מ' נַגַּג / lacun:
 1Q^{a*}

למות	lammāwet	to death
לם	lāmô	to them / to him?

The best handling of the problem is by Barthélemy in *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*.²² It seems that the parent text of the

²¹ The text of the LXX as well as those of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion are all cited from Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Isaias* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum, 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939, 1967).

²² Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 2, Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations. Rapport final du Comité pour l'analyse textuelle de l'Ancien Testament hébreu institué par l'Alliance Biblique Universelle, établi en coopération avec Alexander R. Hulst, Norbert Lohfink, William D. McHardy, H. Peter Rüger, coéditeur, James A. Sanders, coéditeur (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/2. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 397-399, and Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah* (Textual Criticism and the Translator 1; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 194-195.

Septuagint Translator had לָמוֹת, i.e. “to death.” The *taw* was lost by accidental mutilation at the end of the line. The translator also read a passive form of the verb as is also attested by the corrector of 1Q^a. Once the *taw* was lost, the remaining letters were read in the Masoretic Text as *lāmô* and the consonants for the verb vocalised as a noun: “the blow was to them.” This text is problematic since evidence is slim to show that the suffix can mean “to him” as many modern scholars interpret the text. Thus, while not all critics are persuaded,²³ the difference in LXX is probably due to a different Hebrew parent text which preserves the original reading.

Differences, therefore, between the LXX and other witnesses to the text which are genuine textual variants should be evaluated on a case by case basis and one should not prefer *a priori* either the LXX or the MT.

HEBREW AND SEMITIC LANGUAGES

The Septuagint plays an important role in investigation of the history of Hebrew in all aspects of the language: accent system, phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicology.

History of Accents in Hebrew

The Masoretic Text of the Jewish/Hebrew Scriptures records not only consonants and vowels but also an accent system. The accents mark stressed syllables and show how the text was chanted in the synagogue. They can also show a syntactic understanding of the text when different options are possible. A number of biblical texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls use spaces between words that correspond to the later division of the text into verses and in some instances, also division of verses into smaller sense units as marked by the accent system. Most manuscripts from the Dead Sea Scrolls use spaces only for word division. Some of the earliest manuscripts of the Septuagint, however,

²³ Ekblad acknowledges the possibility that the parent text of the LXX had לָמוֹת, but argues that since neither ἡχθη nor any form of ἄγω matches עג anywhere in the LXX, the Greek translator may have mistaken עג as the perfect of נה. This is not probable either as an error of hearing or sight and overlooks the fact that the rendering in v. 9 is inspired by that in v. 7. See Eugene Robert Ekblad, Jr., *Isaiah's Servant Poems According to the Septuagint: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 235-36 and nn. 278-279.

have spaces between words which correspond not only to the division into verses, but also into smaller units as specified by the accent system.²⁴ I mention Papyrus Fouad inv. 266 from Egypt and dating to 50 B.C.E. This manuscript of Deuteronomy employs spaces in the Greek Text that correspond to the so-called closed and open sections and paragraphs marked by the Masoretes. Even more significant is John Rylands Papyrus 458 in Manchester, England dating to the Second Century B.C.E. This papyrus contains fragments of Deuteronomy 23-28. It employs spaces that correspond precisely to the phrase division within verses indicated by the accent system in Hebrew. It is, therefore, manuscripts of the Septuagint that provide the oldest evidence for the accent system in Hebrew.

Historical Phonology and Polyphony

From the Tenth Century B.C.E. to the Fifth Century B.C.E. Hebrew was written using the Canaanite or Phoenician script. From around the Fifth Century B.C.E. onwards, the Assyrian or Aramaic Square script was used. These scripts attempt to represent the spoken form of the language using approximately 22 symbols. A question in the history of phonology is this: did any cases exist where a symbol represented more than one sound? The best evidence for this question lies in the Greek Pentateuch, the Septuagint in the narrowest sense of the term. When the Torah or Pentateuch was translated into Greek, names as a general rule were transliterated rather than translated, that is, they were represented letter for letter by using letters of the Greek Alphabet for letters of the Hebrew Alphabet. A consistent approach to transliteration used by the translators allows us to gain insight into the sounds represented by the writing system. The cases of *heth* and *'ayin* are instructive.²⁵

When Classical Hebrew is taught today, normally the symbol *heth* is described to represent a voiceless uvular fricative or spirant—a consonant produced by restricting the back of the mouth before the uvula to a hole so small that friction results as the air passes through.

²⁴ See E. J. Revell, "The Oldest Evidence for the Hebrew Accent System," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 54 (1971): 214-222.

²⁵ J. Blau, *On Polyphony in Biblical Hebrew* (Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Proceedings Vol. 6, No. 2; Jerusalem: Ahva Press, 1982) and J. W. Wevers, "Heth in Classical Hebrew," in *Essays on the Ancient Semitic World* edited by J. W. Wevers and D. B. Redford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 101-112.

The sound is comparable to the 'ch' in the German word *Bach*. Nonetheless, names normally spelled with the letter *heth* in the later Masoretic Text are spelled either by Greek χ or by zero:

חֶשְׁבֹן > Εσεβων

hešbôn > *Esebôn*

חָרָן > Χαρραν

haran > *Charran*

Although debated at first, scholars appear satisfied that this shows that two different sounds inherited by Hebrew from Proto-Semitic were consistently being represented by the one symbol. One was a voiceless uvular fricative and the other was a voiceless pharyngeal fricative.

Another example is the symbol 'ayin normally described in grammars of Hebrew as representing a voiced pharyngeal. Again consistent patterns in the transliteration of names in the Greek Pentateuch show this symbol sometimes spelled with a Greek γ or with a vowel or zero:

בַּלְעָם > Βαλααμ

bil'am > *Balaam*

עֲמֹרָה > Γομορρας

'amorâ > *gomorras*

Once more, scholars have concluded that in one case the symbol represented a voiced pharyngeal and at other times a voiced uvular. The latter sound is represented by a separate symbol in Arabic and Ugaritic called a *ğayin*. The one symbol represented two separate sounds which were preserved in speech at the time of the translation of the Greek Pentateuch. What is interesting is that these distinctions in the transliteration of names in the Greek Pentateuch are not maintained in

the transliteration of names in the books of the Former Prophets and Writings made no doubt about a hundred years later. This demonstrates that the distinctions between voiced uvular and pharyngeal and between voiceless uvular and pharyngeal were lost among native speakers around this time. Thus for questions of historical phonology, the Greek Bible is actually an important source for issues that cannot be resolved from the evidence of the Hebrew Bible since the Masoretic Text is later.

Historical Morphology

Also relevant to the history of the Hebrew language is Origen's Hexapla. Sometime around 240 a church father named Origen prepared an edition of the Christian Old Testament in six columns. Although debated, scholars generally believe the First Column contained the Hebrew Text and the Second Column a transliteration in Greek of the Hebrew Text. The Second Column would have aided the reading of the First Column since vocalisation of the text was not yet recorded as in the later Masoretic Tradition. Column Five contained the Septuagint, the earliest Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures, and columns Three, Four and Six offered Jewish revisions of the original Greek Translation attributed to Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. This project stretched the nascent development of the codex and may have required as many as forty codices of 400 folios each.²⁶

Origen's massive work did not survive except in copies of which only fragments are extant today. The remains of the Second Column are of particular interest for the history of the Hebrew language. As an illustration we may consider the development of a type of noun called Segholate Nouns. These are nouns of two syllables, always accented on the first syllable, and both syllables usually a short 'e' as in bed. Grammarians diagram the development of such nouns as follows when the main vowel is originally 'a':

CaCCu >	CaCC >	CáCeC >	CéCeC
---------	--------	---------	-------

In the earliest stage, the nouns had the structure consonant, vowel, consonant, consonant, 'u'. Later, a change occurred in patterns of stress in the language and final short vowels were lost leading to a syllable

²⁶ See Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 105.

ending in two consonants. This problem was later alleviated by introducing an anaptyctic or helping vowel, a seghol or short 'e'. Finally, the first vowel was assimilated to the helping vowel. The last stage is what we find in the Masoretic Text. The second stage is what we find in the fragments of Origen's Hexapla:²⁷

Spelling in Masoretic Text	Spelling in Second Column
'éres (אָרֶס)	ars αρς
géber (גַּבְר)	gabr γαβρ

Thus the textual tradition of the Septuagint is critical for determining the history of morphology in Classical Hebrew.

SEMANTIC HISTORY

The Greek Bible also contains data relevant for the history of the meaning of certain words in Hebrew. Sometimes the equivalents for Hebrew words are not based on their meaning in Standard Biblical Hebrew but rather their meaning in Post-biblical Hebrew or Aramaic.

Interpretation Based on Meaning in Post-Biblical Hebrew or Aramaic

EXOD 12:22

MT

וּלְקַחְתֶּם אֶגְדַּת אֲזִיב

וּטְבַלְתֶּם בְּדָם אֶשֶׁר־בַּסֶּף

LXX²⁸

λήμψεσθε δὲ δεσμὴν ὑσσώπου

καὶ βάψαντες ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ
παρὰ τὴν θύραν

²⁷ E. Brønno, *Studien Über Hebräische Morphologie und Vokalismus* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1943), 125.

²⁸ John Wm. Wevers, ed., *Exodus* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum, 2.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991).

וְהִגַּדְתָּם אֶל-הַמַּשְׁקוּף

καὶ θίξετε τῆς φλιᾶς

וְאֶל-שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת מִן-הַדֶּרֶם

καὶ ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρων τῶν σταθμῶν
ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος, ὃ ἐστὶν παρὰ τὴν
θύραν·

וְאֶשְׁרָבָה

And you shall take a bunch of
hyssopand dip [it] in the blood in the
basin

and touch [it] to the lintel

and to the two door-posts from
the blood in the basin.

And you shall take a bundle of hyssop

and dipping from the blood beside
the door

and you shall touch the lintel

and on both door-posts from the
blood which is beside the door.

Hebrew has homonymous nouns וְסָ = 'basin' and וְסָ = 'sill, threshold'.²⁹ Akkadian has both nouns, too, but not in homonymous form.³⁰ Aramaic, however, only has וְסָ = 'sill, threshold', while Phoenician only has וְסָ = 'basin'.³¹ Only the Aramaic noun was known to the Exodus Translator, and guided by the context, he made the best sense he could with that meaning. Nonetheless, the point is that the Greek testifies to the same parent text as in MT.

Jan Joosten's excellent work on Aramaising renderings in the LXX reveals that several issues may be involved at the same time. Consider the following examples:³²

²⁹ L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (trans. M. E. J. Richardson, 5 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994-2000), s.v. I וְסָ and II וְסָ.

³⁰ In Akkadian *s/šappu(m)* is 'basin' and *sippu(m)* is 'doorpost', see W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965-1985), 1027, 1049, 1175.

³¹ See J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the Northwest Semitic Inscriptions* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 796-797 and Charles R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 347.

³² Drawn from Jan Joosten, "On Aramaising Renderings in the Septuagint," in *Hamlet on a Hill: Semitic and Greek Studies Presented to Professor*

JER 31[38]:13

MT - Jer 31:13

LXX - Jer 38:13³³

אָז תִּשְׂמַח בְּתוֹלָהּ בְּמַחֲוֹל

τότε χαρήσονται
παρθένοι ἐν συναγωγῇ
νεανίσκων,

וּבְחָרִים וּזְקֵנִים יִהְיוּ

καὶ πρεσβῦται
χαρήσονται.

Then maidens will rejoice with
dancing,
and young and old men together.

The virgins will rejoice
in the gathering of
young men,
and old men will
rejoice.

Joosten notes that the Greek translation reflects a 3 m. pl. of the Aramaic verb חדה “to rejoice” instead of the adverb יְהִי ‘together’ in MT.³⁴ Exegetes debate whether the rendering in the Septuagint reflects the intended meaning of the Hebrew text or diverges from it. Joosten points out that the idiomatic use of the adverb ‘together’ fits usage elsewhere in Jeremiah.³⁵ We do not need, however, to resolve the debate to see that the Greek translator had the same consonantal text as is preserved in MT. The issue of different vocalisation will be taken up shortly.

T. Muraoka on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday, eds. M. F. J. Baasten and W. Th. Van Peursen (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 587-600.

³³ Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Ieremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Ieremiae* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957, 1976).

³⁴ Jan Joosten, “On Aramaising Renderings in the Septuagint,” 589.

³⁵ E.g. Jer 13:14 and cf. 6:12, 21; 31:8; 48:7(Q); 49:3. See Jan Joosten, “On Aramaising Renderings in the Septuagint,” 589-590 and n. 11.

PS 60[59]:10

MT - Ps 60:10

מוֹאֵב סִיר רְחִיצִי

LXX - Ps 59:10³⁶

Μωαβ λέβης τῆς ἐλπίδος μου

Moab is my washbasinMoab is the cauldron of my hope

The Hebrew root רָחַץ 'to wash' is correctly rendered by *νίπτομαι* in Ps 26[25]:6, 58[57]:11 and 73[72]:13. Here in Ps 60 the rendering by *ἐλπίς* 'hope' is based on the Aramaic meaning of this root.³⁷ In 1912 M. Flashar argued that the Greek translation was based on theological considerations since the translator hesitated to speak of God as having a washbasin.³⁸ Thus the Greek is based on the same Hebrew text that we have in MT, but the apparent divergence is based both on Aramaic influence as well as exegetical issues.³⁹

Translation Reflecting Interpretive Traditions

The rendering in Psalm 60 is explained not only by factors in the lexical and semantic history of the Hebrew Language but also by exegetical issues. Since all translation involves interpretation, the Greek Bible is, in effect, the earliest commentary on the Hebrew Text. What kind of interpretive tradition or traditions are reflected in the Greek Translation?

Translation Reflecting Early Rabbinic Interpretation

This question leads to the next point. Since the Septuagint was produced during the time of Second Temple Judaism, it represents a

³⁶ Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Psalmi cum Odis* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931, 1967).

³⁷ See M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 2nd ed. (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2002), s.v. רָחַץ. The observation was also noted in Franz Wutz, *Die Transkriptionen von der Septuaginta bis zu Hieronymus* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), 151.

³⁸ M. Flashar, "Exegetische Studien zum Septuagintapsalter," *ZAW* 32 (1912): 241-268, esp. 251.

³⁹ See also Jan Joosten, "The Septuagint as a Source of Information on Egyptian Aramaic in the Hellenistic Period," in *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting* edited by Holger Gzella and Margaretha L. Folmer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 93-105.

key witness to the thought and worldview of Second Temple Judaism. A major problem in using sources like the Aramaic Targums or Jewish sources like the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Midrashim to determine the character and nature of early Judaism is that one cannot frequently distinguish materials that represent the situation before the Fall of Jerusalem when Judaism was variegated from those after the Fall of Jerusalem when one sect within Judaism dominated and formed the origins of rabbinic Judaism. Yet it is possible at times to connect interpretive renderings in the Greek Bible with later rabbinic tradition and show earlier stages of this rabbinic tradition.

MIC 5:[6]7

MT - Mic 5:7

בִּטְל מֵאֵת יְהוָה

בְּרִבִּיּוֹת עַל־עֵשֶׂב

As dew from the Lord,
as showers upon the grass

LXX – Mic 5:6

ὡς δρόσος παρὰ κυρίου πίπτουσα

καὶ ὡς ἄρνες ἐπὶ ἄγρωστί

As dew falling from the Lord
and as lambs upon the field grass

Although at first glance the rendering of רִבִּיּוֹת by ἄρνες seems to indicate a possible divergence between the parent text of LXX and MT, again, in certain dialects of Palestine at a later time רִבִּי had the meaning 'lamb'.⁴⁰ We are certain, then, that the parent text of LXX is the same as that represented by MT. Yet what motivated this translation? The language of Mic 5:6 immediately recalls that of Deut 32:2:

יְעַרְף כַּמָּטָר לְקַחֵי תֵל בִּטְל אִמְרָתִי: MT:

בְּשִׁעְרֵם עַל־דָּשָׂא וְכִרְבִּיּוֹת עַל־עֵשֶׂב

May my teaching drop like the rain;

may my speech drip like the dew,

⁴⁰ See F. Schulthess, *Lexicon Syropalaestinum* (Berlin, 1903), 188.

Like drizzle upon the vegetation,

like showers upon the grass.

As Jan Joosten has shown,⁴¹ an early interpretation of Deut 32:2 preserved in *Sifre Deuteronomy* (Pisqa 306)⁴² and also the Samaritan Targum construes רביבים as lambs. By way of illustration, the Samaritan Targum reads:

כצפירים עלוי יאר וכטלין עלוי עסב⁴³

like goats upon the verdure and like lambs upon the grass⁴⁴

Thus the rendering of LXX in Micah 5:6 is an Aramaising rendering, but one that is based upon an intertextual link or what might be called the midrashic principle of *Gezerah shawah*.⁴⁵ Many apparent divergences between the LXX and MT are, in fact, interpretive renderings based on

⁴¹ Jan Joosten, "L'Ondée et les Moutons: La Septante de Michée 5,6 et l'Exégèse Juive Traditionnelle, *Revue des études juives* 162 (2003): 357-363.

⁴² Joosten cites *Sifre on Deuteronomy* as follows:

כשעירים עלי דשא — כשאדם הולך ללמוד תורה תחילה אינו יודע מה לעשות

והיא קשה עליו כשעיר עד ששונה שני ספרים או שני סדרים ואחר כך נמשכת

ועב (Jan Joosten, "L'Ondée et les

Moutons," 362). It should be noted that the words עליו כשעיר are relegated to the apparatus in the edition of Finkelstein, see L. Finkelstein, *Sifre on Deuteronomy* (Berlin, 1939; reprint, New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2001), 339. On this text, R. Hammer notes, "This homily is best read as a continuation of the one above. It refers to both parts of the verse and interprets *šā'ir* as a demon, and *raḥīb* as a pet animal: when you begin to study, Torah is so difficult that it attacks you like a demon; after you learn a little, it becomes as tame as a pet ewe that follows after you" (Reuven Hammer, *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy* (New Haven: Yale, 1986), 492, n. 41). ā. ś.

⁴³ Cited according to A. Tal, *The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch*, Part II (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1981). The reading וכטלין is based upon MS E for which MS J has וכטביים and MS V' has וכרביבין. English translation is mine.

⁴⁴ Translation mine.

⁴⁵ On *Gezerah shawah* see David Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 30; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 17-18.

intertextual links and do not provide support for a different Hebrew parent text.

Linguistics: Bilingualism and Translation Theory

Within the field of linguistics, areas impacted by the Greek Bible in particular are bilingualism and translation theory. The Septuagint is probably the earliest known large-scale translation. A recent exploration is a monograph by Alexis Léonas, *L'Aube des Traducteurs*.⁴⁶ An area of linguistics has been pioneered especially by Gideon Toury called Descriptive Translation Studies. This is briefly summarised by A. Pietersma as follows:

According to Toury, all translations are facts of their respective recipient cultures and as such can best be studied by a target-oriented approach. That is to say, not only are they called into being by a felt need in a specific cultural environment, but, as such, they are intrinsically endowed with three inter-dependent aspects designed to meet the cultural need that evoked them. Translators can thus be said to be working in the interest of the target culture regardless of what kind of product they produce. The (logically) first of the three inter-dependent aspects or foci that Toury identifies he labels “function,” by which he has in mind not so much the actual use to which a translation is put, but rather the systemic slot it is designed to fill within the recipient culture or subculture. That is to say: what sort of text is it, and to what extent does it cater to the norms of the target system and is thus “acceptable” to its host culture? Is it “acceptable,” for example, as a literary or a non-literary production? Is it seen to be a philosophical text or a non-philosophical text, a text in prose or in poetry, romance or history, designed to function bilingually or monolingually? In short, “function” (or “position”) signifies a translation’s cultural slot and the prospective use for which it has been designed...

The second aspect Toury calls “product,” by which he means the textual linguistic makeup of the translated text, that is to say, the network of relationships introduced by the translator; in other words, what is studied in discourse analysis.

⁴⁶ Alexis Léonas, *L'Aube des Traducteurs. De l'hébreu au grec: traducteurs et lecteurs de la Bible des Septante (III^e s. av. J.-C. – IV^e s. apr. J.-C.)* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007).

Concretely, one may think here of the target text as a cultural entity.

The third aspect Toury terms “process,” that is to say, the strategies by which a translation is derived from its source text. Consequently, it includes the relationships that hold the target text and the source text together. Here Septuagintalists might think of “translation technique” since its focus, as noted above, is precisely that of target-source equation and hence the process by which the target text is derived from its source.⁴⁷

Apart from *The Letter of Aristeas* almost no propaganda has survived about the translations. We must develop and utilise approaches like Descriptive Translation Studies to determine the function of the translations, the intended meaning of the translators, and assess the reception history of the translations. Such studies on the body of translations known as the Septuagint reveal and uncover a debate amongst different groups in Second Temple Judaism. Results affect not only linguistics and translation theory but also as sociological analysis of competing cultural heritages. This is highly instructive for our society. During the last fifty years, various groups in North America have had heated debates over modern translations of the Bible and are engaged in culture wars. One calls to mind the famous line from George Santayana: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Most of these debates over approaches to translation as well as the associated culture wars repeat much of what occurred in the Second and First Centuries B.C.E. with no knowledge of the role of the Greek Bible.

One case in the culture war between faithfulness to the Jewish Heritage and the advance of Hellenistic Culture that is ironic is 2 Maccabees. In terms of the history of the Greek Language, this is one of the finest examples of Atticistic Reaction to the Koiné, yet the author would want to side with those faithful to the Jewish Tradition unsullied by advocates of Hellenism.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Albert Pietersma, “LXX and DTS: A New Archimedean Point for Septuagint Studies?” *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 39 (2006): 9.

⁴⁸ Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (London and New York: Longman, 1997), 51.

Classics

Classical Studies may also benefit from the Greek Bible. The texts included in the Septuagint and the New Testament form a huge portion of the extant literature in Greek from the Hellenistic Period. Although some work has been done on grammar and lexicography for the Septuagint, an accurate assessment must await the completion of critical and reliable editions. Nonetheless, this body of texts is critical for description of developments in phonology, morphology, syntax and discourse grammar from the end of the Classical Period to the beginning of the Byzantine Period. In order to describe where the trajectory of developments in Classical Greek are going one must be able to see clearly where they went. Only then can one spot a *Tendenz* in the early process of change towards the end of the Classical Period. As one example, the diminutive is on the rise in the Hellenistic Period. This may affect how one assesses its semantic value in the late Classical Period.

History

Historians might argue that events in a minor province in the Roman Empire or Hellenistic World such as Palestine had little significance for the larger world. Nonetheless, the events there from 250 B.C.E. — 150 C.E. shaped both Jews and Christians and through them the disciplines of the humanities were given their foundations and direction. The major source for this historically, and in philosophic and religious terms is the Greek Bible, and in particular, the Septuagint.⁴⁹

Literature

Ben Edwin Perry, in his important work on *The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of Their Origins*, describes the importance of the novel in literature and the forerunners to it in the Greek and Roman world as follows:

⁴⁹ A standard work is Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Atheneum, 1975). Strangely, François Chamoux, *Hellenistic Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1981, 2003), only refers once to the Septuagint.

Today the novel is well recognized as a literary form and so familiar as such, in spite of its many varieties and the many uses to which it is put, that no one is likely to confuse it with other genres. It has become the principal medium of literary expression, enlisting in its service as practitioners authors from the lowest to the highest. It has come to include every kind of entertainment or interpretation of society and human experience, ranging from what is profoundly philosophic or sublimely poetic to what is inane, vulgar, or merely sensational, thereby embracing what, in earlier and more disciplined ages, would normally have been cast into such various literary forms as tragedy, comedy, and mime, history, biography, epic, essay, satire, dialogue, elegy, etc., or circulated orally for amusement with no pretense to being art and therefore never written down. But this epic-like universality of the novel is something relatively new in the Western world—in a strict sense, no older than Balzac. In Graeco-Roman antiquity, on the other hand, as also in the time of Shakespeare, what we call novels or romances were far more restricted in the range of their substance, quality and pretension than they are today.⁵⁰

Perry was breaking ground to analyse the ancient novellae and romances and discuss these as precursors to the modern novel. From the deuterocanonical works, Judith and Tobit are fine examples of this genre. They were popular reading among both Jews and Christians and have had some influence on the development of the novel.

CONCLUSION

We have considered both in general terms and in a few of the particulars how the Greek Bible has a bearing on the humanities studied in the university today. Much more is involved than just the study of the Bible or the study of Greek. The Greek Bible has a bearing on the foundations of many disciplines and may justify the title of the "Great Code" as study of the Greek Bible is necessary to understand and advance other areas of study.

⁵⁰ Ben Edwin Perry, *The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of Their Origins* (Sather Classical Lectures 37; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 4.

truth of the gospel is not only announced from without but also confirmed from within. In the theology presented here both revelation and salvation have to be understood as objective-subjective rather than fundamentally objective (as in evangelical rationalism) or predominantly subjective (as in existentialism and mysticism)."¹

Here Bloesch is staking out his basic methodological commitment and declaring how it will play itself out especially in the way theology walks into the knowledge of God. But notice that he does so by defining the character of soteriology: it is "*salvation*" which must "be understood as objective-subjective." Salvation, in other words, has to be described in a way that rejects false dichotomies, and does so even at the cost of resorting to the language of paradox: it is simultaneously objective and subjective, or, as Bloesch often prefers, one single complex hyphenated reality: objective-subjective.

Bloesch's writing is full of paradox: his standard mode of operating is to survey a situation, identify the crippling and unnecessary dichotomies that bedevil the topic, and then to demand that those extremes be reconciled by being held together. If necessary, these extremes can be held together by sheer fiat and force of will, but more often he pushes through to achieve a conceptual demonstration of the underlying unity that in fact holds them together. As we stroll through Bloesch's *Foundations*, we see this apparent paradox motif in almost every part of the landscape. I think, however, that we are not seeing merely a formal similarity that is traceable to a habit of thought: a tendency to identify and overcome dichotomies everywhere, and identify erroneous positions to the left and the right. Instead, I believe that throughout his project, Bloesch is tracking down the one central paradox of Christian soteriology, the single reality which we encounter in a polarity as objective-subjective salvation, salvation by Word and Spirit. This soteriological paradox is fruitful, and brings forth the other paradoxes.

In the opening pages of his *Christology* volume, Bloesch recapitulates the methodological commitments of his project, using identical terminology and then applying it more directly to the Christian life:

¹ Donald Bloesch, *A Theology of Word and Spirit: Authority and Method in Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 14-15.

The aim of my *Christian Foundations* series is to set forth a theology of Word and Spirit, which seeks to do justice to both the objective and subjective poles of revelation and salvation. A theology of Word and Spirit will be at the same time a theology of the Christian life, since the truth revealed in the Bible must be appropriated through the power of the Spirit in a life of obedience and piety. While I affirm the pivotal role of the Christian life I am calling not for a new form of the imitation of Christ but instead for a deepening recognition that the risen Christ lives within us, empowering us to realize our divinely given vocation under the cross. The Christian life is not simply the fruit and consequence of a past salvation accomplished in the cross and resurrection of Christ but the arena in which Christ's salvation is carried forward to fulfillment by his Spirit. The Pauline and Reformation doctrine of salvation by free grace must be united with the call to holiness and discipleship, a theme found in Catholic mysticism and Protestant Pietism."²

Salvation is a complex unified reality that pulls in two directions at once: the theologian wants to say that it is a finished work then and there, but also that it is a present reality here and now. Salvation "then and there" means objectively for us in Christ; but salvation "here and now" means subjectively in us by the Spirit. Both must be true, and true in a way that doesn't allow one to surreptitiously conjure away the reality of the other. From that position, Bloesch is able to affirm the way that various traditions have given especially clear witness to one side or another of the polarity: Reformation teaching on justification by free grace brings out the then and there accomplishment of salvation, but mystic and Pietist emphasis on holiness and discipleship keep the here and now of salvation before our eyes.

The question of what is held "before our eyes," or kept at the center of our theological attention, may be the key to understanding soteriology in Bloesch's project. Bloesch is committed to theology as disciplined reflection on a given, a datum, a concrete complex reality which God has set before us, has set us down in the middle of, and fidelity to which is the sole determinant of whether we have a chance of saying the right thing as theologians. Abstracting away from that reality may be a necessary exercise for conceptual clarification in particular thought projects, but the theologian must always return from

² Bloesch, *Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 11.

these carefully delimited exercises in abstraction to the thing itself in its situation in actuality. Keeping the actual thing before the eyes of our contemplation is the main thing. This commitment shows up repeatedly in the topics that make up soteriology. For example, in the doctrine of sin, or “the plight of humanity,” Bloesch avoids describing or defining humanity’s plight in advance, instead demanding that “the knowledge of sin is included in the knowledge of faith. We do not have any reliable knowledge of our sin apart from God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ.”³ Bloesch is aware that many, especially many Lutherans, disagree, but he sees his theological task as starting from the actual knowledge of sin, which comes to us bundled together with knowledge of grace, and only by an act of abstraction can be considered in itself.

Similarly, Bloesch weighs the merits and challenges of Christological approaches from above and from below, and opts for what he calls tellingly “Christology from the center.”⁴ The whole problem of the other approaches is that it makes no sense to start with the human Jesus and work your way up, or to start with the divine person and work your way down. Bloesch has a high Christology, affirms Chalcedon, and defends the pre-existence of Christ, but he does not consider this as giving him a license to start his reflection with the unincarnate Word and then consider its enfleshment as a problem to be solved. He counsels that christology is not reflection on the “abstract concept of God or Christ removed from history nor ... the historical man Jesus. Instead my point of departure is the paradox of God himself entering world history at a particular place and time, in a particular historical figure – Jesus of Nazareth. I wish to begin with the Word made flesh rather than with the preexistent Logos or with the historical Jesus.”⁵

Again, turning from the doctrine of the person of Christ to the work of Christ, Bloesch wants to keep the actual atonement, the one Christians have experienced their salvation through, in its objective-subjective polarity, at the center of theological reflection. That the atonement is objective is obvious and uncontroversial for anybody operating with a remotely traditional theology of the atonement: the sacrificial death of Christ on the cross is obviously a “then and there” event in the history of Jesus Christ. Using a variety of formulations, Bloesch tries to indicate how the atonement itself also has a subjective side: it echoes in the experience of the faithful. In Bloesch’s words: “The

³ Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 47.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 70.

atonement is an objective sacrifice that reverberates throughout history in the lives of those who trust in this sacrifice for their redemption. It includes both God's atoning work for us in the life history of Jesus Christ and the faith of the human subject in this work."⁶ However, this is not simply the traditional Reformed approach of "redemption accomplished and applied." It is not atonement then and there, reception of it here and now. Rather, Bloesch expands the parameters marked out by the term "atonement" so that it includes both the objective sacrifice and its reverberation in later lives: the two together are atonement. This must be the case, for what good would be an atonement that saved nobody? And the historical objective sacrifice divorced from its later reverberations would not be salvation for anyone you have ever met, not even the theologian attempting to render an account of salvation.

As Bloesch circles around this reality of atonement, he tries to describe its nature as something that is in itself both accomplished and experienced, and the tension of doing justice to its then-and-there character and simultaneously its here-and-now character becomes heightened. Finally he has to posit that there are two subjective poles of the atonement: Jesus Christ and the Christian life. He distinguishes the senses, however:

In one sense Jesus Christ himself is the subjective side. Jesus as our representative appropriates the salvation of God on our behalf. Yet salvation remains incomplete until we ourselves participate in Christ's appropriation. The experience of faith constitutes the subjective side of salvation. The Christian life can also be said to comprise the subjective pole of the atonement. Jesus' life and obedience are the ground of our salvation, but our lives and obedience are the fruit and culmination of Christ's work of salvation.⁷

In other words, the objective sacrifice on the cross becomes ours in two ways: first of all, it is always already ours in the sense that it was for us and our salvation that Christ as our representative went to the cross. "Jesus...appropriates salvation of God on our behalf." Second, it becomes ours when we participate, not in the sacrifice, but in Christ's appropriation of that sacrifice for us. In this formulation, we do not make the death and resurrection of Christ our own; Jesus the

⁶ Ibid., 162.

⁷ Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 163.

representative makes them our own and we participate in the own-making.

Ever alert to the danger of a misplaced emphasis, Bloesch is self-critical and worries later that he has himself run the risk of a false emphasis:

The Christian life is not simply a byproduct but a concrete sign and witness of Christ's passion and victory in his struggle against the powers of darkness. But it is more than that: it is the arena in which the implications of our salvation are unfolded as we strive to appropriate the fruits of Christ's cross and resurrection victory. In my early writings I sometimes gave the impression that the Christian life is a contributory agent in the effecting of our salvation. I would now contend that our works of obedience mirror and proclaim Christ's work of obedience unto death, but they do not render his death and resurrection efficacious.⁸

Expanding the very definition of atonement to include also its effects is a dangerous move. The chief danger is that the effects of the atonement, my salvation and Christian life, might now count toward constituting the work of salvation. This conclusion Bloesch denies, understandably: this whole objective-subjective whirligig is a long way to travel if the goal you arrive at turns out to be just salvation by works of righteousness. Bloesch insists on an order, a structured sequence within the manifold reality. The atonement and its effects must be held together, but the effects (salvation and the Christian life) are downstream from the objective event: they answer, or echo, or reflect, or witness to, or proclaim the cross and resurrection.

It seems that Bloesch would be comfortable with the traditional "redemption accomplished and redemption applied" schema of Reformed theology, and he repeatedly uses similar terminology. He often quotes and has clearly reflected deeply on Calvin's classic transition to the third book of the *Institutes*:

First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains

⁸"Donald Bloesch Responds," in *Evangelical Theology in Transition: Theologians in Dialogue with Donald Bloesch* (ed. Elmer M. Colyer; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 200.

useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us.⁹

The objective-subjective soteriology of *Christian Foundations* is a variation on this theme. The fact that Bloesch is concerned about the specter of an atonement that has no effect also puts him in the lineage of the Reformed tradition, the tradition that asks and answers difficult questions about the scope of the atonement. If the atonement is intrinsically effective and necessarily saves all for whom it is intended, then we must affirm either a limited atonement or universalism. Bloesch asks and answers this question as well, which marks him as comfortable in the Reformed tradition, though his answer is not calculated to make his Westminster cousins happy at the family reunion. Because of his commitment to keeping the unabstracted reality of experienced salvation at the center of his reflection, he continually fiddles with the accomplished-applied schema, finding objective-subjective polarities within each side of the accomplishment and application of atonement.

It may not always be clear to the reader which element Bloesch intends to emphasize, because often his whole point is to secure the complex reality of objective-subjective accomplished-applied salvation by Word and Spirit without emphasis or distortion. But when confronted by a tendency toward imbalance, Bloesch immediately goes to the armory and brings out weapons. He sees pietistic subjectivism as a major threat, and "it is dangerously misguided," he warns,

to contend that the real salvation is only what happens in us. The real salvation happened in Jesus Christ for us and happens in us through faith. Our salvation is effected not only through the death of Christ on the cross but also through the application of the benefits of his death by the Spirit of the risen Christ. The descent of God to humanity and humanity's ascent to God through faith and the life of obedience must be held together in paradoxical tension.¹⁰

Bloesch sees the subjectivist temptation as taking several forms: mystical-pietist subjectivism, existentialist subjectivism, and ethical-humanist subjectivism, all of which give total priority to Christ in me

⁹ John Calvin, *Institutes*, Book III, chapter 1.

¹⁰ Bloesch, *Jesus Christ*, 163.

over Christ for me. The objectivist temptation, on the other hand, appears in the forms of sacramentalist objectivism and predestinarian objectivism. It also appears in a kind of Barthian christological objectivism, which has always been Bloesch's major complaint against Barth's soteriology. In 1976, when the standard evangelical misunderstanding of Barth was that his doctrine of the word left him mired in existentialist subjectivism,¹¹ Bloesch published a book arguing that Barth, at least in soteriology, was too objectivistic to do justice to biblical salvation.¹² In Bloesch's judgment, "Where Barth's soteriology stands in most obvious tension with that of historical evangelical orthodoxy is in its objectivism,"¹³ and "The paradox of salvation is ever again sundered in his emphasis on the objective to the detriment of the subjective."¹⁴ Barth's "objectivistic slant" made him sound to Bloesch like the famous reformed Pastor Kohlbrügge, who testified that his own conversion took place at Golgotha. While deploring Barth's objectivist distortion, Bloesch admitted that

Barth's stress on the finished work of salvation is perhaps a needed corrective to the view rampant in American folk religion that salvation is primarily and essentially an experience of the power of God in the here and now. Such a notion robs the historical atonement of its significance and efficacy, since the work of Christ on the cross is reduced to a mere preparation for the real salvific event, which takes place in man's present religious experience. An unbiblical subjectivism is very much in evidence in current revivalism... It is my contention that biblical faith is neither objectivistic nor subjectivistic but

¹¹ The clearest instance of an author who shares Bloesch's concern about Barth but views it from the opposite side is found in Robert Reymond's booklet, *Barth's Soteriology* (Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1967), 3: "Of course, it is true that Barth's *Römerbrief* (1919) had refused to ground Christian faith in objective history and objective knowledge, this refusal rendering his dialectic theology wholly compatible with existential emphases and in broad early agreement with Bultmann..." "But there are sound reasons for feeling that this much-discussed 'development' has been greatly exaggerated and that Barth is still controlled today in his methodology by the presuppositions which bound his thinking in the second edition (1921) of his *Römerbrief*."

¹² Bloesch: *Jesus is Victor! Karl Barth's Doctrine of Salvation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon 1976).

¹³ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 110.

paradoxical in that the divine Word and human subject must be seen together in paradoxical or dialectical tension.¹⁵

When Bloesch sounds those warnings against the equal and opposite errors of objectivism and subjectivism, and struggles to define the place of integrity that falls into neither error, I believe he is working on the issue which is his greatest contribution to contemporary theology, and especially to evangelical theology. We have already said that every fully-elaborated Christian theology finds its coherence and the key to its articulation in a vision of salvation. That vision of salvation is the secret center to which the theologian recurs and refers in locus after locus of the entire range of doctrine.

The personality of a theological character shows through most clearly in his soteriology. Every topic he takes up will be colored by the basic tone of the experience of salvation, and one of the best ways to sort theologians is according to their soteriologies, because that's where family resemblances—sometimes embarrassing family resemblances—are most undeniable. The family resemblance that becomes undeniable in Bloesch's soteriological method is his position in the theological tradition of Protestant Pietism. Pietism resonates with evangelicalism in countless ways, and since its classic expression in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it has exerted a positive pressure on Christian theology and life: it curbs rationalistic tendencies, insists on application to life, and it centralizes and integrates the otherwise disparate set of truths that make up a theology, connecting them all in a vital way with the experience of communion with God. Take as one example of early Pietism the Puritan William Ames, who in his *Marrow of Theology* defined theology as "the doctrine or teaching of living to God."¹⁶ He explained what he meant by "living to God:" People "live to God when they live in accord with the will of God, to the glory of God, and with God working in them."¹⁷ According to Ames, *theologia* really ought to be called *theozoia*, living to God.¹⁸ Thus Ames derived the science of theology from an analysis of "the spiritual life, which is the proper concern of theology."¹⁹ This is a noble tradition, and one in which Bloesch partially—though only partially—views himself as working.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁶ *The Marrow of Theology*, translated and with an introduction by Eusden, I.i.1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I.i.6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I.i.13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I.ii.2.

Between us and the classic Pietists, however, stands the Enlightenment, and in particular that first titanic modern theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Schleiermacher had a Pietist upbringing (among the Herrnhut brethren), and his theological project can be considered a modern twist on the Pietist project. In Schleiermacher's hands, the Pietist impulse entered modern theology as *Bewußtseinstheologie*, the theology of consciousness. If Christian salvation is something we definitely experience, we can then reflect on that experience, and set forth a coherent, systematic, scientific Christian theology as reflection on the distinctively Christian consciousness. The primal content of that Christian consciousness is *Gefühl*, feeling, which operates in the moment prior to the divergence of what we would normally call thought and emotion, prior even to the epistemic distinction between subject and object, in a moment so fleeting and primal that "you always experience and yet never experience" it. It is the pre-conscious pious awareness that you are a portion of the whole world, that you are acted on by God through the universe, that "you lie directly on the bosom of the infinite world."²⁰ By defining the essence of religion as *Gefühl*, Schleiermacher was securing for it an independent region alongside metaphysics and ethics, a maneuver made necessary by the Enlightenment tendency to reduce religion to either a way of thinking (metaphysics) or a way of behaving (ethics). Schleiermacher was manifestly Kantian in that he did not believe that metaphysics was able to deal adequately with the things of religion, but he was decidedly anti-Kantian in the sense that he would not tolerate the reduction of God to "a postulate of practical reason." *Gefühl* could not be reduced to either pure or practical reason; it demanded recognition as an independent realm of experience, or as Schleiermacher said, "Piety cannot be an instinct craving for a mess of metaphysical and ethical crumbs."²¹ Schleiermacher had to assert the absolute independence of piety over against ethics as well as metaphysics, and he made this connection explicit at the point of *Gefühl*, in the Christian consciousness and its experienced knowledge of the reality of salvation. Schleiermacher's argument came from deep convictions rooted in his Pietist faith, but his strategy was largely apologetic. He was recommending Christianity to its cultured despisers, and winning a place for theology in the modern University.

²⁰ Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches To Its Cultured Despisers* (trans. John Oman; New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), 43.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

The way of *Bewusstseinstheologie* is the way of 19th century liberal theology.

The full title of Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* is *The Christian Faith Systematically Presented According to the Basic Tenets of the Evangelical Church*. In his lectures on the theology of Schleiermacher, Karl Barth analyzed this title according to its three main components: Faith, System, and Tenets. The Christian Faith, Barth points out, means for Schleiermacher "the faith of Christians," or the pious consciousness as expressed in the church. "Systematically presented" means that every element of the presentation is explicitly related to *Gefühl*, to the God-consciousness of believers. Finally, "according to the basic tenets of the evangelical church" introduces the idea of an external, even confessional, source for the form and content of the dogmas. Barth is right to indicate that the combination of these three elements in one theological work indicates a tension at the heart of the undertaking: the universal God-consciousness present in *Gefühl* can be seen struggling to express itself through the historically-conditioned forms of a particular church's confession. The awkwardness of this situation is apparent when Schleiermacher discusses the different kinds of dogmatics, and at the borderline between a "Scientific Dogmatic" and a "Symbolical Dogmatic" refers to the requirement that the principal points of the system should be "none other than the fundamental facts of the religious self-consciousness *conceived in a Protestant spirit*." If the theologian is attending to pious consciousness, what inherent connection can that have to a set of doctrines enshrined in confessional statements? Perhaps the theologian's own pious consciousness has been schooled in the confession? But if that is the case, how is reflecting on the Christian consciousness better than simply reflecting on the confessional documents which teach it the things it knows? Are we reading a book or a mind? Or if both, how are they related, and what if they aren't? Schleiermacher seems to have left this tension unresolved.

I have taken a few moments to sketch Pietism's heritage before and after the enlightenment, because I believe this is the nut Bloesch is trying to crack. He is essentially operating within the Pietist paradigm, but with an insistence that there is such a thing as an objective word from God which finds us from outside, communicates to us in a way that produces concepts, knowledge, content, knowable truth. Bloesch is not merely trying to repristinate Pietism or get back to the way it was before Schleiermacher turned it into that modern beast, the theology of consciousness. He is well aware that the dangers which bore fruit in Schleiermacher's romantic faith-subjectivism were latent in the Pietist

approach from the beginning; in fact, this is the main reason he will not associate himself unreservedly with Pietism. In a dialogue with Clark Pinnock, Bloesch observes:

Pinnock rightly perceives my roots in evangelical Pietism, but he needs also to take into account my reticence to define my position as pietistic. While learning from Pietism I also recognize with Karl Barth how easily Pietism slides into liberalism and modernism. When the source of theological authority is reduced to the experience of faith, it opens the possibility of allowing reason to interpret this experience. The University of Halle founded by Pietists in the eighteenth century became within two generations a bastion of rationalism.²²

Notice that in Bloesch's estimation, the slide into liberalism is bad, but the real final danger of pietism is that it can suddenly convert into rationalism, by taking experience as the subject matter of theology and therefore making theology directly available for rational analysis. Fear of rationalism is a pretty pietistic reason to reject Pietism. But it is telling, and entirely consistent that Bloesch would identify the main danger as a reduction of the subject matter of theology to something directly available for human mastery, rational analysis, and personal manipulation.

As he takes a stand between the experience of salvation and the revealed word of God, Bloesch warns that taking Schleiermacher's approach

tend[s] to make religious experience rather than the gospel itself the source and norm of theology. The right order is not from experience to reflection but from divine revelation to human appropriation in experience, life and thought. Experience is not the regulatory norm or enduring basis of theology, but it is a vital and necessary element in theology. The transcendent source of a biblical, evangelical theology is the living Word of God who breaks into our experience from the

²² "Donald Bloesch Responds," in *Evangelical Theology in Transition: Theologians in Dialogue with Donald Bloesch* (ed. Elmer M. Colyer; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 197.

beyond and remolds and transforms our experience and understanding.²³

Theologians must experience salvation, hear God's word, and reflect on it: "Unless it has a perduring experiential ingredient, theoretical theology becomes unnervingly abstract and speculative...the theological task can be carried out only by believers and that the only right theology is a theology done by regenerate persons (*theologia regentorum*)"²⁴ But it is not their own experience or their Christian consciousness that they reflect on. Adamantly, Bloesch insists that it is the transcendent word of God, above our experience and producing our experience, which is the subject of theology.

In 1968 Bloesch published a set of essays called *The Crisis of Piety*. The book was republished 20 years later, and in the "Author's Note" to this 1988 republication of the 1968 original, Bloesch reflected:

If there has been a shift in my perspective, I believe more strongly than before that a theology of Christian commitment must be united with a theology of the Word of God if it is not to lapse into subjectivism and anthropocentrism. The focus on personal piety must never supplant the more basic focus on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The bane of classical Pietism was that it sought to cultivate the Christian life without a corresponding emphasis on the decision of God for humanity in Jesus Christ. Morality and Christian character became more important than the incarnation and substitutionary atonement of Christ in biblical history. Pietism invariably fades into latitudinarianism and liberalism unless it is informed by the wisdom of orthodoxy. Orthodoxy, on the other hand, becomes barren and deadening unless it is nurtured by an abiding seriousness concerning personal salvation and the life of discipleship. What is called for is a live orthodoxy, which is none other than a biblically grounded and theologically robust Pietism.²⁵

A "biblically grounded and theologically robust Pietism" is not the same thing as Schleiermacher's "fundamental facts of the religious

²³ Ibid., 201.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Bloesch, *The Crisis of Piety: Essays Toward a Theology of the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: Helmers & Howard, 1988), xi-xii.

self-consciousness *conceived in a Protestant spirit,*” and need not suffer from the pitfalls of that project. This is what I take to be Bloesch’s great contribution to evangelical theology: he has tried to combine the subjective, lived reality of experienced salvation with the objective, revealed, mind-informing, concept-generating self-revelation of God. He has been at work on a project that bedeviled the Pietists, Schleiermacher the archetypal modern liberal theologian, and Barth. His recommended way forward is to focus our attention on the gospel itself rather than on our experience of salvation, to start with the almighty living Word of God rather than the collection of texts that bear witness to him.

Can the articulation of an entire theology be deducible from a vision of salvation? I believe it both can and should be. But there are right ways and wrong ways to proceed here. Bloesch is an advocate for the right way, taking up a basically Pietist concern to center our knowledge about God on that knowledge of God which is our salvation. There is a very ancient tradition of framing theological arguments according to soteriological vision: even classical conciliar Christology was hammered out with the tools of soteriology. Athanasius knew that Christians had been saved with a salvation only God could have accomplished, and concluded that the savior Jesus Christ must therefore be of one essence with the Father who sent him. This soteriological insight led the Nicene theologians through the Scriptures and gave them advance notice of what testimony to expect from the Scriptures. A generation later, Gregory of Nazianzus argued that however God might have considered saving us, what he actually did was to assume human nature into hypostatic union with the Son of God, healing what he took on. Therefore what is not assumed is not healed, therefore everything essential to human nature was assumed, therefore Jesus Christ is fully human. This must be true, or it would follow that God has not saved us, and he has. These classic theological arguments are soteriological visions which generate theological conclusions, and examples could be multiplied. Schleiermacher represents a paradigmatic modern misuse of the classic method. Bloesch, for his part, intends to stand not in that modern line but in the classic one. The difference between classic soteriological theologizing and the kind of faith-subjectivism generated by 19th century *Bewusstseins-theologie* is the extent to which a vision of salvation is normed and formed by the actual content of God’s work in Christ. The difference between a bad Pietist and a good Pietist is that good Pietists take their religion to heart, recognizing that salvation is something deeper and greater than new ideas, new codes of conduct, or new feelings. Bad Pietists are locked up inside their own consciousness

and cannot hear a word from the Lord. Bloesch has staked his system on the paradox of Christian salvation, of evangelical Protestantism's proclamation of free grace that puts us on the highway to holiness. And he has done so with a keen eye on the danger of lapsing into subjectivism, non-cognitive approaches to truth, or denigration of the Scriptures into a dead letter. Under the banner of salvation by Word and Spirit, Bloesch has been fighting all these years to expound the experience of the Gospel, rather than the gospel of experience, which is not good news at all.

Synoptic Criticism and Evangelical Christian Apologetics¹



ROBERT M. BOWMAN, JR.
Director of Research
Institute for Religious
Research (irr.org)
Grand Rapids, Michigan.
rob@irr.org

INTRODUCTION

Issues in Synoptic criticism play a significant role in evangelical Christian apologetics. This is because such apologetics commonly focuses on defending the central Christian claims about Jesus Christ's life, teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection. Yet evangelicals have widely differing views on how to handle such matters as the Synoptic problem, redaction criticism, and harmonization of the Gospels. This paper briefly reviews aspects of the debate over Synoptic Gospel criticism as it relates to evangelical Christian apologetics. For the sake of clarity and focus I will present this review in the form of a series of ten theses.

1. One's solution to the Synoptic Problem should not be chosen for its apologetic utility but for its fidelity to the facts, realizing that in the end the better we understand the facts the stronger our apologetic will be.

The task of Christian apologetics is to defend the *truth* of the Christian faith, which means that one must first recognize and accept

¹ A shortened version of this paper was read at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Baltimore, MD, on November 21, 2013.

the truth prior to defending it. There is no value in adopting a position on the Synoptic problem, or anything else, because it seems more useful for defending our views on something else. We must be prepared to abandon or revise certain apologetic arguments if the evidence calls those arguments into question. For example, the theory that the Synoptic Gospels give us three completely independent testimonies to the events they report in common may have to be reconsidered if we find that there is some literary relationship among them. For example, according to the “two-source” theory, Matthew and Luke both made use of Mark as well as of another source that is no longer extant (conventionally known as Q). Other theories propose different literary relationships, such as that Mark used Matthew while Luke used both Mark and Matthew (the “Mark without Q” view), that Luke used Matthew and then Mark used both Matthew and Luke (the Griesbach or “two-Gospel” theory), or that Luke used Matthew while Mark used both Matthew and Luke (the “Augustinian” hypothesis). If *any* of these views is correct, two of the Gospels are dependent on one or two of the others.²

Abandoning one line of apologetic argument does not mean forfeiting the case for the truth of the Gospels but rather exchanging a weaker apologetic for a stronger one. For example, standard views in Synoptic criticism identify not just three, but as many as *five* independent sources for Jesus’ actions and sayings. These sources include Mark’s main source (traditionally identified as Peter³), a pre-Markan “passion narrative” or passion narrative sources,⁴ the source dubbed Q, and the sources of Matthew’s special material (M) and Luke’s special material (L). Furthermore, at least three of these five commonly identified sources would probably have *predated* all of the Synoptic Gospels. This stronger argument is not warrant for accepting the two-source theory—only an analysis of the texts can provide such

² A good overview of these theories may be found in Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (2nd ed.; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 37-47.

³ For a defense of this tradition, see especially Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), esp. 155-81.

⁴ A cautious, non-evangelical treatment of the issue of pre-Markan passion narrative(s) is found in the moderate Roman Catholic scholar Raymond E. Brown’s book *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1:36-93.

warrant—but it exemplifies the point that the apologist should not be afraid to follow the evidence where it leads.

2. Evangelicals who advocate an evidentialist approach to apologetics are generally more likely to favor the two-source theory or other literary-dependence theory of Synoptic origins, while evangelicals who advocate a presuppositional approach to apologetics are generally more inclined to question such literary-dependence theories or at least to regard them as of little value.

In *The Jesus Crisis*, Robert Thomas took Craig Blomberg to task for his advocacy of an “evidentialist” approach to the Gospels in contrast to a “presuppositional” approach that assumes that the Bible is inspired. Thomas commented that Blomberg’s approach “includes an embracing of the same methodology as those of radical persuasions.”⁵ The comment, though meant as a criticism, gets at a significant divide among evangelicals with regard to apologetics. Evidentialists do in fact seek to defend the Christian faith utilizing methods that are also used by non-Christians. According to evidentialist John Warwick Montgomery, “Christianity...declares that the truth of its absolute claims rests squarely on certain historical facts, open to ordinary investigation.”⁶ It follows that one may use “ordinary” methods of investigation to show that those historical facts are indeed facts. Such methods may conclude, however, at best that the historical claims of Christianity are factual with some high degree of probability or confidence, not that they are apodictically or absolutely certain.

By contrast with evidentialists, presuppositional apologists maintain that methods of science and history inevitably reflect the presuppositions or typically unstated assumptions of those who employ those methods. Thus Cornelius Van Til, the architect of the most influential version of presuppositionalism, regarded any apologetic argument that ends in a *probable* conclusion as a compromise of the

⁵ Robert L. Thomas, “Introduction: The ‘Jesus Crisis’: What Is It?” in *The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship* (ed. Robert L. Thomas & F. David Farnell; Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1998), 29-30, n. 13.

⁶ John Warwick Montgomery, “The Jury Returns: A Juridical Defense of Christianity,” in *Evidence for Faith: Deciding the God Question* (ed. John Warwick Montgomery; Cornell Symposium on Evidential Apologetics 1986; Dallas, TX: Probe Books, 1991), 319.

gospel. "A really fruitful historical apologetic argues that every fact is and *must be* such as proves the truth of the Christian position."⁷

Obviously, an apologetic stance of this type precludes historical methods of critical inquiry into the Gospel sources, since such historical methods do not presuppose the historical truth of the Gospel narratives. As a result, scholars who explicitly advocate Van Til's apologetic methodology rarely even discuss Synoptic criticism. An interesting exception is Vern Poythress, whose recent book *Inerrancy and the Gospels* devotes a chapter to the Synoptic problem. Poythress suspects that as many as hundreds of pieces of written materials of varying length and subject matter pertaining to the life of Jesus were generated even before his crucifixion. The Gospels may have drawn on any of these sources as well as oral sources (from apostles and others). He concludes that the situation is simply too complex to permit any definite conclusions regarding the literary origins of the Gospels, pronouncing the Synoptic problem "unsolvable."⁸ What is noteworthy about Poythress's treatment is that he neither dismisses the question by critiquing the methods scholars use to investigate such matters nor denies a priori the possibility of any of the specific theories of Synoptic origins. He leaves open the possibility that Matthew used Mark, and he agrees that Luke probably used some earlier sources. Indeed, his conclusion is that Matthew and Luke may have used many *more* sources than scholars commonly acknowledge.

It should be noted that the landscape of apologetic methodology is far more complex than just the two types known as evidentialism and presuppositionalism. There are other schools of thought in apologetic theory such as classical apologetics, Reformed epistemology, and even rational fideism, though the last of these often strikes other apologists as a contradiction in terms. There are also integrative approaches that seek in various ways to combine elements of more than one apologetic methodology. Many evangelical thinkers do not fit neatly into any typology category of apologetic methodology. Moreover, evangelical scholars, being individuals, hold varying opinions that sometimes cut

⁷ Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, (3rd ed.; Nutley, NJ/Philadelphia, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1967), 199. For a discussion of this statement, perhaps the most often quoted statement in Van Til's writings, see Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith* (2nd ed.; Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2005), 277-80.

⁸ Vern Sheridan Poythress, *Inerrancy and the Gospels: A God-Centered Approach to the Challenges of Harmonization* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 123.

across the lines of such distinctions between differing apologetic methodologies.⁹ Thus some evangelicals who eschew the customary Synoptic literary critical methods are not self-avowed proponents of presuppositionalism; and evidentialists, though all of them are open to those methods, do not all reach the same conclusions as to the literary relationships among the Synoptics.

In the second edition of his book *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, Blomberg discusses both evidentialist and presuppositionalist approaches to the Gospels and suggests, "Surely there is a place for both approaches." He argues that "it is possible to defend the accuracy of much of Scripture on purely historical grounds" using "widely accepted historical criteria to demonstrate the general trustworthiness of the Scriptures." However, Blomberg suggests that presuppositionalists can and should seek to offer considered responses to skeptics beyond simply rejecting their presuppositions.¹⁰

3. Broadly speaking, evangelicals who work from such literary-dependence theories as the two-source theory are focused on defending the substantial historicity of the Gospels against extreme skepticism, while evangelicals who advocate literary-independence theories are focused on defending the inerrancy of the Gospels against what they consider compromises by other evangelicals. The former argue based on what can be shown using historical methods of inquiry; the latter argue based on what the doctrine of inerrancy is understood to require with regard to the harmony of the Gospels.

This point is obviously related to the preceding point about apologetic methodologies. In some respects evangelicals who take opposing positions on Synoptic origins often have different agendas.

⁹ See further Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, which proposes ways of integrating valuable elements of other apologetic systems into one's own preferred approach (see especially 483-93).

¹⁰ Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*, 35, citing C. Stephen Evans, *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 231-301. For an analysis of the approach to apologetics advanced by Evans in this and other books, see Boa and Bowman, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, 459-72.

The difference is one of emphasis or focus or orientation to the task, not an absolute disparity: both groups of evangelicals care about both biblical historicity and inerrancy.

4. The inspiration of the Gospels as Scripture implies no particular conclusions regarding the literary origins of the Synoptic Gospels. None of the Synoptic Gospels claims to have been written or composed by an eyewitness. The only canonical Gospel that makes that claim is the Fourth Gospel. Dogmatism on such matters not actually addressed in Scripture is not warranted for evangelicals.

The only canonical Gospel that actually claims to have been written by an eyewitness is the Gospel of John (19:34-35; 21:24-25). Tradition credits the apostle Matthew, another eyewitness, as the author of the First Gospel, and that tradition may be correct. If tradition is correct, Mark, the author of the Second Gospel, may have been an eyewitness of some of the events narrated in that writing, but probably not of most of those events. However, neither the First Gospel nor the Second Gospel actually states that it was composed utilizing eyewitness testimony. And everyone agrees that Luke was not an eyewitness at all of any of the events reported in his Gospel.

One reason why many evangelicals specifically oppose the two-source theory is that it seems to undermine the apostolic origin of Matthew since, it is commonly argued, the apostle Matthew would not have used Mark, a Gospel written by a non-apostle, as the basis for his own work. However, since the NT nowhere attributes the First Gospel to Matthew, it is not necessary theologically to defend Matthean authorship to uphold biblical inerrancy. Nor is it necessary that the tradition of Matthean authorship be correct in order for the Gospel to be the product of apostolic eyewitness testimony. The author might have drawn much of his unique material from Matthew, for example, without Matthew himself authoring the text.

In the very first issue of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Ned Stonehouse offered the following observation:

I personally am strongly persuaded of the apostolic authorship of Matthew. Nevertheless, in keeping with the main point that I have been making, it appears to me to be essential to distinguish qualitatively in this matter also between the

testimony of tradition and that of Scripture itself. Matthew is an anonymous work in that it does not make any claim to Matthaean authorship. One may therefore be influenced by the strength of the tradition and by the complete congruity of the contents of Matthew therewith firmly to maintain the traditional position concerning its authorship. Nevertheless we should not elevate such a conclusion to the status of an article of the Christian faith. Such articles of faith should be based securely upon the teaching of Scripture.¹¹

5. Evangelicals should feel free to continue exploring any and all solutions to the Synoptic Problem, including literary independence theories, oral tradition theories, and literary interdependence theories.

Literary-dependence theories of Synoptic origins have a long history. The early fifth-century church father Augustine proposed that Matthew was written first, that Mark produced a digest of Matthew, and that Luke drew on both Matthew and Mark. In the Reformation era, Martin Chemnitz, the father of Lutheran orthodoxy, endorsed Augustine's view. This "Augustinian Hypothesis" has had few defenders in recent decades, John Wenham being by far the most notable. Augustine was also the first Christian theologian to espouse the view that the Gospels did not follow a strict chronological order in their accounts. Virtually all Gospel scholars today concur with Augustine on this point.

Despite the venerable history of discerning literary relationships among the Synoptic Gospels, in modern times many evangelicals have regarded some or even all such theories with deep suspicion if not hostility. Some evangelicals, while not eschewing all Synoptic literary criticism, sharply denounce the two-source theory. John Niemelä, for example, considers those who accept that particular theory as compromisers who have "bowed the knee to Baal."¹² Similarly, Norman Geisler and William Roach claim that "total inerrantists, such as the framers of the ETS and ICBI statements, have difficulty" with the view

¹¹ Ned B. Stonehouse, "1957 Presidential Address: 'The Infallibility of Scripture and Evangelical Progress,'" *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 1.1 (Winter 1958): 11.

¹² John H. Niemelä, "Two-Gospel Response," in *Three Views on the Origins of Gospel Origins*, ed. Thomas, 110.

that “Mark was the first Gospel written.”¹³ Other evangelicals regard all theories of literary relationships among the Gospels as anathema. David Farnell asserts that “it is impossible to assume literary dependence without denigrating the accuracy of the Synoptic Gospels.”¹⁴ According to Robert Thomas, “since its founding in 1948 the Evangelical Theological Society has been favorably inclined toward the independence position regarding the Synoptic Gospels.”¹⁵

The evidence suggests that these claims are far from the case. Michael Strickland’s 2011 dissertation reviewed every article in the first half-century of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (JETS)* that even mentioned the Synoptic problem. He found that 27 articles and book reviews expressed preference for the two-source theory, five expressed support for Markan priority without addressing other issues of Synoptic origins, one argued for the two-Gospel theory, one argued for the Farrer theory, and four (three by Thomas and one by Geisler) argued for independence. Some 93 other articles and reviews commented in some way on the Synoptic Problem without expressing clear support for any particular view of the matter.¹⁶ In an editorial introduction to the March 1999 issue of *JETS* that included Norman Geisler’s presidential address at the 1998 ETS convention in which he warned against all historical criticism of the Gospels,¹⁷ Andreas Köstenberger made the following remark: “For clarification purposes, it should be noted that ETS has no policy on the orthodoxy of certain positions on Gospel criticism or theories of Synoptic interrelationships and that members in good standing hold to a variety of views.”¹⁸

Thus, the reality is that there is no historic Christian position on the Synoptic problem and no historic evangelical position. Advocacy of the two-source theory is not a recent intrusion into evangelical Christian scholarship on the Gospels but a position that was

¹³ Norman L. Geisler and William C. Roach, *Defending Inerrancy: Affirming the Accuracy of Scripture for a New Generation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), 195.

¹⁴ F. David Farnell, “Independence Response to Chapter One,” in *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels* (ed. Robert L. Thomas; Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2002), 124.

¹⁵ Robert L. Thomas, “Historical Criticism and the Evangelical: Another View,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43 (2000): 99.

¹⁶ Michael Strickland, “Evangelicals and the Synoptic Problem” (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 2011), 374.

¹⁷ Norman L. Geisler, “Beware of Philosophy: A Warning to Biblical Scholars,” *JETS* 42.1 (March 1999): 3-19 (esp. 14-15).

¹⁸ Andreas J. Köstenberger, “Editorial,” *JETS* 42.1 (March 1999): 1.

maintained by some evangelicals and criticized by others throughout the twentieth century, a situation that simply continues to this day.

6. Theories proposing that the Gospels made use of oral traditions, written sources, or both are not necessarily incompatible with acceptance of eyewitness testimony as the ultimate source of the Gospels' contents.

Geisler and Roach construe Robert Webb as presenting a schema of four successive stages leading to the composition of the canonical Gospels, (1) eyewitness testimony, (2) oral tradition, (3) early collections, and (4) composition of the Gospels. They object to this view, pointing out that eyewitnesses were alive when the Gospels were composed.¹⁹ However, Webb specifically denies that these four stages were chronologically “separate and discrete.” He points out that “these stages overlapped one another” and agrees with Richard Bauckham that “eyewitnesses were still alive during the oral traditioning process.”²⁰ The criticism also overlooks the possibility that while some of the eyewitnesses were still alive, others had passed away by the time some or all of the Synoptic Gospels were written. Geisler and Roach assert that “the views of evangelical redactionists” are wrong if the NT claim to be based on eyewitness testimony is true.²¹ This statement is patently false since evangelicals who employ literary-critical methods agree that the NT Gospels were based on eyewitness testimony. The statement also glosses over the possibility that a text might be *based* on eyewitness testimony but present that testimony in a distinctive, literary way.

7. Any dates for the Gospels prior to the end of the first century are consistent with their being based in

¹⁹ Geisler and Roach, *Defending Inerrancy*, 196. Similarly, Eta Linnemann has asserted, “There was no period of oral tradition that preceded the formation of the Gospels.” *Is There a Synoptic Problem? Rethinking the Literary Dependence of the First Three Gospels* (trans. Robert W. Yarbrough; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 181.

²⁰ Robert L. Webb, “The Historical Enterprise and Historical Jesus Research,” in *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (ed. Darrell L. Bock & Robert L. Webb; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 56 n. 123.

²¹ Geisler and Roach, *Defending Inerrancy*, 197.

eyewitness testimony and with their being inerrant, inspired Scripture.

Most evangelicals accept a date for the Gospel of John in the 90s, without regarding such a date as compromising its apostolic origin. In principle, then, there can be nothing a priori unacceptable theologically about dating some or all of the Synoptic Gospels to the 70s or 80s, as some evangelical scholars now do. For example, one may agree with Geisler and Roach that Luke was written before AD 62, as I do, but they give no evidence or reason for their claim that holding a different opinion is inconsistent with belief in the inerrancy of Scripture. Their main point here seems to be that a date before AD 70 for Luke or the other Synoptic Gospels means there was not enough time for Gospel material to have undergone any kind of change or redaction.²² It is difficult to see why this would follow. If sayings of Jesus might have been redacted in some way around, say, AD 75, why would this be impossible around AD 65 or even 55? In any case, a later date for Luke would not necessarily entail its being edited in a way incompatible with its inerrancy, just as most evangelicals agree it would not if the traditional date of John in the 90s is correct.

8. Literary independence theories are not immune from being construed as implying error on the part of the Gospel authors.

Ironically, in his zeal to refute theories of literary dependence among the Synoptic Gospels, Robert Thomas cites what he calls “places of disagreement” among the Synoptics: “Matthew and Mark against Luke, Matthew and Luke against Mark, and Mark and Luke against Matthew.”²³ The irony of this argument in a work professing to defend biblical inerrancy against misguided evangelicals seems lost on Thomas. Nor was the statement an isolated instance or verbal slip: in a journal article Thomas also presses “the agreements of two Gospels against a third Gospel” as evidence against literary dependence theories of Synoptic origins.²⁴ Of course, Thomas does not intend to charge the

²² Ibid., 196-97.

²³ Thomas, “Introduction,” in *Jesus Crisis*, ed. Thomas and Farnell, 17.

²⁴ Robert L. Thomas, “Discerning Synoptic Gospel Origins: An Inductive Approach (Part One of Two Parts),” *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 15.1 (Spring 2004): 12.

Synoptic Gospels with contradicting one another. Neither do evangelicals who reject literary independence.

9. The dogmatic stance that the Gospels must be interpreted consistently as presenting the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus Christ is hermeneutically unsound, textually indefensible, and theologically unnecessary.

Darrell Bock has given several arguments against the theory that the Gospels record the *ipsissima verba* or exact words of Jesus.²⁵ (1) Jesus probably spoke in Aramaic most of the time, but the Gospels report his words mostly in Greek. (2) The Gospel accounts of Jesus' discourses are summaries or digests. Bock points out that even the longest speeches of Jesus can be read aloud in just a few minutes in the form in which they are reported in the Gospels. (3) The Gospels and the other NT writings quote the OT profusely but rarely give the exact words of the OT text or an exact word-for-word translation of those words. (4) It was conventional in genres of ancient Greco-Roman historical writing for the authors to compose speeches that gave the substance of what the speakers historically had said as accurately as possible. (5) A comparison of some of the parallel statements by other speakers in the Gospels, such as the statement of the Father from heaven at Jesus' baptism or the confession by Simon Peter, make it clear that the Gospels are not recording precise transcripts of speeches.

Insistence on viewing the Gospels as giving exact transcripts of everything they report was said leads to all sorts of difficulties if not outright absurdities. For example, Harold Lindsell in his 1976 book *The Battle for the Bible*, following the lead of Johnston Cheney's popular 1969 Gospel harmony *The Life of Christ in Stereo*, argued that Peter had denied Christ *six times* rather than just three times.²⁶ Robert Thomas took essentially the same approach two years after Lindsell in his 1978 *Harmony of the Gospels*, concluding that "Peter apparently denied Jesus

²⁵ See especially Darrell L. Bock, "The Words of Jesus in the Gospels: Live, Jive, or Memorex?" in *Jesus under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus* (ed. Michael Wilkens & J. P. Moreland; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 73-99.

²⁶ Johnston M. Cheney, *The Life of Christ in Stereo* (Portland: Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1969), 190-92, 258; Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 174-76. The theory apparently goes back at least to Bullinger.

at least four times.”²⁷ Bart Ehrman has some fun in his book *Jesus, Interrupted* with these harmonizations, asking what is really a good question: “And isn’t it a bit absurd to say that, in effect, only ‘my’ Gospel—the one I create from parts of the four in the New Testament—is the right one, and that the others are only partially right?”²⁸

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy specifically denies “that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision...the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations” (Art. 13). In the exposition of this denial, the Chicago Statement observes that “non-chronological narration and imprecise citation were conventional and acceptable and violated no expectations in those days.” This means that the dogmatic claim that the Gospels **must** be interpreted as reporting the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus is actually **contrary to** the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy.

Robert Thomas claims that John 14:26 refers to a “supernatural boost to the memories of eyewitnesses and writers.... The Spirit’s work in reminding and inspiring is a supernatural work, guaranteeing a degree of accuracy and precision that is without parallel in the annals of human historiography.”²⁹ Elsewhere Thomas makes the even stronger claim that John 14:26 means that the Synoptic Gospels “were accounts of eyewitnesses whose sharp memories, aided by the Holy Spirit, reproduced the exact wording of dialogues and sermons.”³⁰ It is far from self-evident, however, that what John 14:26 means is that the Gospels would provide an exact transcript of what Jesus said. Does it follow from the fact that the apostles were reminded by the Holy Spirit of all that Jesus said to them that the apostles always quoted Jesus’ exact words? Supposing for the sake of argument that this is what John 14:26 means, does it then follow that when the apostles or their associates penned the Gospels they introduced no variation in how Jesus’ sayings were worded? If the Holy Spirit supernaturally inspired the Gospel

²⁷ Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, *A Harmony of the Gospels: New American Standard Bible* (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 229 nt.

²⁸ Bart D. Ehrman, *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don’t Know about Them)* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 7-8.

²⁹ Robert L. Thomas, “Impact of Historical Criticism on Theology and Apologetics,” in *Jesus Crisis*, ed. Thomas and Farnell, 372.

³⁰ Robert L. Thomas, “Conclusion: The Evidence Summarized,” in *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*, ed. Thomas, 378.

writers to produce the *ipsissima verba* of Christ, why do parallel passages nearly always quote Jesus using at least somewhat different wording?

To their credit, Geisler and Roach rightly point out in their critique of Bart Ehrman that biblical inerrancy does not entail “that we have the exact words (*ipsissima verba*) of Jesus in the Greek New Testament but only the same voice or sense (*ipsissima vox*).” They observe that Jesus probably spoke in Aramaic, not Greek, and agree that in the Gospels Jesus’ words may sometimes “be abbreviated or paraphrased.”³¹ Unfortunately, on the other hand, in their critique of Darrell Bock and Robert Webb they agree with Thomas in claiming that John 14:26 is incompatible with acknowledging any “redacting, editing, and processing the words of Jesus” in the canonical Gospels. To accept “evangelical reductionism” is supposedly to deny that the Holy Spirit “did his job.”³² But if the Holy Spirit’s inspiration of the Gospels is compatible with the view that the Gospel writers abbreviate and paraphrase Jesus’ teaching and do not always give us the exact words of Jesus, then there can be nothing wrong in a measured use of “redaction criticism” to learn as much as one can about the exact words of Jesus. Nor is it amiss to use such critical tools to seek to understand how the Gospels’ rewording of Jesus’ sayings reflects the perspective, purpose, context, and emphasis of each individual Gospel.

An obvious objection, made as has been noted by Bock as well as Geisler and Roach, against the claim that the Gospels uniformly give Jesus’ exact words is that Jesus’ mother tongue was Aramaic but the Gospels were written in Greek. Against the near-consensus of scholarship on the question,³³ Thomas claims that “the case that Jesus spoke Greek is quite strong.”³⁴ While Jesus probably was able to understand Greek and to speak in Greek as the occasion arose (especially in urban settings), it is almost certain that his usual speech when addressing his disciples and the Galilean crowds was in Aramaic.

³¹ Geisler and Roach, *Defending Inerrancy*, 96.

³² *Ibid.*, 202.

³³ On this issue, see *Moisés Silva*, “Bilingualism and the Character of Palestinian Greek,” *Biblica* 61 (1980): 198-219; G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity, Volume 5: Linguistic Essays* (Sydney: Ancient History Documentation Centre, Macquarie University, 1989), 19-21; Craig S. Keener, *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 158-59.

³⁴ Thomas, “Impact of Historical Criticism on Theology and Apologetics,” in *Jesus Crisis*, ed. Thomas and Farnell, 368; see also F. David Farnell, “The Case for the Independence View of Gospel Origins,” in *Three Views on the Origins of Gospel Origins*, ed. Thomas, 288-89.

Unless it can be shown that Jesus *always* spoke in Greek except in those rare places where the Gospels happen to quote him in Aramaic, Thomas cannot overcome this objection to a strict *ipsissima verba* view of the Gospel sayings of Jesus. Thomas does not even attempt to make this claim, let alone to defend it.

The claim that the Gospels always give us the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus even with regard to quoting him in the same language in which he spoke is easily shown to be false. In one notable instance Mark quotes Jesus in Aramaic while Luke quotes the same saying on the same occasion but in Greek. Whereas Mark reports Jesus raising the little girl from the dead by saying to her in Aramaic, *Talitha koum* (Mark 5:41), Luke reports the same saying on that occasion in Greek, *Hē pais egeire* (“Child, arise,” Luke 8:54). It might be tempting to hypothesize that Jesus issued the same imperative to the girl in both Aramaic and Greek—an *ad hoc* hypothesis if ever there was one—but in this case Mark all but rules out this idea. After quoting Jesus in Aramaic, Mark adds, “which is translated, ‘Little girl, I say to you, arise’” (*to korasion soi legō egeire*). Clearly, Mark presents his Greek version of the saying as a translation of what Jesus said in Aramaic, not as a repetition by Jesus of the saying in Greek. If it were, it would pose another problem for the *ipsissima verba* position, since Mark’s interpretation of Jesus’ sentence in Greek is different from that in Luke. Mark consistently provides a Greek translation of the Aramaic sayings of Jesus that he quotes (Mark 5:42; 7:34; 15:34; see also *abba ho patēr*, “Abba, Father,” Mark 14:36, cf. Matt. 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42).

Another example involves a single word—the saying in Mark using the Aramaic word *corban*. “But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”’ (that is, given to God)— then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down” (Mark 7:11 ESV). Here Mark quotes Jesus as using the Aramaic word *corban*, and then Mark adds parenthetically, *ho estin dōron* (literally, “that is, ‘a gift’”). Matthew, in what is definitely a parallel account of the same incident, reports Jesus attributing to the Pharisees the claim that the man can free himself of his obligation to his parents by telling them, “What you would have gained from me is given to God [*dōron*]” (Matt. 15:5 ESV). There is no plausible way to add the words of these two different versions of the saying together into one saying; Jesus would not have used the familiar Aramaic term *corban* when speaking to the Pharisees and then explained it to them by saying, “that is, ‘a gift’”!

These examples prove beyond reasonable doubt that the Gospels do not intend to present in every instance the exact words of Jesus in the language in which he actually spoke. Indeed, no Gospel writer ever claims that he is intending to give Jesus' exact words at all, even in translation. Such an idea does not arise from the text, but is an assumption brought to the text deriving from expectations regarding what an inerrant report of Jesus' teaching would need to look like.

The assumption that the Gospels report the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus requires interpreters to engage in what Robert Thomas calls an "additive-harmonization approach," in which each Gospel reports only part of what Jesus said and all of the parts are to be fitted together somewhat like a jigsaw puzzle. This approach may be illustrated by the first Beatitude. Apparently on the same occasion that Luke reports Jesus beginning his sermon with the words "Blessed are the poor, because yours is the kingdom of God" (Luke 6:20), Matthew reports Jesus beginning his sermon with the words "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). If one assumes that the Gospels intend to report the exact words of Jesus, the different wordings of the saying constitute a problem. Has Matthew added words or has Luke omitted words from this saying? Did Jesus speak of the blessed in the second or third person? Did Jesus say "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven"? It is not possible to add elements of the two versions of the saying together to harmonize them into a single saying with both Gospels reporting exact words (but not all of the words) of Jesus' saying. Or were Matthew and Luke reporting sermons delivered on two different occasions? Although interpreters who assume that the Gospels present Jesus' exact words have usually drawn that conclusion, Thomas's solution is that Jesus probably made both statements in the same sermon one right after the other: "Most probably Jesus repeated this beatitude in at least two different forms when he preached His Sermon on the Mount/Plain.... Each writer selected the wording that best suited his purpose."³⁵ What Thomas does not seem to recognize is that even this theory results in the sermon expressing *the Evangelist's purpose* and not merely reporting what Jesus said.

Thomas asserts, "It is important to a sound view of biblical inspiration that readers have the precise intended sense of Jesus' teaching, not an altered sense that a writer conveyed because of a particular theological theme he wanted to emphasize."³⁶ But how is this

³⁵ Robert L. Thomas, "Impact of Historical Criticism on Theology and Apologetics," in *Jesus Crisis*, ed. Thomas and Farnell, 370.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 372.

not the result if, for example, Jesus frequently used the expression “the kingdom of heaven” and Mark, Luke, and John chose for whatever reason to omit *all* of the sayings of Jesus that used that expression? Thomas does not seem to understand that *omission is a redactional change*. Thus, when Thomas worries that “even the slightest redactional change of Jesus’ words by a gospel writer would have altered the meaning of Jesus’ utterances on a given historical occasion,” he does not seem to recognize that verbal omissions *are* redactional changes, even if “slight,” just as much as slight verbal rewordings or additions.

Poythress suggests that where the three Synoptic Gospels report Jesus’ speech with some variations, it may be that he said all three things. For example, Jesus’ words to the disciples in the boat during the storm (Matt. 8:26; Mark 4:40; Luke 8:25) might have been something like, “Why are you so afraid, O you of little faith? What is the matter with you? Where is your faith? You have been with me for some time. You have seen the things that God has done. Have you still no faith?”³⁷ He rightly argues that people do often repeat themselves in the same context, for emphasis or reinforcement or to make a point from several different angles.³⁸ While this is (of course) possible and even realistic in many situations, the question is whether this is the most plausible explanation for the variations among the Synoptics in their report of Jesus’ speech here. Poythress himself seems to acknowledge that this “additive” approach to harmonizing the texts may not be a complete answer, as he notes that the Matthean version uses the word *oligopistoi*, “ones of little faith,” which reflects a distinctive theme in his Gospel (Matt. 6:30; 14:31; 16:8; 17:20).³⁹ That word does not occur at all in Mark and occurs in Luke only once, in a saying parallel to Matthew 6:30 (Luke 12:28).

There is nothing wrong with considering whether parallel versions of Jesus’ sayings or movements can be harmonized in an “additive” fashion. We should avoid two extremes here, regarding only traditional harmonization or only redaction-critical explanations for differences among the Synoptics. Both additive harmonizations and redaction-critical explanations of differences among the Synoptic Gospels may be considered; whether one or the other is to be accepted should be determined on a case-by-case basis by evaluating the evidence for each explanation.

³⁷ Poythress, *Inerrancy and the Gospels*, 158-59.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 160.

10. The Synoptic problem is significant not only for the light it may shed only on the Synoptic Gospels but also for the light it may shed on noncanonical gospels.

Although the Synoptic problem is of course about the three Synoptic Gospels in the NT canon, it turns out to have some relevance in exposing the unhistorical and fraudulent nature of several noncanonical gospels composed centuries later. Such an application of Synoptic criticism thus has important if surprising apologetic value in defending the orthodox claim that the four Gospels in the NT canon are the only authoritative accounts of the life, teachings, and passion of Jesus Christ.

In order to show how such application is possible, it will be helpful to look at a specific issue in Synoptic studies. It is now widely though not universally recognized among both evangelical and non-evangelical Gospel scholars that the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 is Matthew's expansion of an earlier form of Jesus' sermon to which Matthew added supplemental discourse units and sayings of Jesus that were thematically related but originally spoken at various other occasions. Jesus' historical sermon in Galilee was probably more like the so-called Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6:20-49 (though not necessarily identical to it, either). Careful analysis of the Matthean and Lukan settings as well as the content and structure of the discourses shows that the Matthean and Lukan passages are in fact two versions of the same historical sermon, not two different sermons that Jesus delivered on separate occasions.⁴⁰

Robert Thomas takes issue with those evangelicals who accept such a conclusion. In his view, suggesting that either Matthew's or Luke's text arranges Jesus' teaching thematically or in any other way impugns "the integrity of the gospel accounts," questions their "historicity," and "devastates the historical accuracy of the Gospels."⁴¹ He argues that Matthew's narrative introduction and conclusion (Matt. 5:1-2; 7:28-29) are inexplicable if they do not mean that everything presented within that frame as sayings of Jesus was spoken on that occasion. "If Jesus did not preach such a sermon on a single occasion, why would the

⁴⁰ See Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 935-36; D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III & David E. Garland; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 154-55; Grant R. Osborne, *Matthew* (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT; gen. ed. Clinton E. Arnold; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 160.

⁴¹ Thomas, "Introduction," in *Jesus Crisis*, ed. Thomas and Farnell, 16.

gospel writer mislead his readers to think that Christ did? This question has no plain answer.”⁴² This question makes the same type of mistake as the following questions

- “If Jesus did not preach his sermon in Greek, why would the Gospel writer mislead his readers to think that Christ did?”
- “If Jesus said things in his Galilean sermon other than what is found in Luke 6:20-49, why would Luke mislead his readers to think he said only what is found there?”
- “If Jesus gave the Lord’s Prayer to his disciples as part of the sermon he preached that day, why would Luke mislead his readers to think that Christ did not present the Lord’s Prayer to them until much later in his ministry?”

These questions beg the question by assuming that the Gospel authors’ presentation intends to convey something that the text does not actually assert.

The conclusion that the Sermon on the Mount includes sayings of Jesus originally spoken on other occasions is not dependent on one specific solution to the Synoptic problem. For example, John Calvin, who held to the literary independence of the Synoptics, accepted that Matthew and Luke both constructed compilations of Jesus’ sayings around Jesus’ original sermon.

For the design of both Evangelists was, to collect into one place the leading points of the doctrine of Christ, which related to a devout and holy life. Although Luke had previously mentioned a *plain*, he does not observe the immediate succession of events in the history, but passes from miracles to doctrine, without pointing out either time or place: just as Matthew takes no notice of the time, but only mentions the place. It is probable, that this discourse was not delivered until Christ had chosen the twelve: but in attending to the order of time, which I saw that the Spirit of God had disregarded, I did not wish to be too precise. Pious and modest readers ought to be satisfied with having a brief summary of the doctrine of Christ placed before their eyes, collected out of his many and various discourses, the

⁴² Ibid., 20; see also Robert L. Thomas, “Redaction Criticism,” in *Jesus Crisis*, 257.

first of which was that in which he spoke to his disciples about true happiness.⁴³

If one accepts the conclusion that Matthew's Sermon on the Mount is a compilation of Jesus' sayings that Matthew has arranged using Jesus' historical sermon in Galilee as a starting point and frame, this conclusion has important implications for later noncanonical gospels that incorporated parts of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount.

Consider, for example, the *Gospel of Barnabas*, written no earlier than about the fourteenth century and notorious for its Islamicized theology and portrayal of Jesus.⁴⁴ The *Gospel of Barnabas* replaces the Sermon on the Mount (SM) with several discourses it attributes to Jesus at separate times. This material consistently evidences dependence on the Matthean Sermon on the Mount rather than the Sermon on the Plain, as when it concludes a section on returning good for evil with the statement, "be ye perfect, for I am perfect" (*G. Barn.* 18), a wording that reflects Matthew 5:48 rather than the parallel in Luke 6:36.

The *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, published in Ohio in 1908, is a favorite "gospel" in the New Age movement.⁴⁵ It loosely paraphrases and expands on the entire SM, but in a way that again consistently reflects dependence on Matthew, not on Luke. So, for instance, the *Aquarian Gospel* quotes Jesus as saying, "Worthy are the strong in spirit; theirs the kingdom is.... Worthy they who hunger and thirst for right; they shall be satisfied" (*Aquarian Gospel* 95.7, 9), sayings clearly

⁴³ John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (trans. William Pringle; Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n.d.; Eng. trans. orig. 1845), 230 (on Matt. 5:1).

⁴⁴ The standard English edition is still *The Gospel of Barnabas: Edited and Translated from the Italian Ms. in the Imperial Library at Vienna: With a Facsimile* (trans. Lonsdale and Laura Ragg; Oxford: Clarendon, 1907). The text of this translation is easily accessible in several places online. For an evangelical critique, see F. P. Cotterell, "The Gospel of Barnabas," *Vox Evangelica* 10 (1977): 43-47.

⁴⁵ The full title gives some flavor of the book: Levi H. Dowling, *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ: The philosophic and practical basis of the religion of the Aquarian age of the world and of the church universal: Transcribed from the book of God's remembrances, known as the Akashic records, with introduction by Eva S. Dowling* (Los Angeles: Leo W. Dowling; London: L. N. Fowler, 1908 [©1907]). The book was famously critiqued in Edgar J. Goodspeed, *Famous Biblical Hoaxes or, Modern Apocrypha* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1956 [orig. 1931]), 15-19.

dependent on Matthew's form of these two beatitudes (Matt. 5:3, 6) rather than the form of the Lukan parallels (Luke 6:20b-21).

The most blatant and arguably the most important use of the SM in a noncanonical "gospel" is that found in 3 Nephi, one of the fifteen "books" in the Book of Mormon and one that Mormons have often dubbed a "Fifth Gospel."⁴⁶ The Book of Mormon, of course, is the foundational new scripture of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Third Nephi 12-14 reports Jesus, sometime shortly after his ascension, appearing to the "Nephites" somewhere in the Western Hemisphere and preaching to them the SM almost exactly as it reads in Matthew. The Book of Mormon version omits about eight and a half verses of the 107 verses in the SM, and it replaces them with about an equal number of new verses. Where the sayings included in the Book of Mormon sermon have parallels in both Matthew and Luke, the Book of Mormon reflects the order and wording of the sayings as they appear in Matthew 100 percent of the time. This is simply not historically credible if one acknowledges that Matthew's version of the sermon was in any significant respect shaped and worded by the author. If Matthew sometime between AD 50 and 80 took discourse units and sayings of Jesus originally spoken on various occasions and integrated them into Jesus' historical sermon in Galilee, rewording and structuring the material as an expression of his literary art, this finding poses an insuperable problem for the Book of Mormon. It simply defies all plausibility to claim that Jesus in AD 34 had preached a sermon to the Nephites in the Americas that closely followed the contents, order, and wording of Matthew's composition.

This issue was explored briefly in a 1982 article by liberal Reorganized LDS writer William Russell and more substantively in a 1997 article by evangelical scholar Ron Huggins.⁴⁷ Mormon scholar John W. Welch in a book published in 1990 and revised in 1999 attempted to defend the historicity of the Book of Mormon in relation to the Synoptic Problem as well as other issues.⁴⁸ The evidence in this

⁴⁶ Andrew C. Skinner, *Third Nephi: The Fifth Gospel* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2012).

⁴⁷ William D. Russell, "A Further Inquiry into the Historicity of the Book of Mormon," *Sunstone* 7 (Sept. 1982): 20-27; Ronald V. Huggins, "Did the Author of 3 Nephi Know the Gospel of Matthew?" *Dialogue* 30 (1997): 137-48.

⁴⁸ John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple & Sermon on the Mount: An Approach to 3 Nephi 11-18 and Matthew 5-7* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999 [rev. ed. of a book originally publ. in 1990]). I address the issue of the historicity of the Sermon in its Book of Mormon setting in a comprehensive way in a forthcoming dissertation entitled "The Sermon on the Mount in the

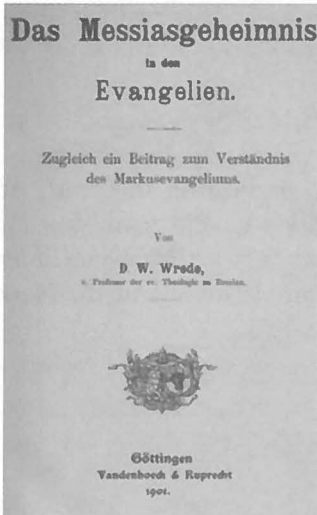
regard, however, is simply overwhelming. To circumvent the problem, one would need to argue that Luke's Sermon on the Plain has no relation at all to Matthew's Sermon on the Mount; Matthew and Luke must be viewed as reporting two entirely separate sermons. Moreover, one would need to argue that Matthew gives the *exact* words of Jesus except where the Book of Mormon version of the Sermon happens to vary from Matthew. We can continue to debate whether Matthew was dependent on the hypothetical source known as Q; it is really beyond reasonable doubt that the Sermon to the Nephites in the Book of Mormon is dependent on Matthew!⁴⁹

The investigation of Synoptic critical questions by evangelicals can thus pay apologetic dividends in unexpected places. Apologetics is not all about "playing defense"; it is also about vindicating the truth of Christianity against false gospels. It would be a shame to miss such opportunities because evangelicals were afraid to ask tough questions about the human origins of the divinely inspired Gospels of the New Testament.

Book of Mormon," being done in the Ph.D. Biblical Studies program at the South African Theological Seminary.

⁴⁹ The problem runs even deeper, since the evidence shows that the Book of Mormon version of the Sermon is not merely dependent on the Gospel of Matthew but specifically on the Gospel of Matthew in the King James Version. For example, the Book of Mormon sermon quotes Jesus ending the Lord's Prayer with the same doxology, in the same wording, as in Matthew 6:13 KJV—a doxology that is not in the Lukan version of the prayer (Luke 11:2-3) and was almost certainly added to the text of Matthew by a later scribe.

The Messianic Secret in Wrede versus The Messianic Secret in Mark



RONALD V. HUGGINS
Associate Professor
NT and Greek
Midwestern Baptist
Theological Seminary
Kansas City, MO 64118
rhuggins@mbts.edu

INTRODUCTION

The term “Messianic Secret” refers to a tremendously influential idea first floated by the German theologian William Wrede (VRAY-duh) more than a century ago in his book *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (1901), which was subsequently published in English in 1971 under the title *The Messianic Secret*.¹ Wrede argued that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah during his lifetime, but that his disciples, after having come to believe in his messiahship after his death, had to invent an explanation as to why he never said so during his life. The explanation they came up with, according to Wrede, was that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah *in public* during his life, but that he did tell his inner circle of disciples *in private*. According to Wrede, then, the disciples, motivated by their faith in Jesus, lied.

¹ William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret* (trans. J. C. G. Greig; Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971).

Wrede describes this after-the-fact-conjured-up-idea of the Messianic Secret in the following terms: “during his earthly life Jesus’ messiahship is absolutely a secret and is supposed to be such; no one apart from the confidants of Jesus is supposed to learn about it; with the resurrection, however, its disclosure ensues,” and then Wrede goes on to say more specifically in reference to the Gospel of Mark: “This is in fact the crucial idea, the underlying point of Mark’s entire approach.”²

One may of course ask how, if the inner circle of disciples claimed Jesus told them privately that he was the Messiah, Wrede, who was not present during any of the private conversations between Jesus and his disciples, knew for a fact that he did not? One of the things we need to understand from the beginning of our discussion is that Wrede, as one of the company of nineteenth-century, so-called “liberal-lives-of-Jesus” authors, was faced with the particular problem of trying to reinvent Jesus in such a way as to render him acceptable and comprehensible from the perspective of a rationalistic, anti-supernatural world view. This meant that Wrede *could not* accept the evidence of the Gospels, in any sense, at face value, because, from such a perspective, demons don’t exist, miracles don’t happen, and people don’t prophetically predict future events at all, never mind the details of their own future deaths and resurrections. Wrede was faced in other words with the task of coming up with an explanation of Jesus that could be based on the evidence only in so far as the evidence could be credited in view of the assumptions of a wholly rationalistic world view. And we needn’t fault him on one level for attempting it. In the past, for example, I have had occasion to write scholarly articles on Joseph Smith Jr, the founder of Mormonism. Although I do not accept Wrede’s out-of-hand, across-the-board dismissal of the miraculous, I have never felt in any way required to blindly accept any and every miraculous claim I happen to encounter. So, in the course of writing history relating to Joseph Smith Jr, I occasionally encountered claims of the miraculous, but I also very often found what seemed to me at least to be compelling reasons to ultimately regard them as better explained by wholly natural causes. Very often, for example, I would find earlier non-supernatural accounts of the same incidents to which new or different miraculous features were later artificially attached.³ Nor are my

² Ibid., 68 (italic orig.).

³ See esp., Ronald V. Huggins, “From Captain Kidd’s Treasure Ghost to the Angel Moroni: Changing *Dramatis Personae* in Early Mormonism,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36.4 (2003): 17-42; but also “‘Without a Cause’ and ‘Ships of Tarshish’: A Possible Contemporary Source for Two Unexplained Readings from Joseph Smith.” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36.1

doubts concerning miraculous claims limited to those made outside the Christian tradition. I am, for example, similarly dubious about the famous Bible translator J. B. Phillips's claim to have been visited by C. S. Lewis a few days *after* Lewis's death.⁴ I had, given Phillips's reputation, been inclined to accept the story when I first read it in his book *Ring of Truth: A Translator's Testimony* (1967), but later, when certain facts relating to Phillips's very real and ongoing mental struggles came to my attention, it provided a context which rendered the story of Lewis's post-mortem visit more doubtful.⁵ Or again in fairness it is not simply the miraculous reports made by Christians that I am ultimately willing to entertain. That the extraordinary visual rainbow phenomenon (not a normal rainbow, mind, but a rainbow circling the sun and clinging to nearby clouds) associated with the cremation of the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche actually occurred seems undeniable. Biblical scholars employ a criterion for determining authenticity known as Multiple Attestation: if an idea, a saying, or an event is attested in a number of independent witnesses it is more likely to be authentic, historical, and so on. The rainbow phenomenon connected with Trungpa's cremation was attested by a multitude of witnesses, some friendly, some not.⁶ But whether or not it was truly supernatural in origin, as his followers claim, is something that for me remains at least

(2003): 157-79; and "Joseph Smith and the First Verse of the Bible," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 46.1 (2003): 29-52.

⁴ J. B. Phillips, *Ring of Truth: A Translator's Testimony* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1967), 89: "A few days after his [C. S. Lewis's] death, while I was watching television, he 'appeared' sitting in a chair within a few feet of me, and spoke a few words which were particularly relevant to the difficult circumstances through which I was passing. He was ruddier in complexion than ever, grinning all over his face and, as the old-fashioned saying has it, positively glowing with health."

⁵ In particular after having read the biography by his wife Vera Phillips, along with Edwin Robertson, entitled, *J. B. Phillips: The Wounded Healer* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985).

⁶ See, e.g., Stephen T. Butterfield, *The Double Mirror: A Sceptical Journey into Buddhist Tantra* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1994), 152; Jeremy Hayward, *Warrior-King of Shambhala: Remembering Chogyam Trungpa* (Boston, MA: Wisdom, 2008): 373; Diana J. Mukpo (with Carolyn Rose Giaman), *Dragon Thunder: My Life with Chögyam Trungpa* (Boston, MA: Shambala, 2006), 392. Allen Ginsberg, "On Cremation of Chogyam Trungpa, Vidyadhara" *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review* (Fall 2003): 73. The reader may observe the phenomenon themselves by going to Youtube and watching the video called "Cremation of Chogyam Trungpa," keeping in mind, of course, the ease with which movies can be doctored.

possible. Yet even supposing the phenomenon was in some sense supernaturally based, I would hardly be ready to automatically grant that it had its origin in God, since, from the perspective of the Biblical world view, the possibility of a demonic source would more immediately recommend itself. In any case, if I were to take it upon myself to write a book against such modern miracles as I have described, a debt to fairness would really require me to come up with an alternative explanation, that was at least plausible. Wrede too, if he wishes to dismiss Mark's account of Jesus, owes a debt to fairness as well. Even granting that he might be operating in good faith doubting the possibility of miracles and therefore seeking some other explanation for the phenomena of Mark, does the explanation he provides fulfill his debt to fairness? Does his Messianic Secret idea have sufficient explanatory power to provide an alternative explanation that is at least coherent and plausible? It is my contention here that it is precisely at this point that Wrede's concept fails. Before we proceed further we need to remember just what would have to be true about Mark's narrative in order for Wrede's Messianic Secret idea to be valid: Mark could not admit that *anyone* besides the inner circle of Jesus's disciples *at any time* had *any inkling* that Jesus was putting himself forth as the Messiah. If, in the course of Mark's narrative, the cat of a Messianic Jesus got out of the bag in a significant way even once, Wrede's thesis fails. With that in mind let's begin.

COMING TO TERMS WITH TITLES IN MARK

Jesus is called a number of things in Mark, including crazy, by his mother and brothers (Mark 3:21), and demon possessed, by some Scribes come down from Jerusalem (Mark 3:22). To the latter, Jesus responds that in saying such a thing those Scribes were coming dangerously close to committing an "eternal sin," the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. The answer itself tells us something about who the Jesus of Mark thinks he is. What sort of man would, could, issue such a warning? In any case in the Markan narrative we find as well other titles associated with Jesus, and in the unfolding of that narrative we see these titles coalescing in such a way as to be identified one with another.

In his very first verse, Mark informs us as his readers who Jesus is in terms that even the players in the story only come to learn in time: "The

beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”⁷ By appending “Christ,” to the name Jesus, Mark is letting us know, in no uncertain terms, that Jesus *is* the Messiah. He also tells us that he is the “Son of God.” Mark does not reveal at this point whether “Christ” and “Son of God” are two ways of saying the same thing, or two different titles. He does not tell us, in other words, whether “Son of God” is a Messianic title. But he will definitely do so before he is finished. In any case the latter title “Son of God,” is confirmed in a positive sense by Mark a few verses later when God the Father’s voice at the Baptism declares from heaven to Jesus: “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased” (Mk 1:11). Mark gives us no inkling as to whether or not anyone else saw the dove or heard the voice, making it possible, supposing Son of God is going to be represented as a title synonymous with “Messiah,” that Wrede might still be able to say that the Messianic Secret is still intact at that point, by asserting that nobody else heard the voice. The same can be said later on, on the mount of the transfiguration, where it is only Jesus’s most intimate inner circle, Peter, James, and John, who hear the voice of God once again declaring from heaven that Jesus is his beloved Son (Mk 9:7). But then, at a number of points as, throughout the rest of Mark’s Gospel, we have Jesus repeatedly telling demons to be quiet because “they knew him.” i.e., they knew who he was (1:34). Mark reports that Jesus’ attempt to silence them wasn’t altogether successful, that some of the demons got out what they wanted to say, sometimes in very public places. So in the very first chapter a man with an unclean spirit cries out in the Capernaum synagogue: “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” (1:24). Then again in chapter 3 Mark goes so far as to say that “Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, ‘You are the Son of God!’” This was not in other words an isolated event. And then finally there is the incident where the Legion in the Decapolis, “shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?’” (Mk 5:7). So, let us be very clear here. The title Son of God in these contexts implies that Jesus is something more than human, he is at the very least also some sort of divine, heavenly figure, acknowledged by God and instantly recognized and feared by the demons. But that being said, does Mark see the title “Son of God,” as also Messianic? If he does, then Wrede’s theory

⁷ The textual variants relating to the words “Son of God” in this verse are not, in my view, ultimately significant enough to cast doubt on the presence of the title in the original.

doesn't work since the application of the title to Jesus is made far too openly and often. So then, is "Son of God" a Messianic title for Mark? The answer: "Yes it is." We see the two titles merged in the question the High Priest puts to Jesus at his trial: "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?" (Mk 14:61). From the perspective of Mark's literary presentation, then, the title "Son of God," paralleled that of "Messiah," or "Christ." Had Mark been engaging in an attempt to explain why Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah, he would not have represented the High Priest as more or less equating the terms, after having had the title "Son of God," slip out so often in the public declarations of the demons.

JESUS IS THE MESSIAH

But what is even more significant is that the High Priest's question was not restricted to whether Jesus was the Son of God. He also asks Jesus point blank if he was the Messiah. Jesus's response is definitive, emphatic: "I am" (*egō eimi*).⁸ Now if Mark is giving us to understand that the High Priest, in front of the whole Sanhedrin, asks Jesus directly whether he is the Messiah and Jesus answers the question emphatically in the affirmative, how on earth could anyone suppose such a scene would be invented by someone trying to cover up the fact that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah?

Quite the contrary, what Mark is reporting is Jesus affirming his Messiahship in the worst possible context in terms of ease of refutation. How easy would it have been for Jewish readers of Mark, who were antagonistic to the early Christian movement, to simply go and ask Jewish leaders with long memories, who perhaps had even had Jesus up before them, whether Jesus had indeed made such an affirmation? Despite many and ingenious attempts by a number of scholars to distance Mark from the historical events he reports, really no one can deny that his Gospel was written within living memory of those events.⁹ If Mark was really engaged in trying to conceal the fact that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah, he would never have had Jesus answer the question so inconspicuously. He could have easily gone with something more like what Matthew has at the same point in

⁸ Interestingly, in this context Mark's version of Jesus' answer is more direct than the parallel answers in the same context in Matthew's and Luke's Gospels.

⁹ More conservative scholars place the date of Mark's composition as early as 50 AD and more liberal scholars between 65 and just after 70 AD.

his Gospel. There Jesus answers the High Priest with the words: "You said [it]" (Matt 26:64). But Mark doesn't. Mark has Jesus come right out with an affirmative answer.¹⁰ Or does he?

Few scholars doubt that *egō eimi* at Mark 14:62 represents a strong affirmative answer to the High Priest's question. There is at least one, however, who attempted to insert room for doubt there in such a torturously ingenious manner that one cannot help but admire his sheer audacity. I refer to Marcus Borg's attempt to suggest that Jesus did not answer "I am," but "am I?" Writes Borg: "the Greek behind the English 'I am' is ambiguous. It can be translated either as an affirmation ('I am') or as an interrogative ('Am I?')." ¹¹ The great irony in Borg's attempt to create an interval of ambiguity in the response of Jesus at this point is that it ultimately only serves to facilitate an even more devastating critique of Wrede's Messianic Secret idea than would have otherwise been possible. Let me explain.

First of all, there actually is a Messianic Secret of a sort going on in Mark, but nothing of the kind Wrede envisages. Jesus actually doesn't go around saying, "Hey guys, look at me, I'm the Messiah!" So even in the case of Peter's great confession, Jesus does not declare to his disciples that he is the Messiah, rather he asks them who *they* say he is, and it is Peter who steps up and answers, "you are the Messiah" (Mk 8:29), after which it says that Jesus "sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him" (vs. 30).

But if the whole reason the Early Church invented the idea that Jesus only told his disciples he was the Messiah in secret was cover for the fact that nobody outside the circle of the disciples ever heard Jesus say it, why does Mark have him *not* declare himself Messiah when he is discoursing privately with the disciples, but then come out right in the open and admit it in front of all the Jewish leaders? If the dialogue of Mark 8 was an invention put back onto Jesus's lips long after the fact, then why not just have Jesus openly proclaim himself the Messiah there? If Wrede was right on this point we should have expected Jesus to be more explicit in declaring his Messiahship to his disciples in his private discourses. Wrede's explanation fails to account for the reason behind Jesus's hesitance to openly declare himself to be the Messiah,

¹⁰ See the discussion of the textual variant at this point in Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2007), 696.

¹¹ Marcus J. Borg, *Jesus, Uncovering the Life, Teachings and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 263. See also, Marcus J. Borg & John Dominic Crossan, *The Last Week: A Day-by-Day Account of Jesus's Final Week in Jerusalem* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 130-31.

even when speaking with his disciples in private. Because he approaches Mark on the front end by attempting to impose a theory upon his gospel that is really foreign to it, Wrede ends by becoming insensitive to Mark's own way of presenting his narrative of the life of Jesus. In fact, the way Mark actually unfolds his story the clear message might well seem to be just the opposite of what Wrede had asserted about it. Starting from where Wrede does, he might have proposed a more plausible alternative reading that went like this: In spite of the fact that Jesus never once in the whole of Mark's Gospel actually on his own initiative declares himself to be the Messiah,¹² by the end of the book, that is what literally everybody has come to believe he is claiming. That's right: Mark's use of the Messianic Secret motif would actually better serve the exact opposite historical situation from the one Wrede was proposing. Namely, it could be used to make the case for a situation in which even though absolutely everybody came to understand that Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah, he never actually did. It would have been, in other words, a massive misunderstanding on the part of everyone, including his inner circle of disciples. There would, on this reading, be far less evidence Wrede would need to dismiss than on his theory. To make this theory work Wrede would have simply needed to (1) dismiss Peter's confession as a misunderstanding on Peter's and the other disciples' part as to what Jesus meant when he responded by commanding his disciples not to tell anyone, (2) insist that the voice at the Baptism only identified Jesus as God's beloved son, but not as the Messiah, and (3) claim that the first line of Mark, where Jesus is called Christ, was a later, non-Markan interpolation. After that he would have found little difficulty in claiming that Mark was actually written to establish that Jesus never claimed to be the Messiah at all, that the Evangelist's goal had actually been to *prove* what Wrede had originally accused him of trying to *conceal*. And this is where the irony comes into Marcus Borg's attempt to soften Jesus answer to the High Priest. If Jesus never did affirm there that he was the Messiah, but rather only said something along the lines of "Gee, do you think I might be?" then the reaction that follows immediately, the High Priest's tearing his robe, the charge that Jesus had spoken blasphemy, and that he was therefore deserving of death,

¹² In Mark 9:41 Jesus says to his disciples: "For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward." It is quite clear that for Mark the word "Christ" in "bear the name of Christ," referred to Jesus. Even so it may be thought not to amount to an unambiguous claim on the part of Jesus to the title, even though it seems quite clear he was speaking of himself.

would have been a total farce based on an enormous misunderstanding. If we take Borg's suggestion seriously it leads us to the following scenario: Jesus makes no declaration concerning himself there at all. The High Priest mistakenly thinks he did and overreacts in such a dramatic way that it shapes everything that follows. Hence, when Jesus is brought before Pilate, the main question he is interrogated about is, once again, whether he is the King of the Jews, the Messiah (Mk 15:2). When Pilate asks the people to choose between Jesus and Barabbas, he again refers to the Messianic claim in the hearing of the gathered crowd: "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" (15:9). The same theme is then carried even further by Mark when he describes the soldiers putting a robe of imperial purple on Jesus, twisting a crown of thorns for him, and bowing down in mock homage, saying 'Hail, King of the Jews!' (15:18). Jesus is then crucified as a Messianic pretender as confirmed in Mark by what was written on the *titulus*, the announcement of the charge affixed to the cross: "The inscription of the charge against him," writes Mark, "read, 'The King of the Jews'" (Mk 15:25). And then finally, as if to leave his readers in no doubt that when the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of claiming to be the King of the Jews, they meant that he was claiming to be the Messiah, Mark has the Chief Priests and Scribes mock Jesus in a way that clearly identified the two: "Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe" (Mk 15:32). So there we have it, the clear presentation of Mark is that by the time Jesus is crucified, pretty much everybody thought he'd claimed he was the Messiah.

WREDE COMES BACK WITH EXCUSES

So, then, given the fact that the whole narrative flow of Mark runs directly against the grain of the reading Wrede wants to impose upon him, how did Wrede himself dispense with the evidence standing so prominently against his theory? Simple. He asserted that it was not he but Mark who was totally confused. As we have already seen, Wrede claims that the Messianic Secret, as he conceives of it, represented "*the crucial idea, the underlying point of Mark's entire approach,*"¹³ but the implausibility of Wrede's own theory forces him to do a considerable amount of back-peddling to try and make the statement stick. By claiming that Mark himself is not the inventor of the Messianic Secret

¹³ Wrede, *Messianic Secret*, 68 (italic orig.).

idea,¹⁴ Wrede is able to win a little wiggle room for accusing Mark of failing to incorporate the idea in a consistent manner: "The impression," writes Wrede, "that Mark has an internally consistent and historically comprehensible overall picture will stand examination only as long as we ignore items of evidence pointing in other directions."¹⁵ This makes it possible for Wrede to declare further that "it is clear that in Mark a lot of things have to be read between the lines if we want to establish that in it there is a really comprehensible development."¹⁶ Such statements are of course, nothing but special pleading arguments to conceal the weaknesses of Wrede's own theory, but read between the lines Wrede certainly does. We see this with particular clarity in his treatment of Jesus's answer to the High Priest concerning the coming of the Son of Man. It will be remembered that immediately after Jesus answered the High Priest's question about his being the Messiah in the affirmative (*egō eimi*), he went on to say: "'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,' and 'coming with the clouds of heaven'" (14:62). It is in response to this latter statement that Wrede writes:

The tacit or explicit assumption behind this is that if the blasphemy lay in the pretension to divine glory and divine nature, Jesus like the high priest would have been taking the title "Son of God" to have a dogmatic, metaphysical sense and this is historically an impossibility...Now if this idea of the Son of God is present in Mark anyway and is therefore to be expected here too, we can no longer doubt that he is putting the term into the high priest's mouth with the sense it has for the evangelist's own Christian faith.¹⁷

Wrede comes near touching on a point here that many have noticed, namely, why should it be considered blasphemy for Jesus to admit he was the Messiah, causing the High Priest to react by tearing his robes? Should we not then look to the Son of Man statement that immediately follows for the cause of offense? Yet Jesus himself had dealt with precisely the issue of the divine status of the Messiah in his public teaching in the Temple shortly before:

¹⁴ Ibid., 145, 210.

¹⁵ Ibid., 14.

¹⁶ Ibid., 15.

¹⁷ Ibid., 74-75.

How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet.' David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?" (Mark 12:35-37)

If the High Priest understood that Jesus was in fact melding the traditional figure of the Messiah with some sort of divine heavenly figure, and understood him to be identifying that figure with himself, there is really little doubt why he would regard it as blasphemy. This kind of strong reaction against the identification of Jesus with the heavenly Son of Man is also attested in the account of the stoning of Stephen when the Jewish leaders reacted to Stephen saying "Look...I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" with a similar response: "they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him" (Acts 7:57).

THE REAL PURPOSE OF MARK'S MESSIANIC SECRET?

One explanation which indeed flows more naturally from the evidence than Wrede's is that Jesus avoided the title Messiah because, at the time, it was too narrowly defined for him to squeeze the reality of what his coming really represented into it. So instead we see him adopting from the beginning of Mark's Gospel a term to describe himself that was useful precisely because it was ambiguous: "Son of Man." On the one hand, it has a very generic sense: a human being, a man, a son of man. On the other it has eschatological overtones deeply rooted in the Old Testament in its use in Daniel 7:13 and 8:17, as well as in the name God repeatedly calls the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek 2:1,3,6,8, et passim). From the beginning of Mark's Gospel Jesus makes assertions about his authority that are so breathtaking that by the time the 3rd chapter of Mark begins, he has already been accused of blasphemy and plans are being made by the Pharisees along with the Herodians to put him out of the way (Mark 2:7 and 3:6). The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, no questions asked, no sacrifices required, just straight out upon his authoritative word alone (Mark 2:8), a prerogative normally (and properly) understood to belong only to God (Mark 2:7). The Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). At the end of all things the Son of Man will come in the Father's glory with his angels (Mark 8:38, 13:16), and he shall rise from the dead (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34). And all this is because "the Son

of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). From the beginning Jesus further underscores his authority as the Son of Man with breathtaking statements about his own importance. He came to call sinners, not the righteous (Mark 2:17). It would be inappropriate for his disciples to fast alongside John the Baptist's disciples and the Pharisees because they had the bridegroom (Jesus himself) with them (Mark 2:19). And besides, to try and squeeze what Jesus was all about into the older religious patterns practiced by John's disciples and the Pharisees would be like trying to put new wine in old wineskins, or a new patch on an old garment (Mark 18:21-22). One of the most frightening instances in which Jesus stresses his importance is when he warns the Scribes that accusing him of doing his divine works by the power of the devil is tantamount to risking committing an eternal, unforgivable sin (Mark 2:28-29). Indeed the very idea that Jesus considered himself in a position to authoritatively declare in that context which blasphemies people can or cannot be forgiven of is so far beyond audacious we can well understand why his family concluded he had lost his mind (Mark 3:20).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we have shown how, on a number of levels, Wrede's explanation of the Messianic Secret motif in Mark fails completely. The better approach is to read carefully through Mark on his own terms (something Wrede does not seem to have been able to do) and letting that form our ideas of how Mark understood the title "Messiah" to relate to Jesus. When we do this we find that Jesus is first and foremost presented as a divined figure, filled with the power of God to heal, cast out demons, perform terror-inspiring miracles, and that in that primary capacity he is also the long expected Messiah of Israel, but one that comes with higher and vastly more expansive plans than anyone at the time would have ever thought of when they used the term. He came first "to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). He will come again, at the end of all things, in his Father's glory, with his holy angels to set up his throne (Mark 8:38, 13:16).

On the Development of Historical Criticism



RUSSELL L. MEEK
*Associate Editor, Journal for the
Evangelical Study
of the Old Testament*
*PhD Student (OT) at MBTS and
Research Assistant to
the President*
rmeek@mbts.edu

INTRODUCTION

The history of the development of historical criticism is important for evangelical scholars to know and understand for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that evangelical scholarship over the past two hundred years has spent no small amount of ink defending concepts such as the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and the divine inspiration of the Bible against historical criticism. Furthermore, the historical-grammatical method that grew from the Reformation ideal of *sola Scriptura* was birthed with the same goals of historical criticism—to understand the biblical text in its original context apart from the shackles of dogmatic exegesis that had often kept the Bible chained to somewhat fanciful interpretations since the days of the church fathers and into the Middle Ages. Each method of exegesis—historical-critical and historical-grammatical—grew from same ground. By understanding the development of the one we may come to understand the development and importance of the other. Finally, historical criticism is not going away. It has by now morphed into

several different manifestations,¹ but the basic, foundational presuppositions of critical exegesis of the Bible remain the same, making it imperative for evangelical scholars to return to its genesis that we might understand and critically engage its current expressions. This project will outline the growth and development of the historical critical method as it relates to Pentateuchal criticism beginning with the work of Baruch Spinoza and continuing to Julius Wellhausen's Documentary Hypothesis. Of necessity, many scholars will be ignored, not because they lack importance, but because a treatment of this size must limit its scope. As this article is an historical survey, the bulk of critical interaction with the conclusions and presuppositions of historical criticism will be reserved until the end of the article, where suggestions will be offered for how we, as evangelicals and Southern Baptists who reject historical criticism as a methodology, should interact with historical criticism.²

THE PREHISTORY OF HISTORICAL CRITICISM

Charting the Course: Baruch Spinoza

"In our time, scholars generally study the Bible in the manner in which they study any other book. As is generally admitted, Spinoza more than any other man laid the foundation for this kind of Biblical study."³ Baruch Spinoza was a Spanish Jew who lived during the time of fierce Christian persecution of the Jews under Phillip II.⁴ This climate of fierce persecution, coupled with the influence of Epicurean philosophy, convinced Spinoza that religion had torn apart Europe and humans must therefore break free of it in order to be truly happy. This freedom from religion comes in the form of faith in science, which Spinoza thought would lead to religious tolerance and pluralism, and therefore,

¹ E.g., form criticism, source criticism, post-colonial criticism, liberation criticism, post-liberation criticism, feminist criticism, etc.

² Parties interested in a fuller treatment of the history of historical criticism should see *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. Volume III/1: The Nineteenth Century* (ed. Magne Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

³ Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 35.

⁴ Roy A. Harrisville and Walter Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture: Baruch Spinoza to Brevard Childs* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 33.

peace.⁵ In order to arrive at this “pure religion”—that which is reasonable and moral—that would allow human happiness, Spinoza “[d]etermined to examine the Bible afresh in a careful, impartial, and unfettered spirit, making no assumptions concerning it, and attributing to it no doctrines which I do not find clearly therein set down.”⁶ This involved the separation of “truth” from “meaning.” Spinoza argued that meaning was tied to the specific historical-cultural context of the original audience and is applicable *only* to the original audience. Truth was that which had universal significance. In order to arrive at truth rather than meaning, Spinoza outlined four principles of biblical interpretation.

First, Spinoza argued that the Bible must be treated as any other text, thus removing from it any vestiges of revelation. Second, the Bible must be divorced from its dogmatic history of interpretation in order that the Bible may be interpreted literally. However, Spinoza “identifie[d] literal interpretation with temporal and profane understanding.”⁷ Thus, literal interpretation entailed going behind the text to discover its true meaning when the text spoke “irrationally,” such as when it claimed that God had spoken. Related to Spinoza’s second principle is his insistence that the Hebrew people have an incredible disposition to attribute all things to God, which allowed him to “undermine the authority of scripture as revelation or even as record of revelation; for obviously at any point where a divine decree or action seemed irrational, it could be claimed that Hebrew idiom was responsible for its attribution to God.”⁸

Third, Spinoza argued that the “truth of Scripture is that which is recognizable to unaided human reason,” but the fourth principle states that only the educated elite are qualified to determine what is reasonable.⁹

Spinoza’s principles of biblical interpretation had profound impact on the development of historical criticism in the centuries to follow. Perhaps most significant was his argument that the Bible should be examined without recourse to its status as divine revelation. This move paved the way for later interpreters to investigate the *human* sources of the text, which ultimately led them to posit historical inaccuracies,

⁵ *Ibid.*, 42–43.

⁶ Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise* (trans. R. H. M. Elwes; New York: Dover, 1951), 8.

⁷ Harrisville and Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture*, 41.

⁸ Robert M. Grant and David Tracy, *A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible* (2nd rev. ed.; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1984), 106.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

multiple authors, and various biases. Furthermore, Spinoza's view that biblical interpretation must be divorced from dogmatism allowed future interpreters to investigate biblical claims outside the church's purview.¹⁰ His separation of "meaning" and "truth" was significant because it highlighted the importance of interpreting the Bible within its historical-cultural context, but also because it allowed scholars to blame any supernatural occurrences on the cultural prejudices of the original authors and audience.¹¹ Finally, Spinoza's view of the superstitious Hebrew mindset laid the foundation for the "degenerative model of ancient Israelite history" that came to dominate biblical studies with the rise and eventual success of historical-critical exegesis.¹²

First Steps: Jean Astruc and Richard Simon

In 1753 Jean Astruc published his *Conjectures sur les Memoires Originaux Dont il paroît que Moÿse s'est servi pour composer le Livre de la Gènese: Avec des Remarques, qui appuient ou qui éclaircissent ces Conjectures*, a treatise that would change the landscape of not only Pentateuchal criticism, but biblical studies as a whole. In it, Astruc posited that if Moses did not experience what he wrote in Genesis (and he did not), then he must either have received it from divine revelation or had recourse to earlier sources. Since Moses did not directly appeal to divine revelation in the Pentateuch, then Astruc concluded that he must have used earlier sources, which Moses then divided into "smaller portions according to the incidents related in them," which he then compiled into Genesis.¹³ Astruc proposed four proofs for his theory that Moses used sources: "1. The repetition of the same occurrences; 2. The

¹⁰ Note that the Reformers also heralded this principle, albeit for different reasons and with different results.

¹¹ On the role of prejudice in interpretation, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (trans. Garrett Barden & John Cumming; New York: Seabury, 1975), 235–74.

¹² Jon D. Levinson, "Theological Consensus or Historical Evasion? Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies," in *Hebrew Bible or Old Testament?* (eds. Roger Brooks & John J. Collins; Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), 123. Quoted in Harrisville and Sundber, *Bible in Modern Culture*, 44.

¹³ Jean Astruc, *Conjectures sur le Gènese* (trans. P. Gibert; *Classiques de l'histoire des religions*; Paris: Noëse, 1991), 9. Quoted in Rudolf Smend, *From Astruc to Zimmerli: Old Testament Scholarship in Three Centuries* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 7.

alternation between Elohim and Jehovah . . . as names for God; 3. The omission of this alternation, generally speaking, in the rest of the Pentateuch from Ex. 3 onwards, where Moses is no longer dependent on tradition but is a witness to what he relates; 4. the anachronisms.”¹⁴ Using these four proofs, Astruc divided the Pentateuch into four columns: column A consisted of texts that use Elohim, column B consisted of texts that use Jehovah,¹⁵ column C consisted of texts that contain repetitions that do not use any name for God, and column D consisted of texts that Astruc believed did not belong to Israel’s history.¹⁶ In order to defend Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, Astruc proposed that Moses compiled these four texts separately, intending them to be read as four distinct accounts. However, later scribes integrated them into a whole, thereby leaving Moses susceptible to the charges of “carelessness and inattention which even the most guarded commentators have laid at his door.”¹⁷

While Astruc wrote apologetically to defend Mosaic authorship, Richard Simon was not so kind toward Moses.¹⁸ In 1678 Simon published *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, in which he first used what would come to be known as the historical-critical method.¹⁹ Simon was not only the forerunner of modern historical criticism, but he was also the first scholar to suggest that behind the Pentateuch “there lay a long prehistory of distinct documents.”²⁰ In his treatise, Simon examines three areas of biblical scholarship.²¹ First, he tackled textual problems, not the least of which was Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, which Simon thought was well-nigh impossible. He also discerned apparent chronological discrepancies in the Old Testament, such as the disagreement in Genesis regarding whether Isaac was alive

¹⁴ Smend, *From Astruc to Zimmerli*, 8.

¹⁵ I am using Jehovah so as not to place “Yahweh” in Astruc’s writings anachronistically.

¹⁶ Jean Astruc, *Conjectures*, 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 438.

¹⁸ Cf., Smend, *From Astruc to Zimmerli*, 11.

¹⁹ Richard Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (Paris: Billaine, 1678). For a modern edition see *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament* (ed. P. Gibert; Paris: Bayard, 2008).

²⁰ Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1996), 240.

²¹ See M. A. Fahey, “Simon, Richard (1638–1712),” in *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters* (ed. Donald K. Kim; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007), 915. See also M. A. Fahey, “Richard Simon, Biblical Exegete (1638–1712),” *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 99 (1963): 236–47.

or dead when Joseph was sold into slavery.²² Second, Simon mocked his contemporaries for their lack of “critical acumen” when examining the biblical text. Third, Simon outlined several rules for interpretation that were to be followed in order to arrive at the appropriate interpretation of a given text: 1) Mosaic authorship was to be abandoned. Instead, groups of scribes composed the majority of the Pentateuch through reliance on an oral tradition. 2) Simon modified the dominant view of biblical inspiration to argue against the idea that God dictated each word of Scripture. Similarly, inspiration did not exclude the use of literary genres in use at the time of composition. 3) Simon denied the historicity of many parts of the Bible, arguing instead that they were “poetic descriptions” of God’s work in the world.²³

Richard Simon’s work is important first of all because he furthered the work of Baruch Spinoza in regards to historical criticism. Whereas Spinoza made it possible to examine the Bible as a human book, Simon took this further by interpreting the Bible critically. Most importantly, his denial of Mosaic authorship in favor of scribal schools anticipated the source criticism that would reach its height a few centuries later. His denial of the historicity of some portions of the Bible also paved the way for the work of scholars such as de Wette and Wellhausen who would roundly deny the historicity of Chronicles, thus denigrating its value for developing a chronology of the Pentateuch. Finally, Simon’s discussion of the doctrine of inspiration has been influential in evangelical scholarship as well as critical scholarship, for it opened the way to examine the Bible within its distinct literary genres.

HISTORICAL CRITICISM IN FULL SWING

Scholars such as Spinoza, Astruc, and Simon laid the foundation for nineteenth century scholarship to develop historical criticism more fully. As in the previous section, our primary focus here is on Pentateuchal criticism because the Pentateuch “has generally served as the staging ground for many if not most of the critical questions and methods that later spread to other areas of the biblical literature.”²⁴

²² Simon, *Histoire critique*, 136–7. Cited in Jean Louis Ska, “The ‘History of Israel’: Its Emergence as an Independent Discipline,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. Volume III/1: The Nineteenth Century* (ed. Magne Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 321.

²³ Fahey, “Simon, Richard,” 915.

²⁴ Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker, *The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress/Chico, CA: Scholars, 1985), 263.

Wilhelm de Wette

With his sixteen-page dissertation, de Wette did what all budding scholars hope to do: change the face of their discipline.²⁵ In it, he argued that Moses did not author the Pentateuch, which was in fact the product of multiple authors. De Wette posited two authors for Genesis, and several more for the rest of the Pentateuch. He also argued that Deuteronomy must have been a later invention because its spirituality corresponds more closely to Judaism.²⁶ It was only in a footnote that he mentioned that the book discovered by Josiah in 622 B.C. was perhaps Deuteronomy, a theory that would become “standard fare” in due time.²⁷ In his later work, de Wette developed the implications of his dissertation.

His *Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament*²⁸ pitted Chronicles against Samuel/Kings, arguing that Chronicles presents a religion that is Mosiac and Levitical while Samuel/Kings does not.²⁹ In de Wette’s view, Chronicles displayed prejudice toward supernatural events and matters related to Levites, thus indicating the author’s desire to retrieve “the honor of the Jewish cultus.”³⁰ These concerns are absent in Samuel/Kings, which records multi-site worship and a religion that is devoid of the type of ritual found in later Judaism. Furthermore, de Wette argued that the religion portrayed in the Pentateuch does not appear outside of the Pentateuch again until Ezra-Nehemiah. De Wette makes much of Josiah’s discovery of the law book in 2 Kgs 22, stating “that until Josiah, there is no trace of the existence of the Pentateuch. Thereafter, especially in the Exile, there are the most frequent and

²⁵ Mark Gignilliat states, “Within this work, the seeds of critical insight were sown that would eventually shape Pentateuchal studies . . .” (*A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism: From Benedict Spinoza to Brevard Childs* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012], 44).

²⁶ See H. Graf Reventlow, *History of Biblical Interpretation, Volume 4: From the Enlightenment to the Twentieth Century* (trans. Leo G. Perdue; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 233.

²⁷ Gignilliat, *Brief History*, 44.

²⁸ Wilhem Martin Leberecht de Wette, *Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (2 vols.; Halle: Schimmelpfennig, 1805–1807).

²⁹ See Reventlow, *History*, 234–5.

³⁰ De Wette, *Beiträge*, 1:102. Quoted in Reventlow, *History*, 235.

definite traces.”³¹ Based on the Levitical and Mosaic emphases of Chronicles, de Wette concluded that Chronicles was a fictive account that projected Deuteronomic ideals onto early Israelite history. Having devalued the historicity of Chronicles, de Wette was now free to re-date the law portions of the Pentateuch, which—for him—reflect the same period as Chronicles, that is, the monarchy.³²

In his *Beiträge*, de Wette also distinguished sharply between myth and history, arguing that the purpose of the historian is to interpret the historical record in order to learn something of its contributors. Thus, the biblical accounts only tell us about the historical-cultural context *at their time of composition*. The implication of de Wette’s view of history-writing is that the Pentateuch is valuable for understanding the history of Israel’s religion in that it describes the religion of those who wrote the Pentateuch, but it “is rather useless as a source of history, or, rather does not exist as such.”³³

Heinrich Ewald

Heinrich Ewald’s *History of Israel* was the first critical history of Israel to be written.³⁴ Ewald’s stated purpose was “To describe this history . . . as far as it can be known in all its discoverable remains and traces . . .”³⁵ Ultimately, Ewald sought to write a history of Israel that would offer an alternative view to the “hyper-critical attitude of de Wette,” for the former held to the truthfulness of Scripture.³⁶ However, for Ewald, “truthfulness” had to be qualified, for “[t]radition has its roots in actual facts; yet it is not absolute history, but has a peculiar character and a value of its own.”³⁷ The task of the historian is therefore to separate out the “historical kernel” that is imbedded deep within the tradition (*Sage*) found in the biblical text. For Ewald, this historical kernel could be found within “songs, proverbs, proper names,

³¹ De, *Beiträge*, 1:184–5. Cited in John Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism in the Nineteenth Century: England and Germany* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1985), 31.

³² See Reventlow, *History*, 234–6.

³³ De Wette, *Beiträge*, 2:398.

³⁴ Heinrich Ewald, *Einleitung in die Geschichte des Volke Israel* (8 vols.; Göttingen: Dieterichsche Buchhandlung, 1843–1859, 1864–1868); ET: *History of Israel* (8 vols.; ed. R. Martineau; London: Longman & Green, 1876–1886).

³⁵ Ska, “The ‘History of Israel,’” 330.

³⁶ Ewald, *History*, I:7.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I:44.

monuments, and institutions.”³⁸ As opposed to de Wette and later Wellhausen, Ewald argued that though the historical narratives were revised at a later date, they still contribute something about both the time in which they were written and the time to which they refer.

Ewald’s *History* divides the Bible into three works: the Great Book of Origins (Genesis–Joshua), the Great Book of Kings (Judges–Kings), and Great Book of Universal History Down to the Greek Times (Chronicles–Nehemiah). He argues that the Pentateuch could have had up to five separate authors, each of whom “completed and supplemented” the others’ work.³⁹ With this, Ewald introduced the Supplementary Hypothesis for the composition of the Pentateuch, his other significant achievement in the development of historical criticism.⁴⁰ Ewald further argued that the Patriarchs were “ideal types” who must have actually lived at some point, but he also affirmed that “If we look simply at the prevailing character and representation of this period given in the most ancient sources, we shall find little that is really historical to say of the three Patriarchs.”⁴¹ Regarding the “Great Book of Kings,” Ewald argued that it consisted of monarchical documents that were later compiled by an exilic, Deuteronomistic editor—who also added Joshua—as an apology for why the people of Israel were suffering exile.⁴²

Karl Heinrich Graf

“Of the trio of scholars who laid the foundation for modern source criticism, Graf was the initiator and first proponent; Kuenen the defender and detailed explicator; and Julius Wellhausen (1844–1914) the one who took the ideas and applied them to a fully articulated

³⁸ Ska, “The ‘History of Israel.’” Cf. Ewald, *History*, 18–22.

³⁹ Ska, “History of Israel,” 335.

⁴⁰ See Thomas Römer, “‘Higher Criticism’: The Historical and Literary-critical Approach—With Special Reference to the Pentateuch,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. Volume III/1: The Nineteenth Century* (ed. Magne Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 411. However, see R. J. Thompson, *Moses and the Law in a Century of Criticism since Graf* (VTSup 19; Leiden: Brill, 1970), 29. Thompson argues that Ewald developed a hybrid Supplementary/Documentary Hypothesis, quoting Georg Fohrer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (New York: Abingdon, 1968), 108–109.

⁴¹ Ewald, *History*, 1:290.

⁴² Cf. Römer, “Higher Criticism,” 415.

history of Israelite religion . . .”⁴³ Along with laying the foundation for source criticism, Graf was instrumental in the development of historical criticism because in his *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments* he denied the unity of the *Grundschrift*, the document that until Graf had been thought to form the primary material in the Pentateuch.⁴⁴ Graf posited that the narrative and legal material within the *Grundschrift* came from two different sources “and argued that its legislation was *later* than that of the book of Deuteronomy.”⁴⁵ Though Graf later brought the narrative and legal sections back together, he “essentially proclaimed the legal material to be the linchpin for the dating of the sources, leaving the narrative material to the side.”⁴⁶

After denying the unity of the *Grundschrift*, Graf developed his second main contribution to historical criticism: he argued that the Deuteronomist combined the narrative of the *Grundschrift* with J and Deuteronomy. As noted above, scholars thought that it was not until after the exile that the priestly material was added to the Pentateuch.⁴⁷ This is crucial because scholars now looked *only* to the legal material as a valid method for dating the Pentateuchal sources, which confirmed critical suspicions that the Pentateuch was a monarchical (at least) projection onto a much earlier period in Israelite history. Furthermore, Graf’s hypothesis “laid the groundwork for the eventual combination of J and E into one narrative document, known by the siglum ‘JE’ or the name ‘Jehovist.’”⁴⁸ From this time it was simply taken as a given that “JE” was a unified source that was to be treated together.

Abraham Keunen

Though Abraham Kuenen sharply criticized Graf for dividing the *Grundschrift*, he developed, clarified, and popularized Graf’s theory. Until Graf and Kuenen, Pentateuchal material was dated according to the “contradictions” and doublets found within the narrative material. After them, it was dated according to the priestly legislation.⁴⁹ Indeed, Kuenen was so convincing in his arguments that in 1886 he could boast

⁴³ Joel Baden, *J, E, and the Redaction of the Pentateuch* (FAT 68; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 27.

⁴⁴ Karl Heinrich Graf, *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments: Zwei historisch-kritische Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: T. O. Weigel, 1886).

⁴⁵ Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism*, 258.

⁴⁶ Baden, *Redaction*, 23.

⁴⁷ Rogerson, *Old Testament Criticism*, 258.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴⁹ Baden, *Redaction*, 24.

regarding historical-critical readings of the Pentateuch that "...I am no longer advocating a heresy, but am expounding the received view of European critical scholarship."⁵⁰ Kuenen also argued that much of the legal material within the so-called Hexateuch was *later* than Deuteronomy and that the author of Deuteronomy did not redact the Hexateuch. Rather, the redaction followed along the lines of the *Grundschrift*.⁵¹ Ultimately, Kuenen's primary importance, apart from his popularization of Graf's work, was his insistence that "[t]he borderline between the *writing* and the *editing* of the Hexateuch exists only in our imagination. The latest writers were at the same time redactors, and vice versa. The further we advance in the critical investigation, the more the extent of what Popper called *the ongoing diaskeue* emerges."⁵² The importance of this statement lies in the fact that Kuenen demonstrated the impossibility of working out the distinction between redactors and authors. This observation may lead one to wonder whether the entire enterprise of searching for separate authors within the Pentateuch is bankrupt, yet Kuenen steadfastly held onto to the Supplementary Hypothesis in spite of confidence in the inability to distinguish between authors and editors within the Pentateuchal material.

Julius Wellhausen

The previous scholars examined each made smooth the way for Julius Wellhausen, perhaps the most influential Old Testament scholar of the entire modern period. Wellhausen is most closely associated with the Documentary Hypothesis, which he adopted and adapted from the likes of Graf, Kuenen, and de Wette, among others. The "novelty" and genius of Wellhausen, however, lay in his use of source criticism to reconstruct a history of Israel.⁵³ In his view, once the historical context of the individual sources were determined, they could then be used to develop a genuine history of Israel for the sources reflected the views

⁵⁰ Abraham Kuenen, *An Historico-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Pentateuch* (trans. Phillip H. Wicksteed; London: MacMillan, 1886), lx.

⁵¹ Rudolf Smend, "The Work of Abraham Kuenen and Julius Wellhausen," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation. Volume III/1: The Nineteenth Century* (ed. Magne Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 431.

⁵² Abraham Kuenen, *ThT* 14 (1880): 281. Cited in Smend, "The Work," 432-3.

⁵³ Smend, "The Work," 450.

dominant at their time of writing, not the views of the Israelites at the time that the events allegedly occurred.⁵⁴

Wellhausen's most influential work was his *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, in which he laid out his view of Israel's history.⁵⁵ In *Prolegomena*, Wellhausen makes a sharp distinction between Israel and Judaism. Israel had no law and therefore represented a pure religion that was devoid of ritualism and false worship. Judaism, on the other hand, had a fully-developed law, which accounted for its ritualistic, lifeless worship.⁵⁶ In order to arrive at this conclusion, Wellhausen asked the question, "Where should the law of Moses be located in Israel's history?"⁵⁷ Since Wellhausen approached the text from the philosophical presupposition that religion becomes more complex over time, he had to posit that Mosaic law belonged at a much later date in Israel's history than the biblical text indicated.

The centralization of the cult became a major tenet in his reconstruction of Israel's history, for it provided important evidence regarding the development of Israel's religion over time. Wellhausen observed tension between cultic centralization and the proliferation of "high places" up until the time of Solomon, after which the kings received criticism if they did not tear down the non-Jerusalemite worship sites. Wellhausen therefore posited that Mosaic Law, which precluded multi-site worship, must have been a later development in Israel's history that was subsequently projected onto the earlier part of its history through the editing of the Pentateuch. Wellhausen posited that of the four sources, JE demonstrated no concern with centralization, D initiated centralization, and P finalized it, such that "Priestly material is retrofitted to the time of Moses in its canonical presentation, though, in fact, it is from the postexilic period."⁵⁸

Apart from cultic centralization, Wellhausen also examined the sacrifices, feasts, priests and Levites, and clergy, each of which "reveal[s] the same historical development of Israel's religion as observed in the move to centralize the cult and further support his historical reconstruction."⁵⁹

The lasting legacy of Wellhausen's *Prolegomena* is his historiographical use of source criticism to write a critical history of

⁵⁴ Gignilliat, *Brief History*, 63.

⁵⁵ Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Scholars Press Reprints and Translations; Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994 [1878]).

⁵⁶ Smend, *From Astruc to Zimmerli*, 95–96.

⁵⁷ Gignilliat, *Brief History*, 67.

⁵⁸ Gignilliat, *Brief History*, 68–69.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 69–70.

Israel. His treatment of the Documentary Hypothesis was—obviously—its most convincing exposition thus far and quickly became the standard critical view. After Wellhausen, scholars simply took for granted that the Pentateuch had been composed of at least four sources and that the legislative material came from a period much later in Israel's history than the narrative sections. Furthermore, Wellhausen essentially flip-flopped the traditional understanding of the relationship between the Law and the Prophets. After his work, the traditional view that the prophets read, interpreted, and expounded upon Mosaic Law was defunct. Rather, it became “common knowledge” that “[i]t is an empty illusion that the prophets would have explained and interpreted the law.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, Wellhausen's dichotomy between Israel and Judaism became increasingly popular and would influence the Christian view of Judaism and the Old Testament for many years to come: “With the appearance of the law came to an end the old freedom, not only in the sphere of worship, now restricted to Jerusalem, but in the sphere of religious spirit as well. There was now in existence an authority as objective as could be; and this was the death of prophecy.”⁶¹

Volumes upon volumes have been written on each of the scholars examined here, and this treatment in no way pretends to be exhaustive. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the brief sketches of these founding fathers of historical criticism will shed some light on the current state of critical scholarship today and its importance for evangelical biblical scholarship. We turn now to what is perhaps most important for understanding how to engage critical scholarship: the philosophical presuppositions that undergird it.

PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS AND INFLUENCES ENLIGHTENMENT RATIONALISM

Perhaps the most important influence in the development of historical criticism is Enlightenment Rationalism. This philosophical worldview allowed interpreters for the first time to view the Bible as a strictly human book, removing from it any vestiges of divine revelation. We can see this trend clearly in Spinoza, whose “rationalism leaves no room for any traditional concept of revelation, and his determinism denies the possibility of any special acts of God in history. Human

⁶⁰ Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, 398.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 402.

reason is the only reliable source of truth; the Bible is simply a collection of fables and fantastic stories that the simple can use to nourish their faith and obedience.”⁶² Rationalism effectively freed interpreters from reading the Bible within the confines of the church’s traditional hermeneutical principles. Rather than working from the presupposition that God had inspired the biblical text, Rationalism allowed them to work from the presupposition that the Bible was just like any other book, which allowed them to apply the same hermeneutical principles to the Bible as would be applied to any other text.

Rationalism also posited that “[r]eason is a human faculty which is adapted to the natural environment,” a view that led to the removal of sin from human affairs.⁶³ That is, it was no longer held as truth that human sinfulness could corrupt the mind; instead, reason was thought to be able to rise above environmental factors in order to understand anything that was reasonable and rational. This certainly included the universe, for Rationalism held that it was constructed “according . . . [to] scientific laws” which are understandable and immutable.⁶⁴ Miracles were thought to be impossible because they would overrule the universal laws that govern the universe. Finally, Rationalism urged interpreters to purify the Bible from all “irrational and immoral elements,” which, of course, were determined by the application of rationalistic principles to the text.⁶⁵

Apart from the devaluation of revelation and the presupposition of the Bible’s origins, Rationalism also caused interpreters to apply modern historiographical principles to the Bible. This result of Rationalism does not fully blossom until the work of de Wette and Wellhausen, but its roots lie in the insistence that the Bible be subjected to the same standards as all other historical works. Furthermore, Richard Simon’s move to interpret the Bible within the confines of its distinct genres impacted the way later interpreters read the historical books, such as Chronicles, leading them to subject ancient history writing to the same standards as modern history writing. Even in this, though, the presupposition that the Bible was a human book—and therefore fallible—was a driving factor.

⁶²Daniel Boerman, “The Significance of Spinoza for Biblical Interpretation,” *ResQ* 51 (2009): 101.

⁶³Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 251–2.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 252.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 253.

HEGELIAN DIALECTIC AND EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

The Hegelian dialectic, in its simplest form, posits a thesis-antithesis-synthesis model of evolutionary development, whereby the antithesis is a sharp reaction against a particular thesis, and the synthesis is the outworking of the combination of the thesis and antithesis. Furthermore, this theory is fundamentally evolutionary: complexity increases over time. An idea in its simplest form—the thesis—comes first, followed by increasing complexity until resolution is reached in the synthesis. This philosophy can be seen clearly in historical criticism: Thompson points out that Wellhausen openly cites Vatke, who “was certainly a Hegelian,” as having profound influence on his work.⁶⁶ Thus, it is no surprise to find Hegelianism in Wellhausen’s division of Israel’s history into three periods: Ancient Israel, Prophetic Reformation, and Restoration.⁶⁷ However, Thompson is perhaps correct in arguing that “at most it is in forms of expression rather than in basic principles that Hegelianism influenced Grafianism.”⁶⁸ In the Hegelian system, the synthesis is considered the highest achievement, but for Wellhausen Ancient Israel marked the high point of Israelite religion for it was unencumbered by the Law. Wellhausen here displays the evolutionary presupposition that religion becomes more complex over time, and therefore the Law—a complex system—must be a later projection onto Israel’s early history, therefore upending the biblical account of God’s revelation in the Old Testament. Finally, Wellhausen’s valuation of “early” Israelite religion exposes his Romanticism.⁶⁹

ROMANTICISM

The influence of Romanticism is most obvious in the beginning stages of historical criticism, whose early proponents were heavily influenced by Herder.⁷⁰ It was also influential in the History of Religions School, as evidenced by its use of the Bible to understand the religion of Israel as a human construct. As Gignilliat states, “[t]he Romantics have to look for ‘religion’ in something other than revelation; it will now be found in the humanities in general or in the course of traceable human

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁶⁷ See Julius Wellhausen, *Israelitische und jüdische Geschichte* (Berlin: Reimer, 1894).

⁶⁸ Thompson, *Moses and the Law*, 41.

⁶⁹ See *ibid.*, 45.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

history with all its *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress).⁷¹ Romanticism is therefore an important concept for historical criticism because it caused early historical critics who had eschewed revelatory religion to search for religion elsewhere. As Thompson indicates, vestiges of Romanticism also likely account for Wellhausen's infatuation with the earlier, "pure" religion of Israel as opposed to the later, "legalistic" religion of Judaism.⁷²

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

Understanding these philosophical presuppositions is crucial to understanding and engaging with historical critical scholarship today. Rationalism—and the anti-supernatural bias that accompanies it—accounts for the most significant disagreements that evangelicals have with critical scholars. Disbelief in the supernatural, and the concomitant elevation of human reason, undergirded critical scholarship from its inception, and remains a driving force in how critical scholars interpret the Bible today. Furthermore, the evolutionary presupposition that complexity increases over time led early critical scholars to discount the biblical account of God's revelation in the Old Testament, a sentiment still held today. Though the Bible presents a complex religious system in the Pentateuch, critical scholars argue that such complexity could not have been reached at such an early point in Israel's history. The result of these two factors—Rationalism and Hegelian Dialectic—was a biblical religion devoid of revelation, and therefore value, which has unfortunately led many to search for a meaningful relationship with God outside of the Bible.

CONCLUSION

Why study the history of historical criticism? Should not evangelical scholars simply concern themselves with the Bible? Yes and no. Yes, because we are a biblical people who hold that the Bible is God's inspired and inerrant word. No, because we also are an evangelistic people who will encounter historical criticism in our ministries. First and foremost our motivation is tied to the call to engage an ever-

⁷¹ Gignilliat, *Brief History*, 87.

⁷² Thompson, *Moses and the Law*, 45.

growing skeptical and post-Christian culture with the truth of Scripture. The people to whom we witness and minister will have been exposed to critical theories of the Bible. Whether it be from The History Channel, Newsweek, or some other source, our mission field is inundated with a false understanding of the Bible. We would do well to be able to interact with historical criticism if for no other reason than that. For too long Christians have retreated from the challenges presented by critical scholarship, and thereby we have allowed many “discussions” to become monologues.

Furthermore, Evangelicalism and historical criticism share similar values, though they usually disagree on how to interpret the biblical evidence itself. Like evangelicals, critical scholars—both previous and current—want to understand the meaning of biblical texts in their original context. They value the original historical-cultural context of the Bible and seek to understand how it influences the meaning of the text. Historical critics also read the Bible closely, and much to the surprise of some evangelicals, take the biblical text seriously. The fruits of historical criticism—source criticism, form criticism, and so many other criticisms—have given new insight into the Bible. Like evangelicals, historical critics are dissatisfied with allegorization and moralization, wanting instead to know how the text’s original audience read and understood it. Thus, even though evangelicals disagree with how critical scholars read the Bible, we may still at times learn from their careful scrutiny of the text.

Despite the similar interests of both historical criticism and evangelical scholarship, there are significant presuppositional disagreements that lead to widely divergent interpretive decisions. Therefore, understanding the history and development of historical criticism will enable thoughtful interaction with the discipline of historical criticism as opposed to either a knee-jerk reaction against it or a naïve embracement of it. Furthermore, understanding the historical-cultural context that gave rise to historical criticism exposes the philosophical presuppositions that underlie many of its unorthodox and anti-supernatural interpretive decisions. As evangelicals seek to engage the world for Christ, we cannot turn a blind eye to critical interpretive strategies; instead, we must confront them head-on. Basic knowledge of the key figures, development, and presuppositions of historical criticism will enable us to do that in a Christ-glorying manner.

The Hare Krishnas, The Second Commandment, And Me

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image... Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.” (Exod. 20:4-5)



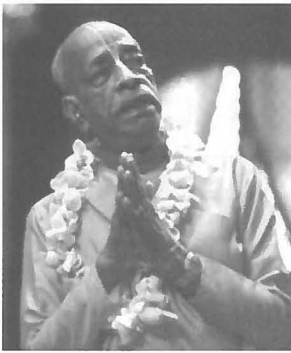
RONALD V. HUGGINS
Associate Professor
NT and Greek
Midwestern Baptist
Theological Seminary
Kansas City, MO 64118
rhuggins@mbts.edu

INTRODUCTION

Sharp-edged shadows, October evening, clear, crisp. Kansas City Saturday on the Plaza. Northwest corner of 47th Street and Broadway Boulevard. Danavir Goswami, President of Kansas City's Rupangura Vedic College is out with a bunch of young guys, shaved heads, dhotis, out for Kirtan (*kīrtana*), singing chants to Krishna, whom they regard as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The name of the chant they are performing while I pause for a bit to listen was the *māha-mantra*. By now there are a number of versions of that famous chant available, but the one being sung tonight uses the tune from the old Radha Krishna Temple album, produced by Beatle George Harrison, which became a hit on the popular radio for a time in the UK back in 1969. I recognize the tune partly because I used to have the album, back in the early 1970s,

and though most of my readers will not have had that record, they'd probably recognize the tune anyway as that of famous American folk singer Woody Guthrie's classic: "This Land is Your Land." If they go way back, or take a special interest in such things, they may even remember where Woody got it, namely from the Carter Family's song, "When the World's on Fire." I put the words in parallel columns to help my readers envisage how the chant goes:

<i>Māha-mantra.</i>	This Land is Your Land	When the World's on Fire
Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna	This land is your land This land is my land From California	Oh my loving mother When the world's on fire. Don't you want God's bosom
Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare	to the New York island; From the red wood forest to the Gulf Stream waters This land was made For you and Me.	To be your pillow Hide thee over in the rock of ages Rock of ages Cleft for me



To me it's amazing how long the Hare Krishnas themselves can go without recognizing the origin of the tune. Some years ago, at the 2003 meeting of the American Association of Religion in Atlanta, I asked a fairly prominent representative of ISCON (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness) whether the Krishnas still sang the *māha-mantra* to the tune of *This Land is Your Land*. Obviously puzzled he looked at me and answered: "We never did." So I sang him the first verse of the *māha-mantra* as he nodded in recognition of the fact that what I was singing was the version he knew, until I replaced the concluding "Rama Rama/ Hare Hare," with "This land was made for you and me." He suddenly exclaimed: "It's the tune of *This Land Is Your Land!*" I can't say for sure, but I wouldn't be surprised to hear that A. C.

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda (d. 1977), the founder of the Hare Krishna movement (hereafter: Prabhupāda), had intentionally taken over the tune of *This Land Is Your Land*, for use in introducing the *māha-mantra* to would-be American converts for the precise reason that that tune had become so deeply rooted in the fabric of American culture.



I sat down and made myself comfortable on the side walk where they were and snapped a few photos of them. I was sort of hoping one or more of them might come over and attempt to share his/their message with me, so that I could share mine with him. Their approach that evening was very direct. What they were doing was passing out little cards with the *māha-mantra* and trying to get people to chant along with them. For them the act of chanting itself is sanctifying and salvific. Prabhupāda explained:

When we chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa [Krishna] *mantra* [i.e., the *māha-mantra*] offenselessly we immediately contact Kṛṣṇa in His

internal energy. Thus we immediately become purified from all the dirty things in our heart.¹

And then later in the same discourse he explains:

Consciousness is already in you, but it is now dirty consciousness. What we have to do now is cleanse our consciousness of all dirty things and make it pure consciousness—Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. And we can easily do this by the pleasant method of chanting the glorious holy name of God: *Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.*²

In making these remarks Prabhupāda was simply revealing his spiritual roots in the Vaishnavism of the teaching the 16th century Bhakti Saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1485-1533).³

Chaitanya himself wrote similarly with regard to the chanting of Krishna's name:

Chant the name of the Lord and His Glory unceasingly
That the mirror of the heart may be wiped clean
And quenched that mighty forest fire,
Worldly lust raging within.⁴

Nor is what these guys are doing here tonight, their “evangelistic” strategy of taking *kīrtana* to the streets as a means of spreading their teaching, new either. It goes back to Chaitanya as well.⁵ In an early study of reasons why people joined the Hare Krishna movement, it was

¹ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *The Quest for Enlightenment* (Los Angeles, CA: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1997), 2. The remarks were from a talk Prabhupāda gave on 1 Jan 1969.

² *Ibid.*, 5.

³ Prabhupāda and his followers actually believe Chaitanya to have been “the Supreme Lord appearing as His own greatest devotee” (Prabhupāda, *Quest for Enlightenment*, 258). Chaitanya was of the same generation as the Protestant Reformer Martin Luther, although the two men would almost certainly never have heard of one another, due the cultural, religious, and language barriers that separated them, to say nothing of the great distance.

⁴ *Vedanta for the Western World* (ed. Christopher Isherwood; New York: Viking, 1960 [Orig. ed. 1945]), 225.

⁵ Arvind Sharma, *Hinduism as a Missionary Religion* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2011), 101-103.

found that “the most common reason given by devotees for being attracted to the movement was the sound of the *mantra* (58%).”⁶ And before we dismiss what’s going on here tonight we need to consider that many of the most prominent Indologists and experts on Hinduism often with positions in major American universities, started, thirty, forty years ago, doing what these young guys are doing tonight.⁷ When generals study military strategists, they do not restrict themselves only to strategists on their own side. One of the reasons of course is that good strategy often applies regardless of what side you’re on, so in that sense there is much generals can learn from enemy strategists as a way of strengthening their own hands so as to make it more likely that they will be able to defeat their enemies. The other side of the coin is that ignorance of the enemy’s strategies increases the likelihood of his defeating you. It’s all there in the writings of that Ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu:

Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.

When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal.

If ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril.⁸

I sometimes ponder what we as Evangelicals can learn from the strategies of Prabhupāda, especially considering his story. Here he was a retired pharmacist who arrived alone in New York City in 1965 at the age of 69. Two years later he suffered a stroke. Altogether he labored for 12 years in the United States and elsewhere, and then died in 1977. In those years he founded an international movement that has influenced literally millions, though sadly in the wrong direction. One of the strategies I am going to promote in this article, one of the strategies I would use on this occasion, is one Prabhupāda himself used,

⁶ Robert D. Baird, “Swami Bhaktivedanta and Ultimacy,” in *Religion in Modern India* (4th rev. ed.; ed. Robert D. Baird; New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 576 n. 3.

⁷ See *The Hare Krishna Movement: The Postcharismatic Fate of a Religious Transplant* (Edwin F. Bryant and Maria L. Ekstrand; New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

⁸ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (trans. & intro. Samuel B. Griffith; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 84 (3.31-33).

and somewhat ironically, it relates to how he used the Bible in his apologetics. But more on that a bit later.

Eventually one of the guys leaves the line of singers and comes over to me and hands me a little card with the *māha-mantra* on it. I take the card and tell him that there was a time when I would have gladly joined them in chanting, that there was a time that I believed what they believed, but that I did not believe it anymore, because now I was a follower of Jesus. A discussion ensued. He told me that he was from Columbia, Missouri, and that he had become interested in the movement after reading the *Bhagavad Gita*, which had led him to come to Kansas City to study at the Rupangura Vedic College. I told him I thought I had seen some books published by the College, and he responded that indeed they did publish books, that they have a very advanced and distinguished teacher there, by which he meant the President of the College (formally addressed as: His Holiness Danavir Goswami), the guy who they were accompanying that evening.⁹ I asked whether they still distributed Prabhupāda's books. "Oh yes," he said. I asked him if he had read certain ones. "No," he said, "Only his translation of the *Gita*."

"Well there," I said, "I began to have trouble, because of the centrality of bowing down to the images of Krishna and Radha, on the one hand, and Krishna as Jagannatha, his brother Baladeva and sister Subhadra on the other. Prabhupāda and his early followers spent a great deal of time trying to explain why this was not a violation of the second commandment: 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them' (Exod 20:4-5). And for me, the harder they tried to explain why that commandment supposedly didn't apply to worshiping images of Krishna and Jagannatha, the more keenly I felt the force and validity of the commandment."

The reason I mentioned not only Krishna and Radha was because their images are quite human looking, whereas the Jagannatha Trio immediately strike the Western eye as very pagan looking idols. These images are associated with the Jagannath Temple in Puri, India, where every year there is celebrated Ratha-yātrā or the car festival in which the images are taken from the temple and paraded on very large float-

⁹ The title used for him, for example, in *Puranic Cosmology 1* (comp. Śrīla Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana Vyāsa; ed. His Holiness Danavir Goswami; Kansas City, MO: Rupanuga Vedic College, 2007).

like, or, better yet, pavilion-like carts. July 9, 1967, saw the first Ratha-yātrā festival in the West, starting at the Krishna Temple at 518 Frederick Street in San Francisco, and running all the way down to the way to the ocean.¹⁰

Despite the glowing descriptions of Jagannatha Trio in some earlier official Hare Krishna sources, I knew how they appeared to most Westerners because I knew how they appeared to me, as rather shocking, horrible idols. Even Satsvarūpa dās Goswami admits initially having a negative reaction to the Jagannatha image the first time he saw it:

Someone said that Lord Jagannatha had arrived and was in Prabhupada's room...so I went upstairs, and there was Lord Jagannatha, a three-foot-tall, black-faced, round-eyed, smiling Deity. Unfortunately, my first impression was one of resentment. Why did we have to worship such a strange form of God?...why did we now have to worship Lord Jagannatha? We had been doing fine with pictures of Kṛṣṇa as youthful, attractive Govinda holding a flute and standing in a threefold-bending form beside Srimati Radharani and a cow. Why go from that to this primitive form of Jagannatha?"¹¹

While never completely absent, concerns over the legitimacy of worshipping graven images was perhaps (and I suspect still is) most keenly felt in the context of Ratha-yātrā, when Krishna as Jagannath, his brother Baladeva and sister Subhadra are worshipped in the form of these crude stereotypically idol-like figures. It was in any case in that context that the most memorable and energetic attempts I encountered to defuse second-commandment concerns were expressed. They occurred, in particular, in the 1 July 1975 issue of ISCON's official *Back to Godhead* magazine, to which I then subscribed. The cover story and much of the issue was taken up with Ratha-yātrā which was to be celebrated on 10 July that year.¹² The main article explaining and

¹⁰ Satsvarūpa dās Goswami, Śrīla Prabhupada-lilāmṛta: *A Biography of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda* (6 vols.; Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1980-1983) 3:153-58; Also *idem*, *Your Ever Well-Wisher* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1983), 122-25. The latter title represents a one-volume abridgement of the former.

¹¹ Satsvarūpa dās Goswami, "Kindly be Visible," *Back to Godhead* 23.8 (Aug 1988): 7, repr. in *Back to Godhead* 3.27 (June 2006): 17-19, 28.

¹² See, "Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar," *Back to Godhead* 10.7 (July 1, 1975): 18.

significance of the festival opens with a brief apologetic for the worship of images:

God's energy is everywhere. God is not different from His energy just as the sun is not different from the sunshine; therefore it is correct to say that God, in His energy, is everywhere. However, it is not possible for us to establish an intimate relationship with this impersonal, all-pervasive aspect of God. Therefore, to enable us to relate to Him personally, God, the Supreme Person, descends to the material world in the authorized form of the Deity.¹³



R.-L. Jagannatha, Subhadra, Baladeva, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

The standard argument given for the worship of images was then articulated in the same magazine in an article dedicated to the question, entitled: "Whose Worship is Idol Worship?" by Jayādvaīta dāsa, which attempts to face the second-commandment problem head on by acknowledging that there are those who "hesitate to join the Ratha-yātrā parade, for they remember that God is 'a jealous God' who commands, 'Thou shalt have no other God before Me' and 'Thou shalt not worship a graven image.' What about this? Are the Hare Kṛṣṇa people really idol worshippers?"¹⁴ Not surprisingly, the author insists that they are not. His argument, which is the basic argument Prabhupāda always used when challenged on this, was that the second commandment only applied to worshipping images having their origin in the human imagination, and not in "authorized" images based on the Scripture. Authorized images are not idols, they are actually the gods

¹³ Viśākhā-devī dasī, "Ratha-yātrā: An Ancient Festival Comes to the West," *Back to Godhead* 10.7 (July 1, 1975): 7.

¹⁴ Jayādvaīta dāsa, "Whose Worship is Idol Worship?" *Back to Godhead* 10.7 (July 1, 1975): 14.

themselves. The point is made as well by Prabhupāda himself in the context of his being interviewed about the views of Immanuel Kant:¹⁵

Hayagrīva Dāsa: Kant rejected church-going as a means to salvation. He says that, “sensuous representations of God are contrary to the command of reason. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,” etc.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: If someone imagines an image, that is not good. An image arises from the imagination. However, it is different to keep a photograph of your beloved. The photograph of your beloved is not imaginary. It is a fact.

One of Prabhupāda’s favorite analogies when describing the identity of the graven image of Krishna or Jagannatha and the god they both represent, is the letter box. One of the clearest expositions of this is found in the “Purport” he attaches to his translation of *Bhagavad Gita* 12:5, which also expounds on the reason he believes images are necessary:

The individual soul is embodied since time immemorial. It is very difficult for him to simply theoretically understand that he is not the body. Therefore, the *bhakti-yogī* accepts the Deity of Kṛṣṇa as worshipable because there is some bodily conception fixed in the mind, which can thus be applied. Of course, worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His form within the temple is not idol worship. There is evidence in the Vedic literature that worship may be *saguṇa* or *nirguṇa* – of the Supreme possessing or not possessing attributes. Worship of the Deity in the temple is *saguṇa* worship, for the Lord is represented by material qualities. But the form of the Lord, though represented by material qualities such as stone, wood or oil paint, is not actually material. That is the absolute nature of the Supreme Lord.

A crude example may be given here. We may find some mailboxes on the street, and if we post our letters in those boxes, they will naturally go to their destination without difficulty. But any old box, or an imitation which we may find

¹⁵ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *Dialectic Spiritualism: A Vedic View of Western Philosophy* (Moundsville, WV: Prabhupada Books, 1985), 255.

somewhere but which is not authorized by the post office, will not do the work. Similarly, God has an authorized representation in the Deity form, which is called *arcā-vigraha*. This *arcā-vigraha* is an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. God will accept service through that form. The Lord is omnipotent, all-powerful; therefore, by His incarnation as *arcā-vigraha* He can accept the services of the devotee, just to make it convenient for the man in conditioned life.¹⁶

The *arcā-vigraha*, as he says in another place, “exactly represents the Supreme Lord.” Indeed, “worship of the *arcā-vigraha* is not idol worship. The *arcā-vigraha* is an incarnation of the Lord in a form appreciable by a devotee.”¹⁷

How literally Prabhupāda understood the idea that the image was an actual incarnation of the god is seen in a letter he wrote in 1974 relating to the question of closing a temple. If there is no image there, then fine, but if there is an image, you can't close it:

If there is no Deity, then it doesn't matter. If possible re-open the Hamburg temple and transfer the Deity again and worship. A center without a Deity can be closed, but a center with a Deity if closed it is a great offense. The Deity is not an idol; it is Kṛṣṇa. We cannot say to Kṛṣṇa personally, now go away.¹⁸

This same point was also made very definitively in the 1975 article we were discussing a little while ago: “The reason the Deity is accorded such reverence is that the form of God is God. There is no difference between the form of the Lord and the Lord Himself.”¹⁹

What is interesting to me as I look back on this after more than 35 years is that none of the arguments I have mentioned ended up being definitive in leading me to finally face the fact that the worship of images of Krishna was an act forbidden in the second commandment. Rather, what became decisive was an argument that was more peripheral:

¹⁶ What Prabhupada labeled “Purport,” we would call commentary. This passage can be found in both the complete and the abridged editions of Prabhupada’s *Bhagavad-gītā: As It Is*.

¹⁷ Purport to Prabhupada’s translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (Bhāgavata Purāṇa)*, 4.12.17 (Online Baktivendanta VedaBase edition).

¹⁸ Prabhupada to Hamsaduta das, 1 Oct 1974 (at prabhupada.blogspot.com).

¹⁹ Jayādvaita dāsa, “Idol Worship?” 16.

Those who are addicted to the idea of a formless, impersonal God object to the worship of the Deity in the temple. "God is everywhere," they say. "Why should we worship Him in the temple?" But if God is everywhere, is He not in the temple also? God is certainly everywhere, but we cannot see Him everywhere. We are all eternal servants of the Lord, but we have forgotten our relationship with Him. Therefore the Lord, by His causeless mercy, appears as the Deity in the temple so that even in this world of material forgetfulness we can see Him and revive our eternal relationship with Him.²⁰

When I read this paragraph all those years ago I took it to mean something like this: Since God is everywhere and in everything, and therefore worshipable in and through everything, how could it be forbidden to worship him in and through an approved image in a temple. As I reflect on the passage now, several decades later, I am not sure I got the author's meaning precisely right. As one reads what follows the author tells us that what actually happens when "a pure devotee paints or carves the form of the Deity," is that Krishna acts upon it and changes matter into spirit.

In fact none of the arguments made by Prabhupāda and his early followers are really able to provide any real confidence to anyone worried that bowing down to Krishna might represent a violation of the second commandment. Even though at the time some of the arguments might have sounded plausible to me, in the end the force of the simple wording of the second commandment itself won out: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." The genius of the commandment, and its salvific usefulness, lies precisely in what it does *not* say. There is nothing there at all to support Prabhupāda's insistence that it only applied to imaginary images of God. There is, in fact, no theological discussion of what the idol is at all. We know from the Apostle Paul that "an idol is nothing in the world" (1 Cor 8:4), but as for the second commandment itself, it does not enter at all into whether an image made with human hands might actually in some sense become a conduit of divine power, or even become that divine power itself. There are occasions when such things happen in the Bible. One example is the

²⁰ Ibid., 19.

bronze serpent God commanded Moses to make when the people were suffering from a plague of snakes:

Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live (Numbers 21:4-9).

Jesus makes reference to this bronze snake in connection with what he himself would accomplish on the cross, when he says: "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). The Bible, however, also explicitly addresses the question whether because God himself had commanded the making of the bronze serpent to use as an instrument of his healing power, it was therefore acceptable for the people of Israel to make it an object of worship. And the answer was a very definite no. In fact, the Bible reports that it was because the people began worshipping the bronze serpent that King Hezekiah (with God's explicit approval) had it destroyed:

And he [Hezekiah] *did what was right in the eyes of the LORD*, according to all that David his father had done. He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And *he broke in pieces the bronze serpent* that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan) (2 Kings 18:3-4).

I have not kept close track of the Hare Krishna Movement over the years, but I have noticed that the same sort of arguments are still put forth, as is seen in a 2011 special issue of *Back to Godhead* magazine devoted to the Ratha-yātrā festival, that included an article by Mathureśa Dāsa entitled: "Who is Worshipping an Idol? Idol Worship and Deity Worship—how they are different":

All the material elements are God's energies. He can use them as He likes and appear as He likes. He is omnipotent. For Him

there is no distinction between matter and spirit. One may fashion a deity of wood, stone, clay, or jewels, or the deity may be a painting or a drawing. Mind too is God's subtle material energy, so a mental image of the Lord in line with scripture is also a worshipable deity. The key is that the deity must be a form authorized by scripture, just as a mail box must be authorized by the post office. Dropping your mail in any old box will not do. As each mailbox has the support of the entire postal system, the deity form authorized by the Lord through scripture has the same unlimited potency as the Lord Himself. If service to the deity were material idol worship, as critics say, then the critics' own mental images of God would be idols as well.²¹

In addition, since his death Prabhupāda has been made into an idol himself, *mūrtis* (statues) of him appearing in temples around the world. Indeed, Kimmo Ketola informs us that "in every temple is a seat (*āsana*) for the *mūrti* of Prabhupāda, which is also worshipped by the congregation daily, immediately after the deity greeting. The seat or altar for the wax or brass image of Prabhupāda is usually facing the main altar at the opposite end of the temple room."²²

One can even purchase one's own 10.5 inch murti of him from KrishnaStore.com for \$63.00, which comes "complete with dhoti, kurta, chadar, neck beads, brahmin thread and bead bag." When you buy the statue, the advertisement promises,

Srila Prabhupada, in this most beautiful form, will be very happy to appear in your house and accept service from you. If you simply serve Srila Prabhupada in his murti form by cooking nice food and offering it to him, by chanting the Hare Krishna mantra in front of him, by reading his books in front of him, Srila Prabhupada will certainly give you his mercy.

²¹ Mathureśa Dāsa, "Who is Worshipping an Idol? Idol Worship and Deity Worship—How They Are Different," *Back to Godhead* (Ratha-yātrā Special Issue) [2011]: 5.

²² Kimmo Ketola, *The Founder of the Hare Krishnas As Seen by Devotees: A Cognitive Study of Religious Charisma* (Numen Book Series: Studies in the History of Religions 120; Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008), 93. See examples and further discussion on pp. 103 (fig. 8), 104, 114 (fig 14).

Without the mercy of a pure devotee of Krishna there is no chance of actually advancing in Krishna consciousness. This is the perfect chance to get the mercy of Srila Prabhupada. Simply install the Prabhupada murti in your house and keep him nicely clean and dressed and offer him nice foodstuffs and chant Hare Krishna in front of him and just see how your spiritual life will improve!

When we as Christians encounter a group of chanting Hare Krishna devotees on a crowded downtown street, we should keep in mind that despite the strange clothes, there is actually one point at which they have more in common with us, than we both have with the teeming crowd of shoppers around us, even though the latter look more like us. Hare Krishna devotees not only believe that there is a God, they also believe that they should seek and serve that God above all else. They also have the concept that there are Scriptures, *sāstras*, and that these Scriptures are to be regarded as divine revelation and as such are to be obeyed. In these shared assumptions, Christians and Hare Krishna devotees share a piece of common ground that stands at an almost infinite distance from the great company of self-identified “Spiritual But Not Religious,” non-seekers, who evidence no real hunger for God at all. I am not, of course, saying that all those who view themselves that way have no interest in God, but there is a significant number. I take an example from the November 2013 issue of the Buddhist magazine *Shambhala Sun*, which contains, as its feature article, a piece by Melvin McLeod, the magazine’s editor-in-chief, entitled “Are You Spiritual But Not Religious? 10 Reasons Why Buddhism Will Enrich Your Path.” Reason number 1? “There is no Buddhist God.”²³ There are many different opinions about the Buddha, McLeod tells us, “But one thing is certain: he was not a God, deity, or divine being. His faculties were purely human, any of us can follow his path, and our enlightenment will be exactly the same as his. Ultimately, we are no different from him, and vice versa.” “The Buddhist cosmos is a vast one,” McLeod goes on to say, but, he comfortingly assures his readers, “There is nothing and nobody fundamentally different from or outside of it.”²⁴

On the basis of our common ground with the Krishnas there is at least the possibility of discussion as to *which* Supreme Personality of

²³ Melvin McLeod, “Are You Spiritual But Not Religious? 10 Reasons Why Buddhism Will Enrich Your Path,” *Shambhala Sun* (Nov 2013): 45.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

Godhead and *which* Scriptures tell the true story. Hindu's (which Hare Krishna devotees are) believe something that is ultimately impossible for Christians to do. They feel sure they can affirm both Krishna and Jesus. When it was becoming clear to Danavir Goswami, who was watching over his charges in much the same way as a mother hen watches over her chicks, that I was doing the talking and the devotee most of the listening, he had another devotee hand him a drum and instruct him to rejoin the line. At the same time Danavir offered me another *māha-mantra* card, and urged me to sing along.

"I'm sorry," I said, "But I can't sing those words. I'm a Christian."

"So are we," he said, "We're Christians too."

"No you're not," I said, rather emphatically, and he immediately disengaged. Later, when I approached him to inquire whether I could I could ask him a question, he said I could not. But when I persisted, and asked him if he'd been with the movement since the days of Prabhupāda, he responded: "Yes, and if you want to talk Prabhupāda, you have my ear."

I never asked Danavir Goswami directly why he claimed the Hare Krishnas were Christians, but I think I know. We see the general rational set out in the following paragraph from the May 1976 issue of the official Hare Krishna movement *Back to Godhead* magazine:

God has an unlimited variety of names. Some of them—Jehovah, Adonai, Buddha, and Allah—are familiar to us, while the names of Kṛṣṇa and Rāma may be less so. However, whatever name of God we may accept, all scriptures enjoin us to chant it for spiritual purification. Muhammed counseled, "Glorify the name of your Lord, the most high" (Koran 87.2). Saint Paul said, "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13). Lord Buddha declared, "All who sincerely call upon my name will come to me after death, and I will take them to Paradise" (*Vows of Amida Buddha* 18). King David preached, "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised" (Psalms 113:3). And the world's oldest scriptures, the *Vedas* of India emphatically state, "Chant the holy name, chant the holy name, chant the holy name of the Lord. In this age of quarrel there is no other way,

no other way, no other way to attain spiritual enlightenment” (*Bṛhan-nāradiya Purāna*).²⁵

When I first read this there were a number of things I didn’t catch, as for example the fact that the Buddha he refers to is not the Buddha we all think of when we think of the Buddha, not Siddhārtha Gautama Shakyamuni, but was rather Dharmākara as Buddha Amitāba, nor that the final passage quoted was not from the world’s oldest scriptures but was perhaps the latest of all the texts quoted. But more importantly I didn’t really catch that the author of the passage is co-opting statements from other religions and interpreting them from the perspective of what has been called “sonic theology.”²⁶ For Prabhupāda salvation lies in the spiritual energies created in the very process of chanting the divine name. This was dramatically illustrated in his response to a scandal in which Hare Krishna devotees were engaging in dubious practices in Chicago, including pick-pocketing at the airport. Ed Senesi (Jagannath-suta), who had been a prominent Hare Krishna leader and one time editor-in-chief of the movement’s *Back to Godhead* magazine, but who afterward became a Christian, reports writing a letter to Prabhupāda expressing grave concern after a newspaper exposé was done on various corrupt activities of certain Krishna devotees. Prabhupāda’s response, which rested on his view of the purifying power of the name of Krishna, left Senesi completely flabbergasted:

We wrote the guru a letter, back around 1976, saying, “At the airport girls are cheating. While in line they are stealing servicemen’s wallets. All these things are going on. It’s being written up in the papers.” We sent one of the clippings to Swami Bhaktivedanta in India...Well, a letter came back from India. The article we sent was printed in a Chicago newspaper by a syndicated columnist, and all these cases of deceptive solicitation techniques at O’Hare Airport were documented. So he sends a letter back after having read the article, and he says, “This is very good. This man has said ‘Krishna’ many times in his article. Therefore, when people read this article, they will

²⁵ *Back to Godhead* 11.5 (May 1976): 1. The name of the author of this paragraph is not given, but Steve Rosen (Satyarasa Dasa) repeats it almost verbatim in an interview in his book *The Agni and the Ecstasy: Collected Essays of Steven J. Rosen* (forward, Radhanath Swami; n.p.: Arktos, 2012), 258.

²⁶ Steven J. Rosen, *Essential Hinduism* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 219. See as well Ravi Shankar’s comment “Sound is God,” in the Martin Scorsese documentary, *George Harrison: Living in the Material World* (2011), Pt. 1, Sc. 06.

have the name 'Krishna' in their minds, and they will be benefitted and purified. It does not matter good or bad; all we are interested in is having the name of Krishna implanted in people's consciousness, because this will purify them."²⁷

To put the best face on Prabhupāda's answer possible, he might have actually believed that exposure to the positive energy of the divine name was powerful enough to counteract negative energy associated with the fact that it was being printed in the context of telling about a scandal.

"CHRISTOS" AND "KRISHNA" ETYMOLOGICALLY RELATED?

Prabhupāda tended to view Jesus as the son of Kṛṣṇa:

Kṛṣṇa is the father of all living entities. He is not happy that all these souls in the material world are rotting like hogs. Therefore He sends His representatives. In the case of Lord Jesus Christ, Kṛṣṇa sent His son. Lord Jesus claimed to be the son of God. Everyone is a son of God, but this son was an especially favorite son, and he was sent to a particular place to reclaim the conditioned souls back home, back to Godhead.²⁸

Prabupada once even made the entirely erroneous claim that "Christos is the Greek version of the word Kṛṣṇa," and, in the same context, even went on to suggest that "Christ" is the name of God the Father.²⁹

Thirty seven years ago, when I first read the paragraph quoted earlier with its claim that "whatever name of God we may accept, all scriptures enjoin us to chant it for spiritual purification," and its appeal to Paul's "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved,"

²⁷ "Inside ISKCON [International Society for Krishna Consciousness]," *Forward: The News and Research Periodical of the Christian Research Institute* 4.1 (1981): 11.

²⁸ A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *A Second Chance: The Story of a Near-Death Experience* (Los Angeles, CA: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1991), 55.

²⁹ "Kṛṣṇa or Christ: The Name is the Same," *Back to Godhead* 11.3/4 (March/April 1976): 4; Repr. in A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *The Science of Self Realization: Articles from Back to Godhead Magazine* (Los Angeles, CA: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1969-1997), 112. See, further, Baird, "Bhaktivedanta and Ultimacy," 573.

(Romans 10:13),” as the alleged Biblical proof, I was still 4 months from the time Jesus would take hold of me and bring me to himself. Even so I was not very biblically illiterate at the time. I had read the New Testament straight through once and then selected passages and books a number of times. I had even taken two courses on Paul, one on his theology and one on his letters at the Roman Catholic Newman Center associated with the university I was attending. Yet for all that I still could not see through the claim that the gods of the various religions were all the same God, simply referred to under different names. This was after all the era of Cat Stevens’ *Buddha and the Chocolate Box Album* (1974) with its song “Jesus,” the first verse of which began with a reference to Jesus and the second to Buddha, implying, or so it seemed to me, that they were both the same being. Or again there was George Harrison’s hit “My Sweet Lord,” on his first independent album, *All Things Must Pass* (1970), in which the chorus of singers in the background alternate back and forth between singing praises to the Christian God (Hallelujah) and praises to the Hindu gods Krishna, Rama, and so on (“Hare Krishna,” “Hare Rama,” etc.), implying by this back and forth, that both the Christian God and the Hindu gods were all one and thus also all the same “Sweet Lord” George was singing about. I loved both songs and bought into their theology, a theology which by now has become in many quarters something akin to a dogmatic orthodoxy.

At the time I could not put on the full armor of God (Eph. 6:13-17), because I didn’t have most of it. As yet no shield of faith, no helmet of salvation. My belt of truth was more like a string or even a thread, and my sword of the spirit (the word of God) was more like the size of a needle that consisted for this particular battle primarily of the second commandment. But even a needle is better than nothing, when you’re faced with a serious threat. My needle saved me from long term bondage under spiritual idolatry. Very seldom do people think of the commandments as protection, but that is precisely what the second commandment represented for me. This is why I am very much in favor of teaching children the Ten Commandments. I learned them by rote as a child, and blessed be God that I did.

In his attempt to bring Vaishnavism to the West, Prabhupāda was frequently forced to attempt to explain away both the second commandment and the exclusive claims of and about Jesus such as Acts 4:12: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Prabhupada actually knew little of the Bible and he seems to tend to respond to the Christian claims in the same way whenever he

encountered them. His strategy was to try to discredit Christians or at least keep them on the defensive through an appeal to the fifth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill” (Exod 20:13) which, he insisted, could only be obeyed by adopting a strict vegetarian diet. Any time anyone tried to help him see the command in the larger context he scornfully brushed them off as pathetic compromisers. He even tried using this technique in conversation with Roman Catholic Cardinal/theologian Jean Danielou:

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Jesus Christ said, “Thou shalt not kill.” So why is it that the Christian people are engaged in animal killing?

Cardinal Danielou: Certainly in Christianity it is forbidden to kill, but we believe that there is a difference between the life of a human being and the life of the beasts. The life of a human being is sacred because man is made in the image of God; therefore, to kill a human being is forbidden.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: But the Bible does not simply say, “Do not kill the human being.” It says broadly, “Thou shalt not kill.”

Cardinal Danielou: We believe that only human life is sacred.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: That is your interpretation. The commandment is “Thou shalt not kill.”³⁰

Notice how in his opening statement Prabhupāda seems to think that this is a commandment of Jesus, not one of the Ten Commandments, and he appears to be completely unaware of the centrality of animal sacrifice in the Jewish Temple, the long descriptive lists describing which animals can and can't be eaten, and so on. To those of his disciples with little knowledge of the Bible the use of this technique by Prabhupāda would make it appear that even a famous theologian like Danielou was no match for him.

³⁰ See a transcript of the exchange in A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, *The Science of Self Realization: Articles from Back to Godhead Magazine* (Los Angeles, CA: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1969-1997), 122-123, esp. 122.

One of the most startling passages in which this strategy is used is where Prabhupāda essentially try's to sidestep the implications of the second commandment by an appeal to the fifth commandment:³¹

Rameśvara: "But the Christians say that according to the Bible, if God wanted us to believe in Kṛṣṇa He would have told us on Mount Sinai, and He would have told us through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, 'I am the only way.'"

Prabhupāda: "That's all right. But Jesus Christ did not explain more to you because you are rascals. You cannot follow even his one instruction, 'Thou shalt not kill.' It is not the foolishness of Jesus Christ. But because you [Christians] are so rascal, you cannot understand him. Therefore he avoided you rascals. Because whatever he said, you cannot follow. So what you will understand? Therefore he stopped speaking."

At the time this argument would not have had any teeth in it for me, since I was a vegetarian. After Christ brought me to himself I was a vegetarian for awhile but gave it up after a time after discovering that Prabhupāda's arguments really did not do justice to the teaching of Scripture on the subject. One scripture in particular helped me to see this, namely Romans 14: 2-3:

One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

This passage turned the issue entirely on its head. I had been used to thinking it was the person who ate meat that was weak and the one who abstained who was strong. Such a conclusion was, and continues to be, the take on the subject within the Hare Krishna movement, as we read in a 2009 *Back to Godhead* article: "Many Bible scholars persist with the theory that Christ ate animal flesh, obviously swayed in their opinions by personal habits."³² Now, on reading the teaching of

³¹ Satsvarūpa dās Goswami, Śrīla Prabhupada-lilāmṛta: *A Biography of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda* (6 vols.; Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1980-1983), 6:225; Also *idem*, *Well-Wisher* (Los Angeles: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1983), 313.

³² Satyarāja Dāsa, "Kṛṣṇa Consciousness and Christianity," *Back to Godhead* 6.12 (Dec 2009): 10.

Scripture itself, I was struck in this case with yet another instance where my own inclinations had been causing me to look at things downside up. Had the teaching of the Bible really agreed with Prabhupāda's interpretation, no problem, I already had been a vegetarian and that for a number of years. Had the Bible taught it, I would have been content to continue being a vegetarian right down to the present day. But having heard the new terms, I certainly did not wish to remain in a state the Bible describes as weak.

In any case Prabhupāda's argument at the time would have simply made things more difficult for me in terms of worrying about the second commandment's forbidding of image worship. After all, if God withheld essential spiritual truth from the Christians because they invented compromising arguments to excuse them from having to obey the fifth commandment, what essential spiritual truth was God withholding from the followers of Krishna for inventing compromising arguments to excuse themselves from having to obey the second commandment?

From time to time Krishna books present very lurid and disturbing depictions of the terrible karmic implications of animal killing and meat eating. One picture that was reproduced in a number of the movements books and articles showed a man with a brutish animal face drawing back an axe to kill a cow with a terrified human face. The example given here was accompanied with a caption that read: "Animal killers do not know that in the future the animal will have a body suitable to kill them. This is the law of nature."



What then will be the parallel karmic implications of disobeying the second commandment? Although it was not a passage I recall knowing at the time, the Bible has a clear answer:

Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, *nor idolaters*, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor 6:9-11)

It is ironic that Prabhupāda would have heartily agreed with the condemnation of almost every sin in the above list, except one: idolatry.

NO ONE WORSHIPS ACTUAL IDOLS ANY MORE? REALLY?

Aldous Huxley once declared that “educated persons do not much run the risk of succumbing to the more primitive forms of idolatry. They find it fairly easy to resist the temptation to believe that lumps of matter are charged with magical power, or that certain symbols and images are the very forms of spiritual entities and, as such, must be worshipped and propitiated.”³³

In the interim between the time the book in which the statement was made, back in 1943, and now, Huxley has been proven to be completely wrong.³⁴ The issue is not the education of the mind, but the condition of the human heart. Such a statement on the part of someone like Huxley does not surprise me, but one thing that does surprise me is how often after I became a Christian, and right up until the present, I have heard the same basic sentiment—and scarcely any other—expressed from any number of Evangelical pulpits. How many

³³ Aldous Huxley, “Idolatry,” in *Vedanta for the Western World* (ed. Christopher Isherwood; New York: Viking Press, 1945), 427, also, *Huxley and God: Essays on Religious Experience* (intro. Huston Smith; ed. Jacqueline Hazard Bridgeman; New York: Crossroad, 2003), 178.

³⁴ As is chronicled particularly well in Huston Smith, *Tales of Wonder: Adventures Chasing the Divine: An Autobiography* (with Jeffery Paine; forward Pico Iyer, New York: HarperOne, 2009), Philip Goldberg, *American Veda: How Indian Spirituality Changed the West* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010), and Tony Schwartz, *What Really matters: Searching for Wisdom in America* (New York: Bantam, 1995).

sermons and books on the ten commandments, when they come to discuss the second commandment, start out by saying something along the lines of “Well, in America nobody engages in real idolatry anymore, so we will be talking instead about heart idolatry,” and then turn immediately to trying to apply the commandment spiritually, often even to something as comparatively innocuous as the dangers of watching too much TV, or of missing Wednesday night service when it conflicts with the annual bowling tournament.” How would one feel, I wonder, say as a pastor or youth leader, to discover that one had succeeded in shaming a member of the congregation into giving up Wednesday night bowling, only to learn that that same member was still all the while clinging to the idea that all gods are really one, that Jesus is the son of Krishna, and that we ought to offer our food to Christ’s or Krishna’s image before eating it?

Let me put a challenge before you in the form of a question: Do we as Evangelicals fail to teach the literal meaning of the Second Commandment because we really believe we all have such a firm grasp on the Scriptural teaching in that regard? Or is it rather that we have uncritically adopted, on the basis of some unspoken evolution of consciousness model we share with our larger culture, the idea that we have all somehow simply *outgrown* bowing down to idols?

One should never underestimate the inclination of the fallen human heart to bow down before idols, nor assume it’s somehow a thing of the past. Certain branches of Christendom have become deeply entangled in what can only be described as idolatry, and have justified it with a number of excuses. For Western Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy few theologians have been more important in providing supposed theological justification for the worship of images than the eighth-century theologian John of Damascus (675-753). John admitted that God had forbidden the Jews of the Old Testament making images and bowing down to them. So then, why did God disallow for the Jews what he now allows for the Christians? It was because, John says, the Jews were “still infants and ill with a diseased inclination to idolatry.”³⁵ Apparently John believed Christians were all spiritual adults and who had simply *moved beyond* all that! In a way this parallels the more recent popular notion that we have all simply *outgrown* idolatry.

³⁵ John of Damascus, *Three Treatises on the Divine Images* (trans. & into. Andrew Louth; Crestwood, NY: 2003), 84 (3.4).

SO WHAT AM I ADVOCATING?

It's very simple really: preach and teach the Second Commandment *As It Is!*³⁶ Go ahead and draw out the commandment's more subtle implications relating to heart idolatry, but only *after* you've laid the foundations of clearly explaining its literal meaning, along with such contemporary theologies inside the church and out that might violate that. You may think your congregation has the literal meaning figured out, but how will are they going to figure it out if you literally never teach them what the commandment literally means? Make your children memorize the Second Commandment. That way even if they ignore everything else you say, they will still have that little piece of the sword of the Spirit to prod and poke them in the right direction if they happen to fall under the sway of false arguments leading to idolatry.

Teaching the Second Commandment will also make believers better equipped to be able to discern the true spiritual situation of non-believers as well as new believers they encounter, to go to the mission field and know how to make sense of what they we encounter there.

We as Baptists place great importance on both missions and evangelism, why then should we hesitate when it comes to better preparing ourselves and our children to do both or either. "Well," someone will say, "All we really need to do is tell them about Jesus." Certainly that's true. But who is Jesus? Is he the son of Krishna? Will that work? Can your converts go on worshipping Krishna now that they have accepted Christ? A couple of years back I visited the Vedanta Society of Northern California. I did so because I wanted to see for myself what I had read about in Philip Goldberg's 2010 book, *American Veda*, where he glowingly reports that "virtually every Vedanta temple in the West displays images of Christ (and of Buddha) and holds special services on Easter and Christmas."³⁷ And sure enough, there was a statue of Jesus, sitting cross legged in a traditional lotus position with its hands carefully sculpted in the form of a particular set of yogic *mudras*. Prabhavananda (not to be confused with Prabhupāda), who was the founder of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, and a man exercised great influence on a number of important English thinkers and writers including Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, and Christopher

³⁶ A play on the title of Prabhupada's translation of a principle text of Hindu Scripture: *Bhagavad-Gītā As It Is*.

³⁷ Philip Goldberg, *American Veda: How Indian Spirituality Changed the West* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010), 83.

Isherwood, writes: “To worship a Christ or a Krishna it is to worship God, it is not, however, to worship a man as God, not to worship a person.”³⁸ Or again, prominent Buddhist writer Thich Nhat Hanh, in his book *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (1995), give a kind of affirmation to Jesus: “On the altar in my hermitage in France are images of Buddha and Jesus, and every time I light incense, I touch both of them as my spiritual ancestors.”³⁹

There is a popular and very appealing song to Jesus entitled “By Your Grace,” one verse of which is as follows:

I follow your footsteps through the flame.
 All that I ever need is in your name
 Carry your heart in mine, vast as space
 All that I am today is by your grace.
 By your grace...
 I live by your grace.

Who wrote the song? One of the Passion performers perhaps? Nope, it was Krishna Das, the “Rock Star” of *Kirtan*, who explains how it is that he, as a Jewish kid and celebrated singer of Hindu songs, came to sing about Jesus:

I never had much to do with Christianity, while I was in America, before going to India. So imagine my surprise sitting in a little Hanuman temple with my guru Maharaj ji [Neem Karoli Baba]. And he looks at us and he says Hanuman, Krishna, and Christ are the same.⁴⁰

What this quotation demonstrates is what I myself experienced as a non-Christian out in the world, namely that one’s doctrine of the oneness of God can become so confused that we don’t even realize that we are violating the first commandment: “I am the LORD thy God...Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2-3). At such times the Second Commandment can come to our rescue, as it did for me. I do not think my experience was that unusual when I wasn’t able to

³⁸ Swami Prabhavananda, *The Sermon on the Mount: According to Vedanta* (Hollywood, CA: Vedanta Press, 1992 [orig. 1963]), 44.

³⁹ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (forward, Brother David Steindl-Rast, O.S.B; intro. Elaine Pagels; New York: Riverhead Books, 1995), 86.

⁴⁰ Krishna Das told this story on 9 Dec 2011 at the Open Your Heart in Paradise Retreat on Maui.

work out the real difference between the Yahweh and Vishnu, between Krishna and Christ, but all the while the Second Commandment, which had to do with a simple point of religious practice, came to my rescue.



Hanuman (Denver Art Museum)

When I asked Danavir Goswami that evening when one could visit the Kansas City's Rupangura Vedic College he told me they have an open house every Sunday at 4 PM. The card they were giving out also announced this, noting that there would be an 11 course vegetarian feast. As a Christian, should I go? Will the food in that feast (called *prasadam*) be offered to Krishna? Yes it will. Here is a description of the procedure given in a book I used to own back in the early 1970s:

When the food is nicely prepared we offer it back to the Source from which everything emanates....Simply place...a generous portion of each item to be offered, on a plate of metal tray, along with a glass of fresh water, and set it before the Deity or picture of Kṛṣṇa. Then prostrate yourself and pray to the Lord

Kṛṣṇa to accept your humble offering.”⁴¹ There then follows a series of prayers to be recited, and then it instructs that “After offering the food to the Lord, you may distribute the *prasādam* to all who are present.” This is not the end. There will also be another prayer before everyone partakes.⁴²

Well, then, as a Christian, should I attend? Actually the Bible has something to say about that. The Apostle Paul writes this instruction:

If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—I do not mean your conscience, but his (1 Cor 10:27-29).

In the present instance the setting would clearly be more formal than a simple dinner invitation from, say, an unbeliever and his family. It is actually more like attending a church service in which food offered to idols is eaten. That setting brings another one of Paul’s instructions into play: “For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols?” (1 Cor 8:10).

If the second instruction wouldn’t have direct application for me in this case, there might well be no objection there. But could I plausibly attend the event acting as though I was not aware of the fact that the eleven dishes had been offered to the idol? And the answer there is that I could not, and that if I were to attend I should probably have to determine beforehand that I would not be partaking in the food. By way of contrast, at the national joint meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Association of Religion, many of the major publishers put out a dish of candies or other snacks at their book stalls in the huge auditorium where they all have their wares on display. Very often Bhaktivedanta Book Trust will put out a tray of some sort of sweet bread. Even though the Christian knows, as Paul knew when giving the instruction of 1 Corinthians 10:25, that the food was very

⁴¹ *The Hare Kṛṣṇa Cookbook: Recipes for the Satisfaction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead* (comp. Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī & Śama Devī Dāsī; intro. Kīrtanānda Svāmī; New York: Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1973), 12.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 13.

likely offered to Krishna, it is not announced and he may decide to go ahead and take one. Doing so may even provide a comfortable opportunity for entering into conversation with the people manning the booth. Then, supposing they elect to share that the food was offered to Krishna, the Christian may simply not eat any more.

In 2 Timothy 3:16, we are reminded that, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” One very precious bit of that God-breathed Scripture is the Second Commandment. I, for one, greatly benefited from being taught, rebuked, corrected, and trained, and equipped by it.



AFTERWARD

I am standing in front of the Rapanuga Vedic College on the corner of East 52nd and Paseo in Kansas City in the old First Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Look there, above the entry: To this day the architecture is still bearing witness to the Gospel of God with its reference to John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” May God daily apply though His Holy Spirit this reference to his precious Word of promise and hope on the outside of the building to those ensnared by the worship of strange gods on its inside! Amen.

Quotations & Reflections¹

“Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care”

—Ecclesiastes 12:9 (ESV).

∞

“Apt quotation is a great aid in all forms of public address. It illustrates a point or clinches an argument. It brings to the enforcement of the truth the wisdom of other men, and sometimes in forms so striking or so beautiful that the quotation is the barb to the arrow, which makes it stick in the mark, after it has flown swift and strong from the hand of the bowman.”

—J. O. Murray, “Homiletic Illustrations from Shakespeare,” *Homiletic Review* 9.1 (Jan, 1885): 13.

∞

“Constant quotations in sermons are, I think, a sign of...crudeness. They show an undigested knowledge. They lose the power of personality. They daub the wall with un-[160] tempered mortar. Here is the need of broad and generous culture. Learn to study for the sake of truth, learn to think for the profit and the joy of thinking. Then your sermon shall be like the leaping of a fountain and not like the pumping of a pump.”

—Phillips Brookes, *Lectures on Preaching: Delivered Before the Divinity School of Yale College in January and February, 1877* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1888), 159-60.

¹ In compiling this collection the editor has asked several friends and Midwestern colleagues to contribute reflections and favorite quotations relating to the life and calling of Christian scholars and apologists. Where quotations have been submitted I have included the initials of the contributors, hence M. A. (Dr. Matthew Arbo), M. M. (Dr. Michael McMullen), B. H. (Dr. Blake Hearson), A. B. (Dr. Alan Branch), M.H. (Marguerite Huggins), M.A.G.H (Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin). Where no initials are given the selection or reflection was contributed by the editor. Quotations are chosen on the basis of their aptness, with no necessary agreement with views of the authors who penned them, nor any representation that those authors were necessarily Christians (see, e.g., the quote from Steve Ross).

“*Ignoratio enim Scripturarum ignoratio Christi est*” (“Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ”)

—Saint Jerome (*Comm. in Is.*, prol.: PL 24, 17).

∞

“History has shown that crimes of logic can be more catastrophic for humanity than crimes of passion.”

—Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 1994), 11.

∞

“If we wish to see the Baptist denomination prosper, we must not expend our zeal so much in endeavouring to make men Baptists, as in labouring to make Baptists and others Christians. If we lay out ourselves in the common cause of Christianity, the Lord will bless and increase us.”

—Andrew Fuller, “The Necessity of Seeking those Things First which Are of the First Importance,” in Andrew Fuller, *Dialogues, Letters, and Essays on Various Subjects* (Hartford, CN: Oliver D. Cooke, 1810), 141-42. (M.A.G.H.)

∞

“...there have been few more frequent sources of difficulty in theology, than the common fallacy of summing up inquiries under two alternatives, neither of which corresponds to the true nature of the case.”

—Benjamin Jowett, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans* (2d ed.; 2 vols.; London: John Murray, 1859), 209.

∞

“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing.”

—Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1990), 32.

∞

“Fallacies...do not cease to be fallacies because they become fashions.”

—G. K. Chesterton, “Novels on the Great War,” *Illustrated London News* (April 19, 1930) in *The Illustrated News 1929-31* (Collected Works of Chesterton 35; San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1991), 293. (M. A.)

“Freedom and not servitude is the cure for anarchy; as religion, and not atheism, is the true remedy for superstition.”

—Edmund Burke, “Speech on Moving his Resolutions for Consolation with the Colonies” (March 22, 1775), in *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke Vol. II* (Boston, MA: John West & O. C. Greenleaf, 1807), 57.

∞

“The ministry of Christ makes its appeal to the men of the noblest gifts, but God is not dependent on any set of men... it must not be forgotten that Jesus chose his apostles from the unschooled fishermen and artisans of Galilee save Judas the Judean. He passed by the rabbinical theological seminaries where religious impulse had died and thought had crystallized. He will bypass the schools today if the teachers and students close their minds and hearts to him. Jesus seeks the open mind and the warm heart. He knocks at the door of the heart of every university and seminary man in the world. The answer is more important to the student than it is to Christ. Jesus will go to the highways and find others to heed his call, but the student will not find another Christ to serve.”

—A. T. Robertson, *The Glory of the Ministry* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1911), 153. (A.B.)

∞

“Now faith means believing what you don’t yet see, and the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.”

—Augustine, “Sermon 43: On What is Written in Isaiah: Unless You Believe, You Shall Not Understand,” in *Sermons II (20-50) on the Old Testament (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century trans. Edmund Hill, O.P.; ed. John E. Rotelle, O. S. A.; Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1990)*, 238. (M. A.)

∞

“Everybody is identical in their secret unspoken belief that way deep down they are different from everyone else.”

—David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest* (New York: Back Bay, 1996), 205. (M. A.)

∞

“A man who is unaffectedly himself turns out to be uncommonly like other people.”

George Santayana “‘The Comic Mask’ and ‘Carnival,’” (1920) in *Theories of Comedy* (intro. and selection Paul Lauter; 415 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday/Anchor, 1964), 415.

∞

“I have been called an Arminian Calvinist or a Calvinist Arminian, and am quite content so long as I can keep close to my Bible.”

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Heart-Disease Curable,” *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 27 (1881): 346.

∞

“All the beauty of nature withers when we try to make it absolute. Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first & we lose *both* first and second things.”

—C. S. Lewis, Letter to Bede Griffiths (April 24, 1951).

∞

“The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies; probably because they are generally the same people.”

—G. K. Chesterton, “The Man Next Door,” *Illustrated London News* 7/16/1910 (Collected Works of Chesterton XXVIII; San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1987), 563 (B.H.).

∞

“7. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.”

—Jonathan Edwards, “Letters and Personal Writings” (*Works of Jonathan Edwards* 16; ed. George S. Claghorn; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 753 (Or online at <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive>. (M. M.)

∞

“The people of this world generally like to take a little religion as spice, but almost never as the main dish of life.”

“But when we perform duties of religion only to be seen and applauded of men, we make God only our pretense, but men our idols; and set up as many Gods before him, as we have spectators and observers.”

—Ezekiel Hopkins (d. 1690), *An Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (rev. and slightly abridged; New York: American Tract Society, n.d.), 60.

∞

“Suppose someone invented an instrument, a convenient little talking tube which could be heard over the whole land—I wonder if the police would not forbid it, fearing that the whole country would become mentally deranged if it were used...On the whole the evil in the daily press consists in its being calculated to make, if possible, the moment a thousand or ten thousand times more inflated and important than it already is. But all moral upbringing consists first and foremost in being weaned away from the momentary.”

—Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) in *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers* (7 vols.; trans. & ed. Howard V. Hong & Edna H. Hong, with Gregory Malantschuck; Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1967-78), 2:483.

∞

“No one in the English-speaking world can be considered literate without a basic knowledge of the Bible. Literate people in India, whose religious traditions are not based on the Bible but whose common language is English, must know about the Bible in order to understand English within their own country...The Bible is also essential for understanding many of the moral and spiritual values of our culture, whatever our religious beliefs...No person in the modern world can be considered educated without a basic knowledge of all the great religions of the world—Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity. But our knowledge of Judaism and Christianity needs to be more detailed than that of other great religions, if only because of the historical accident that has embedded the Bible in our thought [2] and language. The Bible is a central book in our culture, just as the Koran is central in other nations.”

—E. D. Hirsh, Joseph F. Kett, & James Trefil, *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), 1-2.

∞

“Of course, you are not such wiseacres as to think or say that you can expound Scripture without assistance from the works of divines and

learned men who have laboured before you in the field of exposition...It seems odd, that certain men who talk so much of what the Holy Spirit reveals to themselves, should think so little of what he has revealed to others...The temptations of our times lie rather in empty pretensions to novelty of sentiment, than in a slavish following of accepted guides. A respectable acquaintance with the opinions of the giants of the past, might have saved many an erratic thinker from wild interpretations and outrageous inferences. Usually, we have found the despisers of commentaries to be men who have no sort of acquaintance with them; in their case, it is the opposite of familiarity which has bred contempt.”

—Charles H. Spurgeon, *Commenting on Commentaries* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1876), 2.

∞

“The words of the Lord hurt and offend until there is nothing left to hurt or offend. Jesus Christ had no tenderness whatever toward anything that is ultimately going to ruin a man in the service of God.”

—Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (various editions, Sept 27, on Luke 9:57).

∞

“JESUS’ WORDS: HOW THEY MAKE US FEEL? Many people have the impression that Jesus’ words should represent every positive cultural model that we currently uphold; the motivational professional speaker, the esteem building parent, or the positive teacher. We expect that since Jesus is held up as the pinnacle of perfection, His words should always reflect *our* highest standards. Then we begin reading the Bible and find some sayings that make us less than comfortable. The bulk of words that Jesus actually speaks aren’t found in our best and brightest how-to books. His emphasis is neither making us feel good about where we are right now nor tutoring us on how to become experts at time and financial management. Granted, we like it when He speaks comfort to us or lets Pharisees have it, but much of what he says lies outside the perimeter of our comfort zones. How do we process this seeming inconsistency? One person that I was talking to this week asserted that the harsh parts were added later by powerful people who wanted to control the behavior of the masses. Glib cut and paste theology is convenient, but hardly historically plausible. We have a complete picture of Jesus’ sayings that precedes the time frame of Christendom’s rise to power. Jesus was never a product of our culture and it is ludicrous to assume that if his ideas don’t match ours they must have

been changed. Rather, they would more likely be phony if they exactly reflected our ideals. I wonder if it would be a valuable experiment to immerse ourselves straight into the Bible text, to read the four gospels for what they say, to allow the unvarnished words to pierce us straight into the heart and see what happens. Why not lay aside preconceived notions and get on the emotional roller coaster? Why not allow ourselves to feel and see if perhaps there is a purpose in Jesus' strong language."

—M.H.

∞

"The unbelief of man cannot make the threatenings of God's word of no effect, but, sooner or later, they will take place, if the prescribed course be not taken to prevent the execution of them."

—Matthew Henry, *Commentary on Zech 1:1-6*.

∞

"Low-sunk life imagines itself weary of life, but it is death, not life, it is weary of."

—George MacDonald in *George MacDonald: An Anthology 365 Readings* (ed. & pref. C. S. Lewis; HarperSanFrancisco, 1973 [1946]), 67 (reading no. 127).

∞

"The Word we study has to be the Word we pray. My personal experience of the relentless tenderness of God came not from exegetes, theologians, and spiritual writers, but from sitting still in the presence of the living Word and beseeching him to help me understand with my head and heart his written Word. Sheer scholarship alone cannot reveal to us the gospel of grace. We must never allow the authority of books, institutions, or leaders to replace the authority of *knowing* Jesus Christ personally and directly. When the religious views of others interpose between us and the primary experience of Jesus as the Christ, we become unconvicted and unpersuasive travel agents handing out brochures to places we have never visited."

—Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1990), 42.

∞

"To most people God is an inference, not a reality. He is a deduction from evidence which they consider adequate; but He remains personally

unknown to the individual. 'He must be,' they say, 'therefore we believe He is'...for millions of Christians, God is no more real than He is to the non-Christian. They go through life trying to love an ideal and be loyal to a mere principle...The Bible assumes as a self-evident fact that men can know God with at least the same degree of immediacy as they know any other person or thing that comes within the field of their experience."

—A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1982), 49-51.

∞

"Man cannot admit into the catholic Church. No one is admitted into the Church by water baptism, nor by vote of a church meeting, nor by the decision of a session. A person enters the Church when the Holy Spirit baptizes him into Christ. All the other things may be necessary in order that the discipline of the local church may be maintained. There ought to be solemn recognition of some kind when a man joins the outward and visible church, but all such matters are outward and visible recognitions of inward and invisible facts. The only condition on which any person should be admitted to a local church is that evidence is given of membership in the catholic Church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

—G. Campbell Morgan, *Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 34-35.

∞

"It is vital in a discussion...that we should make sure we are going by meanings and not by mere words. It is not necessary in any argument to settle what a word means or ought to mean. But it is necessary in every argument to settle what we propose to mean by the word."

—G. K. Chesterton, *The Appetite of Tyranny* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1915), 15.

∞

"Whatever sin the heart of man is most prone to, that the devil will help forward. If David be proud of his people, Satan will provoke him to number them, that he may be yet prouder (2 Sam. 24).

If Peter be slavishly fearful, Satan will put him upon rebuking and denying Christ, to save his own skin (Matt. 16:22; 26. 69-75). If Ahab's prophets be given to flatter, the devil will straightway become a lying

spirit in the mouths of four hundred of them, and they shall flatter Ahab to his ruin (1 Kings 22). If Judas will be a traitor, Satan will quickly enter into his heart, and make him sell his master for money, which some heathens would never have done (John 13.2). If Ananias will lie for advantage, Satan will fill his heart that he may lie, with a witness, to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5.3). Satan loves to sail with the wind, and to suit men's temptations to their conditions and inclinations. If they be in posterity, he will tempt them to deny God (Prov. 30.9); if they be in adversity, he will tempt them to distrust God; if their knowledge be weak, he will tempt them to have low thoughts of God, if their conscience be tender, he will tempt to scrupulosity, if large, to carnal security; if bold-spirited, he will tempt to presumption, if timorous, to desperation; if flexible, to inconstancy; if stiff, to impenitency.

From the power, malice and skill of Satan, doth proceed all the soul-destroying plots, devices, stratagems he hath to keep souls in a mourning, staggering, doubting and questioning condition."

—Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1993), 16.

∞

"Every generation rewrites the past. In easy times history is more or less of an ornamental art, but in times of danger we are driven to the written record by a pressing need to find answers to the riddles of today. We need to know what kind of firm ground other men, belonging to generations before us, have found to stand on."

—John Dos Passos, *The Ground We Stand On: The History of a Political Creed* (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1941), 3.

∞

"It's an American talent to take something deep and make it as superficial as possible."

—Steve Ross, "veteran L. A. Yoga teacher," in Philip Goldberg, *American Veda: From Emerson to the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation—How Indian Spirituality Changed the West* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010), 208.

∞

"Mankind, unable to escape death, trouble, and ignorance, in order to make themselves happy, have hit upon the plan of never thinking about these things; the utmost efforts of their ingenuity can suggest no better consolation for such prodigious evils. But it is most miserable

consolation, since it goes not to cure the evil, but merely to conceal it a little while; and by concealing it, prevents men from attempting to obtain a thorough cure.”

—Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts on Religion and Philosophy* (trans. Isaac Taylor; Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Adams /Edinburgh: John Grant, 1894), 37 (4.4).

∞

“The fear of ridicule paralyzes us more effectively than flat-out opposition. How much good is left undone because of this fear? The irony is that the opinions we fear most are not those of people we really respect, yet these very persons influence our lives more than we want to admit. This desire to stand well with ‘them’ can lead to an appalling mediocrity and a frightening unfreedom.”

—Brennan Manning, *The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2004), 125.

∞

“It is a species of injustice to attach to any person those consequences, which one may frame out of his words, as if they were his sentiments: But the injustice is still more flagrant, if those conclusions cannot by good consequence be deduced from what he has said.”

—Jacob Arminius, “The Apology or Defense of James Arminius Against Certain Theological Articles Extensively Distributed” (1609), in *Works of Arminius* 1:51-52.

∞

“From experience, I knew it is no strange thing that the bread that pleases a healthy appetite is offensive to one that is not healthy, and that light is hateful to sick eyes, but welcome to the well. Your justice offends the wicked.”

—Augustine, *Confessions* 7.16.22 (ET: John K. Ryan).

∞

“Personally, I have found the Devil easier to believe in than God; for one thing, alas, I have had more to do with him. It seems to me quite extraordinary that anyone should have failed to notice, especially during the last half century, a diabolical presence in the world.”

—Malcolm Muggeridge, *Jesus: The Man Who Lives* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 51.

“Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. [7] And that means the old books. All contemporary writers share to some extent the contemporary outlook—even those, like myself, who seem most opposed to it. Nothing strikes me more when I read the controversies of past ages than the fact that both sides were usually assuming without question a good deal which we should now absolutely deny. They thought that they were as completely opposed as two sides could be, but in fact they were all the time secretly united—united *with* each other and *against* earlier and later ages—by a great mass of common assumptions. We may be sure that the characteristic blindness of the twentieth century—the blindness about which posterity will ask, ‘But how *could* they have thought that?’—lies where we have never suspected it, and concerns something about which there is untroubled agreement between Hitler and President Roosevelt or between Mr. H. G. Wells and Karl Barth. None of us can fully escape this blindness, but we shall certainly increase it, and weaken our guard against it, if we read only modern books. Where they are true they will give us truths which we half knew already. Where they are false they will aggravate the error with which we are already dangerously ill. The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books. Not, of course, that there is any magic about the past. People were no cleverer then than they are now; they made as many mistakes as we. But not the *same* mistakes. They will not flatter us in the errors we are already committing; and their own errors, being now open and palpable, will not endanger us. Two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go wrong in the same direction. To be sure, the books of the future would be just as good a corrective as the books of the past, but unfortunately we cannot get at them.

—C. S. Lewis, Introduction to *St. Athanasius: On the Incarnation* (trans & ed. A. Religious of C. S. M. V; intro. C. S. Lewis; New York: Macmillan, 1946), 6-7.

***Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity.* By Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne, eds. New York: T&T Clark, 2012, xvii + 230 pp., \$34.95 hardback. ISBN-13: 978-0567377234.**

Historical method and historical Jesus research go hand in glove. Through the past few centuries, modernism has emphasized scientific study of the Scriptures, culminating in historical Jesus research as one by-product. Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne, editors and contributors, compiled a team of writers to contribute to *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*. Inundated with books flowing from the peaks of historiography and criteria of authenticity, I hope this book surfaces among the multitudes on the desks of those interested in or involved with historical Jesus research.

Through partially disparate approaches, each contributor shares the central thesis of the book: end or substantially modify the traditional methods of the historical Jesus endeavor, and clear “the ground of several crumbling foundations” to make space for new discussions within the discipline (3, 200). In order to demonstrate their shared thesis, three sections serve as the skeletal outline.

“Part I: Historical Methodology and the Quest for an Authentic Jesus” highlights current trends and advancements in historiography and subsidiary methodologies. Keith (25–48) demonstrates how form criticism and the presuppositions therein serve as a foundation to the continued affirmation of the criteria of authenticity. “The criteria of authenticity,” explains Keith, “even in modified forms, simply cannot deliver what they are designed to deliver” (26). After assessing the past trajectories of form criticism, he calls scholars not to affirm a both/and approach to historicism. “Either one should dispense with the theological interpretations in the narratives of the Gospels in order to reconstruct critically the past, or one should begin with these theological interpretations as the crucial links to the past...But it cannot be both” (47).

Jens Schröter (49–70) has a multi-pronged assessment of historiography and gospel studies. The Third Quest is distinguished by an emphasis on 2nd Temple literature and their political, social, and religious contexts as a means to rightly understand Jesus and his mission (49). Consequently, some use these criteria to determine the authenticity of individual units. Schröter’s possible solution is to admit the historiographer’s position and assess *what* the Gospels *can provide* the modern reader. The documents supply a theological idea for a religious community. The intent of these sources is to maintain unity and not undergo scrutiny as individual units. The documents are

committed to the past and presently remain as a source, though selective and tendentious of the past, to limit historiographical questions (69–70).

“Part II: Specific Criteria in the Quest for an Authentic Jesus” focuses upon individual criterion either with the hope of serious revision or complete abandonment. Loren Stuckenbruck (73–94) interacts with the problems of using the criterion of Semitic or Aramaic traces for determining authentic material. Dagmar Winter (115–31) observes the criterion’s dependence “on a history of religions or comparative religion approach” (118) and it is founded upon a Hegelian dialectical method (119–20). For those who desire a post-criteriological Jesus, Rafael Rodríguez (132–51) exposes a faulty foundation because of their dependency upon other criteria, namely redaction criticism. Balancing concern for historical questions and wading carefully in the brief limitations of the criterion of multiple attestation, Mark Goodacre (152–69) strikes an even-keeled approach to historiography.

A particularly noteworthy chapter is Anthony Le Donne, in “The Criterion of Coherence: Its Development, Inevitability, and Historiographical Limitations” (95–114). He calls into question the coherence criterion and its limitations by interacting with his Social Memory theory (97). Le Donne is not seeking to jettison the criterion altogether; rather, it should be reconsidered in light of a coherent mnemonic continuum (97). Carefully navigating the historical use of the criterion of coherence, he encourages the discussion to affirm generally coherent data while allowing the possibility of historical nuances or potential randomness (110).

“Part III: Reflections on Moving Past Traditional Jesus Research” includes Scot McKnight and Dale Allison reflecting on their autobiographical journey within historical Jesus research. Like a seasoned man expressing concerns to a young scholar, these two chapters are sobering and helpful to the discussion. McKnight (173–85) reflects on the inability of historical Jesus research to aid the church. Scholars have produced multiple portraits of Jesus; he concludes Jesus, either (re-)constructed, the canonical Jesus, or the Jesus of the *regula fidei* is a theological Jesus (173, 176). McKnight concludes, “Historical Jesus proposals are of no use to the church” (175). The church’s Jesus, the orthodox Jesus, the historical Jesus “is someone less, someone else, and therefore not the same Jesus” (176).

Allison (186–99) kindly pulls back the curtain for the reader to travel with him through history as he recounts his internal struggle with historical Jesus accomplishments. Its sobered tone and careful composition will benefit and should be a “must-read” for any budding

historical Jesus scholar and the intelligentsia of historiographical erudites. He begins with his introduction to historical criteria, initial concerns he had, intellectual oversights, and how he modified his views during each of his historical Jesus publications. His conclusion is that, "If we really want to recover and reconstruct Jesus, then, we will cast our nets far wider than the criteria can ever reach" (199).

Upon finishing the book, one is left pondering, "So, what is next?" If the authors' analysis is accurate, what do scholars use to engage historical Jesus research? This book is not a deafening blow, but it is enough to anticipate that a new generation will question and modify the enterprise. Moreover, characteristics of a post-criteriological project are still too new to have an organized front. Nonetheless, this source will hopefully encourage such organization. It is evident within each article that a unified critique of traditional criteria exists, but there lacks a unified vision for moving forward.

I have only a minor critique of this work. Namely, it would have been helpful to see a unified reconstruction. Where does historical Jesus reconstruction go next if traditional criteria are not the solution? This book is a shot across the bow, calling for major revisions or complete abandonment of the criteria. If solutions are not paired with deconstructions, scholars will probably continue to use existing methods.

It will be profitable to watch the works of Keith and Le Donne as time progresses. I anticipate future organization to coalesce around mnemonic and memory criteria, leaving behind form-critical units in order to approach the Gospels as whole documents, and a growing skepticism of traditional criteria. Second, Robert Webb wrote "The Historical Enterprise and Historical Jesus Research," in *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus* (2010). I was surprised to find no interaction with this article. It is nearly 90 pages of articulating historiography, primary and secondary criteria, and is one of the more up-to-date summations of the criteria's use in modern Jesus reconstructions.

Historical Jesus researchers would be amiss if they fail to engage this source. Current students engaging in historiography, the Synoptic Problem, or anyone favoring traditional historical criteria ought to engage this source for continued historical refinement and methodological modification. *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity*, in my estimation, will be the first of many in a postmodern era calling into question a modernist discipline.

Shawn J. Wilhite

Southern Seminary, Louisville, KY

***One Bible, Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?* By Dave Brunn. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013. ii+205 pp., \$16.00 paperback ISBN-13: 978-0830827152.**

Dave Brunn is the Director of Education for the New Tribes Mission Missionary Training Center. He has been associated with New Tribes for over thirty-five years, twenty-one of which were spent translating the New Testament for the Lamogai people of Papua New Guinea.

One Bible, Many Versions is an investigation of the theory and practice of Bible translation, with the goal of finding the similarities and differences in the various English translations of the Bible. Brunn then evaluates the significance of the differences, and concludes that the current sharp debate over whether English translations should strive for the highest degree of literalness is unhelpful and unnecessary.

Brunn's first two chapters describe the controversy over degrees of literalness in English translations, and give a brief outline of the two major philosophies of Bible translation: formal equivalence and functional equivalence. Formal equivalence seeks to retain as much of the grammar and word order of the original language as possible in the target language, and to translate single words in the original language with a single expression in the target language wherever possible. The Greek word *logos* is an example. The most common word for *logos* in English is "word," so this is the rendering that a functional equivalent translation will attempt to use in as many contexts as possible, leaving the reader to determine the intended meaning in each context. The King James Version (KJV), the New American Standard Bible (NASB), and the English Standard Version (ESV) are three examples of formal equivalent translations that Brunn considers throughout the book.

Functional equivalence, also known as meaning-based translation, seeks to express the contextual meaning of the original language idiomatically in the target language, without necessarily representing the grammar, word order, and individual words of the original. If we continue to use the example above, the Greek word *logos* has dozens of slightly different meanings in particular contexts. A functional equivalent translation will attempt to translate *logos* using clear, natural English that expresses its precise meaning in each context. Brunn uses the New International Version (NIV), the New Living Translation (NLT), the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB), and the several others (CEV, NET, GW, the Message) as his examples of functional equivalent translations.

He then offers a long list of examples taken from the translations listed above, and shows that the labels "formal equivalent" and

“functional equivalent” cannot be applied strictly. His first data table alone shows 93 verses from both Testaments in which translations that are widely known as formal equivalents, such as the NASB and ESV, resort to thought-for-thought rendering, where functional equivalent translations, such as the NIV, NLT, proceed word-for-word. His conclusion is that meaning has priority over form. The formal equivalent translations merely try to minimize the situations in which they depart from their stated ideal, but there are still numerous instances in which practical problems force a meaning-based approach, rather than a formal approach.

The largest section of the book (chapters 3-8) describes the various reasons for which the ideal of formal equivalence must be abandoned for meaning-based translation, and what this implies about the common claim that formal equivalent translations reflect a more robust doctrine of divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Brunn himself holds a very conservative view of plenary verbal inspiration and inerrancy, naming Charles Ryrie as a scholar whose view is most similar to his own. He then sums up his view of the relationship between translation and inspiration concisely: “If the doctrine of verbal inspiration requires consistent word-for-word translation, then every English version is disqualified” (129).

Brunn continues with his irenic refutation of the superiority of formal equivalence by considering the special problem of translating New Testament Greek into completely unrelated languages, such as Lamogai, rather than a more closely-related language, such as English. He then explores the translation practices of the New Testament writers themselves. He contends that strict word-for-word translation becomes unworkable for reasons of idiomatic expressions in the original languages, contextual requirements, differences in grammar between languages, and ease of reading in the target language.

The last section of the book (chapters 9-10) argues for greater unity in the church regarding the use of a wide range of translations, while excluding the most extreme examples of each philosophy, such as *Young’s Literal Translation* (formal equivalent) and *The Cotton-Patch Version* (functional equivalent). According to Brunn, all translations that avoid either extreme are useful to Christians. All translations within the acceptable range have more in common than is usually acknowledged, and all are limited in different ways.

The strengths of Brunn’s work are numerous. His writing style is suitable for non-specialists in Bible translation without being oversimplified. His twenty years of successful experience as a Bible translator in an extremely remote people group enable him to write

with authority on the practical difficulties of translation, and the compromises that inevitably result. His experience also lends his conclusions about the commonalities and imperfections of English translations excellent credibility. He includes copious, relevant examples in every chapter to support his views. Brunn makes a strong case against the use of exclusively formal equivalent translations, but his tone remains very gracious throughout the book.

Brunn's main weakness is in his use of examples from the Old Testament. Some of the Old Testament examples he cites betray a limited knowledge of Biblical Hebrew. For example, his rendering of לְשֵׁנְךָ as "navel" in Prov. 3:8 in Table 2.5 (53) fails to consider other textual options for what is a curious image in Hebrew. The example supposedly shows that the formal equivalent translations (NASB, ESV) resorted to a meaning-based rendering at this point ("body, flesh") rather than staying with the strict formal equivalent, "navel." However, the editors of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* suggest that the reader consider the Septuagint text, which reads $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ σώματί σου, and translates as "for your flesh (body)." The back-translation of $\tau\tilde{\omega}$ σώματί σου into Hebrew is לְשֵׁנְךָ , "for your flesh," which shows a one letter difference from the Masoretic Text. It is easy to see how the *aleph* may have dropped out of the text, as it was becoming a silent letter even in biblical times. In the context of healing, "flesh" makes much better sense than "navel." The Septuagint reading appears to be warranted here, which means that the NASB, ESV, and NIV all translated the word in essentially literal fashion. The textual evidence contradicts Brunn at this point.

In Table 2.7 he reads the *beth* in בְּרַגְלֶיךָ from Deut. 11:10 in its common spatial meaning as "in," yielding the meaning "water in your foot." Brunn does not realize that the preposition *beth* in Biblical Hebrew may be used in an instrumental sense, expressing "by" or "with." All of the versions understood the *beth* of בְּרַגְלֶיךָ as an instrumental *beth*. In addition, the NIV and ESV translators correctly understood וְהִשְׁקִיטָהּ as "irrigate (cause to drink), respecting the causative nuance of the *Hiphil* stem of the root שָׁקַט , "to drink." These shortcomings in Biblical Hebrew make his example moot: all of the English translations cited used "water" or "irrigate," which are synonyms in a gardening context, and all of the translations understood the instrumental *beth* better than he did.

Although his use of Old Testament examples is weak, the New Testament examples that Brunn cites are very accurate and strong. His

errors in Hebrew are not numerous enough to undermine his overall argument, which can stand on the strength of his New Testament examples only. One may hope that a second edition of the book will be strengthened by the input of experts in the Old Testament.

One Bible, Many Versions is a well-researched and compelling case for the value of a diversity of English translations, and the value of meaning-based translations in particular. Brunn's effort should lead Christians to greater unity in the important debate over Bible translation philosophy.

Brendan Kennedy

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

***Reviving the Heart: The Story of the 18th Century Revival.* By Richard Turnbull. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2012. 191 pp. \$16.95, paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0745953496.**

This overview of what was a remarkable work of God in the eighteenth century by the former Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford—Turnbull was the Principal from 2005 to 2012—is a well-needed addition to the literature on the revival. While written in a popular vein, it is clear that Turnbull is familiar with some of the most significant literature on the evangelical revival published in the past twenty-five years. The first chapter, dealing with the origins of the revival, reveals Turnbull's grasp of some of this literature. After surveying recent scholarly perspectives as well as the claim that the revival is to be considered solely through the lens of a divine work of the Holy Spirit (a view that Turnbull does not reject but he rightly recognizes that God works through means), he concludes that there is a threefold origin to the revival: it was a movement that was "reacting against mere moralism," while "reclaiming Reformation doctrine, and appropriating experience" (26–27).

The second and third chapters introduce the two figures whose "names dominate the story of the Revival" (30): George Whitefield and John Wesley. In the first of these chapters, Turnbull also introduces us to two other remarkable figures of this era, the Welsh preachers, Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland (50–52, 59–60, 79) and to note one of the key methodologies of this period, itinerant preaching, which is a defining characteristic of much of the revival (60). Chapter four looks at various disputes and divisions within the revival, particularly, Wesley's quarrel with the Moravians over the use of the means of grace (67–71), and Wesley's dispute with his friend Whitefield over the subject of

predestination (71–78) — a conflict that did much to seriously damage their relationship (71).

In chapter five, Turnbull looks at two other pioneer figures in the revival: William Grimshaw of Haworth (83–97) and Samuel Walker of Truro (97–104), both moderate Calvinists, but whose methodologies differed widely. Grimshaw believed it his duty to preach in neighboring parishes where the gospel was a foreign sound and to do this he often employed lay preachers. Walker, on the other hand, rejected both itineracy and the use of lay preachers, though he shared Grimshaw's theological and spiritual beliefs to the full.

Selina Hastings, the Countess of Huntingdon, the remarkable woman who all but founded a denomination—the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion—is the subject of the next chapter. Turnbull regards her as “the glue that held the Revival together” in the mid-eighteenth century (105). This will be a surprising judgment for some, but Turnbull provides evidence to support this assertion: her deep pockets helped support a goodly number of revival leaders, including Whitefield, and also build a variety of chapels throughout England. As an aristocrat, she was able to take advantage of a legal loophole that allowed her to have private chaplains attached to places of residence, where they would lead worship that the public could attend (115). She thus appointed various men to act as her chaplains, but eventually she was forced to register her chapels as places of dissenting worship, and a new denominational body was born. Turnbull does an excellent job of tracing this development and its impact on the revival.

Chapters seven and eight look at the consolidation of the revival and its maturation. To illustrate how the revival was consolidated, four key figures are examined: Henry Venn, William Romaine, John Newton, and John Fletcher. An overview of the shape and legacy of the ministry of these men display well the changes that came to the revival, but also how continuity with the pioneering work of Whitefield and the Wesleys was retained. This reviewer was struck by the profound biblicism of these men. Newton made it clear in his first sermon in London to the congregation of St. Mary, Woolnoth, that the “Bible is the grand repository of the truths that it will be the business and pleasure of my life to set before you” (132). William Romaine was sure that the Bible was “the infallible standard of truth” that he had personally found to be “more precious than gold and...really sweeter than honey” (143). Turnbull ventures that it was local pastors like these men, “practitioners on the ground,” who “formed and shaped the Revival, with the more famous itinerants,” Whitefield and Wesley, “providing the icing on the cake” (148).

The maturation of the revival, treated in the final chapter, especially looks at the development of the revival in the Established Church. Charles Simeon and William Wilberforce are profiled as well as the departure of the Wesleyan Methodist wing of the Revival from the Church of England. Notably, within a generation the Methodists themselves experienced a division over the validity of open-air preaching. Methodist radicals like Hugh Bourne and William Clowes, the founders of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, were “unacceptable to the new Methodist establishment” (159). Turnbull rightly notes that this story “illustrates how the Revival both matured and was then once again radicalized” (159).

In his conclusion, Turnbull argues that while there are a number of possible explanations for the origin of the revival, it must be admitted that the dynamism of the awakening supports the view held by the participants themselves that this was none other than the hand of the Lord (162). He reiterates the importance of John Wesley—“a towering figure”—and of Charles’ “wonderful hymns” (162). The Wesleys’ legacy would dominate the memory of the Revival since Whitefield, the other key pioneer, spent so much time in America and died there more than twenty years before Wesley (163). Whitefield’s “classic moderate Calvinism” would flourish inside the Church of England, but not outside of it. The Countess of Huntingdon’s Connexion, a direct result of Whitefield’s ministry, has never been a large body.

Of course, Turnbull is forgetting the way the revival re-energized the Calvinism of Old Dissent (though there are numerous references to the Dissenters scattered throughout the book). By the time that the Wesleyan Methodists had left their mother church, the Congregationalists and Calvinistic Baptists were undergoing a profound revitalization that had deep roots in the Anglican awakening. The Calvinistic Baptist John Fawcett, for example, who was the author of the hymn “Blest be the tie that bind,” was converted under George Whitefield and thrilled to his preaching and that of William Grimshaw. He reckoned that “for natural, unaffected eloquence” Whitefield was “superior to any person he ever heard.” He was one of several score of Baptist ministers and deacons who were indebted to Whitefield and his co-workers in the revival in the latter half of the eighteenth century, as can be readily seen from scanning the obituaries of *The Baptist Magazine* (1809–) between the 1810s and the 1830s.

An appendix ably and helpfully takes stock of recent historiographical approaches to the Revival. Turnbull believes that the influential work of David Bebbington, who stresses the “newness” of the revival, fails to see more of the revival’s essential continuity with

what had gone before in the Puritan era. He rightly regards “Bebbington’s great achievement” to have been setting the revival in its cultural matrix of the Enlightenment (166–167). Turnbull also discusses the studies by Gordon Rupp and J.C.D. Clark, who have explored the presence of genuine faith in the period following the twilight of Puritanism (167–170). These studies help correct the idea that all was darkness prior to the conversion of Whitefield and the Wesley brothers. Finally, Turnbull notes the influence of Continental Pietism on the origins of the revival, which has been especially elucidated by W.R. Ward (170–174): in fine, “Pietism is crucial to the background of the Revival” (170).

Although there is a degree of choppiness to the book at times, Turnbull has given us an excellent survey of the revival, a book that is at once eminently readable and comprehensive. On the eve of the tercentennial of the birth of a number of key figures in the revival—Samuel Walker was born in 1713, while George Whitefield and William Romaine were both born in 1714—this is a great book by means of which we can remember a remarkable period and through which we can be stimulated to pray God may do a similar thing in our day.

Michael A. G. Haykin
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

***The Early Text of the New Testament.* By Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger, eds. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012, xiv + 483 pp., \$175.00. ISBN-13: 978-0199566365.**

The conversational pendulum of New Testament text critical foci has morphed over the past couple of decades. This magnificent new work, *The Early Text of the New Testament*, is a highly welcomed addition for this shift in discussion. Editors Charles E. Hill and Michael J. Kruger assemble an incredible team of textual critics, New Testament intellectualists, and Patristic scholars in a project that spanned over six and a half years (v). This work will hopefully influence the field, advance broader scholarly conversations, and serve as an authoritative voice in the coming years in New Testament textual criticism and Patristic textual studies.

Three sections provide the skeletal outline for thematic division. Various *types* of scholars help contribute to the value of this work. Textual critics are joined with various NT/Patristic scholars. A total of

twenty-two scholars encompass the team of writers on topics ranging from early sociological and culture readings, evaluation of papyri, to evaluation of Patristic and early Church writings. The overall methodological concern of each chapter and scholar is to evaluate the “state” of the text or examine the cultural repertoire of the early text and cultural setting; that is, the era “before the great uncial codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus of the fourth century” (2). *The Early Text of the New Testament* seeks to “provide an inventory and some analysis of the evidence available for understanding the pre-fourth-century period of the transmission of the NT materials” (2).

“Part I. The Textual and Scribal Culture of Early Christianity” highlights various cultural norms and scribal tendencies during early Christendom. Harry Y. Gamble, in “The Book Trade in the Roman Empire” (23–36), observes the general milieu of early book production and their dissemination. Scott Charlesworth, in “Indicators of ‘Catholicity’ in Early Gospel Manuscripts” (37–48), evaluates the consistency in codex size and *nomina sacra* abbreviations to help determine common use of Gospel manuscripts (37–39). Visual features of manuscripts, such as textual division, punctuation, and other reader’s aids (42) argue for manuscript production for public and private use; therefore, contrary to the Bauer-thesis, catholic and orthodox sources were formed with more organization than non-orthodox sources (46–47). Within erudite cultures, the prevalence for MS care, aesthetic letter shaping, careful and elegant calligraphy, etc. marked pagan circles. According to Larry Hurtado, in “Manuscripts and the Sociology of Early Christian Reading” (49–62), early Christian communities ranged from poor to rich, young to old, and illiterate to literate; therefore unlike erudite communities, the early papyri MSS are clearer, more readable, contain larger letters, careful spacing between lines, etc. so as to demonstrate a deliberate shift in Christian communities encouraging broader reading (57–58). Michael J. Kruger, in “Early Christian Attitudes toward the Reproduction of Texts” (63–80), examines how early Christians viewed the NT text as being Scripture and how early testimony viewed the reproduction of the NT text (66).

“Part II. The Manuscript Tradition” provides an extremely detailed and up-to-date analysis of the early NT papyri; that is, text classification, singular and comparative readings, manuscript features, etc. Discussions include individual books and groups of books—the Gospels (Tommy Wasserman, Peter M. Head, Juan Hernández, Jr., and Juan Chapa), Acts (Christopher Tuckett), the Pauline corpus including Hebrews (James R. Royse), the Catholic Epistles (J.K. Elliot), Revelation

(Tobias Nicklas), and various versions (Peter Williams). Peter Head, in "The Early Text of Mark" (108–20), has the most arduous manuscript analysis because there is only one extant— "rather poorly preserved" (108)—papyri manuscript that qualifies as an "early text" (i.e. k⁴⁵). Conversely, J.K. Elliott, in "The Early Text of the Catholic Epistles" (204–24), is able to interact with the *Novum Testamentum Graecum: Editio Critica Maior* and early papyri manuscripts. Part II is the most technical because of its strenuous, though helpful, textual analysis of individual books.

"Part III. Early Citation and Use of New Testament Writings" explores Patristic and early church literature, and their quotation and borrowing practices in order to evaluate the state of the NT text. Charles E. Hill, in "In These Very Words': Methods and Standards of Literary Borrowing in the Second Century" (261–81), evaluates early citation practices of the NT during 2nd Century literature. Providing samples of non-sacred texts (Homer, Herodotus, Platonic traditions, Philo citing Plato, Plutarch citing Philo) and sacred texts (Porphyry, Philo, Josephus, Jubilees and Pseudo-Philo, Justin), Hill concludes that a lack of accuracy in citation does not prove there is no established text. A helpful investigation for this chapter would have included consideration of how the Gospels cite OT texts; do they follow the same principles? Paul Foster, in "The Text of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers" (282–301), observes loose NT citations in the Didache, 1–2 Clement, Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians and concludes that citation techniques of these Fathers prohibit any clear text forms of an established NT text (300). Dieter T. Roth, in "Marcion and the Early New Testament Text" (302–12), contends that although Marcion's text contains one Gospel and ten Pauline letters, "all readings" should be examined carefully (312), but is a limited study because Marcion's text appears only in the testimony of his opponents (303). Joseph Verheyden, in "Justin's Text of the Gospels: Another Look at the Citations in *1Apol.* 15.1–8" (313–35), evaluates how Justin comments, quotes, and alludes to various portions of the Gospels. Tjitze Baarda, in "Tatian's Diatessaron and the Greek Text of the Gospels" (336–49), attempts to answer how the Greek Diatessaron has been preserved in various versions (Syriac, Armenian, Arabic). He was initially chosen to provide textual Diatessaronic data for the first UBS edition but later withdrew after investigation because of the vast amounts of variants amongst the versions (345). Limiting the apocryphal data prior to 4th Century in Greek literature and able to find direct quotes of the NT, Stanley Porter, in "Early Apocryphal Gospels

and the New Testament Text" (350–69), examines the *Gospel of Peter*, the Egerton papyrus, P.Vindobonensis Greek 2325 (Fayyum Fragment), P.Merton II 51, P.Oxyrhynchus X 1224, the Greek *Gospel of Thomas*, and the *Protevangelium of James*. Lastly, D. Jeffrey Bingham and Billy R. Todd, Jr., ("Irenaeus's Text of the Gospels in *Adversus haeresus*," 370–92) and Carl P. Cosaert ("Clement of Alexandria's Gospel Citations," 393–413) provide highly technical comparative analysis of their respective corpus.

The Early Text of the New Testament provides major contributions to their relevant disciplines. One primary contribution, not as explicitly emphasized in previous decades, is vertical readings of individual manuscripts. Rather than comparing multiple manuscripts side-by-side, thereby creating multiple variants, more attention is given to individual manuscripts highlighting their scribal tendencies, codex size, reading aids (spacing, punctuation, breathing marks), and distinguishing between private and public use. Second, this source joins together two scholarly disciplines: New Testament textual criticism and early church history. Patristic textual studies are greatly enhanced by careful study of the text and observing the early use and reception of the NT text by Patristic and early literature enhances the NT discipline. Lastly, though not exhaustive, any advanced students (Th.M. or Ph.D.) needing thesis/dissertation topics in the field of text criticism and early patristic literature ought to mine the pages for ideas and tentative solutions for their writing projects.

Though an incredible source and worthy of high praise, it is not without some shortcomings. First, with a book of this magnitude, there are far too many spelling errors, character errors, and, at times, ambiguous thesis statements and portions needing further editorial revisions. Take for example the inconsistency of title spellings: "Early Citation and Use of the New Testament Writings" (19) should delete the "the", providing continuity with other occurrences (viii, 259). The papyri symbol appears in normal script (P), as opposed to gothic script (k); and, the papyri number is not super-scripted: P45 (115). ICC should read International Critical Commentary and not International Critic Commentary (xii). There are other errors as well as sentence and thesis restructuring problems ("very significant contributions to method in investigating patristic texts..." 262). Second, as can be expected with a multi-author book, not all chapters are equal and some outshine others. For example, the research and writing abilities of Elliot's chapter is exquisite and creates a standard in research that others didn't necessarily match. Lastly, this excellent book, written by top tier

scholars, is held back by a potentially truncated readership because of its steep price: \$175.00.

This book can and should influence the ongoing text critical discussions. Pertinent to future conversations, topics including “vertical readings” of manuscripts, the organization of an early text, and the usefulness of Patristic literature ought to continue. This is not a book for beginning text critical or Patristic studies students. However, any NT intellectualist, intermediate NT students, NT text critical thinkers, intrigued pastors, or any intermediate Patristic students should read this book in order to join a greater conversation that will aid their studies and make them conversant with a portion of valuable scholarship.

Shawn J. Wilhite
Southern Seminary, Louisville, KY

Midwestern Journal of Theology Subscription Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Country: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Payment enclosed: ___ One year: \$20 ___ Two years: \$35 ___ Three years: \$50

___ Please add me to your general mailing list.

Please send my friend a subscription (payment enclosed):

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Country: _____

Clip and mail to: Editor, *Midwestern Journal of Theology*,
MBTS, 5001 N. Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, MO, 64118

The faculty of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
invites you to subscribe to the
Midwestern Journal of Theology,
a scholarly journal written to assist Christians and churches
in making disciples throughout the world.

Published biannually, each issue includes exegetical and theological articles,
inspirational sermons, and reviews of recent important books.

Please visit the MBTS website at www.mbts.edu.

for the Church



BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY