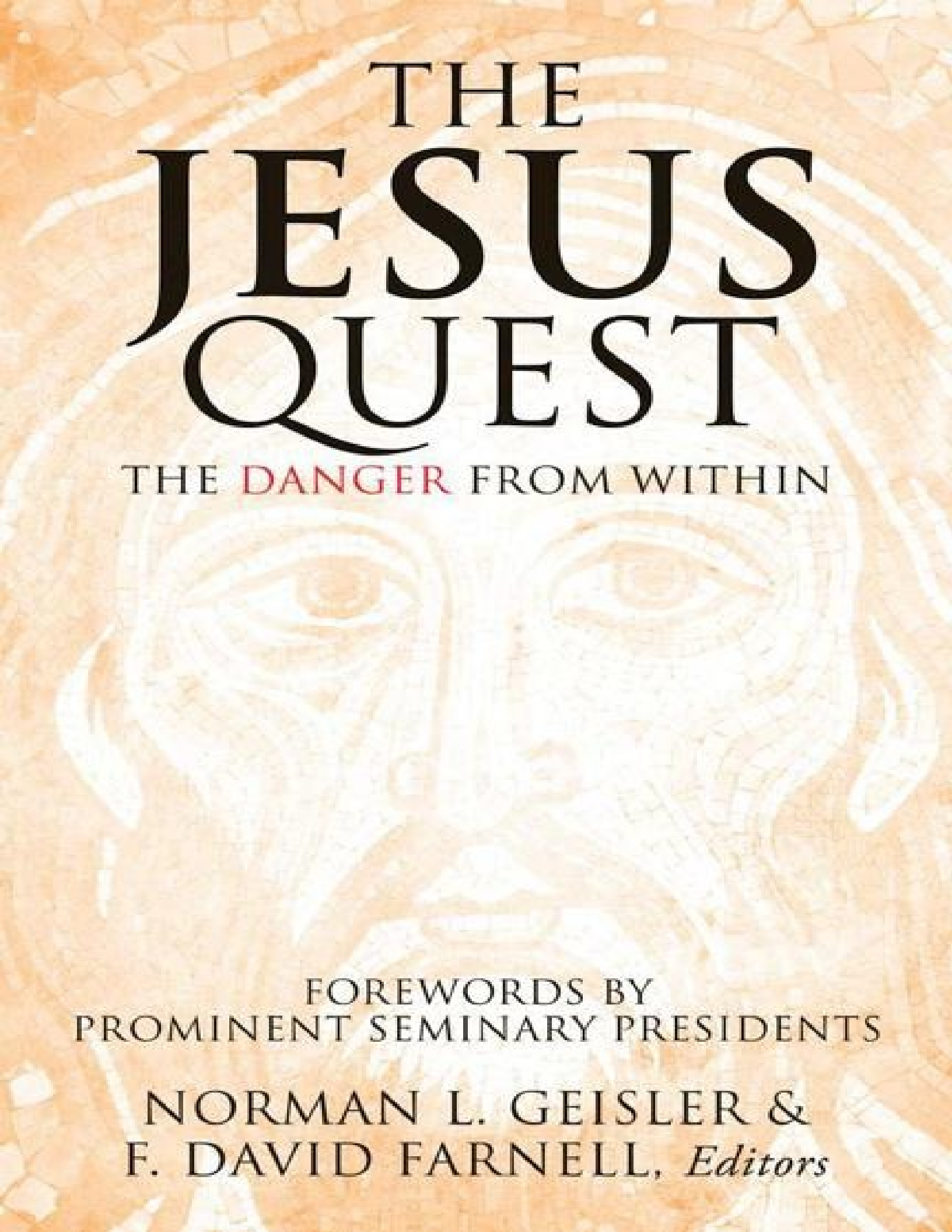


THE JESUS QUEST

THE DANGER FROM WITHIN

FOREWORDS BY
PROMINENT SEMINARY PRESIDENTS

NORMAN L. GEISLER &
F. DAVID FARNELL, *Editors*

Table of Contents

Forewords

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PROLOGUE

A Warning From Recent Church History

BEWARE OF PHILOSOPHY

The Philosophical Roots Of Modern Biblical Criticism

The Problem Of Philosophy In New Testament Studies

The Problem Of Philosophical Presuppositions Used In Gospel Studies: How Various Views Of Inspiration Have Impacted Modern Discussions Of The Synoptic Problem1

Methodological Unorthodoxy

A Critical Review Of Donald Hagner's "Ten Guidelines For Evangelical Scholarship"

BE AWARE OF HISTORY

The Down Grade Controversy And Evangelical Boundaries: Some Lessons From Spurgeon' S Battle For Evangelical Orthodoxy

Perspectives On The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy Of The Twentieth Century (Part 1)

Perspectives On The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy Of The Twentieth Century (Part 2)

A Brief History Of The Evangelical Theological Society On The Discipline Of Its Membership

BEWARE OF “CRITICAL” POSTMODERN HISTORY

Searching For The “Historical” Jesus: The Rise Of The Three Searches

Searching For The Historical Jesus: Does History Matter To NeoEvangelicals?

Searching For The Historical Jesus: Evangelical Participation In The Third Search1

Historical Criticism Vs. GrammaticoHistorical: Quo Vadis Evangelicals?

BEWARE OF HERMENEUTICS

Does Genre Determine Meaning?1

Objectivity In Interpretation

REESTABLISHING A SOLID BASIS FOR KNOWING JESUS

The Knowability Of The Past1

The Reliability Of The New Testament Writers

In Defense Of The Supernatural

EPILOGUE

Epilogue

Appendices

Subject Author Index

Scripture Index

The Jesus Quest

*The **Danger** from within*

NORMAN L. GEISLER
& F. DAVID FARNELL,
Editors

FOREWORDS BY
PROMINENT SEMINARY PRESIDENTS

Xulon Press

Copyright © 2014

by NORMAN L. GEISLER & F. DAVID FARNELL, EDITORS

The Jesus Quest

The Danger from within

by NORMAN L. GEISLER & F. DAVID FARNELL, EDITORS

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 9781628718744

All rights reserved solely by the author. The author guarantees all contents are original and do not infringe upon the legal rights of any other person or work. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the permission of the author. The views expressed in this book are not necessarily those of the publisher.

Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from The New American Standard Bible. Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation.

www.xulonpress.com

FOREWORDS

BY SEMINARY PRESIDENTS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS WORK



The following Prominent Seminary Presidents of evangelical schools, though differing on some areas of theology, are a united voice in agreement with the central theses in. . .

The Jesus Quest: The Danger from Within



FOREWORD

Dr. Joseph M. Holden
President, Veritas Evangelical Seminary

Among the more recent generation of evangelical Bible scholars, as well as with some high profile philosophers and apologists, there exists a powerful but unnecessary draw towards favoring historical skepticism over the biblical narrative. Though this attraction offers the promise of academic respectability, the appearance of "balance," and entry into the prestigious "scholars club" with peers of like kind, it simultaneously chisels away the bedrock of Scripture from which Christian doctrine and the portrait of Christ flow. The casualty to such a compromise has always been 1) the inerrancy of Scripture, 2) confidence in the Gospel account of the life and ministry of Christ, and eventually 3) the community of believers!

Since creation, and throughout the history of the church, the unending assaults on Scripture have come in many forms. In the Garden, the serpent cast doubt on God's word with a hiss, "hath God said?" (Gen 3:1–2); the Gnostics of the second century rejected the vast majority of the inspired account of Jesus and developed their own false canon and distorted life of Christ, labeling those who dissent "unenlightened." In addition, Francis Bacon's inductivism in his *Novum Organum* (1620) limited the realm of truth (fact) to the empirical world. Moreover, Hobbes' materialism in *Leviathan* (1651) limited reality to that which is corporeal. Furthermore, Spinoza's antisupernaturalism in his *Theologico-Politico Tractatus* (1677) limited what is possible to the natural world. What is more, David Hume's radical skepticism in the *Enquiry* (1748) promoted doubt and uncertainty, and Immanuel Kant's agnosticism in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) effectively resulted in relativism and a perceived chasm between the knowable (observable/phenomena) and unknowable (unobservable/noumena) realms. By the mid-nineteenth century, Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) offered the world a naturalistic mechanism (Natural Selection) to account for the evolution of simple life into more complex

life. The application of macro-evolution to other disciplines such as religion has lead to the belief that society, morals, and religion, have evolved over time and that the Genesis creation narrative is myth. All these served as the fertile soil for the growth of higher criticism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the rise of existential encounter offered by Neo-orthodoxy under Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann in the twentieth century.

Collectively, these offerings contributed to forming an armada of cherished notions among Bible scholars that serve as the embarkation point for their quest. These ideas have as their flagship the radical separation between science and religion, fact (historical) and value (moral/faith), and by extension the unassailable dichotomy between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Without the acceptance of this unnecessary dichotomy, the search for the "historical" Jesus all but vanishes.

Some (who are referred to as neoevangelicals), acquiescing to one or more of these inimical ideas, or yielding to the critical theories and historicalcritical methodologies of those who have been snared by them, have felt the need to offer a blended methodology and/or a "new" historiography which is a halfway-house between the methods and conclusions of negative historical criticism and evangelical scholarship. One particular way this is accomplished is by evaluating the extrabiblical literature with its genre. This genre is said to be of the kind that allows for the author's flexible use (i.e. license) of legend, myth, embellishment, and poetic effects. The neoevangelical sees the Gospel narratives as possessing the same (or similar) kind of genre, which allows for Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to use legend and myth for communicating their theological purposes. The conclusions of such an approach yields the difficult task of discovering where history stops and legend begins. Another way to employ the "new blend" is to apply elements of the restrictive historicalcritical criteria to the Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, to discover the authentic historical kernel, unfortunately, leaving much of the narrative outside historical veracity. The fruit of this aberrant mixture often yields conclusions more in line with the negative critics than with the inspired narrative.

We would expect this kind of negative approach to Scripture to be common outside the church. But unfortunately, the alarming number of evangelical scholars adopting this "new blend" or endorsing its aberrant conclusions as being *consistent* with (ICBI) full inerrancy appears to be swelling at an alarming rate. Evangelicals who seriously disagree with the neoevangelical approach, or

vigorously challenge such a position in print, are quickly labeled “unscholarly” or “uninformed,” some are even tabbed as insensitive “theological bullies.”

In *The Jesus Quest*, Drs. Geisler and Farnell, along with their competent array of contributing scholars, draw a line in the sand by offering a masterful treatment of the alarming skeptical trend permeating evangelical scholarship and its graduate institutions. This work is a timely and sobering wake-up call to evangelical faculties everywhere as well as to Bible college and evangelical seminary presidents and academic deans who are responsible for overseeing them!

FOREWORD

Dr. Richard D. Land,
President Southern Evangelical Seminary

Dr. Geisler and Dr. Farnell are to be commended for producing and collecting these important essays addressing a real and growing threat from *within* evangelical scholarship to the complete veracity and authority of the Word of God.

Dr. Geisler, philosopher, theologian, and apologist, and Dr. Farnell, New Testament scholar, are uniquely prepared by academic training, scholarly pursuit, and interest to identify the nature of these threats by the “new” evangelicals and their dangerous flirtation with erroneous philosophies, higher criticism, and faulty hermeneutical methodologies.

These “new” evangelicals have forced the evangelical world to once again ever more carefully define what once were clearly defined words and concepts, which were then undermined and redefined downward by a new generation putting question marks at the end of Holy Scripture’s truth declarations. In an earlier time, Christians who believed in the complete, divine inspiration of Scripture then had to add “full,” “verbal,” and “plenary” inspiration of Scripture to separate and define their original view and to differentiate themselves from those who would redefine the original, orthodox view of biblical inspiration.

Now, in recent years conservative evangelicals have had to delineate the critically important differences between the traditional, “unlimited” inerrancy view of the total truthfulness of Holy Scripture and the more recent “limited”

inerrancy views (Geisler and Roach, chapter 4).

The Jesus Quest's subtitle "The Danger from Within" emphasized that very serious threats to the total truthfulness of Scripture have risen within the confines of "evangelical" scholarship. In raising the alarm in *The Jesus Quest*, Geisler and Farnell have taken on the role of biblical prophets, the "watchmen on the wall" who when they saw danger or peril, sounded the alarm. Geisler and Farnell, having discerned the threat from within the walls of evangelicalism, have sounded a clarion call of warning.

Thankfully, they have done far, far more. They have not only diagnosed the threat, but they have also shown how dangerous such threat have been to true biblical orthodoxy in the past and, most importantly, how to combat and defeat these threats intellectually and spiritually. Far too often, such books diagnose the disease or malady, but provide little or no positive prescription or treatment to cure the sickness and return the Body of Christ to full health. The *Jesus Quest* not only says, "Here is the threat," but also declares, "Here are the answers."

I would urge every evangelical Christian to read *The Jesus Quest*. As a current seminary president, I am going to do everything within my power to see that every potential or current seminary student and every potential or current seminary professor within my circle of influence will read *The Jesus Quest*.

Finally, even excellent books like *The Jesus Quest* have particularly valuable nuggets, and I will close by commending Dr. Geisler's chapter "The Philosophical Roots of Modern Biblical Criticism" as the most valuable nugget in this volume. Dr. Geisler gives invaluable advice to evangelical scholars. Among other things, he urges them to "avoid the desire to become a famous scholar," reminding them that "scholarship should be used to build Christ's spiritual kingdom, not to build an academic kingdom for one's self."

Geisler also advises them not to "trade orthodoxy for academic respectability." He challenges evangelical scholars "not only to live Christocentrically but to "**think** Christocentrically."

He then explains that "**we cannot properly beware of philosophy unless we be *aware* of philosophy.**" Geisler then emphasized what is at stake in these controversies: "Unless either philosophers become biblical exegetes in our schools or those who we now call biblical exegetes take to the pursuit of

philosophy seriously and adequately, and there is a conjunction of these two things, biblical exegesis and philosophical intelligence, there can be no cessation of theological troubles for our schools, nor I fancy for the Christian Church either." Amen!

FOREWORD

Dr. John F. MacArthur, Jr.
President, The Master's College and Seminary

Attempts to discredit the Bible have come in relentless waves since the dawn of the church. The early gnostic heresies that plagued Christianity for centuries represented nothing less than a full-scale assault against the authority and sufficiency of Scripture. The attacks commenced almost as soon as the church was born. The first stirrings of incipient gnosticism were troubling the waters even before the New Testament canon was complete. That fact is clear, because the error that is described and refuted in 1 John 4:2 and 2 John 7 was *docetism,* a classic core tenet of early gnostic thought. The apostle Paul was likewise responding to a gnostic-style notion of enlightenment in Colossians 2:8: "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ." Paul was stepping on gnostic toes yet again when he pointed out that "the world through its wisdom did not come to know God" (1 Corinthians 1:21), and that those who profess to be wise are simply fools (Romans 1:22).

Gnostics claimed to be privy to secret knowledge that would unlock the true meaning of Scripture. *(Gnosis,* of course, is the Greek word for knowledge.) Not that there was any real agreement among these supposedly enlightened teachers regarding what the great secret was or who had actually achieved the pinnacle of understanding. Various gnostic sects were hopelessly fragmented and contentious, competing with one another for followers—fomenting discord and disunity everywhere they went.

But collectively they agreed on this much: they insisted that Scripture alone is unreliable and insufficient; that true spiritual enlightenment entails a high level of philosophical sophistication; and that the Bible therefore cannot be taken at face value or understood correctly by anyone not fully initiated into the hidden *gnosis.* They derided simple, childlike faith. They cast doubt on the accuracy of

Scripture. They denied the incarnation. They retold practically every New Testament story—often writing their own fanciful, spurious, alternative "gospels" with false messiahs as their heroes. Each gnostic sect urged people to embrace whatever unique philosophy or *gnosis* they offered and use that as a lens through which to interpret Scripture.

For centuries, these gnostic cults rose and declined, one after another, in an undulating flood of confusion and doubt. Each surge sought (but failed) to erode the church's confidence in the Word of God, depose the Christ of Scripture from His rightful place as Lord of all, and elevate worldly wisdom above divine revelation. In one way or another, all of them encouraged people to put their faith in human knowledge—or (more specifically) in the gnostic teacher. According to them, only the most unenlightened, dull-witted, or spiritually naïve would believe that Scripture is sufficient, true, and trustworthy.

Religious modernism, quasi-evangelical postmodernism, theological liberalism, so-called "red-letter Christianity," and other currently trending flavors of academic skepticism are all expressions of the same gnostic spirit. They all subvert and cast doubt on the authority, accuracy, and sufficiency of Scripture. They portray simple, childlike trust in Christ and belief in His word as ignorant, unsophisticated, unscholarly, or unenlightened.

The tides of worldly wisdom still come as they always have—in relentless waves, battering the bedrock tenets of Christian belief. They cannot demolish that foundation, because there is no power in hell that can wrest the church from the rock on which Christ has built it (Matthew 16:18). His kingdom cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28). "Those who trust in the Lord are as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved but abides forever" (Psalm 125:1).

Nevertheless, there are (and always have been) certain people in the visible church whose "faith" is something short of settled conviction. They profess faith in Christ and claim to know God, but they are Christians in name only. Such people do fall away—inevitably, and with disastrous effect. They reject simple faith, or they tolerate a defiled conscience, refusing repentance. They make "shipwreck of their faith" (Titus 1:19), and invariably subvert the faith of others as well (2 Timothy 2:18). The influence of such apostasy will frequently inundate earthly institutions, causing formerly sound parachurch organizations, publishers, schools, congregations, or whole denominations to abandon the faith of their fathers and turn against the truth of Scripture. This pattern repeats itself

with a remarkable (almost predictable) pattern of regularity.

A tsunami of neo-orthodox doctrine blended with academic cynicism threatened to sweep through practically every leading evangelical seminary some thirty-five or forty years ago. Key figures in some of the best-known ministerial training schools abandoned a high view of Scripture in a misguided quest for academic stature. The trend spread quickly, eroding evangelical conviction among faculty and students alike. The influence of alumni trained in these institutions was seeping into evangelical churches. Uncertainty and confusion (under the guise of intellectual sophistication) were spreading like poison where the authority and accuracy of the Bible had formerly been deemed unquestionable. Harold Lindsell's landmark 1976 book, *The Battle for the Bible,* exposed and documented the drift.

Soon it seemed the entire evangelical community was caught up in a wide-ranging, far-reaching debate about the inerrancy of Scripture. The tide began to turn with the founding of The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI) in 1978. That group, under the leadership of men like James Montgomery Boice, Jay Grimstead, Norman Geisler, and other key Christian leaders, sponsored the publication of books, journal articles, and white papers in defense of the Bible's authority and integrity—and in fairly short order, it seemed to stem the immediate tide of skepticism.

That, however, was by no means the end of the matter. The evangelical movement never fully regained the ground it had already forfeited to neo-orthodoxy. Once the work of ICBI was finished, many evangelicals, weary of the battle, quietly turned away from the issue, allowing Scripture to take a back seat to pragmatic philosophies of ministry. The megachurch movement soon captured the evangelical spotlight, touting seeker-sensitive strategies, public-opinion polls, entertainment—virtually any kind of gimmickry that might draw a crowd. Sermons were ruthlessly shortened and dumbed down. Doctrine was generally neglected. All these trends fostered a low view of Scripture. The hard-fought victory of ICBI proved to be short-lived and of precious little lasting consequence.

Now a new surge of old-style academic skepticism is rolling in again. It has been building for several years. It is epitomized by the growing influence of the so-called "Quest for the Historical Jesus"—a quasi-scholarly attempt to redefine and reimagine Jesus in a way that deliberately holds the biblical record of His

life and ministry in high suspicion. In other words, the fundamental presupposition of this movement is that extrabiblical sources (starting with the modern historians' own prejudices and speculations) are a better source for understanding the real Jesus than the Gospel records are. Documentaries on the History Channel and cover stories in the leading news magazines every Christmas and Easter reflect the profound influence this movement has had on the consciousness, opinions, and values of secular society.

Those are merely signs of a coming storm, and it looks to be a tempest of massive proportions. The men who have written the essays in this volume see the heaving swells on the horizon and are braced for the onslaught. Each of them is uniquely qualified to speak with considerable authority regarding these issues—but together they confess that Scripture is the supreme and only infallible authority. I'm grateful for their insights and the clarity and conviction with which they write. They have given us an invaluable volume.

I'm especially grateful for the work of Norm Geisler and David Farnell, who compiled and edited this volume. I was privileged to stand shoulder to shoulder with Dr. Geisler in the days when ICBI was coordinating the battle for the Bible. I'm glad to know he has lost none of his passion for defending biblical authority. It is an area where he truly excels. One of my favorite resources, a book I return to again and again, is *A General Introduction to the Bible*, the classic work Dr. Geisler co-authored with Bill Nix (another contributor to this volume).

Dr. Farnell is my colleague and a valuable member of The Master's Seminary faculty. His skill as a teacher and his commitment to the Scriptures can be seen on every page of this fine book. My hope is that these essays will help rally a new generation of young evangelicals to stand together in a sober-minded, steadfast, earnest defense of biblical inerrancy and true biblical scholarship.

Tolle lege.

FOREWORD

R. Albert Mohler, Jr.
President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

A Foreword to *The Jesus Quest*

Questioning the word of God is nothing new; doubting divine revelation is as old as Adam. In the Garden of Eden, God's first man to receive his divine word turned from it under the serpent's cunning temptation, "Did God really say. . .?" By the time of the writing of the New Testament, gnostic heresies were waging war against the authority and sufficiency of God's written revelation: all agreed that the Bible was insufficient for true spiritual enlightenment and required philosophical supplementation. Jesus Christ, God's "second Adam," who himself is the Word of God, was rejected in his own day and all throughout these "last days."

But a high view of Scripture as the revealed, reliable, and sufficient word of God has also endured from the birth of the church. In affirming that the Bible, as a whole and in its parts, contains nothing but God-breathed truth, evangelicals have simply affirmed what the church universal has affirmed for well over a millennium: *when the Bible speaks, God speaks*. Based on this affirmation, Bible-believing inerrantists from multiple denominations and schools across America assembled in 1978 at the International Council of Biblical Inerrancy to defend the authority and integrity of the Scriptures. This group adopted the Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy (1978) and Hermeneutics (1982). Inerrancy has been a core affirmation of evangelical Christianity as a movement, as evidenced by the Chicago Statements and the Evangelical Theological Society's tenet on the nature of the Bible: "The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs."

Nevertheless, the inerrancy of Scripture has not been universally accepted by all who would call themselves evangelical and who would function within the evangelical movement. In fact, the doctrine has seen many challenges in recent years. Embodied in the "quest for the historical Jesus" movement, a skepticism has returned that attempts to redefine and rethink Jesus in a way that denies the biblical record by placing primary importance upon extrabiblical documents and legends. Most recently, some have warned that an affirmation of Scripture's inerrancy would lead to intellectual disaster for the evangelical movement. Still others complain that the concept is bothersome at best and inherently divisive at worst.

If we do not confess that the whole Bible is totally true and trustworthy, then we have set ourselves upon a project of determining which texts of the Bible reflect God's perfection, if any. We will use human criteria of judgment to decide which texts bear divine authority and which texts can be trusted. We will decide,

one way or another, which texts we believe to be God speaking to us.

But if we affirm the inerrancy of Scripture without hesitation or reservation, then we must read it accordingly. Ways of reading Scripture that are at odds with its inerrant nature must be honestly assessed and relentlessly eschewed.

That is why I am thankful for *The Jesus Quest*. In this book, Geisler and Farnell examine the particular historical and philosophical approaches being used in the recent speculations of man set over the eternal self-revelation of God. Key to understanding the Bible and its presentation of Jesus as the Christ is a proper hermeneutical humility that submits to God's Word by taking him at his word in Scripture. To this end, Geisler and Farnell argue convincingly for the reliability of the New Testament books, its writers, and the God who inspired them. Along the way, they helpfully canvas the hermeneutical controversies within evangelicalism, criticize the skepticism of biblical criticism, and deconstruct the deconstructionist attempts to reframe the Scriptures. I appreciate and commend their spirit, scholarship, and sensitivity to the needs of the church as it lives "by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

FOREWORD

Dr. L. Paige Patterson
President, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Comparing the biblical prophets to contemporary preachers and professors has presented me with my keenest disappointment. The former spoke boldly and confidently; the latter with the lisp of compromise. The prophets spoke with a certainty about the musings of the God of Abraham. The latter showed the effects of a desire to be "academically recognized or politically kosher." The offspring of the prophets, men like C.H. Spurgeon, appealed to the souls of men and saw many come to Christ. Many of the current compromised evangelicals do little for the church and the common man and accomplish mostly the crippling of the evangelical students who read their books and study with them. By their fruits you shall know them.

The Jesus Quest: The Danger from Within by Norm Geisler and David Farnell faces the strange spectacle of evangelical compromise and asserts in the face of this slippage the historical doctrine of the full trustworthiness and, yes, inerrancy

of God's Word. Tracing the history of the sad debacle of evangelical compromise through such historical events as the Downgrade Controversy and the searches for the historical Jesus, the various authors frame precisely the impact of such disintegration and proceed to state a fresh and compelling case for historic belief.

Surrounded by the Vienna Boys Choir of light-voiced quasi-evangelicals, I appreciate the booming bass tones of the genuine, uncompromised voices of these contemporary prophets of God. *The Jesus Quest* will do nothing for the popularity of these contributors, but it may well do wonders for the church of the living God.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The contributors to *The Jesus Quest The Danger from Within* would like to acknowledge especially the many courageous men and women of the *International Council of Biblical Inerrancy* who assembled in Chicago some 35 years ago and forged the watershed documents of the *Chicago Statements* on Biblical Inerrancy (1978) and Hermeneutics (1982). Many of these have gone to be with the Lord since the original signing of these declarations. Yet, they have left for us a marvelous, sustaining testimony to the need for faithfulness to God's Word and inerrancy as the "watershed" issue for our time.

Since the signing of the Chicago Statements, troubling signs have once again been appearing in recent years among many neoevangelicals who either did not fight the battles for the inerrancy of Scripture as did the Council or who do not remember the troubling times that caused their development. The nature and definition of inerrancy are now being challenged and/or changed. *History is being forgotten* among many neoevangelicals, resulting in the need for once again sounding the alarm for *Defending Inerrancy*.[1] Among many neoevangelicals today, academic prestige and fads in scholarship now hold as watchwords instead of faithfulness of God's inerrant Word. Our prayer is the Lord will raise up a new generation of evangelicals with the spiritual fervency of the *International Council* to uphold the inerrancy of God's Word: Isaiah 40:8 —"*The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever*" (Isa 40:8 NAU).

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

PART ONE

PROLOGUE



PROLOGUE

A WARNING FROM RECENT CHURCH HISTORY



At the beginning of the early twentieth century, evangelical Christians faced an onslaught from modernists who undermined and even denied the authority and reliability of the Scriptures. This happened because of the widespread infiltration of mainline denominations by historicalcritical ideologies that challenged the biblical text with hostile, alien philosophies that resulted in a reinterpretation of the biblical text to be aligned with evolutionary theory and antisupernaturalism. The net effect of these ideologies was the destruction of concepts of inerrancy and infallibility regarding the Old and New Testaments. Grammaticohistorical hermeneutics were largely abandoned for historicalcritical ideologies that enabled Scripture to be interpreted in a fashion that was more in line with the current fads of the time. Historical criticism became the ready dissolvent that washed away the plain sense of Scripture in exchange for something more acceptable to the modern mind.

In order to protect the Scriptures, many Bible-believing groups broke off from mainline denominations and established their own churches, schools, and seminaries. For a while, the Scriptures were preserved in terms of their inerrancy and authority among these groups, but by the 1950s, these Bible-believing groups began once again to be influenced by those favorable to historicalcritical ideologies. Many within these faithful groups encouraged their students once again to be trained in British and Continental European schools. The end result was that inerrancy once again began to be challenged among groups once faithful to the authority of Scripture. This conflict reached a crescendo with Harold Lindsell's *Battle for the Bible* in 1976 as well as his *The Bible in the Balance* in 1979. As a result, inerrantists from Bible-believing denominations,

schools, and seminaries across America assembled in 1978 in Chicago, Illinois, at the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy to set forth the fundamental definition and implications of the inerrancy of Scripture in what is now known as the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. They assembled again in 1982 to address issues in interpretation, especially delineating the importance of the grammaticohistorical hermeneutic with its goal of plain, normal interpretation. The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy issued the 1982 Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics as a result. They insisted that only the grammaticohistorical hermeneutic as set forth from the time of the Reformation could adequately express the true meaning of the Scripture.

These statements have stood the test of time until recently. At the end of the twentieth century and now at the beginning of the twenty-first, conservative, Bible-believing denominations, schools, and seminaries have once again opened up their institutions to advocates of historical criticism who no longer remember or value the modernist-fundamentalist fight that took place in previous generations. This new group believes that they are competent enough intellectually to use some modified form of historical criticism to benefit the understanding of Scripture. As a result, inerrancy, as well as the authority of the Old and New Testaments, has once again been undermined in current writings by these neoevangelicals. Danger to inerrancy and sound hermeneutics has once again come from within those institutions originally designed to defend God's Word.

Warnings about this degeneration in regard to the integrity of Scripture have been sounded, such as in 1998 with Norman L. Geisler's Evangelical Theological Society presidential address on the need for evangelicals to "Beware of Philosophy" in biblical interpretation and understanding as well as *The Jesus Crisis* by Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell. Neoevangelicals met these efforts with open hostility, alleging that the presidential address and the book were too hasty in their negative assessments of their work. The passage of time, however, has proved both Dr.

Geisler's presidential address and Thomas' and Farnell's *The Jesus Crisis* uncannily accurate in their predictions of the neoevangelical drift away from the inerrancy of Scripture. Many neoevangelicals scholars have now joined their historicalcritical counterparts in efforts that undermine the inerrancy of Scripture through the adoption of postmodernistic historiography as well as their perceived need to apply historicalcritical criteria to determine if the Gospels exhibit any

"core" evidence of historicity. They allege that the Gospels only contain the "footprints" of Jesus, all history is a matter of interpretation, and that criteria of authenticity must be applied to see the level of historical "probability" these documents exhibit. The net result is that the Gospels' authority and integrity are now questioned as suspect. Sadly, Matthew, Luke, Mark, and John are now safer in the hands of the lay person in the church pew than among some of the neoevangelicals who are training the next generation of pastors and teachers.

This work examines the historical and philosophical strengths and/or weaknesses of current neoevangelical approaches espousing some forms of postmodernistic historiography and its resultant search for the "historical" Jesus. It will also demonstrate the impact these efforts have had on the biblical text, especially the Gospels, as well inerrancy issues that surround the Chicago Statements of 1978 and 1982. It will also compare the Jesus Seminar's approach with current evangelical practices of searching in terms of their evidential apologetic impact on the trustworthiness of the Gospels for the Christian. The controlling thesis of *The Jesus Quest: The Danger from Within* is that ***A BAD METHODOLOGY WILL <u>ALWAYS</u> PRODUCE A BAD THEOLOGY***. The end result will be that the Scriptures are undermined when a bad methodology governs their interpretation and understanding.

Drs. Geisler and Farnell have assembled a group of well-known and highly competent scholars to evaluate this current trend among neoevangelicals who are now mirroring critical British and critical European scholarship in their approach to the Gospels. They all bring incisive insights from their expertise in philosophy, history, and New Testament studies into this growing problem in neoevangelicalism. Contributors include: **Norman L. Geisler, Ph.D.,** Chancellor, Veritas Evangelical Seminary and Distinguished Professor of Apologetics and Theology; **F. David Farnell, Ph.D**. Senior Professor of New Testament, The Master's Seminary; **Richard G. Howe, Ph.D**., Director of Ph.D. Program, Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics, Southern Evangelical Seminary; **Thomas A. Howe**, **Ph.D.**, Director of Veritas Graduate School of Apologetics, Professor of Bible and Biblical Languages, Southern Evangelical Seminary; **William C. Roach, Ph.D. Candidate**, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Editor, *Journal of the International Society of Christian Apologetics*; **William E. Nix, Ph.D**., Professor of Historical and Theological Studies, Director of Master of Arts in Theological Studies, Veritas Evangelical Seminary, and co-author of the landmark work, *A General Introduction to the Bible*; and **Dennis M. Swanson**, Vice President for Library and Educational

Assessment, Book Review Editor, *The Master's Seminary Journal*.

A Review of *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, Eds. J. Merrick and Stephen Garrett

Norman L. Geisler

Introduction

The Zondervan general editor of the Counterpoint series, Stanley Gundry, together with his chosen editors, J. Merrick and Stephen Garrett, have produced a provocative book on *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy* (2013). The five scholar participants are Albert Mohler, Peter Enns, Kevin Vanhoozer, Michael Bird, and John Franke. This Counterpoints series has produced many stimulating dialogues on various topics, and they no doubt intended to do the same on this controversial topic of inerrancy. However, there is a basic problem in the dialogue format as applied to biblical inerrancy.

There is Madness in the Method

The "dialogue" method works well for many intramural evangelical discussions like eternal security, the role of women in the ministry, and the like. However, when it is applied to basic issues which help define the nature of evangelicalism, like the nature of Scripture, the method has some serious drawbacks. For if inerrancy is a doctrine that is essential to consistent evangelicalism, as most evangelicals believe that it is, then it seems unfitting to make it subject to the dialogue method for two reasons. First, for many evangelicals the issue of inerrancy is too important to be "up for grabs" on the evangelical dialogue table. Second, just by providing non-inerrantists and anti-inerrantists a "seat at the table" gives a certain undeserved legitimacy to their view. If, as will be shown below, the non-inerrancy view is not biblical, essential, or in accord with the long history of the Christian Church, then the dialogue method fails to do justice to the topic because it offers an undeserved platform to those who do not really believe the doctrine. To illustrate, I doubt if one were setting up a conference on the future of Israel that he would invite countries who don't believe in the existence of Israel (like Iran) to the table.

Stacking the Deck

Not only can the staging of the inerrancy discussion in the *Five Views* book be challenged, but so can the choice of actors on the stage. For the choice of participants in this *Five Views* "dialogue" did not fit the topic in a balanced way. Since the topic was inerrancy and since each participant was explicitly asked to

address the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (CSBI), the choice of participants was not appropriate. For only one participant (Al Mohler) states his unequivocal belief in the CSBI view of inerrancy produced by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI). Some participants explicitly deny inerrancy (Enns, 83f.).[1]

Others prefer to redefine the CSBI statement before agreeing with it. Still others claim to agree with it, but they do so based on a misunderstanding of what the framers meant by inerrancy, as will be shown below.

What is more, an even greater problem is that none of the framers of the CSBI, whose statement was being attacked, were represented on the panel. Since three of them (J. I. Packer, R. C. Sproul, and N. L. Geisler) are still alive and active, the makeup of the panel was questionable. It is like convening a panel on the First Amendment to the US Constitution while Washington, Adams, and Madison were still alive but not inviting any of them to participate! Further, only one scholar (Al Mohler) was unequivocally in favor of the CSBI view, and some were known to be unequivocally against it (like Peter Enns). This is loading the dice against positive results. So, with a stacked deck in the format and the dice loaded in the choice of participants, the probabilities of a positive result were not high, and understandably the result confirms this anticipation.

Understanding Inerrancy

To be sure, whether inerrancy is an essential doctrine is crucial to the point at hand. In order to answer this question more fully, we must first define inerrancy and then evaluate its importance.

Definition of Inerrancy

Unless otherwise noted, when we use the word “inerrancy” in this article, we mean inerrancy as understood by the ETS framers and defined by the founders of the CSBI, namely, what is called total or unlimited inerrancy. The CSBI defines inerrancy as *unlimited* inerrancy, whereas many of ETS participants believe in *limited i*nerrancy. Unlimited inerrancy affirms that Bible is true on whatever subject is speaks—whether it is redemption, ethics, history, science, or anything else. Limited inerrancy affirms that the Bible’s inerrancy is limited to redemptive matters.

The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), the largest of any society of its kind in the world, with some 3000 members, began in 1948 with only one doctrinal statement: “The Bible alone and the Bible in its entirety is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs.” After a controversy in 2003 (concerning Clark Pinnock’s view) which involved the meaning of inerrancy, the ETS voted in 2004 to accept “the CSBI as its point of reference for defining inerrancy” (Merrick, 311). It states: “For the purpose of advising members regarding the intent and meaning of the reference to biblical inerrancy in the ETS Doctrinal Basis, the Society refers members to the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978)” (see J. Merrick, 311). So, for the largest group of scholars believing in inerrancy the officially accepted definition of the term “inerrancy” is that of the CSBI.

The CSBI supports unlimited or total inerrancy, declaring: “The holy Scripture. . .is of divine authority in all matters upon which it touches” (*A Short Statement*, 2). Also, “We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science” (Art. 12). It further declares that: “**The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible’s own”** (*A Short Statement*, 5, emphasis added). As we shall see below, unlimited inerrancy has been the historic position of the Christian Church down through the centuries. Thus, the history supporting the doctrine of inerrancy is supporting unlimited inerrancy.

The Importance of Inerrancy

The question of the importance of inerrancy can be approached both doctrinally and historically. Doctrinally, inerrancy is an important doctrine because: (1) it is attached to the character of God; (2) It is foundational to other essential doctrines; (3) it is taught in the Scriptures, and (4) it is the historic position of the Christian Church.

The Doctrinal Importance of Inerrancy

First of all, as the ETS statement declares, inerrancy is based on the character of God who cannot lie (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2). For it affirms that the Bible is “inerrant” because (note the word “therefore”) it is the Word of God. This makes

a direct logical connection between inerrancy and the truthfulness of God.

Second, inerrancy is fundamental to all other essential Christian doctrines. It is granted that some other doctrines (like the atoning death and bodily resurrection of Christ) are more essential to salvation. However, all soteriological (salvation-related) doctrines derive their divine authority from the divinely authoritative Word of God. So, in an epistemological (knowledge-related) sense, the doctrine of the divine authority and inerrancy of Scripture is the fundamental of all the fundamentals. And if the fundamental of fundamentals is not fundamental, then what is fundamental? Fundamentally nothing! Thus, while one can be saved without believing in inerrancy, the doctrine of salvation has no divine authority apart from the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture. This is why Carl Henry (and Al Mohler following him) affirmed correctly that while inerrancy is not necessary to evangelical *authenticity*, it is nonetheless, essential to evangelical *consistency* (Mohler, 29).

Third, B. B. Warfield correctly noted that the primary basis for believing in the inerrancy of Scripture is that it was taught by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament. And he specified it as unlimited inerrancy (in his book *Limited Inspiration*, Presbyterian & Reformed reprint, 1962). Warfield declared: "We believe in the doctrine of plenary inspiration of the Scriptures primarily because it is the doctrine of Christ and his apostles believed, and which they have taught us (cited by Mohler, 42). John Wenham in *Christ and the Bible* (IVP, 1972) amply articulated what Christ taught about the Bible, including its inerrancy, for Wenham was one of the international signers of the 1978 *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* (see Geisler, *Defending Inerrancy*, 348). Indeed, to quote Jesus himself, "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35) and "until heaven and earth pass away not an iota, not a dot, will pass away from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matt 5:18). A more complete discussion of what Jesus taught about the Bible is found in chapter 16 of our *Systematic*.

Fourth, inerrancy is the historic position of the Christian Church. As Al Mohler pointed out (Mohler, 48-49), even some inerrantists have agreed that inerrancy has been the standard view of the Christian Church down through the centuries. He cites the Hanson brothers, Anthony and Richard, Anglican scholars, who said, "The Christian Fathers and the medieval tradition continued this belief [in inerrancy], and the Reformation did nothing to weaken it. On the contrary, since for many reformed theologians the authority of the Bible took the place which the Pope had held in the medieval scheme of things, the inerrancy of

the Bible became more firmly maintained and explicitly defined among some reformed theologians than it had even been before." They added, "The beliefs here denied [viz., inerrancy] have been held by all Christians from the very beginning until about a hundred and fifty years ago" (cited by Mohler, 41).

Inerrancy is a fundamental doctrine since it is fundamental to all other Christian doctrines which derive their authority from the belief that the Bible is the infallible and inerrant Word of God. Indeed, like many other fundamental doctrines (e.g., the Trinity), it is based on a necessary conclusion from biblical truths. The doctrine of inerrancy as defined by CSBI is substantially the same as the doctrine held through the centuries by the Christian Church (see discussion below). So, even though it was never put in explicit confessional form in the early Church, nevertheless, by its nature as derived from the very nature of God and by its universal acceptance in the Christian Church down through the centuries, it has earned a status of tacit catholicity (universality). It thus deserves high regard among evangelicals and has rightly earned the status of being essential (in an epistemological sense) to the Christian Faith. Thus, to reduce inerrancy to the level of non-essential or even "incidental' to the Christian Faith, reveals ignorance of its theological and historical roots and is an offense to its "watershed" importance to a consistent and healthy Christianity. As the CSBI statement declares: "However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church" (Art. 19).

Unjustified Assumptions about Inerrancy.

A careful reading of the *Five Views* dialogue reveals that not only were the dice loaded against the CSBI inerrancy view by format and by the choice of participants, but there were several anti-inerrancy presuppositions employed by one or more of the participants. One of the most important is the nature of truth.

The Nature of Truth. The framers of the CSBI strongly affirmed a correspondence view of truth. This is not so of all of the participants in the *Five Views* dialogue. In fact there was a major misreading by many non-inerrantists of Article 13 which reads in part: "We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose." Some non-inerrantists were willing to subscribe to the CSBI based on their misinterpretation of this statement. Franke claims that "This opens up a vast arena of interpretive possibilities with respect to the 'usage or purpose' of Scripture in relation to standards of 'truth or error'" (Franke, 264). Another non-

inerrantist (in the CSBI sense), Clark Pinnock, put it this way: “I supported the 1978 “Chicago Statement on the International council on Biblical Inerrancy,” noting that it “made room for nearly every well-intentioned Baptist” (Pinnock, *Scripture Principle*, rev., 266).

However, the framers of the CSBI anticipated this objection, and R.C. Sproul was commissioned to write an official ICBI commentary on the Chicago Statement which, straight to the point in Article 13, reads: “‘**By biblical standards of truth and error’ is meant the view used both in the Bible and in everyday life, viz., a correspondence view of truth.** This part of the article is directed at those who would redefine truth to relate merely to redemptive intent, the purely personal, or the like, rather than to mean that which corresponds to reality.” Thus, “all the claims of the Bible must correspond with reality, whether that reality is historical, factual, or spiritual” (see Geisler and Roach, *Defending Inerrancy*, 31, emphasis added). So, non-inerrantists, like Pinnock and Enns, misunderstand the Chicago Statement which demands that truth be defined as correspondence with reality. This is important since to define it another way, for example, in terms of redemptive purpose is to open the door wide to a denial of the factual inerrancy of the Bible as espoused by CSBI.

Purpose and Meaning. Another serious mistake of some of the non-inerrantists in the *Five Views* dialogue is to believe that purpose determines meaning. This emerges in several statements in the book and elsewhere. Vanhoozer claims “I propose that we indentify the literal sense with the illocutionary act the author is performing” (Enns, 220). The locutionary act is *what* the author is saying, and the illocutionary act is *why* (purpose) he said it. The *what* may be in error; only the *why* (purpose) is without error. This is why Vanhoozer comes up with such unusual explanations of Biblical texts. For example, when Joshua commanded the sun to stand still (Josh 10), according to Vanhoozer, this does not correspond to any actual and unusual phenomena involving an extra day of daylight. Rather, it simply means, as he believes that the purpose (illocutionary act) indicates, that Joshua wants “to affirm God’s covenant relation with his people” (Vanhoozer, *Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*, 106). Likewise, according to Vanhoozer, Joshua is not affirming the literal truth of the destruction of a large walled city (Joshua 6). He contends that “simply to discover ‘what actually happened’” is to miss the main point of the discourse, which is to communicate a theological interpretation of what happened (that is, God gave Israel the land) and to call for right participation in the covenant” (Vanhoozer, *Five Views*, 228). That is why Joshua wrote it, and

that alone is the inerrant purpose of the text.

However, as we have explained in detail elsewhere (Geisler, *Systematic*, chap. 10), purpose does not determine meaning. This becomes clear when we examine crucial texts. For example, the Bible declares “Do not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk” (Ex. 23:19). The meaning of this text is very clear, but the purpose is not, at least not to most interpreters. Just scanning a couple commentaries from off the shelf reveals a half dozen different guesses as to the author’s purpose. Despite this lack of unanimity on what the purpose is, nonetheless, virtually everyone understands what the meaning of the text is. An Israelite could obey this command, even if he did not know the purpose for doing so (other than that God had commanded him to do so). So, knowing meaning stands apart from knowing the purpose of a text. For example, a boss could tell his employees, “Come over to my house tonight at 8 p.m.” The meaning (what) is clear, but the purpose (why) is not. Again, understanding the meaning is clear apart from knowing the purpose.

This does not mean that knowing the purpose of a statement cannot be interesting and even enlightening. If you knew your boss was asking you to come to his house because he wanted to give you a million dollars, that would be very enlightening, but it would not change the meaning of the statement to come over to his house that night. So, contrary to many non-inerrantists, purpose does not determine meaning. Further, with regard to biblical texts, the meaning rests in *what* is affirmed, not in *why* it is affirmed. This is why inerrantists speak of propositional revelation and many non-inerratists tend to downplay or deny it (Vanhoozer, 214). The meaning and truth of a proposition (affirmation or denial about something) is what is inspired, not in the purpose. Inerrancy deals with truth, and truth resides in propositions, not in purposes.

At the CSBI conference on the meaning of inerrancy (1982), Carl Henry observed the danger of reducing inerrancy to the purpose of the author, as opposed to the affirmations of the author as they correspond with the facts of reality. He wrote: “Some now even introduce authorial intent or cultural context of language as specious rationalizations for this crime against the Bible, much as some rapist might assure me that he is assaulting my wife for my own or for her good. They misuse Scripture in order to champion as biblically true what in fact does violence to Scripture” (Henry in Earl Radamacher ed., *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* [1984], 917). This is precisely what has happened with some of the participants in the *Five Views* book when they reduced meaning to

purpose and then read their own extrabiblical speculations into the author's supposed intention or purpose. This will be discussed more when the genre presupposition is discussed below.

Limited inerrantists and non-inerrantists often take advantage of an ambiguity in the word "intention" of the author in order to insert their own heterodox views on the topic. When traditional unlimited inerrantists use the phrase "intention of the author" they use it in contrast to those who wish to impose their own meaning on the text in contrast to discovering what the biblical author intended by it. So, what traditional unlimited inerrantists mean by "intention" is not purpose (why) but *expressed intention* in the text, that is, meaning. They were not asking the reader to look for some *unexpressed intention* behind, beneath, or beyond the text. Expressed intention refers to the meaning of the text. And it would be better to use the word *meaning* than the world *intention*. In this way the word *intention* cannot be understood as *purpose* (why), rather than *meaning* or expressed intention (what) which is found in the text. To put it simply, there is a *meaner* (author) who expresses his *meaning* in the text so that the reader can know what is *meant* by the text. If one is looking for this objectively expressed meaning (via historical-grammatical hermeneutics) it limits the meaning to the text and eliminates finding the meaning beyond the text in some other text (i.e., in some alien extrabiblical genre).

Mike Licona is a case in point. He redefines "error" to include genre that contains factual errors. He claims that "intentionally altering an account" is not an error but is allowed by the Greco-Roman genre into which he categorizes the Gospels, insisting that a CBSI cannot account for all the data (mp3 of his ETS lecture in November 2013).

Propositional Revelation. It is not uncommon for non-inerrantists to attempt to modify or deny propositional revelation. Vanhoozer cites John Stott as being uncomfortable with inerrancy because the Bible "cannot be reduced to a string of propositions which invites the label truth or error" (Vanhoozer, 200). Similarly, he adds. "Inerrancy pertains directly to assertions only, not to biblical commands, promises, warnings, and so on. We would therefore be unwise to collapse everything we want to say about biblical authority into the nutshell of inerrancy" (Vanhoozer, 203).

Carl Henry is criticized by some for going "too far" in claiming that "the minimal unit of meaningful expression is a proposition" and that only

propositions can be true or false (Vanhoozer, 214). However, it would appear that it is Vanhoozer's criticisms that go too far. It is true that there are more than propositions in the Bible. All propositions are sentences, but not all sentences are propositions, at least not directly. However, the CSBI inerrantist is right in stressing propositional revelation. For only propositions express truth, and inerrancy is concerned with the truthfulness of the Bible. Certainly, there are exclamations, promises, prophecies, interrogations, and commands that are not formally and explicitly propositions. But while not all of the Bible is propositional, most of the Bible is propositionalizable. And any text in the Bible which states or implies a proposition can be categorized as propositional revelation. And inerrantists claim that all propositional revelation is true. That is to say, all that the Bible affirms to be true (directly or indirectly) is true. And all that the Bible affirms to be false is false. Any attack on propositional revelation that diminishes or negates propositional truth has denied the inerrancy of the Bible. Hence, inerrantists rightly stress propositional revelation.

The fact that the Bible is many more things than inerrant propositions is irrelevant. Certainly, the Bible has other characteristics, such as infallibility (John 10:35), immortality (Ps 119:160), indestructibility (Matt 5:17-18), indefatigability (it can't be worn out—Jer 23:29), and indefeasibility (it can't be overcome—Isa 55:11). But these do not diminish the Bible's inerrancy (lack of error). In fact, if the Bible were not the inerrant Word of God, then it would not be all these other things. They are complementary, not contradictory to inerrancy. Likewise, the Bible has commands, questions, and exclamations, but these do not negate the truth of the text. Instead, they imply, enhance, and compliment it.

Accommodationism. Historically, most evangelical theologians have adopted a form of divine condescension to explain how an infinite God could communicate with finite creatures in finite human language. This is often called analogous language (see Geisler, *Systematic*, chap. 9). However, since the word "accommodation" has come to be associated with the acceptance of error, we wish to distinguish between the legitimate evangelical teaching of God's *adaptation to human finitude* and the illegitimate view of non-inerrantists who assert God's *accommodation to human error*. It appears that some participants of the inerrancy dialogue fit into the latter category. Peter Enns believes that accommodation to human error is part of an Incarnational Model which he accepts. This involves writers making up speeches based on what is not stated but is only thought to be "called for," as Greek historian Thucydides admitted

doing (Enns, 101-102). This accommodation view also allows for employing Hebrew and Greco-Roman literary genres which include literature with factual errors in them (Enns, 103).

The following chart draws a contrast between the two views:

ADAPTATION VIEW	**ACCOMMODATION VIEW**
GOD ADAPTS TO FINITUDE	GOD ACCOMMODATES TO ERROR
BIBLE USES ANALAGOUS LANGUAGE	IT USES EQUIVOCAL LANGUAGE
BIBLE STORIES ARE FACTUAL	SOME STORIES ARE NOT FACTUAL

Peter Enns believes that “details” like whether Paul’s companions heard the voice or not (Acts 9, 22) were part of this flexibility of accommodation to error. In brief, he claims that “biblical writers shaped history creatively for their own theological purposes” (Enns, 100). Recording “what happened” was not the “primary focus” for the Book of Acts but rather “interpreting Paul for his audience” (Enns, 102). He adds, “shaping significantly the portrayal of the past is hardly an isolated incident here and there in the Bible; it’s the very substance of how biblical writers told the story of their past” (Enns, 104). In brief, God accommodates to human myths, legends, and errors in the writing of Scripture. Indeed, according to some non-inerrantists like Enns, this includes accommodation to alien worldviews.

However, ETS/CSBI inerrantists emphatically reject this kind of speculation. The CSBI declares: “We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture” (CSBI, Art. 14). Further, “We deny that Jesus’ teaching about scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity” (CSBI, Art. 15). “We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterances on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write. We deny that finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God’s Word” (CSBI, Art. 9). Also, “We deny that human

language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work in inspiration" (CSBI, Art. 4).

Reasons to Reject the Accommodation to Error View

There are many good reasons for rejecting the non-inerrantist accommodation to error theory. Let's begin with the argument from the character of God.

First, it is contrary to the nature of God as truth that He would accommodate to error. Michael Bird states the issue well, though he wrongly limits God to speaking on only redemptive matters. Nevertheless, he is on point with regard to the nature of inerrancy in relation to God. He writes: "God identifies with and even invests his own character in his Word. . . . The accommodation is never a capitulation to error. God does not speak erroneously, nor does he feed us with nuts of truth lodged inside shells of falsehood" (Bird, 159). He cites Bromley aptly, "It is sheer unreason to say that truth is revealed in and through that which is erroneous" (cited by Bird, 159).

Second, accommodation to error is contrary to the nature of Scripture as the inerrant Word of God. God cannot err (Heb 6:18), and if the Bible is His Word, then the Bible cannot err. So, to affirm that accommodation to error was involved in the inspiration of Scripture is contrary to the nature of Scripture as the Word of God. Jesus affirmed that the "Scripture" is the unbreakable Word of God (John 10:34-35) which is imperishable to every "iota and dot" (Matt 5:18). The New Testament authors often cite the Old Testament as what "God said" (cf. Matt 19:5; Acts 4:24-25; 13:34.35; Heb 1:5, 6, 7). Indeed, the whole Old Testament is said to be "God-breathed" (2 Tim 3:16). Bird wrongly claimed "God directly inspires persons, not pages" (Enns, 164). In fact, the New Testament only uses the word "inspired" (*theopneustos*) once (2 Tim 3:16) and it refers to the *written* Scripture (*grapha*, writings). The writings, not the writers, are "breathed out" by God. To be sure, the writers were "moved by" God to write (2 Peter 1:20-21), but only what they *wrote* as a result was inspired. So if the Scriptures are the very *writings* breathed out by God, then they cannot be errant since God cannot err (Titus 1:2).

Third, the accommodation to error theory is contrary to sound reason. Anti-inerrantist Peter Enns saw this logic and tried to avoid it by a Barthian kind of

separation of the Bible from the Word of God. He wrote, “The premise that such an inerrant Bible is the only kind of book God would be able to produce. . ., strikes me as assuming that God shares our modern interest in accuracy and scientific precision, rather than allowing the phenomena of Scripture to shape our theological expectations” (Enns, 84). But Enns forgets that any kind of error is contrary, not to “modern interest” but to the very nature of the God as the God of all truth. So, whatever nuances of truth there are which are borne out by the phenomena of Scripture cannot, nevertheless, cannot negate the naked truth that God cannot err, nor can his Word. The rest is detail.

The Lack of Precision

The doctrine of inerrancy is sometimes criticized for holding that the Bible always speaks with scientific precision and historical exactness. But since the biblical phenomena do not support this, the doctrine of inerrancy is rejected. However, this is a “straw man” argument. For the CSBI states clearly: “We further deny that inerrancy is negated by biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision. . ., including ‘round numbers’ and ‘free citations’” (CSBI. Art. 13). Vanhoozer notes that Warfield and Hodge (in *Inspiration,* 42) helpfully distinguished “accuracy” (which the Bible has) from “exactness of statement” (which the Bible does not always have) (Vanhoozer, 221). This being the case, this argument does not apply to the doctrine of inerrancy as embraced by the CSBI since it leaves room for statements that lack modern “technical precision.” It does, however, raise another issue, namely, the role of biblical and extrabiblical phenomena in refining the biblical concept of truth.

With regard to the reporting of Jesus’ words in the Gospels, there is a strong difference between the inerrantist and non-inerrantist view, although not all non-inerrantists in the *Five Views* book hold to everything in the “non-inerrantist” column:

USE OF JESUS’ WORDS AND DEEDS IN THE GOSPELS

INERRANTIST VIEW	***NON-INERRANTIST VIEW***
REPORTING THEM	*CREATING THEM*

PARAPHRASING THEM *EXPANDING ON THEM*

CHANGE THEIR FORM *CHANGE THEIR CONTENT*

GRAMMATICALLY EDITING THEM THEOLOGICALLY REDACTING THEM

Inerrantists believe that there is a significant difference between *reporting* Jesus words and *creating* them. The Gospel writings are based on eyewitness testimony, as they claim (cf. John 21:24; Luke 1:1-4) and as recent scholarship has shown (see Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*). Likewise, they did not put words in Jesus' mouth in a theological attempt to interpret Jesus in a certain way contrary to what He meant by them. Of course, since Jesus probably spoke in Aramaic (cf. Matt 27:46) and the Gospels are in Greek, we do not have the exact words of Jesus (*ipsissima verba*) in most cases, but rather an accurate rendering of them in another language. But for inerrantists the New Testament is not a reinterpretation of Jesus words; it is an accurate translation of them. Non-inerrantists disagree and do not see the biblical record as an accurate report but as a reinterpreted portrait, a literary creation. This comes out clearly in the statement of Peter Enns that conquest narratives do not merely "report events" (Enns, 108). Rather, "Biblical history shaped creatively in order for the theological purposes" to be seen (Enns, 108).

Vanhoozer offers a modified evangelical version of this error when he speaks of not "reading Joshua to discover 'what happened'[which he believes] is to miss the main point of the discourse, which is to communicate a theological interpretation of what happened (that is, God gave Israel the land) and to call for right participation in the covenant" (Vanhoozer, 228). So, the destruction of Jericho (Josh 6), while not being simply a "myth" or "legend," Vanhoozer sees as an "artful narrative testimony to an event that happened in Israel's past" (ibid.). A surface reading of Vanhoozer's view here may appear to be orthodox, until one remembers that he believes that only the "main point" or purpose of a text is really inerrant, not what it affirms. He declares, "I propose that we identify the literal sense with the illocutionary act an author is performing" (Vanhoozer, 220). That is, only the theological purpose of the author is inerrant, not everything that is affirmed in the text (the locutionary acts). He declared elsewhere, "the Bible is the Word of God (in the sense of its illocutionary acts). . ." (Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 195).

The implications of his view come out more clearly in his handling of another

passage, namely, Joshua 10:12: “Sun, stand still. . . .” This locution (affirmation) he claims is an error. But the illocution (purpose of the author) is not in error—namely, what God wanted to say through this statement which was to affirm his redemptive purpose for Israel (Vanhoozer, *Lost in Interpretation*, 138). This is clearly not what the CSBI and historic inerrancy position affirms. Indeed, it is another example of the fallacious “purpose determines meaning” view discussed above and rejected by CSBI.

The Role of Biblical and ExtraBiblical Data

The claim that in conflicts between them one should take the Bible over science is much too simplistic. Space does not permit a more extensive treatment of this important question which we have dealt with more extensively elsewhere (see our *Systematic*, chapters 4 and 12). Al Moher was taken to task by Peter Enns for his seemingly *a priori* biblical stance that would not allow for any external evidence to change ones view on what the Bible taught about certain scientific and historical events (Mohler, 51, 60). Clearly the discussion hinges on what role the external data have (from general revelation) in determining the meaning of a biblical text (special revelation).

For example, almost all contemporary evangelicals scholars allow that virtually certain scientific evidence from outside the Bible shows that the earth is round, and this must take precedence over a literalistic interpretation of the phrase “four corners of the earth” (Rev 20:8). Further, interpretation of the biblical phrase “the sun set” (Josh 1:4) is not be taken literalistically to mean the sun moves around the earth. Rather, most evangelical scholars would allow the evidence for a helio-centric view of modern astronomy (from general revelation) to take precedence over a literalistic pre-Copernican geo-centric interpretation of the phrase the “Sun stood still” (Josh 10:13).

On the other hand, most evangelicals reject the theistic evolutionary interpretation of Genesis 1–2 for the literal (not literalistic) interpretation of the creation of life and of Adam and Eve. So, the one million dollar question is: when does the scientist’s interpretation of general revelation take precedent over the theologian’s interpretation of special revelation?

Several observations are in order on this important issue. First, there are two revelations from God, general revelation (in nature) and special revelation (in the Bible), and they are both valid sources of knowledge. Second, their domains

sometimes overlap and conflict, as the cases cited above indicate, but no one has proven a real contradiction between them. However, there is a conflict between some *interpretations* of each revelation. Third, sometimes a faulty interpretation of special revelation must be corrected by a proper interpretation of general revelation. Hence, there are few evangelicals who would claim that the earth is flat, despite the fact that the Bible speaks of "the four corners of the earth" (Rev 20:8) and that the earth does not move: "The world is established; **it shall never be moved**" (Ps 93:1, emphasis added).

However, most evangelical theologians follow a literal (not literalistic) understanding of the creation of the universe, life, and Adam (Gen 1:1, 21, 27) over the Darwinian macro-evolution model. Why? Because they are convinced that the arguments for the creation of a physical universe and a literal Adam outweigh the Darwinian speculations about general revelation. In brief, our understanding of Genesis (special revelation) must be weighed with our understanding of nature (general revelation) in order to determine the truth of the matter (see our *Systematic*, chapters 4 and 12.). It is much too simplistic to claim one is taking the Bible over science or science over the Bible—our understanding about both are based on revelations from God, and their interpretations of both must be weighed in a careful and complimentary way to arrive at the truth that is being taught on these matters.

To abbreviate a more complex process which is described in more detail elsewhere (ibid.): (1) we start with an **inductive** study of the biblical text; (2) we make whatever necessary **deduction** that emerges from two or more biblical truths; (3) we do a **retroduction** of our discovery in view of the biblical phenomena and external evidence from general revelation; and then (4) we draw our final **conclusion** in the nuanced view of truth resulting from this process. In brief, there is a complimentary role between interpretations of special revelation and those of general revelations. Sometimes, the evidence for the interpretation of one revelation is greater than the evidence for an interpretation in the other, and vice versa. So, it is not a matter of taking the Bible over science, but when there is a conflict, it is a matter of taking the interpretation with the strongest evidence over the one with weaker evidence.

The Role of Hermeneutics in Inerrancy

The ICBI (International Council on Biblical Inerrancy) framers of the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" (CSBI) were aware that, while

inerrancy and hermeneutics are *logically distinct*, hermeneutics cannot be *totally separated* from inerrancy. It is for this reason that a statement on historical-grammatical hermeneutics was included in the CSBI presentation (1978). Article 18 reads: "We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by the grammaticohistorical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it leads to relativizing, **dehistoricizing**, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claim to authorship" (emphasis added).

The next ICBI conference after the CSBI in 1978 was an elaboration on this important point in the hermeneutics conference (of 1982). It produced both a statement and an official commentary as well. All four documents are placed in one book, titled *Explaining Biblical Inerrancy: Official Commentary on the ICBI Statements* (available on www.BastionBooks.com). These four statements contain the corpus and context of the meaning of inerrancy by nearly 300 international scholars on the topic of inerrancy. Hence, questions about the meaning of the CSBI can be answered by the framers in the accompanying official ICBI commentaries.

Many of the issues raised in the *Five Ways* are answered in these documents. Apparently, not all the participants took advantage of these resources. Failure to do so led them to misunderstand what the ICBI framers mean by inerrancy and how historical-grammatical hermeneutics is connected to inerrancy. So-called genre criticism of Robert Gundry and Mike Licona are cases in point.

The Role of ExtraBiblical Genre

Another aspect of non-inerrantist's thinking is Genre Criticism. Although he claims to be an inerrantist, Mike Licona clearly does not follow the ETS or ICBI view on the topic. Licona argues that "the Gospels belong to the genre of Greco-Roman biography (*bios*)" and that "*Bioi* offered the ancient biographer great flexibility for rearranging material and inventing speeches. . ., and the often include legend." But, he adds "because *bios* was a flexible genre, it is often difficult to determine where history ends and legend begins" (Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 34). This led him to deny the historicity of the story of the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27:51-53 (ibid.,527-528; 548; 552-553), and to call the story of the crowd falling backward when Jesus claimed "I am he" (John 14:5-6) "a possible candidate for embellishment" (ibid., 306) and the

presence of angels at the tomb in all four Gospels may be “poetic language or legend” (ibid., 185-186).

Later, in a debate with Bart Ehrman (at Southern Evangelical Seminary, Spring, 2009), Licona claimed there was a contradiction in the Gospels as to the day of Jesus’ crucifixion. He said, “I think that John probably altered the day [of Jesus’ crucifixion] in order for a theological—to make a theological point here.” Then in a professional transcription of a YouTube video on November 23, 2012 (see http://youtu.be/TJ8rZukh_Bc), Licona affirmed the following: “So **um this didn’t really bother me in terms of if there were contradictions in the Gospels.** I mean **I believe in biblical inerrancy but I also realized that biblical inerrancy is not one fundamental doctrines of Christianity.** The resurrection is. So if Jesus rose from the dead, Christianity is still true even if it turned out that some things in the Bible weren’t. So **um it didn’t really bother me a whole lot even if some contradictions existed**” (emphasis added).

This popular Greco-Roman genre theory adopted by Licona and others is directly contrary to the CSBI view of inerrancy as clearly spelled out in many articles. First, Article 18 speaks to it directly: **“We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammaticohistorical exegesis,** taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that **Scripture is to interpret Scripture**” (emphasis added). But Lincona rejects the strict “grammaticohistorical exegesis” where “Scripture is to interpret Scripture” for an extrabiblical system where Greco-Roman genre is used to interpret Scripture. Of course, “Taking account” of different genres within Scripture, like poetry, history, parables, and even allegory (Gal 4:24), is legitimate, but this is not what the use of extrabiblical Greco-Roman genre does. Rather, it uses extrabiblical stories to determine what the Bible means, even if using this extrabiblical literature means denying the historicity of the biblical text.

Second, the CSBI says emphatically that “We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, **dehistoricizing**, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claim to authorship” (Art. 18, emphasis added). But this is exactly what many non-inerrantists, like Licona, do with some Gospel events. The official ICBI commentary on this Article adds, **“It is never legitimate, however, to run counter to express biblical affirmations”** (emphasis added). Further, in the ICBI commentary on its1982 Hermeneutics Statement (Article 13) on inerrancy, it adds, **“We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on**

biblical narratives which present themselves as factual. Some, for instance, take Adam to be a myth, whereas in Scripture he is presented as a real person. Others take Jonah to be an allegory when he is presented as a historical person and [is] so referred to by Christ" (emphasis added)**.** Its comments in the next article (Article 14) add, **"We deny that any event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated"** (emphasis added). Clearly, the CSBI Fathers rejected genre criticism as used by Gundry, Licona, and many other evangelicals.

Three living eyewitness framers of the CSBI statements (Packer, Sproul, and Geisler) confirm that authors like Robert Gundry were in view when these articles were composed. Gundry had denied the historicity of sections of the Gospel of Matthew by using a Hebrew "midrashic" model to interpret Matthew (see Mohler on Franke, 294). After a thorough discussion of Gundry's view over a two year period and numerous articles in the ETS journal, the matter was peacefully, lovingly, and formally brought to a motion by a founder of the ETS, Roger Nicole, in which the membership, by an overwhelming 70% voted and asked Gundry to resign from the ETS. Since Licona's view is the same in principle with that of Gundry's, the ETS decision applies equally to his view as well.

Mike Licona uses a Greco-Roman genre to interpreting the Gospels, rather than Jewish *midrash* which Gundry used. The Greco-Roman genre permits the use of a contradiction in the Gospels concerning the day Jesus was crucified. However, the ICBI official texts cited above reveal that **the CSBI statement on inerrancy forbids "dehistoricing" the Gospels** (CSBI Art. 18). Again, living ICBI framers see this as the same issue that led to Gundry's departure from ETS. When asked about the orthodoxy of Mike Licona's view, CSBI framer R.C. Sproul wrote: "As the former and only President of ICBI during its tenure and as the original framer of the Affirmations and Denials of the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy**, I can say categorically that Dr. Michael Licona's views are not even remotely compatible with the unified Statement of ICBI"** (Personal Correspondence, 5/22/2012, emphasis added).

The role of extrabiblical genre in Gospel interpretation can be charted as follows:

THE USE OF EXTRABIBLICAL GENRE

LEGITIMATE USE	**ILLEGITIMATE USE**
A MATERIAL CAUSE	THE FORMAL CAUSE
HELP PROVIDE PARTS	DETERMINE THE WHOLE
ILLUMINATES SIGNIFICANCE	DETERMINES MEANING

The formal cause of meaning is in the text itself (the author is the efficient cause of meaning). No literature or stories outside the text are hermeneutically determinative of the meaning of the text. The extrabiblical data can provide understanding of a part (e.g., a word), but it cannot decide what the meaning of a whole text is. Every text must be understood only in its immediate or more remote contexts. Scripture is to be used to interpret Scripture.

Of course, as shown above, general revelation can help modify our understanding of a biblical text, for the scientific evidence based on general revelation demonstrates that the earth is round and can be used to modify one's understanding of the biblical phrase "for corners of the earth." However, no Hebrew or Greco-Roman literature genre should be used to determine what a biblical text means since it is not part of any general revelation from God, and it has no hermeneutical authority.

Further, the genre of a text is not understood by looking outside the text. Rather, it is determined by using the historical-grammatical hermeneutic on the text in its immediate context, and the more remote context of the rest of Scripture to decide whether it is history, poetry, parable, an allegory, or whatever.

Furthermore, similarity to any extrabiblical types of literature does not demonstrate identity with the biblical text, nor should it be used to determine what the biblical text means. For example, the fact that an extrabiblical piece of literature combines history and legend does not mean that the Bible also does this. Nor does the existence of contradictions in similar extrabiblical literature justify transferring this to biblical texts. Even if there are some significant similarities of the Gospels with Greco-Roman literature, it does not mean that legends should be allowed in the Gospels since the Gospel writers make it clear that they have a strong interest in historical accuracy by an "orderly account" so

that we can have “certainty” about what is recorded in them (Luke 1:1–4). And multiple confirmations of geographical and historical details confirm that this kind of historical accuracy was achieved (see Colin Patterson, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenic History*, 1990).

The Issue of Gospel Pluralism

Another associated error of some non-inerrantism is pluralism. Kenton Sparks argues that the Bible “does not contain a single coherent theology but rather numerous theologies that sometimes stand in tension or even contradiction with one another” (Cited by Mohler, 55). So, God accommodates Himself and speaks through “the idioms, attitudes, assumptions, and general worldviews of the ancient authors” (Enns, 87). But he assures us that this is not a problem, because we need to see “God as so powerful that he can overrule ancient human error and ignorance, [by contrast] inerrancy portrays as weak view of God” (Enns, 91). However, it must be remembered that contradictions entail errors, and God cannot err.

By the same logical comparison, Christ must have sinned. For if the union of the human and divine in Scripture (God’s written Word) necessarily entails error, then by comparison the union of the human and divine in Christ must result in moral flaws in Him. But the Bible is careful to note that, though Christ, while being completely human, nonetheless, was without sin (Heb 4:15; 2 Cor 5:21). Likewise, there is no logical or theological reason why the Bible must err simply because it has a human nature to it. Humans do not always err, and they do not err when guided by the Holy Spirit of Truth who cannot err (John 14:26; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:20–21). A perfect Book can be produced by a perfect God through imperfect human authors. How? Because God can draw a straight line with a crooked stick! He is the ultimate cause of the inerrant Word of God; the human authors are only the secondary causes.

Enns attempts to avoid this true incarnational analogy by arguing the following: (1) This reasoning diminishes the value of Christ’s Incarnation. He tried to prove this by noting that the Incarnation of Christ is a unique “miracle” (Enns, 298). However, so is the union of the human and divine natures of Scripture miraculous (2 Sam 23:2; 2 Peter 1:20-21). In effect, Enns denies the miraculous nature of Scripture in order to exalt the miraculous nature of the Incarnation of Christ. (2) His comparison with the Quran is a straw man because it reveals his lack of understanding of the emphatic orthodox denial of the verbal

dictation theory claimed by Muslims for the Quran, but denied vigorously by orthodox Bible scholars about the Bible. (3) His charge of "bibliolatry" is directly opposed to all evangelical teaching that the Bible is not God and should not be worshiped.

Of course, Christ and the Bible are not a *perfect* analogy because there is a significant difference: Christ is God, and the Bible is not. Nonetheless, it is a *good* analogy because there are many strong similarities: (1) both Christ and the Bible have a divine and human dimension; 2) both have a union of the two dimensions; (3) both have a flawless character that in Christ is without sin and in the Bible is without error; and (4) both are the Word of God, one the written Word of God and other the incarnate Word of God. Thus, a true incarnational analogy calls for the errorlessness of the Bible, just as it calls for the sinlessness of Christ.

The Acceptance of Conventionalism

Some non-inerrantists hold the selfdefeating theory of meaning called conventionalism. Franke, for example, argues that "since language is a social construct. . .our words and linguistic conventions do not have timeless and fixed meanings. . ." (Franke, 194). There are serious problem with this view which Franke and other contemporary non-inerrantists have adopted.

Without going into philosophical detail, the most telling way to see the flaws of this view is to reflect on its selfdefeating nature. That is, it cannot deny the objectivity of meaning without making an objectively meaningful statement. To claim that all language is purely conventional and subjective is to make a statement which is not purely conventional and subjective. In like manner, when Franke claims that truth is perspectival (Franke, 267), he seems to be unaware that he is making a non-perspectival truth claim. This problem is discussed more extensively elsewhere (see Geisler, *Systematic*, chap. 6). We would only point out here that one cannot consistently be an inerrantist and a conventionalist. For if all meaning is subjective, then so is all truth (since all true statements must be meaningful). But inerrancy claims that the Bible makes objectively true statements. Hence, an inerrantist cannot be a conventionalist, at least not consistently.

The Issue of Foundationalism

The CBSI statement is taken to task by some non-inerrantists for being based on an unjustified theory of foundationalism. Franke insists that “the Chicago Statement is reflective of a particular form of epistemology known as classic or strong foundationalism” (Franke, 261). They believe that the Bible is “a universal and indubitable basis for human knowledge” (Franke, 261). Franke believes that: “The problem with this approach is that it has been thoroughly discredited in philosophical and theological circles” (ibid.,262).

In response, first of all, Franke confuses two kinds of foundationalism: (1) deductive foundationalism, as found in Spinoza or Descartes where all truth can be deduced from certain axiomatic principles. This is rejected by all inerrantist scholars I know and by most philosophers; (2) However, reductive foundationalism which affirms that truths can be reduced to or are based on certain first principles like the Law of Noncontradiction is not rejected by most inerrantists and philosophers. Indeed, first principles of knowledge, like the Law of Noncontradiction, are self evident and undeniable. That is, the predicate of first principles can be reduced to it subject, and any attempt to deny the Law of Noncontradiction uses the Law of Noncontradiction in the denial. Hence, the denial is self defeating.

Second, not only does Franke offer no refutation of this foundational view, but any attempted refutation of it selfdestructs. Even so-called “post-foundationalists” like Franke cannot avoid using these first principles of knowledge in their rejection of foundationalism. So, Franke’s comment applies to deductive foundationalism but not to reductive foundationalism as held by most inerratists. Indeed, first principles of knowledge, including theological arguments, are presupposed in all rational arguments, including theological arguments.

Third, Franke is wrong in affirming that all inerrantists claim that “Scripture is the true and **sole** basis for knowledge on all matters which it touches.” (Franke, 262, emphasis added). Nowhere does the CSBI statement or its commentaries make any such claim. It claims only that the “Scriptures are the supreme **written** norm” “in all matters on which it touches” (Article 2 and A Short Statement, emphasis added). Nowhere does it deny that God has revealed Himself outside His written revelation in His general revelation in nature, as the Bible declares (Rom 1:1–20; Ps 19:1; Acts 14, 17).

As for “falliblism” which Franke posits to replace foundationalism, CSBI

explicitly denies creedal or infallible basis for its beliefs, saying, “We do not propose this statement be given creedal weight” (CSBI, Preamble). Furthermore, “We deny creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible” (CSBI, Art. 2). So, not only do the ICBI framers claim their work is not a creed nor is it infallible, but they claim that even the Creeds are not infallible. Further, it adds. “We invite response to this statement from any who see reason to amend its affirmations about Scripture by the light of Scripture itself, under whose infallible authority we stand as we speak” (CSBI, Preamble). In short, while the doctrine of inerrancy is not negotiable, the ICBI statements about inerrancy are revisable. However, to date, no viable revisions have been proposed by any group of scholars such as those who framed the original CSBI statements.

Dealing with Bible Difficulties

As important as the task may be, dealing with Bible difficulties can have a blinding effect on those desiring the clear truth about inerrancy because they provide a temptation not unlike that of a divorce counselor who is faced with all the problems of his divorced counselees. Unless, he concentrates on the biblical teaching and good examples of many happy marriages, he can be caught wondering whether a good marriage is possible. Likewise, one should no more give up on the inerrancy (of God’s special revelation) because of the difficulties he finds in explaining its consistency than he should give up on the study of nature (God’s general revelation) because of the difficulties he finds in it.

There are several reasons for believing that both of God’s revelations are consistent: First, it is a reasonable assumption that the God who is capable of revealing Himself in both spheres is consistent and does not contradict Himself. Indeed, the Scriptures exhort us to “Avoid. . . contradictions” (Gk: *antheseis*—1 Tim 6:20 ESV). Second, persistent study in both spheres of God’s revelations, special and general revelation (Rom 1:19–20; Ps 19:1), have yielded more and more answers to difficult questions. Finally, contrary to some panelists who believe that inerrancy hinders progress in understanding Scripture (Franke, 278), there is an investigative value in assuming there is no contradiction in either revelation, namely, it prompts further investigation to believe that there was no error in the original. What would we think of scientists who gave up studying God’s general revelation in nature because they have no present explanation for some phenomena? The same applies to Scripture (God’s special revelation). Thus, assuming there is an error in the Bible is no solution. Rather, it is a

research stopper.

Augustine was right in his dictum (cited by Vanhoozer, 235). There are only four alternatives when we come to a difficulty in the Word of God: (1) God made an error, 2) the manuscript is faulty, 3) the translation is wrong, or 4) we have not properly understood it. Since it is an utterly unbiblical presumption to assume the first alternative, we as evangelicals have three alternatives. After over a half century of studying nearly 1000 such difficulties (see *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties,* Baker, 2008), I have discovered that the problem of an unexplained conflict is usually the last alternative—I have not properly understood.

That being said, even the difficult cases the participants were asked to respond to are not without possible explanations. In fact, some of the participants, who are not even defenders of inerrancy, offered some reasonable explanations.

Acts 9 and 22. As for the alleged contradiction in whether Paul's companions "heard" (Acts 9:4) and did not "hear" (Acts 22:9) what the voice from heaven said, two things need to be noted. First, the exact forms of the word "hear" (*akouo*) are not used in both case. First, Vanhoozer (229) notes that Acts 9:4 says *akouein* (in the accusative) which means hear a sound of a voice.

In the other text (Acts 22:9) *akouontes* (in the genitive) can mean understand the voice (as the NIV translates it). So understood, there is no real contradiction. Paul's companions heard the *sound* of the voice but did not *understand* what it said.

Second, we have exactly the same experience with the word "hear" today. In fact, at our house, hardly a day or two goes by without either my wife or I saying from another room, "I can't hear you." We heard their voice, but we did not understand what they said.

One thing is certain, we do not need contorted attempts to explain the phenomenon like Vanhoozer's suggestion that this conflict serves "Luke's purpose by progressively reducing the role of the companions, eventually excluding them altogether from the revelatory event" (230). It is totally unnecessary to sacrifice the traditional view of inerrancy with such twisted explanations.

Joshua 6. This text records massive destruction of the city with its large walls

falling down, which goes way beyond the available archaeological evidence. Peter Enns insists that “the overwhelmingly dominant scholarly position is that the city of Jericho was at most a small settlement and without walls during the time of Joshua” (Enns, 93). He concludes that “these issues cannot be reconciled with how inerrancy functions in evangelicalism as articulated in the CSBI” (92). He further contends that the biblical story must be a legendary and mythological embellishment (96).

In response, it should be noted that: (1) This would not be the first time that the “dominant scholarly position” has been overturned by later discoveries. The charge that there was no writing in Moses’ day and that the Hittites mentioned in the Bible (Gen 26:34; 1 Kings 11:1) never existed, are only two examples. All scholars know that both of these errors were subsequently revealed by further research. (2) There is good archaeological evidence that other events mentioned in the Bible did occur as stated. The plagues on Egypt and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are examples in point. The first fits well with the Uperwer Papyrus and the second with the recent discoveries at the Tall el Hamman site in Jordan (see Joseph Holden, *A Popular Handbook of Archaeology and the Bible*, Harvest House, *2013*, 214–24).

Indeed, Enns admits that the Joshua description of some other cities around Jericho fits the archaeological evidence (Enns, 98). He even admits that “a trained archaeologist and research director” offers a minority view that fits with the Joshua 6 record (Enns, 94), only the alleged time period is different. However, since the dating issue is still unresolved by scholars, a date that fits the biblical record is still possible.

The fact that the belief in the full historicity of Joshua 6 is in the minority among scholars poses no insurmountable problem. Minority views have been right before. Remember Galileo? As for the alleged absence of evidence for a massive destruction of a walled city of Jericho, two points are relevant: 1) the absence of evidence is not necessarily the evidence of absence since other evidence may yet be found; 2) the main dispute is not over whether something like the Bible claimed to have happened actually did happen to Jericho, but whether it happened at the alleged time. However, the dating of this period is still disputed among scholars. Hence, nothing like “overwhelmingly” established evidence has disproven the biblical picture of Joshua 6. Certainly there is no real reason to throw out the inerrantist’s view of the historicity of the event. On the contrary, the Bible has a habit of proving the critics wrong.

Deuteronomy 20 and Matthew 5. Again, this is a difficult problem, but there are possible explanations without sacrificing the historicity and inerrancy of the passages. The elimination of the Canaanites and the command to love one's enemies are not irreconcilable. Even Enns, no friend of inerrancy, points out that an "alternate view of the conquest that seems to exonerate the Israelites" (Enns, 108), noting that the past tense of the Leviticus statement that "the land vomited [past tense] out its inhabitants" (Lev. 18:25) implies that "God had already dealt with the Canaanite problem before the Israelites left Mt. Sinai" (ibid.).

But even the traditional view that Israel acted as God's theocratic agent in killing the Canaanites poses no irreconcilable problem for many reasons. First of all, God is sovereign over life and can give and take it as He wills (Deut 32:39; Job 1:21). Second, God can command others to kill on his behalf, as He did in capital punishment (Gen 9:6). Third, the Canaanites were wildly wicked and deserved such punishment (cf. Lev 18). Fourth, this was a special theocractic act of God through Israel on behalf of God's people and God's plan to give them the Holy Land and bring forth the Holy One (Christ), the Savior of the world. Hence, there is no pattern or precedent here for how we should wage war today. Fifth, loving our enemy who insults us with a mere "slap on the right cheek" (Matt 5:39) does not contradict our killing him in self defense if he attempts to murder us (Exod 22:2), or engaging him in a just war of protecting the innocent (Gen 14). Sixth, God gave the Canaanites some 400 years (Gen 15:13–15) to repent before He found them incorrigibly and irretrievably wicked and wiped them out. Just as it is sometimes necessary to cut off a cancerous limb to save one's life, even so God knows when such an operation is necessary on a nation which has polluted the land. But we are assured by God's words and actions elsewhere that God does not destroy the righteous with the wicked (Gen 18:25). Saving Lot and his daughters, Rahab, and the Ninevites are examples.

As for God's loving kindness on the wicked non-Israelites, Nineveh (Jonah 3) is proof that God will save even a very wicked nation that repents (cf. 2 Peter 3:9). So, there is nothing in this Deuteronomy text that is contradictory to God's character as revealed in the New Testament. Indeed, the judgments of the New Testament God are more intensive and extensive in the book of Revelation (cf. Rev 6–19) than anything in the Old Testament.

Responding to Attacks on Inerrancy

We turn our attention now to some of the major charges leveled against CSBI

inerrancy. We begin with two of the major objections: It is not biblical and it is not the historical view of the Christian Church. But before we address these, we need to recall that the CSBI view on inerrancy means *total* inerrancy, not *limited* inerrancy. Total or unlimited inerrancy holds that the Bible is inerrant on both redemptive matters and all other matters on which it touches, and limited inerrancy holds that the Bible is only inerrant on redemptive matters but not in other areas such as history and science. By "inerrancy" we mean total inerrancy as defined by the CSBI.

The Charge of Being Unbiblical

Many non-inerrantists reject inerrancy because they claim that it is not taught in the Bible as the Trinity or other essential doctrines are. But the truth is that neither one is taught formally and explicitly. Both are taught in the Bible only implicitly and logically. For example, nowhere does the Bible teach the formal doctrine of the Trinity, but it does teach the premises which logically necessitate the doctrine of the Trinity. And as *The Westminster Confession of Faith* declares, a sound doctrine must be "either set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequences may be deduced from Scripture" (Chap. I, Art. 6). Both the Trinity and inerrancy of Scripture fall into the latter category. Thus, the Bible teaches that there are three Persons who are God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:18–20). Furthermore, it teaches that there is only one God (1 Tim 2:5). So, "by good and necessary consequences" the doctrine of the Trinity may be deduced from Scripture.

Likewise, while inerrancy is not formally and explicitly taught in Scripture, nonetheless, the premises on which it is based are taught there. For the Bible teaches that God cannot err, and it also affirms that the Bible is the Word of God. So "by good and necessary consequences [the doctrine of inerrancy] may be deduced from Scripture."

Of course, in both cases the conclusion can and should be nuanced as to what the word "person" means (in the case of the Trinity), and what the word "truth" means (see below) in the case of inerrancy. Nevertheless, the basic doctrine in both cases is biblical in the sense of a "good and necessary consequence" of being logically "deduced from Scripture."

The Charge of Being Unhistorical

Many non-inerrantists charge that inerrancy has not been the historic doctrine of the Church. Some say it was a modern apologetic reaction to Liberalism. Outspoken opponent of inerrancy, Peter Enns, claims that ". . .'inerrancy,' as it is understood in the evangelical and fundamentalist mainstream, has not been the church's doctrine of Scripture through its entire history; Augustine was not an 'inerrantist" (Enns, 181). However, as the evidence will show, Enns is clearly mistaken on both counts. First of all, Augustine (5th century) declared emphatically, "I have learned to yield respect and honour only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free form error" *(Augustine, Letters* 82, 3).

Furthermore, Augustine was not alone in his emphatic support of the inerrancy of Scripture. Other Fathers both before and after him held the same view. Thomas Aquinas (13th century) declared that "it is heretical to say that any falsehood whatever is contained either in the gospels or in and canonical Scripture" *(Exposition on Job* 13, Lect. 1). For "a true prophet is always inspired by the Spirit of truth in whom there is no trace of falsehood, and he never utters untruths: (*Summa Theologica* 2a2ae, 172, 6 ad 2).

The Reformer Martin Luther (16th century) added, "When one blasphemously gives the lie to God in a single word, or say it is a minor matter, . . .one blasphemes the entire God. . ." (*Luther's Works,* 37:26). Indeed, whoever is so bold that he ventures to accuse God of fraud and deception in a single word. . .likewise certainly ventures to accuse God of fraud and deception in all His words. Therefore it is true, absolutely and without exception, that everything is believed or nothing is believed (cited in Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures*, 33).

John Calvin agreed with his predecessors, insisting that "the Bible has come down to us from the mouth of God (*Institute*s, 1.18.4). Thus "we owe to Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from Him alone. . . .The Law and the Prophets are. . .dictated by the Holy Spirit (Urquhart, Inspiration and Accuracy, 129–130). Scripture is "the certain and unerring rule" (Calvin, *Commentaries*, Ps 5:11). He added that the Bible is "a depository of doctrine as would secure it from either perishing by neglect, vanishing away amid errors, of being corrupted by the presumptions of men (*Institutes*, 1.6.3).

Furthermore, it is nit-picking to claim, as some non-inerrantists suggest (Franke, 261), that the Church Fathers did not hold precisely the same view of

Scripture as contemporary evangelicals. Vanhoozer claims they are “not quite the same” (73). Bird asserted, “The biggest problem I have with the AIT [American Inerrancy Tradition] and the CSBI [Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy] are their lack of catholicity. What Christians said about inerrancy in the past might have been similar to the AIT and CSBI, but they were never absolutely the same!” (Bird, 67). However, identical twins are not absolutely the same in all “details,” but, like the doctrine of inerrancy down through the years, both are *substantially* the same. That is, they believed in total inerrancy of Scripture, that it is without error in whatever it affirms on any topic.

The basic truth of inerrancy has been affirmed by the Christian Church from the very beginning. This has been confirmed by John Hannah in *Inerrancy and the Church (*Moody, 1984). Likewise, John Woodbridge provided a scholarly defense of the historic view on inerrancy (*Biblical Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal,* Zondervan, 1982) which Rogers never even attempted to refute. Neither Rogers nor anyone else has written a refutation of the standard view on inerrancy, as defended by Woodbridge, expressed in the ETS and explained by the ICBI.

Of course, other difficulties with the historic doctrine of inerrancy can be raised, but B. B. Warfield summed up the matter well, claiming: “The question is not whether the doctrine of plenary inspiration has difficulties to face. The question is, whether these difficulties are greater than the difficulty of believing that the whole Church of God from the beginning has been deceived in her estimate of Scripture committed to her charge—are greater than the difficulties of believing that the whole college of the apostles, yes and of Christ himself at their head were themselves deceive as to the nature of those Scripture. . . .” (cited by Mohler, 42).

The Charge of the “Slippery Slope Argument”

An oft repeated charge against inerrancy is that it is based on a “Slippery Slope” argument that it should be accepted on the basis of what we might lose if we reject it (Enns, 89). The charge affirms that if we give up the inerrancy of the Bible’s authority on historical or scientific areas, then we are in danger of giving up on the inerrancy of redemptive passages as well. In brief, it argues that if you can’t trust the Bible in all areas, then you can’t trust it at all. Enns contends this is “an expression of fear,” not a valid argument but one based on “emotional blackmail” (ibid.). Franke states the argument in these terms: “If there is a single

error at any place in the Bible, [then] none of it can be trusted" (Franke, 262).

One wonders whether the anti-inerrantist would reject Jesus' arguments for the same reason when He said, "If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things" (John 3:12)? The truth is that there are at least two different forms of the "slippery slope" reasoning: one is valid and the other is not. It is not valid to argue that if we don't believe everything one says, then we cannot believe anything he says. For example, the fact that an accountant makes an occasional error in math does not mean that he is not reliable in general. However, if one claims to have divine authority, and makes one mistake, then it is reasonable to conclude that nothing he says has divine authority in it. For God cannot make mistakes, therefore, anyone who claims to be a prophet of God who does make mistakes (cf. Deut 18:22) cannot be trusted to be speaking with divine authority on anything (even though he may be right about many things). So, it is valid to say, if the Bible errs in anything, then it cannot be trusted to be the inerrant Word of God in anything (no matter how reliable it may be about many things).

The Charge of being Parochial

Vanhoozer poses the question: "Why should the rest of the world care about North American evangelicalism's doctrinal obsession with inerrancy (Vanhoozer, 190). There are no voices from Africa, Asia, or South America that had "any real input into the formation of the CSBI" (Franke, 194). "Indeed, it is difficult to attend a meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society and not be struck by the overwhelming white and male group it is" (Franke, 195).

However, "It is a genetic fallacy to claim that the doctrine of inerrancy can't be right because it was made in the USA" (Vanhoozer, 190). While it is true that "in the abundance of counselors there is wisdom" (Prov 11:14), it is not necessarily true that universality and interethnicity is more conducive to orthodoxy. Would anyone reject Newton's Laws simply because they came from a seventeenth-century Englishman? Vanhoozer rightly asks, "Is it possible that the framers of the Chicago statement, despite the culturally conditioned and contingent nature of the North American discussion, have discovered a necessary implication of what Christians elsewhere might have to say about Scripture's truth?" (Vanhoozer, 190). Is it not possible that inerrancy represents a legitimate development of the doctrine of Scripture that arose in response to the needs and challenges of our twentieth-century context? I don't see why not."

(Vanhoozer, 191).

The early Christian Creeds on the deity of Christ and the Trinity were all time-bound, yet they rightly attained the status of a Creed—an enduring and universal statement which is accepted by all major sections of Christendom. Although the CSBI statement does not claim creedal status, nonetheless, being time-bound does not hinder its deserved wide representation and acceptance in historic evangelical churches.

Franke claims that one of the problems with claiming inerrancy as a universal truth is that "it will lead to the marginalization of other people who do not share in the outlooks and assumptions of the dominant group. Inerrancy calls on us to surrender the pretensions of a universal and timeless theology" (Franke, 279). However, he seems oblivious to the universal and timeless pretension of his own claim. As a truth claim, the charge of parochialism is selfdefeating since it too is conditioned by time, space, and ethnic distinctiveness. Indeed, it is just another form of the view that all truth claims are relative. But so is that claim itself relative. Thus, the proponent of parochialism is hanged on his own gallows.

The Charge of being Unethical

The alleged unethical behavior of inerrantists seems to have been the hot-button issue among most of the participants in the dialogue, including the editors. They decry, sometimes in strong terms, the misuse of inerrancy by its proponents. In fact, this issue seems to simmer beneath the background of the anti-inerrancy discussion as a whole, breaking forth from time-to-time in explicit condemnation of its opponents. In fact, the editors of the *Five Views* book appear to trace the contemporary inerrancy movement to this issue (see Merrick, 310).

Both the editors and some participants of the *Five Views* book even employ extreme language and charges against the inerrancy movement, charging it with evangelical "fratricide" (Merrick, 310). The word "fratricide" is repeated a few pages later (317). Three participants of the dialogue (Franke, Bird, and Enns) seem particularly disturbed about the issue, along with the two editors of the book. They fear that inerrancy is used as "a political instrument (e.g., a tool for excluding some from the evangelical family)" (Vanhoozer, 302) in an "immoral" way (Enns, 292). They speak of times "when human actions persist in ways that are ugly and unbecoming of Christ. . ." (Merrick, 317).

Enns, for example, speaks strongly to the issue, chiding “those in positions of power in the church. . .who prefer coercion to reason and demonize to reflection.” He adds, “Mohler’s position (the only one explicitly defending the CSBI inerrancy view) is in my view intellectually untenable, but wielded as a weapon, it becomes spiritually dangerous” (Enns, 60). He also charges inerrantists with “manipulation, passive-aggressiveness, and. . .emotional blackmail” (Enns, 89). Further, he claims that “inerrancy regularly functions to short-circuit rather than spark our knowledge of the Bible” (Enns, 91). In spite of the fact that he recognizes that we cannot “evaluate inerrancy on the basis of its abusers,” Enns hastens to claim that “the function of inerrancy in the funamentalist and evangelical subculture has had a disturbing and immoral partnership with power and abuse” (Enns, 292).

Franke joins the chorus against inerrantists more softy but nonetheless strongly expresses his disappointment, saying, “I have often been dismayed by many of the ways in which inerrancy has commonly been used in biblical interpretation, theology, and the life of the church. . . . Of even greater concern is the way in which inerrancy has been wielded as a means of asserting power and control” over others (Franke, 259).

A Response to the Ethical Charges

Few widely read scholars will deny that some have abused the doctrine of inerrancy. The problem is that while we have a perfect Bible, there are imperfect people using it—on both sides of the debate.

Misuse Does Not Bar Use

However, the misuse of a doctrine does not prove that it is false. Nor does the improper use of Scripture prove that there is no proper way to use it. Upon examination of the evidence, the abuse charge against inerrantists is overreaching. So far as I can tell, virtually all the scholars I know in the inerrancy movement were engaged in defending inerrancy out of a sincere desire to preserve what they believed was an important part of the Christian Faith. Often those who speak most vociferously about the errors of another are unaware of their own errors. Ethics is a double-edged sword, as any neutral observer will detect in reading the above ethical tirade against inerrantists. Certainly, the charges by non-inerrantists are subject to ethical scrutiny

themselves. For example, is it really conducive to unity, community, and tranquility to charge others with a form of evangelical fratricide, a political instrument for excluding some from the evangelical family, ugly and unbecoming of Christ, a means of asserting power and control, a means of coercion, spiritually dangerous, manipulation, a passive-aggressiveness attack, emotional blackmail, and a disturbing and immoral partnership with power and abuse? Frankly, I have never seen anything that approaches this kind of unjustified and unethical outburst coming from inerrancy scholars toward those who do not believe in the doctrine. So, as far as ethics is concerned, the charge of abuse looks like a classic example of the kettle calling the pot black!

The Log in One's Own Eye

Non-inerrantists are in no position to try to take the ethical speck out of the eye of inerrantists when they have an ethical log in their own eye. Harold Lindsell pointed out (in *The Battle for the Bible*) the ethical inconsistency of the Fuller faculty in voting inerrancy out of their doctrinal statement which they had all signed and was still in effect when they were voting it out of existence. But how could they be against it, if they were on record as being for it. We know they were for it *before* they were against it, but how can they be against it *when* they were for it? Is there not an ethical commitment to keep a signed document? When one comes to no longer believe in a doctrinal statement he has signed, then the ethical thing to do is to resign one's position. Instead, at Fuller, in ETS, and in organization after organization, those who no longer believe what the framers meant will stay in the group in an attempt to change the doctrinal statement to mean what they want it to mean. This is a serious ethical breach on the part of non-inerrantists.

Let me use an illustration to make the point. If one sincerely believes in a flat earth view and later comes to change his mind, what it the ethical thing to do? It is to resign and join the Round Earth Society. To stay in the Flat Earth Society and argue that (1) it all depends on how you define flat; (2) from my perspective it looks flat; (3) I have a lot of good friends in the Flat Earth Society with whom I wish to continue fellowship, or (4) the Flat Earth Society allows me to define "flat" the way I would like to do so—to do any of these is disingenuous and unethical. Yet it is what happened at Fuller and is currently happening at ETS and in many of our Christian institutions today.

An important case in point was in 1976 when the ETS Executive Committee

confessed that “Some of the members of the Society have expressed the feeling that a measure of **intellectual dishonesty prevails among members who do not take the signing of the doctrinal statement seriously.”** Later, an ETS Ad Hoc Committee recognized this problem when it posed the proper question in 1983: **“Is it acceptable for a member of the society to hold a view of biblical author’s intent which disagrees with the Founding Fathers and even the majority of the society, and still remain a member in good standing?”** (emphasis added). The Society never said no, leaving the door open for non-inerrantists to come in. This left a Society in which the members could believe anything they wished to believe about the inerrancy statement, despite what the Framers meant by it.

The ETS Committee further reported that other “members of the Society have come to the realization that they are not in agreement with the creedal statement and have voluntarily withdrawn. That is, **in good conscience** they could not sign the statement” (1976 Minutes, emphasis added). This is exactly what all members who no longer believed what the ETS framers believed by inerrancy should have done. A member who is now allowed to sign the ETS statements but “disagrees with the Founding Fathers” is not acting in “good conscience.” Thus, it is only a matter of time before the majority of the members disagree with the ETS Founders, and the majority of the Society then officially deviates from its founding concept of inerrancy. As someone rightly noted, most religious organizations are like a propeller-driven airplane: they will naturally go left unless you deliberately steer them to the right.

No Evidence for Any Specific Charges Ever Given

The *Five Views* dialogue book contains many sweeping claims of alleged unethical activity by inerrantists, but no specific charges are made against any individual, nor is any evidence for any charges given. Several points should be made in response.

First, even secular courts demand better than this. They insist on due process. This means that: (1) Evidence should be provided that any persons who have allegedly violated an established law. This is particularly true when the charge is murder of a brother!—”fratricide.” In the absence of such evidence against any particular person or group, the charge should be dropped, and the accusers should apologize for using the word or other words like demonize, blackmail, or bullying. (2) Specifics should be given of the alleged crime. Who did it? What

did they do? Does it match the alleged crime? The failure of non-inerrantists to do this is an unethical, divisive, and destructive way to carry on a "dialogue" on the topic, to say nothing of doing justice on the matter. Those who use such terms about other brothers in Christ, rather than sticking to the issue of a valid critique of deviant views, are falling far short of the biblical exhortation to speak the truth in love (Eph 4:15).

The Robert Gundy Case

The so-called "Gundry—Geisler" issue is a case in point. First, ethical charges by non-inerrantists reveal an offensive bias in narrowing it down to one inerrantist in opposition to Gundry when in fact there were was a massive movement in opposition to Gundry's position, including founders of ETS. Indeed, the membership vote to ask him to leave the society was an overwhelming 70%. Even though I was an eyewitness of the entire process, I never observed hard feelings expressed between Gundy and those asking for his resignation before, during, or after the issue.

Long-time Dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Dr. Kenneth Kantzer was the first one to express concern about the issue to me. An ETS founder, Roger Nicole made the motion for Gundry's resignation with deep regret. Knowing I was a framer of the CSBI statement, Gundry personally encouraged me to enter the discussion, saying, he did not mind the critique of his view because he had "thick skin" and did not take it personally. So, to make charges of ethical abuse against those who opposed Gundry's "dehistoricizing" (see CSBI, Article 18) of the Gospel record is to turn an important doctrinal discussing into a personal attack and it is factually unfounded and ethically unjustified.

Second, the CSBI principles called for an ethical use of the inerrancy doctrine. CSBI framers were careful to point out that "Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master" (Preamble to CSBI). It also acknowledges that "submission to the claims of God's own Word. . .marks true Christian faith." Further, "those who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the Divine Word" (ibid.). The framers of CSBI added, "We offer this statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we

purpose by Gods' grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said" (ibid.). To my knowledge, the ETS procedure on the Gundry issue was in accord with these principles, and none of the participants of the *Five Views* book provided any evidence that anyone violated these procedures.

Third, in none of the ETS articles, papers, or official presentations was Robert Gundry attacked personally or demeaned. The process to ask him to resign was a lawful one of principle and not a personal issue, and the parties on both sides recognized and respected this distinction. Anyone who had any evidence to the contrary should have come forward a long time ago or forever held his peace.

Fourth, as for all the parties on the inerrancy discussion over Gundry's views, I know of none who did not like Gundry as a person or did not respect him as a scholar, including myself. In fact, I later invited him to participate with a group of New Testament scholars in Dallas (which he accepted), and I have often cited him in print as an authority on the New Testament and commended his excellent book defending, among other things, the physical nature of the resurrection body (Gundry, *Soma in Biblical Theology*, Cambridge, 1976).

Fifth, the decision on Gundry's views was not an unruly act done in the dark of night with a bare majority. It was done by a vast majority in the light of day in strict accordance with the rules stated in the ETS policies. It was not hurried since it took place over a two year period. It involves numerous articles *pro* and *con* published in the ETS journal (JETS) as well as dozens of ETS papers and discussions. In short, it was fully and slowly aired in an appropriate and scholarly manner.

Sixth, the final decision was by no means a close call by the membership. It passed with a decisive majority of 70% of the members. So, any charge of misuse of authority in the Gundry case is factually mistaken and ethically misdirected.

Since there are no real grounds for the ethical charges against those who opposed Gundry's views on inerrancy, one has to ask why the non-inerrantists are so stirred up over the issue as to make excessive charges like blackmail, demonize, or fratricide? Could it be that many of them hold similar views to Gundry and are afraid that they may be called on the carpet next? As the saying goes, when a stone is tossed down an alley, the dog that squeals the loudest is the one that got hit! We do know this: there is some circumstantial evidence to

support this possibility, for many of the most vociferous opponents are the ones who do not accept the ICBI statement on inerrancy or they called for either modification or destruction of it. For example, Enns argues “inerrancy should be amended accordingly or, in my view, scrapped altogether” (Enns, 84). But it has been reported that he himself left Westminster Theological Seminary under a cloud involving a doctrinal dispute that involved inerrancy. And as fellow participant of the *Five Ways* book, John Franke, put it: “His title makes it clear that after supporting it [inerrancy] for many years as a faculty member at Westminster Theological Seminary. . . . In reading his essay, I can’t shake the impression that Enns is still in reaction to his departure from Westminster and the controversy his work has created among evangelicals” (Franke, 137)

Putting aside the specifics of the Gundry case, what can be said about ethics of inerrantists as charged by the participants of the *Five Views* dialogue? Allow me to respond to some specific issues that have been raised against inerrancy by non-inerrantists.

Does the Abuse of Inerrancy Invalidate the Doctrine of Inerrancy?

Most scholars on both sides of this debate recognize that the answer is “No.” Abusing marriage does not make marriage wrong. The evil use of language does not make language evil. And abusing inerrancy by some does not make it wrong for all to believe it. Even if one would speak truth in an unloving way, it would not make it false. Likewise, one can speak error in a loving way, but it does not make it true. Of course, we should always try to “speak the truth in love” (Eph 4:15). But when the truth is not spoken in love it does not transform the truth into an error. Accordingly, Vanhoozer rightly wondered whether “Enns, too quickly identifies the concept of inerrancy itself with its aberrations and abuses” (Vanhoozer, 302).

Is Animated Debate Necessarily Contrary to Christian Love?

Even the editors of the *Five Ways* book, who spent considerable time promoting harmony in doctrinal discussions, admit that the two are not incompatible. They claim: “There is a place for well-reasoned, lucid, and spirited argumentation” (Merrick, 312). They add, “Certainly, debate over concepts and

ideas involve[s] description, analysis, and clear reasoning" (Merrick, 316). Indeed, the apostle Paul "reasoned' with the Jews from the Scriptures (Acts 17:2) and tried to "persuade Jews and Greek" (Acts 18:4). He taught Church leaders "to rebuke" those who contradict sound doctrine (Titus 1:9). Jude urged believes to "contend for the Faith" (v.3). In view of Peter's defection, Paul "opposed him to his face" (Gal 2:11). Indeed, Paul and Barnabas "had no small dissension and debate" with the legalists from Judea (Acts 15:2). Sometimes, a refutation or even a rebuke is the most loving thing one can do to defend the truth.

Our supreme example, Jesus, certainly did not hesitate to use strong words and to take strong actions against his opponent's views and actions (Matt 23; John 2:15–17). There are in fact times when a vigorous debate is necessary against error. Love—tough love—demands it. All of these activities can occur within the bound of Christian. John Calvin and Martin Luther were certainly no theological pansies when it came to defending the truth of the Christian Faith. But by the standards of conduct urged by non-inerrantists, there would have been no orthodox creeds and certainly no Reformation. And should any knowledgeable evangelical charge the Reformers with being unethical because they vigorously defended Scripture or salvation by faith alone? Of course not!

Should Unity Be Put Above Orthodox?

One of the fallacies of the anti-inerrancy movement is the belief that unity should be sought at all cost. Apparently no one told this to the apostle Paul who defended Christianity against legalism or to Athanasius who defended the deity of Christ against Arius, even though it would split those who believed in the deity of Christ from those, like Arius and his followers, who denied it. The truth is, when it comes to essential Christian doctrine, it would be better to be divided by the truth than to be united by error. If every doctrinal dispute, including those on the Trinity, deity of Christ, and inspiration of Scripture, used the unity over orthodoxy principle that one hears so much about in current inerrancy debate, then there would be not much orthodox Christian Faith left. As Rupertus Meldinius (d. 1651) put it, "in essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty, and in all things, charity." But as we saw above, the inerrancy of Scripture is an essential doctrine of the Christian Faith because all other doctrines are based on it. So, it is epistemologically fundamental to all other biblical teachings.

Is it Improper to Place Scholarly Articles on the

Internet?

Some have objected to carrying on a scholarly discussion on the Internet, as opposed to using scholarly journals. My articles on Mike Licona's denial of inerrancy (see www.normgeisler.com/articles) were subject to this kind of charge. However, given the electronic age in which we live, this is an archaic charge. Dialogue is facilitated by the Internet, and responses can be made much more quickly and by more people. Further, much of the same basic material posted on the Internet was later published in printed scholarly journals.

In a November 18, 2012 paper for The Evangelical Philosophical Society, Mike Licona speaks of his critics saying "bizarre" things like "bullying" people around, of having "a cow" over his view, and of engaging in a "circus" on the Internet. Further, he claims that scholarly critics of his views were "targeting" him and "taking actions against" him. He speaks about those who have made scholarly criticisms of his view as "going on a rampage against a brother or sister in Christ." And he compares it to the statement of Ammianus Marcellinus who wrote, "no wild beasts are such dangerous enemies to man as Christians are to one another." Licona complained about critics of his view, saying, "I've been very disappointed to see the ungodly behavior of a few of my detractors. The theological bullying, the termination and internal intimidation put on a few professors in SBC. . .all this revealed the underbelly of fundamentalism." He charged that I made contacts with seminary leaders in an attempt to get him kicked out of his positions on their staff. The truth is that I made no such contacts for no such purposes. To put it briefly, it is strange that we attack those who defend inerrancy and defend those who attack inerrancy.

While it is not unethical to use the Internet for scholarly articles, it wrong to make the kind of unethical response that was given to the scholarly articles such as that in the above citations. Such name-calling has no place in a scholarly dialogue. Calling the defense of inerrancy an act of "bullying" diminishes their critic, not them. Indeed, calling one's critic a "tar baby" and labeling their actions as "ungodly behavior" is a classic example of how not to defend one's view against its critics.

What is more, while Licona condemned the use of the Internet to present scholarly critiques of his view as a "circus," he refused to condemn an offensive YouTube cartoon produced by his son-in-law and his friend that offensively caricatured my critique of his view as that of a theological "Scrooge." Even

Southern Evangelical Seminary (where Licona was once a faculty member before this issue arose) condemned this approach in a letter from "the office of the president," saying, "We believe this video was totally unnecessary and is in extremely poor taste" (Letter, 12/9/2011). One influential alumnus wrote the school, saying, "It was immature, inappropriate and distasteful" and recommended that "whoever made this video needs to pull it down and apologize for doing it" (Letter, 12/21/2011). The former president of the SES student body declared: "I'll be honest that video was outright slander and worthy of punishment. I was quite angry after watching it" (Letter, 12/17/2011). This kind of unapologetic use of the Internet by those who deny the CSBI view of inerrancy of the Bible is uncalled for and unethical. It does the perpetrators and their cause against inerrancy no good.

Is Disciplinary Action Sometimes called for in Organizations like ETS?

"Judge not" is a mantra of our culture, and it has penetrated evangelical circles as well. But ironically, even that statement is a judgment. Rational and moral people must make judgments all the time. This is true in theology as well as in society. Further, discipline on doctrinal matters is not unprecedented in ETS. Indeed, the ETS By Laws provide for such action, saying: "A member whose writings or teachings have been challenged at an annual business meeting as incompatible with the Doctrinal Basis of the Society, upon majority vote, shall have his case referred to the executive committee, before whom he and his accusers shall be given full opportunity to discuss his views and the accusations. The executive committee shall then refer his case to the Society for action at the annual business meeting the following year. A two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting shall be necessary for dismissal from membership" (Article 4, Section 4). This procedure was followed carefully in the Robert Gundry case.

In point of fact, the ETS has expressed an interest in monitoring and enforcing its doctrinal statement on inerrancy from the beginning. The official ETS minutes record the following:

1. 1. In 1965, ETS Journal policy demanded a disclaimer and rebuttal of Dan Fuller's article denying factual inerrancy published in the ETS *Bulletin*. They insisted that, "that an article by Dr. Kantzer be published

simultaneously with the article by Dr. Fuller and that Dr. Schultz include in that issue of the *Bulletin* a brief explanation regarding the appearance of **a view point different from that of the Society"** (1965).

2. 2. In 1965, speaking of some who held "Barthian" views of Scripture, the Minutes of the ETS Executive Committee read: "President Gordon Clark invited them to leave the society."
3. 3. The 1970 Minutes of ETS affirm that "Dr. R. H. Bube for three years signed his membership form with a note on his own interpretation of infallibility. The secretary was instructed to point out that **it is impossible for the Society to allow each member an idiosyncratic interpretation of inerrancy**, **and hence Dr. Bube is to be requested to sign his form without any qualifications,** his own integrity in the matter being entirely respected" (emphasis added). This reveals efforts by ETS to protect and preserve the integrity of its doctrinal statement.
4. 4. In 1983, by a 70% majority vote of the membership, Robert Gundry was asked to resign from ETS for his views based on Jewish *midrash* genre by which he held that sections of Matthew's Gospel were not historical, such as the story of the Magi (Matt 2:1–12).
5. 5. In the early 2000s, while I was still a member of the ETS Executive Committee, a majority voted not to allow a Roman Catholic to join ETS largely on the testimony of one founder (Roger Nicole) who claimed that the ETS doctrinal statement on inerrancy was meant to exclude Roman Catholics.
6. 6. In 2003, by a vote of 388 to 231 (nearly 63%) the ETS expressed its position that Clark Pinnock's views were contrary to the ETS doctrinal statement on inerrancy. This failed the needed two-third majority to expel him from the society, but it revealed a strong majority who desired to monitor and enforce the doctrinal statement.

Finally, preserving the identity and integrity of any organization calls for doctrinal discipline on essential matters. Those organizations which neglect doing this are doomed to selfdestruction.

Should an Inerrantist Break Fellowship with a Non-Inerrantist over Inerrancy?

The ICBI did not believe that inerrancy should be a test for evangelical fellowship. It declared: "We deny that such a confession is necessary for

salvation" (CSBI, Art. 19). And "we do not propose that his statement be given creedal weight" (CSBI, Preamble). In short, it is not a test of evangelical *authenticity*, but of evangelical *consistency*. One can be saved without believing in inerrancy. So, holding to inerrancy is not a test of *spiritual fellowship*; it is a matter of *theological consistency*. Brothers in Christ can fellowship on the basis of belonging to the same spiritual family, without agreeing on all non-salvific doctrines, even some very important ones like inerrancy. In view of this, criticizing inerrantist of evangelical "fratricide" seriously misses the mark and itself contributes to disunity in the body of evangelical believers. Indeed, in the light of the evidence, the ethical charge against inerrantists seriously backfired.

Conclusion

In actuality, the *Five Views* book is basically a two views book: only one person (Al Mohler) unequivocally supports the standard historic view of total inerrancy expressed in the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (CSBI), and the other four participants do not. They varied in their rejection from those who presented a more friendly tone, but undercut inerrancy with their alien philosophical premises (Kevin Vanhoozer) to those who are overtly antagonistic to it (Peter Enns).

There was little new in the arguments against the CSBI view of total inerrancy, most of which has been responded to by inerrantists down through the centuries into modern times. However, a new emphasis did emerge in the repeated charge about the alleged unethical behavior of inerrantists. But, as already noted, this is irrelevant to the truth of the doctrine of inerrancy. Further, there is some justification for the suspicion that attacks on the person, rather than the issue, are because non-inerrantists are running out of real ammunition to speak to the issue itself in a biblical and rational way.

In short, after careful examination of the *Five Views* book, the biblical arguments of the non-inerrantists were found to be unsound, their theological arguments were unjustified, their historical arguments were unfounded, their philosophical arguments were unsubstantiated, and their ethical arguments were often outrageous. Nevertheless, there were some good insights in the book, primarily in Al Mohler's sections and from time to time in the other places, as noted above. However, in its representation of the ETS/ICBI view of total inerrancy, the book was seriously imbalanced in format, participants, and discussion. The two professors who edited the book (J. Merrick and Stephen

Garrett) were particularly biased in the way the issue was framed by them, as well in many of their comments.

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all page numbers in parentheses refer to J. Merrick and S. Garrett, eds., *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 201v3).

PART TWO

BEWARE OF PHILOSOPHY

Are We Taken Captive? (Col. 2:8)



CHAPTER 1

THE PHILOSOPHICAL ROOTS OF MODERN BIBLICAL CRITICISM

Norman L. Geisler



Introduction

The exhortation of the apostle Paul to “beware of philosophy” (Col. 2:8) is as urgent today as it was in the first century, if not more so.[1] And this is not only true for Christians who call themselves philosophers but for those who do not, especially for biblical exegetes.

Why We Must Beware of Philosophy

Although the context of Colossians 2:8 probably has reference to a proto-gnostic type philosophy at Colossae that had a disastrous mix of legalism, asceticism, and mysticism with Christianity,[2] the implications of Paul’s exhortation to “beware of philosophy” are appropriately applied to other alien systems of thought that have invaded Christianity down through the centuries since then.

Current Philosophies

There are many current philosophies of which we should beware. But first I will touch on some of the more damaging ideologies in the past few centuries. Among them few have been more destructive than naturalism, both of the metaphysical and methodological varieties.

Beware of Naturalism

Naturalism is the philosophy that denies there are supernatural interventions in the world. It is at the root of modern negative biblical criticism which began in earnest with the publication of Benedict Spinoza’s *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* in 1670.

Benedict Spinoza

Spinoza argued that “nothing then, comes to pass in nature in contravention to her universal laws, nay, everything agrees with them and follows from them, for. . . she keeps a fixed and immutable order.” In fact “a miracle, whether in

contravention to, or beyond, nature, is a mere absurdity." The noted Dutch-Jewish Pantheist was nothing short of dogmatic about the impossibility of miracles. He emphatically proclaimed, "We may, then, be absolutely certain that every event which is truly described in Scripture necessarily happened, like everything else, according to natural laws."[3] His naturalistic rationalism led him to conclude that since "there are many passages in the Pentateuch which Moses could not have written, it follows that the belief that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch is ungrounded and even irrational."[4] Rather, Spinoza insisted that it was written by the same person, who wrote the rest of the Old Testament—Ezra the scribe.[5]

Spinoza also rejected the resurrection accounts in the Gospels. Concerning Christianity he said that "the Apostles who came after Christ, preached it to all men as a universal religion **solely** in virtue of Christ's Passion."[6] There was no resurrection. Since orthodox Christianity has held from earliest times, both from Scripture (1 Cor. 15:1-14) and creeds, that apart from the truth of the resurrection of Christ, Christianity would be a false religion without hope, it follows that Spinoza's view is diametrically opposed to orthodoxy.[7]

Indeed, Spinoza categorically denied all miracles in the Bible. He commends "anyone who seeks for the true causes of miracles and strives to understand natural phenomena as an intelligent being. . ."[8] Not only did he conclude that "every event. . . in Scripture necessarily happened, like everything else, according to natural laws,"[9] but that Scripture itself "makes the general assertion in several passages that nature's course is **fixed and unchangeable**."[10] In short, miracles are impossible.

Finally, Spinoza contended that the fact that prophets did not speak from supernatural "revelation" and "the modes of expression and discourse adopted by the Apostles in the Epistles, shows very clearly that the latter were not written by revelation and Divine command, but **merely by the natural powers** and judgment of the authors."[11]

Spinoza's naturalism led directly to the first modern systematic negative criticism of the Bible. It has had a devastating effect on biblical interpretation. His work was the inspiration for Richard Simon who became known as the "Father of Modern Biblical Criticism." Adopting Spinoza's naturalism is a clear and evident example of failing to heed the apostle's warning to "beware of philosophy."

David Hume

The Scottish skeptic, David Hume (1711-1776) carried on Spinoza's antisupernaturalism, only in a way less objectionable to the modern view of scientific law. In Book Ten of his famous *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), he launched his attack on miracles.[12] In Hume's own words the reasoning goes like this: 1) "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature." 2) "Firm and unalterable experience has established these laws [of nature]." 3) "A wise man proportions his belief to the evidence." 4) Therefore, "the proof against miracles. . . is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined." In summary, wrote Hume, "There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event. Otherwise the event would not merit that appellation." So "nothing is esteemed a miracle if it ever happened in the common course of nature."[13] The results of Hume's philosophical naturalism have been disastrous for Christianity. His friend, James Hutton (1726-1797) applied Hume's antisupernaturalism to geology, inaugurating nearly two centuries of naturalism in science. Not long after Hume, David Strauss (1808-1874) wrote the first desupernaturalized version of the life of Christ. As they say, the rest is history. Or better, the rest is the destruction of history—particularly miraculous history recorded in Scripture.

Another consequence of antisupernaturalism has been the denial of predictive prophecy. Two Isaiahs were invented and Daniel was postdated after the amazing events of history they had predicted. In this way a purely naturalistic explanation could be provided. In all of this there is evident the naturalistic consequences of not hearkening to the injunction to "beware of philosophy." For if there is a supernatural God who knows the future, then there is no reason He cannot predict it in advance. Hence dating Daniel after the events of world history which he forecast or positing another Isaiah because otherwise Cyrus is mentioned by name a century and a half before he was born are based at root on a rejection of the supernatural. From this it is clear that the rise and spread of negative higher criticism is fundamentally a philosophical, not a factual question. Indeed, the factual evidence has moved in the direction of conservative views for nearly a century, as has been demonstrated in the increasingly conservative views of the famous archaeologist and paleographer, William F. Albright. As the evidence came in, Albright, unlike so many, was willing to give up his philosophical presuppositions for historic facts. Thus, he moved increasingly in a more conservative direction.

Rudolph Bultmann

More recently, using the same antisupernatural presupposition inherited from Spinoza and Hume, Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976) turned Gospel history into religious mythology. Why? Because, in his words, he believed it would be both senseless and impossible not to recognize the Gospels as myth. “It would be senseless, because there is nothing specifically Christian in the mythical view of the world as such. It is simply the cosmology of a pre-scientific age.”[14] Further, “it would be impossible, because no man can adopt a view of the world by his own volition—it is already determined for him by his place in history.”[15] The reason for this, says Bultmann, is that “all our thinking to-day is shaped for good or ill by modern science.” So “a blind acceptance of the New Testament mythology would be irrational. . . . It would involve a sacrifice of the intellect. . . . It would mean accepting a view of the world in our faith and religion which we should deny in our everyday life.”[16]

With unlimited confidence in modernity, Bultmann pronounced the biblical picture of miracles as impossible for modern man. For “man’s knowledge and mastery of the world have advanced to such an extent through science and technology that it is no longer possible for anyone seriously to hold the New Testament view of the world—in fact, there is hardly anyone who does.” Therefore, the only honest way of reciting the creeds is to strip the mythological framework from the truth they enshrine. . .”[17] This means that “the resurrection of Jesus is just as difficult, it means an event whereby a supernatural power is released. . . . To the biologists such language is “meaningless” and “such a notion the idealist finds intolerable.”[18]

While evangelicals have not bought into the metaphysical naturalism of Spinoza or Hume, nonetheless, they have been bedeviled with its offspring, methodological naturalism both in science (by way of theistic evolution) and in biblical criticism. Here naturalism has been imbibed largely through methodologies such as redaction criticism which assumes a gradual literary development of the text. In this connection, it is refreshing to read the insightful work of the noted former Bultmannian Bible critic, Eta Linnemann, who in her newly published work in German, with the forthcoming English title of *Higher Criticism in the Dock*, lays bare the clay feet of negative higher criticism.

Beware of Agnosticism

The great German thinker, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) claimed to have been awakened from his dogmatic slumbers by David Hume, not to skepticism but to agnosticism. In his weighty *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and his less heralded but highly influential *Religion Within the Limits of Bare Reason* (1793) he argued that God is unknowable (even by revelation) and that the nature of religion is moral. He insisted that our mind and senses are so structured that we cannot know reality in itself (the *noumenal* realm) but only what appears to us (the realm of the *phenomena*). Thus, science is possible because it speaks of the observable world. But metaphysics is not possible.

Further, Kant bifurcated the observable realm of fact and the realm of value. This dichotomy has been disastrous for biblical studies. It leads to a denial of the importance, if not the existence, of the factual and historical record in Scripture and a stress on the moral and religious dimensions that have dominated liberal theology since his time.

The problem, then, with the liberalism that springs from Kant is not factual but philosophical. It is not exegetical but ideological. It imports an alien metaphysics and methodology into biblical studies. Kant himself concluded that the Christian religion should operate without a belief in miracles, declaring that, "If a moral religion (which consists not in dogmas and rites but in the heart's disposition to fulfill all human duties as divine commands) is to be established, all miracles which history connects with its inauguration must themselves in the end render superfluous the belief in miracles in general."[19] Considering the immense influence of Kant on the modern world, we see once more the importance of our thesis to "beware of philosophy."

Beware of Evolutionism

Many thinkers labor under the illusion that evolution is an empirical science when in fact it is a philosophy. Macro-evolution is a philosophy whose naturalistic tenets were spelled out by the man Charles Darwin referred to as "our great philosopher," Herbert Spencer (1820-1903).[20] Spencer came upon his philosophy while meditating on the waves in a pond one Sunday morning—something that no doubt would not have happened had he been in church meditating on the Word of God!

Many evolutionists were not content to hypothesize that life has evolved from simple to complex. They applied the same naturalistic method to society and

religion, claiming they had evolved as well. This gave rise to the still persistent myth that religious belief evolved from magic to polytheism to henotheism to monotheism. This view has dominated the landscape since James Frazer wrote *The Golden Bough* in 1890, even though the discovery of monotheistic creation *ex nihilo* in the Ebla Tablets should have put it to rest, since they are much earlier than Frazer's sources.[21] Even Charles Darwin himself proposed in his *The Descent of Man* (1871) that, "The same high mental faculties. . . led man to believe in unseen spiritual agencies, then in fetishism, polytheism, and ultimately in monotheism. . . ."[22] Based on his naturalistic presupposition he wrote in his autobiography, "I had gradually come, by this time to see that the Old Testament from its manifestly false history of the world, with its Tower of Babel, the rainbow as a sign, etc., etc., and from its attribution to God the feelings of a revengeful tyrant, was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos, or the beliefs of any barbarian."[23] In brief, Darwin concluded that, "Everything in nature is the result of fixed laws." He added,

> By further reflection that the clearest evidence would be requisite to make any sane man believe in miracles by which Christianity is supported, that the more we know of the fixed laws of nature the more incredible do miracles become, that the men of that time were ignorant and credulous to a degree almost incomprehensible by us, that the Gospels cannot be proved to have been written simultaneously with the events, that they differ in many important details, far too important as it seemed to me to be admitted as the usual inaccuracies of eyewitnesses; by such reflections as these. . . I gradually came to disbelieve in Christianity as a divine revelation."[24]

The result of the philosophy of evolutionism has been catastrophic for biblical and theological studies. The historicity and scientific accuracy of the Genesis record has been denied. The doctrine of creation has been discarded with serious moral consequences on our dignity and society. Hitler, for example, applied the Darwinian view to society with horrendous human consequences, arguing that, "If nature does not wish that weaker individuals should mate with the stronger, she wishes even less that a superior race should intermingle with an inferior one; because in such a case all her efforts, throughout hundreds of years, to establish an evolutionary higher stage of being may thus be rendered futile." He then went on to say that, "Such a preservation goes hand-in-hand with the inexorable law that it is the strongest and the best who must triumph and that they have the right to endure."[25] With that he slaughtered some estimated 12 million human beings which he considered to be inferior breeds. Indeed, the evolution text used in the

state of Tennessee at issue in the John Scopes Trial was racist, referring to the Caucasian race as "the highest type of all."[26]

The damage done by Darwinism in the theological realm has been equally undesirable. Of course, some scholars have gallantly but futilely attempted to reconcile evolution and Scripture, including James Orr and A. A. Strong, only to do violence to the historical-grammatical method and to unwittingly undermine both human dignity and theological orthodoxy. They failed to heed the warning of Charles Hodge in his 1878 work titled *What is Darwinism?* in which Hodge correctly answered: "It is atheism. This does not mean, as said before, that Mr. Darwin himself and all who adopt his views are atheists; but it means that his theory is atheistic; that the exclusion of design from nature is. . . tantamount to atheism."[27] After all, if there is no design, then there is no need for a Designer. And if things were not created, then there was no Creator. Once again, grave theological pain could have been avoided by taking seriously the biblical exhortation to "beware of philosophy."

Beware of the Philosophy of Progressivism

Much of modern biblical scholarship was sucked into the philosophy of historicism in the wake of the developmental pantheism of George Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831). In his massive work, *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and his later *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1817) Hegel spelled out his historical progressivism in what became known through the misinterpretation of Johann Fichte (1762-1814) as a dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.[28] Nonetheless, Hegel did affirm that history is the unfolding of Absolute Spirit in a developmental dialectic.

The results of this so-called "Hegelianism" for biblical scholarship were disastrous. F. C. Baur's (1792-1860) Tübingen School contended that the Gospel of John must be viewed as second-century synthesis of the earlier thesis-antithesis conflict of Peter and Paul. This conclusion was arrived at with almost total disregard for the internal and external evidence for an earlier firstcentury date for John. The so-called "exegetical" conclusions, however massive and scholarly, were largely determined by a prevailing philosophy. Once again, the biblical exegete should have heeded the warning to "beware of philosophy."

Beware of Existentialism

The father of modern existentialism was not a twentieth-century French atheist but a Danish Christian named Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) who could have signed a statement subscribing to the historic fundamentals of the Faith. He wrote: “On the whole, the doctrine as it is taught [in the church] is entirely sound.”[29] Nonetheless, few have done more from within the evangelical fold to methodologically undermine historic orthodoxy than Kierkegaard. Indeed, it was his philosophical son, Karl Barth, who gave rise to Neo-Orthodoxy. Kierkegaard concluded that even if we assume that the defenders of Christianity “. . . have succeeded in proving about the Bible everything that any learned theologian in his happiest moment has ever wished to prove about the Bible” namely, “that these books and no others belong in the canon; they are authentic; they are integral; their authors are trustworthy—one may well say, that it is as if every letter were inspired.” Kierkegaard asked: “Has anyone who previously did not have faith been brought a single step nearer to its acquisition? No, not a single step.”[30]

Then Kierkegaard posed the opposite, namely, “that the opponents have succeeded in proving what they desire about the Scriptures, with a certainty transcending the most ardent wish of the most passionate hostility—what then? Have the opponents thereby abolished Christianity? By no means. Has the believer been harmed? By no means, not in the least.”[31]

At the minimum, Kierkegaard’s bifurcation of fact and value is axiologically misplaced. In fact, it has been biblically disastrous, as Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann demonstrate—or whatever other “B’s” may be buzzing around unorthodox circles. We need only mention the Kierkegaardian inspired beliefs that: 1) Religious truth is located in personal encounter (subjectivity); 2) Propositional truth is not essential to the Faith; 3) Higher criticism is not harmful to real Christianity: 4) God is “wholly other” and essentially unknowable, even through biblical revelation. These give further significance to the Pauline warning to “beware of philosophy.”

Beware of Phenomenology

Following the methodology of his mentor, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) set forth the groundwork for the contention that the true meaning of terms is found in etymology. In his works *Being and Time* (1927) and especially *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1953) Heidegger set forth not only the basis for the so-called “New Hermeneutic” of Ott, Ebeling, Fuchs, Bultmann, and Gadamer

but also the foundation for the widely and often naively used Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Among the troubling hidden premises in this massive work are the contentions that: 1) The origin of a term is the key to its meaning; 2) This meaning is non-conceptual and mystical; 3) Language is symbolic, not descriptive. Even the liberal James Barr exposed Kittel's Heideggerian presuppositions in his *Biblical Semantics*. Considering the extensive and often philosophically uncritical use of Kittel by even evangelical scholars, one cannot help but be reminded of Paul's exhortation to "beware of philosophy"—in this case the philosophy of phenomenology.

Beware of Conventionalism

Few philosophies have penetrated contemporary linguistic studies and biblical interpretation more than that of conventionalism. With roots in Gottlob Frege (1848-1925), Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), this philosophy of meaning denies that there are any objective or absolute forms of meaning. In short, all meaning is relative. If so, then all truth is relative, since all true statements must be meaningful. But if all truth is relative, then there are no absolute truths in the Bible no matter how well one exegetes it. But since this truth claim is itself both selfdefeating and incompatible with evangelical theology, then we must beware of the philosophy of conventionalism.

It suffices here simply to note that, like other non-Christian views, the central contention of conventionalism is selfdefeating. For the assertion that no meaning is objective is given as an objective statement about meaning. And the assertion that all truth is relative is offered as absolute truth. Notwithstanding, it is not uncommon to hear evangelical exegetes speak of the cultural relativity of linguistic expressions. Indeed, much of modern translation is based on this mistaken premise.

We hasten to say that this is not to deny that most symbols are culturally relative. With the exception of terms like natural signs and onomatopoeic words, the use of a particular word is culturally relative. But the meaning expressed by words used in sentences is no more culturally relative than are math and morals culturally relative, for they too are expressed in different terms in different cultures.

Furthermore, contrary to the deconstructionist's claim, logic is not dependent

on language. Rather, language is dependent on logic. For the very claim that "Logic is dependent on language" is itself dependent on logical coherence to make any sense. Here again, the biblical exegete must "beware of philosophy." Those not trained to recognize the selfdefeating claims of the linguistic relativists are an easy prey of their subtlety.

Beware of Processism

When the history of the twentieth century is written, Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) will probably emerge as one of the two or three most important philosophers of the century. His works include *Religion in the Making* (1926) and *Process and Reality* (1929). His process view of God and reality has had a disastrous effect on theology in general and, more recently, evangelical theology in particular. And, tragically, in the name of proper biblical exegesis many evangelical theologians have forsaken the absolutely omniscient and unchanging God of historic orthodoxy for a God who not only changes His mind but who does not even know for sure what will happen in the future.

While wrongly chastising other evangelicals who cling to the unchanging God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who claimed "I am the Lord and I change not" (Mal. 3:6) and who, according to Isaiah, "sees the end from the beginning" (Isa. 46:10), they confess buying into the processism of Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and John Cobb. One of the leaders of this movement, Clark Pinnock, positioned his Open Theism view "Between Classical and Process Theism."[32] Indeed, one of their process mentors confessed that since God does not know the future with certainty that he "has to wait with bated breath" to see how things will turn out![33] Few things are a more vivid example of the need to heed the Pauline injunction to "beware of philosophy." In fact, by the time of his latter work on the topic, *The Most Moved Mover,* Pinnock had practically embraced a Whiteheadian view (pp. 78, 143).[34]

Beware of Platonic Allegorism

Space does not permit comment on numerous other philosophies that have misled otherwise good evangelicals to overthrow doctrines once for all committed to the saints. I could speak of the platonic allegorism that has been in the church since Origen which, in the mutated form of Jewish Midrash, led one of ETS's own members to defect from its ranks, claiming that whole sections of

the Gospel of Matthew are not historical. For Robert Gundry insisted that the story of the Wise Men visiting Jesus is not based in fact but was created by Matthew with no basis in fact! When asked in *JETS* dialogue how he would vote on the membership of Mary Baker Eddy in ETS, if she agreed with our statement on inerrancy, even though she used an allegorical method of interpreting Scripture, Gundry replied with shocking candor: "I would vote yes. . . ."[35] Fortunately, the ETS scholars voted "No" on his membership.

Beware of Ockhamistic Nominalism

One does not have time to trace the influences of nominalistic skepticism in evangelical circles. One can only speak from personal experience of a nominalist who was retained on the faculty of a conservative institution in spite of the fact that this entails the denial of the orthodox beliefs that God had one nature, Christ had two natures (one divine and one human), and that the basic laws of thought (such as the law of noncontradiction) are not arbitrary. The errors of nominalism have been adequately exposed in the excellent doctoral work of one of our own members, J. P. Moreland in his book, *Universals, Qualities, and Quality Instances*. Nonetheless, the fact that some evangelicals have bought into this alien view reveals the need to "beware of philosophy."

Beware of Aristotelianism

Lest I be accused of not being aware of the errors of Aristotle who denied the infinity, personality, and worshipability of God, the temporality of the world, and the immortality of the soul, I would simply point out that Thomas Aquinas, known for his use of Aristotelian concepts, rejected all these errors of Aristotle. In short, the Aristotle he used had to repent, be baptized and catechized before he was serviceable to the Christian Faith.

On the other hand, those like Jack Rogers of Fuller Seminary who deny the inerrancy of Scripture, wrongly claiming that scholastic evangelicalism created the doctrine of inerrancy[36] are misdirected and ill-informed. But here again it was because of the work of a philosophically aware evangelical, Dr. John Woodbridge, that Rogers' views were refuted without a substantial response.

Contrary to Rogers' thesis, Augustine, hardly an Aristotelian, clearly embraced inerrancy eight hundred years before scholasticism, declaring that: "If we are perplexed by an apparent contradiction in Scripture, it is not allowable to

say, The author of this book is mistaken; but either the manuscript is faulty, or the translation is wrong, or you have not understood."[37] The truth is that Aristotle, and his distant pupil Aquinas have been a great service to evangelicals[38] who are, as Paul exhorted us, "set in defense of the Gospel" (Phil. 1:17). For Aristotle believed in the correspondence view of truth, the fundamental laws of logic, and the historical-grammatical hermeneutic—all of which are essential to the preservation of evangelical theology.

Beware of the Philosophy of Anthropological Monism

One New Testament scholar, Professor Murray Harris, from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, admitted buying into a "basically monistic anthropology."[39] Before his institution was fully aware of the devastating consequences of this philosophy on his exegesis, he had denied the physical resurrection of believers, the essential materiality of the resurrection body of Christ, and pronounced Christ's Ascension a "parable" or "visual symbol."[40] On the first point he wrote: ". . .the believer's resurrection body will come from heaven, not the grave. . ."[41] and, "Certainly, dead persons are raised, not impersonal corpses."[42] Because of his admitted monistic anthropology he was forced to acknowledge (in order to avoid a temporary annihilationism between death and resurrection) that believers received their permanent, albeit spiritual resurrection body at the moment of death while their physical bodies remained rotting forever in the grave, noting that "Bodily resurrection [at the moment of death] is the prerequisite for the resumption of true life after the intervention of death."[43] He even went so far as to say the resurrection body of Christ possessed "essential immateriality"[44] and was "non-fleshly." In his own words, he declared: "It will be neither fleshly nor fleshy."[45] Both, of course, deny the essential and continuous materiality of the incarnate Christ both before and after the resurrection which has been part of orthodox Christianity[46] from New Testament times (cf. Luke 24:39; Acts 2:31; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7).[47] Under continued criticism from without and pressure from within Harris quietly changed his view on the resurrection of believers and expressed regret for calling Christ's resurrection body "immaterial."[48]

A whole decade of pain could have been avoided had Harris not bought into a confessed "monistic anthropology" which tainted his exegesis since the time of his doctoral studies. Once more we see the value of Paul's exhortation to "beware of philosophy."

Beware of “Historical Criticism”

Other evangelical scholars who have bought into the philosophical presuppositions of negative higher criticism have been exposed in an excellent work by Robert Thomas and David Farnell titled *The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship*. Citing Scot McKnight, they speak of George Ladd’s acknowledgement that form criticism “has thrown considerable light on the nature of the gospels and the traditions they employ,” adding, “Evangelical scholars should be willing to accept this light.”[49]

They note also that “Robert Stein is another evangelical who reflects significant agreement with historicalcritical assumptions. Like other form critics, he accepts the Four-source Hypothesis, basing interpretive conclusions on this.”[50] Stein even asserted that “if the inauthenticity of a saying [of Jesus] should be demonstrated this should not be taken to mean that this saying lacks authority.”[51] Indeed, Stein argues that the exception clause in Matthew 5:31-32 “is an interpretive comment added by Matthew.”[52]

Then there is Robert Guelich, who in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount confesses: “This commentary offers a critical exegesis in that it makes use of the literary and historical critical tools including the text, source, form, tradition, redaction, and structural criticism.”[53] Following this method, Guelich cast serious doubt on the sayings of Jesus in the Gospels in general and in John in particular, whom he believed put his own theological expressions in Jesus’ mouth.

Another sad example of this is found in Mike Licona’s *The Resurrection of Jesus* wherein he casts doubt on the resurrection of the saints after Jesus’ resurrection (Mat 27:51-53),[54] He doubts or denies the historicity of the mob falling backward at Jesus claim “I am he” in John 18:4-6,[55] the historicity of the angels at the tomb recorded in all four Gospels (Mat 28:2-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-7; John 20:11-14),[56] and also asserts that the Gospel genre is Greco-Roman biography which he says is a “flexible genre” in which “it is often difficult to determine where history ends and legend begins.”[57] Further, he makes an outright denial of inerrancy in a debate with Bart Ehrman at Southern Evangelical Seminary in the spring of 2009 when Licona asserted concerning the day Jesus was crucified that: “I think that John probably altered the day in order for a theological—to make a theological point there. But that does not mean that Jesus wasn’t crucified.” He later defends a contradiction in the Gospel on the grounds

that the Greco-Roman genre, which he claims the Gospels are, allows for contradictions. Unfortunately for Licona, neither the Law of Noncontradiction nor the Gospels (1 Tim. 6:20) allow for contradictions.[58]

Decades before Michael Licona (2010) used genre as a means of dehistoricizing Matthew 27:51-53, Craig Blomberg (in 1984) defended Robert Gundry's midrashic approach to the Gospels in no uncertain terms, saying:

> Is it possible, even inherently probable, that the NT writers at least in part never intended to have their miracle stories taken as historical or factual and that their original audiences probably recognized this? If this sounds like the identical reasoning that enabled Robert Gundry to adopt his midrashic interpretation of Matthew while still affirming inerrancy, that is because it is the same. The problem will not disappear simply because one author [Gundry] is dealt with *ad hominem*. . . how should evangelicals react? Dismissing the sociological view on the grounds that the NT miracles present themselves as historical gets us nowhere. So do almost all the other miracle stories of antiquity. Are we to believe them all?[59]

It is important to remember what happened in the Gundry case. After two years of discussion on the issue, the largest society of evangelical scholars in the world (ETS) voted overwhelmingly (by 70%) to ask Robert Gundry to resign from ETS because they believed that his views on a Jewish midrash interpretation of Matthew denied the historicity of certain sections of Matthew, including the story of the Magi visiting Jesus after his birth (Matt. 2). This was a significant decision which drew a line in the sand for ETS. In spite of all this, Blomberg boasts that he opposed the ETS stand on inerrancy. In view of what Blomberg believes about the Gospels (see below), we can understand why he defends his position against ETS and, as we will see, against ICBI as well. It is also apparent why Blomberg defends Licona's view for "birds of a feather flock together."

What is more, Blomberg denied the historicity of the fish with the coin in its mouth (Matt. 17:27). He noted, "It is often not noticed that the so-called miracle of the fish with the coin in its mouth (Mat. 17:27) is not even a narrative; it is merely a command from Jesus to go to the lake and catch such a fish. We don't even know if Peter obeyed the command. Here is a good reminder to pay careful attention to the literary form."[60] Blomberg's solution is directly at odds with the ICBI Statement on Hermeneutics when it states in Article XIII: "generic

categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual."

Thomas and Farnell cite David Catchpole claiming that, "The Gospel tradition itself compels us to engage in tradition-historical inquiry," adding, "We can hardly avoid attributing to the later post-Easter stage both the redaction of material, and, on occasion, its creation."[61]

There seems to be little awareness among these evangelical scholars of the danger of adopting philosophical methods, however modified by their evangelical beliefs which lead logically—and sometimes actually, as Catchpole admits—to the Gospel writers "creating" material, rather than reporting it. Any method that undermines what the Gospels inform us about the words and deeds of Jesus thereby undermines orthodox Christianity.

Thomas and Farnell have done a great service to the Evangelical community in exposing the drift of evangelical New Testament scholars in this dangerous direction. Former New Testament negative critic, Eta Linnemann, wrote of their efforts: "with outstanding knowledge concerning historical critical theology right down to the finest details, the authors are well equipped to detect historical critical thinking wherever it sprouts, even where nobody would expect it—in the midst of evangelical theology by writers supposedly faithful to the Bible."[62] Of course, that is the point we have been making, namely, no matter how evangelical one may be by background or training, if he does not "beware of philosophy," he may fall prey to its subtle influences on his theology.

How to Beware of Philosophy

I turn now to the final section of this discussion: "How to Beware of Philosophy." My advice here is divided into two parts: intellectual and spiritual. First, some intellectual cautions to evangelical exegetes.

How to Avoid Unorthodox Conclusions While Doing Exegesis

In view of the foregoing discussion, some advice from an evangelical philosopher to evangelical exegetes is in order.

Some Intellectual Advice (for the Mind)

My first piece of advice is this:

Avoid the Desire to Become a Famous Scholar.

There seems to be an almost irresistible temptation among many scholars, particularly younger ones, to "make a name for themselves." In biblical terms this is the sin of pride of which Holy Scripture warns us. Pride distorts our vision of the truth because it is the presumption to knowledge born of ignorance. It is humbling to remind ourselves that the apostle Paul explicitly exhorts us that though "I understand all mysteries and all knowledge. . . but have not love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2). Scholarship should be used to build Christ's spiritual kingdom, not to build an academic kingdom for one's self.

Augustine surely identified the root problem when he wrote: "And what is the origin of our evil will but pride? For pride is the beginning of sin."[63] Paul agreed when he warned against putting novices in positions of leadership (1 Tim. 3:6). And the apostle John warned against the "pride of life" as one of our three basic sins (1 John 2:16).

Avoid the Temptation to Be Unique.

My second piece of advice is closely associated with the first. It is this: Avoid the desire to be unique. The temptation to this form of pride seems to be endemic to the higher academic process. For by its very nature a doctoral dissertation is usually supposed to be an original contribution to knowledge. But if the scholar is to make a discovery that no one else has ever made, then it is an almost irresistible temptation to congratulate oneself for being the originator of this new truth. Little wonder the apostle warned us that "knowledge puffs up" but "love builds up" (1 Cor. 8:1). The Scripture alerts us to the fact that the occupation of intellectuals in the modern academy is little different than that of those on the ancient Mars Hill who "spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear **some new thing**" (Acts 17:21, emphasis added).

Do Not Dance on the Edges.

My next bit of advice for evangelical exegetes is to avoid dancing on the

edges. Do not see how far the borders of evangelicalism can be stretched to accommodate the latest scholarly fad. Do not flirt with the latest critical methodology. Some of our own ETS members have been caught in this trap. It would appear that Grant Osborne temporarily fell prey to this temptation when he claimed that Matthew expanded on Jesus' supposedly original statement to baptize in His (Jesus') name, turning it into the Trinitarian formula recorded in Matthew 28:18-20. Other biblical scholars, like J. Ramsey Michaels, went over the line of orthodoxy and declared that in some cases the Gospel writers created, not merely reported, the sayings of Jesus.[64]

The story is told of a king who lived on a narrow, winding, mountain road edged by a steep cliff. When interviewing potential chauffeurs he was careful to ask how close they could get to the edge without falling over. The first driver claimed he could get within a foot with no problem. The second driver boasted of having the ability to drive within a few inches without endangering the king's life. The last candidate said he would drive as far away from the edge as he possibly could. Which one do you think the king hired? The last one, of course. And his royal choice is good advice for biblical exegetes who seem to relish dancing on the edge of evangelical scholarship.

Steer Right to Go Straight.

According to aeronautic experts, when a propeller-driven airplane takes off it naturally veers left unless it is steered right. Based on my observations of evangelical institutions and leaders over the past half century, it appears to me that the same principle applies. The only way to keep on the straight orthodox path is to keep turning to the right. Churches, schools, and even evangelical scholarship will naturally go left, unless they are deliberately turned to the right. The prevailing winds of doctrine blow against us. And if we are to resist them we must have a firm grip on the wheel of the Good Ship Evangelism and steer it to the right.

Do Not Trade Orthodoxy for Academic Respectability.

One of the top leaders of a large Protestant denomination was once asked how his denomination drifted to the left. His analysis of the situation was brief but penetrating. He noted that they wanted accreditation for their schools. In order to attain this they needed academic respectability for their teachers. Thus, they sent

them to some of the best graduate schools in the world. When they returned from these unorthodox institutions they brought with them academic respectability. Sadly, he added: "We achieved scholarly recognition. But we sacrificed our orthodoxy for academic respectability." But this is a trade that no evangelical should ever make. As evangelical scholars we must learn to bear, if necessary, the offense of being called "fundamentalists," "obscurantists," and theologically "dinosauric," along with the offense of the Gospel. In this regard, one cannot help but admire our colleague and brother Thomas Oden who proudly calls himself a "paleo-orthodox" or the conviction and courage of Eta Linnemann who literally trashed her own works upon being converted to Christ and urged her students to do the same.

We must reject the temptation to believe "New is true." It is far more likely that "Old is gold." For truth stands the test of time, while recent error has not been around long enough to be tried in the balance and be found wanting.

Reject any Methodology Inconsistent with the Bible or Good Reason.

Unfortunately, most evangelical biblical exegetes have not digested Etienne Gilson's insightful volume, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*. In it he demonstrates how one philosophy after another led those who embrace the wrong method into undesirable and even disastrous cul-de-sacs. The lesson for biblical exegetes is the same: Adopt a false methodology and it will lead logically to a wrong theology. **How** we do our exegesis will lead to **what** results we obtain from it. Exegetical methods are to their results what meat grinders are to meat: Bologna in, bologna out—no matter how finely it is ground. Biblical and theological methods are not metaphysically neutral. To believe so is to be a candidate for the Colossian warning: "Beware of philosophy."

Some Spiritual Advice (for the Soul)

I turn now to some spiritual advice for biblical exegetes. First and foremost,

Always Choose Lordship Over Scholarship.

One of ETS's noted members, the late Professor J. Barton Payne, told of a conversation he had with a negative Bible critic who denies the creation of

Adam and Eve, the Noahic Flood, Jonah in the Great Fish, one Isaiah, the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and other orthodox beliefs. When Professor Payne pointed out that Jesus had personally affirmed all of these in the Gospels, his liberal friend shockingly replied: "Well, I know more about the Bible than Jesus did!" This is a clear example of putting scholarship over Lordship. If Jesus was the Son of God which the New Testament confirms that He was, then whatever He affirmed about the Old Testament is absolutely true. Indeed, Jesus claimed divine authority for His teaching (Matt. 28:18-20). Since every true evangelical believes this, there should be no hesitation, whenever there is a conflict to choose ancient Lordship over modern scholarship. Several years ago, I wrote the author of a commentary on Jonah from a good evangelical school who had declared in it that it was not necessary to take Jonah literally. After pointing out that Jesus took it literally in Mat. 12:40-42, I asked him if it was necessary for us as believers in Christ to believe what Jesus taught. Surprisingly, he had apparently not considered this, and the statement was subsequently retracted.

Do Not Allow Morality to Determine Methodology.

Henry Krabbendam said it boldly and bluntly when he pointed out that when one departs from the Faith by adopting a wrong methodology there is usually one of two reasons: "First, it is possible that an apostate methodology arises from an apostate heart. Second, it is possible that an apostate methodology to a greater or lesser extent has slipped into the thinking of a man who is otherwise committed to Christ."[65] Whatever the case, in the words of the apostle Paul, those who fall prey have failed to "destroy arguments and every proud obstacle against the knowledge of God and bring every thought captive to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). Herein stands the great challenge of the Christian scholar not only to **live** Christocentrically but to **think** Christocentrically—a task that is forcefully set forth in the excellent work by J. P. Moreland, titled: *Love Your God with All Your Mind*.

Do Not Allow Sincerity to be a Test of Orthodoxy.

In spite of his radical departure from orthodoxy noted earlier, Benedict Spinoza, the grandfather of modern negative biblical criticism, insisted on his biblical fidelity declaring: "I am certified of thus much: I have said nothing unworthy of Scripture or God's Word, and I have made no assertions which I

could not prove by the most plain arguments to be true. I can, therefore, rest assured that I have advanced nothing which is impious or even savours of impiety."[66] This reminds one of Fuller Seminary's defense for keeping Paul Jewett on their faculty after he denied the inerrancy of the Bible by claiming that the apostle Paul was wrong in what he affirmed in 1 Corinthians 11:3. After examining Jewett's views carefully for an extended period of time, they decided to retain him on the faculty because he sincerely believed his view was orthodox and because he had faithfully taught at Fuller for many years.[67] Since when did sincerity and longevity become the test for orthodoxy!

Conclusion

In the final analysis, preserving orthodoxy is not a purely intellectual matter. It is spiritual warfare. "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12). The enemy of our soul wants also to deceive our minds. He desires to destroy good teaching which leads to good living. By undermining our orthodoxy he can weaken our "orthopraxy." So we need to take on the whole armor of God in order to withstand the wiles of the Wicked One. It is noteworthy that this armor includes among other things the wide belt of **truth** which holds the rest of the armor together (Eph. 6:10-18).

In brief, my conclusion is this: **We cannot properly beware of philosophy unless we be *aware* of philosophy**. To use a medical analogy, the person most likely to catch a disease is one who does not understand it and thus takes no precautions against it. After all, doctors do not wear gloves and masks to hide warts and moles. One of the most serious problems for evangelical exegetes is that many are not philosophically sophisticated. They are not trained to snoop out alien presuppositions lurking beneath the surface of their discipline. In short, many evangelical exegetes have not taken time to be aware of philosophy and, hence, do not know how to fulfill Paul's admonition to "beware of philosophy."

It is of more than passing interest to note the conservative influence of committed, philosophically trained evangelical schools. Younger scholars with their orthodox theological commitment and philosophical sophistication, are in a better position to avoid the theological errors into which philosophically untrained biblical scholars too often fall.

Error, even serious error is a very subtle thing. The reason for this was fingered by Irenaeus when he noted that "Error, indeed, is never set forth in its naked deformity, lest being thus exposed, it should at once be detected. But it is craftily decked out in an attractive dress, so as by its outward form, to make it appear to the inexperienced. . . more true than truth itself."[68] Thus we need to be both spiritually and philosophically alert to avoid it.

Speaking of being philosophically informed, the immortal words of Plato are applicable to biblical exegetes as well. In Book V of the *Republic* Plato wrote, "Unless. . . either philosophers become kings in our state or those whom we now call our kings and rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately, and there is a conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophical intelligence,. . . there can be no cessation of troubles. . . for our states, nor I fancy for the human race either."[69] Applying this thought to the topic at hand, I would urge that: unless either philosophers become biblical exegetes in our schools or those whom we now call biblical exegetes take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately, and there is a conjunction of these two things, biblical exegesis and philosophical intelligence, there can be no cessation of theological troubles for our schools, nor I fancy for the Christian Church either.

[1] See Norman L. Geisler, "Colossians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victory Books, 1983), 668, 677.

[2] Most of this chapter was originally delivered to biblical scholars at the 50th annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) on November 19th, 1998 under the title "Beware of Philosophy." It has been updated for presentation in this book.

[3] Benedict De Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1951), 1:83, 87, 92.

[4] Ibid., 126.

[5] Ibid., 129-30.

[6] Ibid., 170 (emphasis added).

[7] See N. L. Geisler, *The Battle for the Resurrection* (Nashville, TN: Thomas

Nelson, 1992), Chapter 4.

[8] Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. A. Boyle (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1910), pt. 1, proposition XXXVI, appendix.

[9] Ibid., 92.

[10] Ibid., 96, emphasis added.

[11] Ibid., 159, emphasis added. Spinoza sometimes says the prophets spoke by "revelation" but understands this as the "extraordinary power. . . [of] the imagination of the prophets" (ibid., 24).

[12] Hume actually has two arguments against miracles here. The first argument is an argument in principle, which assumes the credibility of witnesses. The second is an argument in practice, which challenges in fact whether any miracles have ever had credible witnesses. (The latter will be considered in chapter 11.) David Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: and Other Essays, ed. Ernest C. Mossner (New York: Washington Square, 1963).

[13] Ibid., 10. 1. 122-23.

[14] Rudolph Bultmann, *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, ed. Hans Werner Batsch, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (London: Billing and Sons, 1954), 68.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 3-4.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., 8.

[19] Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, trans. Theodore M. Greene et. al., (New York: Harper Torchback, 1960), 79.

[20] See Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Psychology* (1855; reprint, New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1896); First Principles (1862; reprint, London: Williams & Norgate, 1911).

[21] See Eugene H. Merrill, “Ebla and Biblical Historical Inerrancy,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140, no. 560 (October-December 1983): 302-21.

[22] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, in *Great Books of the Western World*, ed. Robert Maynard Hutchins. Translated by Constance Garnett. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., William Benton, publisher, 1952), Vol. 49, 303.

[23] Charles Darwin, *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin*, ed. Nora Darwin Barlow, (New York: Norton & Co., 1993), 85.

[24] Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man*, 86-87.

[25] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (London: Hurst and Blackett Ltd., Publishers, 1939), 239-40, 242.

[26] See George William Hunter, *A Civic Biology: Presented in Problems* (New York: American Book Company, 1914). He wrote: “At the present time there exists upon the earth five races or varieties of man. . . . These are the Ethiopian or negro type. . .; the Malay or brown race. . .; the American Indian; the Mongolian or yellow race. . .; and finally, the highest type of all, the Caucasians, represented by the civilized white inhabitants of Europe and America” (196).

[27] Charles Hodge, *What is Darwinism?* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Company, 1878), 177.

[28] See Winfried Corduan’s excellent chapter on Hegel in *Biblical Errancy: Its Philosophical Roots*, ed. N. L. Geisler (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981).

[29] Soren Kierkegaard, Kierkegaard’s Journals and Papers 6:362 in *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, ed. Robert Bretall (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973).

[30] Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H.Hong (Princeton, MJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 29-30.

[31] Ibid., 31.

[32] This is the title of an article by Clark Pinnock in *Process Theology*, ed. Ronald Nash (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1987).

[33] Bernard Loomer, “A Response to David R. Griffin,” *Encounter* 36, no. 4 (Autumn 1975): 365.

[34] Clark H. Pinnock, *The Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God’s Openness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001), 78, 143.

[35] Robert Gundry, “A Surrejoiner to Norman L. Geisler,” *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (March 1983): 114. His complete answer to my specific question was: “I would vote yes on a.-f.” which included Averroes, Origen, Jack Rogers, Paul Jewett, Mary Baker Eddy, and Karl Barth!

[36] See John Woodbridge’s definitive critique of Jack Rogers’ view in *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers-McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).

[37] Augustine, Reply to Faustus the Manichaean, 11.5, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff, 14 vols., 1st series, (1886-94; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952).

[38] See N. L. Geisler, *Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1991).

[39] Murray Harris, *Raised Immortal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 140.

[40] Ibid., 92.

[41] Ibid., 44.

[42] Ibid., 133.

[43] Murray Harris, *From Grave to Glory* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 237.

[44] Harris, Raised Immortal, 54.

[45] Ibid., 124.

[46] See N.L. Geisler, *The Battle for the Resurrection*, updated ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992) and In Defense of the Resurrection, rev. ed. (Clayton, CA: Witness, Inc., 1993).

[47] See N. L. Geisler, *The Battle for the Resurrection*.

[48] Murray Harris in an interview, in Timothy Morgan, "Evangelical Theologians Clash in Public over What Kind of Body Jesus Christ Has Following His Resurrection," *Christianity Today* (5 April 1993): 62.

[49] Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell, *The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1998), 209.

[50] Ibid., 210.

[51] Ibid., 211.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid., 213.

[54] Michael Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 548-53.

[55] Ibid., 306n114.

[56] Ibid., 185-86.

[57] Ibid., 34.

[58] A critique of Licona's view is found in our article on "Defending Inerrancy: A Response to Methodological Unorthodoxy" in *the Journal of the International Society of Christian Apologetics* (vol. 5, no. 1, 2012).

[59] Craig L. Blomberg, "New Testament miracles and Higher Criticism: Climbing Up the Slippery Slope," *JETS* 27/4 (December 1984), 436.

[60] Craig L. Blomberg, "A Constructive Traditional Response to New Testament Criticism," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to the Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012) 354n32.

[61] Thomas and Farnell, *The Jesus Crisis*, 219.

[62] Ibid., back cover.

[63] Augustine, *The City of God*, 14.13, in The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. Philip Schaff, 14 vols., 1st series (1886-94; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952).

[64] See J. Ramsey Michaels, *Servant and Son: Jesus in Parable and Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981).

[65] Norman L. Geisler, *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980), 445.

[66] Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, 166.

[67] In the exact words of the Committee, "The Committee, while maintaining its disagreements with and regret of some portions of Man as Male and Female, which appear to question the authority of the Apostle Paul, recommends that the Seminary take no other action in the light of Dr. Jewett's proven integrity, his long-standing contribution to the upholding and teaching of the biblical faith at Fuller, and his reassurance of loyalty to the Fuller doctrinal standards." "Ad Hoc Committee Clarifies Relationship Between Paul K. Jewett's Man as Male and Female and the Seminary Statement of Faith," *Theology News and Notes*, published for the Fuller Theological Seminary Alumni (Special Issue, 1976): 21.

[68] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.2, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), Vol. 1.

[69] Plato, *Republic* 5.473d, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Pantheon Books, 1964)

CHAPTER 2

THE PROBLEM OF PHILOSOPHY IN NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

F. David Farnell



Recent decades have witnessed a change in views of Pauline theology. A growing number of evangelicals have endorsed a view called the New Perspective on Paul (NPP) which significantly departs from the Reformation emphasis on justification by faith alone. The NPP has followed in the path of historical criticism's rejection of an orthodox view of biblical inspiration, and has adopted an existential view of biblical interpretation. The best-known spokesmen for the NPP are E. P. Sanders, James D. G. Dunn, and N. T. Wright. With only slight differences in their defenses of the NPP, all three have adopted "covenantal nomism," which essentially gives a role in salvation to works of the Law of Moses. A survey of historical elements leading up to the NPP isolates several influences: Jewish opposition to the Jesus of the Gospels and Pauline literature, Luther's alleged antisemitism, and historical criticism. The NPP is not actually new; it is simply a simultaneous convergence of a number of old aberrations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

When discussing the rise of the New Perspective on Paul (NPP), few theologians carefully scrutinize its historical and presuppositional antecedents. Many treat it merely as a twentieth-century phenomenon; something that is relatively "new" arising within the last thirty or forty years. They erroneously isolate it from its long history of development. The NPP, however, is not new but is the revival of an old ideology that has been around through all the many centuries of church history: *the revival of works as efficacious for salvation*. One

should emphasize that the NPP is the *direct offspring of historicalcritical ideologies*. The *same* ideologies that destroyed orthodox views of inspiration and the trustworthiness of the Scriptures gave rise to the NPP. Historical critics first questioned the inspiration and integrity of the Gospels and then moved with the same intent to the letters of Paul. The historicalcritical search for the "historical Jesus" has led to the "search for the real Paul." Though many historical critics nominally maintained a Reformed perspective on Pauline literature, their work provided the fodder for the eventual confluence of ideologies that emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century as the NPP. Sadly, historical criticism has provided not only the avenue to produce the unorthodox concepts of the "historical Jesus" but also an unorthodox concept of the "historical Paul," a Paul that bears little resemblance to the letters he wrote. For the NPP, eisegesis, not exegesis, of the biblical text dominates.

Introduction to the New Perspective on Paul

Pauline Theology's Radical Change in the Last Century

Some may not be aware of the qualitative and even substantively radical changes that have come in understanding Pauline theology, especially in soteriology with its concepts of *sola gratia* and *sola fide* and the forensic declaration of the righteousness of God apart from works that was hammered out on the anvils of the Reformation of 1517. Some even suggest that such a "normative" understanding of Pauline theology has been wrong throughout the centuries of church history.

A so-called New Perspective[1] has arisen that has sought to replace the "old" perspective so firmly guarded by the Reformation and its heirs. More accurately, however, it is not a new perspective but a revival of an old perspective of works salvation as advocated by Roman Catholicism leading up to the Reformation. Some important reasons prove this. First, even the Reformer Calvin was aware of those who, like the NPP proponents today, interpreted the Pauline expression "works of the law" as referring to "ceremonies" rather than "the whole law." In commenting on the phrase in Romans 3:20, Calvin shows the NPP is not really new:

> Even among learned scholars there is some doubt about what is meant *by*

> *the works of the law*. While some extend them to include the observance of the whole law, others restrict them to ceremonies alone. The addition of the word *law* induced Chrysostom, Origen, and Jerome to accept the latter opinion, for they thought that this addition had a peculiar connotation, to prevent the passage from being understood of all works. . . . Even the schoolmen had a well-worn cliché that works are meritorious not by any intrinsic worthiness, but by the covenant of God. They are mistaken, since they do not see that our works are always corrupted by vices which deprive them of any merit. . . . Paul. . . rightly and wisely does not argue about mere works, but makes a distinction and explicit reference to the keeping of the law, which was properly the subject of his discussion.
>
> The arguments adduced by other learned scholars in support of this opinion are weaker than they should have been. They hold that the mention of circumcision is offered as an example which refers only to ceremonies. . . . [However] Paul was arguing with those who inspired the people with false confidence in ceremonies, and to remove this confidence he does not confine himself to ceremonies, nor does he specifically discuss their value, but he includes the whole law. . . . We contend, however, not without reason, that Paul is here speaking of the whole law. . . . It is a. . . memorable truth of the first importance that no one can obtain righteousness by the keeping of the law.[2]

Second, the doctrine of *sola fide* is a *sine qua non* of the Reformation, which sought to return to the true intent of Paul's letters. Runia strikes at the heart of its importance: "For the Reformers, and those who stood in their tradition, the doctrine of the justification of the sinner by faith alone (*sola fide*) was always of the utmost importance. In the Lutheran Reformation it was called 'the article upon which the church stands or falls (*articulus ecclesia stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*).'"[3] Luther warned in his *Smalcald Articles*,

> Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered [nor can anything be granted or permitted contrary to the same], even though heaven and earth, and whatever will not abide, should sink to ruin. *For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*, says Peter, Acts 4, 12. *And with His stripes we are healed*, Is. 53, 5. And upon this article all things depend which we teach and practice in opposition to the Pope, the devil, and the [whole] world. Therefore, we must be sure concerning this doctrine, and not doubt; for otherwise all is lost, and the

> Pope and devil and all things gain victory and suit over us.4

He foresaw that a day would come after the Reformation's restoration of Paul's doctrine of salvation through faith alone that some theologians would attempt to bring back the efficacy of works in justification. At one time, Packer observed,

> Luther anticipated that after his death the truth of justification would come under fresh attack and theology would develop in a way tending to submerge it once more in error and incomprehension; and throughout the century following Luther's death Reformed theologians, with Socinian and other rationalists in their eye, were constantly stressing how radically opposed to each other are the "Gospel mystery" of justification and the religion of the natural man."[5]

Basic Definition and Description of the NPP

One will see through this chapter that *when all the dust clears and the issue is seen for what it really is, the NPP supports a mixture of faith and works for justification, thereby violating the sole fide principle, so long held by orthodox Protestantism (as well as by the faithful church from the earliest centuries, e.g., Augustine*). It truly is a revisionist hermeneutic that fatally undercuts this vital doctrine. Not only is the NPP, "at heart, a counter to the Reformational view,"[6] but it constitutes an assault on the gospel of God's grace (cf. Gal 1:8-10). This is at heart the definition as well as a description of the NPP.

A Survey of the Reformation Paradigm on Paul and the Law

Five Hundred Years of Reformation Heritage

The Reformation perspective, wrongly labeled by some as the "Lutheran" perspective,[7] on Pauline theology has dominated the vast majority of Protestant theologies. If one also considers the great church fathers, such as Augustine of Hippo (354-430 A.D.), this perspective had even deeper roots than the Reformation, dating back 1,100 years earlier to the early church itself. Westerholm remarks,

> In all essentials Augustine appears to represent what in many has come to be dismissed as the ‘Lutheran’ reading of Paul. . . with his eleven-century headstart on Luther, his [Augustine’s] dominance of Christian thinking throughout those years, and his demonstrable impact on the Reformers themselves, Augustine has a fair claim to be history’s most influential reader of Paul.[8]

The Reformation approach had two key elements: first, the justification of the individual as the center of Paul’s theology, and second, the identification of Paul’s opponents as legalistic Jews (Judaizers) whom Luther and Calvin viewed as agreeing with the Roman Catholicism of their day. To say that the Reformation perspective has dominated Protestant scholarship to the present is no exaggeration. The Reformation view of Paul and that of Augustine posited the great doctrine of justification by faith as the central focus not only of Paul’s theology but of the whole Bible.

Luther saw justification by faith as “the summary of Christine doctrine” and Calvin called it “the main hinge on which religion turns.”[9] Though the Reformers had differences, they were united on a sinner’s justification before God as the prime focus of biblical doctrine, especially in terms of soteriology.[10] For instance, the two most prominent Reformers, Luther and Calvin, agreed that justification by Old Testament law was not possible due to its stringent demands for perfect obedience. Luther remarked, “[T]he commandments show us what we ought to do but do not give us the power to do it. They teach man to know himself that through them he may recognize his inability to do good. That is why they are called the Old Testament and constitute the Old Testament.”[11] Calvin remarked, “Because observance of the law is found in none of us, we are excluded from the promises of life, and fall back into the mere curse. . . . [S]ince the teaching of the law is far above human capacity, a man may view. . . the proffered promises yet he cannot derive any benefit from them.”[12] For them, the Pauline phrase “works of the law” (e.g., Gal 2:16; 3:10) refer not merely to ceremonial but all aspects of the OT commandments. Luther argued, “[F]or Paul, ‘works of the law’ means the works of the entire law. Therefore one should not make a distinction between the Decalogue and ceremonial laws. Now if the work of the Decalogue does not justify, much less will circumcision, which is a work of the Ceremonial Law.”[13] Calvin similarly stated, “the context [Gal 2] shows clearly that the moral law is also comprehended in these words [i.e., “works of the law”], for almost everything that Paul adds relates to the moral rather than the ceremonial law.”[14]

Though the Reformers were united on the principle of *sole fide*, Luther and Calvin differed significantly on the relevance of moral aspects of OT law for believers in the NT era, i.e., its sanctifying effects. Luther's writings give the impression that the believer is free from the OT Law of Moses, even the moral law:

> It [the Law of Moses] is no longer binding on us because it was given only to the people of Israel. . . .
>
> Moses has nothing to do with us [NT saints]. If I were to accept Moses in one commandment, I would have to accept the entire Moses. . . . Moses is dead. His rule ended when Christ came. He is of no further service. . . .
>
> Exodus 20:1. . . makes it clear that even the Ten Commandments do not pertain to us. . . . We will regard Moses as a teacher, but we will not regard him as our lawgiver—unless he agrees with both the NT and the natural law. . . .
>
> If I accept Moses in one respect (Paul tells the Galatians in chapter 5:[3]), then I am obligated to keep the entire law. For not one little period in Moses pertains to us.[15]

Luther saw the OT as binding only when it agrees with the NT and mirrors natural law: "I keep the commandments which Moses has given, not because Moses gave commandment, but because they have been implanted in me by nature, and Moses agrees exactly with nature."[16]

Although he believed that the OT law was abrogated, Luther saw an important significance of Moses for NT believers: its prophetic pointers to Christ: "I find something in Moses that I do not have from nature: the promises and pledges of God about Christ,"[17] and its spiritual lessons: "[W]e read Moses for the beautiful examples of faith, of love, and of the cross, as shown in the fathers, Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all the rest. From them we should learn to trust in God and love him."[18]

In contrast to Luther, Calvin maintained that although one is saved by grace through faith alone, keeping the moral law does not conflict with the New Testament message of grace, because for him the keeping of the moral law by the saved person was generated from a thankful response to God's grace through obedience. Calvin saw benefits from the moral law for the unsaved too: (1) its

convicting and punitive power moves one to seek grace; (2) it acts as a deterrent for the unregenerate; (3) it is "the best instrument for [mankind] to learn more thoroughly each day the nature of the Lord's will to which they aspire, and to confirm them in the understanding of it"; (4) "by frequent meditation upon it be aroused to obedience, be strengthened by it, and be drawn back from the slippery path of transgression."[19] Calvin went on to note that "certain ignorant persons, not understanding. . . rashly cast out the whole of Moses, and bid farewell to the two Tables of the Law." For Calvin, the ceremonial aspects of the OT law "have been abrogated not in effect but only in use. Christ by his coming has terminated them, but has not deprived them of anything of their sanctity."[20] Calvin saw the New Covenant as providing the Holy Spirit's enablement to live a godly life:

> [T]he proper use of the law, finds its place among believers in whose hearts the Spirit of God already lives and reigns. For even though they have the law written and engraved upon their heart by the finger of God [Jer. 31:33; Heb. 10:16], that is, they have been so moved and quickened through the directing of the Spirit that they long to obey God, they still profit by the law.[21]

The moral law provided that instruction for believers as to what pleases God, and for those born-again, they long to please God for his gracious provision, though believers often fail in this present life; perfection awaits glorification.[22]

Another very important perspective of Protestantism inherited from the Reformers is its viewpoint on Judaism. To Luther, Calvin, and their successors, Judaism was essentially a legalistic religion that had as its core beliefs the need of earning salvation and justification through obedience to the law. They perceived a similar legalism in the Roman Catholicism of their day. Typical is the following comment on Galatians 2:10 by Luther regarding Judaism:

> I also believe that if the believing Jews at that time had observed the Law and circumcision under the condition permitted by apostles, Judaism would have remained until now, and the whole world would have accepted the ceremonies of the Jews. But because they insisted on the Law and circumcision as something necessary for salvation and constructed an act of worship and some sort of god out of it, God could not stand for it. Therefore He threw over the temple, the Law, the worship, and the holy city of Jerusalem.[23]

And again, Luther reacted strongly to all forms of legalism:

> Whoever surrenders this knowledge [of God's grace] must necessarily develop this notion: 'I shall undertake this form of worship; I shall join this religious order; I shall select this or that work. And so I shall serve God. There is no doubt that God will regard and accept these works and will grant me eternal life for them. For He is merciful and kind, granting every good even to those who are unworthy and ungrateful; much more will He grant me His grace and eternal life for so many great deeds and merits!' This is the height of wisdom, righteousness, and religion about which reason is able to judge; it is common to all heathen, papists, the Jews, the Mohammedans, and the sectarians. They cannot rise higher than that Pharisee in Luke (18:11-12). They do not know the righteousness of faith or Christian righteousness. . . . Therefore, there is no difference at all between a papist, a Jew, a Turk, or a sectarian. . . .[24]

Calvin also shared this view of Judaism's legalism. In commenting on Romans 10:3, he wrote,

> Notice how they [the Jews] went astray through their unconsidered zeal. They wanted to set up a righteousness of their own, and their foolish confidence proceeded from their ignoance of God's righteousness. . . . Those, therefore, who desire to be justified in themselves do not submit to the righteousness of God, for the first step to obtaining righteousness of God is to renounce our own righteousness. . . .[25]

Commenting on Romans 10:4, he argued,

> The Jews might have appeared to have pursued the right path, because they devoted themselves to the righteousness of the law. It was necessary for Paul to disprove this false opinion. He does show [sic, "so"?] by showing that those who seek to be justified by their own works are false interpreters of the law, because the law was given to lead us by the hand to another righteousness. . .[26]

To the Reformers, Roman Catholicism of their day had many parallels to the legalism of other religions, especially the Judaism of the New Testament (e.g., Matt 12:8-14; 15:1-20; 23:1-36; Rom 3:27-4:8; 9:30–10:8; Phil 3:2-11). They saw in Judaism a degeneration into attempting to merit favor with God through

good works, which the Reformers interpreted as idolatry, i.e., glory goes to the human instrument rather than to God.[27]

Reformation Exegesis and View of Inspiration

Very important, however, the Reformers anchored their views in grammaticohistorical exegesis based in the original languages and nurtured them with an uncompromising view of the complete inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture. Terry, in his classic work on Biblical Hermeneutics, comments not only about the exposition of the Reformation period but also the changes in exegetical approach that followed soon after the Reformation. He notes that while the more rigid Lutherans at times exhibited a "dogmatic tone and method" in their use of Scripture and Reformed theologians broke away "from churchly customs and traditional ideas and treat the Scriptures with a respectful, but free critical spirit,"

> In general exposition no great differences appeared among the early reformers. Luther and Melanchthon represent the dogmatic, Zwingli. . . and Beza the more grammaticohistorical method of scriptural interpretation. Calvin combined some elements of both, but belonged essentially to the Reformed party. It was not until two centuries later that a cold, illiberal, and dogmatic orthodoxy provoked an opposite extreme of lawless rationalism.[28]

The Rise of the New Perspective Paradigm on Paul and the Law

First Stimulus: Historical Criticism's Rejection of Inspiration

A very important key in understanding the NPP is that the "new" approach to Pauline theology was not founded so much on the grammaticohistorical exegesis of Scripture that motivated the Reformers, but on the superimposition on scriptural interpretation of dogmatic, historicalcritical ideologies and political correctness resulting from those presuppositions. Geisler has correctly observed another major factor that contributed to the fall of the Reformation and its high view of biblical inspiration and inerrancy: the willful imposition of ideologies hostile to the authority of the text:

> [W]ithin a little over one hundred years after the Reformation the philosophical seeds of modern errancy were sown. When these seeds had produced their fruit in the church a century or so later, it was because theologians had capitulated to alien philosophical presuppositions. Hence, the rise of an errant view of Scripture did not result from a discovery of factual evidence that made belief in an inerrant Scripture untenable. Rather, it resulted from the unnecessary acceptance of philosophical premises that undermined the historic belief in an infallible and inerrant Bible.[29]

The Reformation view of both the centrality of justification and the righteousness of God in Pauline theology and the legalism of Judaism remained the dominant paradigm among Protestant theologians, even among such radical theologians as Baur, Bultmann, and more recently Hans Hübner,[30] albeit with some differences in interpreting the text. Those differences centered in a wholesale adoption of historical criticism in interpreting Paul's theology and NT theology in general. Terry's and Geisler's comments expose one of the underlying impetuses ultimately responsible for producing the NPP: historical criticism with its hostile philosophical biases was imposed on the scriptural text that eventually not only undermined the *sine qua non* of inspiration and inerrancy but also served to undermine these basic underpinnings of the Reformation application of grammaticohistorical exegesis to Pauline theology.[31] Once a departure from an orthodox view occurred through the rise of historicalcritical exegesis of the NT rather than grammaticohistorical, the rise of the NPP was inevitable.

The radical critic Bultmann maintained Luther's teaching on the law somewhat, but imposed historical criticism in reinterpreting much of Paul's works, including existentialism, demythologization, and a History-of-Religions approach—all operating with the assumption of an uninspired text.[32] This audacious and unjustified imposition of presupposed ideologies on the text under the assumption of rejecting inspiration and inerrancy was directly responsible for the rise of the NPP. Reventlow decried the "failure of exegetes to reflect adequately on their methodology and the presuppositions, shaped by their view of the world, which they bring to their work."[33] He insisted that in biblical exegesis interpreters must search for "hidden presuppositions."[34] This is a major factor in changes in Pauline theology and constitutes the first of two prime reasons for current changes in approach to Pauline theology. Historicalcritical ideology lies at the center of the NPP.

Thielman notes changes caused by the emergence of the NPP. In discussing the legitimacy of NT theology, he writes,

> An increasing number of scholars are concluding that this or that aspect of Paul's theology, once thought important, hopelessly contradicts the rest, and a few have decided that nothing in the letters is worth salvaging. . . .
>
> At the center of this negative evaluation of New Testament, and particularly Pauline, theology lies the recent cross-examination of Paul's view of the Jewish law. It would be hard to imagine a more fundamental principle of Protestant theology than Paul's dictum that salvation comes through faith alone, apart from works. Martin Luther's understanding of this statement lay at the heart of his protest against the Roman Catholic Church, and a variety of theologians, both Protestant and otherwise, came to agree that the great Reformer's interpretation of this statement was both historically correct and theologically necessary. During the past several decades, however, Luther's reading of Paul's statement about the Jewish law has come under devastating attack.[35]

The attack has been so devastating that some theologians dismiss the possibility of any consistency in Paul's theology. Sanders, reflecting the impact of historical criticism, argues that Paul was thinking in a knee-jerk "reflex" mode driven by his soteriology;[36] that Paul's thinking about the law was frequently inconsistent or "aberrant" (e.g., Rom 2:12-16);[37] and that Paul's view of the law in Romans 2 "cannot be harmonized with any of the diverse things which Paul says about the law elsewhere."[38] Räisänen, deeply influenced by Sanders' thinking,[39] argues that Paul is hopelessly inconsistent even within individual letters: "[C]ontradictions and tension have to be *accepted* as *constant* features of Paul's theology of law. They are not simply of an accidental or peripheral nature."[40] Instead of recognizing orthodox concepts of the inspiration, inerrancy, and divine guidance in Paul's thinking, the NPP imposes historicalcritical postulations on the text.

With the dominance of historicalcritical ideologies, the question that now dominates in many NT circles is "Did Paul Have a Theology?" Reid relates,

> Not all are convinced. . . of the quality of Paul's thinking. Some forceful challenges to the notion that Paul had a coherent, consistent theology, free from contradictions have emerged. The most outstanding example is that of

> Heikki Räisänen, who has argued that Paul's statements about the law are logically inconsistent and are simply rationalizations for views that he arrived at by other means.[41]

Reid views the NPP as "A revolution in New Testament studies" that "will lead to a fresh understanding of Paul."[42] Historicalcritical exegesis provided the platform to remold Pauline thought into a form acceptable to transient modern thought apart from any consideration of authorial intent.

Second Stimulus: Existentialism of the New Hermeneutic

The close of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first have seen a radical departure in Pauline theology from the formerly dominant Reformation perspective. The change has been accurately termed a "paradigm shift" for the study of Paul:

> One of the most important challenges to current scholarship on Paul's letter to the Romans is to come to terms with an interpretive tradition marked by largely unacknowledged antiSemitism while remaining true to Paul's purpose in writing the letter. If a 'paradigm shift' is occurring in the study of Romans, stimulating scholars to revise the traditional anti-Judaic approach, the task is to provide a more adequate alternative. I believe that we are now in a position to suggest that this alternative involves a respectful coexistence between Jews and Gentiles in the context of a mission of world conversion and unification.[43]

In addition to the first stimulus—historicalcritical ideologies—to the rise of the NPP, Jewett's comments reveal a second presupposition: an alleged antiSemitism stemming from the Reformation or what might be called a "Holocaust hermeneutical override approach" to Paul. For quite a while before Jewett, a call for a "new paradigm" for reading Romans had been voiced. Porter commented,

> I intend to demonstrate that in the interpretation of Paul's letter to the Romans there are shared paradigms in the commentaries and "textbooks," that there is a growing sense that existing paradigms have ceased to function adequately, and that the dialogue between Christians and Jews, between the church and synagogue, is a major factor in making the existing

> paradigms inadequate. Furthermore, it is the [my] intent. . . to propose in a very preliminary fashion the implications of the "paradigm shift" for the interpretation of Romans.[44]

Glenn Earley, tracing the rise of the hermeneutical stimulus, terms the second presupposition as "the radical hermeneutical shift in post-Holocaust Christian thought" that has strongly influenced NT interpretation, especially Paul. He finds two phases in the shift: (1) "anti-Judaism in the Christian tradition was a necessary condition for the Holocaust" and (2) a "radical shift in Christian theology away from traditional interpretations of Judaism and the 'New Testament' has been developed."[45] Earley remarks,

> [E]fforts by Christian theologians to come to terms with the Holocaust have led to the recognition that a demonic strand of anti-Judaism runs all the way back to the first centuries of Christian tradition. This recognition has led. . . to a radical hermeneutical shift in the way that Christian scholars and theologians interpret their own tradition as well as Judaism's which. . . has led to an altered understanding of present-day Judaism and Christianity. Thus a shuttle-like dialectic between tradition and the present has begun.[46]

Such a hermeneutical shift has been strongly influenced by current existentialist thinking with its resultant postulation that preunderstanding excludes the possibility of objective interpretation.

As a main influence on this Holocaust hermeneutic,[47] Earley cites Hans-Georg Gadamer's work. That work explained the process of understanding involved in interpretation through the New Hermeneutic's "hermeneutical circle" that was previously proposed by existentialists Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling.[48] The New Hermeneutic postulates an interaction between text and interpreter that brings new meaning to the text from the subjective experience of the interpreter. A set of principles of interpretation is not involved, but an existential or experiential understanding by which the interpreter and his biases approach the text for a new understanding whereby the interpreter himself is altered experientially. That hermeneutic rejects the scientific method and reverses the traditional approach to interpretation by producing meanings not derived through traditional grammaticohistorical principles. Rather it imposes subjective opinions on the text derived from the present cultural experiences of the interpreter. Simply stated, the interpreter's bias and not the historical meaning becomes the meaning of the text. The original context is overlooked. What the

text means for a reader's present situation becomes the measure of what is true.[49] As a result, an interpreter's whimsical bias controls the interpreted meaning of the biblical text. *The text becomes a launching pad for the interpreter's viewpoints rather than being objectively understood as in grammaticohistorical exegesis*. The New Hermeneutic dismisses the conventional nature of language and the propositional nature of the biblical text.

As the second major presupposition, the New Hermeneutic provided the ability to reinterpret the Pauline text without any consideration of his original meaning in favor of the interpreter's bias.

No Uniform Interpretation in the NPP

The NPP has not developed a broad consensus among its proponents.[50] Historical criticism and the subjective bias of the New Hermeneutic contribute directly to non-uniformity. The misnamed "Lutheran approach" had a broad consensus of understanding because it anchored itself in grammaticohistorical principles that promote objectivity. In contrast, each NPP proponent, although sharing some basics with others, has his own ideas so that the movement is more accurately "New Perspectives on Paul." The NPP might be seen as a loose aggregate of similar yet sometimes conflicting opinions.

Although no single spokesperson for the viewpoint exists and no organization propagates it, the NPP has some prominent advocates. The three main proponents, E. P. Sanders, James D. G. Dunn, and N. T. Wright agree with one another on some basics, but sharply disagree on others. Duncan speaks of the central common thread:

> At the heart of NPP's critique of both Protestant and Catholic interpretation of Paul is the charge that Reformation-era theologians read Paul via a medieval framework that obscured the categories of firstcentury Judaism, resulting in a complete misunderstanding of his teaching on Justification. The ideas of "the righteousness of God," "imputation," and even the definition of justification itself—all these have been invented or misunderstood by Lutheran and Catholic traditions of interpretation.[51]

Moo comments similarly:

> Scholarship on Paul and the law in the last ten years has witnessed a

> "paradigm shift." For a long time, the dominant approach to Paul's teaching on the law was set within the framework of key reformation concepts. Against the background of Luther's struggles with "pangs of conscience" and a works-oriented Catholicism, this approach placed the justification of the individual at the center of Paul's theology and identified his opponents as legalistic Jews or Judaizers. These two key components of the old paradigm have been discarded as a decisively new direction in Pauline studies has emerged.[52]

Essentially, *the NPP's central tenet accuses the Reformers of subjective bias while at the same time completely ignoring the extreme bias of its own approach that promotes subjectivity through historical criticism and the New Hermeneutic*.

NPP proponents either accuse Paul of misunderstanding or misrepresenting Judaism (i.e., Paul was wrong), or redefine the opponents that Paul was criticizing, asserting that Luther and the Reformation heritage have misperceived Paul's opponents by misreading Paul. Westerholm comments,

> The conviction most central to the "new perspective on Paul" pertains in the first place to Judaism, not Paul: firstcentury Jews, it is claimed (in dependence on E. P. Sanders' Paul and Palestinian Judaism), were not legalists who supposed that they earned salvation (or membership in the people of God) by deeds they did in compliance with the law. Since the "Lutheran" Paul rejected his ancestral religion because it pursued salvation by "works," our better understanding of Judaism requires a revolution in our understanding of the apostle.
>
> From this point paths diverge. It is possible to hold, with the new perspectivists, that Judaism was not legalistic while still holding, with the "Lutherans," that Paul thought it was: Paul, we must then conclude, was wrong. . . . More commonly it is held that Judaism was not legalistic, that Paul has been misread. . . and that the error is to be attributed to Luther and his heirs, whose views of Judaism we need not scruple to amend.[53]

One must stress that this re-reading of Paul does not result from an objective exegesis of the text to correct an error but has been stimulated by acutely subjective biases of historical criticism and the New Hermeneutic.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, two diametrically opposed views

on Pauline theology and his view of Judaism and the law compete for dominance: (1) The traditional "Lutheran" or Reformation paradigm as a correct understanding of Paul's thought, rejecting the dominance of legalism in soteriology, whether expressed in Judaism of Paul's day or Roman Catholicism of Luther's. Paul opposed Judaism as a religion of works; the Reformers were correct in understanding Paul's opposition to the works of Judaism; Judaism, like Roman Catholicism, was legalistic. NPP proponents have misrepresented the Judaism of Paul's day due to the church's embracing of historicalcritical ideology and a prejudicial hermeneutical bent. (2) The NPP is a needed corrective. Second-Temple Judaism was a religion of grace. In this case, two sub-conclusions compete among NPP proponents: either Paul deliberately misrepresented Judaism in his epistles, or Paul's opposition to Judaism did not lie in a rejection of works. The old perspective has misunderstood Paul's thinking regarding Judaism for the last 500 years of church history.[54] Paul was not opposed to works in matters of soteriology.

Three Main Proponents of the NPP

E. P. Sanders

Educational Background. Ed Parish Sanders (b. 1937) is Arts and Sciences Professor of Religion (New Testament and Christian origins) at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. He received his Th.D. from Union Seminary (New York) in 1966. In 1990, he was awarded a D.Litt. by the University of Oxford and D.Theol. by the University of Helsinki. He is a Fellow of the British Academy. He came to Duke University from Oxford, where he was the Dean Ireland Professor of Exegesis from 1984-1990 and also fellow of the Queen's College. Sanders, characterized as "The most influential scholar on Paul in the last quarter-century,"[55] was the catalyst who brought the NPP thinking to the forefront of NT theology. His book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism, A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (1977), and its impact on Pauline studies has led to a collapse of Reformation consensus regarding Paul's view of the law in the learned centers of theology.[56]

Sanders, however, was not necessarily the originator of the NPP thinking. As will be demonstrated below, much of his approach was anticipated through the prior historicalcritical ideologies of Baur and the Tübingen school, Schweitzer, and Wrede, but especially Moore and Jewish scholars such as Montefiore (to

mention only a salient few).[57] Importantly, this chapter will show that Sanders *has not based his position on objective exegesis of biblical texts but on dogmatically held, a priori thinking that controls his conclusions in the same way that he accuses Paul of doing.*

Heavy Influence by HistoricalCritical Ideologies. Sanders argued that Paul's Christology is unclear as well as conflicting. On Romans 1:3-4 Sanders remarks,

> The reader of this passage would understand that Jesus was 'designated' Son of God, and further that he was designated such only at the time of the resurrection. In later terminology, this is an 'adoptionist' Christology. Jesus was adopted by God as Son, not born that way," while in Philippians 2:5-11 Paul "goes to the other extreme" and "the passage basically states that Jesus Christ was preexistent and was in some sense divine.[58]

Sanders concludes regarding Paul's writings, "One sees that is impossible to derive from Paul's letters anything approaching one single doctrine of the person of Jesus Christ. It is possible that both the passages. . . are pre-Pauline in origin, in which case they show that he drew on, rather than composed, quite diverse statements, one offering a 'low' Christology, the other a 'high' Christology."[59] As will be seen, by negating the authenticity of certain books recognized by orthodoxy as genuinely Pauline since the early church, Sanders' view of Paul's Christology is problematic.

Deeply affected by historical criticism, Sanders denies the apostolic origin of the canonical gospels, asserting, "We do not know who wrote the gospels. . . . These men—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—really lived, but we do not know that they wrote gospels."[60] Sanders strongly differentiates between the Jesus of history and the so-called Christ of faith. He argues that the Gospels are limited in their information about Jesus as a historical Jesus: "Nothing survives that was written by Jesus himself. . . . The main sources for our knowledge of Jesus himself, the gospels in the NT, are, from the viewpoint of the historian, tainted by the fact that they were written by people who intended to glorify their hero,"[61] and "[T]he gospels report Jesus' sayings and actions in a language that was not his own (he taught in Aramaic, the gospels are in Greek). . . . Even if we knew that we have his own words, we would still have to fear that he was quoted out of context."[62] Again, he argues that the authors of the NT "may have revised their accounts to support their theology. The historian must also suspect that the

ethical teaching that has so impressed the world has been enhanced by homiletical use and editorial improvements between the time of Jesus and the publication of the gospels."[63]

He also strongly advocates form and redaction-critical principles, stating, "The earliest Christians did not write a narrative of Jesus' life, but rather made use of, and thus preserved, individual units—short passages about his words and deeds. This means that we can never be sure of the immediate context of Jesus' sayings and actions," and "Some material [in the Gospels] has been revised and some created by early Christians."[64]

Sanders denies orthodox teaching of the deity of Jesus, arguing, "While it is conceivable that, in the one verse in the synoptic gospels that says that Jesus' miracles provoked the acclamation 'Son of God,' the phrase means 'more than human', I doubt that this was Matthew's meaning. . . . This title [Son of God]. . . would not make Jesus absolutely unique."[65] He adds, "Jesus' miracles as such proved nothing to most Galileans beyond the fact that he was on intimate terms with God. . . . Probably most Galileans heard of a few miracles—exorcisms and other healings—and regarded Jesus as a holy man, on intimate terms with God."[66]

Sanders also denies the virgin birth when he argues about Romans 8:14-17 in discussing the term "Son of God," noting, "This is another passage that shows the definition of sonship as adoption. . . and he [Jesus] had been declared Son, not literally sired by God. . . ."[67]

Sanders' Approach to the NPP. Strongly influenced by George Foot Moore, Sanders cited Moore's 1921 article, "Christian Writers on Judaism,"[68] and stressed that it "should be required reading for any Christian scholar who writes about Judaism."[69] Moore's central focus was that Paul's understanding of Judaism was essentially wrong. Paul's focus on individual rather than national salvation and his neglect of the Jewish understanding of human repentance and forgiveness reveal that Paul missed entirely the significance of the law in Judaism. Moore argued, "The prejudice of many writers on Judaism against the very idea of good works and their reward, and of merit acquired with God through them, is a Protestant inheritance from Luther's controversy with Catholic doctrine, and further back from Paul's contention that there is no salvation in Judaism."[70] In other words, not only Luther but also Paul missed the true character of Judaism as a religion of grace. Moore also asserted that this

may be traced back to the NT writings that were more interested in polemics or apologetics of proving Jesus as Messiah. This factor caused an inaccurate reflection of Judaism in the NT era that has been carried down through the centuries.[71] Where Moore only partially succeeded in his contentions, Sanders followed through with such thinking in greater detail.

Reflecting Baur's historicalcritical concept of *Hauptbriefe*,[72] Sanders is selective in his evidence, excluding from consideration Paul's pattern of religion in 2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral Epistles, as well as dismissing the historical reliability of Acts' treatment of Paul.[73] Sanders argued that Christians set about changing Paul to coincide with what became mainstream Christianity by adding new letters to the Pauline collection to prove Jesus' deity and by portraying him as always in agreement with Peter.[74] Sanders also revealed a prior motive among his six "chief aims": "to destroy the view of Rabbinic Judaism which is still prevalent in much, perhaps most, New Testament scholarship" and "to establish a different view of rabbinic Judaism."[75] Although he denies a polemical bias in dealing with antiSemitism,[76] he less than subtly reveals his bent on improving Judaism and Christian relations coupled with holocaustic hermeneutical preunderstanding so prevalent in the NPP and refuting notions that Judaism in Paul's day was a religion of "legalistic works-righteousness."[77]

Important also, Sanders develops his radical thesis apart from any concepts of the inspiration of Paul's writings, orthodox or otherwise. Sanders accuses Paul of contradictory or conflicting thinking in his writings. For example, in Romans 1–2, he argues, "There are internal inconsistencies with this section, not all the material actually lends itself to the desired conclusion, and there are substantial ways in which parts of it conflict with the positions of Paul elsewhere adopted. . . . [T]he treatment of the law in chapter 2 [Romans] cannot be harmonized with any of the diverse things which Paul says about the law elsewhere."[78]

Apparently for Sanders, Paul's concept of the law is based on reflex thinking rather than careful accuracy regarding Judaism. Sanders classic positional statement accuses Paul not only of reflex but also dogmatic thinking:

> Paul's thought did not run from plight to solution, but rather from solution to plight. . . . It appears that the conclusion that all the world—both Jew and Greek—equally stands in need of a savior *springs from* the prior conviction that God had provided such a saviour. If he did so, it follows that

> such a saviour *must* have been needed, and then only consequently that all other possible ways of salvation are wrong. The point is made explicit in Gal. 2:1: if righteousness could come through the law, Christ died in vain. The reasoning apparently is that Christ did not die in vain; he died and lived again "that he might be Lord of the dead and living" (Rom. 14:9). . . . If his death was *necessary* for salvation, it follows that salvation cannot come in any other way. . . . There is no reason to think that Paul felt the need of a universal saviour prior to his conviction that Jesus was such.[79]

Sanders believes Paul's thinking stems from his dogmatically held conviction that "[i]t is the Gentile question and the exclusivism of Paul's soteriology which dethrones the law, not a misunderstanding of it or a view predetermined by its background," not a pre-Christian dissatisfaction with the law or a post-Christian accusation that Judaism is legalistic.[80] Sanders deprecates Paul's reasoning by concluding, "In short, *this is what Paul finds wrong in Judaism: it is not Christianity*."[81]

Another of Sanders' distinctive contributions is the idea that the long-held conviction (as also expressed in the writings of the NT) that Palestinian Judaism was legalistic is entirely wrong. He contends that such a position is not supported by Jewish literature of the Second-Temple Period. Instead he speaks of the Jewish position in Paul's day as "covenantal nomism." He describes covenantal nomism as "the view that one's place in God's plan is established on the basis of the covenant and that covenant requires as the proper response of man his obedience to its commandments, while providing means of atonement for transgression."[82] For Sanders, Judaism affirmed entrance into the covenant through God's grace. However, "The intention and effort to be obedient constitute the *condition for remaining in the covenant*, but they do not *earn* it."[83] Sanders further remarks that in rabbinic literature "*obedience maintains one's position in the covenant, but it does not earn God's grace as such*"[84] and that a "major shift" occurs between Judaism and Paul regarding righteousness. In Judaism, righteousness implies one's maintaining his status among the elect; in Paul, righteousness is a term implying transfer into the body of the elect.[85]

Sanders further delineates that Paul did not reject the law because no one could obey it perfectly or because devotion to the law resulted in legalism. Instead, Paul rejected the law because he believed that salvation was only through Christ, not that the law had any inherent defects.[86]

Taking and applying his thesis to the Reformation, Sanders argues, “Martin Luther, whose influence on subsequent interpreters has been enormous, made Paul’s statements central to his own quite different theology”;[87] “Luther, plagued by guilt, read Paul’s passages on ‘righteousness by faith’ as meaning that God reckoned a Christian to be righteous even though he or she was a sinner”;[88] and further,

> Luther’s emphasis on fictional, imputed righteousness, though it has often been shown to be an incorrect interpretation of Paul, has been influential because it corresponds to the sense of sinfulness which many people feel, and which is part and parcel of Western concepts of personhood, with their emphasis on individualism and introspection. Luther sought and found relief from guilt. But Luther’s problems were not Paul’s, and we misunderstand him if we see him through Luther’s eyes.[89]

He argues that Paul reveals in Philippians 3:6-9 that “The truth finally comes out: there is such a thing as righteousness by the law. Further, it is not wicked [contra Luther and the Reformation heritage]. In and of itself it is ‘gain’ (Phil 3:9). It becomes wrong only because God has revealed another one.”[90] Sanders relates, “Paul fully espoused and observed a ‘work-ethic’, as long as the goal was the right one. His opposition to ‘works of the law’ was not motivated by dislike of effort,” and again, “He [Paul] did not, however, regard effort in doing good as being in any way opposed to membership in the body of Christ.”[91] Sanders argues that while Paul did not require Christians to keep the cultic aspects of the law (such as circumcision, the Sabbath, and dietary laws) that created social distinctions between Jews and Gentiles,[92] he did, however, want Gentiles to keep what Sanders terms “his [Paul’s] own reduction”[93] of the law. He summarizes Paul’s view of law for Christians in the following manner:

> (1) Paul held the normal expectation that membership in the “in group” involved correct behavior. One of the ways in which he stated that expectation was that Christians should fulfill “the law” or keep “the commandments.” (2) In passages in which he requires the fulfillment of the law, he offers no theoretical distinction between the law which governs Christians and the law of Moses; put another way, he does not distinguish between the law to which those in Christ die and the law which they fulfill. (3) In concrete application, however, the behavior required of Christians differs from the law of Moses in two ways: (a) Not all of Paul’s admonitions have a counterpart in Scripture; (b) Paul deliberately and

> explicitly excluded from "the law," or held to be optional, three of its requirements: circumcision, days and seasons, and dietary restrictions.[94]

Sanders asserts, however, that Paul was inconsistent and non-systematic with his viewpoints of Christians and the law: "We cannot determine to what degree he was conscious of his own reduction of the law. . . . [H]e offered no rationale for his de facto limitations, but insisted that those in the Spirit keep what the law requires (Rom. 8:4)."[95]

Efficacious Nature of Law in Soteriology. The implications of Sanders' hypothesis are stunning for orthodox soteriology. Christianity's, especially Paul's, acceptance of Jesus is based on presumptive bias and negativity toward Judaism, which logic is entirely dogmatic and capricious on Paul's part. Jesus as the means of salvation reflects Christianity's prejudice rather than being grounded in Scripture as it competed with Judaism for adherents. Paul's lack of systematic presentation of the believer's relationship to law opens the door to seeing Paul as favorable to Christians "in covenant" as required to keep law to sustain that covenant relationship. The practical implication if Sanders' logic is taken to its inevitable conclusion is that Judaism has equal viability with Christianity as a means of salvation, especially since it is grounded in a religion that always viewed salvation by grace but maintenance of that salvation in covenant by works. Any attempt to integrate such thinking can only bring works in through the back door as Luther had warned. Though Sanders' view of Judaism has been accepted to at least some degree, his solutions in terms of Paul's theology have not been so widely accepted.

James D. G. Dunn

Educational Background. James D. G. Dunn (b. 1939) is Emeritus Lightfoot Professor of Divinity at the University of Durham, England. He holds M.A. and B.D. degrees from the University of Glasgow and a Ph.D. and B.D. from Cambridge. Dunn is another one of the three most notable proponents of the NPP. Though Sanders' work was the catalyst for the NPP, Dunn's efforts have popularized and defended this "new" approach.

Dunn argues that Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* deserves the accolade of "breaking the mold" in Pauline studies and the designation "what amounts to a new perspective on Paul."[96] In his magnum opus on understanding the NPP, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (1998), Dunn argues, "A fresh

attempt at a full restatement of Paul's theology is made all the more necessary in the light of what is now usually referred to as 'the new perspective on Paul.'"[97]

Heavy Influence by HistoricalCritical Ideology. Dunn operates his assertions apart from any consideration of inspiration, whether orthodox or aberrant, for NT canonical books. Dunn, like Sanders, has been heavily influenced by historicalcritical theories. Dunn asserts that the canonical Gospels cannot be a secure starting point to formulate Jesus' theology: "[T]hough a theology of Jesus would be more fascinating [than one of Paul], we have nothing firsthand from Jesus which can provide a secure starting point. The theologies of the Evangelists are almost equally problematic, since their focus on the ministry and teaching of Jesus makes their own theologies that much more allusive."[98] Assuming the Two-Source hypothesis, Dunn notes, "[I]n two at least [i.e., Matthew and Luke] of the four cases [i.e., the canonical Gospels] we have only one document to use [i.e., Mark]; we can speak with some confidence of the theology of that document."[99] For Dunn, what Jesus actually taught and preached is illusive since it was mediated through "Evangelists" (i.e., not the traditional authors of the Gospels but unknown evangelists).

Dunn also denies the orthodox view of the deity of Jesus Christ, insisting that no theology of Christ's preexistence is present in Paul: "Paul does have a conception of the preexistent Christ."[100]

An examination of his theology of Paul reveals that, like Sanders, Dunn also has been influenced by Baur's concept of *Hauptbriefe*. He attributes Pauline authorship to eight epistles: Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1–2 Thessalonians, and Philemon.[101] The others—Colossians, Ephesians, 1–2 Timothy, and Titus—were written by Timothy or other pseudepigraphers. Dunn offers no evidence to support his assumptions about authorship.

Furthermore, Dunn's rejection of Ephesians as post-Pauline fits conveniently within his assertions. For instance, he readily admits that Ephesians 2:8-9 supports the traditional Lutheran approach of "works of the law": "The traditional understanding of the phrase within Protestant theology is that it denoted good works done as an attempt to gain or achieve righteousness. . . . The post-Pauline Eph. 2:8-9 looks very much like a confirmation of this. . . (cf. 2 Tim. 1:9 and Tit. 3:5)."[102] His acceptance of the Lutheran position appears likely if he had not accepted an abbreviated approach to the NT canon.

Dunn's Approach to the NPP. In terms of the NPP, Dunn also reveals a second assumption imposed on NT exegesis: Martin Luther read his own situation into Paul's writings, resulting in the errors of justification by faith and antiSemitism. He praises Sanders in reflecting this assumption:

> Sanders has been successful in getting across a point which others had made before him. . . that Protestant exegesis has for too long allowed a typically Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith to impose a hermeneutical grid on the text of Romans. . . . The emphasis is important, that God is the one who justifies the ungodly (4:5), and understandably this insight has become an integrating focus in Lutheran theology with tremendous power. The problem, however, lay in what the emphasis was set in opposition to. The antithesis to "justification by faith"—what Paul speaks of as "justification by works"—was understood in terms of a system whereby salvation is earned through the merit of good works. This was based partly on the comparison suggested in the same passage (4:4-5), and partly on the Reformation of the rejection of a system where indulgences could be bought and merits accumulated. . . . The hermeneutical mistake was made of reading this antithesis back into the NT period, of assuming that Paul was protesting against in Pharisaical Judaism precisely what Luther protested against in the pre-Reformation church—the mistake. . . of assuming that the Judaism of Paul's day was coldly legalistic, teaching a system of earning salvation by the merit of good works, with little or no room for the free forgiveness and grace of God."[103]

As he continues, Dunn adds, "It was this depiction of firstcentury Judaism which Sanders showed up for what it was—a gross caricature, which, regrettably, has played its part in feeding an evil strain of Christian antiSemitism.[104]

For Dunn and many others who espouse the "New" Perspective on Paul, the "Old" perspective of Martin Luther and his Reformation heirs who continued teaching justification by personal faith and its alleged gross mischaracterization of Second-Temple Judaism are directly responsible for a virulent Gentile Christian antiSemitism that led to (1) Nazi racism to promote its philosophy of the master race and to embark on the genocide of the Jews in the 1940s, (2) South African apartheid, and (3) even some forms of contemporary Zionism.[105] In other words, Luther read his own situation into his theology, the obvious implication being Luther's ruinous theological mistake has grossly misled

Protestant theology for the last five-hundred years, culminating in the tragedy of the Holocaust in which millions of Jews lost their lives.

In this line of thought, Dunn also echoes the thinking of Krister Stendahl, arguing, "[A]s Krister Stendahl pointed out, this portrayal has been too much influenced by Luther's own experience of grace, set as it was against the background of the medieval Church's doctrine of merits and salvation as something which could be paid for in installments."[106] Stendahl, in addressing the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in 1961, asserted that modern experience has caused a misunderstanding of Paul. He said, "[T]he Pauline awareness of sin has been interpreted in the light of Luther's struggle with his conscience. But it is exactly at that point that we can discern the most drastic difference between Luther and Paul, between the 16th and the 1st century, and, perhaps, between Eastern and Western Christianity."[107] Stendahl continues, "In Phil. 3 Paul speaks most fully about his life before his Christian calling, and there is no indication that he had had any difficulty in fulfilling the Law. On the contrary, he can say that he had been 'flawless' as to the righteousness required by the Law (v. 6). His encounter with Jesus Christ. . . has not changed this fact."[108] Dunn laments that Stendahl's point has "been too little 'heard' within the community of NT scholarship. For Dunn, the hermeneutical grid of Luther's preunderstanding has had an unfortunate impact on Protestant theology.

Dunn builds upon the work of Sanders, but he also disagrees with him on some points. Dunn considers Sanders' assertion that Paul rejected Judaism simply because it was not Christianity as ill-advised, noting,

> He [Sanders] quickly—too quickly in my view—concluded that Paul's religion could be understood only as a basically different system from that of his fellow Jews. . . . The Lutheran Paul has been replaced by an idiosyncratic Paul who in arbitrary and irrational manner turns his face against the glory and greatness of Judaism's covenant theology and abandons Judaism simply because it was not Christianity. . . .[109]

Though Dunn endorses Sanders' definition of Judaism as "covenantal nomism,"[110] his own explanation goes against both the Lutheran/Protestant characterization of Judaism as legalistic and Sanders' view of Paul as arbitrary. In referring to his Manson Memorial lecture in 1982, Dunn argues for the crux of his thesis: "My conclusion. . . is that what Paul was objecting to was not the law

per se, but the law seen as a proof and badge of Israel's election; that in denouncing 'works of the law' Paul was not disparaging 'good works' as such, but observances of the law valued as attesting membership of the people of God—particularly circumcision, food laws and Sabbath."[111] Thus, for Dunn, the term "works of the law" does not refer to good works in general or to Jewish legalism but should be limited to Jewish national-identity boundaries that excluded Gentiles from salvation, i.e., circumcision, Sabbath, and dietary restrictions, which Dunn terms the "social function of the Law".[112] His position is that Paul's opposition to "works of the law" stemmed from the fact that these social functions of the law "confined the grace of God to members of that nation."[113] For Dunn, "Sanders did not follow through this insight [i.e., covenantal nomism—getting in by grace; living within by works] far enough or with sufficient consistency."[114] For Jews, these social functions became the "test cases of covenant loyalty," marking them out as the people of God.[115]

Dunn believes that the social function of the law is consistent with the idea of "covenantal nomism." He asserts that "Galatians is Paul's first sustained attempt to deal with the issue of convenantal nomism" and "covenantal nomism is the issue underlying Paul's argument in Galatians."[116] The *crux interpretum* for Dunn's understanding of "works of the law" lies in Galatians 2:16 and 3:10-16. Dunn regards Galatians 2:16 as "the most obvious place to start" for a NPP understanding.[117] Commenting on Reformation understanding of the expression, he laments, "Unfortunately exegesis of Paul's teaching here has become caught up in and obscured by the Reformation's characteristic polemic against merit, against the idea that anyone could earn salvation [by good works]. . . . The mistake was to assume too readily that this was what Paul too was attacking."[118] For Dunn, the Reformation idea of "works of the law" as legalism centering in Luther's assertion that Paul was speaking of the whole law, not just the ceremonial parts, was mistaken.[119] Galatians 2:16 (cf. also Gal 3:10-14;[120] Rom 3:20-2) states, "Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. For Dunn, the term "works of the law" in these places "most obviously" refers to "circumcision and food laws." He comments,

> That is what was at issue—whether to be justified by faith in Jesus Christ requires also observance of these 'works', whether. . . it is possible to conceive of membership of the covenant people which is not characterized

> by precisely these works. The Jerusalem Christians having conceded the argument about circumcision, so far as 'getting in' was concerned, drew the line at food laws: a membership of the chosen people which did not include faithfulness to food laws and purity rituals of the meal table was for them too much a contradiction in terms. And Peter, Barnabas and other Jewish Christians in Antioch evidently agreed, however reluctantly or not—the threat to Jewish identity was too great to be ignored.[121]

Dunn takes the expression **ean mē** in 2:16 to mean "except":

> According to the most obvious grammatical sense, in this clause faith in Jesus is described as a qualification to justification by works of law, not (yet) as an antithetical alternative. Seen from the perspective of Jewish Christianity at that time, the most obvious meaning is that the only restriction on justification from works of law is faith in Jesus as Messiah. The only restriction, that is, to covenantal nomism is faith in Christ. But, in this first clause, covenantal nomism itself is not challenged or called into question—restricted, qualified, more precisely defined in relation to Jesus as Messiah, but not denied. Given that in Jewish selfunderstanding covenantal nomism is not antithetical to faith, then at this point the only change which the new movement calls for is that the traditional Jewish faith be more precisely defined as faith in Jesus Messiah.[122]

Dunn's approach does not center justification in an individualistic, soteriological doctrine as understood by the Reformation, but turns it into primarily a sociological doctrine to include Gentiles among the people of God. Covenantal nomism—getting in by faith, staying in by obedience—for Gentile believers teaches that justification by works only has the primary restriction that those works are to be centered in Jesus Christ. Though Gentiles get in by God's gracious actions through Messiah, works keep them within the community of God under the rubric of covenantal nomism.

Dunn's interpretation opens the door decisively to justification by works, for works are "restricted, qualified, more precisely in relation to Jesus as Messiah, but not denied."[123] Paul's negative words in Galatians are not to works in general but to a "particular ritual response"—circumcision, dietary laws, Sabbath—but not to good works in general.[124] Dunn relates again, "For Paul justification by faith had to do as much, if not more with the breaking down of the racial and national exclusiveness of Israel's covenant claims, than with his own personal

experience of grace as persecutor of the Church of God."[125] Regarding Romans 3:27-30 where Paul's theme of boasting crescendos, he asserts, "justification by faith is a corollary of Jewish monotheism, directed primarily against the exclusiveness of Israel's own claim upon that one God."[126] In Romans 10:3, he again asserts, "Once again the belief against which justification by faith is directed is the belief that Israel's privilege and prerogative as God's elect people had to be established and defended against Gentile encroachment."[127]

Dunn has come under severe criticism for his position in his ground-breaking "New Perspective on Paul" article as well as his other works, and has attempted to qualify his assertions. For example, Bruce pointed out that Dunn's interpretation of **ean mē** as "except" in the construction of Galatians 2:16 runs "counter to the Greek idiom" thereby rendering a crucial point of Dunn's *crux interpretum* as a grammatical solecism.[128] Yet, Dunn maintains this translation in order to sustain his thesis. Schreiner has pointed out that Dunn's view of "works of the law" fails to observe correctly with the contextual argument that Paul builds in Romans 2:17-29 in relationship to Romans 3:20 whereby Paul in 2:17-29 faults them not for circumcision but for disobedience to the law in general.[129] Silva's criticism of Dunn faults Dunn's "point of departure" which is Sanders' basic position, noting that Sanders operates (1) "with an understanding of 'legalism' that is at times fuzzy and ambiguous, at other times quite misleading," and (2) "with an inadequate understanding of historical Christian theology."[130]

Dunn's comments reveal the tenuous exegetical nature of his assertions regarding the phrase "works of the law" in Romans 3 as well as Galatians 2, for he assumes what he is trying to prove and reduces Christ's death to the narrow view of removing boundary markers of the law rather than seeing it as removing the curse of the whole law (cf. Gal 2:20). As a result, Cranfield has taken Dunn to task for his exegesis of the term "works of the law" that Cranfield labels as "unconscionably tortuous."[131] Dunn has responded to Cranfield's criticism, claiming that "Cranfield appears to ignore, more or less completely, the social context and ramifications of such a view of the law and its requirements."[132] He also remains adamant that "Paul's gospel of justification by faith is clearly aimed at Jewish assumption of privileged status before God."[133]

Efficacious Nature of Law in Soteriology. In sum, Dunn, like Sanders, opens the door for destroying the doctrine of *sola fide* ("faith alone"). Preunderstandings stemming from covenantal nomism and its boundary markers control Dunn's exegetical decisions; indeed, Dunn is guilty of the same charge

leveled against Luther: subjectively controlled exegesis. Moreover, nothing inhibits Dunn's conclusions degenerating into works-righteousness except for personal denials that it does not. Dunn's assertion that "what I say is not and should not be conceived as an attack on the Protestant doctrine of justification" stands in direct opposition to his assertion that

> Luther's conversion experience and the insight which it gave him also began a tradition in biblical interpretation, which resulted for many in the loss or neglect of other crucial biblical insights related to the same theme of divine justice. And particularly in the case of Paul, Luther's discovery of "justification by faith" and the theological impetus which it gave especially to Lutheran theology has involved a significant misunderstanding of Paul, not least to "justification by faith" itself.[134]

One wonders if Dunn's approach to the NPP resembles a purpose of dialectical thinking: an intentional design to conceal his actual theological position from opponents, but to reveal his true position to those who ardently support him.

N. T. Wright

Educational Background. The third main proponent of the NPP is Nicholas Thomas Wright (b. 1948) who, until recently, was Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey. He is now Bishop of Durham, one of the highest ranking bishops in the Church of England. He formerly was Dean of Lichfield Cathedral in England. He received his bachelors, masters, and doctorate degrees from Oxford University. He taught for twenty years at Cambridge, McGill, and Oxford Universities. Of the three main proponents of the NPP, Wright is the only one who considers himself an evangelical, as he has commented, "I see myself as a deeply orthodox theologian."[135] Because Wright calls himself an evangelical, his writings have had a powerful impact on the spreading of the NPP among evangelicals.

Heavy Influence by HistoricalCritical Ideologies. Wright, however, displays a middle-of-the-road approach to biblical research, weaving a conflicting tapestry of radical and moderate ideological concepts. He describes his studies at the University: "There was all this liberal stuff on the one hand, and then the noble evangelicals saving the day. Of course, I realized before my first year at Wycliffe Hall was over that you couldn't divide scholars like

that."[136] He proceeds to speak of his growing respect for liberals such as Rudolf Bultmann and Joachim Jeremias.[137] He now finds his greatest difficulties in relating to conservative Christians, not liberals.[138]

Certain factors indicate, however, that Wright would be definitely in the left-leaning areas of British evangelicalism. Accommodating his research to Baur's concept of *Hauptbriefe*, Wright confines evidence for his work, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, to selected epistles of Paul: "Most of what I say in this book [*What Saint Paul Really Said*] focuses on material in the undisputed letters, particularly Romans, the two Corinthians letters, Galatians and Philippians. In addition, I regard Colossians as certainly by Paul, and Ephesians as far more likely to be by him than by an imitator."[139] Such a capricious approach not only impugns the orthodox NT canon, but also slants evidence for his position by providing opportunity to ignore passages that do not support his position (e.g., Eph 2:8-10; Titus 1:9).

Wright apparently takes a noncommittal position on Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles: "It would be just as arbitrary to exclude them from a 'Pauline' section as to include them, since even if, as most scholars have supposed, they are not by Paul himself, they are clearly by someone, or more than one person, who thought they should belong closely with his work and thought."[140] He also questions Paul's authorship of the Pastoral Epistles because of no mention of resurrection in them.[141]

Wright participates in what he has labeled the "Third Quest for the Historical Jesus." He writes, "I still believe that the future of serious Jesus research lies with what I have called the 'Third Quest,' within a broadly post-Schweitzerian frame."[142] Based on philosophical skepticism, the historicalcritical discussions of the last two centuries have distinguished between the Jesus of the Gospels—the Christ of Faith—and the Jesus of history—the Jesus as He existed in the time-space continuum.[143]

As will be seen in more detail in later chapters, the discussions have included three quests for the "historical" Jesus. The First Quest covered the period from Reimarus (1694-1768) to Schweitzer (1906–*Von Reimarus zu Wrede*). It was an extremely skeptical quest that denied the trustworthiness of the Gospels and the rest of the NT. The Second Quest reacted to Bultmannian skepticism and was started by Ernst Käsemann in 1953. It reopened the question of the "historical Jesus" and the "Christ of faith." Some consider it less skeptical than the First

Quest, but it was only slightly less skeptical. Influenced by Wrede's radical perspective, its skepticism resulted in the Jesus Seminar. The Third Quest has run from the 1980s and is characterized by attempts to place Jesus within the Jewish context of the NT era. It has roots in Jewish studies of older scholars like Strack-Billerbeck and Joachim Jeremias, and is now impacting the entire NT, bringing the NPP to the forefront of NT discussion.[144] Although it is the least skeptical of the quests, it remains heavily skeptical merely by continuing the "search" for the "historical Jesus." The question is whether the Third Quest should be distinguished from the Second. Wright distinguishes the two because of his personal demarcations that are now accepted by others.[145] He contends that the New Quest [i.e., the Second Quest] is old and the Third Quest is new due to its emphasis on Jewish studies, although it could be a matter of emphasis rather than a distinction.[146] Because of its roots in historical criticism and skepticism, the Third Quest is not easily separated from the previous ones.

Wright's assertions about the importance of Jewish sources raises the question of why, for an accurate portrayal of Jesus, evangelicals should not give primary attention to the Gospels whose writers had supernatural guidance in presenting Jesus as He truly was in history. All secondary sources—problematic at best, false at worst—must take a back seat to NT revelation. About twenty years ago Alexander issued cautions regarding rabbinic sources:

> An expert Rabbinist could not but be impressed by the New Testament scholar's new-found enthusiasm for things Rabbinic. However, he would be less impressed to discover that this enthusiasm is not always matched by knowledge, or tempered with caution. Much recent New Testament work is seemingly ignorant of the problems, debates and achievements in the current study of early Judaism, and its methodology in the use of early Jewish source has advanced little beyond pioneering works such as Davies' *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (1948), Duabe's *New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (1956), and Gerhardsson's *Memory and Manuscript* (1961).[147]

Alexander identifies some of the weaknesses in evidence in many NT scholars' handling of Rabbinic literature.[148] He catalogues the following as important warnings in dealing with such secondary sources: (1) the state of the texts—many rabbinic sources still do not have critical editions; (2) the understanding of the texts—in their understanding of the text many rely on mediaeval scholars who imposed their own views on the early sources; (3) the dating of the texts—dates of rabbinic sources are problematic at best, relying on

questionable dates reached on subjective grounds; (4) accuracy of the attributions—critics who question the credibility of the Gospels fall into the trap of unquestioning acceptance of a logion attributed to someone in a text edited long after (500 years or more) that person's death; (5) anachronism—"Many New Testament scholars are still guilty of massive and unsustained anachronism in their use of Rabbinic sources. *Time and again we find them quoting texts from the 3rd, 4th or 5th centuries AD, or even later, to illustrate Jewish teaching in the 1st century*."[149] However, any religion changes and develops through time. Academic caution demands that the Judaism of Hillel in the first century A.D. was probably not identical with the Judaism of Hoshaiah in the 3rd.[150] Two events could have profoundly influenced the development of early Judaism and diverted it into new channels: the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and the defeat of Bar Kochba in A.D. 135; (6) Parallelomania—"New Testament scholars are still afflicted by the scourge of parallelomania,"[151] meaning that they crudely juxtapose elements of early Judaism and Christianity, detect similarities, and on the basis of these supposed similarities conclude that Christianity has "borrowed from," or "been influenced by" Judaism.[152] For evangelicals, the questionable application of rabbinic sources along with the skepticism of any Third Quest must cause extreme caution.

Alexander's cautions are still pertinent. He more recently warned, "It is. . . extremely difficult, using strictly historical criteria, to lay down a norm for Judaism in the first century. . . . Rabbinic Judaism cannot easily be equated with normative Judaism before the third century C.E., and even then only in Palestine."[153]

Adding more questions about Wright's approach are the following samples of his ideological criteria: (1) he affirms use of tradition criticism in the Gospels (i.e., "criterion of dissimilarity") but with "great caution," placing the burden of proof for authenticity upon the Gospels, his disclaimers notwithstanding.[154] (2) He states, "The critics of form-criticism have not, to my knowledge, offered a serious alternative model to how the early church told its stories."[155] (3) He refers to the Gospel stories in terms of his own modified version of "myth": "The gospels, then, are myth in the sense that they are foundational for the early Christian worldview. They contain 'mythological' language which we can learn, as historians, to decode in the light of 'other apocalyptic' writings of the time."[156] For Wright, "Jesus and his contemporaries" did not take apocalyptic language "literally, as referring to the actual end of the time-space universe."[157] (4) He claims that "'Jesus-stories' were invented or possibly adapted for the needs of

the community."[158] (5) Wright is very vague regarding authorship of the Gospels. He explains, "I make no assumptions about the actual identity of the evangelists, and use the traditional names for simplicity only."[159]

Wright's Approach to the NPP. Wright takes his typical moderating stance in accepting the NPP. About Sanders he writes, "[U]ntil a major refutation of his central thesis is produced, honesty compels one to do business with him. I do not myself believe such a refutation can or will be offered; serious modifications are required, but I regard his basic point as established."[160] He contends, "Sanders' main thesis. . . is that the picture of Judaism assumed in most Protestant readings of Paul is historically inaccurate and theologically misleading."[161] He "strongly disagrees with Sanders on some points, and wants to go a good deal further than him on some others."[162] Wright also criticizes Sanders for "a somewhat unsystematic treatment of different Pauline themes. Nor has he [Sanders] offered very much verse-by-verse exegesis."[163] He concedes, "Sanders' proposal had its own agenda at the level of the study of religions. . . and indeed was in some ways a plea to see Christianity from a modernist comparative-religion perspective rather than a classical theological one."[164] Such admissions from Wright are telling because they reveal that the NPP is as guilty of *a priori* thinking as the Protestant-Lutheran traditions so heartily condemned by the NPP, and perhaps more so. Wright also admits that no fundamental agreement exists in Pauline studies: "The current situation in Pauline studies is pleasantly confused."[165]

He agrees with Sanders and Dunn that the Judaism of Paul's day was not a religion of self-righteousness in which salvation depended on human works: "Christians should regard Jews with a good deal more respect than in the past, and in particular should not saddle them with a form of religion of which they are innocent."[166] For Wright, "the traditional" picture of Judaism as self-righteous legalism promoted by Luther and the Reformation ("though by no means exclusively") is "false": "My case here is simply stated: the tradition of Pauline interpretation has manufactured a false Judaism for him to oppose."[167] For Wright, as with Sanders and Dunn, Luther and others have wrongly imposed their own historical situation of opposition to Roman Catholic legalism on Paul's writings.[168] The idea that Paul was "proto-Pelagian. . . who thought he could pull himself up by his moral bootstraps" is "radically anachronistic. . . and culturally out of line (it is not the Jewish way of thinking). . . . [W]e have misjudged early Judaism, especially Pharisaism, if we thought of it as an early version of Pelagianism."[169]

Wright also contends that Paul should be absolved of any charge of antiSemitism (being a self-hating Jew). Paul was not criticizing Jews for using the law, as falsely charged by Lutheranism. Instead, Paul directed his criticism toward Jewish *nationalism*:

> If we ask how it is that Israel has missed her vocation, Paul's answer is that she *is guilty not of "legalism" or "work-righteousness" but of what I call "national righteousness", the belief that fleshly Jewish descent guarantees membership of God's true covenant people*. This charge is worked out in Romans 2:17-29; 9:30–10:13, Galatians, and Philippians 3. . . Within this national "righteousness", the law functions not as a legalist's ladder but as a character of national privilege, so that, for the Jew, possession of the law is three parts of salvation: and circumcision functions not as a ritualist's outward show but as a badge of national privilege. Over against this abuse of Israel's undoubted privileged status, Paul establishes, in his theology and in his missionary work, the true children of Abraham, the worldwide community of faith.[170]

For Wright, Paul's real concern in his controversy with Jewish leaders centered in their treatment of Gentiles in terms of inclusion (nationalism) rather than in legalism. For Wright, "the tradition of Pauline interpretation has manufactured a false Paul by manufacturing a false Judaism for him to oppose."[171]

Wright also adds his own emphases to the NPP. One of these is Romans 2:17-29, calling it "a somewhat neglected passage."[172] He says that Paul was not criticizing Jews for legalism, but presents "a detailed and sensitive critique of Judaism *as its advocates present it*"[173] (cf. also Rom 3:27-29; 9:30–10:13; Gal 2–4; Phil 3:2-11). Paul's critique centers on (1) Jewish boasting about being the exclusive chosen people of God; (2) Jewish breaking of the law (or sin), not legalism; (3) Paul is positive about God's law itself, for he focuses his attack on the "abuse" of the law claiming national righteousness (not legalism); and (4) Paul's attack against Jewish trust in the law and circumcision as badges of national privilege rather than "'true circumcision' which keeps the law from the heart." In this section Paul outlines his theology of the church as Israel, the people of God.[174]

For Wright, the gospel is a message about the Lordship of Jesus Christ:

> It is not. . . a system of how people get saved. The announcement of the gospel results in people being saved. . . . But the 'gospel itself, strictly speaking, is the narrative proclamation of King Jesus. . . .'
>
> His [Paul's] announcement was that the crucified Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead; that he was thereby proved to be Israel's Messiah; that he was thereby installed as Lord of the world. Or, to put it yet more compactly: Jesus, the crucified and risen Messiah, is Lord.[175]

Wright also contradicts the Reformation doctrine of justification and *sole fide*. For Wright, an examination of Galatians indicates "[w]hat Paul means by justification. . . is not 'how you become a Christian', so much as 'how you can tell who is a member of the covenant family.'"[176] He argues, "Justification is thus the declaration of God, the just judge, that someone has had their sins forgiven and that they are a member of the covenant family, the family of Abraham. That is what the word means in Paul's writings. It doesn't describe how people get into God's forgiven family; it declares that they are in. . . ."[177] Wright argues again, "Despite a long tradition to the contrary, the problem Paul addresses in Galatians is not the question of how precisely someone becomes a Christian or attains to a relationship with God. . . . The problem he addresses is should his ex-pagan converts be circumcised or not?"[178]

To Wright, justification is corporate rather than individual; it is primarily eschatological rather than immediate. Yet he straddles the fence on the issue, for though justification from his perspective is primarily eschatological, he contradicts himself: "Justification in the present is based on God's past accomplishment in the Messiah, and anticipates the future verdict. The present justification has exactly the same pattern."[179] Wright refers to eschatological judgment in Romans 2:13: "Possession of Torah had become, in Jewish thought, a badge of privilege, a talisman, a sign that Israel was inalienably God's people. No says Paul. What counts is doing Torah. . . . Israel's ethnic privilege, backed up by possession of Torah, will be of no avail at the final judgment if Israel has not kept Torah."[180]

He is unclear whether the believer's standing before God depends on works or on Christ's sacrifice. Wright goes on,

> "Justification" in the first century was not about how someone might establish a relationship with God. It was about God's eschatological

> definition, both future and present, of who was, in fact, a member of his people. . . . It was not so much about "getting in", or indeed about "staying in", as about "how you could tell who was in". In standard Christian theological language, it wasn't so much about soteriology as about ecclesiology; not so much about salvation as about the church.[181]

For Wright, justification by faith is not Paul's gospel, though it is implied by that gospel. It does not represent Paul's answer to the question of how an individual can be saved or enjoy a right relationship with God:

> [I]f we come to Paul with these questions in mind—the questions of how human beings come into a living and saving relationship with the living and saving God—it is not justification that springs to his [Paul's] lips or pen. . . . The message about Jesus and his cross and resurrection—"the gospel". . . is announced to them; through this means, God works by his Spirit upon their hearts; as a result, they come to believe the message; they join the Christian community through baptism, and begin to share in its common life and its common way of life. That is how people come into relationship with God.[182]

For Wright, justification does not describe how people get in to God's family; it declares that they are in. He never clarifies when an individual comes into the family of God. His position is, therefore, quite nebulous, but he asks his readers to dismiss centuries of understanding from Augustine through Luther and accept it.

Adding to Wright's ambiguity regarding the role of works in justification is his interpretation of "works of the law" (evx e;rgwn no, mou, *ex ergōn nomou*; cf. also Rom 9:32) in Galatians 2:16; 3:10-14. Wright disagrees with Dunn on some minor points in Galatians 3:10-14: "[W]hile I disagree with Dunn's exegesis of this particular passage, I am in substantial agreement with his general thesis about 'works of law' in Paul, and indeed I think that my reading of this text supports this position better than his does. . . . The work of Sanders, and later Dunn, has served in some ways as confirmation of the general line I had taken."[183] Yet, Wright affirms that "works of the law" refer to "the badges of Jewish law observance" (cf. also Phil 3:2-11) and "table fellowship."[184] He, therefore, reflects Dunn's interpretation rather than substantially differing with him.[185] For Wright, Paul is not so much arguing against meritorious works, as he is arguing against racial exclusion: "Justification in Galatians, is the doctrine

which insists that all those who share faith in Christ belong at the same table, no matter what their racial differences, as together they wait for the final new creation."[186]

Wright also changes traditional understanding of the "righteousness of God." He rejects the traditional Protestant view of imputation of righteousness "as denoting that status which humans have, on the basis of faith, as a result of the gospel," or as Luther believed, "God's moral activity of punishing evil and rewarding virtue."[187] For Wright, the Protestant view describes more of a "legal fiction" of imputation.[188] It is not "something that "'counts before'" God" or "avails with God." Instead, he argues that the term refers to "God's faithfulness to his promises, to his covenant," having a qualitative idea rather than a status. It is righteousness as a moral quality (genitive of possession). On Paul's comments in Philippians 3:9 where Paul states, "and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith," he remarks,

> First. It is *membership* language. When Paul says he does not have a righteousness "of my own", based on Torah, the context of the previous verses must mean that he is speaking of a righteousness, a covenant status, which was his as a Jew by birth, marked with the covenant badge of circumcision, and claiming to be part of the inner circle of that people by being a zealous Pharisee. That which he is refusing in the first half of the verse 9 is not a moralistic or self-help righteousness, but the status of orthodox Jewish covenant membership.
>
> Second, the covenant status Paul now enjoys is the gift of God: it is 'a. . . righteousness from God.'[189]

He also rejects the traditional concept of imputation of the righteousness of God. Overturning an Augustinian and Reformation understanding of imputation,[190] Wright argues, "If we use the language of the law court, it makes no sense whatever to say that the judge imputes, imparts, bequeaths, conveys or otherwise transfers his righteousness to either the plaintiff or the defendant. Righteousness is not an object, a substance or a gas which can be passed across the courtroom."[191]

Efficacious Nature of Law in Soteriology. A logical result of Wright's (as

well as Sanders' and Dunn's) position is the opening wide of the contribution of meritorious works in salvation. Wright does not explicitly declare that a person's works are grounds for a righteous standing before God, but dismisses standard texts used by the Reformers and their Protestant heirs as support for their case against such a position. That ambiguity leads toward the Romanist/works position. At the very least, the barriers to the contribution of works in salvation have been removed—nothing prevents Wright (or his followers) from logically moving toward human effort as having a soteriological impact.

The Historical and Philosophical Motives of the NPP

How did the New Perspective on Paul develop? The discussion above has noted two main stimuli behind it: historicalcritical ideology based on philosophy and the New Hermeneutic with its subjective interpretation of the biblical text. The development stemmed from the same presuppositions that generated historicalcritical ideologies (such as source, form, redaction, and tradition criticism), unorthodox views of inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, aberrant views of Synoptic development, and the overall rejection of the historicity, integrity, and authority of the biblical texts.[192] Its historical, theological antecedents make the NPP far from neutral or a mere "rethinking" of the Reformation perspective. It was spurred by philosophies, generated from a preunderstanding replete with prejudicial thinking, not from an objective exegesis of the Pauline texts.

Important also is the fact that while admittedly many historicalcritical ideologists such as Baur and Bultmann maintained a nominal Lutheran perspective on Paul, historicalcritical approaches provided the avenue through which the NPP could develop. Especially as the inerrancy and authority of Scripture were undermined through historical criticism, the NPP could remake Paul's theology into something palatable to a "politically correct" explanation that predominates in much of theology today. Tracing the impact of these presuppositions on Pauline studies reveals that the NPP did not appear suddenly on the scene. Basic presuppositions and philosophical developments have facilitated its rise. Although the historical beginnings of any movement can be at times gradual, the beginnings of the NPP are traceable to several key movements and figures.

Jewish Opposition to the Gospel's Presentation of

Jesus

Throughout church history, Jewish theologians, with perhaps some exceptions, have expressed strong antipathy not only towards Jesus and the Gospel accounts of His life but also toward Paul, his theology, and his statements regarding such. Scripturally, this is not a surprise to astute Christian theologians, especially since Paul warned in 1 Corinthians 1:18–2:14 that God sovereignly planned that a crucified Messiah would be a stumbling block to the Jews ("we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness," 1 Cor 1:23; cf. Rom 9:30-33; 10:1-4). God's program for including Gentiles in salvation also included the judicial blinding of Israel (Rom 11:1-36).

Within about the last hundred years, however, a Jewish reclamation of Jesus has come, including a recasting of Jesus into an image acceptable to Jews.[193]The new image is in sharp contrast to how He is portrayed in the Gospels and is more palatable to non-believing Jewish sensibilities. Many Jews now declare that Jesus is/was a rabbi among rabbis, a part of Israel's literary heritage.[194] Hagner provides a major clue as to how a Jewish "reclamation" of Jesus was possible: "Building on the results of radical Protestant scholarship, Jewish writers argue that the Jesus of the Gospels is to a very large extent the product of the faith of the later church. The actual Jesus of history, on the other hand, is regarded as belonging with Judaism rather than Christianity."[195] In essence, modern Jews have used historicalcritical ideologies (source, form, redaction, and tradition criticism, History-of-Religions School, etc.) derived from radical Gentile Christian scholars that denigrated the historicity of the Gospels in order to remake Jesus into someone who was acceptable to them. They used these ideologies to drive an artificial wedge between the "Jesus of History" (how Jesus actually was in history) and the "Christ of faith" (how Jesus is portrayed in the canonical Gospels), thereby reinventing a Jesus who is unoffensive to them. The NT's "rock of offense" and "stumbling stone" for Jews (Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:8; cf. Isa 28:16) was removed by constructing a qualitatively different Jesus than the Gospel portrayals.

Jewish Opposition to Paul and His Presentation of Judaism

Until the modern period, Jews were mostly silent in their sharp disagreements with Paul. Only a few scattered and elusive references to Paul are possible. For

example, some Jews consider *Aboth* 3.12 as speaking of Paul when it notes someone "who profanes the Hallowed things and despises the set feasts and puts his fellow to shame publicly and makes void the Covenant of Abraham our Father [negating circumcision] and discloses meanings in the Law which are not according to the *Halakah*."[196] Klausner considers *Shabbath* 30b a reference to Paul when it speaks of a pupil of Gamaliel as having exhibited "impudence in matters of learning."[197]

Two main reasons may account for this: First, Jews ignored Paul's theology as patently wrong and dangerous. Since Christian missionary endeavors found great success with Paul's thoughts, Jews ignored Paul so as not to support his ideas unintentionally, ideas that threatened Jewish interests. Second, Jewish and Christian hostilities contributed to silence. Hagner notes,

> Explaining the silence was the precarious situation of the Jews under a Christian tyranny that existed from the fourth century to the nineteenth-century Emancipation—the ultimate, but slowly realized, fruit of the Enlightenment. As long as this oppression continued, Jews were unable to speak publicly and objectively about Jesus, Paul or Christianity. Thus the history of the Jewish study of Paul is closely parallel to the history of the Jewish study of Jesus. With the new climate of freedom produced by the gradual acceptance of Jews into European society came the first scholarly assessments of Jesus and Paul from Jewish writers.[198]

The Enlightenment, "a prejudice against prejudice" movement that used philosophy to destroy the authority of the Bible, gave impetus and freedom to Jewish assaults on the Gospels as well as the Pauline Epistles.[199] Gay summarizes the essence of Enlightenment leaders: "Theirs [the Enlightenment proponents'] was a paganism directed against their Christian inheritance and dependent upon the paganism of classical antiquity, but it was also a *modern* paganism, emancipated from classical thought as much as from Christian dogma."[200]

Ironically, Jewish opposition to the Jesus of the Gospels and to Paul's portrayal of Judaism found an ally in the meteoric rise of historical criticism in Gentile circles that stemmed from philosophy's invasion of theology. The impact of individual approaches along with their sum-total effect upon the trustworthiness of the NT confirmed centuries-old Jewish criticism of Paul. As noted below, from so-called "Christians" of "massive scholarly erudition" came

theories that affirmed what the Jews had felt long ago, i.e., that Paul's epistles and the Gospels had imported elements foreign to Judaism.[201]

The impact was profound. The theories cast Paul as an inventor of a new religion inconsistent with the Judaism of his day and a radical departure from what Jesus had taught. As Hagner observes, "To have such views [against Paul] uttered not out of a context of religious polemics or apologetics, but from what claimed to be 'objective,' 'scientific' Christian scholarship was indeed a boon to the Jewish perspective."[202] Bruce tellingly notes,

> Although he [Paul] was rabbinically trained, his reappraisal of the whole spirit and content of his earlier training was so radical that many Jewish scholars have had difficulty in recognizing him as the product of a rabbinical education. They have found it easier to appreciate the Prophet of Nazareth (who, indeed, was not rabbinically trained) than the apostle to the Gentiles. Paul presents an enigma with which they cannot readily come to terms.[203]

Jewish scholars made good use of Gentile-originated historical criticism, and their criticisms, in turn, influenced the thinking of such NPP proponents as Sanders, Dunn, and Wright. For instance, Sanders devotes the "Preface," "Introduction," and "Part One" of his seminal work *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* to formulating his view of "covenantal nomism" by reviewing the emphasis of Jewish scholars such as Claude Goldsmid Montefiore[204] and Hans Joachim Schoeps on correcting improper thinking on Judaism, which Sanders terms "the 'wearing struggle' to get Christian scholars to see Rabbinic Judaism (or Pharisaism) in an unbiased light."[205] For Sanders, Christian theology from Paul through the Reformation was primarily a result of antiSemitism.

Montefiore, the most influential Jewish writer of the early twentieth century, decried "the imaginary Rabbinic Judaism, created by Christian scholars, in order to form a suitably lurid background for the Epistles of St. Paul."[206] Montefiore asserted, "[T]here is much in Paul which, while dealing *with* Judaism, is inexplicable *by* Judaism."[207] Montefiore denied that Paul ever knew authentic Rabbinic Judaism: "[T]he present writer is going to argue that Paul's pre-Christian religion must have been, in many important points, very unlike the religion of a representative Rabbinic Jew of the year 500."[208] Although Sanders does not agree with everything that these Jewish scholars propose, he does affirm the central thesis of their works that true rabbinic Judaism was a religion

of grace rather than the traditional understanding of Protestant scholars that it was based on legalism and works-righteousness. Sanders dismisses this latter view, arguing that Jewish literature has demonstrated the former position to be accurate. Profoundly under such influence, Sanders stated in his seminal work, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, that among his six purposes for writing this work was "to destroy the view of Rabbinic Judaism which is still prevalent in much, perhaps most, New Testament scholarship"; "to establish a different view of Rabbinic Judaism"; to argue for a certain understanding of Paul"; "to carry out a comparison of Paul and Palestinian Judaism."[209]

Luther's Alleged Antisemitism

Worsening the negative reaction against the Lutheran and Reformed positions on Pauline theology has been the harsh anti-Semitic statements of Luther (1484-1546) in his later years. The most famous such treatise of Luther is *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543), written when he was around sixty years of age.[210] The treatise caused widespread dismay, not only among Jews contemporary with Luther, but also in Protestant circles. Melanchthon and Osiander were unhappy with its severity, and Bullinger related Luther's words to the Spanish Inquisition.[211] Luther's proposals were quite severe, especially in the fourth section of his work.[212] Fortunately, Luther's proposals did not receive widespread approval, and the treatise did not sell as well as his pro-Jewish treatise, *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, produced twenty years earlier (1523).

Realizing the volatility of Luther's words, the editors of the American edition of *Luther's Work*s state that they have "played so fateful a role in the development of antiSemitism in Western culture" that many attribute to them the eventual rise of antiSemitism in Germany and the Holocaust.[213] That caveat shows the difficulties caused by the treatise: "Publication of this treatise is being undertaken only to make available the necessary documents for scholarly study of this aspect of Luther's thought. . . . Such publication is in no way intended as an endorsement of the distorted views of Jewish faith and practice or the defamation of the Jewish people which this treatise contains."[214]

In the fourth section, Luther suggests the following actions for Christians against the Jews:

> What shall we Christians do with this rejected and condemned people, the Jews? Since they live among us, we dare not tolerate their conduct, now

that we are aware of their lying and reviling and blaspheming. . . .

First, to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn. . . .

Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed. . . .

Third, I advise that that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them. . . .

Fourth, I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach. . . .

Fifth, I advise that safe-conduct on the highways be abolished completely for the Jews. . . Sixth, I advise that usury be prohibited to them, and that all cash and treasure of silver and gold be taken from them and put aside for safekeeping. . . .

Seventh, I recommend putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread in the sweat of their brow. . . . [215]

Luther stopped short of encouraging physical harm to Jews, however. He cautioned pastors of Protestant churches to warn their people against the Jews, but not to "curse them or harm their persons. . . . For the Jews have cursed and harmed themselves more than enough by cursing the Man Jesus of Nazareth. . . which unfortunately they have been doing for over fourteen hundred years."[216] Nevertheless, he called for the expulsion of the Jews from Germany: they should "be expelled from the country and be told to return to their land and their possessions in Jerusalem." He called them "a brood of vipers and children of the devil."[217]

Earlier in life, he had not shown such marked prejudice. In 1523, Luther published *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*, a work greeted positively by Jewish readers throughout Europe. Luther wrote,

They [i.e., popes, bishops, sophists, and monks] have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs rather than human beings; they have done little else than deride them and seize their property. . . . I have heard myself from pious baptized Jews that if they had not in our day heard the gospel they

> would have remained Jews under the cloak of Christianity for the rest of their days. For they acknowledge that they have never yet heard anything about Christ from those who baptized and taught them.
>
> I hope that if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from the Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians and turn again to the faith of their fathers, the prophets and patriarchs.[218]

Various theories have been propounded for Luther's change from sympathy for Jews to outright antagonism. Suggestions have ranged from declining health to splinter movements in the Reformation that saddened him. Perhaps the answer lies in his treatise itself: Jewish obstinacy or refusal to accept conversion. Jewish historian Marvin Lowenthal (1890-1969) remarks,

> Luther entertained high hopes of converting the Jews. By stripping Christianity of its centuries of Catholic accretions he felt that he was making it attractive and acceptable to the members of the Old Faith. Unfortunately for both parties, while he thought he was bringing the Jews nearer to the church, they thought he was approaching the synagogue. A few Jews even waited on Luther to persuade him to take the final step. . . .
>
> But as the Protestant movement matured, Luther's attitude changed. He grew embittered to discover that the Jews were as deaf to Martin of Eisleben as they had been to Paul of Tarsus. He became alarmed to find among the sects which sprouted like mushrooms in the fertile soil of Protestant resolve a dangerous tendency to revert to Jewish type; to deny the Trinity, to look upon Jesus as a prophet rather than a deity, to observe the seventh day as the Sabbath, and to take the Old Testament with a literalness embarrassing to the New—in short, to go "Jewish" as the Humanists had gone "ancient."[219]

Rightly or wrongly, Luther has received a great share of blame for the rise of the Holocaust, especially since some nominal Lutherans in the twentieth century participated with Hitler in the rise of the Third Reich. The NPP is in many ways a reaction to perceived Protestant (i.e., German Lutheran) church passivity or, in some cases, sympathy toward Nazi atrocities in World War II.

An Unidentified or Overlooked Cause of Luther's

AntiSemitism: Jewish anti-Gentilism in the Talmud

Various theories have been propounded for Luther's change from sympathy with Jews to outright antagonism from declining health to splinter movements in the Reformation that saddened him. A greatly overlooked, and largely ignored, cause (i.e. proverbial "elephant in the room") for Luther's anger stems from his direct knowledge of the Jewish oral law, written down after the destruction of Jerusalem (i.e. the Babylonian Talmud reaching its final form in the seventh century) that Jesus vilified in His own day in such places as Matthew 15:1-9 (e.g. Law of Corban // Mark 7:1-8) and in Matthew 23:1-35, where the label of "hypocrite" loomed large in Jesus' condemnation of the pharisaical tradition that stands behind the Talmud. An examination of Luther's treatise reveals that Luther was aware of much of the hate-speech directed toward and especially aimed at Jesus but also Christianity, as well as gentiles as a whole, in *uncensored versions of the Talmud*. Luther wrote:

> Why, their Talmud and their rabbis record that it is no sin for a Jew to kill a Gentile, but it is only a sin for him to kill a brother Israelite. Nor is it a sin for a Jew to break his oath to a Gentile. Likewise, they say that it is rendering God a service to steal or rob from a Goy, as they in fact do through their usury. For since they believe that they are the noble blood and the circumcised saints and we the accursed Goyim, they cannot treat us too harshly or commit sin against us, for they are the lords of the world and we are their servants, yes, their cattle.[220]

Luther continued,

> How much more honorably do the pagan philosophers, as well as the poets, write and teach not only about God's rule and about the life to come but also about temporal virtues. They teach that man by nature is obliged to serve his fellow man, to keep faith also with his enemies, and to be loyal and helpful especially in time of need. Thus Cicero and his kind teach. Indeed, I believe that three of Aesop's fables, half of Cato, and several comedies of Terence contain more wisdom and more instruction about good works than can be found in the books of all the Talmudists and rabbis and more than may ever occur to the hearts of all the Jews.[221]

He also cited Jewish acceptance of the false messiah bar Kochba (Luther's words were "Ben Koziba or Bar Kiziban") led by Rabbi Akiba as due to

ignorance of the Old Testament that clearly proclaimed Jesus as the true Jewish Messiah.[222]

He expressed great umbrage at rabbinic vilification of Mary, Jesus' mother:

> A malicious rabbi does not call the dear mother of Christ *Maria* but *haria*; i.e., *sterquilinium,* a dung heap. And who knows what other villainy they may indulge in among themselves, unknown to us? One can readily perceive how the devil constrains them to the basest lies and blasphemies he can contrive. Thus they also begrudge the dear mother Mary, the daughter of David, her right name, although she has not done them any harm. If they do that, why should they not also begrudge her, her life, her goods, and her honor? And if they wish and inflict all kinds of disgrace and evil on their own flesh and blood, which is innocent and about which they know nothing evil, what, do you suppose, might they wish us accursed Goyim?[223]

He noted Jewish preference for the Talmud literature instead of the Old Testament,

> Oh, how ridiculous it seems to these circumcised saints that we accursed Goyim have interpreted and understand this saying thus [i.e. Dan 9:25], especially since we did not consult their rabbis, Talmudists, and Kokhbaites whom they regard as more authoritative than all of Scripture.[224]

As a consequence of his knowledge of this literature, Luther urged that "all their prayer books and Talmudic writings, in which such idolatry, lies, cursing, and blasphemy are taught, be taken from them."[225] Even after Luther's time, in the Prussian states, Jewish Talmudic literature become more widely known in Europe with the publishing of the shocking work by Johann Andreas Eisenmenger's *The Tradition of the Jews* (German title, *Entdecktes Judenthum*, 1700).[226] The work had Jewish interests scrambling to destroy copies of the work in order to prevent further anti-Semitic outcry in Europe. The German work revealed shocking Talmudic teachings as the advocacy of pedophilia as permissible (*Ketubot* 11b-"If a grown man has intercourse with a little girl, it is for nothing, for having intercourse with a girl less than three years old is like putting a finger in the eye"). In 1732-1734, John Peter Stehelin had selections of Eisenmenger's work translated into English and published in two volumes as Rabbinical Literature, The Tradition of the Jews (Reprint 1742 and 1748). Even

more recently, Jewish writer Israel Shahak published *Jewish History, Jewish Religion, The Weight of Three Thousand Years*, in which he explained some of antiSemitism as based in a response to Jewish anti-gentilism.[227] Recently, the Anti-Defamation League (February 2003), while admitting that these statements are in the Talmud, published a rebuttal to these accusations, citing recent Jewish principles that disavow these statements found in the Talmud.[228]

A very recent work, *Jesus in the Talmud*, has revealed the shocking rabbinical statements of the Babylonian Talmudic literature against Jesus, with its capstone statement that Jesus as a blasphemer and idolater rightly deserved to die and is boiling in Hell in human excrement (*Gittin* 57a) and a variety of other horrific statements (*Sanhedrin* 107b; 43a; *Sotah* 47a).[229]

Historical Criticism as the Primary Agent of Change

Much has already been noted about Gentile Christian scholar's assault on the trustworthiness of the NT, especially the Gospels, and their contrast of Jesus' teachings with those of Paul. Historical criticism provided the means through which Scripture's authority was rejected, aiding the rise of the NPP. Many historical critics remained nominally Protestant—or Lutheran—in approach to Paul, their ideologies providing the fertile ground for the NPP eventually to challenge the theological basis of the Protestant Reformation, especially in its approach to Paul's epistles.

F. C. Baur (1792-1860). Prominent in the assault on the NT was Ferdinand Christian Baur, founder and uncontested leader of the "Tübingen School" of German radical biblical criticism and a tutor of Strauss.[230] Hagner observes, "The modern debate of this problem [of a radical difference between Jesus' and Paul's preaching] goes back to F. C. Baur, who regarded Paul as an innovator and who was followed in this by others among whom Wendt, Goguel, Wrede and Bultmann deserve special mention."[231] Although Baur and the Tübingen school he headed remained nominally Lutheran in their view of Paul and eventually fell into disrepute because of radical scholarship, Baur's effect on Gospel and Pauline studies had lasting effects, including several contributions that aided the development of the NPP.

First, with no substantive basis Baur pursued a dogmatic view of Scripture through his imposition of Fichtean-Hegelian philosophy on the biblical text, especially Paul's epistles. This view became the foundation of his understanding

of the entire NT, especially Pauline and Petrine epistles and the history of the early church. Baur based this philosophical imposition on the sheer hubris of his personality. He represented a more moderate approach to Hegel's philosophy (actually derived from Fichte), for as Corduan notes, "Baur's appropriation of Hegel is far more subtle than those of other Hegelians."[232]

In 1831, Baur published an essay entitled, "*Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christenthums in der ältesten Kirsche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom*," ("The Christ-party in the Corinthian Church, the Conflict Between Petrine and Pauline Christianity in the Early Church, the Apostle Peter in Rome") in which he asserted that apostolic Christianity was marked by deep cleavage between the Jerusalem church and the Pauline mission.[233] On the one side was Jewish Christianity represented by Peter that maintained a Judaizing form of Christianity and on the other side was Paul who insisted on the abolition of Jewish legalism. This assumption affected all interpretive data from the NT epistles. Paul's mention of divisions in the Corinthian church between himself and Peter (1 Cor 1:11-12) became central to this imposition.

Second, Baur theorized a radical contrast between Jesus' and Paul's teachings. The historicalcritical dichotomy between Jesus and Paul continued with his *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, in which he posits,

> But the apostle takes up an attitude of so great freedom and independence not only towards the older apostles, but towards the person of Jesus himself, that one might be inclined to ask whether a view of his relation to the person of Christ can be the right one which would make the apostle Paul the originator and first exponent of that which constitutes the essence of Christianity as distinguished from Judaism. . . . He bears himself but little like a disciple who has received the doctrines and the principles which he preaches from the Master whose name he bears. . . . [H]is whole Christian consciousness is transformed into a view of the person of Jesus which stands in need of no history to elucidate it.[234]

The assertion of a dichotomy between Paul and Jesus along with the rise of the History-of-Religions School (see below) that widened the gap more sharply, eventually aided the case of Jewish theologians that Paul had imported ideas foreign to Judaism and invented a religion contrary to Jesus' intentions.[235]

Third, Baur in "*Die Christpartei*" used this Hegelian-Fichtean paradigm on the NT Epistles. Books that clearly reflect either Pauline or Jewish (Petrine) theology were dated early while books reflecting an alleged synthesis of this thinking were considered late. Based on this paradigm, Baur considered only Romans, Galatians, and 1–2 Corinthians as legitimately Pauline. These became known as the *Hauptbrief* or "chief epistles," since the Tübingen school considered these epistles the only genuine epistles coming from Paul; the rest were dismissed. Baur viewed the Pastorals as late-second century documents written against Gnostics and Marcionites. He saw the Prison Epistles and Philemon as written in A.D. 120-140 and as coming from an alleged Pauline school. First and Second Thessalonians were written after Paul (A.D. 70-75) and were of inferior theological quality.

His students and followers applied this scheme to the rest of the NT through what is now known as *Tendenz criticism* as either Pauline (e.g., Hebrews, 1 Peter), Petrine-Judaizing (e.g., James, Matthew, Revelation), editing and conciliatory (e.g., Luke-Acts; Mark), or catholicizing (e.g., 2 Peter, Jude, John). Those ideas came into the twentieth century and are held by NPP scholars (Sanders, Dunn, Wright, *et al*).[236]

The surface rejection of the radicalism of Baur and Tübingen has not nullified their impact. Hafemann remarks,

> Baur's consistent attempt to provide a comprehensive and coherent understanding of history of the early church on the basis of historical reasoning alone, without recourse to supernatural interventions or to explanations based on the miraculous, did propel biblical scholarship into the modern world. Moreover, Baur's work also set the stage for the debate in the twentieth century over the relationship between the life and teaching of the historical Jesus and the theology of Paul.[237]

Baur's *a priori* imposition of philosophical concepts on Scripture as interpretive tools also facilitated the rise of such scholars as Wrede and Bultmann whose works also contributeed to rise of the NPP.[238] Baur's treatment of Paul also led to a twentieth-and twenty-first-century development of Paul's view of the Mosaic Law and his own understanding of the gospel, including a search for an alleged center in Paul's theology.

The Religionsgeschichte Schule. The History-of-Religions School as

represented in the works of Pfleiderer, Heitmüller, Gunkel, Bousset, Reitzenstein, and Bultmann (to name a few) also contributed to the development of the NPP. This was a group of influential German biblical scholars from 1880 to 1920 who, based upon comparative study of religions, explained Christianity as a Near Eastern religious syncretism.[239] They focused on Paul since he among all the NT writers allegedly exhibited the greatest Hellenistic influence. Discoveries involving the Mystery Religions and Gnosticism provided a rich source for finding parallels with Paul's theology.

The person most responsible for widely disseminating this view was William Reitzenstein (1861-1931). His most famous work, *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen* (1910), asserted that Paul must have been acquainted with Hellenistic mystery religions that profoundly influenced his thinking. He sought to establish the direct dependence of early Christianity on Hellenistic, Mandaean, and Iranian ideas. Reitzenstein identified Paul as a Hellenistic mystic and Gnostic whose religious experience matched that of the Hellenistic mystics. He claimed that Paul borrowed his presentation of Christ from the pre-Christian Gnostic redeemer myth. He emphatically declared that Paul knew Hellenistic religious literature and that such literature had a profound influence on him as he proclaimed the Jewish faith in a Hellenistic world.[240]

Another leader in this movement was Wilhelm Bousset (1865-1920) who in his *Kyrios Christos* (1913) alleged that in Hellenistic Christianity the "Kyrios Christos" concept replaced the eschatological Son of Man in earlier Christianity and that it along with many other biblical concepts were based on the ancient myths of Babylonian and Egyptian instead of Jewish origin. Bousset claimed that in many cases Christians were involved in mystery religions before they were converted and transferred concepts of the mystery-gods to Christianity.[241]

Ernst Troeltsch, who formulated the three basic principles of historicalcritical methodology (criticism, analogy, correlation), was also a member of the History-of-Religions School.[242] The principles expressed the hostile prejudice and skepticism of the school against the supernatural in the NT. He labeled himself "the systematic theologian of this approach."[243]

Another notable example of ardent proponents of the History-of-Religions School was Rudolf Bultmann, who although he was essentially Lutheran in approach, created a vast chasm between the Jesus in the Gospels and the one in Pauline writings and an even larger gap between Judaism and Paul. Bultmann

viewed Paul as influenced by “Gnostic terminology” and as “the founder of Christian theology.”[244]

The widespread effect of this school was the impression that Paul had combined nominal Jewish ideas within the framework of a dominant syncretistic Hellenism (especially Hellenistic Mystery Religions) and Gnosticism to create a new religion. Paul’s central theology (e.g., his alleged mysticism, his Christology, soteriology, ecclesiology) stemmed from the strong impact that these influences had upon him. Under this impression, many Jewish scholars who disliked the image of Judaism in the Pauline epistles along with historicalcritical scholars viewed Paul as the founder of a new religion. Many Jews considered the findings of the History-of-Religions School as explaining why Paul came to such supposedly bizarre conclusions regarding Judaism: the influence of Hellenistic concepts that distorted his portrayal of the true Judaism of his day. Historical critics explained alleged differences between Jesus and Paul by Paul’s susceptibility to Hellenizing syncretism. Although the History-of-Religions School was responsible for dealing a death-blow to the domination of Baur’s concept of Hegelian-Fichtean dialectics in explaining elements of the Pauline epistles, the fact that influences from both helped to contribute to the rise of the NPP is an interesting aspect of history.

The Impact of Wilhelm Wrede (1859-1906). Wilhelm Wrede is another major contributor to the rise of the NPP. Wrede was primarily a historian, rather than a theologian, with an extreme skepticism toward the NT. He also was strongly influenced by and appreciative of the History-of-Religions School. He is remembered primarily for his effect on Gospel studies, but he also contributed to the NPP. Wrede’s influence on Gospel study was expressed primarily through his *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (“The Messianic Secret,” 1901). Perrin remarks, “Wilhelm Wrede. . . sounded the death knell” regarding the historicity of Mark “by demonstrating that a major aspect of the Marcan narratives was precisely the ‘mythic’ and, in so doing, opened the door for the entry of redaction criticism upon the scene.”[245]

In his *Origin of the New Testament*, Wrede asserted that “science has destroyed that idea” of “the supernatural origin of the Bible” and “shattered even the simplest facts” of the Bible.[246] Furthermore, he noted, “[T]he books of the New Testament were not, as was once thought, literally dictated to the human authors by God Himself; rather they were written by men in a way entirely human.”[247] The origin of the NT is “a historical, and a purely historical

question," yet "This does not impugn the religious value of the New Testament."[248]

Following Baur's example of imposing philosophical ideas upon the biblical text, Wrede imposed his own skeptical philosophy not only on the Gospels but also upon Paul. He based his assertions on *the sheer force of his personality with no objectivity and a paucity of exegesis of central Pauline passages*.

Wrede's treatment of the Pauline text has little respect for the documents because of his skepticism. Wrede's widely acclaimed and popular work, *Paul*,[249] was *the first major challenge to the centrality of justification*, a doctrine supported in the Protestant Reformation. In this ground-breaking work, he argued for a wide chasm between Paul and Jesus (reflective of Baur but even more extreme): "the name 'disciple of Jesus' has little applicability to Paul. . . . He [Paul] stands much farther away from Jesus than Jesus himself stands from the noblest figures of Jewish piety."[250] For Wrede, historic Christianity through the centuries is not modeled on Jesus but on Paul, whom he terms "*the second founder of Christianity*" [emphasis in original], although Paul was inferior to Christ. Nevertheless, Paul "exercised beyond all doubt the stronger—not the better—influence."[251]

Foundational for the eventual development of the NPP, Wrede argued that the doctrine of justification was not central to Paul's thought, but only developed as a response to Paul's conflict with Judaism:

> The Reformation has accustomed us to look upon this as the central point of Pauline doctrine: but it is not so. In fact the whole Pauline religion can be expounded without a word being about this doctrine, unless it be in the part devoted to the Law. It would be extraordinary if what was intended to be the chief doctrine were referred to only in a minority of the epistles. That is the case with this doctrine: it only appears where Paul is dealing with the strife against Judaism.[252]

Seminal to the thinking of the NPP, Wrede comments regarding Paul's purposes for his doctrine of justification: "Two purposes, then, come really into play: (1) the mission must be free from the burden of Jewish national custom; (2) the superiority of the Christian faith in redemption over Judaism as a whole must be assured. *The doctrine of justification is nothing more than the weapon with which these purposes were to be won*."[253]

Long before the NPP concept of a Pauline emphasis on corporate rather than individual salvation (e.g., Wright), Wrede began a shift toward similar thinking:

> Luther asks, how does the individual man, who stands in the church and shares the church's faith in the redemption, overcome the tormenting uncertainty whether salvation and the forgiveness of sins holds good personally for him? His answer is, he reaches a personal certainty when he recognizes that it depends absolutely on grace, which God has unconditionally promised. Paul has not the individual in mind at all; the question of personal salvation plays no part in his exposition. . . . We must not then conceive of justification as a personal experience of the individual, or a subjective, psychical process. . . . It is rather conceived in the same mode as the death of Christ, which holds good for all who belong to Christ.[254]

According to Wrede, Paul's thought finds its primary background in *Apocalyptic Judaism*:

> The framework of the whole Pauline teaching is formed by the Jewish idea of a contrast between two worlds (aeons), one of which is present and earthly, the other is future and heavenly. Here we have the foundation of the Pauline way of regarding history. . . . All is Jewish, from the judgment with its wrath and retribution to the great "oppression" before the end, to the "blast of the last trumpet," to the victory of Messiah over the hostile spirits.[255]

Like the NPP that would follow, Wrede described Paul's epistles as filled with contradictions and inconsistencies: "Pertinacious and impulsive, turbulent and stable, inconsiderate and tender, in his intolerance bitter to the point of hardness and acrimony, and yet a man of soft sensibility; unyielding and yet pliant; all enthusiasm and glow, all sober prudence; a thinker, a mediator, and yet even more a restless toiler—no scheme will suffice to comprehend the whole man."[256] Paul never attempts "to unfold a system of doctrine."[257] Paul's thoughts are "somewhat elastic. . . . His points of view and leading premises change and traverse each other without his perceiving it. It is no great feat to unearth contradictions, even among his leading thoughts."[258]

The sum total of these thoughts is that Wrede acted entirely apart from any concept of inspiration, with the result that he performed no objective or thorough

exegesis of the biblical text.

The Impact of Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965). Schweitzer's understanding of Paul, although not as well known, was similar to Wrede's. In contrast to Wrede, however, Schweitzer had nothing but contempt for the History-of-Religions School, especially in its attempt to find oriental and Hellenistic influences on Christianity. Ironically though, he borrowed their method, finding in Judaism the background of Jesus, early Christianity, and Paul.[259]

In his studies, Schweitzer came under the philosophical influence of Kant, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche.[260] He has been called an irrational rationalist, but the term that best describes him is "mystic."[261] Even more so than Wrede, Schweitzer was among the most thoroughgoing eschatologists of all historical critics. Yet he dogmatically read his philosophy into the biblical text without considering exegetical data from the text. As with Wrede, such imposition stemmed more from his personality and reputation than from objective interpretive data.

In Schweitzer's *The Problem of the Lord's Supper* (1901),[262] he developed ideological approaches as a matrix he would use on later studies of Jesus[263] and Paul:[264] (1) as a device, a survey of the history of research on the subject and (2) his solution to the problem centered on this dogmatically imposed assumption of a thoroughgoing eschatology, i.e., an apocalyptic understanding of the kingdom of God.[265]*This apocalyptic approach was so overwhelming in the determination of Schweitzer's thinking that it would eventually cause his rejection of Protestant emphasis on justification as the center of Paul's thinking*.

In Schweitzer's *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God,* he set forth the idea that Jesus' eschatological (i.e., apocalyptic) conviction "must from the beginning, even in the first Galilean period, have lain at the basis of his preaching!"[266] Echoing the thinking of Wrede's *Messianic Secret*,[267] Schweitzer maintained that Jesus recognized himself as the Messsiah at his baptism, but kept his messiahship secret, arguing,

> What we call the Transfiguration is in reality nothing else but the revelation of the secret of messiahship to the Three. . . .
>
> There is in fact an inward connection between the Baptism [of Jesus] and the Transfiguration. In both cases a condition of ecstasy accompanies the

> revelation of the secret of Jesus' person. The first time the revelation was for him alone; here the Disciples also share it.[268]

Schweitzer also posits a secret passion. He asserts that Jesus expected that the messianic woes would happen during His ministry, but when they did not, Jesus decided He would inaugurate the messianic feat by sacrificing himself. Schweitzer believed that Jesus was hopelessly mistaken: "With his death he destroyed the form of his '*Weltanschauung,*' [i.e. Worldview] rendering his own eschatology impossible."[269] Instead, "he [Jesus] gives to all peoples and to all times the right to apprehend him in terms of their thoughts and conceptions, in order that his spirit may pervade their '*Weltanshauung*' as it quickened and transfigured Jewish eschatology."[270]

Based on his reading of apocalyptic into any analysis of the biblical text, Schweitzer formulated his best known work, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, that was originally known by its 1906 German title *Von Reimarus zu Wrede: Eine Geschichte der Leben-Jesus-Forschung*. In this famous work that chronicles the First Quest for the "historical Jesus," Schweitzer praised the Deist Reimarus' work as "one of the greatest events in the history of criticism" because of Reimarus' apocalyptic approach to understanding Jesus.[271] He dismissed previous liberal attempts at reconstructing a life of Jesus as failures because they did not appreciate the apocalyptic element that he had identified. He also lauded D. F. Strauss' Life of Jesus since "we also find in it a positive historical impact. . . as the historical personality which emerges from the mist of myth is a Jewish claimant to the messiahship whose world of thought is purely eschatological."[272] For Schweitzer, all scholarship between Reimarus and Johannes Weiss "appears retrograde" because of a failure to appreciate apocalyptic thought.[273] Schweitzer's heroes in this work were four: Reimarus, Strauss, J. Weiss, and Schweitzer himself.[274] His Quest crescendos to the following thought about Jesus' apocalyptic hopes in the Gospels:

> The Baptist appears, and cries: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes Him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, He has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the

> spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is His Victory and His reign.[275]

Schweitzer's summary of Jesus' life: Jesus miscalculated both personally and apocalyptically and was killed for His error.

After Schweitzer's imposition of historicalcritical slants and assumption of apocalypticism on the Gospels, he turned to impose the same on Paul. Reflecting a similar position to many others like Sanders in the NPP, Schweitzer stressed alleged Pauline contradictions. He criticized previous works on Paul:

> The odd thing is they [previous writers on Paul] write as if they understand what they were writing about. They do not feel compelled to admit that Paul's statements taken by themselves are unintelligible, consist of pure paradoxes, and that the point that calls for examination is how far they are thought of by their author as having a real meaning, and could be understood in this light by his readers. They never call attention to the fact that the Apostle always becomes unintelligible just at the moment when he begins to explain something; never gives a hint that while we hear the sound of his words but the tune of his logic escapes us.[276]

According to Schweitzer, Paul's thinking was not only contradictory but was also marked by two important elements that governed it. The first is "Christ-mysticism" that is historic-cosmic. Schweitzer argued, "The fundamental thought of Pauline mysticism runs thus: I am in Christ; in Him I know myself as a being who is raised above this sensuous, sinful, and transient world and already belongs to the transcendent; in Him I am assured of resurrection; in Him I am a child of God."[277] Schweitzer labels Paul's "being in-Christ" as "the prime enigma of Pauline teaching."[278]

This mystic element, however, was derived from a second more predominant element, Paul's eschatology: "[T]his mystical element is actually derived from the eschatological concept of the Community of God in which the Elect are closely bound up with one another and with the Messiah."[279] Once again, for Schweitzer, his theory of apocalypticism dominated and prejudiced his interpretation.

Because of his overwhelming preoccupation with apocalyptic elements in the Gospels and Paul, Schweitzer deliberately shifted from the Reformation

emphasis on justification as dominant in Pauline writings to an overwhelming preoccupation with Pauline apocalypticism and mysticism. He noted,

> Paul is. . . forced by his mysticism to recast the doctrine of the atoning death of Jesus, in the sense of inserting into it the doctrine of freedom from the Law. This is not possible by straightforward logic, because there is no argument against the validity of the Law to be derived directly from the atoning death of Jesus. All that can be done therefore is to bring the doctrine of the freedom from the Law into close connection with the doctrine of the atoning death of Jesus by means of logical ingenuities. This Paul does by showing by the argument *from Prophecy* that the only valid righteousness is that which comes from faith alone, and that works righteousness is incompatible with faith-righteousness. It is possible for the idea of righteousness apart from the works of the Law to be expounded by means of this ingenious reasoning; but it could never have arisen out of it. The doctrine of righteousness by faith is therefore a subsidiary crater, which has formed within the rim of the main crater—the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ.[280]

Baird's summary of Schweitzer is significant: "With an arrogance excusable only in a genius, he imagines all preceding work has been mistaken. His passionate arguments, punctuated by either/ors, tend to oversimplify and exaggerate. . . . Schweitzer demonstrates the danger of presuppositions in historical research—paradoxically, both in his critique of others and his own results."[281]

Conclusion Regarding the NPP

The New Perspective on Paul is not new, but quite old. Similar approaches have been around throughout the centuries of church history. Although many of its supporters issue loud attempts at denial, close scrutiny reveals that the NPP is the revival of the concept that works are efficacious for salvation which Luther and others in church history warned would happen. Moreover, it is the direct product of historicalcritical ideologies. Often ignored by its proponents as well as its critics, is the important fact that *the same road that led to the destruction of the orthodox concepts of Scripture, especially the Gospels, also led to the NPP*. Though many historical critics were nominally Lutheran or Reformed in their views of Paul, their philosophically motivated proposals facilitated the rise of not only a "search for the historical Jesus" but also a "search for the historical

Paul." A fortuitous, well-timed convergence in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries of historicalcritical ideologies, political correctness, and eisegesis of Pauline texts by such men as Sanders, Dunn, and Wright have led to the emergence and prominence of the NPP.

[1] The term "New Perspective on Paul" was coined by a major proponent, James Dunn (James D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," *Bulletin of the John Ryland's Library* 65 [1983] 95-122).

[2] John Calvin, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians," *Calvin's Commentaries*, trans. Ross Mackenzie, eds. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 8:69-70 (emphases in the original).

[3] Klaas Runia, "Justification and Roman Catholicism," in *Right with God*, ed. D. A. Carson (London: published on behalf of the World Evangelical Fellowship by Paternoster and Baker, 1992) 197. Although Luther himself did not use this precise expression, he used similar ones. For further information, see H. George Anderson, T. Austin Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess, eds., *Justification By Faith, Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII* (Mineapolis: Augburg, 1985), 25, 320 n. 51.

[4] Martin Luther, *The Smalcald Articles, A Reprint from the "Concordia Triglotta." in Commemoration of the Four-Hundredth Anniversary of the Presentation of This Confession of the Lutheran Church at Schmalkalden, Germany, in 1537* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1937), 4 (emphases in the original).

[5] J. I. Packer, "Justification in Protestant Theology," in *Here We Stand*, eds. J. I. Packer *et al.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986), 86.

[6] Thomas R. Schreiner, *The Law and Its Fulfillment* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 15.

[7] The inaccuracy of labeling the Reformation as the "Lutheran" perspective is that the majority of Reformers, such as Melanchthon and Calvin, also supported the essentials of the Reformation perspective.

[8] Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 3.

[9] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), III.xi.1 (1:726).

[10] Buchanan remarked, “Few things in the history of the Church are more remarkable than the entire unanimity of the Reformers on the subject of a sinner’s Justification before God” (J. Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification* [reprint of 1877 ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977], 151).

[11] Martin Luther, “Treatise on Christian Liberty,” 31:348, in *Luther’s Works*, ed. Harold J. Grimm, gen. ed. Helmut T. Lehmann. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957).

[12] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* 2.7.3 (352).

[13] Martin Luther, “Lectures on Galatians “ (1535), in *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963), 26:122; see also 26:123-41, 248-68.

[14] John Calvin, “The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians,” *Calvin’s Commentaries*, trans. T. H. L. Parker, eds. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 11:38.

[15] *Luther’s Works*, 35:164-66.

[16] Ibid., 35:168.

[17] Ibid., 35:173.

[18] Ibid., 35:173; cf. Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament*, trans. Eric W. and Ruth C. Gritsch, ed. Victor I. Gruhn (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 81-218; Gerhard Ebeling, “On the Doctrine of the *Triplex UsusLegis* in the Theology of the Reformation,” in *Word and Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 62-78.

[19] Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* 2.7.7-12 (351-61).

[20] Ibid., 2.7.16 (364).

[21] Ibid., 2:7.12 (360).

[22] For further comparison between Luther and Calvin on their approach to the OT, see David Wright, “The Ethical Use of the Old Testament in Luther and Calvin: A Comparison,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36 (1983): 463-85.

[23] Luther, “Galatians “ (1535), *Luther’s Works,* 26:105.

[24] Luther, “Galatians “ (1535), *Luther’s Works,* 26:396-97.

[25] Calvin, “Romans,” *Calvin’s Commentaries,* 8:221.

[26] Ibid., 8:221-22.

[27] Calvin, *Institutes,* 3:14.1-17 (768-84); 3.15.1-7 (788-96); Luther, “Galatians” (1535), *Luther’s Works,* 26:33, 124-76; 266, 396. For a defense of the Reformation position regarding Judaism’s legalism in Paul’s day, see R. H. Gundry, “Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul,” *Biblica* 66 (1985): 1-38; Brice L. Martin, *Christ and the Law in Paul* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989).

[28] Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Interpretation* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 682.

[29] Norman L. Geisler, “Inductivism, Materialism, and Rationalism: Bacon, Hobbes, and Spinoza,” in *Biblical Errancy: An Analysis of Its Philosophical Roots,* ed. Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 11. This excellent work presents a variety of articles that trace the underpinnings of historicalcritical methodologies to baneful philosophical methodologies.

[30] Hans Hübner, *Law in Paul’s Thought,* trans. James C. G. Greig, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1984). Hübner’s radicalism is demonstrated by his bold assertions of an alleged inconsistency in Paul’s thought and that Paul’s thoughts developed regarding the law, being strongly negative in Galatians, while turning positive and maturing over time when he composed Romans. Hübner went so far as to say that Paul in Gal 3:19 believed that evil angels had imposed the law on the Israelites (see 1-11, 26-30).

[31] For background on the damage of historicalcritical ideologies to the text of Scripture, especially the Gospels, see F. David Farnell, “The Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism,” *The Jesus Crisis,* eds. Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 85-131; Eta Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible, Methodology or Ideology?* trans.

Robert Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1990).

[32] For more about philosophical systems that undermined the inspiration and authority of the text, consult Geisler (ed.), *Biblical Errancy: An Analysis of Its Philosophical Roots*, 11-258.

[33] Henning Graf Reventlow, *The Authority of the Bible and the Rise of the Modern World* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 1.

[34] Ibid., 4, 6.

[35] Frank Thielman, "Preface," *Paul and the Law, A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 9-10.

[36] E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977), 510.

[37] Ibid., 516.

[38] E. P. Sanders, *Paul, The Law and the Jewish People* [hereafter *PLJ*] (Philadelphia: Fortress,1983), 123.

[39] Räisänen credits Sanders with a great influence on his thought: "the publication of Sanders' illuminating work [i.e. Paul and Palestinian Judaism] was like a gift from heaven for my own quest." See Heikki Räisänen, "Preface," *Paul and the Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), v.

[40] Ibid., 11.

[41] See Daniel G. Reid, "Did Paul Have a Theology?," *Christianity Today* (April 24, 1995): 18-22.

[42] Daniel G. Reid, "The Misunderstood Apostle," *Christianity Today* (July 16, 1990): 25.

[43] Robert Jewett, "The Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles in Romans, *Interpretation* 39 (October 1985):341; cf. Calvin L. Porter, "A New Paradigm for Reading Romans: Dialogue Between Christians and Jews," *Encounte*r 39 (Summer 1978): 257-72.

[44] Porter, “A New Paradigm,” 341.

[45] Glenn David Earley, “The Radical Hermeneutical Shift in Post-Holocaust Christian Thought,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 18 (Winter 1981): 16.

[46] Ibid., 17.

[47] See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 2 Auflage (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1965); English edition, *Truth and Method*, trans. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York: Seabury, 1975); and idem, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, 1976).

[48] For example, Ernst Fuchs, *Hermeneutik*, 2 Auflage (Bad Cannstatt: R. Müllerschön, 1958); Gerhard Ebeling, *Einführung in Theologische Sprachlehre* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1971); English edition, *Introduction to a Theological Theory of Language*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973).

[49] For further information, consult James M. Robinson, “Part I. The Issue: Hermeneutic,” in *New Frontiers in Theology*, vol. 2: *The New Hermeneutic*, eds. James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr. (New York; Evanston, Ill.; and London: Harper & Row, 1964): 1-77.

[50] For an excellent discussion, see the edited and expanded transcript given by J. Ligon Duncan, “The Attractions of the New Perspective(s) on Paul,” A paper given at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Jackson, Mississippi (October 2001); expanded at Twin Lakes Fellowship Fraternal, Florence, Mississippi (April 2002); Glasgow Miniserial Fraternal, May 2002, Glasgow, Scotland; Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi (September 2003), 3.

[51] Duncan, “The Attractions of the New Perspectives on Paul,” 3; Robert Smith, “Justification in ‘The New Perspective on Paul,’” *Reformed Theological Review* 58 (April 1999): 16-30.

[52] Douglas Moo, “Paul and the Law in the Last Ten Years.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 40 (1986): 287; Moo wrote his article in 1986, so the NPP has had dominance for over 20 years.

[53] Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 178.

[54] For further information, see ibid., 133.

[55] Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New,* xiii.

[56] E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism, A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* [hereafter *PPJ*] (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

[57] Sanders' position is substantially that of Moore, but Sanders was more successful in popularizing the views than Moore.

[58] E. P. Sanders, *Paul, A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1991), 95-96.

[59] Ibid., 96.

[60] E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993), 63.

[61] Ibid., 3.

[62] Ibid., 4.

[63] Ibid., 8.

[64] Ibid., 57.

[65] Ibid., 162.

[66] Ibid., 163-64.

[67] Ibid., 244.

[68] George Foot Moore, "Christian Writers on Judaism," *Harvard Theological Review* XIV (July 1921): 197-254. See also George Foot Moore, *Judaism, In the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim,* 3 vols., reprint of the 1927 President and Fellows of Harvard College Edition (reprint; Peabody, Mass.: Hendricksen, 1997).

[69] Sanders, *PPJ,* 33.

[70] Moore, *Judaism,* 93.

[71] Moore, “Christian Writers on Judaism,” 197-221.

[72] Although more will be noted about Baur’s contribution, sufficient to note here is that Baur concluded that only four epistles were genuinely Pauline, i.e., Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, and Galatians. Baur’s position was based only on the study of these four epistles, which led him to many false conclusions. Baur strongly influenced NT scholarship as a whole, other epistles subsequently being rejected, i.e., 2 Thessalonians, Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastorals. For a brief, historical overview of Baur’s position, see Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, new ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University, 1988), 25; Werner Georg Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, trans. S. McLean Gilmour and Howard C. Kee (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1972), 120-43.

[73] A check of Sanders’ “Index of Passages” reveals that these books are never considered in his study but overwhelmingly rendered to a handful of footnote references that gloss over these works. See *PPJ,* 584-88.

[74] Sanders, *Paul, A Very Short Introduction,* 22.

[75] Sanders, *PPJ,* xii.

[76] Ibid., xiii.

[77] Ibid., 33.

[78] Ibid., 123; cf. Jewett, “The Law and the Coexistence of Jews and Gentiles in Romans,” 347.

[79] Sanders, *PPJ,* 443 (emphasis in the original).

[80] Ibid., 497 (see 442-97 also).

[81] Ibid., 552 (emphasis in the original).

[82] Ibid., 75 (see also 236).

[83] Ibid., 180 (emphasis in the original).

[84] Ibid., 420 (emphasis in the original).

[85] Ibid., 140.

[86] Ibid., 420.

[87] Sanders, *Paul, A Very Short Introduction,* 53.

[88] Ibid., 57.

[89] Ibid., 58.

[90] Ibid., 142.

[91] Ibid., 119, 120.

[92] Sanders, *PLJ,* 100-102.

[93] Ibid., 103.

[94] Ibid., 104.

[95] Ibid., 103.

[96] Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul" 97; see also James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1998), 338-39.

[97] Dunn, *Theology of Paul,* 5.

[98] Ibid., 13.

[99] Ibid., 13.

[100] Ibid., 292.

[101] Ibid., 13.

[102] Ibid., 354.

[103] James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8,* Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 38A

(Dallas: Word, 1988), lxv.

[104] Ibid.

[105] D. G. Dunn and Alan M. Suggate, *The Justice of God, a Fresh Look at the Old Doctrine of Justification by Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 28; Dunn, *Romans 1–8,* lxv.

[106] James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1990), 10-11.

[107] Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *Harvard Theological Review* LVI (July 1963): 200.

[108] Ibid., 200-201.

[109] Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law* 186–87; Dunn, *Romans 1-8,* lxvi.

[110] Dunn, *Romans1-8,* lxv. See also D. Garlington, "Obedience of Faith," *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament* 2/38 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991).

[111] Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 11.

[112] Dunn remarks, "Anthropologists and sociologists have made us aware of the fact that any social grouping will inevitably have various features and characteristics which provide the group's self-definition (consciously or unconsciously) and mark it off from various other groups. . . Two key words. . . are *identity* and *boundary*." For further information, see Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 216-19.

[113] Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 11-12.

[114] Dunn, *Romans 1–8,* lxvi.

[115] Ibid., lxxi.

[116] Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 242 (also 251-57).

[117] Ibid., 188.

[118] James D. G. Dunn, *The Parting of the Ways* (London and Philadelphia: SCM and Trinity, 1991), 135-36.

[119] Interestingly, Luther attacks Jerome for limiting this phrase to ceremonies only: “Hence the opinion of Jerome and others is to be rejected when they imagine that here Paul is speaking about the works of the Ceremonial law, not about those of the Decalog.” See Luther, “Commentary on Galatians,” *Luther’s Works*, 26:138; I 3.17.2 (804-5).

[120] For Dunn, Galatians 3:10-14 is his “test case” for the appropriateness of his view. See Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 225-32.

[121] James D. G. Dunn, “Works of the Law and the Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:10-14*),” New Testament Studies* 31 (October 1985), 528.

[122] Dunn, “New Perspective on Paul,” 112.

[123] Ibid., 112.

[124] Ibid., 113.

[125] James D. G. Dunn, “The Justice of God,” *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 43 (April 1992): 11.

[126] Dunn, “The Justice of God” 12; cf. also Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, 153-55, 158-59, 183-94.

[127] Dunn, “The Justice of God” 12; cf. also James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16*, vol. 38B (Dallas: Word, 1988), 595-96.

[128] F. F. Bruce, “Paul and the Law in Recent Research,” in *Law and Religion*, ed. Barnabas Lindars (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1988), 125.

[129] Thomas R. Schreiner, “‘Works of the Law’ in Paul,” *Novum Testamentum* 33 (1991): 227.

[130] Moisés Silva, “The Law and Christianity: Dunn’s New Synthesis,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 53 (1991): 347-48.

[131] C. E. B. Cranfield, “‘The Works of the Law’ in the Epistle to the Romans,”

Journal for the Study of the New Testament 43 (1991): 92; cf. Dunn, "Works of the Law and Curse of the Law," 536-39.

[132] James D. G. Dunn, "Yet Once More—'The Works of the Law,'" *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 46 (1992): 102.

[133] Ibid., 111.

[134] Dunn, "The Justice of God," 2.

[135] Tim Stafford, "The New Theologians," *Christianity Today* (February 8, 1999): 46.

[136] Ibid., 44.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid., 46.

[139] N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 8.

[140] N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 267.

[141] Ibid., 271.

[142] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 78.

[143] See Thomas and Farnell (eds.), *The Jesus Crisis*; Eta Linnemann, *Biblical Criticism on Trial*, trans. Robert Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001).

[144] For further discussion on these Quests, consult N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 3-124; N. T. Wright, *The Contemporary Quest for Jesus* (Minneapolis:Fortress, 2002).

[145] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 78-82.

[146] See John Reumann, "Jesus and Christology," in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*, eds. Eldon Jay Epp and George W. MacRae (Philadelphia:

Fortress, 1989), with Wright's response (*Jesus and the Victory of God* 83-84).

[147] Philip S. Alexander, "Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament," *Zeitschrift für die neu-testamentliche Wissenschaft* 74 (1983): 237.

[148] Ibid., 238.

[149] Ibid., 244 (emphasis in the original).

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid., 245.

[152] Ibid., 243, cf. also 238-46; and Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81 (1962): 1-13.

[153] Philip S. Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Judaism," in *Jews and Christians, the Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*; ed. James D. G. Dunn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 2-3.

[154] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God,* 86.

[155] Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God,* 424.

[156] Ibid., 426 (emphasis in the original).

[157] Ibid., 425.

[158] Ibid., 426, cf. 424-26 also.

[159] Ibid., 372 n. 4.

[160] Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said,* 20.

[161] Wright, "A Fresh Perspective on Paul," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 83 (Spring 2001): 21. 79-80.

[162] Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said,* 18.

[163] Ibid., 19.

[164] Wright, “A Fresh Perspective on Paul,” 22.

[165] Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said,* 20.

[166] Ibid., 19; cf. N. T. Wright, “The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 (1978):

[167] Ibid., 78.

[168] Ibid., 87.

[169] Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said,* 32.

[170] Wright, “The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith,” 65 (emphasis in the original).

[171] Ibid., 78.

[172] Ibid., 82.

[173] Ibid., 82 (emphasis in the original).

[174] Ibid., 82.

[175] Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said,* 45-46.

[176] Ibid., 122.

[177] N. T. Wright, “The Shape of Justification,” *Bible Review* 17 (April 2001): 50.

[178] Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said,* 120.

[179] Wright, “The Shape of Justification,” 8.

[180] N. T. Wright, “The Letter to the Romans,” *NIB*, 440.

[181] Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said,* 119.

[182] Ibid., 116.

[183] N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 139 n. 10; For minor disagreements between Wright and Dunn on Gal 3:10-14, see ibid., 137-56.

[184] Wright, "Justification," 8, 50.

[185] Cf. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law,* 216-19; idem, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993), 134-41.

[186] Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said,* 122.

[187] Ibid., 100, 102.

[188] Ibid., 102.

[189] Ibid., 124.

[190] Ibid., 116.

[191] Ibid., 124.

[192] For a succinct history of historicalcritical ideologies, consult F. David Farnell, "Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis,* 85-131.

[193] For an excellent study of this Jewish reclamation of Jesus, consult Donald A. Hagner, *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

[194] Harry A. Wolfson, "How the Jews will Reclaim Jesus," *The Menorah Journal* (1962): 25-31; reprinted in *Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. B. Agus (New York: Arno, 1973). For an excellent review of how Jewish theologians have approached Paul in modern Jewish thought, consult Donald A. Hagner, "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," in *Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to Professor F. F Bruce on his 70th Birthday*, eds. Donald A. Hagner and Murray J. Harris (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 143-65.

[195] Hagner, "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," 143.

[196] Kittel traces the possibility that Paul is alluded to by Rabbi Eleazar in the Mishna (*Abot* 3.12). See Gerhard Kittel, "Paulus im Talmud," in *Rabbinica*

(Leipzig: Heinrich's, 1920), 1-16; Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah*, translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes (London: Oxford University, 1933), 451.

[197] Joseph Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul*, trans. William F. Stinespring (New York: Macmillan, 1943), 308-11.

[198] Hagner, "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," 144.

[199] See Farnell, "Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis*, 96-97.

[200] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment, An Interpretation: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: W. W.

Norton, 1966), xi.

[201] Hagner, "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," 146.

[202] Hagner, "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," 146.

[203] F. F. Bruce, *Paul the Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 462.

[204] Claude Goldsmid Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul, Two Essays* (London: Max Goschen, 1914); see also "Rabbinic Judaism and the Epistles of St. Paul," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 13 (January 1901): 161-217.

[205] Sanders, *PPJ* 35.

[206] C. G. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul, Two Essays* (London: Max Goschen, 1914), 65.

[207] C. G. Montefiore, "Rabinnic Judaism and the Epistles of St. Paul," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 13 (January 1901), 167 (emphasis in the original); reprinted in *Judaism and Christianity*, ed. J. B. Agus (1973).

[208] Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul*, 17.

[209] Sanders, *PPJ*, xii.

[210] For the complete text see Martin Luther, “On the Jews and Their Lies,” in *The Christian in Society*, vol. 47 of *Luther’s Works*, ed. Franklin Sherman, gen. ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 137-306.

[211] For an excellent treatment of the history and reaction surrounding this article, see “Introduction to ‘On the Jews and Their Lies,’” in *The Christian in Society*, vol. 47 of *Luther’s Works*, 123-36.

[212] See Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, 267-92.

[213] “Introduction to ‘On the Jews and Their Lies,’” 123.

[214] Ibid., 123.

[215] Ibid., 268-72.

[216] Ibid., 274.

[217] Ibid., 276, 277.

[218] Martin Luther, “That Jesus was Born a Jew,” in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 45, ed. Walther I. Brandt, trans. Walther I. Brandt (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1962), 200.

[219] Marvin Lowenthal, *The Jews of Germany, A Story of Sixteen Centuries* (New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1936), 158-59.

[220] Martin Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies*, 226-227.

[221] Ibid., 228.

[222] Ibid., 236.

[223] Ibid., 261-262.

[224] Ibid., 243.

[225] Ibid., 269.

[226] Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, *Entdecktes Judenthum* (Frankfurt am Main, 1700).

[227] Israel Shahak, *Jewish History, Jewish Religion, The Weight of Three Thousand Years*, Pluto: London and Sterling, VA, 1994).

[228] For the Anti-defamation leagues response to these statements, see "The Talmud in Anti-Semitic Politics" (Anti-Defamation League, February 2003): http://www.adl.org/presrele/asus_12/the_talmud.pdf.

[229] Consult uncensored editions for these texts. For more shocking statements in the Babylonian Talmud about Christianity and Jesus, see Peter Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2007). An online fully downloadable source for anti-Christian statements, with pdf proof for every citation, is Elizabeth Dilling's research preserved at http://www.come-and-hear.com/download.html. Accessed on 6/3/2013.

[230] For further information, see Peter C. Hodgson, "General Introduction," in Ferdinand Christian Baur, *On the Writing of Church History*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson (NewYork: Oxford University, 1968), 1-40; Neill and Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, 20-30.

[231] Hagner, "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought" 146; see also V. P. Furnish, "The Jesus-Paul Debate: From Baur to Bultmann, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 47 (1965), 342-81.

[232] Winfried Corduan, "Transcendentalism: Hegel," in *Biblical Errancy*, 94.

[233] Ferdinand Christian Baur, "Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde, der Gegensatz des petrinischen und paulinischen Christenthums in der ältesten Kirsche, der Apostel Petrus in Rom," *Zeitschrift für Theologie* 4 (1831): 61-206.

[234] Ferdinand Christian Baur, *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, 3d ed., trans. and ed. Allan Menzies (London: Williams and Norgate, 1878), 1:49-50.

[235] Hagner, "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought" 146; Baur's major works, especially *Paul, The Apostle of Jesus Christ, His Life and Work, His Epistles and His Doctrine*, trans. Eduard Zeller, 2 vols. (reprint of 1876 ed.; Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003), also set the stage for the 20th-century debate over the relationship between the life and teachings of the "historical Jesus" and the theology of Paul.

[236] For further information, consult Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems,* 127-133.

[237] S. J. Hafemann, "Paul and His Intepreters," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1993), 668.

[238] Though Wrede and Bultmann were essentially still Lutheran in approach, their ideas stimulated discussion that would lead to the NPP.

[239] For overviews of the development of the *Religionsgeschichte Schule* or History-of-Religions school, see Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems* 206-25, 245-80; Neill and Wright, *The Interpretation of the NT 1861-1986,* 168-79.

[240] Richard Reitzenstein, *Der Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen, Ihre Grundgedanken und Wirkungen* (Leipzig und Berlin: Bruck und Verlag von B. G. Teubner, 1910); see also English translation *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions, Their Basic Ideas and Significance*, trans. John E. Steely (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1978).

[241] See Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos*, trans. John E. Steely (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970).

[242] For further information, see Ernst Troeltsch, "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" (1898) (11-32); "Christianity and the History of Religion" (1897) (77-86); "The Dogmatics of the History-of-Religions School" (87-108), in *Religion in History*, essays translated by James Luther Adams and Walter F. Bense with an Introduction by James Luther Adams (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991).

[243] See Troeltsch, "The Dogmatics of the History-of-Religions School," in *Religion in History,* 87.

[244] See Rudolf Bultmann, *The Theology of the New Testament*, complete in one volume, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951, 1955), 164-87 (especially 181, 187).

[245] Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 7.

[246] Wilhelm Wrede, *The Origin of the New Testament*, trans. James S. Hill (London and New York: Harper & Brothers, 1909), 3.

[247] Ibid.

[248] Ibid.

[249] Wilhelm Wrede. *Paul*, trans. Edward Lummis (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1908).

[250] Ibid., 165.

[251] Ibid., 179, 180.

[252] Ibid., 123.

[253] Ibid., 127-28 (emphasis in the original).

[254] Ibid., 131-32.

[255] Ibid., 139-40.

[256] Ibid., 39-40.

[257] Ibid., 74.

[258] Ibid., 77.

[259] For an excellent summary, see William Baird, *History of New Testament Research* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 2:229-37.

[260] Schweitzer completed his D.Phil. dissertation on Kant (*Die Religionsphilosophie Kants*) in July 1899.

[261] Baird, *A History of New Testament Research*, 2:230.

[262] For further information see John Reumann, "'The Problem of the Lord's Supper'" as Matrix for Albert Schweitzer's 'Quest of the Historical Jesus,'" *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981): 476.

[263] Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, First Complete

Edition, ed. John Bowden, trans. W. Montgomery, J. R. Coates, Susan Cupitt, and John Bowden from the German *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, published by J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen [1906, 1913, 1950] (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001). Bowden's edition has been produced in response to some perceived translational errors in Montgomery's famous English translation. Bowden remarks, "[W]hen I started comparing it [Montgomery's translation] to what Schweitzer had written, I was horrified. Montgomery had a kind of bombastic, end-of-the-nineteenth-century style which contrasts strikingly with Schweitzer's clear, matter-of-fact and often witty prose." See "Editor's Note," *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, First Complete Edition, xi.

[264] A. Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1930), English translation, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Henry Holt, 1931). See also A. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der paulinischen Forschung von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1912), English translation, *Paul and His Interpreters: A Critical History*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 1951).

[265] For information, see Reumann, "The Problem of the 'Lord's Supper' as Matrix for Albert Schweitzer's 'Quest of the Historical Jesus,'" 475-87.

[266] Albert Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, translated and introduced by Walter Lowrie (London: A. & C. Black, 1925), 87.

[267] Wrede's thinking differed from Schweitzer here in that Wrede contended that Jesus never presented himself as Messiah but that the evangelist who wrote Mark used it as a literary device to explain the post-Easter church's proclamation of Jesus as the Messiah, while Schweitzer believed that the "messianic secret" was not a literary device but was contained in the pre-Marcan tradition. See Schweitzer, *The Quest*, 302, 303-14.

[268] Schweitzer, *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, 180-81.

[269] Ibid., 251.

[270] Ibid.

[271] Ibid.

[272] Schweitzer, *The Quest*, 90.

[273] Ibid., 23.

[274] For the agenda behind Schweitzer's *Quest*, see S. J. Gathercole, "The Critical and Dogmatic Agenda of Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*," *Tyndale Bulletin* 51 (2000): 261-83.

[275] Oddly, this quote does not appear in the lastest edition of Schweitzer's *Quest*, i.e., Bowden's edition (2001). See Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Introduction by James M. Robinson, trans. W. Montgomery from the first German edition, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* [1906] (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 370-71.

[276] Albert Schweitzer, *Paul and His Interpreters*, trans. W. Montgomery (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 37.

[277] Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of the Apostle Pa*ul (German title *Die Mystik des Apostles Paulus)*, trans. William Montgomery with a prefatory note by F. C. Burkitt (New York: Henry Holt, 1931), 3.

[278] Ibid.

[279] Ibid., 116.

[280] Ibid., 224-25 (emphasis added).

[281] Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 2:237.

CHAPTER 3

THE PROBLEM OF PHILOSOPHICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS USED IN GOSPEL STUDIES: HOW VARIOUS VIEWS OF INSPIRATION HAVE IMPACTED MODERN DISCUSSIONS OF THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM[1]

F. David Farnell



INTRODUCTION

Second Corinthians 10:5 and Colossians 2:8 warn believers to examine one's thought life carefully to guard against being taken a prisoner by philosophical presuppositions that are hostile to the Bible. One can either take thoughts captive or have their thought life take them captive to the detriment of their spiritual lives. One place in particular where conservative evangelicals have been taken captive is in the practice of the historicalcritical discipline of source criticism. The predominant view of the early church was that the Gospels were four independent witnesses to the life of Christ. Starting around the seventeenth century a philosophical and ideological shift began to occur in thinking about the origin of the Gospels, particularly in relationship to the Synoptic Gospels. Due to the rise of rationalism, deism, skepticism, the Enlightenment and Romanticism (to name only a few), the Independence Approach was rejected and two qualitatively different approaches resulted in explaining the Gospels, *i.e.* the Two-Gospel (neo-Griesbach) and Two-/Four-Source hypotheses. A careful investigation reveals that both these approaches developed from the same errancy roots as do modern unorthodox views of inspiration. Unorthodox views of inspiration produced both predominant Synoptic approaches. Because of the history and philosophy behind source criticism, when evangelicals adopt either approach in their interpretation of the Gospels, they automatically adopt these errancy roots that inevitably lead to deprecating the historicity and factuality of the Gospels.

The Need to Examine the Philosophical and Historical Bases of Literary Dependency

For the first 1,700 years of the church, the Independence view regarding synoptic origins prevailed.[2] That is, each Gospel writer worked independently of the others without relying on another canonical Gospel as a source of information. Consequently, the Gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John constitute four independent accounts of the life of Jesus. More specifically, no *direct* literary dependency exists among the Gospels, *i.e.* no Gospel writer directly used the others' works to compose his Gospel as asserted by modern source dependency hypotheses. They constitute four separate, independent

eyewitness testimonies to the life of Jesus.[3] Since the eighteenth century, however, the concept of literary dependency has come to prevail, with evangelicals today espousing either the Two Source or the Two-Gospel (neo-Griesbach) hypotheses. The crucial question in Gospel discussion for evangelicals, therefore, must center in what crucial factors changed this overwhelmingly predominate consensus from literary independence to one of literary dependency. What caused this paradigmatic shift in approach to explaining synoptic origins? A careful examination of church history reveals that modern shifts in view regarding the nature of inspiration were decisive in the historical development of modern forms of historicalcritical discussions of the Synoptic Problem, especially the Two-Gospel and Two-Document Hypotheses. Modern views regarding inspiration were, in turn, influenced and/or motivated by philosophical assumptions stemming from Rationalism, Deism, and the Enlightenment, to name only a salient few.[4]

Qualitatively Different, Ideological Approaches to the Gospels Predominate

As orthodox approaches to Scripture were jettisoned, especially regarding its inspiration (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), a qualitatively different approach to explaining the origin and nature of the Scriptures, particularly the Synoptics, gradually developed over time. Not only was the Bible reduced to a "handbook of morality" divorced from its claims, but an inverse proportion also developed between orthodox concepts of inspiration and the development of the literary dependency hypotheses. Specifically stated, as orthodox views of inspiration of the Gospels were reduced or jettisoned entirely, literary dependency hypotheses arose to predominate in synoptic discussion. David Laird Dungan, in his *History of the Synoptic Problem*, an ardent supporter of the literary dependency hypotheses known as neo-Griesbach or Two-Gospel hypothesis, identifies three significant factors that he labels "main roots" of the "Third Form of the Synoptic Problem," that caused the rise to predominance of literary hypotheses that currently prevail in NT Gospel studies, especially the Two-Gospel and Two-/Four-Source hypotheses. All three of these factors stemmed from philosophical ideologies, as well as critical historical developments, that caused an increasingly radical skepticism toward orthodox approaches to Gospel inspiration and origin. First, a skepticism toward, and rejection of, the historical and chronological value of the Gospel accounts, *i.e.* the Gospels could not be harmonized.[5] Second, a "cult of objectivity" that pursued a reductionist agenda

toward a purely mechanistic, rationalistic, and naturalistic explanation based in philosophically motivated premises of science or mathematical proof (i.e. a "new breed of *natural philosophers*").[6] As a result, Dungan notes, this factor caused "the demise of the Gospel harmony and led directly to the invention of the Gospel synopsis, an instrument intended to facilitate the objective investigation of the differences among the Gospels."[7] Third, the philosophical viewpoint known as Romanticism posited dynamic historical development in terms of flux and change. Although Romanticism remained rationalistic and non-supernatural in its view of history as well as Scripture, it reacted against the machine metaphor of rationalism, positing instead a dynamic continuum dominated by change. As a consequence, Romanticism's developmental view of nature and history produced a new developmental approach toward the differences among the Gospels and sought to explain the Gospels in terms of what sources had been used in the writing of the Gospels. Dungan, who might not place himself within the evangelical camp, frankly comments that modern historicalcritical synoptic approaches differ from previous Gospel study since they "arose within an attitude of extreme hostility toward the Bible and traditional Christian beliefs and values."[8]

Consequently, at the heart of literary dependency hypotheses is a philosophically-motivated radical skepticism regarding the historical value of the Gospels as trustworthy, historical documents. This skepticism may generally be traced back to Baruch Spinoza, who is regarded as the father of modern historical criticism of the Bible. Spinoza himself was a rationalist and pantheist, who for overriding personal reasons, disdained the plain meaning of the biblical text because of the implications as well as the effect it had had upon him as a person as well as his society as a whole.[9] Spinoza set in motion the modern nature of biblical criticism "*as a weapon to destroy or at least discredit the traditional metaphysics of Christianity and Judaism*."[10] Its purpose was to remove all influence of the Bible, not only in the religious sphere, but also in the economic as well as political areas of society. Commenting on the antecedent developments of historical critical ideology, Dungan relates,

> Spinoza and his followers multiplied questions about the physical history of the text to the point that the tradition theological task could never get off the ground. That, however, was precisely the intended effect of the first step: to create an endless "nominalist barrage" if you will, an infinitely extendable list of questions directed at the physical history of the text, to the point where the clergy and the political officials allied with them *could*

> *never bring to bear their own theological interpretations* of the Bible. In other words, Spinoza switched the focus from the *referent* of the biblical text (e.g., God's activity, Jesus Christ) to *the history of the text*. In doing so, he effectively eviscerated the Bible of all traditional theological meaning and moral teaching.[11]

Dungan goes on to comment, "In short, the net effect of what historical critics have accomplished during the past three hundred years—apart from accumulating an enormous heap of data about the physical history of the text—has been to eviscerate the Bible's core religious beliefs and moral values, preventing the Bible from questioning the political and economic beliefs of the new bourgeois class [that arose in the modern historicalcritical era]."[12] This chapter, therefore, will focus on reductionist views of inspiration, or perhaps more accurately unorthodox or aberrant views that resulted from these historical antecedents and philosophical premises that played a strategic role in the development of literary dependency hypotheses. Due to length limitations, we will focus on the Two-Gospel (neo-Griesbach) hypothesis as paradigmatic of this philosophical shift that affected Gospel studies since it arose historically before the Two-/Four-Source hypothesis (the Two-Source hypothesis exhibits the same historical and presuppositional roots). Specifically, J. J. Griesbach had an aberrant view of inspiration that directly contributed to his synoptic viewpoint for the priority of Matthew and the inferiority of Mark. He also manifested substantial disregard for the evidence from church history as to synoptic developments. Since this view is also known as the Owen-Griesbach hypothesis with the assertion that Griesbach received ideas regarding literary dependency from Owen, this paper will also review Owen's literary approach to the Gospels after reviewing Griesbach's approach.

THE TWO-GOSPEL/NEO-GRIESBACH HYPOTHESIS' UNORTHODOX, ABERRANT ROOTS

In terms of Griesbach's synoptic hypothesis, Griesbach's concepts of inspiration and hermeneutics were *decisive* factors in the development of his hypothesis. Dungan makes the following startling comment concerning Griesbach's work, *A Demonstration That the Whole of the Gospel of Mark Was Extracted from the Commentaries of Matthew and Luke*,[13] wherein he set forth his idea of the priority of Matthew and that Mark used Matthew as his primary

source: “It is striking to see the underlying modern historicist assumption just taken for granted –that these [Gospel] authors all wrote in an entirely human fashion. There is no mention of divine inspiration anywhere.”[14] The critical question, therefore, regarding Griesbach’s synoptic approach is what historical and presuppositional factors influenced Griesbach in the development of his hypothesis?

Three main influences are strategic to explaining Griesbach’s approach to the “synoptic” Gospels, a term that he apparently coined,[15] as well as his approach to his theological thinking as a whole: Pietism, the rationalism of the Enlightenment, and the philosophy of Romanticism.[16]

Griesbach’s Educational Background

Johann Jacob Griesbach (1745-1812) was the only son of a Lutheran Pietist minister, Konrad Kaspar Griesbach. He was further educated in Lutheran Pietistic orthodoxy during his five semesters at the University of Tübingen, although he would disassociate himself eventually from Pietism.[17] He transferred to the University of Halle in 1764 where he came under the influence of two great rationalistic modernist theologians there, New Testament scholar Johann David Michaelis (1717-1791), the inaugurator of the science of New Testament introduction,[18] as well as the renowned Professor of Theology, Johann Salamo Semler (1725-1791), the “founder of the historical study of the New Testament” and in whose house Griesbach lived as a student.[19] To these latter two individuals is credited the modern “scientific study” of the New Testament as well as having been strongly influenced by English Deists in their conclusions regarding the New Testament, for Kümmel relates that “[b]oth [Semler and Michaelis] were directly dependent for the questions they asked, as well as for many of the answers they gave, on the writings of the English Deists.”[20] Baird labels Michaelis and Semler each as being a “wunderkind” of the German Aufklärung.[21] Brown has described the religion of the Enlightenment as “none other than Deism in slightly different dress.”[22]

Griesbach also studied with the eminent New Testament critic Johann August Ernesti at Leipzig (1766-1767), who strongly influenced Griesbach’s hermeneutical approach.[23] Thus, Griesbach received the best education in Pietist and rationalistic, modernist, Enlightenment (Aufklärung) biblical studies that Germany and other countries of his day had to offer.[24] Important also is the fact that through family contacts as well as during his years as professor at Jena

(installed in 1775) and its connection to the neighboring Weimar region, Griesbach came into contact with leaders of the ideology of Romanticism, such as Goethe and Schiller, who often stayed at Griesbach's house.[25] Dungan summarizes well,

> Given his family background and academic training, Johann Griesbach's approach toward the Bible and theology was complex and nuanced. On one side, throughout his life he remained in close contact with Germany's Romantic thinkers—Goethe and Schiller. . . . From his student days with Semler and Michaelis, Griesbach had been exposed to Europe's skeptical, historicist interpretation of the New Testament and Church history. At the same time, he remained a true son of his religious heritage, never relinquishing in his lectures, publications, and ecclesiastical activities a marked Lutheran Pietism.[26]

Griesbach Identified as a Neologian.

Griesbach (along with Michaelis, Semler, Eichhorn and Herder—to mention but a few) is classified as belonging to the *Neologie*, a movement that reached its zenith between 1740 and 1790.[27] Kümmel and Bray identify Semler as "the father" or "the founder of the movement" but others dispute this identification.[28] The term "neology" has the meaning of "Teachers of the New."[29] They were called this term because people believed that the way these men read the Bible was fundamentally new. It consisted of combining the thinking of rationalism, Pietism, and Romanticism into a new system of approach toward Scripture.[30] While the neologians did not deny the validity of divine revelation *per se*, they assigned priority to reason and natural theology, "While faith in God, morality, and immortality were affirmed, older dogmas such as the Trinity, predestination and the inspiration of Scripture were seriously compromised."[31] Their historicalcritical method was virtually identical to rationalism, but they remained perhaps nominally more receptive to the idea of miracles.[32] Brown comments,

> In general, the Neologians sought to transcend both orthodoxy and pietism by restating the Christian faith in the light of modern thought. To them [the Neologians], revelation was a confirmation of the truths of reason. They drew a distinction between religion and theology, and between dogmas and the Bible. In a sense they were pioneers of moderate biblical criticism, maintaining that Jesus deliberately accommodated his teaching to the beliefs and understandings of his hearers.[33]

Griesbach admitted this factor in his own work and also noted the dissatisfaction among some people caused by this melding of conflicting thoughts in the Preface to the second addition (1786) of his *Anleitung zum Studium der populären Dogmatik, besonders für künftige Religionslehrer [Magistri verbi divini],* wherein he stated that he would be referring to "the precious 'enlightenment' of many dogmas" provided by modern scholars, so that certainly some of his readers "will shake their heads suspiciously at supposed heterodoxies—known now as neologies," while others "will shrug their shoulders indulgently at the author's attachment to old-fashioned orthodoxy."[34] Dungan relates, "Griesbach was a perfect example of such a hybrid or mediating position. . . . Judging from his more popular writings, Griesbach's Bible became —in good Enlightenment, *i.e.* Spinozist, fashion—a handbook of morality whose doctrines were acceptable to any reasonable person."[35]

Thus, neology was an attempted, albeit unsuccessful, effort at synthesizing contemporary thought. Affirming rationalism's critical spirit, neologians refused to recognize the Bible as divinely inspired but modified rationalism's ideology that interpreted Scripture entirely based on natural science; from the Romantics, they developed the idea that the Bible was to be interpreted in literary categories and seen through the concept of development and change; from the tradition of textual criticism, they were concerned with a detailed analysis of the text.[36] Neology's attempted synthesis was viewed as a failure and lasted only a generation. A renewed, rigorous rationalism on the one hand that was counter-balanced by a renewed supernaturalism on the other replaced it. Bray comments on neology's demise,

> The accusation that neology was little more than rationalism with a human face may be somewhat harsh, but it is true that the neologists were unable, and probably unwilling, to move away from rationalistic presuppositions in any decisive way. In the end, they could not separate critical methods from the ideology that lay behind them, and their attempts to do so made them appear inconsistent with their own principles. . . .
>
> Perhaps the best judgment on neology is to say that it was not so much a failure at synthesis as a first attempt. . . but which established basic principles that still play their part in biblical interpretation today.[37]

Reflecting the mentoring of his teachers Semler and Michaelis, Greisbach attempted to accommodate traditional Christianity to the mind of the

Enlightenment, and thus he was plagued by the same tension between faith and criticism that troubled his predecessors.[38]

Mentoring for Griesbach

Theologically, Michaelis and Semler had a profound impact on their student Griesbach while he studied at Halle. Baird notes, “Their two most famous students, J. J. Griesbach and J. G. Eichhorn, carried on the tradition of their teachers.”[39] From his student days with Semler and Michaelis, Griesbach had been exposed to Europe’s skeptical historicist (rationalistic) interpretation of the New Testament and Church history.[40] Hurst, in his *History of Rationalism*, relates that “Griesbach pursued his [Semler’s] skeptical investigations for the establishment of natural religion and others aided him in his undertaking.”[41] Semler was reared in the atmosphere of Pietism but eventually rejected his Pietistic heritage in his theological assertions. Under his leadership, Halle became the leading, as well as dominant, center of liberal, critical theology in the eighteenth century.[42] Hurst uses little diplomacy in noting that “there have been few men who have shown greater boldness in assaulting the Christian faith than Semler, the father of the destructive school of Rationalism.”[43] Hurst’s further description is even more biting,

> His work, though destructive, was in conflict with the pure beauty of his private life. And here we look at him as one of the enigmas of human biography. True to his tenet that a man’s public teachings need not influence his personal living, he was at once a teacher of skepticism and an example of piety. . . .
>
> It was astonishing that a man could live as purely and devotedly as Semler, and yet make the gulf so wide between private faith and public instruction. We attribute no evil intention to him in his theological labors; these were the results of his own mental defects.[44]

As a true child of the Enlightenment,[45] Semler demonstrated contempt of the history and doctrinal authority of the church, Hurst again noting that “His [Semler’s] chief triumph was against the history and doctrinal authority of the church. His mind had been thoroughly imbued with a disgust of what was ancient and revered. He appeared to despise the antiquities of the church simply because they were antiquities. What was new and fresh, was, with him, worthy of unbounded admiration and speedy adoption.”[46]

Semler opposed the biblicism of the orthodox, rejecting the traditional doctrine of inspiration.[47] Semler was a chief catalyst in the hermeneutical revolution that was occurring. His four-volume *Treatise on the Free Investigation of the Canon* (1771-75) [*Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Canon*] fought the orthodox doctrine of inspiration and claimed that the Word of God and Holy Scriptures are not identical, thus implying that not all parts of the Bible are inspired. He also claimed that the question of whether a book belongs to the canon is purely a historical one. That is, the Bible is purely a historical document and to be investigated like any other document through historicalcritical methodology.[48] In light of the alleged historical development of Scripture, Semler maintained that one could no longer appeal to the doctrine of inspiration as a guarantee of the text of Scripture as the Word of God and that the Gospels themselves were not intended to be universally valid, definitive histories, but each grew out of a particular historical context.[49] Semler prepared the way for the "free investigation" of the Scripture unencumbered by dogmatic or theological restraints. He also asserted that the Scriptures are to be interpreted by the same method whereby any other book would be interpreted, *i.e.* the historical (i.e. rationalistic).[50] Gerhard Maier strikes at the heart of the matter, "The general acceptance of Semler's basic concept that the Bible must be treated like any other book has plunged theology into an endless chain of perplexities and inner contradictions."[51]

Another significant feature of Semler's exegesis is his use of the theory of accommodation. According to Semler, the truths of revelation had been accommodated to the capacity of the people to appropriate them. In discussing the relation of Jesus to demons, Semler constructed his accommodation theory, asserting that Jesus himself did not believe in the existence of demons but trimmed his teaching to fit the unenlightened minds of his hearers.[52] Semler argued, "That teachers, after the undeniable example of Jesus and the apostles, condescended to their listeners' mode of thought, or accommodated themselves to their own circumstances, is historically certain and was done at that time as the matter required."[53]

Interestingly, Semler, however, reacted strongly against the Wolfenbüttel Fragments published by Lessing.[54] Baird relates, "Although both [Lessing and Semler] had rejected the faith of their youth, Semler was never fully free from his pietistic legacy. . . . Semler thought the Fragments to be an impious assault on Christianity."[55] Semler's approach upheld a general, reverent and judicious acceptance of new, historicalcritical approaches while Lessing's approach,

though essentially supporting Semler's, appeared to Semler to be malicious and sarcastic in tone. Thus, the difference between Lessing and Semler was in part a matter of temperament and tone in writing, rather than of substance.[56] Nonetheless, the aggregate result of Semler's approach is the destruction of biblical authority as well as its inspiration.[57] Such views earned for Semler the title of "father of historicalcritical theology."[58]

Michaelis, another mentor of Griesbach who significantly influenced him, was relatively more conservative than Semler, although strong Deistic influences alienated him from Pietism. Michaelis expressed his ideas in his *Einleitung in die göttlichen Schriften des Neuen Bundes*, of which the fourth edition of 1788 carried forth Semler's historical approach to the New Testament.[59] He also advanced some very influential ideas upon Griesbach, some of which deserve special mention. First, only books written by apostles should be accepted as inspired. Michaelis argued regarding the Gospels of Mark and Luke (as well as the book of Acts) that "I must confess, that I am unable to find a satisfactory proof of their inspiration, and the more I investigate the subject, and the oftener I comprare their writings with those of St. Matthew and St. John, the greater are my doubts."[60]

Second, a book could be genuine (i.e. authentically written by the individuals who are purported to have written them) but not necessarily inspired: "The question, whether the books of the New Testament are inspired, is not so important, as the question whether they are genuine. The truth of our religion depends on the latter, not absolutely on the former." [61] Michaelis's distinction between inspiration and reliability called into question the belief that the whole Bible was equally inspired and infallible. Baird remarks, "Although Michaelis had written impressive works on dogmatics and reflected profoundly about the meaning of language, his weakness was a failure to think theologically about his historical criticism."[62]

Third, Michaelis raised the possibility of contradictions in the Gospels so that their harmonization was questioned, although, admittedly, he did not take this to mean that the main substance of their accounts was false since he felt that the evangelists were on the whole good historians.[63] Neill and Wright comment "the orthodoxy of the time [Michaelis' day] took it for granted that, because the NT is divinely inspired in every part, it is *a priori* impossible that there should be any contradictions between the Gospels; any apparent contradiction must be due only to the imperfection of our understanding, and must be susceptible of resolution

into harmony. Michaelis was prepared to face the possibility that there really might be contradictions."[64]

Thus, for Michaelis, as well as for his student, Griesbach, the Gospels of Matthew and John were inspired; the other two, Mark and Luke, were not. Interestingly, Baird notes that "Michaelis intended to use the new historicalcritical method to support authenticity. . . . Michaelis. . . was concerned to defend the apostolic authorship and canonicity of most of the NT books."[65] Others during Michaelis's time, however, recognized the real effect of Michaelis's work in deprecating the inspiration of the New Testament books.[66] Unlike his student Griesbach, Michaelis rejected the idea of literary dependence, instead presenting for the first time the hypothesis of an *Urevangelium* or "original lost gospel" whereby he traced their common characteristics to common use of several apocryphal gospels.[67]

German Pietism's Emphasis on Personal Experience: A Bridge to Griesbach's Rationalism.

Pietism, whose central figure was Philipp Jacob Spener (1635-1705), was essentially a reaction against the development of Scholastic Lutheranism that had developed in Germany after the Reformation. Though Scholastic Lutheranism was based on the Scriptures, it assumed the form of a fixed dogmatic interpretation, rigid, exact and demanding intellectual conformity. Emphasis was laid on pure doctrine and on the sacraments. The vital relationship between the believer and God that Luther had taught was replaced very largely by a faith that consisted in the acceptance of a dogmatic whole. Although some evidences of deeper piety existed, the general tendency was external and dogmatic.[68]

Spener reacted against such externals, asserting the primacy of feeling in Christian experience.[69] Although at first Pietists adhered to the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture in the same manner as did the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Anabaptist, Lutheran, Evangelical Reformed, and Westminster traditions, they stressed subjective, personal experience rather than biblical doctrines or catechism.[70] August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), Spener's close associate, argued, "We may safely assure those who read the word with devotion and simplicity, that they will derive more light and profit from such a practice, and from connecting meditation with it. . . than can ever be acquired from

drudging through an infinite variety of unimportant minutiae."[71] In 1694 the University of Halle was founded and quickly became the main eighteenth-century center of the Pietistic Movement begun by Spener, with Francke dominating the theological methods and instruction, although he did not become a member of the faculty until 1698.[72]

Francke took Spener's emphasis on personal experience further, even to the point where, although he emphasized the importance of reading Scripture, at times he appeared opposed to the need for intellectual and doctrinal pursuits (as the quote above may indicate). This led to attacks on Pietism by orthodox Lutherans. Gonzalez notes that "[t]he emphasis here [by Francke] falls entirely on individual believers and their relationship with God, and the church seems to be entirely bypassed."[73] This acute subjectivism actually prepared the way for the rise of rationalism among later Pietists, like Spener, Michaelis and Griesbach. [74] Nix summarizes well:

> Although Pietists adhered to the inspiration of the Bible, they advocated individual feeling as being of primary importance. That may have been an adequate method for avoiding cold orthodoxy of "Protestant scholasticism," it opened the door for the equally dangerous enemy of "subjective experientialism." The first generation of Pietists could recall and reflect on its grounding in Scripture while validly advocating the need for individual experience. A second generation would stress the need for individual experience, but often without a proper Biblical or catechetical basis. This would leave a third generation that would question individual experience with no Biblical or doctrinal "standard" to serve as an objective criterion. In turn, their unanswered questions would tend to demand an authority. When the Scriptures were neglected, human reason or subjective experience would fill the need as the required "standard." Thus while not causing other movements Pietism gave impetus to three other movements in the post-Reformation church: deism, skepticism and rationalism. Although these movements were not limited to any particular country prior to the revolutions in America and France, deism was most dominant in England and America, skepticism in France, and rationalism in Germany.[75]

As a consequence, rationalism had strongly influenced the Pietism of Griesbach's day.

The Importance of Griesbach's Historical and

Presuppositional Context

Griesbach's approach to the New Testament, especially his synoptic approach, strongly attests these background influences of his mentoring, his pietistic religious background, as well as the Enlightenment's rationalistic methods of historical criticism expressed in his day. Strategically, only by placing Griesbach into this historical and presuppositional context can one properly evaluate his literary dependency hypothesis.

HistoricalCritical Presuppositions that Influenced Griesbach's Synoptic Approach

Reflecting Semler's and Michaelis's approach, Griesbach asserted that although the Bible is a unique book, "The New Testament must be explained as every other ancient book is explained."[76] Moreover, Griesbach believed, along with them, that "The accuracy, especially in the case of the NT writers, often errs."[77] Reflecting Semler's accommodation hypothesis, Griesbach believed that the people of the Ancient Near East were limited in their worldview and ascribed to divine intervention what was the result of natural causes. [78] As a result, Griesbach asserted, "The truth of the Christian religion. . .rests not on miracles, but partly on its excellence, partly on its history."[79] Reflecting Semler's concept that the Word of God and the Scriptures are not identical, Griesbach asserted that much of the NT (e.g., the temporally conditioned data, the limited perspective of the original readers) belongs simply to the garment which clothes the universal truth. Hence, Greisbach held that the Bible is not to be identified as the Word of God, but "it is merely the history of revelation, the presentation of the revealed truth."[80]

Griesbach's unorthodox view of the canon as erring and limited in inspiration contributed to fostering the concept of valuing of some Gospels as being more reliable or "inspired" (Matthew, John) while others were not (Mark, Luke), and hence, the more reliable ones could serve as possible "sources" for the others. Since the Scriptures were to be approached like any other book, such an idea also disposed him toward a totally naturalistic and mechanistic explanation for the Gospel phenomena in accordance with the rationalism of Enlightenment thinking, apart from any concepts of the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon the writers, especially since, as noted, his synoptic approach never referenced inspiration at any point.[81]

Rationalistic and Pietistic Presuppositions that Influenced Griesbach's Synoptic Approach

Griesbach's unorthodox presuppositions regarding inspiration reflected in the rationalism that imbued the Pietism of his day. He believed that the New Testament writers were not inspired by the Holy Spirit *in the act of writing*.[82] That is, Griesbach opposed the orthodox idea that the New Testament Scriptures were plenary, verbally inspired by God.[83] Instead, he maintained that the Apostles received a onetime gift of the Spirit at Pentecost which made it possible for them later on both to understand and transmit doctrine.[84] Such a stance automatically deprecated and left out the Gospels of Mark and Luke, as well as some other NT books, because they were not written by Apostles directly but associates. Reflecting Michaelis's concept that only books written by Apostles are inspired, Griesbach argued, "Those who argue that Mark wrote under the influence of divine inspiration must surely regard it as being a pretty meagre one!"[85] According to Griesbach, the Holy Spirit worked through two Apostles, Matthew and John, who were of preeminent importance for giving reliable testimony to the historical facts of Jesus' ministry. This becomes key for his acceptance of Matthew as the Gospel that would have literary primacy in his synoptic hypothesis.

Combined with this unorthodox view of inspiration, he also reflected Michaelis's skepticism regarding generally the historical reliability of the Gospels, believing that the Synoptics could not be harmonized or offer a reliable chronological account of Jesus' life. Brown perceptively comments, "Griesbach's separation of the first three Gospels from the fourth [i.e. John's Gospel] gave rise to the classification of the former as the Synoptic Gospels," a term that was coined by Griesbach.[86] This historical skepticism led him to the development of a synopsis rather than pursuing any development of a traditional harmony, which he rejected.[87] Moreover, Griesbach's view of the Gospel of John was highly skeptical in terms of its chronological reliability and he omitted it from his synopsis. Greisbach also maintained that Mark particularly was not interested in the chronological order of events, commenting that "I have serious doubts that a harmonious narrative can be put together from the books of the evangelists, one that adequately agrees with the truth in respect of chronological arrangement of the pericopes and which stands on a solid basis. . . . I confess to this heresy!"[88] He hypothesized that through critically observing synopsis presentation of the Gospels the "correct" original order of composition could be

discovered by comparing the Gospels to one another, thus also determining the most reliable historical facts in the gospels.

In sum, Griesbach's aberrant position on inspiration combined with rationalistic skepticism regarding the historical and chronological reliability of the Gospels caused him to view one Gospel, Matthew, as superior to the other Synoptics. This led him to prefer Matthew, while Mark and Luke were *a priori* placed in an posterior position as deriving information from their "source," *i.e.* Matthew. Dungan, a staunch supporter of the Two-Gospel hypothesis, admits that both Griesbach's rejection of the possibility of harmonizing the Gospels and Griesbach's view of inspiration influenced his Synoptic approach:

> As long as the Gospels were viewed as a divinely inspired, inerrant, timeless block, or, more precisely, as four accurate but incomplete chronologies of the original events, the obvious gaps and apparent chronological inconsistencies among the Gospels had to be explained. . .
>
> As soon as the Gospels were seen to be *human* books written at *different* times for different *audiences*, their differences and inconsistencies took on a wholly new significance; they were important clues to the shifts and changes in the vital development of the early Christian church.

Dungan goes on to conclude,

> One immediate result of this approach was to open the door to the possibility that not all of the Gospels were equally reliable. The big question then became how to distinguish the more reliable from the less reliable Gospels. . .
>
> Griesbach resolved this riddle by pointing to the Gospels of Matthew and John as the most reliable historical accounts, since they had been written by the Apostles who had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.[89]

The Influence of Historical Skepticism on Griesbach's Invention of the Synopsis

Because Griesbach's view of inspiration, as well as his negative approach regarding harmonization, differed qualitatively from the position of the church held down through the centuries through the time of the Reformation,[90] it caused

him to develop a different approach, the synopsis, that placed the Gospels not into a harmonious whole but into parallel columns so that minute differences and/or alleged contradictions could stand out sharply and be magnified. In its historical development, therefore, the synopsis is based on historical skepticism of the Gospels. Dungan strikes at the heart of the issue when he relates that at heart of all modern discussion of modern synoptic dependency hypotheses is a "skepticism regarding the chronological value of the gospels."[91] Importantly also is the fact that Gospel synopses played a decisive role in the development of modern synoptic dependency hypotheses that arose from modern skepticism regarding the Gospels. Both the Two-/Four-Source and Two Gospel hypotheses were greatly facilitated to prominence through this vehicle. [92] More significantly, grave suspicion is cast upon any neutrality of synopses in dealing with the synoptic question since they are circular at core, being constructed to prove dependency hypotheses already chosen on an *a priori* basis. Dungan comments that most modern synopses are now highly biased toward the Two-/Four-Source hypothesis:

> [T]he same circular process of argument emerged in Germany that later appeared in England. A source theory was invented and a synopsis created to illustrate it. Charts were then created based on that synopsis which were held to "prove" the theory. This *circulus in probando* was camouflaged in Germany by Huck's claim that his synoptic arrangement was "neutral" with respect to all source theories.[93]

The Philosophy of Romanticism's Influence on Griesbach's Approach

The influence of Romanticism and its concept of development influenced Griesbach's synoptic approach.[94] Dungan observes, "Griesbach was unable to adopt the traditional harmony since he felt drawn toward the modern Romantic notion of a development view of the Gospels' history, a conception that was intrinsic to the epistemological rational of the synopsis, as distinguished from the harmony."[95] He lived at the rise of Romanticism's influence in Germany, greatly affecting his approach toward the Gospels.[96] Its concepts of change and flux caused him to move toward developmental ideas of how the Gospels were created. At heart, however, Romanticism was rationalistic, seeking naturalistic and mechanistic ways of explaining Scripture rather than recognizing any orthodox viewpoint regarding its inspiration. Brown comments,

> The Romantic movement created great interest in the Bible as literature and consequently reduced it to one among many documents to be studied by scholars in comparative literature and religion. . . If the Bible could be damaged by placing it alongside other supposedly early documents, some genuine, some less so, and suggesting that it has no more authority than they do, it could also be reduced in influence by placing other documents alongside the Bible and implying that they have an authority similar to the Bible's.[97]

Griesbach's Enlightenment Prejudice Against Ancient Traditions

In 1771, Griesbach prepared a treatise on the importance of the church fathers (especially Origen) for the original text of the New Testament. Yet, in regard to his synoptic hypothesis, like his mentor, Semler, he exhibited the characteristic Enlightment (Aufklärung) disrespect or dismissal of their writings. Linnemann aptly notes,

> What about the traditions from the early church that give information about the origins of the Gospels? Griesbach focused only on those in which he found supporting evidence for his hypothesis. The rest he arbitrarily declared to be "sheer fabrication" and "worthless fables."
>
> How scientific "scientific" theology is becomes obvious as we consider what Griesbach was really saying: Historical church tradition—which possessed incontrovertible validity for friend and foe alike in the second century, when some were still alive who could declare what was bogus—was branded a lie by a "scientist" at the end of the eighteenth century. Yet this view so thoroughly discredited the tradition that its claims to truth no longer was taken seriously by historicalcritical theology.[98]

Orchard concurs, "Griesbach. . . accepted the authenticity of the Gospels but at the same time denied the value of the historical evidence."[99] Griesbach depricated Papias, "The things that Papias (Eusebius H.E. III. 39) records about the Gospel of Mark are figments very far from the truth, although he produces the Presbyter John as a witness."[100] Griesbach would need to deprecate Papias since he relates that Mark was dependent on Peter, not Matthew, as the "source" for his Gospel. Griesbach summarily dismissed other evidence by arguing, "The

most ancient Fathers, who recorded that Mark wrote the life of the Lord under the auspices of Peter, either narrated their own conjectures (not history drawn from trustworthy documents), or were deceived by false rumours."[101] Regarding the evidence of the Petrine source behind Mark, he states that Tertullian (*Against Marcion* IV.5) relied on "vague rumors and arguments with little foundation"; that the authority of Justin (*Dialogue with Trypho* §106) in historical matters "amounts to nothing;"[102] and that Clement of Alexandria is "not quite consistent with himself" and trumps up artificial differences in statements capable of more viable alternatives.[103]

Griebach's dismissal of Clement as a source is rather telling of his Enlightenment prejudice against ancient tradition at times, especially since a closer examination of Clement reveals that he received information on the Gospels through personal contacts from a wide network of church elders from different parts of the Mediterranean world.[104] Eusebius quotes him as noting that "a tradition of the primitive elders with regard to the order of the Gospels as follows. He said that those Gospels were first written which include the genealogies."[105] Here Clement, based on widespread information, related that Matthew or Luke were first composed, then Mark and John. While part of the evidence from Clement supports Matthean priority in terms of time of composition (i.e. Matthew first), Griesbach summarily dismissed evidence than ran contrary to his hypothesis and asserted that Mark depended on Peter, not Matthew, as his source.[106]

Interestingly also, the tone of Griesbach's handling of evidence that contradicted his hypothesis closely resembles Streeter's high-handed and cavalier dismissal of the "minor agreements" as "irrelevant" and "deceptive" of Matthew and Luke against Mark.[107] Yet, sound reasoning would dictate that those closest to the composition of the Gospels should be taken more seriously than advocates of late-developing synoptic hypotheses. Because of the contemptuous attitude of Enlightenment scholars, current German and British scholars have by and large continued to ignore or dismiss such evidence.[108]

AN EXAMINATION OF HENRY OWEN IN REGARD TO THE TWO-GOSPEL HYPOTHESIS ALSO KNOWN AS THE OWEN-GRIESBACH HYPOTHESIS[109]

Some evangelicals who adopt literary dependency have attempted to point out the possible influence and contribution of Henry Owen (1716-1795) to Griesbach's literary dependency approach. By profession Owen was a practicing physician (MD degree in 1753 at 37 years old; practicing for three years) who only later took clerical vows in the Church of England. He became rector of St. Olave, Hart Street, in 1760, and vicar of Edmonton, Middlesex in 1775. More specifically, evangelicals assert that it was Owen, not Griesbach, who originated the very first defense of literary dependence. Owen wrote nineteen years (1764) before Griesbach (1783)[110] and reflected a very similar view to Griesbach because, it is alleged, Owen may have later influenced Griesbach's thinking. Owen, so the thinking goes, is considered by some evangelicals to be a defender of biblical accuracy and literary dependency in his work so that the conclusion reached is that evangelicals, emulating Owen's approach, may operate literary dependency from a high view of Scripture.[111] Therefore, a review of Henry Owen and his treatise, *Observations on the Four Gospels*, is necessary to determine the validity of such an assertion.[112]

Circumstantial Evidence of Owen's Influence on Griesbach

Theories on the influence of Owen on Griesbach are not new. Herbert Marsh (1758-1839), Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge (1807) who translated Michaelis's *Introduction to the New Testament* (1801-1802), had appended an essay entitled, "Dissertation on the Origin and Composition of the Three First Canonical Gospels" wherein he set forth the idea that Griesbach had been influenced by Owen as well as Büsching and Stroth in the development of his hypothesis.[113] Also in 1897, Weiss, in his *Einleitung*, called it the "*Owen-Griesbach'sche Hypothese*" (1897).[114] On the basis of this assumption, Neirynck argues, "Griesbach's personal contribution is not in suggesting Mark as a combination of Matthew and Luke, but in arguing with new "*gravissimae rationes*, especially the relative order of episodes."[115]

The idea that Griesbach was influenced by Owen in the development of his approach is purely circumstantial, being based on inference and speculation. No evidence exists that Griesbach met Owen. Griesbach never mentioned Owen by name (or Büsching). Griesbach, however, did obtain Owen's work at some point, since it is listed in the catologue of his library when it was prepared for sale after his death in 1813.[116] Since Owen published his work before Griesbach (1764)

and since Griesbach visited England prior to the publication of his source hypothesis in the preface to his *Synopsis* (1776), it is assumed that he may have met Owen or purchased this work while he visited Oxford and London (1769-1770), chiefly gathering materials for his textcritical research. The precise time of obtaining Owen's work, however, is unknown. Moreover, Griesbach made a veiled reference in his *Demonstration* that "more recently some have shrewdly observed that the conformity of Mark with Luke is also so great that he [Mark] would seem to have had his [Luke's] Gospel at hand."[117] Oddly, Griesbach does not mention who he had specifically in mind here but does mention others, such as Lardner, Koppe, Michaelis, and Storr, who opposed the idea. This statement regarding these shrewd observers could be interpreted in different ways: perhaps Griesbach did not want his readers to know who influenced him or whose ideas he borrowed so he only made a veiled reference to them; perhaps he merely wanted to suggest to his readership that his conclusions were not unusual since other shrewd observers had come to his same conclusion. This latter point finds support in the immediate context, since his purpose in the section centered more on a listing and refutation of those who opposed the idea of Mark as the abbreviator of Matthew or who dissented from his own synoptic approach as well as pointing out "such extensive disagreement of these scholars" rather than mustering a list of names who supported his approach.[118]

The case for any such influence, however, must remain inferentially based. While others may have influenced Griesbach and although his major mentors (Michaelis, Semler, Ernesti, and Le Clerc) did not espouse this synoptic hypothesis, all the essential elements were present in Griesbach's thinking regarding the Gospels in terms of his philosophical background as well as his theological approach to develop such a literary hypothesis apart from Owen.[119] For the sake of argument, however, the present writer will assume that Owen may have influenced Griesbach's approach. One must now look at any influences upon Owen to see if he remained free of philosophical and theological aberrations in the development of his own synoptic approach.

Owen's Literary Approach to the Synoptics

In sum, Owen's synoptic approach was one of literary dependency. Specifically, that the Gospel of Mark is a compilation of Matthew and Luke. Owen wrote,

> In compiling this narrative, he [Mark] had but little more to do, it seems,

> than to abridge the Gospels which lay before him—varying some expressions, and inserting some additions, as occasion required. That St. Mark followed this plan, no one can doubt, who compares his Gospels with those of the two former Evangelists. He copies largely from both: and takes either the one or the other almost perpetually for his guide. The order indeed is his own, and is very close and well connected. [120]

To Owen, the literary (and chronological) order is Matthew-Luke and Mark with Mark being reduced to merely a slavish abridgement of Matthew and Luke.[121] Hence, Owen's view essentially matches Griesbach's approach. Stoldt relates, "They [Owen and Griesbach] were of the opinion that, in view of the texts, the Gospel of Mark had to be considered an abbreviated compilation of the kerygmatic work of Jesus drawn from Matthew and Luke, in which the prehistory (the nativity legends, *Evangelium infantiae*, and genealogy) was deliberately foregone."[122] Owen argued that Mark wrote so that "his Gospel should stand clear of all objections."[123]

An examination of Owen's treatise reveals that, based on an acutely *selective* as well as *arbitrary* treatment of internal evidence, corroborated by *selective and arbitrary* citation of external evidence designed to support his *a priori* internal conclusions, he asserted that Matthew was written in A.D. 38 (from Jerusalem); Luke in A.D. 53 (from Corinth); Mark in A.D. 63 (from Rome) and John (from Ephesus) in A.D. 69.[124]

Owen Professed to Maintain a High View of Scripture

Evangelicals who practice literary dependency find solace in the fact that Owen professed a high view of Scripture. Owen thought that his newly developed literary dependency would function as an apologetic answer to growing skepticism regarding the Gospels during his day: "[H]ow, then, came they not to avoid the many contradictions observable among them? These are only *seeming* contradictions; and vanish most of them, on a close comparison of the several passages."[125] He argued "these Gospels are by no means to be looked upon as so many detached pieces, composed by persons totally ignorant of each other's intentions; but rather as one complete system of Divinity, supported by the strongest proofs that the subject is capable of, and defended against all the objections [its critics]. . . could make to the truth and certainty of it."[126] Owen also maintains traditional authorship of the four Gospels.[127]

If these statements are taken in isolation without a careful examination of his entire treatise, one might be tempted to use such statements as alleged evidence for Owen's literary dependency hypothesis being compatible, or defensible, with a high view of Scripture uncontaminated by any negatives. Such a conclusion, however, is hasty for two strategic reasons. First, to present Owen as a pre-Griesbachian literary dependency advocate free from modern philosophical or theologically unorthodox practices is tenuous. As will be demonstrated, evidence from his treatise shows that Owen contradicted his profession of a high view of Scripture in his literary approach.

Second, complicating the issue for evangelicals who present Owen as an outstanding paradigm for their literary dependency practice is Owen's own admission that he had not thoroughly worked out the practical implications of his hypothesis. He states that he had merely formulated his literary approach and admits that he never completely thought through the implications of it. The practical outworking he leaves to others:

> If the plan here exhibited be just in the main. . . . Some few specimens. . . the Reader will find inserted in the Notes. More could not conveniently be added, though they spring up thick in the Author's way. This superstructure he leaves to others and to future time: his present concern is for the goodness of the foundation, which he intreats the public to examine with care; and to judge of with candour and impartiality. Whatever is defective in it, he heartily wishes to see supplied, and whatever is exceptional, corrected. The whole aim of his research is the acquisition of truth, to which he is ready to sacrifice any of the forementioned opinions, whenever they are proved to be false.[128]

Clearly from the above, Owen had not thought things through regarding the long-term implications of his literary dependency approach, making any usage of Owen precarious as a paradigm for evangelicals. One cannot offer Owen as a paradigm for evangelicals if even Owen did not think through the practical implications of what he formulated in theory. Certain indications, however, are manifest in his treatise that demonstrate that his method and practice directly contradicted his statements of a high view of Scripture.

Owen's Practice of Literary Dependency Contradicted His Profession of a High View of

Scripture

Several indications exist in Owen's writings that profession did not match practice. First, certain indications in Owen's writing indicate that he realized his approach differed qualitatively and sharply from the orthodox approach that had been in vogue in his own time. Owen wrote, "If the plan here exhibited be just in the main. . . then there is a *new* [italics added] field of Criticism opened, where the learned may usefully employ their abilities, in comparing the several Gospels together, and raising observations from that comparative View."[129] Notice the word "new." It was a qualitatively different approach that had not previously been displayed among the orthodox that surrounded Owen. Owen goes on,

> [T]he Evangelists not only perused, but also transcribed, each others Writings; and consequently, that the argument *commonly* [italics added] urged in support of the credibility of the Gospel-History, and founded on contrary opinion, is at last founded on a common mistake. For thus they reason. "The sacred Historians agree in their accounts, and yet knew nothing of each others Writings; they did not therefore write in concern, and forge these accounts, but were severally guided by the real existence of the facts related."[130]

By these words, Owen admits here that the predominant view of the orthodox or standard view (i.e. "commonly urged") in defense of the Gospels was that each Gospel writer was an independent eyewitness and writer of their accounts. Instead, he calls this thinking a "common mistake" and admits his approach differed (qualitatively) from current practice. He goes on to note, "True indeed it is, that they neither forged their accounts, nor wrote in concert; for they wrote at different times, in different places, and with different views; yet, so far is it from being true, that the later Evangelists never consulted what the former had written before them. . . . They pursed, recommended, and copied each other."[131] Owen here admitted that he had moved away from prevailing, orthodox opinion that was commonly held and adopted an entirely qualitatively new approach.

Second, while Owen may have been aware of the dangers of ancient philosophy, since he mentioned the heresy of the "Nicolaitans," labeling it "heretical" and "founded on Philosophy and vain learning in reference to John's Gospel," he does not openly admit or seem self-aware of the philosophies of his own times that controlled his thinking on the Synoptic Gospels.[132] Owen's synoptic approach demonstrates that he came under Spinoza's influence of

searching behind the text for sources rather than starting with the text of the Gospels themselves; he changed the referent from the text to sources behind the text. If indeed Griesbach traveled to Great Britain for research and somehow met Owen, his travels to England were motivated by the fact that its institutions were famous cutting-edge learning centers well aware of philosophical speculations and the *Zeitgeist* of the time.[133]

Like Griesbach, Owen was a child of rationalistic Enlightenment philosophy and his treatise came at the height of Enlightenment influence on learning.[134] This influence is manifest in Owen's synoptic approach that, typical of the Enlightenment philosophical approach, deprecated, dismissed, and capriciously rejected tradition, especially early church tradition. Owen argued regarding the early church fathers, "But as these Writers [church fathers] differ widely in their accounts. . . even the testimonies alleged are generally to be looked upon as no more than collateral proofs of what had been deduced before them from the internal structure of the Gospels;"[135] "the accounts they [all the ecclesiastical writers of antiquity] have left us on this head are evidently too vague, confused, and discordant, to lead us to any solid or certain determination;"[136] "the only inference we can draw with certainty is,—that, of all the Evangelists, St. Matthew, in their opinion wrote first; St. Mark, next; then St. Luke; and last of all St. John: though perhaps the Gospels themselves, carefully examined, may afford us reason to doubt the exactness of this order;"[137] "the ancient Fathers. . . 'tis to be feared took it upon trust. The oldest of them collected reports of their own times, and set them down for certain truths; and those who followed, adopted those accounts, with implicit reverence. Thus, traditions of every sort, true or false, passed on from hand to hand without examination, until it was almost too late to examine them to any purpose;"[138] "*their* strangely various and contradictory Accounts."[139] He argued that the early fathers accounts regarding the date of the Gospels "are evidently too vague, confused, and discordant, to lead us to any solid or certain determination. Discordant, however, as these accounts are, it may not be improper to collect them, and present them to the Reader's view."[140] Owen goes on to conclude, "There being, then, but little dependence to be laid on these *external* proofs, let us now see whether anything can be inferred from the *internal* construction of the Gospels themselves, either *for* or *against* the preceding articles."[141] For Owen, the early church fathers were unthinking or inept and had little critical skills in evaluating historical evidence. Having set aside early church traditions that may contradict his hypothesis, Owen as well as Griesbach, "arrived at their result on the basis of an internal analysis of the synoptic gospels."[142]

Owen then performs a highly subjective analysis based on internal evidence as a buttressing support for his *a priori* assumption of literary dependency, using selective evidence from the church fathers to support his already assumed approach. This *a priori* assumption is seen at the very outset of his discussion. Owen writes,

> When the *first* Evangelist had penned his Gospel, it is natural to conclude that it was soon published and dispersed abroad. . .
>
> Hence then we may further conclude, that the *second* evangelist was perfectly acquainted with the writings of the *first*: and that the *third*, when he wrote, perused the Gospels of the other *two*. . . This we offer at present only by way of supposition: hereafter it may appear to have been real fact.
>
> But to clear our way to the proof of this fact, it will be necessary to determine, among other things, which of these sacred Historians is in reality to be accounted the *first*; which the *second*; and which the *third*: for much depends on this question.[143]

For Owen, external evidence is only to be accepted selectively when it agrees with his already chosen position of literary dependency. After dismissing any value to the fathers and accepting from them only what would support his assumed approach, in rationalistic overtones,[144] Owen boldly asserted that he conducted his research "with the utmost impartiality. For the Author [Owen], having no hypothesis to serve, nor any other end in view but the investigation of truth, suffered himself to be carried along as the tide of evidence bore him."[145] Owen, however, consistently based the order, circumstances, and dates on a subjective analysis of internal evidence with a selective acceptance of external evidence only when it confirmed his preconceived notions regarding these issues. Thus, he wrote "If he [Owen] displaced the common order of the Gospels [i.e. Matthew-Mark-Luke as he thought church tradition maintained], it was because he found that the order incompatible with their internal character, and contrary to the sentiment of primitive antiquity."[146] Instead, based on internal evidence, Owen adopted the order Matthew-Luke-Mark. Owen concluded his preface by asserting: "The whole aim of his [Owen's] research is the acquisition of Truth."[147] One is left wondering how "truth" can be discovered through suppression and subjective selection of external, as well as internal, evidence used only to confirm what he has already assumed.

Like Griesbach, Owen was strongly influenced by the philosophy of Romanticism. As Dungan observes about both Owen and Griesbach, "we can see that they share the same new Romantic conception of a developmental history of early Christianity, in terms of which to *justify* the differences among the Gospels."[148] Owen described his approach in Romanticism's developmental terms: "comparing the several Gospels together, and raising observations from that *comparative* View";[149] "Could we truly discover at what time, for whose use, and on what occasion, the Gospels were respectively written, we should doubtless be able, not only to understand them more perfectly, but also to read them with more profit, than we have the happiness at present to pretend to."[150] Owen asserted regarding his Romantic idea of development of one Gospel from another, "That St. Mark makes quick and frequent transitions from one Evangelist to the other; and blends their *accounts*, I mean their *words*, in such a manner is utterly inexplicable upon any other footing, than by supposing he had both these [Matthew and Luke] before him."[151]

Owen's synoptic approach also evidences the radical nature and results of historical criticism. Several assertions of Owen demonstrate this fact. Long before the development of redactional hermeneutics in the twentieth century, Owen's work anticipated the concept of esoteric messages conveyed by the evangelist through the historical situation of the readers (i.e. manifesting a concept of *Sitz im Leben* before its time),

> In penning their Gospels, the sacred Historians had a constant regard, as well to the circumstances of the persons, for whose use they wrote; as to the several particulars of Christ's life, which they were then writing. It was this that regulated the conduct of their narration—that frequently determined them in their choice of materials—and, when they had chosen, induced them either to contract or enlarge, as they judged expedient. In short, it was this that *modified* their Histories and gave them their different *colourings*."[152]

Owen continues,

> [I]f the Gospels were thus modeled, as I apprehend they were, to the state, temper, and disposition of the times, in which they were written; then are we furnished with certain Criteria, by which we may judge of their respective dates. For those times, whose transactions accord with the turn of the discourses related in *the Gospel-Histories*, are, in all probability, the

very times when the Gospels were written.[153]

Ignoring any external evidence that contradicted his synoptic hypothesis, Owen established the date of each Gospel based on an *a priori* assumption of literary dependency and modification of one Gospel by another. This subjective analysis of internal evidence, in turn helped establish the circumstances of the readership and constituted a vehicle for any esoteric messages to the particular Gospel's readership. Any external evidence is used in a selective fashion merely to corroborate his *a priori* assumptions centered in internal evidence. Thus, Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience. It was "penned at a time, when the Church was labouring under heavy persecution."[154] Through the vehicle of references to persecution, Matthew conveys to his Jewish-Christian readership "to expect" and "to bear" persecution and that "the Church must be supposed to labour under such a state when the Evangelist advanced and urged them" and "This example. . . . and these promises, St. Matthew laid before them, for their imitation and encouragement. For now—toward the close of this dangerous period—it is most likely that he wrote his Gospel, and delivered it to them, as the anchor of their hope, and to keep them stedfast in this violent tempest."[155] To Owen, since Matthew's Gospel was written "for the sake of the *Jews*, and consequently adapted to their peculiar circumstances, must necessarily be defective in several particulars, which nearly concerned the *Gentiles*."[156] Notice the word "defective" that he applies to the inspired Gospel text. This word is hardly appropriate for someone maintaining a high view of the Scriptures.

Because of these Matthean deficiencies in writing to Jewish interests only, Luke was written to "satisfy the enquiries, and supply the wants of these *Heathen* Converts."[157] Luke, utilizing Matthew, "adjust[s] the points of His [Matthew's] History, as his Brother-Evangelist had done before, to the circumstances of the persons to whom he wrote; and so modify his general instructions as to make them applicable to those particular times."[158] The Gospel of Mark resulted because Matthew's and Luke's "Histories became, in the detail, more complex and various than we have reason to think they would otherwise have been."[159] To Owen, Matthew and Luke were too complicated than they should have been for a general readership. This is another aberrant position for someone to take regarding a high view of Scripture and plenary verbal inspiration as well as the sufficiency of the Spirit-inspired text. Finally, in Owen's thinking, Mark wrote his Gospel "exhibited in a more simple form. . . without any particular consideration to *Jew* or *Gentile*, delivered in a manner suitable to the condition of the world at large."[160] Owen describes Mark as

"divested of almost all peculiarities, and accommodated to general use" and that "he had but little more to do, it seems, than to abridge the Gospels which lay before him. . . . That St. Mark followed this plan, no one can doubt, who compares his Gospel with those of the two former Evangelists. He copies largely from both: and takes either one or the other almost perpetually for his guide."[161] For Owen, each Gospel writer wrote utilizing the other and "improving upon one another." That a Spirit-inspired text would need to be improved is not a position of orthodoxy but an aberration from the view of the early church maintained from the very beginnings of Christianity.

Although Owen stated that he left to others the details of the outworking of the superstructure of his hypothesis, indications exist in his writings of the inevitable results of his hypothesis that makes one Gospel the "source" of the others. Specifically, he dehistoricized the Gospels and exhibited the same type of radical creativity that modern historical criticism exhibits. For instance, Owen asserted that the Gospel writer, in utilizing one Gospel as his source, put words on Jesus' lips that he did not say. For instance, in recounting the rooster crowing in Matthew 26:30-50, which Owen assumed was Mark's source in Mark 14:26-46, Owen asserted,

> As the *Jews*, in the enumeration of the times of the night, took notice only of *one* cock-crowing, which comprehended the third watch; so St. Matthew, to give them a clear information that Peter would deny his Master *thrice* before *Three* in the morning, needed only to say, that he would do it "before the cock crew." But the Romans, reckoning by a *double* crowing of the cock—the first of which was about *Midnight*, the second at *Three*—stood in need of a more particular designation. And therefore, St. Mark, to denote the same hour to *them*, was obliged to say—"before the cock 'crow *twice*.'" [162]

Thus, from Owen's perspective, Mark could add to the lips of Jesus words that he did not say. Jesus did not say "twice" but Mark added it to Jesus's lips to clarify the passage for his Roman audience.

Owen allowed for the possibility that each Gospel writer could creatively modify the historical situation of Jesus' teachings and circumstances in adopting it for use in his Gospel. For example, he asserted that "the Parable of the Seed, [Mark] iv. 26-29 seems to be taken from Matt. xiii.24 & c. but varied a little in the circumstances."[163] An examination of these two passages reveals that such an

occurrence would mean much more than merely a “little” variation, for Matthew 13:24-30 and Mark 4:26-29 are entirely different in content and wording. Matthew 13:24-30 deals with an enemy sowing wheat and tares in a man’s field with both elements growing together until separation at the harvest, while Mark 4:26-29 deals with the gradual growth from seeds to mature crops in a man’s garden that leads to harvest. The orthodox approach would recognize these as two distinct parables spoken by Jesus rather than one as the creative development or source from the other.

In sum, while Owen professed to a high view of Scripture, his treatise exhibits startling contradictions from such a profession. Like Griesbach’s, Owen’s work exhibited the same kind of negative influence regarding presuppositions. Owen’s work reveals that like Griesbach, philosophy had affected his theology and lead to a qualitative departure from orthodoxy in terms of inspiration as well as a qualitatively different approach toward Gospel origins. His approach led naturally to a dehistoricizing of the text and evidenced historicalcritical concepts of creativity and fabrication. While Owen may not have been quite as radical as Griesbach, nonetheless, he exhibited the same negative influences that led Griesbach to the same literary dependency conclusions.

THE TWO-/FOUR-SOURCE HYPOTHESIS

This article has concentrated so far on the Two-Gospel hypothesis of Owen-Griesbach. The story of the Two-/Four Source hypothesis has a very similar history. As we have already cited Linnemann’s correct observation, *at no time was any “scientific” study conducted of the theory!* Instead, philosophy and strategic historical factors played the decisive role in its ascendancy.[164] *The Jesus Crisis*, as well as the present writer’s article, “The Synoptic Gospels in the Ancient Church: A Testimony to the Priority of Matthew’s Gospel,” has already catalogued many of the strategic factors in the rise of Two-/Four Source hypothesis.[165] Especially it must be noted that the early church never asserted Mark was first, but always Matthew.[166] An important work on how the early church fathers commented on the New Testament, entitled *Mark*, vol. II from the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture buttresses the contention against the Two-/Four-source hypothesis. This work, by appealing to the ancients, circumnavigates such sacrosanct, as well as highly erroneous, historicalcritically cherished icons originating out of source, form, tradition, and redaction criticism, revealing some interesting contradictions with post-Enlightenment assertions. For instance, the volume on Mark reveals that the early church fathers

overwhelmingly neglected Mark, rarely producing a sustained commentary on the book. Instead, Matthew and John received the most attention. While one could argue that they held Matthew and John in high esteem because they were apostolic, one still wonders why, if Mark was really the first written Gospel as so ardently maintained by source criticism (contra the Two-Gospel Hypothesis), did the fathers so persistently neglect it. Moreover, the volume also reveals that the fathers consistently maintained that Mark actually wrote Mark (not some unknown "evangelist" as maintained by historical critics) and that it reflected Peter's preaching rather than being a condensation of Matthew and Luke (contra the Two-Gospel Hypothesis). The conclusion the work reaches is astoundingly refreshing: "It had always been evident that Mark presented a shorter version of the Gospel than Matthew, but the premise of literary dependency was not generally recognized. The view that Matthew and Luke directly relied on Mark did not develop in full form until the nineteenth century."[167] Such a perspective also indicates that the church fathers regarded Matthew, not Mark, as the first Gospel to be written. Importantly, only by *a priori* reading these two recent synoptic hypotheses of the Two-/Four-Source and Two-Gospel hypotheses subjectively into the writings of the church fathers can one move from acute speculation about such theories to the current enslaving dogma that reigns in critical New Testament studies.

Far from contradicting each other, the information that these fathers supply is largely complementary, consistent, and congruent: the apostle Matthew wrote first, the apostle John last, with Luke and Mark writing between these two. Some difference of opinion exists as to whether Luke or Mark wrote second, but probability is on the side of Luke's Gospel being second. Mark derived his material from the preaching of Peter, not from Matthew and Luke.

Sadly, the overarching reason why modern scholarship rejects or explains away patristic testimony is adherence to an assumed hypothesis of literary dependence, which is a basic assumption of historical criticism. The church fathers stand solidly against the stultifying dogma of modern source criticism that blindly upholds the Two-(or Four-) Source Hypothesis and the Two-Gospel Hypothesis, theories that suppress, dismiss, or ridicule any evidence contrary to their assumed tenets. Instead of being blindly rejected, explained away, or enervated by a preconceived agenda or predilection toward a particular synoptic hypothesis, the statements of the fathers should have their full weight in any discussion of the Synoptic issue. Their voices objectively analyzed constitute a united witness against the concept of the priority of Mark based on literary

dependence, and in turn, provide a cogent testimony for the chronological priority of the writing of Matthew. Could it be that Enlightenment-spawned historical criticism has so systematically ignored the early fathers because they stand as manifest contradictions to its cherished dogmas or might it also reflect intellectual arrogance displayed by much of modern scholarship?

The rise of evolutionary philosophy with its concept of simple to complex development contributed greatly to these hypotheses. Another example of the strong influence of evolution is found in source criticism, especially that of the Two-Source (popularized and synthesized by the German Heinrich J. Holtzmann [1832-1910] in *Die Synoptischen Evangelien* [1863]) and the Four-source (popularized by Burnett Hillman Streeter [1874-1937] in Britain—*The Four Gospels*-1924) hypotheses that assume the priority of Mark. Here again the idea of simple to complex is seen in that Mark, the alleged "Q" source, material peculiar to Matthew (M), and material peculilar to Luke (L) were combined into the complex documents of Matthew and Luke.[168] The Two-/Four-Source hypotheses developed at a time in which evolutionary philosophy was rocketing to prominence in Britain and on the European continent (Germany) in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

William Farmer, in his work, *The Synoptic Problem* (1964), insightfully identifies the evolutionary "intellectual climate" of the time as rocketing the Four-Source Hypothesis to prominence at the end of the nineteenth century.[169] Thomas Huxley (1825-1895), one of the greatest of evolutionary propagandists, championed the Markan hypothesis. He wrote: "our canonical second Gospel (the so-called 'Mark's' Gospel) is that which most closely represents the primitive groundwork of the three. That I take to be one of the most valuable results of New Testament criticism, of immeasurably greater importance than the discussion about dates and authorship."[170]

In *Oxford Studies*, Burnett Streeter wrote an essay entitled "The Literary Evolution of the Gospels."[171] *Oxford Studies*' editor, William Sanday (1843-1920), an outstanding propagandists for the British Four-Source theory, praised Streeter's essay with the following:

> I do not remember to have seen, within anything like the same compass, a picture at once so complete, so sound, and (to my mind) so thoroughly scientific, of the whole course of development in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic age in its bearing upon literary composition in general and the

> composition of the Gospels in particular. It is a real evolution, and an evolution conceived as growth, in which each stage springs naturally, spontaneously, and inevitably out of the last.[172]

Farmer remarks, "Darwin's epoch-making *Origin of Species* had been published during Sanday's student days at Oxford and there is no doubt that in the years following, like many of the best minds of his generation, he [Sanday] drank deeply from the cup of salvation offered by the cult of 'scientism,' that is, faith in science."[173]

In addition, Edwin Abbott (1838-1926) provides another important clue in the acceptance of Mark as the first and most "primitive" Gospel: antisupernaturalism. Abbott based his acceptance of the "antiquity" of Mark because it does not mention "supernatural events" like Matthew and Luke, *i.e.* reference to the details of Jesus' birth (e.g., virgin birth, the angelic visitation, Bethlehem star) and "only the barest prediction of His resurrection."[174] Because Mark was relatively "simple," without any reference to the miraculous birth narratives and post-Resurrection appearances, the antisupernatural climate of the time naturally gravitated to the Markan hypothesis.[175]

In 1866 the scholar Hajo-Uden Meijboom, a contemporary of Holtzmann, pointed out the historical and political factors involved in the rising dominance of the Two-/Four-source Hypothesis in *A History and Critique of the Marcan Hypothesis: 1835-1866*.[176] More recently, William Farmer also noted another strategic influence: the competition between the Papacy and state rights in nineteenth-century Europe. The European continent, especially the Germanic Prussian state was struggling against Romanism's political influence and control. Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16: "Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," prompted Jesus in Matthew's account to pronounce Peter's importance in the early church: "And Jesus said to him, 'Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it'" (Mat 16:17-18). Yet, the parallel account in Mark 8:29-30 contains no such pronouncement by Jesus regarding Peter. The latter was clearly preferred and promoted as a means of combating Romanistic influence in nineteenth-century universities and would naturally be promoted as a means of reducing such influence. Thus, the "Protestant Theory" of Markan priority gained ascendancy for political and historical reasons rather than any scientific investigation.[177]

Mark was now viewed as prior to and containing “core” historicity rather than Matthew or Luke.

As time passed, the more radical and liberal elements of New Testament theology soon found a method and means to deny even the above idea of an assumed minute core of historicity to the Gospel of Mark. Although liberal scholarship by the middle of the nineteenth century had assumed the hypothesis of the core of historicity in Mark, this position changed when Wilhelm Wrede (1859-1906) published his work, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (English title, *The Messianic Secret in the Gospels*).[178] In this work, Wrede postulated that two opposing positions existed in the early church concerning Jesus’ messiahship: the first and oldest group held that Jesus made no claims to Messiahship during His lifetime, and only after His resurrection (negated by Wrede as not *historie*), was Jesus made Messiah of Israel by His followers. As time passed, a second and more recent group tended to push back Jesus’ “claims” of Messiahship into the time period of His earthly life, thus attributing words and statements to Jesus about His Messiahship that he really did not claim or make. Wrede went on to argue that the writer of Mark was caught between these two groups and invented the “messianic secret” motif in Mark in hopes of explaining why the early church believed Jesus was Messiah even though He made no public affirmation of messiahship during His life. Thus, in Mark, according to Wrede, this compromise expresses itself by hypothesizing that Jesus kept His messiahship secret during His lifetime, telling only his disciples (although the demons seemed also to know). Jesus warned them not to tell anyone until after his resurrection (e.g., Mark 9:9).[179]

Hence, Wrede rejected the idea of a core of historicity in Mark as Lachmann sought to maintain. Perrin extols the virtues of Wrede’s work by noting:

> Wrede showed once and for all that it was impossible to read Mark as a vivid, simple, record unless one read as much into Mark as he read from it, and he showed that the narratives in Mark are permeated through and through with a theological conception—that of the Messianic Secret—which necessarily was of post-Easter origin. In other words, those whom we shall call the “historicizers,” those who read Mark as fundamentally a historical record, were bringing their history to Mark rather than taking it from him.[180]

In addition, because of this assumed creativity (fabricative embellishment)

upon the part of Mark, liberal scholarship from Wrede onward assumed that constructing a historical and chronological framework for the life of Jesus was impossible.

Eventually, Wrede's ideas become part of the primary postulates of all subsequent New Testament research in liberal spheres and later would dramatically influence the development of form and redaction criticism in the twentieth century.[181] From now on, to critics, one could never assume the factuality or historicity of anything in the Gospel accounts. Instead, one must push behind those accounts through critical research to discover what really transpired, and so began the "search for the historical Jesus" that will be discussed further in later chapters.

Hence, for the form critic, there is no purely historical witness to Jesus' life and actions, even in Mark, for it is all theological.[182] This idea is confirmed by other prominent form critics, such as Schmidt, when he notes the following: "As a whole there is no life of Jesus in the sense of developing a biography, no chronological sketch of Jesus' history, but only single stories (pericopes) which are put into a framework."[183]

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions stem from this discussion. First, the roots of literary dependency were stimulated by the same roots of modern errancy concepts.[184] One cannot overstress that the same soil that gave root to modern errancy hypotheses regarding Scripture also stimulated modern, literary dependency hypotheses: a radical skepticism regarding the historical reliability and harmonization of the Gospels accounts. Second, an examination of the historical evidence surrounding Griesbach's and Owen's hypotheses reveals that the primary impetuses for the development of their synoptic approach were errant and unorthodox views of inspiration that derived from modern philosophical concepts, *e.g.* the Rationalism, Deism, and Romanticism (too name but a few) rather than any objective, "scientific" investigation of the Gospels. Aberrant philosophical ideologies led not only to a qualitatively distinct departure from the orthodox view of inspiration (i.e. plenary, verbal) but also resulted in a qualitatively different approach that departed from the traditions the church had held for the first 1,700 years of its history, *i.e.* from literary independence to literary dependency concepts.

Some Evangelicals may counter, however, that one can practice literary dependency concepts in isolation from the antecedents that gave them impetus, *i.e.* one can sanitize the roots of dependency hypotheses from its practice. Two responses may be offered to such an assertion. (1) Logically, the tried and true saying that "a text without a context is a pretext" applies here. Such historicalcritical ideologies can be no more valid than the concepts upon which they are based. Etienne Gilson, in his excellent, *Unity of Philosophical Experience*, has demonstrated that no hypothesis or theory is any better than the concepts upon which they are based, arguing that "However correct my combinations of concepts may be, my conclusions cannot be more valid than my concepts. . . . if it is necessary for a true reasoning that it be logical, it is not enough for it to be logical in order to be true."[185] If a method is based on a false ideology or reasoning, no matter how logical it may sound, then such methods will lead to wrong conclusions. Thus, if historicalcritical ideologies, like source-critical dependency hypotheses, center in false or aberrant thinking and concepts, their exegetical conclusions cannot be true—even if they may appear to some to be "logical." (2) More crassly, if the roots of the tree are rotten or aberrant, so logically would be the fruit. Due to their aberrant roots, both philosophically and historically literary dependency hypotheses by their very nature will automatically produce significant denigration of the historical accuracy of the Gospel accounts.[186] Church history stands as a monumental testimony to the fact that orthodox positions have stood the test of time and diligent scrutiny, while more recent developments have often been demonstrated as heterodox in origin. Have evangelicals forgotten that church history also stands as a monumental witness that once someone comes under the influence of historicalcritical ideology disastrous consequences ensue (cf. Acts 20:28-31)? As the Apostle Paul admonished, "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the traditions of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (Col 2:8; cf. 2 Cor 10:3-5).

[1] A brief version of this chapter appeared as "How Views of Inspiration Have Impacted Synoptic Problem Discussions," *MSJ* 13 (Spring 2002), 33-64.

[2] For further information on the predominance of the Independence Approach, consult Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell, *The Jesus Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998); F. David Farnell, "The Independence Approach to Gospel Origins," in *Three Views on the Synoptic Gospels*. Ed. Robert L. Thomas (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 226-309; F. David Farnell, "The Synoptic Gospels in the

Ancient Church: A Testimony to the Priority of Matthew's Gospel, *MSJ* 10 (Spring 1999), 53-86.

[3] As regards the total weight of this evidence from church history regarding the independence viewpoint, even opponents admit this. For example, evangelical Grant Osborne, an ardent proponent of Two-Source hypothesis, admits, "It is true that the independence view predominated for 1700 years." Grant R. Osborne, "Historical Crticism: A Brief Response to Robert Thomas's 'Other View,'" *JETS* 43 (March 2000), 113.

[4] For a more complete delineation of philosophical and historical factors involved consult F. David Farnell, "The Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis*, 85-131; Norman L.Geisler, ed. *Biblical Errancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981); Norman L. Geisler, "Beware of Philosophy: A Warning to Biblical Scholars, *JETS* 42 (March 1999): 3-19; Eta Linnemann, *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 9-42; idem., *Historical Criticism of the Bible, Methodology or Ideology?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 83-159.

[5] David L. Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 307.

[6] Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem*, 308.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 345.

[9] Ibid., 171-176; 198-260; See also Norman L. Geisler, "Philosophical Presuppositions of Biblical Errancy," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 316-320; F. David Farnell, "Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis*, 89-92.

[10] Dungan, 199 [emphasis original].

[11] Ibid., 172 [emphasis original].

[12] Ibid., 174 cf. 171. Dungan goes so far as to say that "modern biblical hermeneutics [i.e. historical criticism] was an essential part of the main attack on the traditional institutions of Throne and Altar."

[13] The work was written in Latin, *Commentatio qua Marci Evangelium totum e Matthaei et Lucae commentariis decerptum esse monstratur* (published 1789-1790 and republished with additions in 1794). For an introduction to this work as well as the Latin text and English translations (reflecting the Gabler 1825 edition of Griesbach's work), see Bo Reicke, "Introduction to *Commentatio qua Marci Evangelium totum e Matthaei et Lucae commentariis decerptum esse monstratur*," Johann Jakob Griesbach, *Commentatio*, and trans. Bernard Orchard, *A Demonstration, in J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 68-135.

[14] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 322.

[15] The term appears in Griesbach's *Libri historici Novi Testamenti graece* (1774-5) wherein the first part has the title *Synopsis evangeliorum Matthaei, Marci et Lucae*. A reprint of this first part of the edition appeared separately in 1776 under the title *Synopsis evangeliorum Matthaei, Marci et Lucae. Textum graecum ad fidem. . .* (Halle, 1776). For further information, see Bo Reicke, "Introduction to *Commentatio*," *in J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 68-69; William Baird, *History of New Testament Research, Vol. One From Deism to Tübingen* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992), 143; Dungan, 7, 176, 310.

[16] These factors are identified as the major influences on Griesbach's thinking in such works as Gerhard Delling, "Johann Jakob Griesbach: His Life, Work and Times," in *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 5-15; Dungan, 308-326; Baird, 138-148.

[17] Delling, "Johann Jakob Griesbach: His Life, Work and Times," in *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 6.

[18] Werner Georg Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems*, Trans. S. MacLean Gilmour and Howard Clark Kee (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 69.

[19] Kümmel, *The New Testament*, 68. Not only did Griesbach live with Semler during his days as a student at Halle, but he also lived with him after he returned from his extensive European tour, which he undertook to acquaint himself with the methods of different professors and to examine the New Testament manuscripts in the great libraries of London, Oxford, Cambridge and other

centers of learning. Griesbach was 23 years old at the time he set off in 1768, and he returned home in 1770. See Brown, *Jesus in Protestant European Thought*, 175-176; Dungan, 310; Delling, "Johann Jakob Griesbach: His Life, Work and Times," in *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 7.

[20] Kümmel, The New Testament, 62.

[21] Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:127.

[22] Brown, *Christianity in Western Thought, Vol. 1, From the Ancient World to the Age of Enlightenment*, 214.

[23] For further information on Ernesti, see Kümmel, *The New Testament*, 60-61, 473.

[24] Dungan, *The History of the Synoptic Problem*, 310.

[25] Delling, "Johann Jakob Griesbach," 14.

[26] Dungan, *The History of the Synoptic Problem*, 311-312.

[27] Aner identifies both Griesbach and Eichhorn as "neologians" but not Michaelis and Semler. See Karl Aner, *Die Theologie der Lessingzeit* (Hildesheim, Germany: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung), 98-99.

[28] Kümmel, *The New Testament*, 490; Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation, Past & Present* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 257. Aner notes that Semler as well as Michaelis are sometimes classified as neologians but feels that they were independent historically, not belonging to any party. Instead, Aner argues that the neologians appropriated the historicalcritical work of these two figures. However, Aner does classify Griesbach and Eichhorn as belonging to the neologians. See Aner, *Die Theologie der Lessingzeit*, 98-99, 138-139.

[29] The German term is "Lehrer des Neuen"; S. v. "Aufklärung II," by Martin Schmidt, in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, Studienausgabe, Teil I, Band IV (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 600.

[30] Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 257.

[31] Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:116.

[32] Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 257.

[33] Colin Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth: 1985), 8.

[34] Cited by Delling, "Johann Jakob Griesbach: His Life, Work and Times," *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and textcritical studies 1776-1976*, 9, 17.

[35] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 314.

[36] Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 258.

[37] Ibid., 258-259.

[38] Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:147.

[39] Ibid., 1:117.

[40] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 311-12.

[41] John Fletcher Hurst, *History of Rationalism*. Revised 1901 (New York: Eaton & Means, 1901), 137-138.

[42] Brown, *Jesus in Protestant European Thought*, 10.

[43] Hurst, *History of Rationalism*, 128. Baird notes, "Semler, with considerable despair, was never able to experience the new birth which Pietists thought essential to authentic faith, a point of increasing tension with his father." Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:117.

[44] Hurst, *History of Rationalism*, 133, 136.

[45] For an excellent summary of the Enlightenment's effect on the inspiration and authority of Scripture, consult Bruce Demarest, "The Bible in the Enlightenment Era," in *Challenges to Inerrancy, A Theological Response*. Eds. Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest (Chicago: Moody, 1984), 47.

[46] Hurst, 132.

[47] Gerhard Hasel, *Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 20 fn. 36.

[48] Hasel, Basic Issues, 21; Kümmel, The New Testament, 63; Baird, History of New Testament Research, 1:118.

[49] For an excellent overview of Semler's assertions, consult Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 10-16.

[50] J. S. Semler, *Vorbereitung zur theologischen Hermeneutik*, vols. 1 and 2 (Halle: C. H. Hemmerde, 1760-61), 1:129; Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:125.

[51] Gerhard Maier, *The End of the HistoricalCritical Method*. Trans. Edwin W. Leverenz and Rudolph F. Norden (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia, 1974, 1977), 11.

[52] J. S. Semler, Versuch einer biblischen Dämonologie, oder Untersuchung der Lehre der heil. Schrift vom Teufel and seiner Macht (Halle: C. H. Hemmerde, 1776), 341; Baird, 1:124.

[53] Quote taken from Semler's *Versuch einer freiern theologischen Lehrart* (Halle, 1777) and cited by Trutz Rendtorff, *Church and Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 47-48.

[54] For further information regarding Reimarus and Lessing, consult *Reimarus: Fragments*. Edited by Charles H. Talbert, trans. Ralph S. Fraser (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970).

[55] Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:175.

[56] Brown notes, What Semler urged—and in no small measure achieved—was a general, reverent and judicious acceptance of the new critical approach to Scripture." Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought*, 11; Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:175.

[57] Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:126.

[58] Edgar Krentz, *The Historial-Critical Method* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 19.

[59] For the latest edition that reflected this, see Johann David Michaelis, *Einleitung in die göttlichen Schriften des Neuen Bundes*, 4th revised ed., 2 vols. (Göttinghen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1788); English Translation: *Introduction to the New Testament* by John David Michaelis. 4 volumes. Translated from the Fourth Edition of the German and Considerably Augmented with Notes and a Dissertation on the Origin and Composition of the First Three Gospels by Herbert Marsh. Second Edition (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1802). See also F. F. Bruce, "The History of New Testament Study," in *New Testament Principles of Interpretation*. I. Howard Marshall, ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 37; *Baird, History of New Testament Research*, 1:131.

[60] Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 1:87.

[61] Ibid., 1:72.

[62] Baird, 1:138.

[63] Michaelis argued, "If the word inspiration therefore be taken in such a sense as to include infallibility, we can scarcely believe, that St. Mark and St. Luke were inspired. The violent methods which have been used to reconcile their accounts with those of the others Evangelists, and the insuperable difficulty, which has hitherto attended the harmony of the Gospels, have cast a dark shade on our religion, and the truth and simplicity of its history have been almost buried under the weight of explanations." Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 1:96.

[64] Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, 2nd Ed. (Oxford: University Press, 1988), 6.

[65] Baird, History of New Testament Research, 1:137.

[66] Ibid., 1:137 cf. John Randolf, Remarks on "Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament, Vols. III. IV. Translated by the Rev. Herbert Marsh, and Augmented with Notes," By way of caution to students in Divinity, Second Edition, with Preface and Notes, In Reply to Mr. Marsh (London: T. Bensley, 1802).

[67] Kümmel, *New Testament Introduction*, 69.

[68] For further information on Protestant Scholasticism as well as its counter-

reaction in German Pietism, see Williston Walker and Richard A. Norris, David W. Lotz, Robert T. Tandy, *A History of the Christian Church*. Fourth Edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), 526-529; 587-592.

[69] See Philipp Jacob Spener, *Pia Desideria*. Translated, edited, and with an Introduction by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964).

[70] Tappert notes, "He [Spener] did not deny the scholastic doctrine of the inspiration of the Scriptures, but he was more interested in their content than in their form and in their effect than in their origin." Spener's emphasis was on the more subjective elements or impact of the doctrine of inspiration on the individual's life. Tappert, "Introduction," in *Pia Desideria*, 25.

[71] Hermann Francke, *A Guide to Reading and Study of the Holy Scriptures*. Translated from the Latin, and Augmented with Notes by William Jaques (Philadelphia: David Hogan, 1823), 83.

[72] F. Ernest Stoeffler, *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 39-87.

[73] Justo L. Gonzalez, *A History of Christian Thought*, rev. ed., vol. 3, *From the Protestant Reformation to the Twentieth Century* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1975, 1987), 304.

[74] Hurst writes, "the evils of Rationalism were partially anticipated by the practical teachings of the Pietists." Hurst, *History of Rationalism*, 102.

[75] William E. Nix, "The Doctrine of Inspiration Since the Reformation, Part II: Changing Climates of Opinion," *JETS* 27 (December 1984): 442.

[76] The German reads: "Das N.T. muß erkläret werden, wie jedes alte Buch erklärt wird." See Johann Jacob Griesbach, *Vorlesungen über die Hermeneutik des N.T. mit Anwendung auf die Leidens—und Auferstehungsgescichte Christi*. Herausgeben von Johann Carl Samuel Steiner (Nürnberg: Zehschen Buchhandlung, 1815), 53.

[77] Griesbach's comment, "Die Genauigkeit, besonders bei den N.T. Scriftststellern, fehlt oft." Griesbuch, Vorlesungen, 139; Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:140.

[78] Griesbuch, *Vorlesungen*, 139-144; Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 312; Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:140.

[79] The German reads, “Die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion behurt ja nicht auf den Wundern; sondern theils auf iherer Vortrefflichkeit, theils auf ihrer Geschichte.” Griesbach, *Vorlesungen*, 144.

[80] The German text reads, “Muß man die irrige Vorstellung fallen lassen, die Bibel selbst sei das Wort Gottes; nein, sie ist blos die Geschichte der Offenbarung, die Darstellung der geoffenbarten Wahrheiten.” Griesbach, *Vorlesungen*, 164; Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:141.

[81] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 322.

[82] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 313; Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, 1:139.

[83] See Gerhard Delling, “Johann Jakob Greisbach: His Life, Work and Times,” *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 11.

[84] Cited in Delling, “Johann Jakob Greisbach: His Life, Work and Times,” *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 11.

[85] Griesbach, “A Demonstration,” in *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 135.

[86] Brown, *Jesus in Protestant European Thought*, 177.

[87] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 318-319.

[88] For this quote from the preface to Greisbach’s 1797 second edition of his Synopsis Evangelorium Matthaei, Marci et Lucae, see Heinrich Greeven, “Gospel Synopsis from 1776 to the Present Day,” *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 27, 190-191.

[89] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 321.

[90] Dungan comments, [T]raditional Gospel harmonists proceeded on the basis of Augustine’s assumption that all four Gospels were uniformly true and without admixture of the slightest degree of error. . . . The Augustinian approach

remained the model for more than a thousand years." Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 304 (see also 123-141, 171-190). Through the time of the Reformation until the modern philosophical presuppositions (rationalism, deism, Romanticism, etc.) caused the rise of the historicalcritical ideology, the orthodox position of the church was that the Gospels were without error and could be harmonized into a unified whole. For harmonization during the time of the Reformation, consult Harvey K. McArthur, "Sixteenth-Century Gospel Harmonies," in *The Quest Through the Centuries, The Search for the Historical Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress,1966), 85-101.

[91] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 307.

[92] Ibid., 332-341.

[93] Ibid., 336.

[94] Ibid., 302-326.

[95] Ibid., 320.

[96] For information on Romanticism, consult "Romanticism," by Crane Brinton, in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. in Chief, Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), vol. 7, 206-209. Contemporary scholars differ regarding exact definitions of Romanticism, but agree on general details describing it (R. V. Pierard, "Romanticism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 960.

[97] Harold O. J. Brown, "Romanticism and the Bible," in *Challenges to Inerrancy*, ed. Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest (Chicago: Moody, 1984), 58.

[98] Linnemann, Is There A Synoptic Problem?, 28.

[99] Bernard Orchard and Harold Riley, "The State of the Question," in *The Order of the Synoptics, Why Three Synoptic Gospels?* (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1987), 111-117 (quote from page 112). White describes the period as follows: "The Enlightenment attitude of mind was complex and internally varied, but it can be characterized roughly as as a dedication of human reason, science, and education as the best means of building a stable society for free men on earth. This meant that the Enlightenment was inherently suspicious of religion, hostile to tradition, and resentful of any authority based on custom or

faith alone." For further information on Enlightenment dismissal of tradition, consult Hayden White, "Editor's Introduction," in Robert Anchor, *The Enlightenment Tradition*, reprinted and updated (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California, 1979), ix; Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment, An Interpretation: The Rise of Modern Paganism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), 374-375.

[100] Griesbach, *A Demonstration*, in *J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and textcritical studies 1776-1976*, 134.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid., 116.

[103] Ibid., 135.

[104] Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 5.11.3-4. See also F. David Farnell, "The Synoptic Gospels in the Ancient Church," *MSJ* 10 (Spring 1999): 53-86.

[105] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History,* 6.14.5-7.

[106] More recent supporters of Griesbach have attempted to correct this after realizing the importance of the evidence from the fathers, see William R. Farmer, "The Patristic Evidence Reexamined: A Response to George Kennedy," in *New Synoptic Studies*, William R. Farmer, ed. (Macon, GA: Mercer University), 3-15; cf. George Kennedy who encouraged NT scholars to take patristic evidence more seriously, George Kennedy, "Classical and Christian Source Criticism," in *Relationship Among the Gospels: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, edited by William O. Walker, Jr. (San Antonio: Trinity University, 1978), 147-152.

[107] See B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (London: Macmillan, 1924, 1953), 295-331.

[108] Orchard and Riley, "The State of the Question," in *The Order of the Synoptics, Why Three Synoptic Gospels?*, 112-113; Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 380-381.

[109] Agnew argues, "The contemporary scholars who work with the gospel order Matthew-Luke-Mark, first propounded by Owen (1764) and later (1789) expounded by Johann Jacob Griesbach, have brought up to date Griesbach's arguments; thus, the hypotheses has grown beyond its origins and is best

characterized by a descriptive, rather than proper name," *i.e.* Two-Gospel hypothesis. Peter W. Agnew, "The Two-Gospel Hypothesis and a Biographical Genre for the Gospels," *New Synoptic Studies*, ed. William R. Farmer (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1983), 487 n. 22.

[110] In 1783, Griesbach published a lecture entitled *Paschatos solemnia pie celebranda* ["That Easter may be celebrated with solemn piety"], defending the Easter texts wherein he set forth the basics of his approach. Cited by Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 317.

[111] For a defense of this evangelical position regarding Owen and that Owen, not Griesbach, originated the literary dependency concept of Matthew-Luke-Mark, see Matthew C. Williams, "The Owen Hypothesis: An essay showing that it was Henry Owen who first formulated the so-called 'Griesbach Hypothesis,'" *Journal of Higher Criticism* 7 (2000): 109-125.

[112] See Henry Owen, Observations on the Four Gospels; tending chiefly to ascertain the Times of their Publications; to illustrate the Form and Manner of their Composition (London: T. Payne, 1764).

[113] See Michaelis, *Introduction*, vol. III, part II, 161-409, esp. 174-175. While Owen adopted the literary dependency order of Matthew-Luke-Mark, Büsching's order was Luke-Matthew-Mark. See also Anton Friedrich Büsching, *Die vier Evangelisten mit ihren eigenen Worten zusammengesetzt und mit Erk*älr*ungen versehen* (Hamburg, 1766).

[114] Cited by F. Neirynck, "The Griesbach Hypothesis: The Phenomenon of Order," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* (April, 1982): 116 n. 24.

[115] Neirynck, "The Griesbach Hypothesis: The Phenomenon of Order," 117.

[116] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 484, n. 48.

[117] Griesbach, *A Demonstration, in J. J. Griesbach: Synoptic and Textcritical Studies 1776-1976*, 104.

[118] Ibid., 106.

[119] Dungan believes that since nothing in the doctrines of these four resemble Griesbach's source approach, then Griesbach must have been influenced by

Owen. Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem*, 484.

[120] Owen, *Observations on the Four Gospels*, 51-52.

[121] Hans-Herbert Stoldt, *History and Criticism of the Marcan Hypothesis*. Translated and Edited by Donald L. Niewyk (Macon, GA.: Mercer, 1977), 6.

[122] Stoldt, *History and Criticism*, 7 cf. Owen, *Observations on the Four Gospels*, 50, where he argues that "some of its [Christianity's] most faithful and serious Professors might wish to see the Gospel exhibited in a more simple form" and "delivered in a manner suitable to the condition of the world at large."

[123] Owen, *Observations on the Four Gospels*, 52.

[124] Ibid., 16-114; note "Appendix," 115 for summary.

[125] Ibid., 83 [emphasis original].

[126] Ibid., 108.

[127] Ibid., 9.

[128] Ibid., vi-vii.

[129] Ibid., vi [emphasis added].

[130] Ibid., 82 [emphasis added].

[131] Ibid., 82.

[132] Ibid., 85.

[133] This can be demonstrated also by the fact that Owen was aware of Michaelis's *NT Introduction* (Owen, *Observations of the Four Gospels*, 100).

[134] Dungan, 315.

[135] Owen, iv.

[136] This term inserted, "all the ecclesiastical writers of antiquity," is Owen's own term used in the prior context (Owen, *Observations on the Four Gospels*,

1).

[137] Ibid., 6-7.

[138] Ibid., 8.

[139] Ibid., 102 [emphasis original].

[140] Ibid., 2.

[141] Ibid., 8-9 [emphasis original].

[142] Stoldt, *History and Criticism*, 7.

[143] Owen, *Observations on the Four Gospels*, 9-10.

[144] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 485 n. 50 cites this as "a choice expression of contemporary rationalist optimism" during the Enlightenment.

[145] Owen, "Preface," iv.

[146] Ibid., v-vi cf. *Observations on the Four Gospels*, 6-7.

[147] Owen, "Preface," vii.

[148] Dungan, *History of the Synoptic Problem*, 317 [emphasis original].

[149] Owen, "Preface," vi.

[150] Ibid., iii.

[151] Owen, *Observations on the Four Gospels*, 74.

[152] Ibid., 15-16 [emphasis original].

[153] Ibid., 16 [emphasis original].

[154] Ibid., 17.

[155] Ibid., 17, 20, 21.

[156] Ibid., 24 [emphasis original].

[157] Ibid., [emphasis original].

[158] Ibid., 27.

[159] Ibid., 50.

[160] Ibid., [emphasis original].

[161] Ibid., 51.

[162] Ibid., 56-57 [emphasis original].

[163] Ibid., 72-73.

[164] For an excellent presentation of the real factors that caused the rise of the Two-/Four-Source Hypothesis, see Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem*, 145-341.

[165] See F. David Farnell, "The Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis*, 85-131.

[166] See F. David Farnell, "The Synoptic Gospels in the Ancient Church: A Testimony to the Priority of Matthew's Gospel," *MSJ* 10 (1999): 53-86.

[167] Thomas C. Oden & Christopher A. Hall, *Mark*, vol. II of Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), xxix.

[168] For further information on the details of the four source hypothesis, consult Burnett H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels, A Study of Origins* (London: Macmillan, 1953), 223-272.

[169] See William R. Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem* (Macon, GA.: Mercer University, 1964), 178-190.

[170] See Thomas H. Huxley, *Science and Christian Tradition* (New York: D. Appleton, 1899), 273.

[171] See Burnett H. Streeter, "The Literary Evolution of the Gospels," in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*. Edited by W. Sanday (Oxford: At the

Clarendon, 1911), 227. Streeter also used the term “evolution” for “evolution of the Gospel canon” and “evolution of Pauline canon.” See Streeter, *The Four Gospels*, 609 (cf. 526 and 499 note 1).

[172] See William Sanday, *Oxford Studies*, xvi.

[173] Farmer, Synoptic Problem, 181.

[174] This is from an *Encyclopadia Britannica* article (1879) written by Abbott and cited by Farmer, *The Synoptic Problem*, 178 note 1.

[175] See Farmer’s excellent discussion, *The Synoptic Problem*, 25-26, 178-79.

[176] Hajo-Uden Meijboom, A History and Critique of the Marcan Hypothesis: 1835-1866, A Contemporary Report Rediscovered. Trans. John J. Kiwiet (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1992).

[177] See William R. Farmer’s excellent summary discussion, “A Social History of Markan Priority,” *In The Gospel of Jesus The Pastoral Relevance of the Synoptic Problem* (Louisville, KY: Westminister/John Knox, 1994), 146-160.

[178] Wilhelm Wrede, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1901).

[179] For an effective reply to such an assertion, See James D. G. Dunn, “The ‘Messianic Secret’ in Mark,” in *The Messianic Secret*. Christopher Tuckett, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 116-131.

[180] Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress,1969) 14.

[181] D. Edmond Hiebert, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. 1 *The Gospels and Acts* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH, 1975) 185.

[182] Paul J. Achtemeier, “Mark as the Interpreter of the Jesus Tradition,” *JBL* 32 (October 1978) 339.

[183] K. L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Berlin: Trowitzsch and Son, 1919) 317.

[184] One has only to compare the names involved in the development of biblical criticism as a whole with those involved in modern synoptic studies to see this intertwined and dynamic commonality. For more information, consult Farnell, “Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism,” in The Jesus Crisis, 86; Linnemann, Is There a Synoptic Problem?, 9-15; 19-42; Geisler, ed., *Biblical Errancy*, 7-237 and Norman L. Geisler, “Philosophical Presuppositions of Biblical Errancy,” *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 307-334.

[185] Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1965 [1937]), 14.

[186] *The Jesus Crisis* (1998) has catalogued numerous examples of the denigration or denial of the historical accuracy of the Gospels from amount evangelical practitioners of historical criticism where one Gospel, especially Mark, is considered the “source” of Matthew or Luke. See Robert L. Thomas, “The ‘Jesus Crisis’: What is It?,” in *The Jesus Crisis*, 13-34.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGICAL UNORTHODOXY

Norman L. Geisler and William C. Roach 2012[1]



Brief Background of the Discussion[2]

In the past generation the debate about inerrancy shifted from the domain of bibliology to that of methodology; from what the Bible affirms about itself to how the Bible should be interpreted. Most evangelicals who believe in the inerrancy of the Bible would agree with the Lausanne Covenant statement: “We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” Of course, the Bible is true in all it affirms, but the question has refocused on specifically the content that the Bible is affirming in a given passage. Or, to put it another way, evangelicals do not so much debate whether the Bible is “true,” but what is meant by “true,” and how we know such truth.

Viewed from a historical perspective, the current movement has been away from the unlimited inerrancy view of the total truthfulness of Scripture, as defended by Hodge and Warfield, to a form of limited inerrancy[3] which Jack Rogers of Fuller Seminary and Donald McKim embraced when they claimed that the Bible was unerring in its redemptive purpose, but not always in all of its factual affirmations.[4] Rogers and McKim reacted to what they perceived to be the current view of inerrancy, which they misrepresented with the constant refrain: “To erect a standard of modern, technical precision in language as the hallmark of biblical authority was totally foreign to the foundation shared by the

early church." Instead, they termed the view to which they reacted a "rationalistic extreme" and asserted that "the central church tradition. . . more flexible than seventeenth-century scholasticism or nineteenth-century fundamentalism."[5]

And again, "For early Christian teachers, Scripture was wholly authoritative as a means of bringing people to salvation and guiding them in the life of faith. . . . Scripture was not used as a sourcebook for science."[6] The opinion of a number of scholars has shifted from the unlimited inerrancy of *The International Council of Biblical Inerrancy* (ICBI) to the limited inerrancy of Clark Pinnock in his *Scripture Principle* which allowed for minor mistakes and errors in the biblical text while retaining an inerrancy of purpose.[7]

Craig Blomberg of Denver Seminary blames defection from the faith on the fact that evangelical Christians had been aggressively promoting plenary, verbal inspiration. He wrote: "The approach, famously supported back in 1976 by Harold Lindsell in his *Battle for the Bible* (Zondervan), that it is an all-or-nothing approach to Scripture that we must hold, is both profoundly mistaken and deeply dangerous. No historian worth his or her salt functions that way." He adds, "But, despite inerrancy being the touchstone of the largely American organization called the Evangelical Theological Society, there are countless evangelicals in the States and especially in other parts of the world who hold that the Scriptures are inspired and authoritative, even if not inerrant, and they are not sliding down any slippery slope of any kind. I can't help but wonder if inerrantist evangelicals making inerrancy the watershed for so much has not, unintentionally, contributed to pilgrimages like Ehrman's. Once someone finds one apparent mistake or contradiction that they cannot resolve, then they believe the Lindsells of the world and figure they have to chuck it all. What a tragedy!"[8]

From the time of Robert Gundry (1983), who was asked to resign from ETS by an overwhelming 70% vote of the members, to the present there has been a growing movement away from unlimited inerrancy to limited inerrancy, the most recent being inerrancy of authorial intention by genre determination. This has come to focus recently in the work of Mike Licona in his book *The Resurrection of Jesus (2010)* in which he claimed, along with many other evangelical New Testament (NT) scholars, that one must make an up-front determination of genre categories of the type of literature we are dealing with before we approach the Gospels to decide which category they fit into.[9] Licona admits the significant influence of Charles H. Talbert, Distinguished Professor of Religion at Baylor

University, as well as British scholar and Dean of King's College London, the Reverend Doctor Richard A. Burridge.[10] He wrote, "Before we can read the gospels, we have to discover what kind of books they might be."[11] Supposedly, by a study of the Roman and Jewish) literature of the time, Licona comes to the NT with a genre category already set, claiming, that "[**t]here is somewhat of a consensus among contemporary scholars that the Gospels belong to the genre of Greco-Roman biography (*bios*)."** Then he goes on to say that "*Bioi* offered the ancient biographer great flexibility for rearranging material and **inventing speeches. . . and they often included legend.** Because *bios* was a flexible genre, **it is often difficult to determine where history ends and legend begins."[12]** With this category in mind, he looks at the Gospel record and concludes that it best fits into this "Greco-Roman biography" which allows for "legend," "inventing speeches," "embellishment," and permitting other factual errors. Thus, when he looks at the story of the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27:51-54, he concluded that it is "poetical," a "legend," an "embellishment," and literary "special effects." [13] He also presents **"A possible candidate for embellishment is John 18:4-6"** [emphasis added] where, when Jesus claimed "I am he" (cf. John 8:58), his pursuers "drew back and fell on the ground."[14] Furthermore, Licona adds, "Considerations of genre, the demand for quality evidence, and methodological controls are important for all claims to historicity. In principle, a historian of Jesus might conclude that the resurrection hypothesis warrants a judgment of historicity while simultaneously concluding that certain elements of the Gospel narratives were mythical or were created while knowing only the historical kernel, such as that Jesus had healed a blind person."[15]

These methodological concerns bring us to our next consideration, a contrast of the two different views of hermeneutics.

Two Views of Hermeneutics in Contrast

Now granted Licona's methodological presuppositions, these are not unreasonable conclusions. But this is precisely the problem, namely, there is no good reason to grant his methodology. Indeed, it is, as we shall see, another case of methodological unorthodoxy, not unlike that which Robert Gundry held and which led to his expulsion from ETS. The following chart summarizes the radical differences in the traditional historical-grammatical view, adopted by ICBI, and that of "The New Historiographical Approach" of Licona and other contemporary evangelical NT scholars. Before we compare the two, we note that

not everyone who holds one of more of these views would hold to the entire method named at the top. However, most scholars who hold the method would hold most of the views listed below.

NAME OF METHOD	***TRADITIONAL HISTORICAL-GRAMMATICAL VIEW***	***THE NEW HISTORIO-GRAPHICAL APPROACH***
Language	Realism	Cultural Linguistic Conventionalism
Epistemology	Correspondence View of Truth	Intentionalist View of Truth[16]
Intent of Author	Always Expressed in the Text	Not Always Expressed in the Text[17]
	Known only from the Text in Context	Can be Known from ExtraBiblical Texts
ExtraBiblical Data	Can Illuminate Meaning of a Text	Can Determine the Truth of a Text
	Can Illuminate Meaning of Bible Words	Can Determine Truth of a Sentences
Genre Types	Decided After Examining the Text	Decided Before Examining the Text
	Determined by the Text and Context	Decided by Other Texts and Contexts
Nature of Meaning	Found in *What* not Why the Text Says	Found in *Why* not Just What a Text Says
	True Meaning is the Author's	True Meaning is Reader's

	Meaning	Meaning[18]
Number of Meanings	ONE: *Sensus Unum*	MANY: *Sensus Plenior*
Role of Context	Meaning Known from Author's Context Biblical Context is Determinative	Meaning known from Reader's Context ExtraBiblical Context can be Determinative
Historicity	Presumed in a Narrative Text	Not Presumed in a Narrative Text[19]
Legend	Not found in a Narrative Text	Sometimes Found in a Narrative Text[20]
Symbolic	Can Represent Literal Events	Can Replace Literal Events
Figures of Speech	Must have Literal Referent	Need not have a literal Referent
Inspiration	Formally Distinct from Interpretation	Actually Separated from Interpretation[21]
Inerrancy	Unlimited (to all of the text)	Limited (to part of the text)[22]
Theological Truth	Lends itself to Systematic Theology Truth is in the Meaning of the Text Propositional Truth is Important	Lends itself to Biblical Theology Truth is in the Significance of the Text Propositional Truth is Diminished[23]

A Defense of the Historical-Grammatical View

Space allotted does not permit a detailed explanation of each point, nor a complete defense of "the Historical-Grammatical View" on the points listed. So, our comments will be limited to certain key points. For brevity we will call this the Traditional Approach (TA). The New Historiographical Approach we will label the New Approach (NA).

Language and Meaning

The TA is based on a realistic view of meaning, whereas the NA is based on a conventionalist view of meaning. Realists believe there is an objective basis for meaning and conventionalists do not. Both sides agree that *words* or symbols are culturally relative, but unlike realists, conventionalists hold that all *meaning* is also culturally relative.[24]

However, there are many good reasons for an evangelical to reject a conventionalist view of meaning.[25] First of all, if true then there could be no objective meaning or truth. Since all true statements are meaningful, it would follow that all meaning is also culturally relative. For to be a true statement is must be meaningful. But this is clearly contrary to the traditional, historic, and creedal confessions of evangelicalism which proclaim that certain essential beliefs are objective truth about reality.[26] Second, it is selfdefeating to claim that "All meaning is subjective." For that very statement claims to be objectively meaningful. So, the NA is based on a faulty subjectivists view of meaning.

Locus of Meaning

According to the TA, the meaning of a text is found in w*hat* the text affirms, not in *why* the text affirms it. Since we have defended this view elsewhere,[27] we will simply use one illustration here. Exodus commands: "Do not boil a kid (baby goat) in its mother's milk" (Ex.34:26). The meaning of this text is very clear, and every Israelite knew exactly *what* to do. However, as a survey of a few commentaries will reveal, it is not at all clear to us *why* they were commanded to do this. So, meaning (what) can be understood apart from purpose (why). This is not to say that knowing purpose is not sometimes illuminating. Nor does it claim that purpose does not add to the significance of a statement. It often does. For example, if I say "Come over to my home tonight at 7 p.m," the meaning of the statement is very clear. However, if you know that my reason (purpose) for inviting you over was to give you a million dollars, then that detail adds

significance to the statement—and to your motivation for coming! But the statement is clear and meaningful apart from what the purpose(s) might have been.

As we demonstrated, Jack Rogers and Clark Pinnock clearly adopted this purpose-determines-meaning approach.[28] Licona appears to do the same in his misdirected use of "the author's intent."[29] For the fact is that we have no valid way to get at the biblical author's intent except by what is expressed in the text of Scripture. Further, the problem of not placing the locus of meaning in the text is that apart from doing so we are left with no objective way to determine the meaning.[30] We are left with subjective and extrabiblical ways of determining what the text actually meant, and often we can never know that meaning for sure. Unfortunately, this is the point at which many NT scholars, primarily following the lead of E.P. Sanders and N.T. Wright, turn to extrabiblical data, such as Second Temple Judaism, to help them determine what the text means.[31]

The True Meaning is the Author's Meaning

According to the TA, the true meaning of a text is found in what the author meant by it, not in what the reader(s) may mean by it. A text means exactly what an author means by it and not what someone else means by it. To claim otherwise is selfdefeating. For no author, no matter how postmodern he may be, allows that his book should be taken to mean anything but what he meant it to mean. Otherwise, a reader would be able to reject or reverse what an author meant and to replace it by what he wants it to mean. For example, Kevin Vanhoozer claims that one cannot say, as the ICBI did in its widely accepted "Chicago Statement," that "the Bible is true and reliable in all matters it addresses (Art. XI)." Why? Because, strictly speaking, "'it' neither affirms nor addresses; authors do."[32] However, an ICBI framer, R.C. Sproul, in a personal letter to me [William Roach], responds to Kevin Vanhoozer stating:

> But you asked particularly the question regarding Vanhoozer's statement where he distinguishes between what the Bible addresses and what men or authors do. His statement, strictly speaking, *it* doesn't affirm or address anything, only authors do. This is worse than pedantic. It's simply silly. When we're talking about the Bible, the inerrancy position makes it clear that the Bible is a book written by human authors, which authors address various matters. And whatever these authors address within the context of sacred Scripture, while under the supervision of the Holy Spirit, carries the

> full weight of inerrancy. It would seem to me that if somebody is trying to avoid the conclusions that the Chicago Statement reaches regarding inerrancy, it's a far reach to avoid them by such a distinction. In the final analysis, the distinction is a distinction without a difference [June 30, 2010].

Of course, the author speaks though a medium (language) that is common to both the author and reader. But the meaning embedded in that medium (language) is the author's meaning, not the reader's meaning or anyone else's meaning. And it is the reader's obligation to discover what the author's meaning encoded in that language actually was by decoding it, not to make up his own meaning.

Intent of Author is the Meaning Expressed in the Text

Burridge made it clear that the intention or purpose of the author is "essential" in determining the meaning of a text.[33] The NA stresses the "intention" of the author, but it rejects what the TA means by "intention." First, "intention" can mean *purpose*, and we have already shown why purpose does not determine meaning. Second, "intention" can mean *unexpressed intention* that is not found in the text or in its context (see next point). But this is not what the TA means by use of the word "intention." The TA means *expressed intention* (i.e., meaning), that is, intention that is expressed in the text and which can be derived from the text by a reader who reads it properly in its context. Only this kind of expressed intention is objectively determinable. Unexpressed intention leaves the door of interpretation wide open to misinterpretation. Indeed, it leaves us with no objective way to discover the meaning of a text since there is no objective meaning expressed in the text. The true meaning of a text is not found *beyond* the text (in some extrabiblical texts),[34] or *beneath* the text (in some mystical intuition), or *behind* the text (in the author's unexpressed intention).[35] Meaning is like beauty in that the beauty of a painting is not found *behind* it (in the painters mind), nor *beyond* it (in the painter's purpose), but beauty is found expressed *in* the painting. Likewise, the real meaning of a text is found *in* the text as understood in its textual context. The author is the *efficient* cause of the meaning in the text, individual words are the *instrumental* cause used to express meaning, but meaning itself is found in the *formal cause*, the actual form these words take in a sentence, in a paragraph, and in the overall context of the book.

The Role of Context in Meaning

As just noted, meaning is found in a sentence (the smallest unit of meaning) in its context. Technically, single words in and of themselves have no meaning;[36] they merely have *usage* in a sentence which does have meaning. Furthermore, words do not just point to meaning; instead, they receive meaning by the biblical author when placed into a sentence. And biblical meaning is found in the biblical context. As the ICBI framers put it, "Scripture is to interpret Scripture" (Article XVIII). It adds, "WE INVITE RESPONSE TO THIS STATEMENT FROM ANY WHO SEE REASON TO **AMEND ITS AFFIRMATIONS ABOUT SCRIPTURE BY THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE ITSELF,** UNDER WHOSE INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY WE STAND AS WE SPEAK" (ICBI, PREAMBLE, EMPHASIS ADDED). As the old adage put it, "a text out of its context is a pretext." The only proper way to interpret the Bible is by the Bible. Every text is to be understood in its context in its paragraph, in its book, and, if needed, by other Scripture. For as the Reformers taught us through their "Analogy of Faith" principle, the Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible.

Extrabiblical data or contexts cannot be determinative of the meaning of a biblical text. It can illuminate usage of words and customs, but it should never be used hermeneutically to determine the meaning of a biblical text. This is why the ICBI framers exhorted: "We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship" (Article XVIII).

The Role of ExtraBiblical Data

This leads to an important distinction between the two views in the use of extrabiblical data. According to the TA position, extrabiblical data can illuminate meaning of a text (i.e., reveal some of its significance), but it cannot determine the meaning or truth of a text. All the factors to determine the meaning of a biblical text are in the text taken in its context.[37]Of course, individual words used in that text, especially *hapax legomena* (words only used once in the Bible), can be illuminated by extrabiblical usage of these terms but this extrabiblical usage cannot determine truth of a biblical sentence. The form (*formal cause*) of meaning is the text itself. At best, extrabiblical data can only help us understand the meaning of a word (which is part of the *material cause*), but it cannot determine the meaning of the text itself. The word is only a part of the total form

in the grammatical structure of the text—which structure we get only in the text itself. Words are like pieces in a puzzle; they can be key to completing the picture, but they are only a piece of the picture. The picture (the form) itself is found only in the text (the whole picture). Either the piece (word) fits or it does not fit into the picture (form) found in the text.

Also, extrabiblical data can illuminate customs expressed in a text, but they cannot determine the meaning or truth of the passage which that custom is found in. Thus, commands about taking a staff, wearing sandals, or kissing the brethren are illuminated by the culture, but they do not determine the truth of any biblical passage in which they are found. And to borrow a Jewish or Greco-Roman legend to determine the meaning of a biblical text is methodologically misdirected and can lead to what is theologically tragic, namely, denying the historicity of the text.[38] For example, the fact that there were ancient creation or flood stories other than the Bible can illuminate (and even help confirm) the biblical story, but they should not replace it, nor should they be used to undermine the historicity of the biblical stories. Thus, ICBI declared: "We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood" (Article XII). And the official ICBI commentary adds, "We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual." Further, "Some, for instance, take Adam to be a myth, whereas in Scripture he is presented as a real person. Others take Jonah to be an allegory when he is presented as a historical person and [is] so referred to by Christ" (EH Article XIII).[39]

Licona's Misuse of Greco-Roman Genre to Explain an Alleged Contradiction

A classical example of the misuse se of extrabiblical Greco-Roman genre to interpret the text is found in Mike Licona's attempt to explain an alleged contradiction in the Gospels.

The Charge of Contradiction in the Gospels

Critic Bart Ehrman wrote: "Maybe when Mark says that Jesus was crucified

the day after the Passover was eaten (Mark 14:12; 15:25) and John says he died the day before it was eaten (John 19:14)—maybe that is a genuine difference," that is, a real contradiction.[40] This is not an uncommon claim for a Bible critic and agnostic like Bart Ehrman. But is it consistent for an evangelical New Testament scholar like Mike Licona? In a debate with Ehrman at Southern Evangelical Seminary(Spring 2009), Licona said, "I think that John probably altered the day [of Jesus's crucifixion] in order for a theological—to make a theological point there. But that does not mean that Jesus wasn't crucified." In short, John contradicts the other Gospels on which day Jesus was crucified.

Holding Greco-Roman Genre Allows for Contradictions

But how can one hold to inerrancy, as Licona claims to do, and yet affirm that there is a contradiction in the Gospels? According to Licona, the answer is found in embracing the Greco-Roman genre view of the Gospels. He claims this is a "flexible genre," and "it is often difficult to determine where history ends and legend begins."[41] Indeed, he claims "*Bios* offered the ancient biographer great flexibility for rearranging material and *inventing speeches*. . .and they often *included legends*."[42]

In a professionally transcribed interview by Lenny Esposito of Mike Licona on YouTube on November 23, 2012 at the 2012 Evangelical Theological Society meeting,[43] Licona affirmed the following: "So **um this didn't really bother me in terms of if there were contradictions in the Gospels.** I mean **I believe in biblical inerrancy but I also realized that biblical inerrancy is not one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.** The resurrection is. So if Jesus rose from the dead, Christianity is still true even if it turned out that some things in the Bible weren't. So **um it didn't really bother me a whole lot even if some contradictions existed.** But it did bother a lot of Christians."

So, contradictions in the Gospels do not bother Licona because inerrancy "is not one of the fundamental doctrines." Why? Because, says Licona, they don't affect any important doctrine like the resurrection of Christ. However, Licona realized that "it did bother a lot of Christians." In fact, he said**, "I asked the class [he was teaching] how many of this thing [sic] about potential contradictions really bothers you, and the majority of the class raised their hands"** (emphasis is mine in all these quotations).

How Greco-Roman Genre Allows for Contradictions in Gospels

Since it bothered so many other Christians to think that there may be contradictions in the Gospels, Licona said, “I started reading ancient biographies written around the time of Jesus because the majority of New Testament scholars, thanks to Richard Burridge initially, and also people like Charles Talbert, David Aune, and even more recently Craig Keener shows that uh the **majority of New Testament scholars regard the Gospels as ancient biographies, Greco-Roman biographies.”** So, what did he discover? Licona replied, “They all followed Greco-Roman biographies. So I started reading through these. There was like 80 to 100 written with in just a couple 100 years of Jesus and the most prolific is Plutarch and he wrote over 60, fifty of which have survived and so I read through all of those not only to understand not only how ancient biography worked but to actually read these.”

What did he find? Licona continued, “I noticed that nine of the people that he [Plutarch] wrote biographies on lived at the same time so this provided me as a historian a unique opportunity because so, for example the assassination of Julius Cesar is told in five different biographies by Plutarch, so you have the same biographer telling the same story five different times and **so by noticing how Plutarch tells the story of Caesar’s assassination differently we can notice the kinds of biographical liberties that Plutarch took and he is writing around the same time as some of the Gospels** are being written and in the same language, “Greek” to boot.” So, “as I started to note some of these liberties that he took **I immediately started to recognize that these are the same liberties that I noticed the Evangelists did, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.**” So, “**these most commonly cited differences in the Gospels that skeptics like Ehrman like to refer to as contractions aren’t contradictions after all. They are just the standard biographical liberties that ancient biographers of that day took.”**

Licona admits that most of the problems in the Gospels are just difficulties but not really contradictions. He said, “a second point we can make is we have to look at genre of the Gospels, the literary style and that’s ancient biography and they were allowed to take liberties**. I want to point out a couple of those liberties like time compression or lack of attention to chronological detail . . . .** So there’s all of these different liberties and I can give examples of some of

these so that these aren't contradictions they are just biographical liberties that were taken. And then the third one, and I am trying to think what that third is right off and um, **oh you have to distinguish between a contradiction and a difference."**

However, even in eyewitness accounts like the Gospels, Licona insists that "**there are certain cases when some things can't be reconciled like the Titanic broke in half prior to sinking, [or]the Titanic went down intact, um that can't be reconciled, that is a contradiction and most of the things we find in the Gospels are differences.** I mean there are **only maybe a handful of things between Gospels that are potential contradictions and only one or two that I found that are really stubborn for me at this point and they are all in the peripherals again."**

An Evaluation of Licona's View on Contradictions in the Gospels

Licona's view on contradictions in the Gospels includes several important points. First, we will state the point and then give a brief evaluation of it from the standpoint of historic biblical inerrancy. Licona contends that:

First, most alleged contradictions are not real contradictions. There are plausible ways to reconcile the discrepancies.

Response: With this point we have no disagreement as such, expect that it does not go far enough. The historic doctrine of inerrancy, as embraced by the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) and the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI), affirms that **all**, not just most, alleged contradictions are not real, and there are possible, if not plausible, ways to harmonize all of them. This we have demonstrated in our volume, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties*.[44] After examining some 800 alleged contradictions in the Bible, we found not a single one proved to be a demonstrable error! And the vast majority of them had possible, or even plausible, explanations.

Actually, Licona employs several good principles in reconciling alleged contradictions in Scripture. For one, he is opposed to "abusing the text or to force meaning so they kind of twist the words to not mean what the author meant but to mean something else." Also, he rejects "pushing twenty-first century scientific classification onto animals that did not exist 3,500 years ago." Had he

applied similar logic to imposing Greco-Roman categories on the Gospels, he could have avoided his own error of using alien and extrabiblical categories on the Gospels that yield legends and contradictions.

Second, there are some contradictions in the Gospels, but they are only on peripheral matters and do not affect any essential doctrine of the Christian Faith.

Response: Nowhere has Licona (or any other Bible critic) actually proven there were any real contradictions in the Gospels. The one Licona mentions about the day of Christ's crucifixion has several possible explanations. First, there could have been two different Passovers, one following the Pharisees and the other the Sadducees. Second, the Gospel writer could have been referring to two different days, one the Passover day itself and the other the beginning of the feast following the Passover.[45] Third, John could have been using Roman time, not Jewish time. If so, there is no contradiction as to the time of day. Further, John 19:14 is not contradictory to Mark 14:12 since it is possible that the "preparation" day to which John referred could be the Friday before Sabbath of the Passover week. This view was held by the great Greek Scholar A. T. Robertson who affirmed that the phrase "day of the preparation of the Passover" in John 19:14 means "Friday"(Nisan 15), the day before the Sabbath in the Passover week. This harmonizes with the other Gospels (cf. Mark 14:12). *Ellicott's Commentaries* (vol. 6, 560-561) presents the same view (in "Excursus F" by Prof. Plumptre): "Even the phrase which seems most to suggest a different view, the 'preparation of the Passover' in John XIX. 14, does not mean more on any strict interpretation than the 'Passover Friday,' the Friday in Passover week. . . ." So, there are plausible explanations to the alleged contradiction mentioned by Ehrman and Licona.

Third, according to Licona these contradictions are not contrary to the Greco-Roman genre of the Gospels which allows for legends and contradictions.

Response: It is true that Greco-Roman genre allows for legend and error. But, despite its current popularity, it is not necessary to take the Gospels as part of Greco-Roman genre. In fact, this Greco-Roman genre view is a kind of current scholarly fad that stresses some similarities but overlooks some crucial differences between the Gospels and Greco-Roman biography. First of all, the Gospels themselves claim to be historical and accurate. Luke wrote, "Just as those who from the beginning were ***eyewitnesses and ministers of the world***

have delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also***, having followed all things closely*** for some time past, to write an ***orderly account*** for you, most excellent Theophilus***, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught***" (Luke 1:1-4, emphasis added). This claim for accurate historicity in Luke has been demonstrated in numerous details in the work of Roman Historian Colin Hemer in his monumental work, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenic History.*[46] He showed that in nearly 90 details of the account of Luke in Acts, he is accurate in even minute historical details. Not once has Luke been demonstrated to be in error.

Second, similarity does not prove identity. The Gospels are like Greco-Roman biography in some respects, but they are not identical to it. The Jewish nature of the New Testament is well known to biblical scholars. The NT citations are overwhelmingly from the Old Testament. It considers itself a fulfillment of the OT (Matt 5:17-18 cf. Book of Hebrews). The NT is rooted in Jewish history and considers itself a fulfillment of it in Jesus the Messiah and his kingdom. The NT writers give no evidence that they are borrowing from a Greco-Roman genre.

Third, the Bible does use different genres of literature (history, poetry, parable, etc.). But these are all known from inside the Bible by use of the traditional "grammaticohistorical exegesis" which the ICBI framers embraced (Article XVIII). The genre categories into which the Bible is said to fit are not determined by data outside the Bible. The Gospels, for example, may be their own unique genre, as many biblical scholars believe. As the ICBI statement puts it, "Scripture is to interpret Scripture" (Chicago Statement, Article XVIII). The Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible.

Fourth, whatever light extrabiblical information may shed on the biblical text (e.g., in customs or use of words), it does not determine the overall meaning of a text. The meaning of the biblical text is found in the text and its context. Certainly, extrabiblical Greek legend characteristics do not determine the meaning of the biblical text. This is an unorthodox method and, when applied to the Bible, it yields an unorthodox conclusion.

Fourth, Licona claims that we can believe there are contradictions in the Gospels without giving up his belief in inerrancy.

Response: The Law of NonContradiction that rules all thought, including theological thought, demands that opposing views cannot both be true. If one is

true, then the opposing view is false. But inerrancy demands that every affirmation in the Bible is true. Jesus could not have been crucified on Friday Nisan 15 and not crucified on that day. The claim that He was crucified on a day that He was not is false. For inerrancy demands that all the affirmations of the Bible are true. The ICBI statement on inerrancy declares: “We affirm the unity and internal consistency of scripture” (Article XIV). And “We deny that later revelations. . .ever correct or contradict” other revelations (Article V).

Fifth, inerrancy is not an essential doctrine of Christianity like the resurrection of Christ is. It is a non-essential or peripheral doctrine.

Response: On the contrary, the inspiration of Scripture is one of the essential or fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith, along with the deity of Christ, His atoning death, and his bodily resurrection. And inerrancy is an essential part of divine inspiration. Thus, a divinely inspired error is a contradiction in terms. As the ETS statement on inerrancy puts it, “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is *therefore* inerrant in the autographs” (emphasis added). It is clear from this statement that the framers meant that the Bible is inerrant *because* it is the Word of God. Inerrancy flows from inspiration and is a necessary part of it. The Bible is the Word of God, and God cannot error. Therefore, the Bible cannot err. After all, “God” means the Theistic God who is omniscient, and an omniscient Mind cannot make any errors in His Word. So, it is simply wrong to affirm that “inerrancy is not an essential doctrine of Christianity.”

Critical Comments on Licona’s Use of Greco-Roman Genre in the Gospels

First of all, whatever else there may be to commend Mike Licona’s view of Scripture, one thing is certain: his view is not consistent with the historic view of inerrancy as held by the framers of the ETS and ICBI statements. To claim, as he does, that the Gospels represent Jesus as being crucified on different days, is a flat contradiction. And contradictions are inconsistent with the doctrine of inerrancy. To claim otherwise is unbiblical, irrational, and nonsensical.

Second, classifying the Gospels as Greco-Roman biography which allows for errors and legends is not in accord with the historic view of the full and factual inerrancy of Scripture. An error is an error whether it is a legend or a

contradiction. And errors cannot be part of the inerrant Word of God.

Third, Licona adopts an unorthodox methodology, and unorthodox methodology leads to unorthodox theology. Any method that can be used to justify errors in the Gospels and yet be able to claim they are inerrant is not only contrary to the Bible, and the historic view on inerrancy, but it is contrary to logic and common sense.

Finally, As Professor Al Mohler of Southern Baptist Seminary pointed out in his critique of Licona's view, "Licona has handed the enemies of the resurrection of Jesus Christ a powerful weapon" by denying or undermining the historicity of other sections of the Gospels. For he uses an extrabiblical method by which he claims "it is often difficult to determine where history ends and legend begins."[47] He also claims that "*Bios* offered the ancient biographer great flexibility for rearranging material and *inventing speeches*. . .and they often *included legends.*"[48] What is more, using that method, Licona came to the conclusion that an event directly connected to the resurrection of Christ, and that occurred as a result of it, namely the bodily resurrection of some saints (in Matt 27:52-53), was merely a "poetical device," "special effects"[49] or a "legend."[50] This, indeed, is handing "the enemies of the resurrection of Jesus Christ a powerful weapon." For how can we be sure the resurrection of Christ is historical when in the same passage the resurrection of some saints that resulted from Christ's resurrection it not considered historical?

Correspondence view of Truth

There is another important difference between the Traditional Historical-Grammatical Approach and the New Historiographical Approach. The historical-grammatical approach implies a correspondence view of truth. But the new hermeneutic often entails an intentionalist view of truth. Truth as correspondence means a statement is true if it corresponds to the facts, to the reality to which it points. Intentionalists, on the other hand, claim that truth is found in the author's intent (purpose) which we cannot always know from the biblical text itself, but sometimes only by the determination of a literary genre based outside of the biblical text itself. But if truth is found in intention, whether the intention is redemption or anything else beneficial, then any well-intended statement is true, even if it is mistaken—which is patently absurd.

Further, there are fatal flaws in the intentionalist view of truth. One of them

was implied by a proponent of the view himself. Clark Pinnock wrote, "I supported the 1978 Chicago Statement of The international Council on Biblical Inerrancy," noting that Article XIII "made room for nearly every well-intentioned Baptist. . . ."[51] He was referring to Article XIII which said that "We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose." But this is clearly contrary to what the ICBI framers meant by inerrancy, as is revealed in its official commentary on those very articles. ICBI declared explicitly "When we say that the truthfulness of Scripture ought to be evaluated according to its own standards that means that . . . all the claims of the Bible must correspond with reality, whether that reality is historical, factual or spiritual."[52] It adds, "By biblical standards truth and error is meant the view used both in the Bible and in everyday life, viz., a correspondence view of truth. This part of the article is directed toward who would redefine truth to relate merely to redemptive intent, the purely personal, or the like, rather than to mean that which corresponds with reality."[53]

Further, the denial of the correspondence view of truth is selfdefeating. For the claim that "Truth is not what corresponds to reality" is itself a statement that implicitly claims that it corresponds to reality. This is to say nothing of the fact that the Bible everywhere assumes a correspondence view of truth, as do people in their everyday lives.[54] Likewise, both science and the courts assume a correspondence view of truth.[55] So, the correspondence view of truth is biblical, unavoidable, and rationally undeniable. But the "New Historiographical View" rejects the traditional correspondence view for a modified position by affirming a "blurred [correspondence] picture" of what occurred with the "intention" of the author.[56]

Use of Genre Types in Scripture[57]

Virtually everyone agrees that there are different genre in Scripture: narratives (Acts), poetry (Psalms), parables (Gospels), and even allegory (Gal 4). There are also figures of speech, including hyperbole (Matt 23:24), simile (Ps 1:3), metaphor (Ps 18:2), symbolic language (Rev 1:20), and so on. These are not in dispute. What is in dispute between the TA and NA methods of interpretation is whether genre determination made apart from the biblical text can be used as hermeneutically determinative of the meaning of a biblical text.[58] Clearly the "New Historiographical Approach" espoused by Licona and other evangelicals holds that it can.[59] For Licona argued that that "**there is somewhat of a consensus among contemporary scholars that the Gospels belong to the**

genre of Greco-Roman biography (*bios*).”[60] But how could they know this genre classification before they ever look at the biblical text.[61] Maybe the Gospels are a unique genre category of their own.[62] Maybe, despite some similarities with Greco-Roman biography, the Gospels are a unique category of their own that can only be known by examining the Gospels themselves and their relation to the rest of Scripture. Or, perhaps the Gospels are in the broad category of redemptive history. But, as the ICBI framers remind us, “Though the Bible is indeed *redemptive* history, it is also redemptive *history*, and this means that the acts of salvation wrought by God actually occurred in the space-time world.”[63]

According to the traditional historical-grammatical interpretation, the genre types that are applicable to the biblical text are not fixed outside of the biblical text.[64] They are decided by examining the biblical text itself with the historical-grammatical method and discovering whether they should be taken literally or not. ICBI declared: “We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material, variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.” (Article XIII). But all of this is determined by looking at the phenomena of Scripture itself, not by making external genre decisions.[65]

As we will show below, the TA has the presumption of literalness, unless proven to the contrary.[66] Hence, if the text says this is it a “parable,” an “allegory” (cf. Gal 4:24) or it is only “like” what it is speaking about, then there are grounds for taking it in a nonliteral sense. Even then symbols and other figures of speech often contain a literal truth about a literal truth. For example, while calling God a rock is a metaphor (since the Bible says he **is** “Spirit”—John 4:24), nonetheless, God does have rock-like characteristics, such durability and stability.

Another difficulty with the idea that genre “gives meaning” view is that the interpreter must read the text and attempt to discern the patterns that would indicate conformity to the characteristics of a particular genre.[67] This requires that the person have a rudimentary knowledge of the text prior to classifying the genre. This rudimentary knowledge occurs when a person approaches the text according to the historical-grammatical interpretive methodology, which goes from the particulars to the whole.[68] Furthermore, the idea that genre determines

meaning suffers from another logical mistake. In order to discover the genre of a particular text, one must already have a developed a genre theory. As Professor Howe notes: “But a genre theory comes from studying and comparing individual texts, and this is done prior to and apart from genre classification. If this is so, then it must be the case that there is some meaning communicated to the interpreter apart from whether the interpreter has recognized any given genre classification. But, if genre determines meaning, then this scenario is impossible. The interpreter must know the genre before he knows the text. But this is tantamount to imposing genre expectations upon the text.”[69] In hermeneutics, we label this as eisegesis!

In the light of this, the ICBI statement on genre is taken out of context by the “new historiographical method.” The ICBI statement reads: “We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammaticohistorical exegesis, *taking account of its literary forms and devices*, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture” (Article XVIII, emphasis added). This does not mean that genre types derived from outside of Scripture should be used to determine the meaning of Scripture. For the preceding phrase states clearly that very next sentence stresses that it is “**the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammaticohistorical exegesis”** and the following sentence insists that **“Scripture is to interpret Scripture**” (emphasis added). Then it goes on to excluded extrabiblical sources used to determine the meaning of Scripture, proclaiming that: “We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, **dehistoricizing,** or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship” (emphasis added). But this is precisely what Mike Licona and the NA do in proclaiming that certain NT Gospel texts were (or could be) legends.[70]

We need to underscore the fact that the literary genres perceived in biblical as well as classical literature are for the most part generalizations created by scholars over the last few centuries. It is highly unlikely that the human authors of the Bible selected a particular genre for a specific passage and then made sure that they abided by the requirements mandated for the genre of their choice. It is true that some forms of literature are written according to some stated set of rules. However, the genres of literature frequently invoked for various Bible passages have no rules, only the criteria used by scholars to categorize them. They may be valid generalizations, but one cannot use them as sufficiently invariable to draw inferences from them.

For example, it is almost universally accepted the Old Testament contains a genre called “poetry,” and it is an easy to move from there to the conclusion that poetry consists of figures of speech, thereby possibly weakening the factual meaning of a passage. However, in contrast to other languages and cultures, Hebrew “poetry” is highly ambiguous as a literary genre. For the last few centuries textbooks have generally stated that Hebrew poetry manifests itself in parallelism. However, this idea did not become popular until 1754 with the publication of the book *Praelectiones Academiae de Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum* (On the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews) by Robert Lowth. Subsequent scholars have expanded on the nature of parallelism to the point where it has practically lost its meaning because there remain few verses that would not fit one of the alleged types of parallelism. For example, E. W. Bullinger, lists seven types of parallelism.[71] But there still are problems with this classification. The criteria are not sufficient to reach agreement which passages exhibit parallelism (cf. *e.g.* Isaiah 37:30, which is translated as poetry in only some English versions). On the other hand, numerous texts exhibiting parallelism (e.g. Lamech’s nasty outburst in Genesis 4:23-24) do not seem to fit our intuitive understanding of “poetry.” We certainly cannot infer from the presence of parallelism that a passage must also contain figures of speech or symbolism. This much is certain: to classify a text as “poetry” on the basis of parallelism, and then to use that classification as a reason to deny its facticity is to go way beyond what can be gleaned from either our reconstructions of the genre or of the content of the Bible.[72]

Similarly, the genre of apocalyptic writing is a general category created inductively by scholars, and, thus, should not be used deductively to infer certain features of a text. The name is based on the book of Revelation, the Apocalypse. Thus apocalyptic writing is literature in the style of the book of Revelation. Isaiah 24–27 is alleged to be an early example of it, and Daniel supposedly brought the style to maturity. It is also found in apocryphal books such as Enoch, 2 Esdras, and the Assumption of Moses. Once one takes a close look at all of these books and passages, it becomes clear that not one of them meets all of the criteria usually ascribed to apocalypticism. For example, not all look to the immediate future for redemption, not all are pseudepigraphal, not all depict a redeemer figure, not all are written in a time of despair, not all contain angels, and so forth. One cannot deny that there are similarities in style among the aforementioned texts, and it is legitimate to summarize those similarities for the sake of convenience with the term “apocalyptic style,” as long as we keep in mind its Protean nature. Having labeled a passage as “apocalyptic,” it would be a

serious mistake on that basis to deduce anything about the passage that is not directly contained in it.

The discovery of genres continues, as we see with the references to "*bioi*" of late. Doing so may be helpful in understanding specific pieces of writing, including Bible passages. However genre criticism should never strait-jacket any particular passage, biblical or otherwise, in order to make it fit into the scholar's inductively derived category. Logically, to use genre criticism to as a tool to question the historicity of a passage is to commit the fallacy of begging the question. The same scholar who raises historical doubts on the basis of the genre of a passage categorized the passage as belonging to that genre to begin with.

The Presumption of Historicity

The traditional method of historical-grammatical analysis demanded by ICBI as part of its inerrancy statement (Article XVIII), presumes that a narrative text is historical. The new historiographical approach does not.[73] According to Licona, we approach the Gospel narratives in neutral with regard to their historicity. That is, we do not know in advance what the writer intended to say in this narrative regarding its historicity.[74] We can only determine this after we have decided the genre categories outside the Gospels. Thus, when we look at the Gospels, they seem to fit best into the Greco-Roman biography category (which allows for legend and errors), then we can determine what is history and what is legend.[75]

However, this is contrary to the traditional historical-grammatical method which presumes that a narrative is historical, until proven otherwise. As the ICBI framers put it, "We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which **present themselves as factual**." Then it goes on to affirm that it is wrong to take such texts and pronounce them a myth or allegory, noting, that "Some, for instance, take Adam to be a myth, whereas in **Scripture he is presented as a real person.** Others take Jonah to be an allegory **when he is presented as a historical person** and [is] so referred to by Christ" (EH Article XIII, emphasis added). As a member of the drafting committee, I [Norman Geisler] can verify that we explicitly had in mind also Robert Gundry (who was later let go from the ETS over this issue) when he denied the historicity of certain sections of Matthew on similar grounds to those used by Mike Licona.[76]

But just how does the TA justify its presumption of historicity in a narrative or how do we determine that they "present themselves as factual"? The answer lies in the nature of the historical-grammatical method. It is often called the "literal method" of interpretation, though appropriate qualifications (such as that it does not exclude figures of speech, etc.) are taken into account. The Latin title is s*ensus literalis*.[77] The basic or true sense of any statement is the literal sense. As it has been put popularly, "If the literal sense makes good sense, then seek no other sense, lest it result in nonsense." But from where do we get this presumption of literalness? The answer is: from the very nature of communication itself—of which language is the medium. The fact is, that communication is not possible without the assumption of literalness. Indeed, life itself as we know it would not be possible without this presumption. Consider for a moment, whether life would be possible if we did not presume that traffic signs convey literal meaning. The same is true of everything from labels on food and common conversations to courtroom procedures. Of course, figures of speech and symbols are used in literal communication, but the truth that is communicated is a literal truth. A figure of speech without an underlying literal core of meaning that is shared by those engaged in communication cannot convey any meaning.[78] For instance, Jesus said Lazarus was "sleeping" when he was actually dead (John 11:11-14). This is an appropriate figure of speech of a literal event—death. However, this is significantly different from the claim that death is not a literal event of which we can use appropriate figures of speech or symbols.

Now the basis for taking things literally in common communication applies not only to the present but also to the past. When statements are made about the past, we assume them to refer to literal events, unless there is good reason to think otherwise by the biblical text, its context, or other biblical texts. So, the **historical**-grammatical method by its very name and nature has the presumption of historicity when used of the past. So, when the Gospel narrative declares that Jesus rose from the dead (Matt 27:53), then we presume this is historical. Likewise, when the same chapter (Matt 27:50-54) says that some saints were resurrected "after his [Jesus'] resurrection," then we presume (unless proven to the contrary by biblical context), that this statement is referring to a literal resurrection as well. Thus, the burden of proof rests on those who "dehistoricize" this or any like narrative. Further, once we examine the text, its context, and other biblical text, we see: (a) there is no evidence in the text to the contrary, and (b) there is strong evidence in the text and context that the presumption of historicity is justified.[79]

Indeed, there are multiple lines of evidence to confirm the historicity of the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27, including the following:[80] (1) This passage is a part of a historical narrative in a historical record—the Gospel of Matthew. Both the specific context (the crucifixion and resurrection narrative) and the larger setting (the Gospel of Matthew) demand the presumption of historicity, unless there is strong evidence to the contrary in the text, its context, or in other Scripture—which there is not. (2) This text manifests no literary signs of being poetic or legendary, such as those found in parables, poems, or symbolic presentations. Hence, it should be taken in the sense in which it presents itself, namely, as factual history. (3) This passage gives no indication of being a legendary embellishment, but it is a short, simple, straightforward account in the exact style one expects in a brief historical narrative. (4) This event occurs in the context of other important historical events—the death and resurrection of Christ—and there is no indication that it is an insertion foreign to the text. To the contrary, the repeated use of "and" shows its integral connection to the other historical events surrounding the report. (5) The resurrection of these saints is presented as the *result* of the physical historical resurrection of Christ. For these saints were resurrected only "after" Jesus was resurrected and as a result of it (Matt 27:53) since Jesus is the "firstfruits" of the dead (1 Cor 15:20). It makes no sense to claim that a legend emerged as the immediate result of Jesus' physical resurrection. Nor would it have been helpful to the cause of early Christians in defending the literal resurrection of Christ for them to incorporate legends, myths, or apocalyptic events alongside His actual resurrection in the inspired text of Scripture.

In addition to this indication with the text, there are other reason for accepting the historicity of Matthew 27: (6) Early Fathers of the Christian Church, who were closer to this event, took it as historical, sometimes even including it as an apologetic argument for the resurrection of Christ (e.g., Irenaeus, *Fragments*, XXVIII; Origen, *Against Celsus*, Book II, Article XXXIII; Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, Chap. XIII). (7) The record has the same pattern as the historical records of Jesus' physical and historical resurrection: (a) there were dead bodies; (b) they were buried in a tomb; (c) they were raised to life again; (d) they came out of the tomb and left it empty; (e) they appeared to many witnesses. (8) An overwhelming consensus of the great orthodox teachers of the Church for the past nearly two thousand years supports the view that this account should be read as a historical record, and, consequently, as reporting historical truth. Aquinas cited the Fathers with approval, saying, "It was a great thing to raise Lazarus after four days, much more was it that they who had long slept should

now shew themselves alive; this is indeed a proof of the resurrection to come" (Chrysostom). And "As Lazarus rose from the dead, so also did many bodies of the saints rise again to shew forth the Lord's resurrection" (Jerome).[81] (9) Modern objections to a straightforward acceptance of this passage as a true historical narrative are based on a faulty hermeneutic, violating sound principles of interpretation. For example, they (a) make a presumptive identification of its genre, based on extrabiblical sources, rather than analyzing the text for its style, grammar, and content in its context; or, (b) they use events reported outside of the Bible to pass judgment on whether or not the biblical event is historical. (10) The faulty hermeneutic principles used in point #9 could be used, without any further justification, to deny other events in the gospels as historical. Since there is no hermeneutical criterion of "magnitude," the same principles could also be used to relegate events such as the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection of Christ to the realm of legend.

ICBI on Dehistoricizing the Gospel Record

Since there is both the presumptive confirmation of historicity in the Gospel narrative and abundant evidence in the text itself and early understandings of it, then it is understandable that the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI) would speak to the contemporary trend to undermine the inerrancy of the Gospel record, such as, has once again been attempted by Mike Licona. In the process of defending the historicity of the resurrection of Christ he undermined the historicity of the very Gospel narrative which supports the historicity of the resurrection. This led Southern Baptist leader Dr. Al Mohler to declare: "Licona has not only **violated the inerrancy of Scripture**, but he has **blown a massive hole into his own masterful defense of the resurrection."** Thus, "**Licona has handed the enemies of the resurrection of Jesus Christ a powerful weapon. . . ."** (emphasis added).[82]

The ICBI framers condemned what some evangelical scholars were doing in undermining the Gospel record and provided clear statements that condemn that kind of "dehistoricizing." They wrote: "We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship" (Article XVIII). And in the official ICBI commentary on their inerrancy statement, they added, "It has been fashionable in certain quarters to maintain that the Bible is not normal history, but redemptive history with an accent on redemption. Theories have been established that would limit inspiration to the

redemptive theme of redemptive history, allowing the historical dimension of redemptive history to be errant."[83] "Though the Bible is indeed *redemptive* history, it is also redemptive *history*, and this means that the acts of salvation wrought by God actually occurred in the space-time world."[84] In addition, ICBI unequivocally stated that "We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit. We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science" (Article XII).

In addition to the ICBI statements (above) declaring that dehistoricizing the Gospels is a denial of inerrancy, there are several other reasons in support of our conclusion: (1) Affirming the historical truth of this text in Matthew 27 has been the overwhelming consensus of the great orthodox teachers of the Christian Church for the past nearly 2,000 years. So, any denial of its historicity has virtually the whole weight of Christian history against it. (2) The largest organization of scholars in the world who affirm inerrancy, the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), declared that views like this that dehistoricize the Gospel record are incompatible with inerrancy, and, hence, they asked a member (Robert Gundry) to resign by an overwhelming vote (in 1983) because he had denied the historicity of sections in Matthew. The only real difference to Licona's approach in Matthew 27 is the type of extrabiblical literature used—apocalyptic vs. midrash. (3) The official statements of the ICBI, the largest group of international scholars to formulate an extended statement on inerrancy, explicitly exclude views like this that "dehistoricize" Gospel narratives. As a member of the ICBI drafting committee, I [Norman Geisler] know for certain that views like Robert Gundry's were a specific target when we declared: "We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching. . ." ("Chicago Statement on Inerrancy," Article XVIII), and "We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightfully be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual" (*Statement on Hermeneutics*, Article XIII). (4) The ETS has adopted the ICBI understanding of inerrancy as their guide in determining its meaning. And the ETS excluded a member who dehistoricized sections of the Gospel like this. And it was because of instances like this, where members redefine doctrinal statements to suit their own beliefs, that the International Society of Christian Apologetics (www.isca–apologetics.org) added this sentence: "This doctrine is understood as the one expressed by the Framers of the *International Council on Biblical Inerrancy* in its 'Chicago Statement' and as interpreted by the official ICBI Commentary on

it." (5) Neither the ETS nor ICBI, in their official statements and actions, have allowed divorcing hermeneutics from inerrancy by making the vacuous claim that one could hold to inerrancy regardless of the hermeneutical method he employed and the conclusions to which it leads, even if it dehistoricized the creation story, the death of Christ, or His resurrection. If they did, then they would no longer be an "Evangelical" theological society. (6) Statements from other ICBI framers and members confirm this relationship between hermeneutics and inerrancy. An ICBI framer and founder of the ICBI, RC Sproul wrote:

> Inspiration without inerrancy is an empty term. Inerrancy without inspiration is unthinkable. The two are inseparably related. They may be distinguished but not separated. So it is with hermeneutics. We can easily distinguish between the inspiration and interpretation of the Bible, but we cannot separate them. Anyone can confess a high view of the nature of Scripture but the ultimate test of one's view of Scripture is found in his method of interpreting it. A person's hermeneutic reveals his view of Scripture more clearly than does an exposition of his view.[85]

In his book *Does Inerrancy Matter?* James Montgomery Boice cites John Feinberg stating: "Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their *original autographs* and *properly interpreted* will be shown to be wholly true in everything they teach, whether that teaching has to do with doctrine, history, science, geography, geology, or other disciplines of knowledge."[86]

Dehistoricizing the Gospel Record is a Denial of Inerrancy

Licona and his defenders attempt to argue that the historicity of the Gospels is not a matter of inspiration (or inerrancy), but a matter of interpretation. But this move is unsuccessful for many reasons.

First, it is built on a serious misunderstanding about what inerrancy means, especially that of the ICBI, which Licona claims to support. The ICBI statements insist that the Bible does make true statements that "correspond to reality" and that the Bible is completely true (corresponds to reality) in everything it teaches and "touches," including all statements "about history and science." So, inerrancy does not simply apply to contentless statements (for which we can

only know the meaning by adopting a modern form of biblical criticism). Rather, inerrancy as a doctrine covers the truthfulness of all that Scripture teaches, including its own inerrancy.

Second, without a connection between inerrancy and hermeneutics—the literal historical-grammatical hermeneutics—the claim of inerrancy would be totally empty or vacuous. It would amount to saying, "**If** the Bible makes any truth claim, then it is true, but inerrancy *per se* does not entail that the Bible makes any truth claim." But inerrancy is not an empty vacuous claim. It is a claim that the whole Bible makes truth-claims, and that it is true in all that it affirms. And truth, as we have seen and as it is defined by ICBI, is what corresponds to reality. So, to affirm the Bible as completely true is to affirm that all it affirms about reality is actually true. Thus, when it affirms things about the past, it follows that they are historically true. This means that to deny their inerrancy is to deny their historicity. The ICBI statements are very clear on this matter. They emphatically declare that: "HOLY SCRIPTURE, BEING GOD'S OWN WORD, WRITTEN BY MEN PREPARED AND SUPERINTENDED BY HIS SPIRIT, IS OF INFALLIBLE DIVINE AUTHORITY **IN ALL MATTERS UPON WHICH IT TOUCHES** ("A SHORT STATEMENT, "NO. 2, EMPHASIS ADDED) "We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture" (ARTICLE XIII). "We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write" (ARTICLE IX). "We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit. We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science" (ARTICLE XII). "We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture" (ARTICLE XIII). So, inerrancy is not an empty claim. It claims that every affirmation (or denial) in the Bible is completely true, whether it is about theological, scientific or historical matters (emphasis added in above quotations).

Third, a complete disjunction between hermeneutics and inerrancy is an example of "Methodological Unorthodoxy" which we first exposed in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (JETS) in 1983, now easily accessible on our web site (www.normangeisler.net). (1) If Licona's total separation of inerrancy and hermeneutic is true, then one could completely allegorize the Bible (say, like Mary Baker Eddy did)—denying the literal Virgin

Birth, physical resurrection of Christ, and everything else—and still claim that they held to the inerrancy of the Bible. (2) Such a bifurcation of hermeneutics from inerrancy is empty, vacuous, and meaningless. It amounts to saying that the Bible is not teaching that anything is actually true. But neither the ETS nor ICBI, whose view of inerrancy was adopted as guidelines for understanding inerrancy, would agree with this contention, as the next point demonstrates.[87] [88]

Fourth, the ICBI Chicago Statement on inerrancy includes a statement on the literal historical-grammatical hermeneutics. Article XVIII reads: "We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammaticohistorical exegesis. . . ." There are very good reasons for including this statement on hermeneutics in an evangelical inerrancy statement. For one thing, there would be no doctrine of inerrancy were it not for the historical-grammatical hermeneutic by which we derive inerrancy from Scripture. For another, the term "evangelical" implies a certain confessional standard on essential doctrines, including the inspiration of Scripture, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, His atoning death, and his bodily resurrection. These doctrines expressed in the early creeds of Christendom are derived from Scripture by the historical-grammatical hermeneutic. Without it there would be no "evangelical" or "orthodox" creeds of beliefs in accord with them.[89]

Inerrancy is Actually Inseparable from Interpretation

Inerrancy and the literal hermeneutic are *formally distinct*, but they are *actually inseparable.* Failure to make this distinction has led some to the false conclusion that any time one changes his interpretation on a given passage of Scripture, he has thereby denied inerrancy since opposing interpretations cannot both be true. However, this is based on the false assumption that what is actually inseparable is identical. Siamese twins with two heads and only one heart are inseparable but not identical. Apart from death, our soul and body are inseparable, but they are not identical. Hence, the charge that inerrancy and hermeneutics are identical is absurd. ICBI did not suppose that inerrancy and hermeneutics were formally identical, only that they were actually inseparable. So, when one changes his interpretation from a false one to a true one, the truth of the Bible does not change. All that changes is his interpretation of that text. Truth does not change when our understanding of it changes. The Bible remains inerrant when our interpretations are not. In short, there is an overlap between inerrancy and hermeneutics because inerrancy is not an empty (vacuous) claim. It is a claim that involves the assertion that an inspired Bible is actually true in

all that it affirms. And this truth corresponds literally to the reality about which it speaks. Thus, inerrancy is not claiming that "if the Bible is making a truth claim, then that truth claim must be true." Rather, inerrancy claims that "the Bible is making truth claims, and they are all true." Since truth is what corresponds to reality, to say the Bible is inerrant is to say that all of its claims correspond to reality.[90]

Finally, to retreat to the unknown and *unexpressed* "intentions" of the author behind the text, as opposed to the *expressed intentions* in the text, can be little more than a cover for one's unorthodox beliefs. This assumption that we do not know the author's intentions expressed in the biblical text, but must seek to find them by some extrabiblical text, is a capitulation to contemporary scholarship rather than submission to the ancient Lordship of the Savior who affirmed the imperishability (Matt 5:17-18), final authority (Matt 15:1-6), unbreakability (John 10:35), and inerrancy of Scripture (Matt 22: 29; John 17:17).

Conclusion

There are unorthodox methods and unorthodox messages. Unorthodox methodology leads to unorthodox theology. Many NT scholars,[91] including Mike Licona, have done both. In the final analysis that *with which* we think can be just as important, if not more, than that *about which* we think. As we have seen, The "New Histriographical Approach" of Mike Licona is an unorthodox methodology. And this unorthodox method led him to some unorthodox conclusions.

The tendency to migrate toward what is new is a dangerous tendency in contemporary biblical scholarship. It is based on a fallacious premise that claims, to use popular language, that "new is true" and implies "old is mold." I [Norman Geisler] for one have found after sixty years of biblical studies that "Old is gold." And I would urge that young evangelical scholars resist the Athenian tendency to "spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new" (Acts 17:21).

[1] This chapter is a revised version of an article that first appeared in the *Journal of the International Society of Chistian Apologetics* (vol. 5 No. 1 2012) under the tile "Defending Inerrancy: A Response to Methodological Unorthodoxy."

[2] For background on the significant changes occurring among evangelicals regarding ICBI, see Jason S. Sexton, "How Far Beyond Chicago? Assessing Recent Attempts to Reframe the Inerrancy Debate," *Themelios* 34/1 (April 2009) n. p.

[3] We need not address the additional problem that the very term "unlimited inerrancy" is redundant. However, the redundancy is made necessary by the fact that some have limited the inerrancy of Scripture to redemptive or spiritual matters.

[4] Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible, An Historical Approach* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979).

[5] Rogers and McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible*, xxii, xxiii.

[6] Ibid., 457-58.

[7] Clark Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*. Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006).

[8] http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2008/03/26/interview-with-craig-blomberg/ One might take note of the phenomenon that, no sooner had Blomberg protested against a "slippery slope" argument, he applied one directly to Bart Ehrman. The truth is that the very fact that this entire debate is taking place testifies to the existence of the slope and that it is quite slippery. Admittedly, the "all or nothing at all" argument is fallacious when used of the Bible, if one is speaking only of its reliability. For it could be reliable in general, even if not in all particulars. However, when speaking of the Bible *as the Word of God*, finding just one real error would undermine its claim to be the Word of God in everything it affirms. For finding even one error would reduce it to the level of any other purely human book.

[9] Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus, A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2010), 34, 54, 96, 143, 186, 202-204, 338-339, 548-553, 570, 593, 596-597.

[10] Licona, *Resurrection*, 202-203. See Charles H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with GraecoRoman Biography*. Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004).

[11] Burridge, ibid., 324.

[12] See Licona, *Resurrection*, 34, emphasis added in these citations.

[13] Ibid., 34, 306, 548, 552, 553.

[14] Ibid., 306 footnote 114.

[15] Ibid., 570.

[16] Licona claims to hold a correspondence view of truth but modifies it by insisting that "our knowledge of the past may not mirror reality" and may present "a blurred picture of what occurred," (ibid., 92). Indeed, according to Licona, it may contain legend and not history (ibid., 35, 306) and even contradictions.

[17] Ibid., 92.

[18] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*. Second Revised Edition. Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London and New York: Crossroad, 2004 [1975, 1989]; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutic and Philosophical Speculation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1980); Ibid. *New Horizons in Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997).

[19] Licona, *Resurrection*, 97-99.

[20] Ibid., 185-86; 570.

[21] Ibid., 208.

[22] Ibid., 596.

[23] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Lost in Interpretation," Truth, Scripture, and Hermeneutic, *JETS* 48/1 (March 2008) 89-115.

[24] See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (NY: Macmillan, 1953) I:19, 23, 241; II, 194, 226.

[25] See Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology, in One Volume* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), Chapter 6; John O'Callaghan, *Thomistic Realism and the*

Linguistic Turn (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2003).

[26] See Norman L. Geisler and Ron Rhodes, *Conviction without Compromise: Standing Strong in the Core Beliefs of the Christian Faith* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2008), Part One; Philip Schaaf, *The Creeds of Christendom*. Sixth Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), vol. 1: The History of the Creeds.

[27] See Norman L. Geisler, "The Relation of Purpose and Meaning in Interpreting Scripture" in *Grace Theological Journal* 5/2 (Fall 1984), 229-245.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Licona, *Resurrection,* 85, 195.

[30] For an excellent defense of objectivity in Hermeneutics, see Thomas Howe, *Objectivity in Biblical Interpretation* (Atamonte Springs, FL: Advantage Books, 2004).

[31] Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning In This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009); E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CONN: Yale University, 1967); E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); E.P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993); *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); *The Resurrection and the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003); *Paul: Fresh Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005).

[32] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Lost in Interpretation?," 106.

[33] Burridge, ibid., 121.

[34] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1996), 89-113; Darrell L. Bock, "The Historical Jesus, An Evangelical View," in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. Eds. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009).

[35] Paul Ricœur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation.* Edited with Introduction by Lewis S. Mudge (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980).

[36] Of course, there are single word sentences like "Go," but they have an implied subject meaning "[You] go."

[37] See John H. Sailhamer, "The Hermeneutics of Premillennialism," *Faith and Mission* 18/1 (2000), 96-109; *The Meaning of the Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009).

[38] See Leon Morris, *Apocalyptic* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972).

[39] See Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam* (Grand Rapids: Baker/Brazos, 2012); John Polkinghorne, *Testing Scripture: A Scientist Explores the Bible* (Baker/Brazos, 2011); Bruce Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 202-203.

[40] Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperOne, 2005), 9.

[41] Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 34.

[42] Ibid. [emphasis added]

[43] See http://youtu.be/TJ8rZukh_Bc

[44] Norman L. Geisler and Thomas A. Howe, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008).

[45] See John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary,* 2 vols. (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983), 2:258.

[46] Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenic History* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990).

[47] Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 34

[48] Ibid. [Emphasis added]

[49] Ibid., 552.

[50] Ibid., 34.

[51] Clark Pinnock, *Scripture Principle*. Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 266.

[52] R. C. Sproul and Roger R. Nicole, *Explaining Inerrancy: A Commentary*

(Oakland, CA: International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, 1980), 41.

[53] Ibid., 43-44.

[54] See Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, in One Volume (Baker, 2012), chapter 7.

[55] See Norman L. Geisler and William C. Roach, *Defending Inerrancy: Affirming the Accuracy of Scripture for a New Generation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 233-253.

[56] Licona, *Resurrection*., 85, 195.

[57] See: "Genre Criticism," in *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy and The Bible*. Eds. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 165-216.

[58] See Tom Howe, "Does Genre Determine Meaning?," *Christian Apologetics Journal* (SES) 6/1 (Spring 2007), 2-17.

[59] See Andreas Köstenberger and Richard Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregal Academic and Professional, 2011), 237-574; Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in This Text?*(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009); Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, Eds. *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

[60] Licona, *Resurrection.*, 34, 54, 202-204, 548-553 [emphasis added].

[61] Kevin Vanhoozer tries to redefine himself as a literary inerrantist. But this is little more than the syncretizing of genre-criticism and the traditional categories of inerrancy.

[62] Burridge appears to be inconsistent at this point, claiming both that genre categories are determined before we come to the text (ibid., 324) and yet that genre "must be discovered by internal examination" of the text (ibid., 55).

[63] Sproul, *Explaining Inerrancy*, 37.

[64] See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. "Legitimate Hermeneutics," in *Inerrancy*. Ed. Norm Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) 116-147; *The Uses of the Old*

Testament in the New Testament (Chicago: Moody, 1985).

[65] J. I. Packer, "Encountering Present-Day Views of Scripture," in *The Foundation of Biblical Authority*. Ed. James Montgomery Boice (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 61-82.

[66] J. I. Packer, '*Fundamentalism' and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 11, 99, 102 ff.

[67] Thomas Howe, "Does Genre Determine Meaning?," 10-11.

[68] Ibid., 6.

[69] Ibid., 10-11.

[70] Licona, *Resurrection.,* 34, 306, 548, 552-53.

[71] E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (London: Eyres & Spottiswoode, 1898), 350.

[72] We are indebted to Professor Win Corduan for the points made in this and the following paragraph. See: Licona, 143; Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005).

[73] http://commonsenseatheism.com/?p=261.

[74] Licona, *Resurrection,* 97-99.

[75] Ibid., 34, 306, 552-53.

[76] http://www.albertmohler.com/2011/09/14/the-devil-is-in-the-details -biblical-inerrancy-and-the-licona-controversy/.

[77] Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Single Meaning, Unified Referents," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.

[78] See Paul Edwards, "Professor Tillich's Confusions" *Mind* 294 (April 1965): 197-206, for a good exposition on the futility of "irreducible metaphors."

[79] See J. W. Wenhem, "When Were the Saints Raised, A Note on the

Punctuation of Matthew Matt. 27:51-53," *JTS* 32/1 (April 1981) 150-152.

[80] See JETS latest article reviewing Licona's book: Charles L. Quarles, "Review: *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach*." By Michael R. Licona. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010, 718 pp., *JETS* 54/4 (December 2011) 839-844.

[81] Thomas Aquinas, *The Gospel of Matthew XXVII* in *Catena Aurea* (*Commentary on the Four Gospels. Vol. I: St. Matthew,* Part III), 964.

[82] http://www.albertmohler.com/2011/09/14/the-devil-is-in-the-details-biblical-inerrancy-and-the-licona-controversy/.

[83] Sproul, *Explaining Inerrancy*, 36.

[84] Ibid., 37.

[85] R. C. Sproul, "Biblical Interpretation and the Analogy of Faith," in *Inerrancy and Common Sense*. Eds. Roger R. Nicole & J. Ramsey Michaels (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 134.

[86] James Montgomery Boice, *Does Inerrancy Matter?* (Oakland: International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, 1977), 13, emphasis added.

[87] Support for this conclusion comes from retired Wheaton Professor and ICBI signer Henri Blocher who speaks against totally separating interpretation from the inerrancy issue because "It is thus possible to talk of Scripture's supreme authority, perfect trustworthiness, infallibility and inerrancy and to empty such talk of the full and exact meaning it should retain by the way one handles the text." He adds, "I reject the suggestion that Matthew 27:52f should be read nonliterally, and I consider that it puts in jeopardy the affirmation of biblical inerrancy which I resolutely uphold." Blocher advocates a literal interpretation of the passage because the last words of verse 53 "sound as an emphatic claim of historical, factual, truthfulness with an intention akin to that of 1 Corinthians 15:6." So, a nonliteral interpretation "seems rather to be motivated by the difficulty of believing the thing told and by an unconscious desire to conform to the critical views of nonevangelical scholarship." He correctly notes that the pressure of nonevangelical scholarship weighs heavily on the work of evangelical scholars. Thus, the nonliteral interpretation is not only an exegetical mistake, but "In effect, it modifies the way in which biblical inerrancy is

affirmed. Contrary to the intention of those propounding it, it undermines the meaning of 'inerrancy' which we should, with utmost vigilance, preserve" Erin Roach, "Licona Appeals to J. I. Packer's Approach" (*Baptist Press*, Nov. 9, 2011), n.p.

[88] Packer argued against Licona-like positions in *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* pg 166-68 claiming: **"**Faith is rooted in the realization that the gospel is God's word; and faith recognizes in its divine origin a full and sufficient guarantee of its veracity. So with Scripture, 'God's Word written': faith rests its confidence in the truth of the biblical narratives, not on the critical acumen of the historian, but on the unfailing trustworthiness of God." In footnote 3 at the end of the paragraph on page 167 JI Packer states: "It should perhaps be emphasized that we do not mean by this that Scripture history is written according to the canons of modern scientific history. Biblical historians are not concerned to answer all the questions which modern historians ask, nor to tell their story with the detailed completeness to which the modern researcher aspires. It is no more possible to write a full history of Israel from the Old Testament documents than to write a complete biography of Christ from the four Gospels, or a full record of the expansion of Christianity during its first thirty years from Acts. The biblical writers had their own aims and interests guiding their selection of the evidence, and their own conventions for using it; and if we fail to take account of these things in interpreting what they wrote, we violate the canon of literal interpretation: cf. pp. 102 ff. above. Our point in the text is simply that, when Scripture professes to narrate fact, faith receives the narrative as factual on God's authority, and does not conclude it to be legendary, or mythical, or mystical, or mere human authority."

[89] See: *Four Views on The Spectrums of Evangelicalism*, eds. Stanley Gundrey, Andrew David Naselli and Collin Hansen (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

[90] RC Sproul once said, "[T]he confession [of biblical inerrancy] rests its confidence on the integrity of God. On numerous occasions I have queried several Biblical and theological scholars in the following manner. – "Do you maintain the inerrancy of Scripture?" – "No" – "Do you believe the Bible to be inspired of God?" – "Yes" – "Do you think God inspires error?" – "No" – "Is all of the Bible inspired by God?" – "Yes" – "Is the Bible errant?" – "No" – "Is it inerrant?" – "No!" – At that point I usually acquire an Excedrin headache." See: John Warwick Montgomery, *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1974), 257.

[91] See Geisler and Roach, "Part Two: Recent Challenges to Inerrancy," *Defending Inerrancy*, 45-211.

CHAPTER 5

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF DONALD HAGNER'S "TEN GUIDELINES FOR EVANGELICAL SCHOLARSHIP"

F. David Farnell and Norman L. Geisler[1]



Introduction

Baker Books blog published on March 12, 2013, Donald Hagner's "Ten Guidelines for Evangelical Scholarship."[2] These guidelines were praised by Craig Blomberg[3] in the first comment on the blog where Blomberg noted, "Excellent, Don, excellent. And I'm so enjoying reading your book. I hope you still have several more good ones to come!" immediately below Hagner's listing of ten guidelines. Here are Hagner's guidelines (and we suspect many more critical, evangelical scholars would concur with his list). We cut/paste verbatim from Hagner's blog entry:

"*Ten Guidelines for Evangelical Scholarship***"**
by Donald A. Hagner*:*

"Proposals for an evangelical criticism that affirms the indispensability of the critical method, i.e., being "reasonably" critical:

We must:

1. 1. See *what is there* (avoiding maximal conservatism, anachronistic approaches, harmonizing and homogenizing, partial appeals to historical evidence).
2. 2. Affirm the full humanity of the scriptures (the word of God in the words of men).
3. 3. Define the nature of inspiration inductively (not deductively), i.e., in light of the phenomena of scripture (doing justice to it as it is).
4. 4. Acknowledge that no presuppositionless position is possible and that the best we can do is attempt to step outside of our presuppositions and imagine "what if." (Only a relative degree of objectivity is attainable.)
5. 5. Modify the classical historicalcritical method so far as its presuppositions are concerned, i.e., so as to allow openness to the transcendent, the action of God in the historical process, the possibility of miracles, *etc.* Develop a method not alien but rather appropriate to what is being studied.
6. 6. Maintain a unified worldview, avoiding a schizophrenic attitude toward

truth and criteria for the validation of truth. That is, all truth is God's truth, including that arrived at through our rationality.

7. 7. Acknowledge that in the realm of historical knowledge, we are not dealing with matters that can be proven (or disproven, for that matter!), but with probability. Historical knowledge remains dependent on inferences from the evidence. Good historical criticism is what makes best sense, i.e., the most coherent explanation of the evidence.
8. 8. Avoid the extremes of a pure fideism and a pure rationality-based apologetics. Blind faith is as inappropriate as rationalism. Faith and reason, however, both have their proper place. What is needed is a creative synthesis.
9. 9. Develop humility, in contrast to the strange (and unwarranted!) confidence and arrogance of critical orthodoxy (concerning constructs that depend on presuppositions alien to the documents themselves).
10. 10. Approach criticism by developing a creative tension between intellectual honestly and faithfulness to the tradition (each side needs constant reexamination), with the trust that criticism rightly engaged will ultimately vindicate rather than destroy Christian truth.

Note: The Holy Spirit cannot be appealed to in order to solve historicalcritical issues or in the issue of truth-claims. Nevertheless, it is true that *for the believer* the inner witness of the Spirit confirms the truth of the faith existentially or in the heart.

Concede: Our knowledge is fragmentary and partial, and all our wisdom is but stammering. Full understanding can only come after our perfection, and then it will no longer be understanding alone but also worship." (italics in the original)

Analysis of Proposed Guidelines

Now let us respond to each of Hagner's ten evangelical scholarship "guidelines," even though the "proof in the pudding" is readily seen in what has been written already. The bottomline is that critical evangelical scholars are becoming so much like their left-wing counterparts that little differences remain on the whole. Ability to distinguish between these two groups in terms of presuppositions and conclusions is blurring rapidly.

PROPOSED GUIDELINE ONE:

"See what is there (avoiding maximal conservatism, anachronistic approaches, harmonizing and homogenizing, partial appeals to historical evidence)."

RESPONSE:

1. 1. *Historical criticism is really the anachronistic approach, spawned by Spinoza in the seventeenth century and aided by alien negative presuppositions. Please read, Norman Geisler, "Beware of Philosophy," JETS* 42:1 (March 1999) 3-18.
2. 2. Historical criticism does not accept "what is there" but wants to see what they *a priori* have chosen NOT to be there (i.e. slaughtering of the babies in Bethlehem [Gundry], resurrection of saints in Matthew 27:51-52 [Licona].
3. 3. Historical criticism, no matter how "modified," assaults the integrity of God's Word, *i.e.* this is the inevitable "fruit" of historical criticism. It attacks rather than affirms; casts doubt, rather than confirms. Many evangelical critical scholars seem to be blind to such effects.
4. 4. No matter how much Hagner would attempt to modify historical criticism, most true historical critics (i.e. nonevangelicals) probably would not accept that modification.
5. 5. Plenary, verbal inspiration allows for harmonization, while historical criticism divides God's word into what is acceptable and what is NOT acceptable to the individual historical critic.

PROPOSED GUIDELINE TWO:

"Affirm the full humanity of the Scriptures (the word of God in the words of men)."

RESPONSE:

1. 1. Although the full-humanity of Scripture is true, since God is author of Scripture and God cannot lie or err, the Scripture cannot err (John 14:26; 16:13; 17:17).
2. 2. The Bible is fully human without error; it is God's Word as well as man's

words (2 Sam 23:2; 2 Tim 3:16). It is a theanthropic book, as Christ is a theanthropic person.

3. 3. By Hagner's same logic, Jesus must have erred (and sinned).

PROPOSED GUIDELINE THREE:

"Define the nature of inspiration inductively (not deductively), i.e., in light of the phenomena of scripture (doing justice to it as it is)."

RESPONSE:

1. 1. This is a false disjunction since both induction and deduction are involved in determining the doctrine of Scripture, as they are in other doctrines as well.
2. 2. The doctrine of inspiration is based on a complete inductive study of all of Scripture which yields two basic truths: a) the Bible is the written Word of God; b) God cannot error. From which we rightly deduce that a) The Bible cannot err. As the *Westminster Confession of Faith* put it, the basis for our faith is "The whole counsel of God. . . [which] is either expressly set down in Scripture, *or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture* (I, VI, emphasis added).
3. 3. Of course, the doctrine of Scripture should be understood in the light of the data of Scripture. However, as the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy [ICBI] put it, "We further deny that inerrancy is negated by the Biblical phenomena. . . (Article XIII). The data of Scripture do not contradict the doctrine of Scripture; they merely nuance and enhance our understanding of it.[4]

PROPOSED GUIDELINE FOUR:

"Acknowledge that no presuppositionless position is possible and that the best we can do is attempt to step outside of our presuppositions and imagine 'what if.' (Only a relative degree of objectivity is attainable.)"

RESPONSE:

1. 1. While this is true in a very important sense, Hagner apparently ignores

the history and presuppositions of historical criticism to his own detriment.

2. 2. The question is not *whether* one approaches Scripture with presuppositions, but *which* presuppositions he uses.
3. 3. As evangelical scholars, we approach the Bible as the inerrant written Word of God by way of the historical-grammatical method of interpretation. Current critical scholarship denies both of these in the historic evangelical sense.
4. 4. As ICBI stated, "We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammaticohistorical exegesis, taking in account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture" (Article XVIII).
5. 5. ICBI adds importantly, "We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text of quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship" (Article XVIII). But this is exactly what Hagner and his British-trained NT cohorts do.
6. 6. Hagner comes dangerously close to denying that one can truly obtain an "objective" interpretation of Scripture. Besides being a selfdefeating claim to objectivity in denying objectivity, he apparently has not read and interacted with the excellent work by Professor Thomas Howe titled, *Objectivity in Biblical Interpretation*.[5]

PROPOSED GUIDELINE FIVE:

"Modify the classical historicalcritical method so far as its presuppositions are concerned, i.e., so as to allow openness to the transcendent, the action of God in the historical process, the possibility of miracles, etc. Develop a method not alien but rather appropriate to what is being studied."

RESPONSE:

1. 1. If the "historicalcritical method" needs to be "modified" before it can be safely used, then this is an admission that it is a dangerous method.
2. 2. Further, if is it modified of its antisupernaturalism, then why accept the method to begin with?
3. 3. What value does this critical methodology have that could not have been gained by the traditional historical-grammatical method?
4. 4. If it is not radically modified, then it does not help evangelicals. But if it is radically modified to suit evangelicalism, then why accept it to begin

with? If you have to radically modify a Ford to make a Cadillac, they why not start with a Cadillac?

5. 5. Methodology determines theology, and an unorthodox methodology will yield unorthodox theology.

PROPOSED GUIDELINE SIX:

"Maintain a unified worldview, avoiding a schizophrenic attitude toward truth and criteria for the validation of truth. That is, all truth is God's truth, including that arrived at through our rationality."

RESPONSE:

1. 1. As the ICBI framers put, "Truth is what corresponds to the facts" (ICBI Article XIII, official commentary), whether God revealed it in Scripture (John 17:17; 2 Tim 3:16) or in nature (Ps 19:1; Rom 1:1-20), and God does not contradict Himself (ICBI Articles V and XIV).
2. 2. We deny that truth is "*arrived at through our rationality*," as Hagner meant it, since God is the source of all truth, whether in general or special revelation. The ICBI framers declared emphatically, "We affirm that the written Word in its entirely is a relation given by God. . . [and] We deny that the Bible . . .depends on the responses of men for its validity" (Article III). As for other alleged sources of truth, "We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth's history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture" (Article XII).
3. 3. However, good reason must always be in accord with and enlightened by revelation and God's Holy Spirit. As Article XVII declares: "We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word. We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operated in isolation from or against Scripture."

PROPOSED GUIDELINE SEVEN:

"Acknowledge that in the realm of historical knowledge, we are not dealing with matters that can be proven (or disproven, for that matter!), but with probability. Historical knowledge remains dependent on inferences from the evidence. Good historical criticism is what makes best sense, i.e., the most coherent explanation of the evidence."

RESPONSE:

1. 1. Historical knowledge can rise above mere "probabilities." One can have moral certainty about many historical events things. Luke spoke of "**convincing proofs**" of the resurrection of Christ (Acts 1:3).
2. 2. Luke begins his Gospel with the assurance to the reader that he "may have **certainty** concerning the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:4-ESV).
3. 3. In determining the truth of a historical presentation one certainly wants the interpretation that **"**makes best sense, i.e., the most coherent explanation of the evidence." However, it begs the question whether what Hagner means by "good historical criticism" is the best way to achieve this. As a matter of fact, as manifest in the writings of many contemporary scholars who have adopted this method, it clearly did not lead to the best conclusion. Certainly, it did not lead to the most evangelical conclusion.

PROPOSED GUIDELINE EIGHT:

"Avoid the extremes of a pure fideism and a pure rationality-based apologetics. Blind faith is as inappropriate as rationalism. Faith and reason, however, both have their proper place. What is needed is a creative synthesis."

***RESPONSE*:**

1. 1. To speak of "blind faith" as one of the poles, is a straw man since one can be a Fideist (e.g., like Alvin Plantinga) without having blind faith.
2. 2. True Christian scholarship involves "faith seeking understanding," as the Bible exhorts when it asks us to "give a reason for the hope that is in us" (1 Pet 3:15). Indeed, God said through Isaiah, "Come let us reason together. . ." (Isa 1:18). And Jesus commanded that we love the Lord our God with our "mind," as well as with our heart and soul (Mark 12:30).
3. 3. There are other apologetics alternatives to Fideism and a rationally-based approach. Aquinas spoke of faith *based in* God's Word but *supported by* evidence.[6] And Cornelius Van Til's transcendental reduction to the necessity of accepting the Triune God revealed in Scripture was certainly not a form of pure fideism or pure rational in apologetics.
4. 4. Faith and reason do both have a proper place and need a "creative

synthesis," but they do not find it in critical method proposed by Donald Hagner's "Ten Guidelines for Evangelical Scholarship."

PROPOSED GUIDELINE NINE:

"Develop humility, in contrast to the strange (and unwarranted!) confidence and arrogance of critical orthodoxy (concerning constructs that depend on presuppositions alien to the documents themselves)."

RESPONSE:

1. 1. This guideline is an ironic example of the very orthodox view it is criticizing. It is hardly an example of humility to exalt one's own methodology and stereotype one's opponent as having a "strange (and unwarranted!) confidence and arrogance." Humble statements do not condemn others as having unwarranted confidence and arrogance!
2. 2. The humble thing to do would have been to show some respect of the orthodox view of Scripture.[7]

PROPOSED GUIDELINE TEN:

"Approach criticism by developing a creative tension between intellectual honestly and faithfulness to the tradition (each side needs constant reexamination), with the trust that criticism rightly engaged will ultimately vindicate rather than destroy Christian truth."

***RESPONSE*:**

1. 1. Certainly Hagner does not mean what he says, since he says "intellectual honesty" needs "constant reexamination" too!
2. 2. Further, "faithfulness to the tradition" one has should not be a goal. Rather, it should be faithfulness to the Word of God.
3. 3. Further, the phrase "rightly engaged" is bristling with presuppositions that Hagner leaves unstated and unspecified.
4. 4. Judging by these ten guidelines, Hagner is "engaging" in a form of biblical criticism that is ill-founded and destined to disaster. For ***bad methodology leads to bad theology, and he has adopted a bad***

methodology.

HAGNER NOTE:

"Note: The Holy Spirit cannot be appealed to in order to solve historicalcritical issues or in the issue of truth-claims. Nevertheless, it is true that for the believer the inner witness of the Spirit confirms the truth of the faith existentially or in the heart.

Concede: Our knowledge is fragmentary and partial, and all our wisdom is but stammering. Full understanding can only come after our perfection, and then it will no longer be understanding alone but also worship."

***RESPONSE*:**

1. 1. This is an odd comment coming from an evangelical since Scripture affirms the role of the Holy Spirit in the production of His Word**:** John 6:63 —"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" and 2 Peter 1:19—"And *so* we have the prophetic word *made* more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts." (2 Pet 1:19).
2. 2. The Spirit of God never affirms anything contrary to the Word of God. Further, the Holy Spirit is essential in a proper interpretation and application of the Word of God (see ICBI Statement on Hermeneutics, Articles IV, V, VI). As the Holy Spirit lead the apostles in writing the Word of God (John 14:26; 16:13), even so he leads the believers in understanding the Word of God (1 John 2:26-27).
3. 3. Just because *perfect* understanding of Scripture does not come until heaven (1 Cor 13:10-13) does not mean we cannot have an *adequate* understanding of it here. Nor does it relieve us of our obligation, to "test the spirits" to discover the "false prophets" and to know "the Spirit of truth" from "the spirit of error" (1 John 4:1, 6). After all, we have in Scripture "a sure word of prophecy" (2 Pet 1:19), and we are exhorted to use it to "contend for the Faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

THE RESULTS OF FOLLOWING THESE GUIDELINES IN HAGNER'S WRITINGS

Now let us look at the consequences of these principles from which Hagner's own recently published New Testament Introduction operates, *i.e.* his *The New Testament A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012).

The work is praised as follows on the Amazon website, reflecting similar wording on its jacket cover: "This capstone work from widely respected senior evangelical scholar Donald Hagner offers a substantial introduction to the New Testament. Hagner deals with the New Testament both historically and theologically, employing the framework of salvation history. He treats the New Testament as a coherent body of texts and stresses the unity of the New Testament without neglecting its variety. Although the volume covers typical questions of introduction, such as author, date, background, and sources, it focuses primarily on understanding the theological content and meaning of the texts, putting students in a position to understand the origins of Christianity and its canonical writings." The book includes summary tables, diagrams, maps, and extensive bibliographies. It is praised by such scholars as James D. G. Dunn, I. Howard Marshall, Craig Keener, and Thomas Schreiner.

One may note two strategic factors regarding Hagner's New Testament *Introduction*: First, his work represents the cutting edge of evangelical, British-influenced and trained critical scholarship who are currently teaching the next generation of preachers and scholars in the United States, both on a college and seminary level. Second, Hagner's work will most likely replace the late Donald Guthrie's New Testament Introduction that was last revised in 1990. If one wants to know where evangelical critical scholarship is moving, Hagner's work provides that trajectory.

These two strategic factors are also the works' gravest weaknesses. Hagner attributes the word "inspired" to the New Testament Scriptures,[8] yet also maintains, "the inspired word of God comes to us through the medium of history, through the agency of writers who lived in history and were a part of history" which "*necessitate the historical and critical study of Scripture*."[9] He says that the use of the word "critical" does not refer to "tearing it down or demeaning it—but rather to exercising judgment or discernment concerning every aspect of it."[10] Therefore, Hagner asserts that "[w]e must engage in historical criticism, in the sense of thoughtful interpretation of the Bible" and "the historical method is indispensable precisely because the Bible is the story of God's act in history."[11] What Hagner means by this is the need for historical

critical ideologies rather than grammaticohistorical criticism. This is the first signal that British-influenced evangelical scholars are shifting markedly away from the Reformation tradition of a grammaticohistorical approach and training the next generation of preachers in historical criticism that markedly differs in approach presuppositionally, historically, and in the qualitative kind of conclusions such an ideology reaches. Like many British-influenced evangelical critical scholars, he believes that he can use historical criticism and be immune from its more negative elements: "The critical method therefore needs to be tempered so that rather than being used against the Bible, it is open to the possibility of the transcendent or miraculous within the historical process and thus is used to provide better understanding of the Bible."[12] This latter admission is telling, since it is an admission, no matter how indirect, of the dangers of historical criticism. Hagner argues that "[k]eeping an open mind concerning the possibility of the transcendent in history does not entail the suspension of critical judgment. There is no need for a naïve credulity and acceptance of anything and everything simply because one's worldview is amenable to the supernatural."[13] Hagner apparently believes that he has discovered the proper balance of presuppositions and practice in the historicalcritical method displayed in this work: "It must be stressed once again that the critical method is indespensible to the study of Scripture. It is the *sine qua non* of responsible interpretation of God's word. The believer need have no fear of the method itself, but need only be on guard against the employment of improper presuppositions" (p. 11). An old pithy saying, however, is that the "devil is in the details." Hagner's argument here ignores the marked evidence or proof from history of the presuppositions and damage that historical criticism has caused by even well-intentioned scholars who have eviscerated the Scripture through such an ideology. History constitutes a monumental testimony against Hagner's embracing of the ideologies of historical criticism that displays the damage it has caused the church.

Hagner excoriates "very conservative scholars" and "obscurantist fundamentalism" that refused to embrace some form of moderated historicalcritical ideology. Hagner commends Hengel's belief that "fundamentalism" and its accepting belief in the full trustworthiness of Scripture is actually a form of atheism,[14] quoting and affirming Hengel's position that "Fundamentalism is a form of 'unbelief' that closes itself to the—God intended—historical reality."[15] Hagner insists that "[r]epudiation of the critical study of Scripture amounts to a gnostic-like denial of the historical character of the Christian faith."[16] Apparently, Hagner agrees with Hengel that "Fundamentalist

polemic against the 'historicalcritical method' does not understand historical perception" and believes (with Hengel) that since the Scriptures were mediated through history and human agency, this opens the documents up to being fallible human products. Because of the Scripture being based in historical knowledge, one cannot use the word "certain" but only "probable," for Hagner insists that the "word 'prove,' although perhaps appropriate in mathematics and science, is out of place when it comes to historical knowledge."[17] In studying Scripture, compelling proof will always be lacking.[18]

In response, Hagner (and Hengel) apparently do not understand the issue, for what he calls "Fundamentalism" (e.g. *The Jesus Crisis*) never argued against criticism but only the kind of criticism utilized and the philosophical principle involved in such criticism that closed off the study of Scripture *a priori* before any analysis could be done, *i.e.* historicalcritical ideologies. Historical criticism is a purposeful, psychological operation designed to silence Scripture and deflect away from its plain, normal sense implications, *i.e.* to dethrone it from influence in church and society. While liberal critical scholarship will openly admit this, "moderate" evangelicals like Hagner choose to ignore the intent of historical criticism.

Considering this operating assumption about understanding Scripture, here is a sampling of Hagner's "balanced" approach to historicalcritical ideologies: First, he says, "we have no reliable chronology of Jesus ministry" in the Gospels.[19] Since the Gospels are "historical narratives" they involve "interpretation" by the evangelists and that "level of interpretation can be high."[20] Since the gospel writers largely (but not completely) reflect ancient Roman *bioi* as the "closest analogy" from antiquity" and since *bioi* were not necessarily always without interpretation,[21] "[t]he Evangelists compare well with the secular historians of their own day, and their narratives remain basically trustworthy."[22]

Second, like other critically-trained European scholars, Hagner accepts Lessing's "ugly ditch" and the German/British concept of a *historie* (actual verifiable events) vs. *geschichte* (faith interpretations of events) dichotomy between the Jesus of the Gospels and the "historical Jesus."[23] Although critical of some historical Jesus research, Hagner concedes that "the Jesus of history was to some extent different from the Gospels' portrayal of him" and "if we cannot look for a one-to-one correspondence between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of the early church's faith, we can at least establish a degree of continuity between

the two."[24] Furthermore, "we are in no position to write a biography of Jesus" based on the information from the New Testament since the gospels are "kerygmatic portrayals of the story of Jesus."[25]

Third, Hagner embraces the idea that a book with "pseudonymity" is acceptable in the New Testament canon. Hagner argues, "We have very little to lose in allowing the category of Deutero-Pauline letters. If it happens that some other persons have written these four, or even six documents [e.g. Ephesians, the Pastoral Epistles] in the name of Paul, we are not talking about forgery or deception.[26]" He continues, "The ancient world on the whole did not have the same kind of sensitivity to pseudonymity that is typical in the modern world, with its concern for careful attribution and copyright."[27] And "The authority and canonicity of the material is in no way affected by books put into final shape by disciples of the prophets."[28] "The fact is that the Pauline corpus, with deuteron-letters as well as without them, stands under the banner of the authoritative Paul."[29] Hagner supports British scholar, I. Howard Marshall's view on "pseudonymous" writings in the New Testament: "In order to avoid the idea of deceit, Howard Marshall has coined the words "allonymity" and "allepigraphy" in which the prefix *pseudos* ("false") is replaced with *allos* ("other") which gives a more positive concept to the writing of a work in the name of another person.[30] Hagner notes that another British scholar James Dunn has come to a similar conclusion. Hagner says, "We do not know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there are Deutero-Pauline letters in the Pauline corpus, but if in the weighing of historical probabilities it seems to us that there are, we can freely admit that this too is a way in which God has mediated Scripture to us."[31] Apparently, to Hagner and others, God uses false attribution to accomplish His purpose of communicating His Word that encourages the highest ethical standards upon men! Thus, for Hagner, Paul most likely did not write Ephesians as well as the Pastoral Epistles (1-2 Timothy and Titus),[32] but believes they should be viewed in the category of Deutero-Pauline letters.[33] Hagner even devotes a whole section of his Introduction to this category of Deutero-Pauline letters.[34] He also regards the book of James as possibly not written by James: "we cannot completely exclude the alternative possibility that the book is pseudonymous. Already in the time of Jerome it was regarded as such. . . Least likely of all, but again not impossible, the letter could have been written by another, little known or unknown, person named 'James.[35]'" Second Peter is "Almost certainly not by Peter. Very probably written by a disciple of Peter or a member of the Petrine circle."[36] Revelation is "Almost certainly not by the Apostle John. Possibly by John 'The Elder' but more probably by another John, otherwise unknown to us,

who may have been a member of the Johannine circle."[37]

Due to space limitations, a final concatenation surrounding Hagner's view of the composition and authorship of the NT must satisfy for various assertions of Hagner's Introduction: The Gospels involve "interpretation," that "level of interpretation can be high" at times, and display "basic reliability," "basically trustworthy" in their presentation; [38] "it is a great pity that the word 'Pharisee,' which ought to be a complementary term, has become in the English language synonymous with 'hypocrite,' "to be a Pharisee was to wear a badge of honor," "to a considerable extent, Jesus himself, in his call to righteousness, actually resembled the Pharisees, as has been rightly pointed out by many Jewish scholars. And, of course, one tends to be most harshly critical of those who are closest to the truth;"[39] "[t]hat the Jesus of history was to some extent different from the Gospels' portrayal of him can hardly be doubted," in the Gospels "details were added or altered to make narratives clearer or more applicable to the church. An example, in Peter's confession, is Matthew's alteration of Mark's simple 'You are the Christ" to "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" [i.e. meaning that Peter did not originally say the whole statement, but Matthew added to it for further meaning]; "if we cannot look for a one-to-one correspondence between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of the early church's faith, we can at least establish a degree of continuity between the two;"[40] the oral transmission of the Gospel material has "basic reliability;" "to a certain degree, even a number of his [Jesus'] sayings are reworked by the early church, but the primary goal in all of this has been to understand them better."[41] Hagner assumes modern historicalcritical approaches such as form and redaction criticism: "[t]hat the tradition of Jesus' words and deeds experience some degree of transformation in the different between the first [i.e. the *Sitz im Leben* of Jesus] and the third time frames [i.e. the *Sitz im Leben* of the Evangelist] seems inevitable. Nevertheless, such a view is not incompatible with the conclusion that the tradition has been handed down in a substantially accurate and trustworthy form. We are not talking about the kind of modifications of the tradition that end up in a gross distortion wherein Jesus of the church bears little relationship to the Jesus of history;"[42] "Mark serves as a model followed by the Evangelists Matthew and Luke;" "the content of Mark is of fundamental importance and provides the basic building blocks of Jesus;"[43] "[although] the disciple Levi-Matthew possibly is the collector and editor of the five Matthean discourses, the Gospel as it stands likely is the work of an unknown disciple or disciples of the Matthean circle—that is, associated with Matthew;"[44] "[t]he fact is that the Pauline corpus, with deutero-letters as well as without them, stands

under the banner of the authoritative Paul;" "[f]rom a canonical perspective, the corpus as it stands represents Paul, even if the Deutero-Pauline letters require special awareness and care when they are used to speak of Paul himself. It is not unfair to say that the deutero-Pauline letters represent Paul in their own way as much as the authentic letters. But it is indeed Paul whom they represent, and therefore to that extent they involve no deception;"[45] "[t]here is nothing crucial at stake here for those who, like, myself, treasure the NT as Scripture. The acceptance of this kind of pseudonymity, based on actual association with and dependence upon Paul or other Apostles, should in no way threaten the canonical authority of these documents."[46] Hagner lists the following four books as deutero-Pauline [i.e. not written by Paul]: Ephesians ("probably by a disciple of Paul')[47] and the Pastoral Epistles of 1-2 Timothy and Titus ("a slight probability favors a disciple or disciples of Paul, possibly making use of fragments of Paul");[48] "[w]e do not know beyond a shadow of a doubt that there are Deutero-Pauline Letters in the Pauline corpus, but if in the weighing of historical probabilities it seems to us that there are, we can admit freely that this too is a way in which God has mediated Scripture to us;"[49] the book of James is "very possibly by James, the brother of Jesus. But it is equally possible that the prescript is pseudonymous (or 'allonymous'), so that the real author is unknown to us. A third possibility is that he material of the epistle traces back to James but was put into its present shape by a later redactor,"[50] the book of 1 Peter "very possibly Peter, through Silvanus, but if not, possibly by a disciple or associate of the Apostle;"[51] the authorship of Jude has "[n]o certainty possible, but probably Judas, the brother of Jesus and James;"[52] 2 Peter "[a]lmost certainly not by Peter. Very probably written by a disciple of Peter or a member of the Petrine circle;"[53] although he says he favors the authorship of the Johannine Epistles to that of the Apostle John, he also argues that "[a]uthorship of the letters by a member of the Johannine circle remains a possibility;"[54] and as for Revelation, Hagner argues "[a]lmost certainly not by the Apostle John. Possibly by John 'the Elder,' but more probably another John, otherwise unknown to us, who may have been a member of the Johannine circle."[55]

In sum, Hagner's work represents what may well replace Guthrie's *New Testament Introduction*. One can only imagine the impact that British and European evangelical critical scholarship as represented by Hagner's assertions regarding his so-called "balanced" use of historicalcritical presuppositions will have on the next generation of God's preachers and teachers! As Machen said long ago, "as go the theological seminaries, so go the churches." [56]

CONCLUSION TO HAGNER'S PRINCIPLES

Church history testifies against Hagner's principles as being profitable for orthodox Christianity as well as evangelicals as a whole. Such principles are not "excellent" but disastrous for the inerrancy and inspiration of the Scriptures. When adopted by evangelical scholarship, such principles lead to a denigration of God's Word. No compelling reason exists for their adoption. Rather, they seem to be driven largely by a desire motivated to gain some form of acceptance by critical scholarship.

In 2007, Andreas Köstenberger edited a work entitled, *Quo Vadis Evangelicalism?* The work consisted of a highly selected choice of presidential addresses of Evangelical Theological Society scholars who, in the history of the Society, favored the move in the Society toward historicalcritical ideologies. No presidential addresses that warned against historicalcritical ideologies were allowed. The work related that ETS has been "polarized" into two camps, one represented by Eta Linnemann and Norman Geisler who warned against historicalcritical ideologies and that of Darrell Bock and others who heartily embrace "the judicious use of a historicalcritical approach."[57] The book was extremely prejudicial toward one side, hardly objective. Köstenberger never stated what a "judicious" use of historical criticism was or whose version would be accepted. He did note, however, that "the pendulum [at ETS] seems to have swung toward the side of the latter ["judicious use] group."[58] It actually constituted a personal vanity toward praising a direction that the editor apparently embraced. He concluded his preface by noting, "Speaking personally, reading and digesting these presidential addresses—spanning a half-century and delivered by some of evangelicalism's most distinguished leaders—has given me, a third-generation scholar in the ETS, a much fuller and deeper appreciation for the history of the evangelical movement and my place within it."[59] He concluded, "In my judgment the present volume offers great hope for the future of a movement whose best days, by God's grace and abundant mercy, may yet lie ahead."[60]

One writer of this present chapter had a rather aged church history professor during his days at Talbot Seminary who issued a warning that he has not forgotten to this day. He would say that church history teaches consistently that by the third generation of any Christian group, the original intent of the organization was lost (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, etc.) and the loss in these organizations is always away from a steadfast trust in the Word of God. What is

noticed here is that Köstenberger admits that ETS is now in its third generation and is now open to many of Hagner's principles in historical criticism. The new third generation is in charge.

Long ago, Harold Lindsell, the scorn of much of these younger scholars today, said this about his own day:

> Anyone who thinks the historicalcritical method is neutral is misinformed. Since its presuppositions are unacceptable to the evangelical mind this method cannot be used by the evangelical as it stands. The very use by the evangelical of this term, historicalcritical method, is a mistake when it comes to describing its own approach to Scripture. The only way he can use it is to invest it with a different meaning. But this can only confuse the uninformed. Moreover, it is not fair to those scholars who use it in the correct way with presuppositions which are different from those of the evangelical. It appears to me that modern evangelical scholars (and I may be guilty of this myself) have played fast and loose with the term because the wanted acceptance by academia. They seem too often to desire to be members of the club which is nothing more than practicing an inclusiveness that undercuts the normativity of the evangelical theological position. This may be done, and often is, under the illusion that by this method the opponents of biblical inerrancy can be one over to the evangelical viewpoint. But practical experience suggest that rarely does this happen and the cost of such an approach is too expensive, for it gives credence and lends respectability to a method which is the deadly enemy of theological orthodoxy.[61]

Church history stands as a monumental testimony against this third generation of ETS evangelicals who have thought that they are somehow special, endowed with exceptional abilities, and able to overcome historical criticism's negative bias against Scripture that no one else in church history has been able to accomplish. Later chapters in this work cite recent, salient examples from both past and current evangelical history that demonstrate the disastrous consequences of adopting these type of guidelines set forth by Hagner. Let the reader be warned, whenever historicalcritical principles are applied to the study of God's Word—regardless of who applies them—the inerrancy of God's Word and, ultimately, the whole body of Christ suffers.

[1] This chapter originally appeared in the *Journal of the International Society of*

Christian Apologetics, 6/1 (April 2013) 179-205.

[2] http://blog.bakeracademic.com/don-hagners-ten-guidelines-for-evangelical-scholarship/ and was accessed by the authors of this article on April 16, 2013.

[3] Please also read Norman L. Geisler and F. David Farnell, "The Erosion of Inerrancy Among New Testament Scholars" at http://normangeisler.net/articles/Bible/Inspiration-Inerrancy/Blomberg/DenialOfMiracleStory.htm) on Dr. Geisler's personal website (normangeisler.net).

[4] See Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Bethany House, 2002), vol. 1, chap. 12.

[5] Altamonte Springs, FL Advantage Inspirational Books, 2005.

[6] See Norman L. Geisler, *Thomas Aquinas: An evangelical Appraisal* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1991, chap.5)

[7] John D. Hannah, *Inerrancy and the Church (Chicago: Moody, 1984);* Norman L. Geisler, *Biblical Inerrancy: the Historical Evidence (available at www.BastionBooks.com. 2013)* and the venerable historical-grammatical way of interpreting it (see ICBI Hermeneutics Articles and Commentary, 2013 (available at www.BastionBooks.com. 2013).

[8] Donald A. Hagner, *The New Testament A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012), 4.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid. 5.

[11] Ibid. 5.

[12] Ibid. 7.

[13] Ibid. 7.

[14] Cf. Martin Hengel, "Eyewitness Memory and the Writing of the Gospels: Form Criticism, Community Tradition and the Authority of the Authors," in *The*

Written Gospel. Eds. Markus Bockmuehl and Donald Hagner. Cambridge: University Press, 2005), 70-96.

[15] Hengel, "Eyewitness Memory," 94 n. 100.

[16] Hagner, *The New Testament A Historical and Theological Introduction*, 10.

[17] Ibid., 9.

[18] Ibid., 9.

[19] Ibid., 63.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 61.

[22] Ibid., 65.

[23] Ibid., 83-104.

[24] Ibid., 97.

[25] Ibid., 98.

[26] Ibid., 429.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 431. See I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, 84.

[31] Hagner, *New Testament Introduction*, 432.

[32] Ibid., 428.

[33] Ibid., 429.

[34] Ibid., 585-642.

[35] Ibid., 675.

[36] Ibid., 714.

[37] Ibid., 761.

[38] Hagner, Introduction, 64-65;

[39] Ibid., 35.

[40] Ibid., 97.

[41] Ibid., 115.

[42] Ibid., 119.

[43] Ibid., 163.

[44] Ibid., 194.

[45] Ibid., 429.

[46] Ibid., 431.

[47] Ibid., 586.

[48] Ibid., 615.

[49] Ibid., 432.

[50] Ibid., 672.

[51] Ibid., 689.

[52] Ibid., 708.

[53] Ibid., 714.

[54] Ibid., 728.

[55] Ibid., 761.

[56] J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian Faith in the Modern World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,1936). 65.

[57] Andreas Köstenberger, *Quo Vadis Evangelicalism*? (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 18.

[58] Ibid., 18.

[59] Ibid., 26.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Harold Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 283.

PART THREE

BE AWARE OF HISTORY

Are We Repeating Past Errors?



CHAPTER 6

THE DOWN GRADE CONTROVERSY AND EVANGELICAL BOUNDARIES: SOME LESSONS FROM SPURGEON' S BATTLE FOR EVANGELICAL ORTHODOXY

Dennis M. Swanson



Introduction[1]

Defining the "Boundaries of Evangelicalism" has always proven a difficult task. The task itself indicates that there exists a level of discomfort or dissatisfaction with traditional norms and definitions. The idea of Evangelicalism being a movement that "emphasizes conformity to the basic tenets of the faith and a missionary outreach of compassion and urgency;"[2] holding to a theological position which "begins with a stress on the sovereignty of God;"[3] regarding Scripture as the "divinely inspired record of God's revelation, the infallible, authoritative guide for faith and practice;"[4] or, in short, that Evangelicalism is "the affirmation of the central beliefs of historic Christianity,"[5] is no longer a settled matter. Perhaps more disturbingly, those items which constitute the "central beliefs of historic Christianity" are no longer a settled matter.

In the second edition of the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, the article on

“Evangelicalism” has been revised and expanded to reflect this discomfort. The authors state, “The very nature of Evangelicalism never was a unified movement but a collection of emphases based on a common core of belief–a core that itself is now under discussion.”[6] The revised article summaries six points of discussion within twenty-first century Evangelicalism,

> First, the nature of God. Some reformists would like to abandon a traditional theism for a more process model of God or would redefine various of God’s attributes, in particular God’s omniscience, arguing that for humans to be truly free, God cannot know the future. Second, Christology. In order to preserve the true humanity of Jesus, some reformists are advocating an adoptionist or kenotic form of Christology. They argue that evangelicalism is in danger of becoming docetic by placing too much emphasis on the deity of Christ. Third, the doctrine of salvation. The theory of the atonement is now being revisited, and various forms of universalism are being openly defended as evangelical. This denies the doctrine of hell, as do annihilationist theories, which are also being broached within the evangelical community. Fourth, the doctrine of Scripture. Reformists are dissatisfied with the traditional doctrine of inerrancy and would substitute, “infallibility” (Scripture infallibly leads us to Christ), “final authority in what it teaches” (but nowhere else), or “final authority in faith and doctrine (but not necessarily in matters of science or history). Fifth, the traditional doctrine of direct creation (not necessarily twenty-four hours day theories) is being replaced by theistic evolution. Sixth, the area of hermeneutics, postmodern literary theories are being used to deny that we may know to any truly meaningful extent the original author’s intent when reading the Scriptures.[7]

That American Evangelicalism in the second decade of the twenty-first century would be struggling with its “core of beliefs” is a theme reminiscent of Thomas A. Langford’s work: *In Search of Foundations, English Theology 1900–1920*.[8] When one considers the dominance of Protestant, Puritan, and Evangelical theology in England, both in Anglican and NonConforming churches over the preceding 300 years, the idea that theological “foundations” were in need of “finding” at the beginning of the twentieth century is amazing.

However, in the declining years of the Victoria Era, the moorings of English evangelical theology had been severely damaged, and the foundation, though perhaps not lost, was certainly obscured. Illustrating this, in no small part, was

the *Down Grade Controversy* (1887–92)[9] in England; a theological dispute between the hierarchy of the Baptist Union and the most influential Baptist pastor, educator, and theologian of the era, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834–92).

At first glance it may seem as though there would be no connection between the theological debates in twenty-first century American Evangelicalism and a nineteenth-century British Baptist controversy. Even as late as 1958 Glover stated the Down Grade Controversy is, "from the perspective of the mid-twentieth century. . . hardly more than an insignificant episode in the history of English Baptists."[10] However, in more recent years the controversy has increasingly been viewed as foreshadowing the theological debates within American evangelicalism in the twenty-first century.[11] Carlile, I think accurately, called the Down Grade, "one of those conflicts which reappear in history when opposing ideas can long longer refuse battle."[12] MacArthur sees, "striking parallels between what is happening in the church today and what happened a hundred years ago."[13] He notes, "The more I read about that era, the more my conviction is reinforced that we are seeing history repeat itself."[14]

This chapter will examine the issues related to the Down Grade Controversy and compare them with the larger question of the boundaries of American Evangelicalism today.

The Background of the Down Grade

The Down Grade Controversy was a prolonged dispute between Spurgeon and the leaders of the Baptist Union about various manifestations of what was called the "New Theology" arising in the Union. The dispute ultimately led to Spurgeon's withdrawal from the Union and the Union's subsequent vote of censure against Spurgeon; the dispute ending with Spurgeon's death in 1892.[15]

The prelude to the controversy began in the preceding decade. Kingdom notes that, "the Down Grade Controversy broke out in a period of theological decline"[16] within an organization which was comprised of a "complex and confused ecclesiastical situation."[17] The Baptist Union, founded in 1813, was originally a voluntary association of Particular or Calvinistic Baptist Churches.[18] The Union was reorganized in 1832 describing itself as a "union of Baptist ministers and churches who agree in the sentiments usually denominated evangelical."[19] This rather nebulous statement allowed for members of the *New Connexion of General Baptists*, the newly formed association of evangelical

Arminian Baptists, to gain entry into and association with the Union. At that time Payne notes, “the defenders of both traditions felt themselves at one in an understandings of the Christian faith which was ‘evangelical.’”[20] However, this one mind lasted less than a generation. In 1873 the Union again discussed the basis of fellowship and discovered it could no longer agree on the word “evangelical.”[21] Many expressed the idea that it was too limiting in terms of “intellectual freedom,” the “autonomy and independence” of the local churches, and the “right of the individual to his own private judgment.”[22] The Union adopted a statement of purpose that required only agreement that “immersion of believers is the only Christian baptism”[23] as being necessary for inclusion in the Union fellowship.

It was at this point that Spurgeon, who had long supported the Union, began to raise objections. The inroads of evolutionary thought, higher criticism, and the “New Theology” were beginning to have an impact on evangelical theology in England. At the 1873 meeting he argued that, “it was no time to be changing moorings”[24] and for the first time proposed that the Union adopt a substantial doctrinal declaration based on the model of the *Evangelical Alliance*. The Alliance, formed in 1846 by Anglican and nonconformist ministers, had also been supported over the years by Spurgeon. However, the Union leadership rejected this as an unnecessary and opposed to the traditional Baptist position against creedal statements.

Inaction by the Baptist Union in 1873 proved to be a significant decision and a watershed event for the controversy to follow. Leland points out that the entire Down Grade Controversy likely would have been avoided had the Union adopted “an explicitly authoritative creed”[25] or even the “evangelical declaration” favored by Spurgeon.[26] He also adds that among the main reasons for rejecting the adoption of a formal statement was “an aversion to dogmatism or what might be called a sense of ‘theological elasticity.”[27] By 1891 the *de facto* unification of the Baptist Union and the New Connexion of General Baptists became *de jure*.

Several other important developments precipitated the Down Grade Controversy. The first was a 1877 publication by Samuel Cox, the influential pastor of Mansfield Road Baptist Church in Nottingham and founding editor of *The Expositor*. In *Salvator Mundi; or Is Christ the Savior of All Men?* Cox articulated his views regarding the “larger hope” in salvation which rejected eternal punishment, advocated universalism and what Spurgeon called

"postmortem salvation."[28] Cox also was the president of the *New Connexion of General Baptists* in 1873 and as the Down Grade Controversy began in earnest, he published a sequel entitled, *The Larger Hope*[29] in 1883. Cox's work became a focal point for what many English evangelicals already believed and in some regards became a distinctive of British evangelical theology in the following decades.

Another significant event was the address of John Page-Hopps at the annual meeting of the Baptist Union in 1883. Page-Hopps was a Unitarian who had graduated from the *New Connexion General Baptist College* in Leicester. His remarks were apparently injudicious and offended a number present.[30] While Spurgeon himself was not in attendance at the meeting, the contents of the speech were reported to him by his friend and member of the Baptist Union council, Archibald Brown.[31] At this time Spurgeon apparently decided that he could no longer associate with the Baptist Union and planned to withdraw, writing a letter to his brother-in-law, William Jackson, to that effect.[32] Word of this impending defection spread to members of the Baptist Union Council who met with Spurgeon and pleaded with him to stay. During the Down Grade Controversy itself Spurgeon retells this incident in a letter to the editor of *The Baptist* magazine dated December 19, 1887,

> After a painful occurrence at Leicester I made serious complaint to the secretary, the president (Mr. Chown), and others of the Council. At the Orphanage to which he kindly came, Mr. Chown made to me a pathetic appeal to regard it as a solitary incident and hoping that I had been mistaken. I did not go further with this matter, for which, possibly, I am blameworthy.[33]

The other major occurrence involved the Samuel Harris Booth, general secretary of the Baptist Union during the controversy. Booth and Spurgeon had been friends for several years and corresponded with some regularity.[34] Along with his duties with the Baptist Union, Booth was also pastor of Elm Road Church in Beckenham. Because of the burden of his responsibilities an associate pastor, W. E. Bloomfield, a graduate of Regent's Park College was secured to assist Booth. However, after a short time Booth became unhappy with the doctrinal content of Bloomfield's sermons and dismissed him. In a turn of events the church membership supported Bloomfield and, after a board of inquiry by three sympathetic pastors concluded that Bloomfield was doctrinally sound, he was re-instated by the membership. Booth resigned from the church in 1885.[35] In

his resignation letter stated,

> [W]e stand against the attempt to bring into our churches what is known as the “New Theology” which teaches that such phrases as the Atonement, the Church or The Fall are only mental conceptions and not actual facts. As opposed to such nebulous theology, I have preached not about Christ, but Christ Himself.[36]

Spurgeon and Booth corresponded and met on at least a few occasions to discuss this matter.[37] Drummond states,

> Booth not only informed Spurgeon of the Elm Road situation with Bloomfield, but also told him of other serious theological problems throughout the entire Union. Booth apparently pleaded with Spurgeon to take a stand. . .it seems to be the case that Booth gave Spurgeon facts and names concerning what he considered as heretical doctrine preached by those who were deviating from orthodox Christianity.[38]

The Down Grade Controversy certainly did not occur in a vacuum; and, in many respects, the fact of the controversy should not have really been all that surprising. Kingdom points out:

> That in 1887 he [Spurgeon] should have raised his voice in public protest at doctrinal declension within the ranks should not have surprised those who were in the inner councils of the Union. That Spurgeon was made to appear by the officials and Council of the Union to have made sudden and unsubstantiated charges is a sad reflection upon their integrity.[39]

Graham Harrison, echoes this sentiment, “It really is amazing that the charges Spurgeon was to raise in the Downgrade Controversy could ever have been queried as being unfounded.”[40] Even Willis B. Glover, no friend of conservative theology, stated that, “we can see that Spurgeon’s apprehensions were not without foundation.”[41]

The controversy should not have surprised the council; but Samuel Harris Booth, the general secretary of the Union, it seems, should have welcomed it. In 1887 Spurgeon would begin the formal battle for theological orthodoxy in the Baptist Union.

The Events of the Down Grade

The Down Grade Controversy began with the publication of two articles in Spurgeon's widely distributed monthly journal, *The Sword and Trowel* in 1887.[42] The articles were without by-line; however, they were the product of Spurgeon's close friend Robert Shindler.[43] Spurgeon inserted a footnote on the first page of each of the "Down Grade" articles where he called for "earnest attention" on the part of the readers,[44] with the urgent warning that "we are going down hill at break-neck speed."[45] Spurgeon himself later added several additional articles and regular notes in *The Sword and Trowel*.[46]

In the first article Shindler laid a historical foundation for his thesis, detailing how many nonconformist churches, immediately after the Puritan era, began to drift into theological error.

> The Churches they established were all Calvinistic in their faith and such they remained for at least that generation. It is a matter of veritable history, however, that such they did not all continue for any great length of time. Some of them, in the course of two or three generations, or even less, became either Arian or Socinian. This was eventually the case with nearly all the Presbyterians, and later on, with some of the Independents, and with many of the General Baptist Communities. By some means or other, first the ministers and then the Churches, got on "the down grade," and in some cases the descent was rapid, and in all very disastrous.[47]

The second article continued the discussion of theological "Down Grade" concentrating on the Baptist churches. His main points were that (1) earlier church leaders, although themselves sound in doctrine, had not been sufficiently bold to confront error;[48] (2) "The first step astray is a want of adequate faith in the divine inspiration of the sacred Scriptures. All the while a man bows to the authority of God's Word, he will not entertain any sentiment contrary to its teaching;[49] and, finally, (3) a departure from Calvinistic doctrine. On the last point, neither Shindler nor Spurgeon were dogmatic. Shindler stated that, "the writer is of the opinion that the great majority of those who are sound in the doctrine of inspiration, are more or less Calvinistic in doctrine."[50] In the same issue Spurgeon added that,

> We care more for the central evangelical truths than we do for Calvinism as a system; but we believe that Calvinism has in it a conservative force

> which helps to hold men to vital truth, and therefore we are sorry to see any quitting it who once accepted it.[51]

Spurgeon made it clear that his argument was not designed to reopen the older Calvinist-Arminian debates. “The present struggle is not a debate upon the question of Calvinism or Arminianism, but of the truth of God versus the inventions of men. All who believe the gospel should unite against that ‘modern thought’ which is its deadly enemy.”[52] Throughout the Down Grade Controversy the charge was made that Spurgeon was motivated by his desire to force conformity to his Calvinistic theology within the Union. Spurgeon steadfastly refuted this charge declaring,

> Certain antagonists have tried to represent the Down-Grade controversy as a revival of the old feud between Calvinists and Arminians. It is nothing of the kind. Many evangelical Arminians are as earnestly on our side as men can be. We do not conceal our own Calvinism in the least; but this conflict is for truths which are common to all believers. . .it is of no use attempting to drag this red herring across our path: we can argue other points and maintain Christian harmony at the same time; but with those who treat the bible as waste paper, and regard the death of Christ as no substitution, we have no desire for fellowship.[53]

In a private letter to a “Dear & Venerable Friend,” Spurgeon wrote,

> They try to make out that I fight for Calvinism. Indeed I do not deny my peculiar doctrines, but I have no war with an Evangelical Arminian nor indeed is this the question at all. There is an underlying gospel, common to all true churches, & this is assailed by Evolutionists, Postmortem Salvationists, Restorationists, & the whole school of the New Theology - which is no theology at all. Unbelief is in the very air, & all churches will yet have to deal with it though I believe yours to be least of all affected by it.[54]

Shindler added a third article in June 1887 turning his attention to American manifestations of the “Down Grade,” the heresy trials involving members of the faculty at Andover Theological Seminary. He accused them of using deception to gain their positions, affirming doctrines that they could not possibly believe given their public statements and published works.[55] In summarizing this article MacArthur points out,

> Shindler saw the Andover disaster as an object lesson on the dangers of the down-grade, and he did not hesitate to make the point, using American Baptists as an illustration, that The Baptist Union in England was headed down the same path.[56]

The articles evoked small reaction at first, then Spurgeon wrote a series of articles under his own name for five consecutive issues of *The Sword and Trowel*. These would bring the controversy to "white hot temperature."[57]

In the first article by Spurgeon, "Another Word Concerning the Down-Grade" (August 1887), he left no doubt as to the issues involved and was much more forceful in language than Shindler had been. He stated,

> Read those newspapers which represent the Broad School of Dissent, and ask yourself, How much further could they go? What doctrine remains to be abandoned? What other truth is to be the object of contempt? A new religion has been initiated, which is no more Christianity than chalk is cheese; and this religion being destitute of moral honesty, palms itself off as the old faith with slight improvements, and on this plea usurps pulpits which were erected for gospel preaching. The Atonement is scouted, the inspiration of Scripture is derided, the Holy Spirit is degraded into an influence, the punishment of sin is turned into fiction, and the resurrection into a myth, and yet these enemies of our faith expect us to call them brethren, and maintain a confederacy with them![58]

In this statement Spurgeon foreshadows J. Gresham Machen and the battles that would lead to Machen's departure from Princeton Seminary. In *Christianity and Liberalism*, Machen states that liberalism was not Christianity at all, but an entirely new religion,[59]

> [I]t may appear that what the liberal theologian has retained after abandoning to the enemy one Christian doctrine after another is not Christianity at all, but a religion which is so entirely different from Christianity as to belong in a distinct category. It may appear further that the fears of the modern man as to Christianity were entirely ungrounded, and that in abandoning the embattled walls of the city of God he has fled in needless panic into the open plains of a vague natural religion only to fall an easy victim to the enemy who ever lies in ambush there.[60]

Spurgeon had clearly taken the challenge given to him by Booth as he stated, “it is time that somebody should spring his rattle, and call attention to the way in which God is being robbed of his glory, and man of his hope.”[61] While Spurgeon was certainly concerned about the purity of essential biblical doctrines, he was equally concerned by what he saw as the immediate and practical result of the “New Theology.” “At the back of doctrinal falsehood comes a natural decline of spiritual life, evidenced by a taste for questionable amusements, and a weariness of devotional meetings.”[62] Above all he saw the greatest danger in the fact that the gospel was being marginalized, ridiculed and obscured.

> Where the gospel is fully and powerfully preached, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, our churches not only hold their own, but win converts; but when that which constitutes their strength is gone–we mean when the gospel is concealed, and the life of prayer is slighted–the whole things becomes a mere form and fiction.[63]

Apparently already sensing where this controversy was going to lead him he stated,

> It now becomes a serious question how far those who abide by the faith once delivered to the saints should fraternize with those who have turned aside to another gospel. Christian life has its claims, and divisions are to be shunned as grievous evils; but how far are we justified in being in confederacy with those who are departing from the truth?”[64]

He understood that absolute purity was not realistic, “we fear it is hopeless ever to form a society which can keep out men base enough to profess one thing and believe another.”[65] Spurgeon firmly declared that the “New Theology” was not Christianity and that there could be no union or cooperation with those who denied doctrines essential for salvation.[66]

In the second article Spurgeon reacted to those who both opposed his “Down Grade” views and supported his stand. Glover concluded that Spurgeon had, “expected that the majority of English Baptists and perhaps other denominations would rally around him in opposition to pernicious influences.”[67] While that seems unlikely, given the general history leading up to the controversy, he is perhaps correct to state that “Spurgeon had under-estimated rather than over-estimated how widespread the heretical taints were. Even the real evangelicals were confused.”[68] Spurgeon himself stated,

> Let no man think that a sudden crotchet has entered our head, and that we have written in hot haste: we have waited long, perhaps too long, and have been slow to speak. Neither let anyone suppose that we build our statements upon a few isolated facts, and bring to the front certain regrettable incidents which might as well have been forgotten. He who knows all things can alone reveal the wretched facts which have come under our notice. Their memory will, we trust, die and be buried with the man who has borne their burden, and held his peace because he had no wish to create disunion. Resolved to respect the claims both of truth and love, we have pursued an anxious pathway. To protest when nothing could come of it but anger, has seemed senseless; to assail evil and crush a vast amount of good in the process, has appeared to be injurious. If all knew all, our reticence would be wondered at and we are not sure it would be approved. Whether approved or not, we have had no motive but the general progress of the cause of truth, and the glory of God.[69]

Spurgeon lamented the fact that the issues he was raising were not being honestly addressed; “no one has set himself to disprove our allegations,”[70] he stated. He was accused of pessimism, vagueness of charges, trying to open old wounds and even unsoundness of mind due to his increasingly poor health.[71] In the third article, published in October 1887, “The Case Proved” Spurgeon detailed several examples of the inroads the “New Theology” had made into the Baptist Union. He also made it clear that he would resign from the Union.

> One thing is clear to us: we cannot be expected to meet in any Union which comprehends those whose teaching is upon fundamental points exactly the reverse of that which we hold dear. . . With deep regret we abstain from assembling with those whom we dearly love and heartily respect, since it would involve us in a confederacy with those with whom we can have no communion in the Lord.[72]

Spurgeon officially resigned from the Union on October 28, 1887.

Within the third article we are also exposed to the inner workings of the Baptist Union and its now vacillating general secretary, Samuel Harris Booth. As previously noted, in 1885 Booth had given Spurgeon information regarding doctrinal defections among members of the Baptist Union and had corresponded with him extensively. As the controversy deepened and the Union Council sought a way minimize the damage, members of the council began to criticize

Spurgeon for not producing the evidence and names of erring ministers and churches he had claimed to have. At this crucial point Spurgeon informed Booth of his intention to make public the information that Booth had provided in the preceding years. Booth, for reasons that have never been fully understood, forbade Spurgeon from doing so, claiming that the correspondence and communication was provided in confidence.[73] Wisely or not, Spurgeon acted as his own honor required and acquiesced to Booth's demand. Spurgeon, in a somewhat oblique manner, did make a public pronouncement that he possessed all of the evidence required to prove the reality of the Down Grade. Spurgeon wrote,

> If we were not extremely anxious to avoid personalities, we could point to other utterances of some of these esteemed writers which, if they did not contradict what they have now written, would be such a supplement to it that their entire mind would be better known. To break a seal of confidential correspondence, or to reveal private conversations, would not occur to us; but we feel compelled to say that, in one or two cases, the writers have not put into print what we have personally gathered from them on other occasions. Their evident desire to allay the apprehensions of others may have helped them forge their own fears. We say no more.[74]

In his important biography of Spurgeon, Carlile states,

> Many letters passed between Dr. Booth and Mr. Spurgeon during the period of the controversy, 1887–1892. Some of these letters were well known to myself and others. Dr. Booth gave names, and extracts from sermons and speeches. The correspondence passed at the death of Spurgeon into the hands of his wife, and then to his son, Charles. And it cannot now be traced. Probably it was destroyed in order to prevent accentuating the unhappy controversy to which it referred.[75]

Carlile also noted,

> Mr. Holden Pike in his *Life of Spurgeon* made several references to Dr. Booth's communications, and Mrs. Spurgeon wrote: "There are many dear and able friends who could write the full history of the controversy, but after much thought and prayer I have been led to allow the shadow of the pastor rest upon it in a measure, and to conceal under a generous silence most of the documentary and other evidence which could be produced to

> prove the perfect uprightness, veracity and fidelity of my dear husband throughout the whole of the solemn protest which culminated in the vote of censure by the Council of the Baptist Union.[76]

In Spurgeon's *Autobiography,*[77] edited by Mrs. Spurgeon and J. W. Harrald, Spurgeon's private secretary, only 12 pages are dedicated to the Down Grade Controversy. At the end of the chapter Mrs. Spurgeon reiterated the position of the family,

> I have received from many friends copies of my dear husband's letters written during this trying period; but I do not think any good purpose can be served by the publication of more than I have here given. Those who sympathized with him in his protest need nothing to convince them of the need and the wisdom of his action; while those who were opposed to him would probably remain in the same mind, whatever might be said, so there the matter must rest as far as I am concerned.[78]

Booth's integrity and character are certainly to be called into question.[79] Subsequent documentary discoveries[80] demonstrate that he had the ability and opportunity to stand for not only doctrinal truth, but also for personal integrity; unfortunately, he failed to do either. At one point during a meeting of the council Booth was asked directly by other council members whether or not Spurgeon had ever communicated to him charges against other ministers or churches. Booth denied that any such communication had ever happened.[81] James Spurgeon, Charles' brother, and himself a prominent member of the Baptist Union, was at the meeting and the recently discovered minutes from that meeting[82] indicates that this denial and another assertion of a lack of truthfulness by his brother so angered him that he left the meeting.[83] James Spurgeon related the events of this meeting to his brother. Spurgeon, writing to his wife about the meeting stated, "for Dr. Booth to say I never complained, is amazing. God knows all about it, and He will see me righted."[84]

During the extended negotiations,[85] where the Council sought to heal this breach and bring Spurgeon back into the assembly, two things ended any hope of reconciliation. Spurgeon again requested that the Council adopt a declarative statement of faith based on the model of the Evangelical Alliance. The Council refused again indicating that they saw no need. The Council, now took an offensive stance and pressed Spurgeon again name specific individuals. By this time Spurgeon saw that nothing was going to be accomplished and broke off

further discussion. Instead of letting the matter drop, Glover records that the Council,

> Taking advantage of Spurgeon's refusal to make personal denunciations, the Council accused him of bringing charges without evidence. Since no individuals had been charged, this was a meaningless quibble.[86]

The result was that the Baptist Union issued a vote of censure against Spurgeon on January 18, 1888. Regarding the Council and the action by the Baptist Union Glover noted,

> They were not prepared to admit the general charge of a loss of evangelical faith, and they were afraid that any admission of his specific charges would lead to unnecessary and fruitless controversy within the Union. The policy which they adopted was to attempt to put the responsibility for disturbing the peace back on Spurgeon. They took the position that his charges were too vague to merit serious investigation, that he failed to substantiate them by naming any ministers who were guilty. However useful this policy might have been politically, can only be described as dishonest trifling with the subject. Spurgeon's resentment was well founded.[87]

Carlile reached a similar conclusion,

> Spurgeon was never righted. The impression in many quarters still remains that he made charges, which could not be substantiated, and when properly called upon to produce his evidence, he resigned and ran away. Nothing is further from the truth. Spurgeon might have produced Dr. Booth's letters; I think he should have done so.[88]

Spurgeon himself responded to the censure in the February 1888 issue of *The Sword and Trowel*. He stated,

> I brought no charges before the members of the council, because they could only judge by their constitution, and that document lays down no doctrinal basis except that belief in "immersion of believers is the only Christian Baptism." Even the mention of evangelical sentiments has been cut out from their printed programme. No one can be heterodox under this constitution, unless he should forswear his baptism. I offered to pay the fee for the Counsel's opinion upon this matter, but my offer was not accepted

> by their deputation. There was, therefore nothing for me to work upon, whatever evidence I might bring.[89]

Spurgeon received a deputation from the Baptist Union on January 13, 1888, consisting of Samuel Harris Booth, the general secretary of the Union; James Culross, the Union President; and John Clifford, the Union vice-president. Clifford, who would become the president of the Union the following year, seems to have been a focal point in the discussion and leader in the drive to censure Spurgeon. This seems to have been an effort to discredit Spurgeon and preempt any effort Spurgeon might make to form a new association. The other member to have been present was Dr. Alexander Maclaren of Manchester, the only other pastor in the Baptist Union who approached Spurgeon's international influence. However, while Maclaren was repeatedly appointed and commissioned to meet with Spurgeon on behalf of the Union, he was always "unavailable" at crucial times.[90] The meeting was described as "quite tense"[91] and Spurgeon refused to withdraw his resignation. He made two requests: (1) He asked the Council to render an opinion as to whether or not the current constitution of the Union allowed for the removal of heretics, and offered to pay for the expenses of those deliberations, as noted above; (2) and again asked for an adoption of a "evangelical statement of doctrine." Spurgeon wrote to Culross stating, "so long as Association without a creed has no aliens in it, nobody can wish for a creed formally, for the spirit is there; but at a time when 'strange children' have entered what is to be done?"[92] Both requests were refused. Glover points out plainly some of the problems involved,

> The dishonesty of the Council's position lay in the fact that the vice-president and several members were themselves in fundamental disagreement with Spurgeon on the specific issues involved. Clifford and his chief supporters, Alexander Maclaren and Charles Williams, had rejected the doctrine of inerrancy of the Scripture and were well aware that one distinguished Baptist minister, Samuel Cox, has made himself one of the best known exponents of universal restoration.[93]

After Spurgeon resigned from the Union it was feared that the organization itself would split and that Spurgeon would form a new denomination. In his first article there is a hint that he had considered this. "It might be possible," he stated, "to make an informal alliance among those who hold the Christianity of their fathers."[94] However, by November 1887 he clearly stated that a new denomination was not his intention.[95] Spurgeon never mounted an effort to

encourage people to leave the Union, and in fact few followed Spurgeon's lead.

The Results of the Down Grade

The main result of the controversy was that the evangelical hegemony, whether real or perceived, in the Baptist Union was broken. Everything that Spurgeon feared regarding the future of British Evangelicalism came to pass within a very short time. Glover, who disagreed with Spurgeon's theology at almost every point, still admitted,

> Spurgeon's insight into the religious life and his own times was proved by subsequent events. He did stand on the verge of a great evangelical depression, and unquestionably the theological confusion of his day and the disturbance to religious traditions wrought by higher criticism had a great deal to do with the decline of evangelicalism.[96]

MacArthur, more sympathetic to Spurgeon, concluded a similar sentiment,

> It was surely difficult for Spurgeon himself, and even his early biographers, to assess the value of the Down-Grade Controversy. In those last years of Spurgeon's life, the strife was so much in the foreground that it obscured for most observers the real importance of the stand Spurgeon had taken. Spurgeon was the first evangelical with international influence to declare war on modernism. The Baptist Union was never the same. But the Evangelical Alliance, an interdenominational fellowship stood with Spurgeon and gained strength.[97]

In the postmortem of the Down Grade Controversy Spurgeon joined with a group of like-minded pastors in a "Fraternal Union" and published a declaration and statement of faith. It was widely published and commonly became known as "Spurgeon's Confession of Faith" or "Spurgeon's Manifesto." An article in *The Sword and Trowel* detailed the development of this "fraternal" Spurgeon's relation to it. It was not the statement that he had proposed earlier to the Baptist Union, nor was association in the "fraternal" limited to Baptists. It was perhaps the manifestation of what Spurgeon had referred to in 1887 as an "informal alliance."[98] The preamble and the actual statement are important to note here,

> We, the undersigned, banded together in Fraternal Union, observing with growing pain and sorrow the loosening hold of many upon the Truths of

> Revelation, are constrained to avow our firmest belief in the Verbal Inspiration of all Holy Scripture as originally given. To us, the Bible does not merely contain the Word of God, but is the Word of God. From beginning to end, we accept it, believe it, and continue to preach it. To us, the Old Testament is no less inspired than the New. The Book is an organic whole. Reverence for the New Testament accompanied by skepticism as to the Old appears to us absurd. The two must stand or fall together. We accept Christ's own verdict concerning "Moses and all the prophets" in preference to any of the supposed discoveries of so-called higher criticism. We hold and maintain the truths generally known as "the doctrines of grace." The Electing Love of God the Father, the Propitiatory and Substitutionary Sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, the Justification of the sinner (once for all) by faith, his walk in the newness of life and growth in grace by the active indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and the Priestly Intercession of our Lord Jesus, as also the hopeless perdition of all who reject the Savior, according to the words of the Lord in Matt. xxv. 46, "These shall go away into eternal punishment," –are, in our judgment, revealed fundamental truth. Our Hope is the personal Premillennial Return of the Lord Jesus in glory.[99]

Spurgeon also produced a small booklet entitled *The Greatest Fight in the World*[100], a condensation of Spurgeon's last address to his Pastor's College Conference. This work was Spurgeon's last call to theological orthodoxy before the final illness that would take his life in six months. Bebbington notes,

> Spurgeon's protest against emerging liberal tendencies may not have carried many with him at the time, but the enduring esteem in which he was held in the whole Evangelical world ensured a wider hearing for conservative opinion in subsequent generations.[101]

Lessons from the Down Grade

During the years of the Down Grade Controversy Spurgeon repeatedly warned of six areas of "down grade" in evangelical doctrine:

- • *The denial of the verbal inspiration (that is, inerrancy) of Scripture.*
- • *The denial of eternal punishment and the affirmation of universalism.*

- • *The denial of the Trinity, mainly in terms of the rejection of the personality of the Holy Spirit.*
- • *The movement towards Socinianism or the denial of the deity of Christ and original sin.*
- • *The denial of the creation account in Genesis in favor of evolution.*
- • *The unhealthy influence of Higher Criticism on biblical scholarship, particularly as it related to the Old Testament.*

He summarized his position on the theological trends in his day as he stated,

> Look at the church of the present day; the advanced school, I mean. In its midst we see preachers who have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. They talk of the Lord Jesus, but deny his Godhead, which is his power; they speak of the Holy Spirit, but deny his personality, wherein lies his very existence. They take away the substance and power from all the doctrines of revelation, though they pretend still to believe them. They talk of redemption, but they deny substitution, which is the essence of it; they extol the Scriptures, but deny their infallibility, wherein lies its value; they use the phrases of orthodoxy, and believe nothing in common with the orthodox.[102]

This list is remarkably similar to the entry on “Evangelicalism” in the second edition of the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* by Pierard and Elwell cited in the introduction to this chapter.

As Pierard and Elwell note, several aspects of evangelical theology, which were formerly agreed on by consensus, are undergoing debate. The focus of attention today is not on the personality of the Holy Spirit, but rather God the Father Himself. As Pettegrew notes,

> After two thousand years of Christian theology, serious Bible-believing Christians are once again debating what God is like. The debate is not even about peripheral matters or technicalities; it actually revolves around some of the basic attributes of God.[103]

One can only imagine what Spurgeon would have thought had he seen Openness and Process Theology propagated during his lifetime. That noted evangelical scholars such as Clark Pinnock, John R. W. Stott, Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, and John Wenham (among others) today should be denying eternal

punishment[104] while others advocate a “larger hope” or one of the various forms of universalism, denying the absolute necessity of the gospel for salvation[105] should not be viewed as something new; Spurgeon fought against the same thing over 100 years ago.

Spurgeon clearly recognized that the greatest dangers of the “New Theology” and the result of the Down Grade Controversy lay in the practical ministry of the church; that is (1) evangelism, and (2) prayer, which he called that “which constitutes their strength.”[106] He noted that this movement was leading to the concealment of the gospel and the slighting of the life of prayer.[107] In relation to evangelism, the growing trend of Universalism; that is, the ultimate reconciliation of all things to Christ or the salvation of all men regardless of their faith in Christ in this life.[108] Spurgeon saw clearly how this teaching was deadly to the work of evangelism. If all men would ultimately be saved, what was the real impetus for evangelism to be? Where universalism and its twin-sister, the denial of eternal punishment, became dominant, the message of the church was reduced to either moralism or social action.

As earlier noted, Samuel Cox’s two works, *Salvator Mundi; or, Is Christ the Savior of all Men* (1877) and the sequel *The Larger Hope* (1883), make it clear that both eternal punishment is to be rejected and that God will see to the salvation of all men, even those who reject Christ. He states clearly,

> And what else, or less, do our Lord’s own words imply: “It shall be *more tolerable* for them at the day of judgment than for you?” Lives there the man with soul so dead and brain so narrow that he can take these solemn words to mean nothing more than that the men of Tyre and Sidon will not be condemned to quite so hot a fire as the men of Chorazin and Bethsaida! Must they not mean at least that in the future, as in the present, there will be diversities of moral condition, and a discipline nicely adapted to those diversities? May they not mean that those who have sinned against a little light will, after having been chastened for their sins with a “few stripes,” receive more light, and be free to walk in it if they will? We are often chastened in this world that we may not be condemned with the World, often judged and condemned and punished that we may be aroused to repentance and saved unto life everlasting. Why, then, should we always take the chastenings of the world to come to mean judgments, and the judgments to mean condemnations, and the condemnations to mean nothing short of a final and irreversible doom? On the contrary, we ought rather to

> hope that while during the brief hours of time our lives describe but "broken arcs," in eternity, and through whatever chastening and discipline may be requisite for us, they will reach "the perfect round."[109]

So, while it would certainly be nice and preferable for people to trust in Christ in this life, according to universalism, it isn't necessary and it may not even be practical.

The inroads of Higher Criticism in evangelical scholarship today are apparent in questioning the Old Testament; but also the New Testament, as Thomas and Farnell have demonstrated.[110] Questioning Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, once a relic of liberalism, has now found its way into evangelical scholarship.[111] The real and/or practical rejection of inerrancy of the Scripture (as traditionally understood), the advocacy of theistic evolution, the denial of the reality of Adam and Eve,[112] the rejection of the worldwide flood,[113] all have proponents within the Evangelical sphere. The *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* even published an article which concluded, "Spurgeon's understanding of the nature and interpretation of the Bible does not adequately serve this generation of evangelical Christians who have come to accept the best of current Biblical scholarship while holding concurrently to the inspiration and authority of Scripture."[114] This is an opinion that could have been just as easily written by one of Spurgeon's critics during the Down Grade Controversy and is as specious today as it would have been then.

Beyond these disturbing theological trends, the key lesson to be derived from the Down Grade Controversy is the need for diligence. Spurgeon was lambasted for being unloving and old-fashioned in his stand against the theological slide of his day. Even those leaders, who in past times stood for Biblical truth, occasionally fall away (as Booth did). Even formerly sound publications can become suspect. Speaking of the affirmation of Open Theism in *Christianity Today*, David Wells stated,

> To rebuff so large a part of the evangelical world requires considerable moral authority. And this is precisely the kind of authority *Christianity Today* has now forfeited as it has steadily divested itself of theological substance and passed up opportunity after opportunity to show a little moral courage. Slick and professional it is, but uncertain and directionless it also appears to be.[115]

Vigilance is neither easy, nor is it popular. Spurgeon, as previously noted, was never vindicated in his lifetime and only decades later were his concerns related to the Down Grade shown to be truer than perhaps even he realized. The lesson of continued diligence is not confined to Spurgeon's day. Fighting his own battle for orthodoxy in the 1960's, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones stated,

> We have evidence before our very eyes that our staying amongst such people does not seem to be converting them to our view but rather to a lowering of the spiritual temperature of those who are staying amongst them and an increasing tendency to doctrinal accommodation and compromise.[116]

Conclusion

In his work, *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, Iain Murray noted that the prevalent attitude on the part of the Baptist Union leadership was, "an unwillingness to define precisely any doctrinal issue, a readiness to reduce what constitutes the content of orthodox Christianity to a minimum, and a 'charity' which made men unwilling to question the standing of any denomination in the sight of God so long as it professed the 'Evangelical Faith.'"[117] Harrison notes that for the Union Council to "pretend that the effects [of doctrinal error] were marginal and superficial is disingenuous almost beyond belief."[118] Murray pointedly adds,

> As we look back now on the last decades of the 19th century we cannot exonerate orthodox ministers who allowed the term 'evangelical' to become debased: they had not the strength to declare that men were not ministers of Christ who, while professing the 'Evangelical Faith', either never preached that Faith or practically repudiated it in the details of their teaching.[119]

Spurgeon himself warned, "There is truth and there is error and these are opposite the one to the other. Do not indulge yourselves in the folly with which so many are duped–that truth may be error, and error may be truth, that black is white, and white is black, and that there is a whitey-brown that goes in between, which is, perhaps, the best of the whole lot."[120]

With the "core of belief" of Evangelicalism now open for discussion, one wonders if a book will be written in the next generation that describes the current state of American Evangelicalism as a powerful, effective, and efficient instrument in the hands of God; declaring His Glory and expounding His Truth,

or as a movement “In Search of Foundations”?

[1] This chapter has been updated and modified from a paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, November 2001 at Colorado Springs, Colorado. The theme for the meeting that year was “Defining Evangelicalism’s Boundaries.”

[2] Pierard, Richard V., “Evangelicalism” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Walter A. Elwell, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 379.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 380.

[6] Pierard, Richard V. and Walter A. Elwell, “Evangelicalism” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 2001), 409

[7] Ibid.

[8] Langford, Thomas A. *In Search of Foundations: English Theology 1900–1920*. (Nashville, TN: Abington Press, 1969.

[9] The phrase “Down Grade” is rendered in various manners in the literature. For our purposes we have chosen the form that Spurgeon adopted in his writings. Quotations from others in this chapter will naturally reflect that author’s form.

[10] Booth, Willis B. “English Baptists at the Time of the Downgrade Controversy,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal of History and Theology* 1, No. 3 (July 1958): 46.

[11] For examples see: John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), Thomas Jerrell Sutton, “A Comparison Between the Down Grade Controversy and Tensions Over Biblical Inerrancy in the Southern Baptist Convention,” Unpublished doctoral dissertation (Fort Worth, TX: Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1982), and R. J. Sheehan, *C. H. Spurgeon and the*

Modern Church: Lessons for Today from the Downgrade Controversy. (London: Grace Publications, 1985).

[12] Carlile, J. C. *C. H. Spurgeon: An Interpretive Biography*. (London: The Religious Tract Society and the Kingsgate Press, 1933), 243.

[13] MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, xix.

[14] Ibid.

[15] While Spurgeon's health had been tenuous for many years, there is no question that the stress of this affair helped hasten his death at the relatively young age of 58.

[16] Kingdom, David P. "C. H. Spurgeon and the Down Grade Controversy," in *The Good Fight of Faith, 1971 Westminster Conference Papers*. (London: Westminster Chapel, 1971), 35. This article was also republished in an edited form in *A Marvelous Ministry: How the All-round Ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon Speaks to Us Today*, by Tim Curnow, Erroll Hulse, David Kingdom and Geoff Thomas (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publishers, 1993).

[17] Ibid., 40.

[18] Payne, Ernest A., *The Baptist Union: A Short History*. (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1958), The "Baptist Union" was the common name for the organization from the beginning, but it was not made official until 1873.

[19] Ibid., 4.

[20] Ibid.

[21] As a parallel the *raison d'être* of the Evangelical Theological Society was the affirmation of the inerrancy of Scripture (although in 1990 a second feature was added to the doctrinal statement affirming trinitatianism). However, the society has never adopted a clear definition of inerrancy. As late as 1978, ETS President Stanley Gundry stated regarding a definition,

The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy resulting from that meeting [ICBI meeting of 1977] is a remarkably balanced and comprehensive document, especially considering the theological diversity of the particpants and the time

limitations within which they operated. Even so, the papers and discussions leading up to the document clearly showed that inerrantists themselves disagree on the definition and implications of inerrancy, the apologetics of inerrancy, the determination of authorial intent, the question of single or dual intention, the use of the historicalcritical method, the uses of literary genre, and the cultural conditioning of Scripture. A comprehensive consensus has not yet emerged. As a body of evangelical theologians, apologists, and Bible scholars committed to inerrancy need to squarely face these questions.

Gundry, Stanley N. "Evangelical Theology: Where Should We Be Going?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 22, No. 1 (1979): 8–9.

[22] Payne, *Baptist Union*, 4

[23] Ibid.

[24] Kingdom, "Down Grade," 40.

[25] Leland, Patrick R. "Anti-Creedalism in the Down Grade Controversy," *Baptist History and Heritage* 31 (April 1996): 33–34.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid., 34

[28] Underwood, A. C. *A History of the English Baptists.* (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1947), 230, n.1. Largely because of his increasingly liberal theological views Cox was replaced as the editor of *The Expositor* by the publishers, Hodder and Stoughton, in 1884 and replacing him with W. Robertson Nicoll. However, as many have noted, under Nicoll's editorship, *The Expositor* became the leading Evangelical outlet for Higher Criticism.

[29] Cox's works remain some of the most influential literature in Universalist circles. *Salvator Mundi* has gone through nearly 20 printings since it first appeared.

[30] *Kingdom*, 41.

[31] Drummond, Lewis A. *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1992), 667.

[32] Ibid. The letter was dated November 8, 1883 and states in part, “I think I must personally withdraw from the Baptist Union.”

[33] Cited in *The Life and Work of Charles Haddon Spurgeon* by G. Holden Pike. (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1894), 6:292.

[34] Payne, *History*, 130.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Cited in Drummond, *Prince of Preachers*, 670.

[37] Payne, *History*, 129–30.

[38] Drummond, *Prince of Preachers*, 670–71.

[39] Kingdom, “Down Grade Controversy,” 42.

[40] Harrison, Graham. “C. H. Spurgeon and the Downgrade Controversy,” in *Divisions and Dissensions The Westminster Conference Papers, 1987*. (London: Westminster Chapel, 1987), 98.

[41] Glover, “English Baptists,” 47

[42] It should be remembered that in this era the print media was the exclusive means of disseminating information. The so-called “religious press” was widespread and influential and the secular press reported on religious and ecclesiastical matters on an indepth basis.

[43] Drummond, *Prince of Preachers*, 676. Drummond states fully:

The articles were unsigned, but it is common knowledge that there were written by Robert Shindler, who later wrote a biography of Spurgeon entitled, *From the Usher’s Desk to the Tabernacle Pulpit*. It may seem strange that Spurgeon did not author these early Down Grade Articles, thus becoming the one who fired the first broadside against heterodoxy, but he no doubt approved them. The author, Robert Shindler, stated that Spurgeon himself supervised the writing of the articles while in Mentone (ibid).

[44] Shindler, Robert. ‘The Down Grade,” *The Sword and Trowel* (March 1887):

122.

[45] Ibid.

[46] See the collection of unedited *Sword and Trowel* articles in *The "Down Grade" Controversy*. (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publishing, n.d.).

[47] Ibid.

[48] Shindler, Robert. "The Down Grade Second Article," *The Sword and Trowel* (April 1887): 166–71. His particular example was that of Philip Doddridge (1702–51), 166.

[49] Ibid.,170.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Spurgeon, Charles H. "Notes," *The Sword and Trowel* (April 1887): 195.

[52] Ibid., 196.

[53] Spurgeon, Charles H., "Notes," *The Sword and Trowel*, 23 (December 1887): 642.

[54] Spurgeon, Charles H. Private letter dated 18 Feb 1888, from Beulah Hill, Upper Norwood. This letter is in the private collection of Gary W. Long and used with his permission.

[55] Shindler, Robert. "Andover Theology," *The Sword and Trowel* 23 (June 1887): 274–80.

[56] MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, 204.

[57] Drummond, *Prince of Preachers*, 680.

[58] Spurgeon, Charles H. "Another Word Concerning the Down-Grade." *The Sword and Trowel* 23 (August 1887): 397.

[59] Machen, J. Gresham. *Christianity and Liberalism*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923).

[60] Ibid., 7

[61] Spurgeon, “Another Word,” 400

[62] Ibid., 397.

[63] Ibid., 399.

[64] Ibid.,400.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Wills, Gregory A. “The Ecclesiology of Charles H. Spurgeon: Unity, Orthodoxy and Denominational Identity,” *Baptist History and Heritage* 34, No. 3 (Autumn 1999): 75.

[67] Glover, Willis B. *Evangelical Nonconformists and Higher Criticism in the Nineteenth Century*. (London: Independent Press, 1954), 167.

[68] Ibid., 168.

[69] Spurgeon, Charles H. “Our Reply to Sundry Critics and Enquirers,” *The Sword and Trowel* 23 (September 1887): 462.

[70] Ibid., 461.

[71] Ibid., 462–63.

[72] Spurgeon, Charles H. “The Case Proved,” *The Sword and Trowel* 23 (October 1887): 515.

[73] Harrison, “Spurgeon,” 110; Carlile, *C. H. Spurgeon*, 247

[74] Ibid., 510.

[75] Carlile, *C. H. Spurgeon*, 246.

[76] Ibid., 248.

[77] Spurgeon, Charles H. *C. H. Spurgeon’s Autobiography; Compiled from His Diary, Letters and Records by His Wife and His Private Secretary* (London:

Passmore and Alabaster, 1900).

[78] Ibid., 4:264.

[79] Drummond, *Prince of Preachers*, 685.

[80] Hopkins, mark, "The Down Grade Controversy: New Evidence," *The Baptist Quarterly* 35:6 (April 1994): 262–78.

[81] Drummond, "Prince of Preachers," 696–70.

[82] Ibid., see also, Hopkins, "New Evidence." Some years ago when the Baptist Union moved its offices a large cache of documents were discovered and sent to Regent's Park College. Among those were the council meeting minutes and records of the Down Grade Controversy, records previously thought to be lost. They shed a great deal of light on the inner workings and political intrigue. See also Carlile, *C. H. Spurgeon*, 247.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 6:257. In his biography of Spurgeon, Drummond misquotes this sentence from Spurgeon slightly, but in doing so alters the intent of Spurgeon rendering the last part of the quotation, "God knows all about it, and He will see me *write it*" (Drummond, *Spurgeon*, 697 [emphasis mine]). It should be noted that at this time Spurgeon was in Mentone, France convalescing.

[85] Space and purpose prohibit an extended recounting of the events. Spurgeon, by all accounts, was neither inclined nor adept at denominational politics (his brother James, as the history shows, was also less than skilled in this area). Although he was one of the most prominent members of the Union, pastoring the largest church and overseeing the most substantial ministry, he never served on the Council nor in any official position within the Baptist Union. W. Robertson Nicoll stated, "His was by nature little fitted for many things that befell him in the last lacerating years" (Nicoll, *Princes of the Church* [London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1921], 54). Nicoll, although a great admirer of Spurgeon, nonetheless was himself at least partly responsible for the introduction of liberalism into British churches through his influential journal, *The Expositor*. He closed his comments on Spurgeon with the rather cryptic, "Better for him, better, perhaps, for us, that he has gone up the shining road."

[86] Glover, *English Baptists*, 50.

[87] Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformists*, 172.

[88] Carlile, *C. H. Spurgeon*, 248–49.

[89] Spurgeon, Charles H. "The Baptist Union Censure," *The Sword and Trowel* 24 (February 1888): 81.

[90] His name is also rendered McLaren in the literature. There is, in fact, no record that Maclaren ever allowed himself to be involved at any crucial point in this controversy. The relationship between Spurgeon and Maclaren was never much more than perfunctory, but it seems that Maclaren would have been more honest to simply decline the appointments to the committee.

[91] Drummond, *Prince of Preachers*, 698.

[92] Spurgeon, *Autobiography*, 4:263.

[93] Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformists*, 172–73. See also Underwood, "A History of the English Baptists," 230.

[94] Spurgeon, "Another Word," 400.

[95] Spurgeon, Charles H. "A Fragment upon the Down-Grade Controversy," *The Sword and Trowel* 23 (November 1887): 560

[96] Glover, *Evangelical Nonconformist*, 248.

[97] MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel*, 225.

[98] Spurgeon, "Another Word," 400.

[99] "Mr. Spurgeon's Confession of Faith," *The Sword and Trowel* 27 (August 1891): 446.

[100] Spurgeon, Charles H. *The Greatest Fight in the World* (New York: Funk and Wagnall, 1891). This was based on an address by Spurgeon at his annual conference of the Pastor's Conference.

[101] Bebbington, David. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the*

1730's to the 1980's. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989): 146.

[102] Spurgeon, Charles H. "The Form of Godliness without the Power," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit; Sermons Preached and Revised by C. H. Spurgeon in the Year 1889*. (reprint, Pasadena, Texas: Pilgrim Publications, 1975), 308.

[103] Pettegrew, Larry D."Is There Knowledge in the Most High (Psalm 73:11)," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 12, No. 2 (Fall 2001): 133.

[104] Mayhue, Richard L. "Hell Never, Forever, or Just for Awhile?" *The Master's Seminary Journal* 9, No. 2 (Fall 1998): 129.

[105] MacArthur, John. "Open Theism's Attack on the Atonement," *The Master's Seminary Journal*, 12, No. 1 (Spring 2001), 6ff.

[106] Spurgeon, "Another Word," 400.

[107] Ibid.

[108] This view traces its roots back to Origen, who affirmed that not only would all men be saved, but that even Satan and the demons would be "reconciled" to God in Christ.

[109] Cox, Samuel. *Salvator Mundi; or Is Christ the Savior of All Men*. (London: Kegan Paul, 1977), 25.

[110] Thomas, Robert L. and F. David Farnell (editors). *The Jesus Crisis*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1998).

[111] Carson, D. A. *New Testament Commentary Survey* (5th Edition). (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 2001), 107. See also, Donald A. Hagner, *The New Testament: A Historical and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2012), 615. Hagner states:

No single argument [against Pauline authorship of the Pastorals] is totally persuasive, but as the number of arguments against Pauline authorship increase, they grow in strength, and the defense of Pauline authorship becomes and increasingly difficult challenge (621–22).

[112] Young, Davis A. “The Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race Revisited,” Christian *Scholars Review* 24 (1995), 380–96.

[113] Swanson, Dennis M. “ExtraBiblical Evidence, General Revelation, and Scripture: A Response to David A. Young’s ‘The Biblical Flood,’” *Journal of Christian Apologetics* 2, No. 1 (Summer 1998): 3–24.

[114] Ferguson, Duncan S. “The Bible and Protestant Orthodoxy: The Hermeneutics of Charles Spurgeon.” *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 25, No. 4 (December 1982): 466.

[115] Wells, David F. “Foreword” in *Whatever Happened to the Reformation?* Gary L. W. Johnson and R. Fowler White, ed’s. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2001), xxiii

[116] Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*. (Carlise, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1987), p. 147. Sadly enough Lloyd-Jones was fighting the same battle within the Evangelical Union in England (the Union that Spurgeon had supported) that Spurgeon had fought within the Baptist Union. In this we note that diligence is needed in every generation for Biblical and doctrinal fidelity. For this history of this particular struggle see, Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950-2000* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2001). For other warnings see: David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth: Or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing, 1993); Gary L. W. Johnson and R. Fowler White (ed’s), *Whatever Happened to the Reformation?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 2001); and John F. MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2002). See also *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 12, No. 2 (Fall 2001) an issue dedicated to the theme of Open Theism.

[117] Murray, Iain. *The Forgotten Spurgeon*. (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1966): 156.

[118] Harrison, “C. H. Spurgeon,” 98.

[119] Murray, *Forgotten Spurgeon*, 156.

[120] Spurgeon, “Three Sights Worth Seeing,” Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit for 1887 (Reprint; Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publishing, 1982), 476. Along the same

line, in his presidential address to the *Evangelical Theological Society* in 1957 Ned B. Stonehouse stated:

If the word “evangelical” in the name of our Society and in its broader applications in out day is to possess genuine meaning, we may not be satisfied with a lowest common denominator of Christian belief. *Rather, take with full earnestness our avowed commitment to the divine inspiration and authority of Scripture, and putting more fully into practice out theoretical acknowledgement of the primacy of exegesis, we must search out diligently what the Scriptures teach concerning basic questions on which evangelicalism are seriously divided.* There can be no hope of evangelical progress apart from energetic in this direction (emphasis in original).

Stonehouse, Ned B. “The Infallibility of Scripture and Evangelical Progress,” in *Quo Vadis Evangelicalism*. Edited by Andreas J. Köstenberger (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 35–36. Unfortunately, since Stonehouse’s address the questions dividing evangelicalism have seemingly deepened and multiplied.

CHAPTER 7A

PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUNDAMENTALIST-MODERNIST CONTROVERSY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (PART 1)

William E. Nix



Introduction

The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy is conventionally dated as beginning in 1922 with a sermon by a well-recognized and articulate spokesman for liberal Protestantism, Harry Emerson Fosdick. Fosdick, a liberal Baptist preaching by special permission in First Presbyterian Church, New York, delivered his sermon “Shall the Fundamentalists Win?” highlighting differences between liberal and conservative Christians. The end of the controversy was marked by J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) and a number of other conservative Presbyterian theologians and clergy who left the denomination in 1936 to establish the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. [1] At the beginning of the Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy, Presbyterians were the fourth-largest Protestant group in the United States. Methodists were the largest, followed by Baptists (who became the largest during the period), Lutherans, Disciples of Christ, and Episcopalians were in sixth place. [2] Although the “Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy” is the term used to describe this major schism in the Presbyterian Church, very similar and far-reaching reactions against the growth of liberal Christianity also occurred in other major Protestant denominations before and after the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy of the 1920s.

The First Great Awakening

Protestant Christianity had completed over two hundred years of vigorous advance by the beginning of the twentieth century. Within this advance historians and theologians identify as “Great Awakenings” those periods of religious revival and other reform movements that swept across America and beyond. Such was the “great international Protestant upheaval” that gave rise to Pietism among Lutherans in Germany, the Evangelical Revival and Methodism in Great Britain, and the First Great Awakening in the British American colonies in the 1730s-40s Revivalism, under Jonathan Stoddard and Jonathan Edwards, was transformed by the nominal Anglican itinerant evangelist George Whitefield (1715-1770). Whitefield’s preaching of regeneration (called a “New Birth”) was an important component of his message. Whitefield’s Calvinism contrasted with the Arminianism of John Wesley (1703-1791). Wesley had a disastrous missionary tour to Georgia before his evangelical conversion at Aldersgate

(1738). Both John and Charles Wesley came under the influence of Charles Böhler and the Moravians. Charles experienced conversion on May 21, 1738. John travelled to the Moravian center at Hernnhut and he "had the experience conversion on May 24, 1738 at the reading of Martin Luther's Preface to the Romans at a meeting in Aldersgate Street. Henceforth his professed object was 'to promote as far as I am able vital practical religion and by the grace of God to beget, preserve, and increase the life of God to the souls of men', and the rest of his life was spent doing evangelistic work."[3]

"Protestantism had passed through a Baroque phase but had emerged in its Evangelical form, in the Augustan atmosphere of the Enlightenment. . . .The prolix scholarship of the earlier era was no longer congenial. . . .Reading as much as thinking was conditioned by the Enlightenment. The Augustan tone is evident in the greatest literary achievement of the revival, the hymnody of Charles Wesley. He was a disciple of the *avant garde* of the literary Enlightenment in its displacement of the Baroque. Because his hymns express feeling in common vocabulary, they have sometimes been classified as anticipations of the Romanic era. The content and the manner, however, both bear testimony to their being characteristics of Augustanism."[4] Charles Wesley "was the most gifted and indefatigable hymn-writer that England has ever known (over 5,500 hymns in all), and like his brother understood their immense importance for missionary, devotional, and instructional purposes."[5] His hymns were didactic, for their aim was to transmit doctrine to their singers.

The Great Awakening increased religious activity and resulted in permanent divisions among New England's Puritan Congregationalists.[6] Unitarian doctrine entered preRevolutionary New England and appealed to the secular establishment. Puritan divines proclaimed their doctrines regularly without hindrance. By the time of the first Great Awakening, two of the leading opponents of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield were Unitarian pastors of prominent Boston churches: Charles Chauncey (1705-1787), grandson of the second president of Harvard, and his younger contemporary Jonathan Mayhew (1720-1766) were highly respected and well-educated clergymen whose Artillery Day sermons in Boston helped to instill patriotism and engender the revolutionary ideals of the Enlightenment. In the meantime, the Great Awakening was also influential among Presbyterians in the "back regions" of the Middle and Southern Colonies. The schism which occurred during the first Great Awakening resulted in the Presbyterian Church in 1741 being divided into Old Side and New Side. The two churches reunified in 1758. Northern Baptist and

Methodist (not yet officially a denomination in America) preachers converted both whites and blacks (enslaved and free) in the southern Tidewater and Low Country.

The Second Great Awakening

The so-called “Second Great Awakening” began in the United States around 1790 as followers of John Wesley (1703-1791) formed the Methodist church in America. They gained momentum by 1800 as revivals were led by both Methodists and Baptists. The most effective forms of evangelism in the 1820s-1840s were camp meetings across Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio. Arminian and emotional in their appeal, revivalists emphasized personal sin and the need to turn to Christ for restoration and a sense of personal salvation. Women converts far outnumbered men in the Second Great Awakening.[7] Upon returning home most converts joined or created small local rapidly growing churches. Methodist circuit riders and local Baptist preachers made enormous gains, making them comparable to the Anglican, Presbyterian, and Congregational denominations of the colonial period. In order to ameliorate the strict Calvinistic tradition and to accommodate Arminian revivalism, New Hampshire Baptists produced the moderately Calvinistic “New Hampshire Baptist Confession” (1833).[8] To a lesser degree Presbyterians, particularly the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and many new denominations grew out of the religious ferment of the Second Great Awakening. The second Presbyterian schism which occurred was the Old School —New School Controversy, which occurred in the wake of the Second Great Awakening, and which witnessed the Presbyterian Church split into two denominations beginning in 1836-38. Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) studied to become a licensed minister in the Presbyterian Church, although he had many misgivings about the fundamental doctrines taught in that denomination. He rejected tenets of “Old Divinity” Calvinism and became the most noted revivalist in the “burned-over district” of upstate New York (1825-1835) before moving to Ohio. There he became professor and later president of Oberlin College (1851-1866). Oberlin became active early in the movement to end slavery and was among the first American colleges to co-educate blacks and women with white men.[9] In the Southern phase of the Second Great Awakening the Restoration Movement was seeking to restore a primitive or apostolic form of Christianity. Two particular groups developed under the leadership of Barton W. Stone and under Thomas Campbell and Alexander Campbell. Continued development has resulted in three main branches in the United States: the

Churches of Christ, the Christian churches and churches of Christ, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).[10]

Although northern and southern churches did not organize into national denominations, they did seek ways to cooperate and maintain mutual amity. At first, cooperation in foreign and home missions was amicable, but sectional interests caused those efforts to break down and divisions occurred. The most notable example of the development of a broad cooperative denomination came in the wake of controversy among Baptists over the appointment of foreign missionaries. In 1814 Baptists from the north and south began their triennial meetings to support foreign missions. Sectional interests grew tense and finally reached the breaking point (1844) when a slave holder from Alabama sought appointment as a missionary. Knowing that they would not achieve success at the next triennial meeting (1847), Baptists from the South met in Augusta, GA and formed the Southern Baptist Convention (1845). Among other things, they adopted an “associational” rather than a “societal” approach to missions. The northern Baptists would have nothing to do with such a policy, since they did not want any intrusion into the independent life of local churches. The societal versus associational cooperation issue would play a major role in the developments following the turn of the century. Theological education was also important to the Southern Baptist Convention. They founded the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1859 subscribing to “Abstract Principles” as its doctrinal guide. Half a century later, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary was founded in 1908, subscribing to the “New Hampshire Confession of Faith” (1833) as its doctrinal authority. Both seminaries played an important role in the theological controversies of the period of revivalism called the “Third Great Awakening.” Individual churches also adopted the New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith. This procedure was followed in the founding of First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas in 1868.[11]

The American educational heritage reflects its origins to three ancient European universities: Paris, Oxford and Cambridge.

> All the colleges which were founded in America up to 1860 and even beyond were heirs of this ancient tradition. Harvard was largely a duplicated of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, the most Puritan of the Cambridge colleges, and the one from which John Harvard came; William and Mary, the second oldest American college, was modeled after Edinburgh and Oxford; Yale was a duplicate of Harvard; Princeton was a

> duplicate of Yale and was founded by Yale graduates, while Yale and Princeton served as the models practically all the early midwestern colleges until the Civil War. . . .
>
> Tewksbury's thorough study of the founding of American colleges and universities before the Civil War presents overwhelming evidence that the American churches dominated the whole higher educational movement, not only in the west but throughout the nation, a least until 1860.[12]

In the years before the Civil War the results of the Second Great Awakening acted as a buffer to keep American Evangelicals sheltered from a more corrosive form of biblical criticism. American seminary professors who kept abreast of the latest European scholarship knew, however, that uneasiness about the Bible was not a thing of the past. . . . On the whole, however, liberal biblical criticism in New England before the Civil War had little effect on evangelical churches. . . . Evangelical religion depended on warm "spiritual feelings" and saw little need to take account of new ideas."[13]

The Third Great Awakening

Some historians and theologians recognize a "Third Great Awakening"[14] (late 1850s until the early 1900s). George Williams founded the Y.M.C.A. on June 6, 1844. It was introduced into urban areas of the north beginning with Boston in December 1851. In 1854 Dwight Lyman Moody (1837-1899) moved to Boston to work in his uncle's shoe store and became involved with the Y.M.C.A. before moving to Chicago in 1858. The Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. were designed to assist men and women as they moved into industrial centers of the North. In 1859 Moody was active in the Chicago's prayer revival, helped establish Chicago's Y.M.C.A, and became its first full-time employee. By 1860 Moody's Sunday School grew to 1,500 in attendance, and newly elected President Abraham Lincoln visited and spoke at a Sunday School meeting on November 25, 1860. In 1861 Moody became a city missionary for the Y.M.C.A. and rose to its presidency from 1866 to 1869. The Civil War experienced revivals in the armies of both the North and the South as well as among civilian populations, and Moody ministered at several battlefields. In 1867 Moody supervised the erection of the Farwell Hall, seating 3,000, as the first Y.M.C.A. in America. He met Ira David Sankey in 1870 and the two traveled together in America, Britain, Scotland, and Ireland. During the Chicago fire in October 1871, the Y.M.C.A., the church, and Moody's home were destroyed. Moody quickly built the

Northside Tabernacle and turned it into a relief center to feed and clothe thousands who had lost their homes. When Moody and Sankey made their second visit to London in 1887, Charles Haddon Spurgeon invited him to preach in the Metropolitan Tabernacle.

After the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln's desire for a moderate reconstruction was dismissed after his assassination, and Andrew Johnson of Tennessee was thwarted by northern Radical Republicans when he attempted to continue with Lincoln's vision. Johnson narrowly survived his impeachment trial, but his opponents were emboldened and Radical Reconstruction (1865-1877) was imposed. Under President Ulysses S. Grant the former Confederate States were treated as "conquered provinces" and compelled to accept the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to *The Constitution of the United States* before being readmitted to the Union. The South generally felt itself defeated, ostracized, and humiliated as Grant's administration, controlled by Radical Republicans, dominated the South. "The principal concern of organized religion during the era of Reconstruction was the education and social advancement of the freedman . . . . It was the northern churches more than any other group of institutions that took the freedman in hand and ministered to his economic, intellectual, moral, and spiritual needs. The results were phenomenal by any standard."[15]

The Civil War marked a watershed between an old and a new America, but "the civil religion of the War made powerfully lingering effects. Denominationally, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians were long defined by region."[16] They were identified "in terms of North or South but not both."[17] In the meantime, the American people became much more heterogeneous in background. The advent of modern science drastically altered the intellectual climate. The quickening pace of industrialism created new centers of power in national life."[18] Innovations in education and the impact of ideas also provided new challenges to American life and values during the periods of Reconstruction (1865-1877), the Gilded Age (1877-1893), the Progressive Era (1890-1920), the "Return to Normalcy" of the Roaring Twenties (1920-1929), the Great Depression (1930-1940), and World War II (1939-1945).

Despite the failure of Reconstruction to secure civil rights for freed slaves in the South, and intensifying racism over the next half century, blacks seized control of their own religious experience. By 1870 ex-slaves founded the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church and the Colored Cumberland Presbyterian

Church. Although Baptists were more fragmented, they formed the National Baptist Convention (1895). It split into the National Baptist Convention and the National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A. Inc. (1907) and constitutes the largest cluster of black Christians in the United States. Methodists led the expansion of previously existing Northern denominations into the South. In addition independent congregations, usually Baptist and mostly rural, created and maintained their own congregations. They became the mainstay of the black Christian experience. Blacks played prominent roles in the development of holiness and Pentecostal forms of the Christian faith. They also made some efforts at educating an indigenous black leadership. During Reconstruction, most black colleges were organized, financed, and directed by white Christian bodies, but during the Gilded Age the main black denominations established over twenty-five church-connected colleges in the South.[19]

The era between the economic panics of 1873 and 1893 was dubbed the "Gilded Age" by Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clements) and Charles Dudley Warner in their novel *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (1873). Their title was an apparent allusion to King Lear's remark "So we'll live, |And pray, and sing and tell old tales, and laugh |At gilded butterflies."[20] A "gilded butterfly" was an object with a thin golden veneer. In the usage of Twain and Warner it was a thinly veiled reference to a society of cruelty and corruption overlaid by a thin veneer of gold during the age of the "Captains of Industry." Their novel satirized the age of "the Men Who Built America" ("Robber Barons") as one of greed, graft, materialism, and corruption in public life in post-Civil War America. The "Age of the Great Industrialists," when Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, John Pierpont Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt and others helped transform the United States from a mostly agricultural to the world's leading industrial nation. By the 1870s northern Europeans of the first wave of immigration had become integrated into American society. The "Captains of Industry" needed their unskilled labor, entrepreneurial energy, and technological talent to bring about the transformation which immigrants from northern Europe and their children provided in abundance. Sydney Ahlstrom observes, "When Fort Dearborn was incorporated as the village of Chicago in 1833, it was an ugly frontier outpost of seventeen houses. By 1900, though still ugly, it was a sprawling western metropolis of 1,698,575 people—the fifth largest city in the world. Chicago became the most dramatic symbol of the major social trend of the post-Civil War era: the rise of the city."[21] The social and economic revolution in America accompanied the final phase of the great Atlantic immigration in such great numbers that it dwarfed all previous migrations combined. "The pre-Civil War

peak came in 1854 with 427,833 immigrants, nearly twice that number arrived in 1882 and in 1907 the all-time high of 1,285,349 was reached."[22] Boston, Philadelphia, and New York also experienced enormous growth between 1860 and 1890.

This is the period of the Third Great Awakening, although it is not so reckoned in Methodist circles. For example, staff writer Peter Baker reports, "President George W. Bush told a group that he sensed a 'Third Awakening' of religious devotion in the United States that has coincided with the nation's struggle with international terrorists, a war that he depicted as 'a confrontation between good and evil.'" He states that "The First Great Awakening refers to a wave of Christian fervor in the American colonies from about 1730 to 1760, while the Second Great Awakening is generally believed to have occurred from 1800 to 1830." Baker adds, "Some scholars and writers have debated for years whether a Third Awakening has been taking place, although some identify other awakenings in U.S. history. Bush aides, including Karl Rove, have read Robert William Fogel's "The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism." [23]

The Supposed Fourth Great Awakening?

Before investigating the particulars of the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy of the Third Great Awakening, it is necessary to address the so-called "Fourth Great Awakening" raised by Pulitzer Prize winning econometric historian Robert William Fogel.[24] In addition to political leaders, Fogel's theory has also caught the imagination of evangelical scholars. Iain S. McLean observes that Fogel's controversial work is an innovative economist's treatise on American slavery. McLean writes, "*The Fourth Great Awakening* grew out of his study of slavery and the religious movement against it. He notes the connection between the evangelical 'great awakenings' and subsequent political movements. In fact, he holds that one cannot understand current political, cultural, and moral trends without understanding these religious awakenings in American history and their subsequent social, economic, and political reform movements."[25] In *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (1989, 1994), Fogel "attributed the demise of American slavery not to its diseconomy but to a religiously-inspired vision of slavery that made slavery unsupportable. . .generated by the Second Great Awakening which idealized the goal of equality of opportunity. In *The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (1974) he began to appreciate the power that religious enthusiasm has exerted in American politics

in promoting that egalitarianism which he asserts is an enduring theme in American history."[26] As Fogel sees it, "the Third Great Awakening which began in the late nineteenth century eventually adopted and secularized a Social Gospel-inspired by equality of material condition as its ideal because it saw evil as social, not individual, in origin."[27] In his analysis of Fogel's methodology, John B. Carpenter indicates that Professor Wayne Grudem, in his presidential address to the Evangelical Theological Society (November, 1999)[28] "suggested that evangelicalism has been evolving toward a more mature sense of the essentials of the faith over its history."[29] Carpenter then examines *The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism* using a reverse methodology. His major innovation, however, is the broadening of the basic parameters of the dialogue. He replaces the theological perspective with a secular perspective as he focused on socio-economic parameters rather than biblical ones. These artificial constructions (or reconstructions) permit the writers to develop constructs which allow them to utilize the erroneous social scientist methodologies. In 1989, for example, David W. Bebbington set forth his definition of evangelicalism and its quadrilateral of priorities—the "Bebbington Quadrilateral"—transcending any given era.[30] In the meantime some noted historians have employed their own constructs to write histories that have generated criticism because their narratives were not supported by factual evidence. The Whig historians Thomas Babington Macaulay, George Macaulay Trevelyan, and other Whig historians came under attack in a short book by Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931). Although always under fire, Herbert Butterfield's attack on Whig historiography made it very unfashionable indeed. Butterfield's charges were felt by Carl Becker[31] whose artificial constructs were criticized by Peter Gay as well.

Unveiling the Misnamed "Hegelian Dialectic"

The methodology employed by Fogel (and used by Carpenter for his evaluation) is supposedly based on the writings of George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and erroneously identified as the "Hegelian Dialectic." It is similar to the methodology used by McGill University professor Peter Button's 2007 article "Negativity and Dialectical Materialism: Zhang Shiying's Reading of Hegel's Dialectical Logic," in *Philosophy East and West*.[32] Observing Button's article one discovers that his source citations are extremely out of date (mostly coming from the period prior to 1955). Since Shiying's readers are steeped in the dialectical materialism of Karl Marx (1818-1883), it is understandable that he would disregard late-twentieth century advancements concerning "The Hegel

Myths and Legends." In 1958, for example, Gustav E. Mueller published "The Hegel Legend of "Thesis-antithesis-synthesis" in the "Notes and Documents" section of *The Journal of the History of Ideas*. In this short but poignant analysis Mueller pointed out that in the winter of 1835-36, a group of Kantians in Dresden called on Heinrich Moritz Chalybaus, professor of philosophy at the University of Kiel, to lecture to them on the new philosophical movement after Kant. They were older, professional men who in their youth had been Kantians, and now wanted an orientation in a development which they distrusted; but they also wanted a confirmation of their own Kantianism. Professor Chalybaus did just those two things. His 1837 lectures were very popular and appeared in three editions. In the third edition (1843), Professor Chalybaus says: "This is the first trilogy: the unity of Being, Nothing and Becoming. . .we have in this first methodical thesis, antithesis, and synthesis an example or schema for all that follows" (p. 354). This was for Chalybaus a brilliant hunch which he had not used previously, and did not pursue afterwards in any way at all. But Karl Marx was at that time a student at the University of Berlin and a member of the Hegel Club where the famous book was discussed. He took the hunch and spread it into a deadly, abstract machinery. Other left-Hegelians, such as Arnold Ruge, Ludwig Feuerbaeh, Max Stimer use "thesis, antithesis, synthesis" just as little as does Hegel.

> But "thesis, antithesis, synthesis" is not the only Hegel legend fabricated by Marx. Brutal simplifications are Marxistic specialties. "Thesis, antithesis, synthesis" is said to be an "absolute Method" of Hegel's alleged "rationalism." Marx says: "There is in Hegel no longer a history in the order of time, but only a sequence of ideas in reason." Hegel, on the contrary, says: "The time order of history is distinguished from the sequence in the order of concepts"
> (*Werke*, XII, 59).[33]

In 1959, Walter A. Kaufmann wrote "The Hegel Myth and Its Method" in which he addressed Hegel as he is known largely through secondary sources and a few incriminating slogans and generalizations. The resulting myth, however, lacked a comprehensive, documented statement till Karl Popper found a place for it in his widely discussed book, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. After it had gone through three impressions in England, a revised one-volume edition was brought out in the United States in 1950, five years after its original appearance. Kaufmann challenges Popper's treatment of Hegel, his poor documentation, and his editorial procedures. The result is a distorted version of

Hegel.[34] Winfred Corduan observes that most of the critiques of Hegel "are based on erroneous conceptions of Hegel's system." He adds that "a valid critique of Hegel must be faithful to Hegel's thought. First one must remove the common misconception that Hegel's system consists of the inexorable forward arch of reason based on the trichotomy of thesis, antithesis, synthesis, frequently referred to as 'dialectic.'"[35] One additional voice to completely muzzle the Hegel Myths and Legends is provided by Jon Stewart in *The Hegel Myths and Legends*. He writes,

> It is further asserted, even by some enthusiastic supporters of Hegel such as McTaggart and Stace, that Hegel's dialectical method of argumentation takes the form of the thesis-antithesis-synthesis triad. This is among the most famous of all the Hegel myths and, as we have already seen, can still be easily found in encyclopedias and handbooks of Philosophy. If students "know" one thing about Hegel it is usually this. In his essay, Gustav Mueller, the author of a number of works on Hegel, irrefutably exposes this legend for what it is, by tracing the regrettable dissemination of this view back to Marx, who inherited it from a certain Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus, a long since forgotten expositor of the philosophy of Kant and Hegel. [36]

A final note about the broken connection between Karl Marx and George W. F. Hegel is their chronology. Marx was born on May 5, 1818. He was privately educated until 1830, when he entered Trier High School. In August 1831 a cholera epidemic reached Berlin and Hegel left the city, taking up lodgings in Kreuzberg. Now in a weak state of health, Hegel seldom went out. As the new semester began in October, Hegel returned to Berlin, with the (mistaken) impression that the epidemic had largely subsided. By November 14 Hegel was dead. It is unimaginable that the thirteen-year old Karl would have a firsthand acquaintance with the ailing sixty-one year old world-famous professor. Marx's acquaintance with Hegel was secondhand at best. Thus reinforcing the so-called "Hegelian Dialectic" as an artificial creation of Marx, the secular and materialistic philosopher. The fascination of the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" methodology for Christian scholars is both unwarranted and threatening. It comes from a worldview perspective that is diametrically opposed to historic Christian orthodoxy.

In a chapter entitled "The reception of *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* since its publication in 1989,"[37] Timothy Larsen treats Bebbington's definition of evangelicalism as characterized by a quadrilateral of priorities transcending any

given era. This “Bebbington Quadrilateral” consists of four characteristic qualities: conversionism, biblicism, curcicentrism, and activism.”[38] Bebbington argues that “British evangelicalism had been shaped, consecutively, by the Enlightenment (as exemplified in John Wesley and the first generation of evangelicals), Romanticism (as exemplified in the Keswick Convention and the nineteenth century Holiness movement), and modernism (as exemplified in Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group and then the charismatic movement).”[39] Bebbington errs both in his artificial constructs and in his anachronisms as factual evidences to the contrary demonstrate.

On the first point Bebbington asserts, “The activism of the Evangelical movement sprang from its strong teaching on assurance. That, in turn, was a product of the confidence of the new age about the validity of experience. The Evangelical version of Protestantism was created by the Enlightenment.”[40] This is certainly an overreach. Bebbington is dismissive of compelling evidence to the contrary as presented by others including the monumental two-volume study by distinguished historian Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*,[41] mentioned only once in a footnote on John Locke. Bebbington’s focus on Locke raises the question of “Whig” and “Tory” interpretations as well as the scope of Bebbington’s treatment of the Enlightenment. “Whig” and “Tory” are political party labels that have been in use in England since around 1681. They were both terms of reproach of Scottish and Irish origin respectively. Supporters of the referring to the supporters of the country were Whigs, and supporters of the court were Tories. Originally the country party (Whigs) passed the Test Acts (1673, 1678) requiring all persons holding office to take oaths of allegiance and loyalty and excluded Roman Catholics from any place in Parliament. “Meanwhile Protestant Dissenters, their cause espoused by the Whigs, numbered in their ranks men of the quality of John Owen, Richard Baxter, Matthew Mead, Hanserd Knollys, Thomas Collier, William Kiffin, John Bunyan, John Collinges, John Flavel, Francis Holcroft and Nathaniel Mather.”[42] In 1666 Locke met Lord Ashley, later First Earl of Shaftsbury, and moved to London after becoming his secretary. They moved to France in 1675 and returned to England in 1679. After the fall of Shaftsbury, Locke fled to Holland in 1683, where he remained until 1689. While in Holland, Locke came under the influence of René Descartes (1596-1650) and the early Enlightenment. In 1689, John Locke accompanied Mary Stuart as she returned to join her husband William as the new English monarch. From 1691 until his death he lived in the manor house of Otes in Essex.

As the foremost champion of free inquiry in the late seventeenth century, Locke combined Christian rationalism, empiricism and religious toleration. He pleaded for religious liberty for everyone except atheists and Roman Catholics, who were viewed as a danger to the state. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Locke's "ideal was a national church with an all-embracing creed that made ample allowance for individual opinion, on the ground that human understanding was too limited for one man to impose his beliefs on another."[43] During his sojourn in Holland, Locke penned *Two Treatises on Government* which were published in 1690. He also wrote an *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) in which he rejected the Platonic notion of "innate ideas." Instead, he asserted that the human mind is a *tabula rasa* (a clean slate) and all humankind's ideas come from experience (sensation or reflection). This knowledge was to Locke a "natural revelation." "Pure reality cannot be grasped by the human mind; consequently there is no sure basis for metaphysics, and substance is in 'an uncertain supposition of we know not what'.[44] He developed his religious ideas further in *The Reasonableness of Christianity as Delivered in the Scriptures* (1695). To him the only secure basis of Christianity is its reasonableness. He accepts the miracles in Scripture as proof of its Divine origin. Reason has the last word in acceptance of the supernatural and the interpretation of Scripture. Locke's support for the William and Mary (1689) shows his Whig sympathies. He supported their claim to the English throne but added that they had responsibilities to their subjects.

Of all the Enlightenment spoke persons John Locke would have the greatest impact. On this Bebbington is correct. However, there were other spoke persons whose influence was mainly rejected rather than accepted by orthodox Christians. "The grand sin of these days, according to an Albury report, was 'scepticism, infidelity, the deification of the intellect of man, reasoning, pride disbelief in the Word of God'. The tide of unbelief had swept in since the French Revolution; Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Condorcet, and other free-thinking writers (philosophes)[45] were selling well in France; Tom Paine was influencing even the Reformed religion in Britain."[46]

Joseph Butler (1692-1752), a Presbyterian by descent, early entered the Church of England and became Bishop of Bristol (1738) and of Durham (1751). His natural theology is contained in *The Analogy of Religion* (1736),[47] "a work of immense labor, candor, and care. In his answer to the Deists, he started from the premises, held equally by the Deists and their opponents, that God exists, that nature moves in a uniform course, and that human knowledge is limited. God is

admittedly the author of nature; if the same difficulties can be raised against the course of nature as against revelation, the probability is that both have the same author."[48] Butler does not regard nature as religiously neutral. "Rather, nature is the product of providential design. . . . From the assumption that nature implies an operating agent, it seems clear that Butler did not intend his arguments to appeal to the religious skeptic."[49] Butler's argument was published just prior to John Wesley's Aldersgate experience.

Changed historical circumstances following the Glorious Revolution brought changes to the outlook of Whigs and Tories. Throughout the eighteenth century, Tories maintained their support for the monarchy and for the established Church of England. John Locke's called for the "right to life, liberty, and property" was modified by Thomas Jefferson to the "right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." After a period of political realignments in the middle part of the century, the terms had shifted around somewhat again by the late eighteenth century: a Tory was a "conservative," a supporter of the status quo with its various privileges and exclusions, while a Whig was a "liberal" or "reformer," committed to modernizing the system of church and state. These latest inflections stuck through much of the nineteenth century, during which Tories or Conservatives opposed Catholic Emancipation, electoral reform, and Irish Home Rule, while Whigs or Liberals championed those causes. Subsequently, the term Tory has survived as a label for a conservative or reactionary political outlook; the term Whig has more or less completely died out, having been displaced by "liberal." By the Reform Act (1832) the Whig position became unchallenged in England, and it retained this position throughout the nineteenth century.

Of all the Enlightenment spoke persons John Locke would have the greatest impact. On this Bebbington is correct. However, there were other spoke persons whose influence was mainly rejected rather than accepted by orthodox Christians. "The grand sin of these days, according to an Albury report, was 'scepticism, infidelity, the deification of the intellect of man, reasoning, pride disbelief in the Word of God'. The tide of unbelief had swept in since the French Revolution; Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Condorcet, and other free-thinking writers (philosophes)[50] were selling well in France; Tom Paine was influencing even the Reformed religion in Britain."[51]

Isser Woloch writes, "Only as sprawling as the twenty-eight volume *Encyclopedia or classified dictionary of the sciences, arts and trades* (1751-1772), edited by Diderot and the mathematician Jean d'Alembert, could

encompass the philosophes' full range of interests. . . . It was not to be a mere reference work, but was designed (ad the preface stated) 'to change the general way of thinking.'"[52] English writer and encyclopaedist Ephraim Chambers (c.1680–1740) is primarily known for producing the *Cyclopaedia, or a Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (1728). Chambers's *Cyclopaedia* gave rise to two larger works: the *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (28 volumes–17 folio volumes of text and 11 volumes of plates–published in France between 1751 and 1772), and the *Encyclopeaedia Britannica: or a Dictionary of the Arts and Sciences* first published as a three-volume set in 1768.[53] In February 1746 a group of publishers were granted the *privilège* (license) to publish a dictionary, and the contract to publish was signed on June 27, 1746. On October 16, 1747, Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717-1783) and Denis Diderot (1713-1784) were offered the task of editing a French translation of Chambers' work begun in 1744 by John Mills, assisted by Gottfried Sellius. The new direction of the *Encyclopédie* became evident in 1750, when Diderot wrote a *Prospectus* spelling out the details of the redirected enterprise. 1751 Diderot secured the collaboration of d'Alembert, the prominent mathematician and scientist, and others for the project, although the primary work was accomplished by Diderot himself. D'Alembert revised the *Prospectus* as a *Preliminary Discourse* in the final publication. A storm of protest accompanied the publication of the first volumes. Events in 1757, however, brought a new and far more violent storm of protest to threaten the *Encyclopédie*. In January an attempt to assassinate Louis XV inflamed public opinion. Jesuits and Jansenists alike tried to insinuate that the subversive writings of the philosophes were the behind this dreadful crime. In addition, satires were written against the philosophes. In this situation, volume seven was published. It contained the single most controversial article of the *Encyclopédie,* "Geneva," by d'Alembert."[54] Introducing "Geneva," Hoyt and Cassirer indicate,

> When this article by d'Alembert appeared in 1757, Diderot's friend Friedrich Melchior Grim inserted the following comment in his *Correspondance littéraire*, an account of the latest events in the literary world of Paris, which he regularly sent to various German princes: This article "is causing a great stir: its author very harshly asserts that the theologians of Geneva are Socinians, and even deists; this represents a particularly bad blunder by M. d'Alembert since he surely had no intention of incurring the displeasure of the Republic of Geneva."[55]

A third onslaught followed in 1758, when Jean-Jacques Rousseau came to the defense of his native city. Until recently, Rousseau had been a contributor to the *Encyclopédie*. In the midst of all this controversy d'Alembert resigned as coeditor of the *Encyclopédie*.. . . Diderot's displeasure, Rousseau's attack, and the violent criticism he received from both Protestants and Catholics were all persuasive arguments in favor of abandoning his exposed position.[56] Further difficulties were encountered by the Encyclopedists until their work was completed in 1772. Rather than the Enlightenment being the creator of Protestant Evangelicalism, as asserted by Bebbington, it produced the confidence of a new age based on the validity of reason (not experience as Bebbington asserts[57]), which culminated with the revolutions in America (1776) and France (1789).

Other Enlightenment spokespersons include Paul Heinrich Dietrich, Baron d'Holbach (1723-1789), and Caritat, Marie Jean AntoineNicolas, marquis de Condorcet (1743-1794). D'Holbach was French-German author, philosopher, encyclopedist and prominent figure in the French Enlightenment. Born in Edesheim, near Landau in the Rhenish Palatinate, he inherited enormous wealth and attended Leiden University (1744-48). He married his second cousin, Basile-Geneviève d'Aine in 1750. In 1753 both his uncle and his father died, leaving the 30-year old d'Holbach enormously wealthy. His wife died in 1754, from an unknown disease. In 1755, after moving to the provinces for a brief period with his friend Baron Grrim, d'Holbach received a special papal dispensation to marry his deceased wife's sister. Back in Paris d'Holbach maintained one of the more notable and lavish Parisian *salons*. His *salon* on the outskirts of Paris soon became an important meeting place for the contributors to the *Encyclopédie*. As a German who had become a naturalized Frenchman, d'Holbach translated many German works on natural philosophy into French. Although written anonymously, d'Holbach wrote over 400 articles, including several disparaging entries on non-Christian religions intended to be veiled criticisms of Christianity itself. In addition d'Holbach served as editor of several volumes on natural philosophy between 1751 and 1765. His personal philosophy was expressly materialistic and atheistic. In 1761 *Christianisme dévoilé* (*Christianity Unveiled*) appeared in which he attacked Christianity (and religion in particular) as an impediment to the moral advance of humanity. He is best known for his atheism and his anti-religious writings. His most famous anti-religious writing, *le Système de la nature* (*The System of Nature*), published in 1770, denied the existence of a deity, refused to admit as evidence all *a priori* arguments, and saw the universe as nothing more than matter in motion bound by inexorable natural laws of cause and effect.[58]

Condorcet (named by Bebbington without further comment)[59] was one of the youngest of the Encyclopedists, and the only prominent one to participate in the French Revolution. He was a protégé of d'Alembert. After his marriage to Sophie de Grouchy (1786), their salon became one of the most brilliant and influential in the prerevolutionary period. Condorcet opposed slavery, championed the rights of women, Elected to the Legislative Assembly (1791-92), he advocated educational reform and influenced the establishment of the French educational system. In the National Convention (1792-95) Condorcet opposed the execution of Louis XVI (but voted for the supreme penalty short of death in January, 1793). Jacobin denunciation in 1793 caused him to go into hiding in Paris, where he began writing the *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progress du l'eprit humain* (*A Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, published posthumously in 1795. The fundamental idea of Condorcet's *Sketch* is the continual progress of mankind toward perfection. He left his place of asylum, was arrested, and died mysteriously during his first night of imprisonment in 1794.[60]

Edmund Burke (1729-1797),[61] author of *Reflections on the Revolution in France*[62] (1792), is known to a wide public as a classic political thinker: it is less well understood that his intellectual achievement depended upon his understanding of philosophy and use of it in the practical writings and speeches by which he is chiefly known. He was born in Dublin to a Catholic mother and Protestant father who committed his early training to Quakers. As a parliamentarian and political writer he embraced a great many concerns. Prominent amongst these were the problems of British rule overseas, in North America, India and Ireland. His name, however, has been linked most strongly by posterity to a critique of the French Revolution. Burke "was especially critical of revolutionary movements with noble humanistic ends because he believed that people are simply not at liberty to destroy the state and its institutions in the hope of some contingent improvement. . . .he insisted that people have a paramount duty to guard and preserve their inherited rights and privileges."[63] Thus, he supported the movement for independence in Ireland and the American colonies while bitterly opposing the French Revolution, which he believed was based on a false rationalistic philosophy. He was especially critical of his contemporaries who made an abstraction of "*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*" ("liberty, equality, fraternity") at the expense of personal property, religion, and the traditional class structure of a Christian kingdom.[64] Maurice Cranston asserts:

> A diligent study of Burke's letters and manuscripts brings home the

> extent to which Burke's approach in politics was a religious one. What is often spoken of as his "empiricism" appears in this light to be better described as Christian pessimism. As a Christian, Burke believed that the world is imperfect; he regarded his "enlightened" contemporaries' faith in the perfectibility of man as atheistical as well as erroneous. Thus, whereas the fashionable intellects of his time looked for the progressive betterment of the world through the beneficent influence of Reason and Nature, Burke maintained that the moral order of the universe is unchanging. The first duty of rulers and legislators, he argued, it to the present, not to the future; their energies should be devoted to the correction of real ills, not to the promotion of an ideal order that exists only in their imagination.[65]

Yet some sort of procedure of the type pursued by Burke was implied in his sense of practical reasoning. The 'philosopher in action' had the function of finding 'proper means' to 'the proper ends of Government' marked out by 'the speculative philosopher'. In his censure of the *Philosophes*, Ian Harris goes on to say that Burke

> attributed to them complicity with the style of thought that had set up a limited range of simple principles as the norm for politics, and which was wholly inadequate to satisfy the connected and various needs of human nature under modern conditions. Burke preferred to emphasize that numerous principles, and practical thinking to combine them, were necessary to meet these needs, and so to sustain improvement, and emphasize, too, that such accommodation involved much more practical activity than speculative design. Correspondingly his own writings develop less a political philosophy than a political style that had at its core philosophical elements—a style which, indeed, implicitly suggested that *political* philosophy was not a feasible activity, and, if it was, certainly not one sufficient to the task of 'the philosopher in action.' [66]

Building on this first synthesis, Bebbington "deals with a change in direction in Evangelicalism that occurred in the 1820s and 1830s. "A different mood was abroad. It was partly because a new generation was coming to the fore. The old leaders were going to their reward: Robert Hall, Adam Clarke, William Wilberforce, Hannah More, Rowland Hill and Charles Simeon all died between 1831 and 1836. Their successors had risen within an Evangelicalism whose place in the world was assured."[67] Bebbington traces the shift of emphasis once more to its cultural roots—this time in Romanticism—and examining some of

the consequences down to about 1860."[68] As W. H. Oliver points out, "it may certainly be that prophetic and millennialist ideas, already widely diffused when the period opened, were significant at all social levels. The scholarly exegete, the self-proclaimed Messiah, the evangelical preacher, the prophet of hope, the prophet of doom, the Mormon missionary, and the restorer of Israel, all employed the same body of religious ideas, spoke the same religious language, pondered the same set of biblical images. This religious inheritance, further, was a useful means of communication for the political radical, the socialist journalist, and the Owenite lecturer. No social group and no intellectual level lacked access to these ideas, concepts and images, should any of its members want to use them."[69]

In the aftermath of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, there was a widespread disillusionment with the Enlightenment tradition. Bebbington addresses these issues preceding his discussion of Romanticism. He writes about the emergence of new views about existing methods of spreading the gospel, a renewed interest in Calvinism, Edward Irving, millenarianism, premillennialism, the inspiration of Scripture, and biblical literalism as they fundamentalism.[70] He adds, "the particular version of the belief held in the Enlightenment era was uniformly postmillennial: the second coming of Christ, that is to say, would not take place until after the millennium. There would therefore be no sharp break from preceding history. Rather, the millennium would be the result of gradual improvement a belief that shaded into the idea of progress. Evangelicals identified the future epoch as a time of peace and glory for the church that would follow on persistent mission.[71] Oliver states that the "distinction between pre-and post-millennialists is a good deal more ancient than the terminology; Eusebius was probably the first post-millennialist."[72] However, as Robert G. Clouse asserts that the expository fame of the great English biblical scholar, Joseph Mede (1586-1638), "rests upon the *Apocalyptica* (*Key of the Revelation*, 1627, 1643)," in which he attempted construct an outline of the Apocalypse based solely upon internal considerations. In this interpretation he advocated premillennialism in such a scholarly way that this work continued to influence eschatological interpretations for centuries."[73] This was a full two centuries before the activities of Edward Irving and Henry Drummond.

According to Oliver, "Of recent years a good deal has been written about seventeenth-century prophetic and millennialist movements, but less about the underlying prophetic and millennialistic theology. These studies do not always make it sufficiently clear that biblical prophecy was then, as it had been and

continued to be, the basis for a wide range of behavior. Within this range theorizing and mysticism were constant, while efforts to bring about the millennial kingdom were no more than occasional. Because such efforts failed in the mid-century, prophecy did not cease to have its uses."[74] Oliver goes on to say, "millennialism is rooted in theology and specifically in eschatology, the doctrines about the last things, and yet more specifically in apocalyptic, a more limited group of ideas about last things." He observes that the millennium itself "is a long period of felicity on earth which will precede the truly final end." In it "the divine plan will be consummated, the divine purpose in creation fulfilled, and divine justice vindicated. . . .The vital point is that this consummation, fulfillment and vindication will take place *on earth*." He goes on to add that the "distinction between preand post-millennialists is a good deal more ancient than the terminology" that "turns, first, upon the continuity or lack of it anticipated between the world as it is and as it shall be, and second upon the character of the events which were expected to accompany the transition from the one to the other."[75] He asserts:

> If continuity is stressed, the millennium becomes simply a progressively achieved improvement on upon the present. If discontinuity is stressed, then it becomes a complete reversal. In the former case the transition is smooth, gradual and peaceable; in the latter, it is abrupt, revolutionary, and violent. The distinction is focused on the role played by the Christ of the second coming. This role was immediately clear to those who foresaw radical discontinuity. So they are 'pre'-millennialists, in the sense that the second coming will precede the millennium. Those who stressed continuity and progressive improvement were embarrassed by the second coming, for it was an event they were not prepared to dismiss. Yet it would introduce such a qualitative change that it would preclude continuity. Their solution was an argument that the second coming would indeed take place, but after the millennium, as the prelude not to a time of earthly felicity but to the final winding up of the earthly experiment. Hence they are 'post'-millennialists."[76]

Oliver indicates that premillennialists "so despaired of the world as they knew it they saw the necessity of a miraculous change." And post-millennialists "hoped with such confidence for the world as they knew it that they saw no such necessity. The premillennialists are clearly closer to the meaning of the texts they both accepted, and nearer to the social situation from which these writings emerged. . . . Premillennialism is the basic stance; postmillennialism a

compromise in the form of a metaphor."[77] Although premillennialism took a multitude of forms, at the core it "was a flexible predictive mechanism which showed how an existing condition of disorder would move towards a crisis, and how this crisis would bring on a new situation in which old wrong would be set right. The distinguishing [pre]millennial and apocalyptic feature is the accomplishment of this change by a miraculous and divine agency, an external power intervening decisively in human affairs. All this led to the development of three different millennial streams of thought. In 1834 these three millennial streams met and briefly flowed together: the native British illuminism of Joanna Southcott (or Southcote) (1750-1814), the secular evangel of Robert Owen (1771-1858), and the schematic worldview of Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and the St. Simonians.[78]

Joanna Southcott was the self-described religious prophetess (1750-1814).[79] Born in Devonshire, she was a farmer's daughter who was for a considerable time a domestic servant. She was originally a Methodist member of the Church of England. About 1792, becoming persuaded that she possessed supernatural gifts, she wrote and dictated prophecies in rhyme. Then she announced herself as the woman spoken of in Revelation 12:1-6. Joanna moved to London at the request of the engraver William Sharp (1749-1824), where she began to "seal" the 144,000 elect at varying charges. At the age of sixty-four she affirmed that she was pregnant and would deliver the new Messiah ("Shiloh," Genesis 49:10.) on the 19th of October 1814. Shiloh failed to appear, and it was reported that she was in a trance. When Joanna died in December 1814, her followers (Southcottians) numbered over 100,000. That number diminished by the end of the nineteenth century.

Henri de Saint-Simon, Olinde Rodrigues (1795-1851), and Charles Fourier (1772-1837), influenced the foundations of Karl Marx, Auguste Comte (1798-1857), and other early socialists. Through St Simonians the ideas of Joachim of Fiore (Flora) (c.1135-1202) gained a new currency. Joachim was founder of the monastic order of San Giovanni in Fiore. In about 1159 he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land where he experienced the first of three visions that gave him an understanding of the way he was to read the biblical text. In his other two visions, at the Cistercian monastery of Casamari (1184), he realized that he possessed the key to interpreting the biblical texts that revealed the patterns of history and its progression toward the end of times. Joachim presented his mature understanding in his central works *Liber Concordia Novi ac Veteris Testamenti, Expositio in Apocalypsim, Psalterium decem chordarum,* and *Liber*

figunanum. In them he developed Patterns of twos (based on the two Testaments) and threes (based on the three persons of the Trinity) as they are understood to have been revealed in history. The Trinitarian pattern of three was probably the outcome of his second vision at Casamari (1184). Joachim's interpretation "resulted in a significant departure from previous understanding of the Apocalypse. St. Augustine had proposed that the thousand-year reign of the saints with Christ was the present time of the Church, and that therefore, all that was expected in the future was the second coming and final judgment. Joachim's understanding was, however, that the millennium was yet to come and was the third period that would be ushered in after the defeat of the Antichrist. Thus, Joachim outlined the history of the world as one divided into three statuses, each one connected to one of the three persons of the Trinity, and reflecting the relationship within the Trinity."[80] The three statuses are interlinked: in the first status (of the Father) "men lived according to the flesh," in the second (of the Son), "men live between two poles, between the flesh and the spirit," and in the future third status (of the Holy Spirit), "people will live according to the spirit."

Central to Joachim's understanding of the unfolding Divine revelation in history is the old English Name "IEUE" for the Hebrew Tetragrammaton (HWHY). His trinitarian "IEUE interlaced circles diagram was influenced by the different three-circles Tetragrammaton-Trinity diagram of Petrus Alphonsi (1062-1110). Born Moses Sephardi, "the Spaniard," Petrus was a controversialist and physician in ordinary to King Alfonso VI. of Castile. He embraced Christianity and was baptized at Huesca on St. Peter's day, June 29, 1106. In honor of the saint and of his royal patron and godfather he took the name of Petrus Alfonsi (Alfonso's Peter). He sought to show his zeal for the new faith by attacking Judaism and defending the truths of the Christian faith. He composed a series of twelve dialogues against the Jews, "*Inter Petrum Christianum et Moysem Hæreticum*," the supposed disputants being Mose and Pedro (= Moses Sephardi and Petrus Alfonsi, or, in other words, himself before and after conversion). He is the first apostate known to have written against the Jewish creed, *Opiniones Confutantur*, although this book seems to have had little influence.[81] It did provide Joachim with proof that the Trinity had been revealed to the biblical Jews from within their most holy of the Divine names. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) condemned Joachim's teachings on the Trinity while adopting those of Peter Lombard (c.1100-60). Nevertheless, southern Italy and Sicily provided important centers that carried on with Joachim's ideas in the second half of the thirteenth century. Much energy was spent attempting to set the date for the introduction of the third status of Joachim's calculations of the

forty-two generations. “According to Joachim’s view of salvation, there is a progression from original sin, throughout history toward the third status, and this also points toward a return to the pristine spiritual state before the Fall. In other words, over time there is a movement away from carnality and worldly affairs toward spiritual life and true knowledge of God.”[82] Joachim retired first to the hermitage of Pietralata, and then founded the Abbey of Fiore (*Flora*). In 1198 Flora became the center of a new and stricter branch of the Cistercian Order. The mystical basis his doctrine of the “Eternal Gospel” is founded on an interpretation of Revelation 14:6.

An ancient undercurrent of Joachimism “became explicit once more, and fitted harmoniously with [James] Smith’s development of his native British millennial inheritance. . . . The route they travelled to reach the nineteenth century was a long one, perhaps in detail untraceable, nevertheless, some interesting possibilities and parallels may be noted. It ended with St Simon’s posthumous disciples rather than the master himself.”[83] The last and most important expression of his views is in the unfinished *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825). Prior to writing it, St Simon had not concerned himself with theology.[84] However, *Nouveau Christianisme* “starts from a belief in God, and his object is to reduce Christianity to its simple and essential elements. He does this by clearing it of the dogmas and other excrescences and defects that he says gathered round the Catholic and Protestant forms of it.”[85] The Preface states that “The main object of the following dialogue is his: to recall peoples and kings to the true spirit of Christianity.” He adds, “It is written for those who realize that there is something truly sublime, divine, in primitive Christianity—the predominance of morality over the law, that is to say, over forms of worship and dogma;. . .criticisms of Catholicism, Protestantism, and other Christian sects are indispensable, since it is evident that none of these sects has fulfilled the views of the founder of Christianity.” In it he presents “a three-fold historical account of the Christian religion (Catholicism, Protestantism and New Christianity linked in a dialectical pattern of thesis, antithesis, and a new thesis which is not a synthesis of the first two but simply a perfection of the organic qualities of Catholicism) the whole thing is rather evidently a clever construct. St Simon allowed himself some rather curious expressions, but his approach to religion was purely social: imperfect men expressed themselves in religions, so, at least to persuade them to change, new ideas had to be cast in a religious shape.”[86] His disciples, it is well known, went a good deal further: they became enthusiasts. More specifically, they became Joachimite enthusiasts. [Simon’s] three-fold division of Christianity became once again the three ages of the Father, of the

Son and of the Spirit, of law, grace and love, of Moses, Jesus and St Simon, a progressive series of incarnations spanning the evolution of religious consciousness. The triadic view of history was born again in a most improbable setting but with appropriate millennial excitements, for (as usual) the third age was about to begin."[87] "Triads run riot in Rodrigue's *Lettres*. As there are three persons in God, so there are three functions in humanity, love, science, power, corresponding ecclesiastically to priests, theologians and deacons, and socially to artists, savants and *industriels* [manufacturing trades]. Put in another way, the three basic activities of men are religion, dogma and cult, from which arise the fine arts, science and industry, the ideals of which are the beautiful, the true and the useful, and are personified by Moses, Jesus and St. Simon."[88]

Saint-Simon attacks the foundation for traditional orthodox Christianity according to the Preface of *Nouveau Christianisme*: "As for those who regard ideas of Deity and revelation as concepts which have been of value in times of ignorance and barbarism, but the use of them in the nineteenth century as contrary to philosophy." Bebbington's treatment of theological developments within evangelical Christianity around 1830. Of primary concern here is his notion "that somewhat elastic views of biblical inspiration associated with the earlier usage of the term 'plenary' subsequently gave way to the stricter views associated with the term 'verbal', a concomitant element of which was a belief on biblical inerrancy."[89] Specifically, Bebbington asserts, "In addition to the advent of hope, the radical Evangelicals of the 1820s bequeathed another enduring legacy to their successors, a more exalted estimate of scripture. In the earlier years of the nineteenth century Evangelicals shared the standard attitude of contemporary theologians to the Bible. Henry Martyn, the distinguished Cambridge scholar who abandoned his academic career to travel as a missionary to the East. . . did not believe in verbal inspiration."[90] Stewart posits three views that are tenable ways of stating the doctrine of inspiration."[91]

Beginning with William Ames (1546-1633), English Puritan divine dwelling in the Netherlands is a transitional in handling the doctrine of Scripture. He wrote "a major treatise on Scripture never translated from Latin, *Disputatio theologicae de perfectione ss scripta* (Theological Discussions on the Perfection of the Holy Scriptures)" and *The Marrow of Theology* [1623],. . .in which he emphasizes the variety of the divine working in them [the prophets and heralds. In this way, he anticipates (yet without advocating) what will come to be called the 'plenary' view."[92] Stewart argues "Thus, in principle, Ames is granting that inspiration has not functioned identically in all writers and all parts of Scripture.

However, if Ames can anticipate what a century later would be called ‘plenary’ inspiration, he is simultaneously found striking notes that have recognizably to do with ‘verbal’ understandings of inspiration.”[93]

James Ussher (1581-1656), Irish Archbishop of Armagh, in his *A Body of Divinitie* (1647), contended for an ‘oracular’ view of inspiration. “The viewpoint implicit in Ussher’s conviction that a divine governance extending to the supplying of words of the text had kept the fallible human writers from floundering at their task, was made explicit later in the century by the Swiss compilers of the *Formula consensus helvetica* (1675). In it, there was a readiness to posit a view of verbal inspiration extending not only to the consonants, but to the vowel points in the Hebrew script.[94] Francis Turretin (1623-87), a collaborator of the *Fomula consensus helvetica,* as he contended that a divine revelation in words was essential for the salvation of the human race, also insisted that this word-revelation had, of necessity, been committed to writing. “Turretin, in consequence of his confidence in a past multiform revelation preserved in inspired words, would have no patience with those who posited the view that ‘the sacred writers could slip or err in smaller things’. To him, such concessions were ‘an abandonment of the cause’. ‘Are there real and true, and not merely apparent contradictions’. ‘We deny the former.’”[95] John Owen (1616-83) was Turretin’s British contemporary who held highly similar views. In his *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit* (1674) he affirmed that the Holy Spirit

> so raised and prepared their minds as that they might be capable to receive and retain those impressions of things which he communicated unto them. So a man tunes the strings of an instrument, that it may in a due manner receive the impressions of his finger, and give out the sound he intends. He did not speak in them or by them, and leave it unto the use of their natural faculties, their minds, or memories, to understand and remember the things spoken by him, and so declare them to others; but he himself *acted* their faculties, making use of them to express his words, not their own conceptions. And herein, besides other things, consists the difference between the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and those so called of the devil. The utmost that Satan can do, is to make strong impressions on the imaginations of men, or influence their faculties, by possessing, wresting, distorting the organs of the body and spirits of the blood. The Holy Spirit is in the faculties, and useth them as his organs.[96]

“Here, articulated by both a Genevan and an English Reformed theologian of

renown was he precursor of what the Bebbington theory would convince us arose only in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[97]

Benedict Pictet (1655-1724), Turretin's successor and the last Genevan theologian to uphold the high Calvinist orthodoxy characteristic of the seventeenth century. In *Christian Theology* (1696), Pitet developed Turretin's emphases in new directions. "Concurring with Turretin that God has given fallen humanity a verbal revelation, he nevertheless. . . introduces for the first time. . . the notion that a comprehensive divine inspiration has functioned in distinguishable ways in the various Scripture writers.[98]

> But that the whole subject may be properly understood, several things are to be noticed. *First*, it is not necessary to suppose, that the Holy Spirit *always* dictated to the prophets and apostles every *word* which they used. Nevertheless those holy men wrote very many things under the immediate suggestion of the Spirit, such as prophecies. Hence Paul says, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly;" (1 Tim. iv. 1) and many other things. Again: they wrote some things in which there was no need of the Spirit's suggestion; such as those things with which they were already acquainted, which they had seen and heard, or those which related to their own private affairs.[99]

Stewart asks, "What has moved Pictet to pass beyond the bare granting of diverse modes of divine revelation (a concept certainly present in Ames and Turretin) to acknowledging a likely variation of intensity in the Spirit's operation in the Scripture writers?" He responds that it was "Not the discovery of apparent error, for this Pictet denies as strongly as they. On the contrary, it would seem warranted to suppose that a changing intellectual climate in which miracle is questioned had moved Pictet to build his doctrine of inspiration more inductively than they."[100]

English Independent theologian Thomas Ridgley (1667-1734), continued the same emphasis on an inductive method in framing a right understanding of biblical inspiration. Ridgley's *A Body of Divinity* (1731) was structured around the questions of the Westminster Larger Catechism. Ridgley took small steps down a path cleared by Pictet, but "the eighteenth century would demonstrate that Ussher, Turretin, and Owens's emphasis upon oracular inspiration also had its loyal supporters. Thomas Boston of Ettrick (1676-1732), in a *Body of Divinity* and James Fisher (1697-1775), who "maintained that while revelation had been

furnished by a variety of methods, including immediate revelation, theophany and ministry of angels,"[101] and of the patriarchs, "the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are called *[the word of God!]*"[102]

The most dominant evangelical personality during the remainder of the eighteenth century was Philip Doddridge of Northampton (1702-51). Born the twentieth child of a prosperous London of nonconformist ancestry, he came under the influence of Samuel Clarke (1684-1750). "Before he could read, his mother taught him the history of the Old and New Testament by the assistance of some blue Dutch chimney-tiles. He afterwards went to a private school in London,. . . He declined offers that would have led him into the Anglican ministry or The Bar, and in 1719 entered the very liberal academy for dissenters at Kibworth in Leicestershire, taught at that time by the Rev, John Jennings, whom Doddridge succeeded in the ministry at that place in 1723."[103] "He supplies, in his correspondence, some very interesting details of the course of study. The spirit of the academy was decidedly liberal. Jennings encouraged 'the greatest freedom of inquiry' (*Corresp*. i. 156), and was not wedded to a system of doctrine, 'but was sometimes a Calvinist, sometimes a remonstrant, sometimes a Baxterian, and sometimes a Socinian, as truth and evidence determine him (*ib*. p. 198). As a student Doddridge was diligent and conscientious, gaining a wide acquaintance with the practical outfit of his profession, but showing no turn for research."[104] "The death of Jennings in his prime (8 July 1723) had created a void in the dissenting institutions for theological training. Need was felt of a midland academy at once liberal and evangelical. . . . Jennings, it was known, had looked to Doddridge as likely to take up his work." Doddridge opened the institution Market Harborough at the beginning of July 1729, with three divinity students and some others. He moved the academy to Northampton; "he began his ministry there on Christmas day."[105] He was a popular preacher whose "great aim was to cultivate in his hearers a spiritual and devotional frame of mind. He laboured for the atainment of a united Nonconformist body, which should retain the cultural element without alienating the uneducated."[106]

Once the stern embargo on the use of music in sacred worship had been broken, music moved into the worship experience of Christians in Britain. William Barton, Benjamin Keach, Isaac Marlow, others with dissenting hymns, and the Parliamentary adaptation of psalm-singing in the mid-seventeenth century Civil War. The theory and theology of the composition of hymns over the last half of the seventeenth century are traceable in the controversy over

using poetic words as opposed to Scriptural words in the argument between the Baptists Benjamin Keach and Isaac Marlow in the 1690s, the emergence of famous hymns in the work of Richard Baxter and John Mason in the late seventeenth century, and at the common hymn-writer's practice of borrowing phrases from other hymns.

"Benjamin Keach (1640-1704) is important in Baptist history for many reasons. He was an outstanding Particular [Calvinistic] Baptist pastor, held and practiced advanced views on denominational organization, was a writer and theologian of note, and pioneered in religious education and literature for children. However, he is best remembered as the man who taught Baptists to sing."[107] He was minister of the Southwark congregation outside London, which later became the New Park Street Church that was moved into the Metropolitan Tabernacle under Charles Haddon Spurgeon. In about 1673, Keach persuaded his congregation to sing a hymn at the end of Communion service based on the Gospel account of the Last Supper (Mt. 26:26-30; Mk. 14:22-26). About 1688 he introduced the practice of conjoint (two or more voices joined together) singing which was condemned by the London General Baptist Association in 1688 as a 'carnal formality.'[108] Keach was one of seven men who sent out the invitation to the 1689 General Assembly, was sent by his church as representative, and subscribed the London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689). The controversy lasted until Keach published the decisive *The Breach Repaired in God's Worship, or Singing of Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, proved to be an Holy Ordinance of Jesus Christ* (1691, 1696, 2nd ed. 1700).[109] In 1664 Keach was fined and pilloried for writing "The Child's Instructor." He is credited for writing "Keach's Catechism," although his work was probably written by William Collins. When Keach's hymnbook was published (1691) it provoked heated debate in the Assembly of Particular Baptists in 1692. In 1697 he published a collection of thirty-seven hymns.

At the start of the eighteenth century the publications of a group of ministers associated with the Friday evening King's Weigh House lectures paved the way for the widely accepted and supremely popular hymns of Isaac Watts (1674-1748), who along with Charles Wesley (1707-1788), was one of the most popular writers of the day in their concern to stimulate the affections of the reader. Along with them, Philip Doddridge is admired as a writer of hymns. His model was Isaac Watts, especially his hymns. "During the eighteenth century Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge were part of a movement known as nonconformist. They were not a part of the official state Church of England.

Doddridge had held a service in a barn for “plain country people” in which they sang one of Watts’ hymns which had brought a tearful and celebratory response within the congregation present. The church in the English speaking world began to sing, and write its own songs, and sing some more.” In view of the previous discussion, this is an erroneous sentiment attributed to Mark Noll.[110] As a matter of fact, Baptist Benjamin Keach was a contemporary of Isaac Watts, but he persuaded his congregation to sing following Communion service the year before Watts’ birth. When Keach died, Doddridge was merely two years old, and it would be another three years before Charles Wesley was born.

Isaac Watts is not reckoned as an evangelical, but he befriended them and they embraced him from the start. He was one of the most popular writers of the day. “His poetic fame rests on his hymns. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the stern embargo which Calvin had laid on the use in the music of sacred worship had been broken by the obscure hymns of Mason, Keach, Barton, and others; and hymns were freely used in the baptist and independent congregations. The poetry of Watts took the religious world of dissent by storm.”[111]

> The Arian controversy of his time left its mark on Watts. His hymns contain an entire book of doxologies modelled on the Gloria Patri. But at the conference about the ministers at Exeter held at Salters’ Hall (1719) he voted with the minority, who refused to impose aceptance4 of the doctrine of the Trinity on the independent ministers. He did not believe it necessary to salvation; the creed of Constantinople had become to him only a human explication of the mystery of the divine Godhead; and he had himself adopted another explication, which he hoped might heal the breach between Arianism and the faith of the church. [112]

Watts broached the subject of the Trinity again in 1722, 1724-5, and twice in 1746. “His theory, held also by Henry More, Robert Fleming, and Burnet, was that the human soul of Christ had been created anterior to the creation of the world, and united to the divine principle of the Godhead known as Sophia or Loos (only a short step from Arianism); and that the personality of the Holy Ghost was figurative rather than proper or literal.”[113]

Doddridge’s doctrine of Scripture builds upon insights displayed earlier in Pictet and Ridgley, yet at the same time he is striking out in new territory. He does not solve questions about inspiration deductively. Rather, he proceeds in an

inductive and evidentiary way. Doing this he simply acknowledges the limitations of the evidentiary method in establishing certainty. He shows these limitations with regard to the Old Testament stating, “The History of the Old Testament is in the main worthy of credit.”[114] Of the New Testament he asserts, “The system of doctrines delivered to the world in the New Testament, is in the main worthy of being received as *true* and *divine*.” Key to Doddridge’s doctrine is that both the Old and New Testament are *in the main worthy*.[115] His overall aim is to present the claims of theology in terms comprehensible to that ‘Age of Reason’.[116] According to Stewart, Doddridge’s name and reputation is associated with the proposal that divine inspiration might take the form of *superintendence*, in which God does so influence and direct the mind of any person so as to keep him more secure from error than he would by the use of his natural faculties. Doddridge also posited an inspiration of *elevation*, by which human faculties are raised to an extraordinary degree so they can grasp more of the true sublime, or pathetic than natural genius could have given. Doddridge goes on to posit an inspiration of *suggestion* under which God speaks directly to the mind making such discoveries to it as it could not have obtained and dictating the very words.[117] Stewart correctly deduces that “the most general conception of inspiration (that taking place under divine superintendence) operated universally in *all* parts of Scripture, with ‘elevation’ and ‘suggestion’ operating only in select instances. To the first and most general conception he awarded the name ‘plenary superintending inspiration’ or, to be more brief, ‘full inspiration’.[118]

According to Bebbington, “Doddridge distinguished between different modes of inspiration, so that some passages were held to afford greater insight than others into the divine mine. It was Doddridge’s view that predominated the discussion of inspiration in 1800 by the Eclectic Society.”[119] “Notes” taken by The Eclectic Society, founded by London’s Evangelical clergy in 1783. “Notes on their meetings between 1783 and 1814 by Josiah Pratt, later secretary of the Church Missionary Society. They were published by John Henry Pratt in 1858. Richard Turnbull: “First, despite the wide range of opinion expressed at the meetings, and clearly different emphases emerging in relation to biblical interpretation and providence, there was an essential unity, particularly in the area of atonement and justification. Second, there was a notable absence of any extensive discussion of church and sacraments, although baptism and baptismal regeneration were dealt with on occasion. There was no discussion of the Lord’s Supper.”[120] In his desire to assimilate foundational changes to Christianity, Bebbington has nothing to say about these moves into aberrant forms of the Christian religion.

> The chief explanation for the transformation of Evangelicalism in the years around 1830 is the spread of Romanticism. Much must be attributed to the alarming political events of the times. The constitutional revolution in particular precipitated a revision of Evangelical attitudes. The changing religious situation, encompassing the immigration of the Catholic Irish, the rise of the Oxford Movement and the growing strength of Evangelicalism itself, played an essential part. But Evangelicals were most affected by the new cultural mood that in the 1820s spread beyond the small literary caste to a wider public. Before any of the shockwaves of repeal, emancipation and reform, a new worldview for Evangelicals had been fashioned by the radical coterie of Albury.[121]

The “radical coterie of Albury” may refer to those associated with Henry Drummond (1786–1860), English banker, Member of Parliament for West Surrey, leading figure in London, writer and patron of the parish of Albury. He purchased a mansion in Albury Park (1819) and within five years gathered about him a group of associates to examine and discuss the teachings of the charismatic Scottish preacher Edward Irving (1794-1834). “In the conference sessions themselves, the program was about equally divided between the three chief concerns of the day—prophetic chronology, the second advent, and the restoration of the Jews. No appeal to authority or argument was allowed except the authority of direct biblical quotation or an argument designed to reconcile scriptural references.”[122] Irving began as a charismatic Presbyterian minister in Scotland before moving to London. In 1822 he was appointed minister at the Caledonian Chapel in London where he became a very popular preacher. Bebbington cites the chief agent in Edward Irving’s liberation was S. T. Coleridge in whom Irving discovered “a new world of thought and feeling.” The ripening friendship of the two men from 1823 to 1826, when, despite continuing mutual esteem, they diverged on account of Irving’s studies.”[123] His views became very controversial and his congregation began to depart. His firm conviction that he and his followers had major prophetic powers turned his popularity into notoriety. Irving and his followers embraced speaking in tongues and became obsessed with a rapidly approaching apocalypse. His followers began to drift away and Irving lost his reputation and eventually was excommunicated from the Church of Scotland in 1833. Nevertheless, in 1832 his remaining congregation formed the “Irvingite” or Holy Catholic Apostolic Church in the Newman Street Church in London. Henry Drummond wrote extensively defending its distinctive doctrines and practices. In 1829 Drummond summarized the conclusions reached at the conferences into a table of six points

on which all the participants had been in substantial agreement."[124] He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (1839) and represented West Surrey in Parliament from 1747 until his death in 1770. Drummond took a deep interest in religious subjects and published numerous books and pamphlets on the interpretation of prophecy, the circulation of the Apocrypha, and the principles of Christianity which attracted much attention. Nevertheless, "Edward Irving's impact upon the millenarian movement had been dramatic and brief. After his death the Catholic Apostolic church won some converts but, other than that, played an insignificant role among millenarians and evangelicals. By contrast, the Plymouth Brethren, who also withdrew from the established church in an effort to revive apostolic Christianity, cooperated with other millenarians and eventually almost captured the movement."[125]

John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) was involved and interacted with various individuals and groups who studied the millennialism question beginning with his student days at Trinity College, Dublin. Almost universally, earlier studies of Fundamentalism tied its roots to Darby and his premillennial dispensationalism.[126] Bebbington cites H. H. Rowdon and Ernest Sandeen in his discussion of "Biblical Literalism":

> Different views of what literalism implied jostled each other during the 1830s and 1840s. Horatius Bonar, the chief Scottish premillennial champion, conceded than. 'No one maintains that *all* Scripture is literal, or that *all* is figurative. Historicists found I had to be thoroughgoing advocates of literal interpretation. There was too great a gulf between the detail of biblical images and their alleged historical fulfillment to make such claim plausible. Futurists did not suffer from this handicap. Consequently, they shouted louder for literalism – and, among the futurists, the dispensationalists shouted loudest of all. J. N. Darby was contending as early as 1829 that prophecy relating to the Jews would be fulfilled literally.* As his thought developed in the 1830s, this principle of interpretation became the lynchpin of his system. Because Darby's opinions were most wedded to literalism, his distinctive scheme enjoyed the advantage of taking what seemed the most rigorist view of scripture. Conversely, the preference for the literal over the figurative approach to biblical exposition drew growing popular support from the advance of millenarianism.** The rising prestige of biblical literalism propounded by Haldane and his circle.[127]

Mark Sweetnam and Crawford Gribben correct this anachronism in their treatment of "J. N. Darby and the Irish Origins of Dispensationalism."[128] In treating "Biblical Literalism" Bebbington asserts, "One of the chief reasons for the spread of the new attitude was its association with premillennialism. Haldane did not toy with prophetic speculation, but many of those who fought the Apocrypha battle at his side were among those whose concern for the Jews blossomed into expectation of the advent. There was a tight logical connection between high hopes for the Jews and a new estimate of scripture."[129] Robert Haldane, who had come under the influence of David Bogue (1750-1825) before writing the first edition of *The Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation, Being a view of the Testimony of the Law and the Prophets to the Messiah, with the subsequent testimonies* (1816). In the years following the first edition of *The Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation* (1816), Haldane became aware of the threat arising from Philip Doddridge's different definitions of inspiration (see previous discussion). In "The inspiration of the Holy Scriptures," Haldane writes, "But as the Scriptures assert the inspiration equally of all their parts, these writers are obliged to denominate even tis slight assistance as a kind of inspiration. Some, accordingly make three degrees or kinds of inspiration, while others add a fourth. Of the *Superintendence*, *Elevation*, and *Suggestion*, of Doddridge, has been added *Direction*.*" [At this asterisk Haldane inserts a footnote: "These distinctions are not only unfounded, but absurd. Superintendence, Elevation, and Direction, are not degrees of the inspiration of Scripture. Had these been all enjoyed by the writers of the Bible, it would not have made it an inspired book, nor have entitled it to be called the Word of God."] And some, substantially agreeing in the doctrine of different degrees, quarrel with the terms by which these distinctions are designated, and for Suggestion have substituted *Revelation*, as more appropriately expressing the highest degree in the scale of inspiration"[130]

Both Robert and James Haldane were interested in missions. In 1816-17 Robert made first visited Geneva, where "he came into contact with a number of students who were studying for the ministry. They were all blind to spiritual truth but felt much attracted to Haldane and to what he said. He arranged, therefore, that they should come regularly twice a week to the rooms where he was staying and there he took them through and expounded to them Paul's *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (*Commentaire sur l'Epitre aux Romains* (1819). One by one they were converted, and their conversion led to a true Revival of religion, not only in Switzerland, but also in France."[131] Among his circle of friends were César Malan, Frédéric Monod, and Jean-Henri Merle

d'Aubigné, François Samuel Robert Louis Gaussen (1790-1863) and others. These individuals spread the revival of evangelical Protestant Christianity across the continent of Europe. In 1831 they formed a *Société Evangélique* (*Evangelische Gesellschaft*) which established a new evangelical college (1834). Merle d'Aubigné served as professor of history and Gaussen served as professor of systematic theology. During his forty-one years as professor at Geneva, Merle d'Aubigné completed his 1817 resolution to write a *History of the Reformation in Europe*.[132] It involved numerous visits to the major libraries of Central and Western Europe in order to read original documents in Latin, French, German, Dutch, and English.

Le Réveil, which appears to have lasted from 1813 to 1830, impacted France, Germany, the Netherlands and its influence reached into Italy and Hungary. Robert and James Haldane were particularly involved in the Apocrypha controversy at wracked the Bible Society in the 1820s. As a result of this controversy, Robert published a series of pamphlets and a treatise *On the Inspiration of Scripture* (1828), and a multi-volume *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans* (1835), frequently edited and reprinted, and translated into French and German. Philip Schaff observes, "Merle's *History*, owing to its evangelical fervor, intense Protestantism and dramatic eloquence, has had an enormous circulation in England and America through means of the Tract Societies and private publishers." Elsewhere he adds, "in the Wartburg [the stately castle on a hill above Eisenach] Dr. Merle d'Aubigné of Geneva received his inspiration for his eloquent history of the Reformation, which had a wider circulation, at least in English translation, than any other book on church history."[133] The original edition of F[rançois] S[amuel] R[obert] Louis Gaussen, *Théopneustie, ou inspiration pléniére des Saintes Écritures* (Paris, 1840) was translated into English by E. N. Kirk, *Theopneusty, or the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures* (London, 1841) was printed in New York (1842). A better translation of appeared in Edinburgh (1842). This *Theopneustia, The Bible: its Divine Origin and Inspiration*, was published by David Douglas Scott (1841, 1867). It was re-edited and revised by B[urton] W. Carr and published, with a prefatory note by C. H. Spurgeon, in London (1888). John Robbins cites Spurgeon's recommendation of Gaussen's book:

> The turning point of the battle between those who hold 'the faith once delivered to the saints' and their opponents lies in the true and real inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. This is the Thermopylae of Christendom. . . . In this work the author proves himself a master of holy argument.

> Gaussen charms us as he proclaims the Divine veracity of Scripture. His testimony is clear as a bell.[134]

In 1894 this edition began to be published for the Colportage Library of the [Moody] Bible Institute in Chicago.

Kenneth Stewart states that, “Louis Gaussen was a good, a *very* good theologian as to industry, wide reading, and intellectual vigor. He was at home reading German or English theologian works as he was his native French. A close reading of his *Theopneustia* demonstrates that he was at the time of writing thoroughly abreast of current German biblical criticism as well as British science and apologetics – having read these materials in their original dress.”[135] Charles Haddon Spurgeon did not recommend Gaussen’s *Daniel le Prophète, exposédans une suite de leçons pour une école du dimanche* (*Daniel the Prophet. . .* Toulouse, 1839; Paris 1848, 1850). In fact, he “never actually produced a full systematic view of inspiration. . . . However, Spurgeon certainly did say enough concerning the Scriptures to glean his views. Moreover, in 1888, he reissued for his students at the Pastors’ College, the book by Dr. L. Gaussen, professor of Systematic Theology at Geneva: *Theopneustsis: The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*.”[136]

A contemporary of Henri Merle d’Aubigné and Louis Gaussen was the development of John Nelson Darby’s interpretation of prophetic Scripture. According to Sweetnam and Gribben, “his development of dispensationalism was a result of his disaffection with the ecclesiastical status quo. Especially in light of his later complaints that those he spoke to during his visits to the Unites States enthusiastically absorbed his prophetic teaching while ignoring almost entirely his views on church order, it is important to note that, with Darby, eschatology followed on from church doctrine. It was ecclesiastical concern that led to Darby’s rethinking of prophecy.”[137] He began a serious study of Scripture while convalescing from a serious fall from a horse in 1827. In 1828 he underwent a personal “conversion.” Up to this point, Darby “seems to have held to the sort of postmillennial scheme that was a key part of the intellectual landscape at [Dublin’s] Trinity College.”[138] Shortly hereafter, he published *Considerations on the Nature and Unity of the Church* (1828). It was his first tract and it outlined his emerging understanding of the spiritual nature of the church. The ensuing controversy led Darby to resign from his Anglican curacy and to begin his itinerant missionary work. When Darby wrote *Reflections upon “The Prophetic Inquiry” and the Views Advanced in It* (1529), his pessimistic

view of the health of the church led him to adopt a clearly premillennial position. His premillennial view was historicist rather than futurist, i.e., he viewed the prophecies of Revelation and other prophetic Scriptures as having been or were being fulfilled. Darby's "expectation of Christ's return was also posttribulational—it would be some time before the pre-wrath and 'secret' Rapture would fully emerge in his thought. Throughout the early 1830s, then, Darby was developing both his ecclesiology and his eschatology."[139]

During the period 1830-1838, Theodora, Lady Powerscourt, sponsored a series of conferences on her estate in County Wicklow for some of the foremost students of prophecy including Darby. "Initially the conferences gathered together a fairly typical spectrum of prophecy students: meeting were chaired by Robert Daly, the evangelical minister of the parish, and a number of Irvingites attended. Darby's role in the conferences also developed, and he played an increasingly important role in directing discussion. . . .and only the outlines of some of the discussions survive. However, these outlines and the fact that Darby was felt to be increasingly dominating discussion are sufficient to indicate both that his eschatological understanding was taking defined shape and that he was beginning actively to propagate his new understanding. This is not to suggest that Darby had all the details of dispensational interpretation worked out by 1833—that was to be a prolonged and never entirely conclusive process Nevertheless, the key features of his thought were already clear."[140] The genesis of dispensational is complex and many theories are offered. "But what is equally notable about the emergence of Darby's ideas is the degree to which his ideas were rooted in a particular social, national, and historical context. Darby's story and the story of dispensationalism[141] are closely imbricated with the contours of Irish history and the fortunes of ascendency society. . . .The relationship between Ireland, Darby, and dispensationalism is a complex and incomplete picture. One of the most interesting elements of that picture is the role played in Darby's religious and intellectual formation by his years in Trinity College Dublin."[142]

Liberalism

The nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a multitude of "isms." Most of them emphasized political or social issues. "One non-political 'ism' was called 'romanticism,' a word first used in English in the 1840s to describe a movement then half a century old. The English Parallel to these theological and historical questions involves Romanticism. Its great exponents included Wordsworth, Shelley, and Byron in England, Victor Hugo and Chateauriand in

France, and Schiller and the Schlegels and many others in Germany. . . . The romantics, characteristically, insisted on the value of feeling as well as reason. . . . romanticism gave a new impetus to study of the past. Politically romantics could be found in all camps, conservative and radical."[143] Out of the romantic movement came the most influential German theologian of the early nineteenth century, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834). Schleiermacher's work has molded religious thought far beyond his native Germany. The son of a Prussian chaplain, he was educated by the Moravians before being influenced by Christian Wolff (1679-1754) Johann Salomo Semler (1725-94), often called the father of German Rationalism. He was the first to advocate the so-called "Accommodation Theory," which set the stage for the so-called "historicalcritical" method. For Semler, "Revelation is in Scripture, but all Scripture is not revelation. The creeds of the church are a growth. Church history is a development."[144] "Schleiermacher's revision of Christian theology had its most radical impact on the issue of authority, because he argued that no external authority, whether it be Scripture, church, or historical creedal statement, takes precedence over the immediate experience of believers. He also contributed to a more critical approach to the Bible by questioning its inspiration an authority."[145] As previously discussed, Schleiermacher's views were confronted by Louis Gaussen in *Theopneustia*. "Schleiermacher greatly influenced Christianity in three major achievements. First, he made religion socially acceptable to those who no longer took the Bible and its doctrines seriously by showing its appeal to man's aesthetic tendencies. Second, he attracted to theology countless young men who were interested in religion primarily as an expression of man's imaginative spirit. And third, for a time he changed biblical criticism from historical to literary analysis. His influence, limited to Germany during his lifetime, was enormous on later Protestants because of Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1899), Adolph von Harnack (1851-1930), and Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923)."[146]

D. Clair Davis speaks of the phenomenon of liberalism frequently and indicates the term "has been applied to any Protestant religious movement that calls into question the basic doctrines of evangelical Christianity (from the Enlightenment down to the present day), more specifically it refers to the attempt, which prevailed in Europe and America from the mid-nineteenth century until World War I [1914-1918], to harmonize the Christian faith with all of human culture. The movement was a reaction to the alleged 'monastic' or pietistic, introspective Romanticism of the philosopher Immanuel Kant and the theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher."[147] The first liberals, calling themselves by that name. . . . arose in Spain among certain opponents of the Napoleonic

occupation. The word then passed on to France, where it denoted opposition to royalism after the restoration of the Bourbons in 1814. In England many Whigs became increasingly liberal, as did even a few Tories, until the great Liberal party was founded in the 1850s. Nineteenth-century, or "classical," liberalism varied from country to country, but it showed many basic similarities."[148] Along with the emergence of historical criticism, the scientific and industrial revolutions brought bold conflicting challenges to orthodox Christianity as well as to classical liberalism.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882), published *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), while Karl Marx (1818-1883) published *The Communist* Manifesto (1848), and A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, his first economic treatise and forerunner to his three-volume Das Kapital (Capital, 1867), *Capital II: The Process of Circulation of Capital* (1893), and *Capital III: The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole* (1894), remained in manuscript form until the time of his death. Marx, along with a German language abridged edition of *Theories of Surplus Value* (1905, 1910), with an English language abridged edition published in London (1951). A Russian language translation of *Theories of Surplus Value* was published as the "fourth volume" of *Capital* in Moscow (1963, 1971). Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Max Weber (1864-1920) are considered the three architects of modern social science. In modern sociological theory, Marxist sociology is recognized as one of the main classical perspectives. His dominance in economic history and theory is also impressive. Isaiah Berlin acknowledges the role of Marx's canons of interpretation:

> The scientific study of economic relations and their bearing on other aspects of the lives of communities and individuals began with the application of Marxist canons of interpretation. Previous thinkers for example, Vico, Hegel, Saint-Simon drew up general schemata, but their direct results, as embodied in the gigantic systems of Comte or Spencer, are at once too abstract and too vague, and as forgotten in our day as they deserve to be. The true father of modern economic history, and, indeed, of modern sociology, in so far as any one man may claim that title, is Karl Marx. If to have turned into truisms what had previously been paradoxes is a mark of genius, Marx was richly endowed with it. His achievements in this sphere are necessarily forgotten in proportion as their effects have become part of the permanent back ground of civilized thought. [149]

John Dillenberger and Claude Welch candidly assert that “The most trenchant external attack on the church’s position came from Marxist socialism, notably expressed in the *Communis Manifesto* *1848) and Marx’s *Das Kapital* (1867). According to Marx, history moves irresistibly along a path dictated by economic forces and marked by continual class conflict. All human institutions and ideas are to be understood as direct or indirect products of the economic struggle.”[150] They ask, “What is the significance of religion, according to this understanding of history?” Their answer is “Religion is a product of economic forces. It is the instrument whereby the dominant capitalistic class is able to maintain its power to exploit the workers. Religion is the ‘opiate of the people.’ It anaesthetizes the sensitivity of the oppressed by holding before them the prospect of reward in the hereafter.”[151]

The so-called “thesis-antithesis-synthesis” methodology came into the world of thought during the era of romanticism. Harold O. J. Brown quotes T. E. Hulme: “Romanticism, then, and his is the best definition I can give to it, is split religion” (“Romanticism and Classicism”). Brown goes on to say, “T. E. Hulme’s classic definition of Romanticism suggests two things about it: (1) that parts of it, at least, were deeply religious; (2) if we may preserve the fluid metaphor, that its religion was sloppy. . . .The movement may be dated roughly from 1780 to 1840,. . .It began just before the French Revolution (1789) and had died out by the time of the revolutions of 1848. But something like Romanticism has reappeared from time to time since 1848. . . .The full impact of the Marxist critique of Christianity did not come until the twentieth century.”[152] “The appearance of Marxism in the mid-nineteenth century was of greatest importance as a symbol in a least two respects. First, Marxism represented the judgment which Christianity had not effectively pronounced on the injustice and exploitation of the Industrial Revolution. . . .Second, the Marxist vision of a perfect society corresponded to (and had its roots in) the Christian hope for the kingdom of God on earth. In this respect particularly, Marxism has often been called a ‘Christian heresy.’”[153]

Charles Haddon Spurgeon’s “ChallengeResponse” Model

Rather than a “thesis-antithesis-synthesis” methodology, Christian scholars would be better served to address the issues leading the fundamentalist/modernist conflict with a “challengeresponse” approach. This

method is exemplified in a collection of twelve essays edited by Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest in *Challenges to Inerrancy: A Theological Response*.[154] Frederic Howe used the same approach in *Challenge and Response: A Handbook of Christian Apologetics*.[155] The major reason why the inspiration and authority of Scripture was and is central to the fundamental/modernist conflict is because of the absolute nature of truth. Absolute truth cannot be subjected to a "dialectical process" with error and remain absolute. Scripture is the absolute standard by which all other things are measured for Christians. If the truth of Scripture is compromised the whole basis for Christianity is cut loose from its mooring. Constitutional turmoil unfolded in England as the secular influences of the Enlightenment on the European Continent and England challenged British legal, constitutional, and religious entities in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Socinian followers of Michael Servetus (1511-1553), Laelio Sozzini (1525-1562) and his nephew Fausto (1539-1604), had published an English translation of the Latin *Racovian Catechism* (1632) which contained a brief history of Unitarianism.[156] Unitarian doctrine was a recasting of ancient Arianism which arose just prior to Council of Nicea (325). These doctrinal deviations (or recastings) as Unitarianism and universalism became major challenges to historic Christianity in Great Britain and America. Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), became pastor of the congregation where Benjamin Keach had ministered (the Southwark congregation outside London), which had become the New Park Street Church before it moved into the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon, who gained renown as the prominent leader of that famous congregation for 38 years, provides a case study in the challengeresponse approach to doctrinal-theological and socio-economic cultural disputations.

Spurgeon's leadership in the Down Grade Controversy toward the end of his active ministry made him the role model for Baptists and other Christians in America[157] and throughout the world. He started charity organizations which now work globally, and founded Spurgeon's College (named after him posthumously) at which he trained over 900 men for pastoral ministry. Following the example of George Müller (1805-1898), Spurgeon founded the Stockwell Orphanage, which opened for boys in 1867 and for girls in 1879. It continued in London until being bombed in the Second World War. The orphanage still exists as Spurgeon's Child Care. Spurgeon taught across denominational lines and when his friend James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) founded the interdenominational China Inland Mission (CIM) in 1864, Spurgeon supported his work financially and directed many missionary candidates to apply for service with the CIM. Contrary to popular opinion, Spurgeon was a

traditional historical premillennialist, but not a dispensationalist.[158] He had a visceral dislike for John Nelson Darby, whom he regarded as a schismatic with erroneous teachings.[159] Spurgeon opposed those who try to predict the end of the age and divide the Scriptures into segments. His historical premillennialism emphasized five future themes: "the resurrection, the second coming of Christ, judgment, hell and heaven. This formed a balanced basic eschatological approach for the London pastor."[160] On 5 June 1862, Spurgeon challenged the Church of England when he preached against baptismal regeneration. This stance made him a controversial spokesperson with some supporters of George Williams' Y.M.C.A., but Williams insisted upon having Spurgeon speak at Y.M.C.A. meetings to help underscore the interdenominational emphasis of that organization. Spurgeon, along with Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey were unofficially involved in raising funding for Exeter Hall. Still, he aided in the work of cross-cultural evangelism by promoting "The Wordless Book" as a teaching tool. When missionary David Livingstone died in 1873, a discolored and much-used copy of one of Spurgeon's printed sermons, "Accidents, Not Punishments," was found among his few possessions. Spurgeon's ministry reached new heights during the decade 1875-1885. When Moody made his second visit to London in 1887, Spurgeon invited him to preach in the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Moody and Sankey, like Spurgeon, came under severe criticism from the media. With William Garrett Lewis of Westbourne Grove Church Spurgeon founded the London Baptist Association (1857).

Nevertheless, "Zeal for doctrinal distinctiveness, the positive usefulness of confessions, and the conserving power of theological expansiveness suffered severe blows from [Robert] Hall's [1764-1831] overall influence and formed the climate for the energetic modernism of John Clifford [1836-1923]."[161] Spurgeon was involved in several controversies with the Baptist Union of Great Britain over support for missions, the rise of higher criticism, Darwinian evolution, cultural relativism, and theological drifting. In 1888 he reprinted Gaussen's *Theopneustia* for students at his college. The "Down Grade Controversy" that flared in the 1880s led Spurgeon to write a series of articles in *The Sword & the Trowel*.[162] The Controversy took its name from Spurgeon's use of the term "Down Grade" to describe certain other Baptists' outlook toward the Bible when they "Down Graded" the Bible and the principle of *sola scriptura*. In addition, Spurgeon alleged that an incremental creeping of the higher critical Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, and other concepts were weakening the Baptist Union. Reciprocally Spurgeon explained the success of his own evangelistic efforts. Spurgeon's principle opponent was

the brilliant John Clifford. In 1859 Clifford became pastor at Praed Street (later Westbourne Park Baptist Church) in London. It was Clifford's first and only pastorate. At the outset of his ministry he made it clear that he envisaged the church as having a public ministry. In his early years questions of biblical interpretation arose but these were replaced by social problems. Clifford's Mutual Economical Benefit Society was established in 1861. It gave birth to "a people's university," the Westbourne Park Institute, in 1885. Clifford urged attention to Darwin's work, German higher criticism, and he favored the "new theology" opposed by Spurgeon. As the nexus of nonconformity and Liberal and Labor politics Clifford frequently sided with radical movements including the Fabian Society of which he became President. Clifford's own commitment to social questions increased with the spirit of the 1880s, the watershed in the Churches' response to social problems as he reacted to the extravagances and follies of the theological party in the Baptist Union. With the ensuing "Down Grade Controversy" Spurgeon and the Metropolitan Tabernacle became disaffiliated from the Baptist Union in October 1887, effectuating Spurgeon's congregation as the world's largest self-standing church.[163] The standoff even split his pupils trained at the College, each side accusing the other of raising issues which did not need to be raised. Spurgeon and Clifford reflected the perspectives of the Victorian past and the progressive future. "Spurgeon clearly was shocked at the response his articles received. He had not expected such a controversy, and he was no doubt chagrined by the slight support and extensive criticism he personally encountered."[164] The Down Grade controversy ended with the death of Spurgeon in 1892.

Labor unrest in 1888-1889 brought the churches' attention back to social questions and Clifford became president of the Baptist Union in 1888. Social conditions, labor strikes, and riots were catalysts for his inaugural address as President of the Baptist Union in August 1888. On October 3 1888, Clifford delivered his inaugural address: *The New City of God; or The Primitive Christian Faith as a Social Gospel*.[165] He was one of the first to use the expression "Christian Socialism." In 1891 Particular Baptists and General Baptists merged in the Baptist Union and Clifford led the Baptist denomination throughout the 1890s. By unanimous choice Clifford became the first president of the Baptist World Alliance in 1905. Leon McBeth observes, "while Particular Baptist structures prevailed, the General Baptist theology continued in the merged group." He goes on to state, "However, not all was well in the Baptist Zion. Already secularism, so rampant in the twentieth century, was making its presence felt. . . . they seemed to lose much of their soul in the devastating Down

Grade Controversy."[166] Contextually the Down Grade Controversy was British Baptists' equivalent of hermeneutic tensions which were dividing Protestant fellowships in general, and in particular were central to the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy of the 1920s in America.

> **Note**: Due to the depth and amount of the subject matter, this chapter is divided into two parts: 7A and 7B. Chapter 7B will continue the discussion of "Prospects of the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy."

[1] Longfield, Bradley J. *The Presbyterian Controversy: Fundamentalists, Modernists, and Moderates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

[2] Gaustad, Edwin Scott, *Historical Atlas of Religion in America, Revised Edition* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1976), 52 -112.

[3] Ibid., 1467.

[4] Bebbington, 67-68.

[5] Cross, "Wesley, Charles (1707-88)," *Oxford Dictionary*, 1466b.

[6] Sydney E. Ahlstrom (ed.), *Theology in America: The Major Protestant Voices from Puritanism to Neo*-Orthodoxy (in The American Heritage *Series* (Indianapolis, IN: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc, 1967), 33-41, 149-92; Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 85-113; Sidney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 265-314; Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America: An historical account of the development of American religious life, Second Edition* (New York: 1965, 1973), 59-82; Robert T. Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 76-117; Edwin S. Gaustad and Leigh E. Schmidt. *The Religious History of America*. New York: Harper/Collins Publishers, 2004; 54-65 Clifton E. Olmstead, *History of Religion in the United States* (Englewood-Cliffs, NJ: 1960), 155-178; Edwin S. Gaustad (ed.), *A Documentary History of Religion in America: to the Civil War* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 194-221; Edwin S. Gaustad (ed.) with revisions by Mark A. Noll, *A Documentary History of Religion in America to 1877, 3rd ed.* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 160-190.

[7] Ahlstrom (ed.), *Theology*, 211-249; Noll, 165-90; Ahlstrom, *Religious*, 388-490; Hudson, 59-82; Handy, 162-96; Gaustad and Schmidt. 139-161; Olmstead, 238-283; Gaustad (1982), 382-409; Gaustad (2003), 160-190.

[8] See McGlothlin, W. J. *Baptist Confessions of Faith* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1911, pp. 299-307; Lumpkin, William L. *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, rev. ed. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1959, 1969, pp. 360-367. Wallace, O. C. S. *What Baptists Believe: The New Hampshire Confession, An Exposition*. (Nashville: Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, 1913.).

[9] William G. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959); William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

[10] Kevin R. Kragenbrink, "The Modernist/Fundamentalist Controversy and the emergence of the Independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ," *Restoration Quarterly*, 42, 1 (2000), 1-17; Douglas Allen Foster and Anthony L. Dunnavent (eds), *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches/Churches of Chris, Churches of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004); C. Leonard Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1988);

[11] Leon McBeth, *The First Baptist Church of Dallas: Centennial History (1868-1968)*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968), pp. 29-30.

[12] William Warren Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), 162, 164-165.

[13] John D. Woodbridge, Mark A. Noll, and Nathan O. Hatch, *The Gospel in America*: Themes in the Story of America's Evangelicals (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), 108-109.

[14] McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*, passim; McLoughlin, *Revivals*, passim.

[15] Olmstead, 405.

[16] Noll, 333.

[17] Ibid, 330.

[18] Hudson, 207.

[19] Noll, 336-337.

[20] Tucker Brooke and William Lyon Phelps (eds.), *The Tragedy of King Lear*: *The Yale Shakespeare*, New Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), Act V, Scene 3, lines 10-12, p. 137.

[21] Ahlstrom, *Religious*, 735.

[22] loc. cit.

[23] Peter Baker, "Bush Tells Group He Sees a 'Third Awakening," *The Washington Post*, Wednesday, September 13, 2006. Also see Howard Smead, "Impeachment and trhe end of the Fourth Great Awakening," http://www/howardsmead.com/4thGA.htm accessed Feb 19, 20123.

[24] Robert William Fogel, *The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); John B. Carpenter, "The Fourth Great Awakening or Apostasy: Is American Evangelicalism cycling upwards or spiraling downwards?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 44, 4; Dec 2001), 647-70; Nathan O, Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (1989); Mark A. Noll, *Religion and American politics: from the colonial period to the 1980s* (1990).

[25] Iain S. MacLean, "*The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism*. By Robert William Fogel. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. 383 pp. $25.00 (cloth),"*Anglican Theological Review*, 83, 4 (Fall 2001), 895-897. Also see Robert William Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, (Inc), 1974; reissued with an "Afterword" (New York: W. W. Norton, 1989, reissued 1995); and Robert William Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery* (New York: W. W. Norton, Inc., 1994.

[26] Ibid. 895-897.

[27] Gary W. Hull, "*The Fourth Great Awakening and the Future of Egalitarianism*. By Robert William Fogel. Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

2000. 383 pp. n. p.," *Journal of Church and State*, 43, 2 (Spring 2001)368-370.

[28] Wayne Grudem, "Do We Act As If We Really Believe That 'The Bible Alone, And The Bible In Its Entirety, Is The Word Of God Written?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 43, 1 (March 200), 2-26..

[29] John B. Carpenter, "The Fourth Great Awakening or Apostasy: Is American Evangelicalism Cycling Upwards or Spiraling Downwards?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 44, 4 (December 2001), 647.

[30] David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

[31] Carl L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932). Carl Becker, "Every Man His Own Historian,"Annual address of the president of the American Historical Association, delivered at Minneapolis, December 29, 1931, *American Historical Review*, vol. 37, no. 2, p. 221–36

[32] Peter Button, "Negativity and Dialectical Materialism: Zhang Shiying's Reading of Hegel's Dialectical Logic," *Philosophy East and West*, 57, 1 (January 2007), 63-82.

[33] Gustav Mueller, "The Hegel Legend of Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis" in "Notes and Documents" section of *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 19, 3 (June 1958), 411-14. Also reprinted in Ron Stewart (ed.), *The Hegel Myths and Legends* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 301-05, 373-74.

[34] Walter Kaufmann, "The Hegel Myth and Its Method," *Philosophical Review*, LX (1951), 450-486; also transcribed by Kai Froeb in *From Shakespeare to Existentialism: Studies in Poetry, Religion, and Philosophy*, Boston:

Beacon Press, 1959, Chapter 7, 88-119.

[35] Winfried Corduan, "Transcendentalism: Hegel," in Norman L. Geisler (ed.), *Biblical Errancy: An Analysis of Its Philosophical Roots* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House of the Zondervan Corporation, 1981), 79-101, 246-47.

[36] Ron Stewart (ed.), "Introduction," *The Hegel Myths and Legends* (Evanston,

IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 1-16; “Hegel and the Myth of Reason,”.306-18, 374-79.

[37] Timothy Larsen, “The Reception given *Evangelicalism in Modern* Britain since its publication in 1989,” in Michael A. G. Haykin and Kenneth J. Stewart (eds.), *The Advent of Evangelicalism: Exploring Historical Continuities* (Nashville: B&H Academic, B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 21-36. Originally published as David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

[38] Brian Harris, “Beyond Bebbington: The Quest for Evangelical Identity in a Postmodern Era,” *Churchman*, 122, 3 (2008), 201-219).

[39] Larsen, p. 30. These views are developed by Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, chapters 2, 3 and 4.

[40] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 74.

[41] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*. Vol. 1, *The Rise of Modern Paganism*; Vol. 2, *The Science of Freedom* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967, 1970).

[42] Douglas C. Sparkes, “The Test Act of 1673 and its aftermath,” *The Baptist Quarterly*, 25, 2 [1973], 74-85. See *www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/bq/25-2_074.pdf*

[43] F. L Cross, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Second Edition, revised by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958, 1574), 832.

[44] Ibid.

[45] *Philosophe* is the French word for “philosopher,” and was a word that the French Enlightenment thinkers usually applied to themselves. Between 1740 and 1789, the Enlightenment acquired its name and, despite heated conflicts between the philosophes and state and religious authorities, gained support in the highest reaches of government. Although *philosophe* is a French word, the Enlightenment was distinctly cosmopolitan; philosophes could be found from Philadelphia to St. Petersburg. The philosophes considered themselves part of a grand “republic of letters” that transcended national political boundaries. Chief

among their desired reforms was intellectual freedom—freedom to use one's own reason and to publish the results. The philosophes wanted freedom of the press and freedom of religion, which they considered to be "natural rights" guaranteed by "natural law." In their view, progress depended on these freedoms.

[46] Bebbington, p. 100.

[47] Joseph Butler, *The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (London: 1737). Also see Elmer Sprague, "Butler, Joseph," in Paul Edwards (Editor in Chief), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Volume One (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc. The Free Press, 1967), pp. 432b-434b.

[48] Walker, Williston, Richard A. Norris, David W. Lotz, and Robert T. Handy. A History of the Christian Church, Fourth Edition. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985, p. 581.

[49] Sprague, Ibid.

[50] *Philosophe* is the French word for "philosopher," and was a word that the French Enlightenment thinkers usually applied to themselves. Between 1740 and 1789, the Enlightenment acquired its name and, despite heated conflicts between the philosophes and state and religious authorities, gained support in the highest reaches of government. Although *philosophe* is a French word, the Enlightenment was distinctly cosmopolitan; philosophes could be found from Philadelphia to St. Petersburg. The philosophes considered themselves part of a grand "republic of letters" that transcended national political boundaries. Chief among their desired reforms was intellectual freedom—freedom to use one's own reason and to publish the results. The philosophes wanted freedom of the press and freedom of religion, which they considered to be "natural rights" guaranteed by "natural law." In their view, progress depended on these freedoms.

[51] Bebbington, p. 100.

[52] Isser Woloch, *Eighteenth-Century Europe: Tradition and Progress, 1715-1789* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), p. 241.

[53] *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (*Encyclopedia or a Systematic Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts and Crafts*) is famous above all for representing the thought of the Enlightenment.

[54] Diderot, D'Alembert, And a Society of Men of Letters, *Encyclopedia selections: Translated, with an Introduction and Notes by* Nelly S. Hoyt and Thomas Cassirer (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965), ""Introduction," vii-xxxvii. Also see S. J. Gendzier (ed.), *The Encyclopedia: Selections* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967).

[55] Ibid, 122. Their citation is from *Correspondance littéraire*, December 15, 1757 (Vol. III, p. 458 in the edition by Maurice Tourneux: Paris, 1878).

[56] Ibid.

[57] Bebbington, p. 74.

[58] This discussion follows Aram Vartanian, "Holbach, Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron d'," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Volume Four (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc. The Free Press, 1967), pp. 49a-51b. Also see Michael LeBuffe, "Paul-Henri Thiry (Baron) d'Holbach," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2010 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/holbach/.

[59] Bebbington, p. 100.

[60] This discussion follows Keith Miller Baker, "Condorcet, Marquis de," in Paul Edwards (Editor in Chief), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Volume Two (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc. The Free Press, 1967), pp. 182b-184b. Also see AntoineNicolas De Condorcet, *A Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Human Mind*, translated by June Barraclough (London: Weidenfelf and Nicolson), 1955.

[61] According to A. H. Martin, *et al.* "The exact year of his birth is the subject of a great deal of controversy; 1728, 1729 and 1730 have been proposed. His date of birth is also subject to question, a problem compounded by the Julian-Gregorian changeover in 1752, during his lifetime. For a fuller treatment of the question, see F. P. Lock, *Edmund Burke. Volume I: 1730–1784* (Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 16–17. Conor Cruise O'Brien (2008; p. 14) questions Burke's birthplace as having been in Dublin, arguing in favour of Shanballymore, Co. Cork (in the house of his uncle, James Nagle)." Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php? oldid=564992807.

[62] Burke, Edmund, *Reflections on the Revolution in France. A Critical Edition*,

J. C. D. Clark (ed.), (Stanford University Press, 2001).

[63] Maurice Cranston, “Burke, Edmund,” in Paul Edwards (Editor in Chief), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Volume One (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc. The Free Press, 1967), pp. 429b-431a.

[64] Ibid., “*ou la mort*,” was originally used during the French Revolution but was later dropped due to its association with the “Reign of Terror” in 1791.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ian Harris, “Edmund Burke,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/burke/.

[67] Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, [75]; he cites D. M. Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture* (London, 1984), pp. 35ff..

[68] Ibid. 19, 80-81.

[69] W. H. Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Press, 1978), p.17.

[70] Bebbington, 76-96.

[71] Ibid. 62.

[72] Oliver, 20. The reference is to Eusebius Pamphilus of Caesarea (c.260/265-c.339/340), in *Ecclesiastical History*, was the first to reject the premillennial views of the early church.

[73] Robert G. Clouse, “Mede, Joseph,” in J. D. Douglas (General Editor), *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974, 1978), 646.

[74] Oliver, 12.

[75] Ibid. 19-20 (emphasis in original).

[76] Ibid. 21.

[77] Ibid. 21.

[78] Ibid. 197.

[79] The following discussion follows The Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the University of Cambridge. “Southcott, Joanna,” *The Encyclopædia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*, eleventh edition, Volume XXV: *Shuválov to Subliminal Self* (New York: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 1911), 506a.

[80] H. J. Hames, “Joachim and Joachism in Italy” (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 11-14.

[81] George Alexander Kohat, “Alfonsi Petrus,” in Isidore Singer (ed.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia* Vol. 1, 1906, digitized by Varda Books, 2004, p. 377. http://www.publishersrow.com/dBookReader/default.asp?bvid=795&pg=436.

[82] Hames, 24.

[83] Ibid. 204.

[84] See “Claude Henri de Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon,” *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Claude_Henri_de_Rouvroy,_comte_de_Saint-Simon (accessed 8/04/2013.

[85] Henri de Saint-Simon, *New Christianity 1825*, an anonymous translation in “Printer” and “Reader” formats without pagination, but with a “Preface.” Posted on line at http://sadenaco.ipower.com/Archive/New-Christianity/ (accessed August 04, 2013).Henri de St.-Simon, *New Christianity; by Henri de St.-Simon*. Translated from the original French by the Rev. J. E. Smith (London: B. D. Cousins, [1825], 48pp.

[86] Ibid. 204.

[87] Ibid. 204.

[88] Ibid. 204.

[89] Bebbington, 77-91. Also see Kenneth J. Stewart, “The Evangelical Doctrine of Scriptures, 1650-1850: A Reexamination of David Bebbington’s Theory,” in Haykin and Stewart, 394-413..

[90] Bebbington, 86.

[91] Stewart, 395.

[92] Ibid. 396.

[93] Ibid. 396.

[94] Ibid. 397.

[95] Ibid. 398. See “Second Topic: The Holy Scriptures,” in James T. Dennison, Jr. (ed.), *Francis Turretin’s* Institutes of Elenctic Theology *(1679-85),* 3 volumes, translated by George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Publishing, 1992-97). I-VI, 55-94. Also see, Francis Turretin, The Doctrine of Scripture: Locu 2 of Institutio Theologiae Elencticae, edited and translated by JOHN W. Beardslee III (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981), 39-70.

[96] John Owen, *Pneumatologia (ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ): or A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, n. d.), Book I, 132-133.

[97] Stewart, 399, citing Bebbington, 90-91.

[98] Ibid. 399. See Benedict Pictet *Christian Theology*, translated from Latin by Frederick Reyroux (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, n.d.) 43.

[99] Pictet, *Christian Theology*, 43 (emphasis in original).

[100] Stewart, 400.

[101] Ibid. 401.

[102] James Fisher, *The Westminster Shorter Catechism Explained* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1753, 1769), Q and A 20-21, p. 17. (emphasis in original).

[103] "Doddridge, Philip," *The Encyclopædia Britannica: A Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature and General Information*, Eleventh Edition; Volume VIII, Demijohn to Edward (New York: Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 1911), 368b.

[104] Alexander Gordon, "Doddridge, Philip, D. D. (1702-1751)," 159b, in Leslie Stephen (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XV: Diamond—Drake* (New York: Macmillan and Co. 1888, 158b-164a.

[105] Ibid. 160.

[106] *Britannica*, 368b.

[107] H. Leon McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 64.

[108] Alexander Gordon, "Keach, Benjamin (1640-1704)," in Leslie Stephen (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. XXX: Johnes—Kenneth* (New York: Macmillan and Co. 1888, 254a-255a.

[109] McBeth, *Sourcebook*, cites the 2nd ed, 1700, 64-69.

[110] Mark A. Noll, "The Defining Role of Hymns in Early Evangelicalism," in Richard J. Mouw and Mark A. Noll (eds.), *Wonderful Words of Life* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publications, 2004, 1-4.

[111] Canon Leigh-Bennett, "Watts, Isaac(1674-1748)," in Leslie Stephen (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography, Vol. LX: Watson—Whewell* (New York: Macmillan and Co. 1899, 67b-70a.

[112] Ibid. 69.

[113] Ibid. 69b.

[114] Philip Doddridge, *The Miscellaneous Works of Philip Doddridge, with an Introductory Essay by the Rev. T. Morell* (London: William Ball, 1839), "Lecture CXXVII. Proposition CX," 373b.

[115] Ibid. "Lecture CXXXVI. Proposition CXIV," 386b. (emphasis in original). In both statements "*in the main*" has emphasis added by Stewart.

[116] Stewart, 402.

[117] Ibid. 402. Philip Doddridge, *The Works of the Rev. P. Doddridge, D. D., In Ten Volumes*: Volume IV. *Containing*, "IV. A Dissertation on the Inspiration of the New Testament," and a "Postscript;" "A Sketch of the Arguments for the Inspiration of the Old Testament," (Leeds: Baines and Binns, 1803), 168-194, 195-198. Also see Doddridge, *Miscellaneous*, 388-390. Doddridge, Volume V: "I. A Course of Lectures on Pneumatology, Ethics and Divinity, (continued.)": "Lect. CXXXVII. Of divine Inspiration—an Inspiration of Superintendency—Plenary Superintendent of Elevation—of Suggestion," (Leeds: Baines and Binns, 1801), 93-95. Also see Doddridge, *Miscellaneous*, 1095-1109.

[118] Stewart, 402, n. 29 (he cites *Miscellaneous*, 1096).

[119] Bebbington, asserts that the

[120] Richard Turnbuoo, "The Emergence of the Protestant Evangelical Tradition," *Churchman* (107. 2), 1993.

[121] Bebbington, p.103. Oliver, chapters 4-6 relate the arguments about prophecy and the roles of Irving and Drummond as well as the Albury group and its context, pp. 68-149.

[122] Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978 reprint), pp. 20-21.

[123] Bebbington, 80.

[124] Ibid. p. 21.

[125] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[126] See Stewart Cole, *A History of Fundamentalism* (New York: Smith, 1931); James Barr, Fundamentalism (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977, 1978); Charles A. Briggs, *The Fundamental Christian Faith* (New York: Scribner's, 1913); Norman Furniss, *The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954); Louis Gasper, *The Fundamentalist Movement* (Paris: Mouton, 1963); Willard B. Gatewood, Jr. (ed), *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution* (Nashville:

Vanderbilt University Press, 1969); Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Fundamentalism, 1800-1930* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978, reprint of Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[127] Bebbington, 88-89. (Bebbington's footnotes are indicated by asterisks: * "Rowdon, *Origins of the Brethren* [*1825-1850* (London, 1967)], p. 52"; and ** "Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, pp. 107ff."

[128] Mark Sweetnam and Crawford Gribben, "J. N. Darby and the Irish Origins of Dispensationalism," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 52, 3 (Septembet 2009), 569-77.

[129] Bebbington, 88.

[130] Robert Haldane, *The Evidence and Authority of Divine Revelation, Being a view of the Testimony of the Law and the Prophets to the Messiah, with the subsequent testimonies,* in two volumes: Vol. I, second edition, much enlarged and improved (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1834), 159-160, *et passim*.

[131] D. M. Lloyd-Jones, "Foreword," in Robert Haldane, *Bible Study Commentary on Epistle to the Romans* (n.p., 1958).

[132] Jean-Henri Merle d'Aubigné, *Histoire de la Reformation au XVIie sicle*, in 5 vols. (Paris, 1835–1853; new ed:, 1861–1862); Jean-Henri Merle d'Aubigné, *Histoire de la Reformation en Europe au temps de Calvin*, 8 vols. (Paris, 1862–1877).

[133] Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*; *Volume VII: Modern Christianity: The German Reformation*, Second Edition, Revised (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1910), 90, 333.

[134] John Robbins, "*God-Breathed: The Divine Inspiration of the Bible*, by Louis Gaussen," *WRS Journal*, 10, 2 (August 2003), 31-34. Spurgeon's publisher, Passmore & Alabaster, published Carr's revision of Gaussen.

[135] Kenneth J. Stewart, "A Bombshell of a Book: Gaussen's *Theopneustia* and its Influence on Subsequent Evangelical Theology," *Evangelical Quarterly*, 75, 3 (2003), 218 (emphasis in original). In a footnote Stewart adds, "Schleiermacher, Michaelis, Rudelbach, Strauss are widely referred to, as are Buckland,

Chambers, Dick, and Wilson." These are found in Gaussen, *Theopneustia*, Scott translation (1841, 1867), 26-27, 143, *et passim*.

[136] Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1992), 620-21.

[137] Mark Sweetnam and Crawford Gribben, 573. This "status quo" was "the disastrous manifestation of the Erastian union of Church and State that was the present reality in Ireland." The following discussion follows the excellent treatment by Sweetnam and Gribben.

[138] Ibid. 573.

[139] Ibid. 574.

[140] Ibid. 574.

[141] Ronald M. Henzel, *Darby, Dualism, and the Decline of Dispensationalism* (Tucson: Fenestra Books, 2003), 48, observes, "Traditional Dispensationalism is a theological system that posits complete discontinuity between Israel and the Church, gives priority to discontinuities over continuities in biblical history, has a literalistic approach to prophecy, and assumes that God never mixes the principles of law and grace in his dealings with people. John Nelson Darby founded this unique theological perspective, and his non-Plymouth Brethren followers eventually assumed the leadership of Dispensationalism as a movement during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These leaders included James Hall Brookes, C. I. Scofield, and Lewis Sperry Chafer. They were in turn succeeded by John F. Walvoord, J. Dwight Pentecost, Charles C. Ryrie and others. Their writings will reveal the trajectory of the system that Darby launched. Thus the safest general characterization of traditional Dispensationalism is that is consists of a series of footnotes to Darby."

[142] Ibid. 575.

[143] R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World*, fifth edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 428.

[144] Norman L Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Revised and Expanded Edition (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968, 1986), 157

[145] Ibid. 143.

[146] Ibid. 143.

[147] D. Clair Davis, “Liberalism: The Challenge of Progress,” in Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce Demarest (eds.)

Challenges to Inerrancy: A Theological Response (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 49.

[148] Ibid. 429.

[149] Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939, 1959), 144.

[150] John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, *Protestant Christianity: interpreted through its development* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1954), 239.

[151] Ibid., 239-240.

[152] Harold O. J. Brown, “Romanticism and the Bible,” in Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce Demarest (eds.) *Challenges to Inerrancy: A Theological Response* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984), 49.

[153] Dillenberger and Welch, 240-241.

[154] Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest (eds.), *Challenges to Inerrancy: A Theological Response* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1984).

[155] Frederic R. Howe, *Challenge and Response: A Handbook of Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982.

[156] Rees, Thomas, *The Racovian Catechism, with notes and illustrations, translated from the Latin: to which is prefixed a sketch of the history of Unitarianism in Poland and the adjacent countries* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1818).

[157] Lewis A. Drummond, *Spurgeon*, especially *The Sword and the Trowel* articles of 1887, in “Appendices A-I,” 787-836.

[158] Dennis M. Swanson, "The Millennial Position Spurgeon. *Master's Theological Journal*, 7, 2 (Fall, 1996), 184-239.

[159] Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *The Sword and Trowel, 1865-1869* (London: Passmore & Alabaster), passim.

[160] Drummond, 651.

[161] Thomas J. Nettles, "John Clifford (1836-1923): Irrepressible Liberal," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology,* 64 02 (Winter 1907), 58-81.

[162] Extensive coverage of his ministry, college, orphanage, missionary efforts, theological perspectives and other denominational and trans-denominational enterprises are presented in the monthly volumes of Spurgeon, *The Sword and Trowel: 1865-1892.*

[163] Ernest Payne, "The Down Grade Controversy: A Postscript," *Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 28 (1979), 146-58.

[164] H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, Broadman Press, 1987), 303.

[165] John Clifford, *The New City of God; or The Primitive Christian Faith as a Social Gospel: An Address from the Chair of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland at the Autumnal Assembly in Huddersfield, October 3rd, 1888* (London: Alexander & Shepherd n.d.).

[166] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 307.

CHAPTER 7B

PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUNDAMENTALIST-MODERNIST CONTROVERSY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY (PART 2)

William E. Nix



Introduction

The Rise of Historical Criticism and Textual Criticism

Historical or higher criticism applies to the genuineness of the biblical text. Its subject matter concerns the date of the text, its literary style and structure, its historicity, and its authorship. Technically, Higher or Historical criticism belongs to the field of Special Introduction to the Bible. The Documentary Hypothesis originated with Jean Astruc (1684-1766). German rationalists followed with Johann Semler's "Accommodation Theory." The Documentary Hypothesis developed through several stages, culminating with Karl Heinrich Graf (1815-1869), Abraham Keunen (1828-1891) and Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). Graf distinguished between the later priestly code in the Pentateuch and the earlier code of Deuteronomy. Graf's views were published in *Die geschichtlichen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (1866) and refined by Kuenen when he published *De Godsdienst van Israël* (1869-1870) (Eng. trans., *The Religion of Israel to the Fall of the Jewish State* (3 vols., 1874-1875).[1] The stage was set for Julius Wellhausen's hypothesis of the reconstruction of Hebrew history in the priestly period. His important contributions were *Die Komposition des Hexateuchs* (*The Composition of the Hexateuch*, 1876), and *Geschichte Israels* (*History of Israel*, 1878), republished as *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* (1882). As a result, as Gleason Archer observes,

> Although Wellhausen contributed no innovations to speak of, he restated the documentary theory with great skill and persuasiveness, supporting the JEDP sequence upon an evolutionary basis. This was the age in which Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) was capturing the allegiance of the scholarly and scientific world, and the theory of development from primitive animism to sophisticated monotheism as set forth by Wellhausen and his followers fitted admirably into Hegelian dialecticism (a prevalent school in contemporary philosophy) and Darwinian evolutionism. The age was ripe for the documentary theory, and Wellhausen's name became attached to it as the classic exponent of it. The impact of his writings soon made itself felt throughout Germany. . .and found increasing acceptance in both Great Britain and America [2]

In 1885, the official English translation was published by J. Sutherland Black and Allan Menzies, with a Preface by William Robertson Smith (1848-1894)[3] and the fifth German edition in 1899. The *Prolegomena* was originally intended as the first part of a two-volume work on the history of Israel (the Jewish people), but the second volume never appeared. By the time the English translation was published, it was already regarded as a self-contained work. Samuel R. Driver (1846-1914), *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (1891, ed. 1901, 1909) gave its classical expression in the English language. The general outlines of the Wellhausen theory continued to be taught in most non-conservative institutions, although some uncertainties were expressed concerning the comparative dating of the supposed "documents" by W. O. E. Osterley and T. H. Robinson, *Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament* (1934) and other documents were identified.

"Application of similar principles to the New Testament writings appeared in the Tübingen School of theology following the lead of Heinrich Paulus, Wilhelm De Wette, and others. They developed principles to challenge the authorship, structure, style, and date of the New Testament books."[4] "The first signs of a serious invasion of the rationalistic spirit into New Testament studies also came from Germany through the writings of Schleiermacher, Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752-1827), and the more radical Ferdinand Christian Baur (1792-1860) at Tübingen. Baur reduced the authentic Pauline Epistles to four (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians) and denied the genuineness of most other New Testament books."[5] His critical opinions fell into disrepute, but David Strauss in his *The Life of Jesus* (1835) approached the gospel narratives with the belief that much of the material was mythical. His views did not win general acceptance by contemporaries, but they have played an important role in subsequent scholarship. These scholars include Heinrich Julius Holtzmann (1832-1910), Adolf Harnack, Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), Karl Barth (1886-1968) and Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976). "Toward the end of the nineteenth century, capable orthodox scholars began to challenge the destructive criticism of the higher critical school. Among these orthodox scholars were George Salmon, Theodor von Zahn, and R. H. Lightfoot. Their work in higher criticism must surely be regarded as constructive criticism. Much of the recent work done in the field of higher criticism has revealed itself as rationalistic in theology, although it makes claim to be upholding orthodox Christian doctrine. This recent rationalism manifests itself most openly when it considers such matters as miracles, the virgin birth of Jesus, and His bodily resurrection."[6]

Lower (Textual) Criticism

On another level is the matter of lower, or textual criticism. While higher or historical criticism has to do with the *genuineness* of the Bible text, lower or textual criticism has to do with the *authenticity* of the form or text of the Bible. It attempts to restore the autograph—the original readings of the text. “In the Reformation era the biblical text entered a period of crystallization in printed rather than manuscript form. Frequently these were published in polyglot (multilingual) form. It was also during this period that the Masoretic Text was published (c.1525) under the editorship of Jacob ben Hayyim ben Isaac ibn Adonijah (Jacob Ben Chayyim, c.1470–before 1538), a scholar of the Masoretic textual notes on the Hebrew Bible and a printer. A Hebrew Christian, Ben Chayyim made his notes based on a manuscript recension of the Masorete Ben Asher (fl. 920) manuscript. Textual work on the New Testament was more varied and sweeping as a result of the generation of Johann Gutenberg (c.1396-1468). The first Greek New Testament to come off the press (1502) was planned by Cardinal Francisco Ximénes de Cisneros (1437-1517), as part of the Complutensian Polyglot. The first Greek New Testament to be published was edited by Desiderius Erasmus (c.1466-1536). Robert Estienne (Etienne; Latin, Stephanus, 1503-1559) was the “royal printer who published several editions of the Greek New Testament in 1546, 1549, 1550, and 1551. The third edition (1550) was the earliest to contain a critical apparatus, although it was a mere fifteen manuscripts. This edition was based on Erasmus’ fourth edition and became the basis for the Textus Receptus. After its publication this third edition became the dominant Greek text in England. In his fourth edition, Etienne indicated his conversion to Protestantism and demonstrated the modern verse divisions which he produced for the first time.”[7] Théodore de Bèze (Beza) (1519-1605), successor to John Calvin (1509-1564) at Geneva, published nine editions of the New Testament between 1564 and his death (1605), as well a posthumous tenth edition (1611). His most famous edition (1582) included a few readings from Codex Bezae (D) and Codex Claromontanus (D^2). Beza’s Greek New Testament editions are in general agreement with the Textus Receptus, which they helped to popularize and stereotype. King James Bible translators made use of Beza’s 1588/89 edition.

When Brian Walton (1600-1661) edited the London Polyglot, he included the variant readings of Etienne’s 1550 edition. This Polyglot contained the New Testament in Greek, Latin, Syrian, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Persian (in the

Gospels). Its annotations contained the variant reading of the recently discovered Codex Alexandrinus (A). Archbishop Ussher's critical apparatus appeared in 1675. When John Mill (1645-1707) reprinted the 1550 text of Etienne, he added some thirty thousand variants from nearly one hundred manuscripts. Johann Albrecht Bengel (1685-1752) established one of the basic tenets of textual criticism: the difficult reading is to be preferred to the easy. Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693-1754) was first to identify uncial manuscripts by capital Roman letters and minuscule manuscripts by Arabic numerals. He also added the sound principle that manuscripts must be evaluated by weight rather than by number. Semler followed Bengel's pattern of classifying manuscripts by groups. He "was also the first scholar to apply the term *recension* to groups of New Testament witnesses. He identified here of these recensions: Alexandrian, Eastern, and Western. All later materials were regarded by Semler as mixtures of these." Johann Jakob Griesbach carried these principles further by classifying "the New Testament manuscripts into three groups (Alexandrian, Western, and Byzantine), and laid the foundation for all subsequent work on the Greek New Testament. In his work Griesbach established fifteen canons of criticism." [8] Andrew Birch (1758-1829) directed a group of Danish scholars in publishing four volumes of textual work. These volumes included readings from Codex Vaticanus (B) which appeared in print for the first time.

"The first complete break with the Received Text was made by such men as Karl Lachmann (1793-1851), who published the first Greek New Testament resting wholly on a critical text and evaluation of variant readings; Lobegott Friedrich Constantin von Tischendorf (1815-1874), who sought out, discovered, and published manuscripts and critical texts; Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (1813-1875), who was instrumental in directing England away from the Received Text; and Henry Alford (1810-1871), who wrote numerous commentaries and otherwise demolished the unworthy and pedantic reverence for the Received Text."[9] Several others played key roles in the development of textual criticism, but two Cambridge scholars, Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901) and John Anthony Hort (1828-1892), rank along with Tischendorf for their contribution to the study of the New Testament. They published *The New Testament in the Origin Greek* (1881-1882) in two volumes. Their text was made available to the revision committee which produced the English Revised New Testament (1881). The Old Testament was published in 1885, and the Apocrypha in 1897 completed the RV or ERV. American observers to the English Revised Version committee produced the American Standard Version (ASV) in 1901. The Westcott-Hort text virtually dethroned the Received Text. Nevertheless, some

scholarly advocates for the Received Text spared no efforts in arguing against the text of Westcott and Hort. Three of these included John W. Burgon (18313-1888), F. H. A. Scrivener (1813-1891), and George Salmon (1819-1904). They challenged Bernhard Weiss (1827-1918), Alexander Souter (1873-1949), and others. Another opponent of Westcott and Hort was Hermann Freiherr von Soden (1852-1914), whose work caused a reevaluation of the Westcott-Hort theory. These developments would be central to the debates in the Modernist-Fundamentalist Controversy in America.

The Conservative Response to Higher Criticism

Since at least the 1820s, American theological students had regularly traveled to Germany to finish off their theological education. In Germany biblical critics known as "Neologians' had been doing controversial studies on the Scriptures for quite some time. Charles Hodge (1797-1878), "who had gone to Europe in the 1820s, learned of the newer biblical criticism but did not adopt it himself. Later in the century, however, other Americans returned from their studies in Germany as proponents of the higher critical views they had studied. They joined [Charles Augustus] Briggs in attacking traditionally orthodox ways of viewing the Scriptures."[10] By the mid-1870s evolutionary thought had made great headway at the nation's leading colleges, including Princeton College, where President James McCosh (1811-1894) adopted Darwin's principle of natural selection. This was at variance with Charles Hodge of Princeton Seminary who argued strenuously that evolutionary natural selection was synonymous with atheism. "Many evangelical clergymen were genuinely baffled by these developments."[11]

Charles Hodge was the second surviving son of Hugh Hodge and Mary Blanchard. Their first three sons died in the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 and another yellow fever epidemic in 1795. His brother Hugh Lenox became an authority in obstetrics and remained close to Charles throughout his life. Seven months later his father died of complications from the yellow fever epidemic in 1795. His mother, with help from her family minister, Ashbel Green, provided her sons with the customary education using the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Charles attended the classical academy in Somerville, NJ, and in Princeton in order to attend Princeton College, where Ashbel Green became president of the school originally organized to train Presbyterian ministers. In order to address the inadequacy in the training of ministers at the college and the perception that it was drifting from orthodoxy, the Presbyterian Church was establishing

Princeton Theological Seminary. Archibald Alexander (1772-1851) was appointed the first professor of the new seminary which represented Old School Presbyterians and supported the Westminster Confession as the foundational constitutional document of the Presbyterian Church, and, since it was simply a summary of the Bible's teachings, the church had the responsibility to ensure its ministers' preaching was in line with the Confession. Alexander "insisted that infallibility belonged to the original documents of the Bible: 'We have the best evidence that the Scriptures which were in use when Christ was upon the earth, were entire and uncorrupted, and were an infallible rule.' More commonly, though possessing high views of the Bible's authority, Evangelicals had not exerted much thought in constructing careful theories of inspiration. Until the 1880s that had not seemed necessary."[12] In addition, Alexander took a special interest in Charles, assisting him in Greek and taking him of itinerant preaching trips. In 1815 Charles joined a local Presbyterian church and decided to enter the ministry. He entered the seminary in 1816, shortly after completing his undergraduate studies. The academic program was rigorous in that it required students to recite Scripture in the original languages and to use the dogmatics written by Reformed scholastic Francis Turretin. Professors Alexander and Samuel Miller also inculcated him with intense piety. Upon graduation from seminary, Charles received additional private instruction from Hebrew scholar Joseph Bates in Philadelphia. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1820. He preached regularly as a missionary preacher in vacant pulpits in Philadelphia. He also received a one-year appointment as assistant professor to teach biblical languages at Princeton Seminary. In 1821 he was ordained a minister by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, and published his first pamphlet in 1822. President Alexander used this as the basis for appointing him as full Professor of Oriental and Biblical Literature. Later that year he married Sarah Bache, Benjamin Franklin's great granddaughter. In 1824, along with Robert Baird and Archibald Alexander, Hodge founded the Chi Phi Society. In 1825 he founded the quarterly *Biblical Repertory* in order to translate the current scholarly literature on the Bible from Europe.

Hodge's study of European scholarship led him to question the adequacy of his training, and the seminary agreed to continue to pay him for two years while he traveled to Europe to "round out" his education. Charles supplied a substitute, John Nevin, on his own expense. From 1826 to 1828, Charles traveled to Paris, where he studied French, Arabic, and Syriac; Halle, where he studied German with George Müller and made the acquaintance of August Tholuck; and Berlin, where he attended lectures by Silvester de Sacy, Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg,

and Augus Neander. There he also became personally acquainted with Friedrich Schleiermacher, the leading modern theologian. Although he admired the deep scholarship he witnessed in Germany, he thought the attention given philosophy clouded common sense and lead to speculative and subjective theology. Unlike other American theologians who spent time in Europe, Hodge's experience did not cause any change in his commitment to the principles of the faith he had learned from childhood. Throughout his lifetime, Charles Hodge had an extensive writing career. Perhaps his most famous exegetical work was his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (1835), which was followed by a *Commentary on Ephesians* (1856); *on First Corinthians* (1857); *on Second Corinthians* (1859). He also published *Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States* (1840); *Way of Life* (1841) which as republished in England and translated into other languages. His *magnum opus* is the three-volume (2,260 pages) *Systematic Theology* (1871-1873) which continues to be published. His last book *What is Darwinism?* appeared in 1874. In addition, Charles Hodge published upwards of 130 articles in the *Princeton Review*. Many of these articles have been gathered into volumes and published as *Essays and Reviews from the Princeton Review* (1857) and *Discussions in Church Polity* 1878). Conservative by nature, his life was spent defending the Reformed faith as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism, and the Shorter Catechism. Hodge must be classed among the great defenders of the faith rather than among the great constructive minds of the Church. He was the champion of his Church's faith during a long and active life, her trusted leader in time of trial, and for more than half a century the most conspicuous teacher of her ministry.[13]

Between 1829 and 1850, the *Princeton Review*, the leading Old School theological journal under the editorship of Charles Hodge, published 70 articles against higher criticism, and the number increased after 1850. However, it was not until 1880 that higher criticism really had advocates within American seminaries. The first major proponent of higher criticism within the Presbyterian Church was Charles Augustus Briggs (1841-1913), who studied higher criticism in Germany in 1866. He was appointed Professor of Hebrew at Union Theological Seminary in 1876. His inaugural address was the first salvo of higher criticism within American Presbyterianism. Briggs was instrumental in founding *The Presbyterian Review* in 1880, with A. A. Hodge of Princeton Theological Seminary initially serving as his coeditor. In 1881 Briggs published an article in support of W. Robertson Smith which led to a series of responses and counter-responses between Briggs and the Princeton theologians in the

pages of *The Presbyterian Review*. Benjamin Breckinridge (B. B.) Warfield (1851-1921) became coeditor of *The Presbyterian Review* in 1889. He refused to publish one of Briggs' articles. This was a key turning point in the Presbyterian higher criticism controversy. In 1891 Briggs as appointed Union's first ever Professor of Biblical Theology. His inaugural address, "The Authority of Holy Scripture," proved to be very controversial. Previously higher criticism seemed a fairly technical, scholarly issue. Now Briggs spelled out its full implications:

> . . .higher criticism has proven that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, Ezra did not write Ezra, Chronicles or Nehemiah; Jeremiah did not write the books of Kings or Lamentations; David wrote only a few Psalms; Solomon did not write the Song of Solomon or Ecclesiastes and only a few Proverbs; and Isaiah did not write half of the book of Isaiah. The Old Testament was merely a historical record, and one which showed man in a lower state of moral development, with modern man having progressed morally far beyond Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Judah, David and Solomon. At any rate, the Scriptures as a whole are riddled with errors and the doctrine of scriptural inerrancy taught at Princeton Theological "is a ghost of modern evangelicalism to frighten children." Not only is the Westminster Confession wrong, but the very foundation of the Confession, the Bible, could not be used to create theological absolutes.

He now called on other rationalists in the denomination to join him in sweeping away the dead orthodoxy of the past and work for the unity of the entire church."[14] In the aftermath of Briggs' inaugural address, Old School Presbyterians vetoed his appointment, but Union Seminary refused to recognize their veto, calling it a matter of academic freedom. Finally, in October of 1892, Union Seminary withdrew from the denomination. In the meantime, the New York Presbytery brought heresy charges against Briggs. These were defeated by a 94-39 vote. The committee bringing the charges appealed to the General Assembly, held in Portland, Oregon. Its response was its famous "Portland Deliverance," which affirmed that the Presbyterian Church holds that the Bible is without error and that ministers who believe otherwise should withdraw from the ministry. Briggs' case was remanded to the New York Presbytery which held a second heresy trial in late 1892 and early 1893. Again Briggs was found not guilty of heresy, and again his opponents appealed to the General Assembly, which in 1893 was held in Washington, D.C. This time the General Assembly overturned the New York decision and declared Briggs guilty of heresy. He was de-frocked until the Episcopal bishop of New York, Henry C. Potter, ordained

him an Episcopal priest in 1899.

The Southern Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Basil Manly, Sr. (1798-1868) was named minister at Charleston Church, Charleston, South Carolina in 1826. He remained there until he became president of the University of Alabama (1837-1855). In 1838 he had a leading role in founding Judson Female Institute (changed to Judson College in 1903). Basil Manley, Sr. also had leading role in founding the Southern Baptist Convention (1845). In 1850 he was founder of the Alabama Historical Society, whose role was to preserve the story of the state of Alabama. In 1855 he resigned from the University of Alabama to return to a pastorate in Charleston. In 1858 he served as founding chairman of the board of trustees of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He returned to Tuscaloosa, Alabama as State Evangelist in 1859. Serving as a chaplain for the provisional Congress of the Confederate States, Basil commenced the inauguration of Jefferson Davis as President of the Confederate States of America on February 18, 1861. He served as pastor at the First Baptist Church in Montgomery from 1861 to 1863, when he resigned to return to South Carolina where he died in the home of his son, Basil Manly, Jr. (1868). He is best known as the author of the "Alabama Resolutions," which formed part of the case for separation of the Southern Baptist Convention from northern churches in 1845.

Basil Manly, Jr. (1823-1892) moved to Tuscaloosa when his father became president of the University of Alabama. In 1843 he studied theology at Newton Theological Institute and Princeton Theological Seminary, where he graduated in 1847. He served as pastor of the prestigious First Baptist Church of Richmond (1850-1854) but resigned to become president of Richmond Female Institute. In 1859 he was asked to compose "An Abstract of Principles" for the newly formed Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. His effort reflects a moderate Calvinist approach to Baptist doctrine. Manly also joined the faculty as professor of Old Testament interpretation. He left Southern to become president of Georgetown College (1871-1877), but spent the remainder of his career at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. His publications include *A Call to the Ministry* (1867) and *The Bible Doctrine of Inspiration* (1888). He was also a writer of hymns. Together with his father, they published *Baptist Psalmody* (1850). Basil Manly, Jr. was also instrumental in founding the Sunday School Board of the Southern

Baptist Convention (1863).

According to R. Albert Mohler, Jr., “The *Magna Carta* of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was set forth in July 1856 when James Petigru Boyce (1827-1888) delivered his inaugural address as a professor at Furman University. His address entitled ‘Three Changes in Theological Institutions,’ set forth a bold, innovative, and thoroughly comprehensive view for a central theological institution to serve the needs of Baptists in the South.”[15] Boyce was born in Charleston, South Carolina. He matriculated at Brown University in 1845 where he professed faith in Christ. In December 1845 he married Lizzie Ficklen in December 1848 and together raised two daughters. After graduation, Boyce served as editor of the *Southern Baptist*. In 1849 he entered Princeton Theological Seminary, completing his three-year course in two years. When Boyce entered Princeton, the faculty included Archibald Alexander, its first professor, and his two sons, James and Addison, and Dr. Samuel Miller, the second professor named to the institution. Miller was elevated as emeritus professor 1849, the year Boyce enrolled. In 1840 Archibald Alexander had relinquished the chair of didactic theology to Dr. Charles Hodge. The Princetonians were ardent systematicians which they exhibited in themselves and inculcated in their students. Many of the passages from Miller’s *Doctrinal Integrity* were reflected in Boyce’s inaugural address.

Upon graduation from Princeton, Boyce returned to Columbia, South Carolina to be pastor of First Baptist Church. He also had close proximity to the Presbyterian Theological Seminary. James H. Thornwell, George Howe, and Benjamin Morgan Palmer were all leading figures in the Presbyterian church of that day and they represented continuity with the Princeton tradition. In his famous inaugural address at Furman University in 1856, Boyce “set forth his vision for theological education that would eventually shape as the Southern Baptist Seminary. The ‘three changes’ he proposed were;

1. 1. Availability of theological education to all called by God to be ministers in His church, despite possible lack of previous formal education. (Most theological institutions in Boyce’s day assumed students would have had ten to twelve years of Latin and six to nine years of Greek.)
2. 2. Excellence in theological education, including programs of study at the research level equal to or surpassing those available in secular universities. (This conviction would later lead Southern Seminary to become the first

non-university based institution in the United States to offer a Ph.D.)

3. 3. A confessional basis for theological education in which the specifics about what the Bible says are declared.

This last point would later lead to the framing of the Abstract of Principles.[16]

The first of his three visionary changes is “reflective of the influence of Francis Wayland (1796-1865). . . .Boyce made clear from the onset his insistence upon the vital importance of education and the dignity and utility of graduate education, he nonetheless feared that Baptists would be sidetracked into a false sense of educational aspiration. Should his aspiration be transformed into standards for ministry in the churches, Boyce felt that both Biblical imperatives and denominational advance would be compromised.”[17] He advanced beyond the argument of Francis Wayland by calling for a change in theological institutions that would open the door to those who were without benefit of a classical education in order that such students might better understand the Word of God and prepare them for ministry. “Thus, the theological seminary would train those who came with the benefit of a classical education and study in Greek and Latin, but would train as well those who came with a basic education in English. This would constitute a virtual revolution in theological education.”[18] “Boyce’s second change can be seen in the complementary parallel to the democratic impulse reflected in his first concern. . . .If his concern related to the first change was *access* to theological education for those who had no classical training, his second change called for the development of a *quality* theological institution which would call forth and train the most highly qualified minister of the Gospel. He was concerned that churches were calling educated men who were not educated ministers.”[19] Boyce’s third change reflected his sincere concern that doctrinal compromise would in fact threaten both the theological seminary and its denomination. To meet this concern, Boyce called for a “declaration of doctrine” which would be required of all those who would teach within the institution. He quickly reviewed the legacy of heresy which had called forth this imperative, Campbellism and Arminianism had already infected many Baptist churches, “and even some of our ministry have not hesitated to avow them.”[20] Boyce warned of a “crisis in Baptist doctrine” which he saw close on the horizon. “Those who would stand for historic Baptist convictions and essential evangelical doctrines would have to do so against the tide of modern critical scholarship, which was even by that time beginning to erode conviction among the churches.” Boyce made clear his concern was for the integrity of the theological seminary in the midst of doctrinal decline. The one who would teach

the ministry “who is to be the medium through which the fountain if Scripture truth is to flow,” stands before God with a much higher responsibility and accountability than any other teacher.

Boyce argued that it is only proper that such a teacher should be held to a formal and explicit confession of faith which would set forth without compromise, and without forsaking clarity, precisely what would be taught within the institution. “This *Abstract of Principles* constitutes an unbreakable bond and covenant between the seminary and its churches through the denomination. . . .the theological professor is fully free to teach within the boundaries and parameters of that doctrinal covenant. The professor is not free to violate that covenant either through implicit or explicit disavowal.”[21] Boyce brought his vision to life in the Southern Seminary when it opened in 1859 in Greenville, South Carolina. He served as de facto president of the seminary for early thirty years, although his official title was chairman of the faculty. Attendees of the 1857 Education Convention in Louisville formally approved the motion to begin The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. One year later, Convention members selected the Seminary faculty. Boyce kept his focus on the Southern Baptist Seminary, Broadway Baptist Church, and the Southern Baptist Convention, for which he served seven terms as president. He found time to write a catechism and a text book, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*, which was used in systematic Theology classes for many years. Because if his administrative and fund-raising skills, Boyce was offered the presidency of the South Carolina Railway Company (1868), several colleges sought him, and his alma mater, Brown University, requested that he become president there (1874). He refused these invitations because he was thoroughly convinced he could do was more crucial to the gospel than his devoted service to the seminary.

Shifting Population in Post-Civil War America

In the half-century 1865-1914, sources of European immigration tended to shift from the northern and western regions of Europe to the southern and eastern regions. In religious terms this shift was away from historic Protestantism and toward Roman Catholicism, Judaism as well as progressive and traditional modes. Mark Noll states that Post-Civil War American population growth in rounded numbers in 1870 was 9,900,000 Americans (26 percent) living in towns/cities of 2,500 or more; in 1930 the absolute number had risen to 69,000,000 Americans (56 percent) living in towns/cities. In addition, Chinese emigrants began in large numbers to reach over three million by 1882 when the

nation took steps to halt further emigration from China. “Despite strong anti-Oriental prejudices and open wonderment at the cultural-religious-racial peculiarities of the Chinese, America’s churches did launch missionary efforts among the ‘heathen.’”[22] The shift in population did not mean that revivalist, evangelical, voluntarist Protestantism passed away. It “did mean that the small towns and rural settlements where Protestantism had dominated culture as well as provided the stuff of religious life were no longer as important in the nation as a whole.”[23] The Federal Census Bureau asked questions concerning religious membership in America from 1890 through 1936. H. K. Carroll (1848-1931) was appointed “special commissioner” in charge of the division of churches in the Eleventh Census (1890). “Using his data (first published in 1893, revised in 1896), one notes that the religious picture in America is one of ever-multiplying colors. Older family groups such as Lutherans and Baptists continue to divide; newer American-born groups such as Disciples of Christ and Latter-Day Saints, continue to grow.”

THE FOURTEEN LARGEST DENOMINATIONAL FAMILIES (1895) [188]

Denomination	Communicants
1. Roman Catholic	8,014,911
2. Methodist	5,452,654
3. Baptist	4,068,539
4. Presbyterian	2,458,999
5. Lutheran	1,390,775
6. Disciples of Christ	923,663
7. Episcopal	626,290
8. Congregationalist	600,000

9. Reformed	343,981
10. United Brethren	262,950
11. Latter-Day Saints	234,000
12. Evangelical	145,904
13. Jewish	139,500
14. Friends	114,711

He goes on to add that "This urban environment provided more intense commercial pressure, greater access to higher education, and more opportunities for contact with diverse religious and ethnic groups—all of which worked in some degree to undermine the evangelical character of the national religion."[24] Space in the cities for other forms of Christianity and for simple inattention to the faith stimulated the religious pluralism that was always part of the American scene. This space was also filled with civil strife, labor controversies, worker strikes, and social repression. These sorts of social changes may have been primary reasons for the shaking of white Protestantism in the period between the Civil War and World War I. The setting is reminiscent of London when Charles Haddon Spurgeon and John Clifford faced off with their competing worldviews and divergent perspectives for Christians.

Problems at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

The impact of German higher criticism was felt in the life and ministry of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Its first graduate, faculty member, and brilliant Old Testament scholar Crawford Howell Toy (1836-1919) followed the traditional path of going to Europe to complete his formal training. The oldest of nine children, Crawford attended Norfolk Military Academy and entered the University of Virginia in 1852, when he was sixteen years of age. He graduated from the University of Virginia (1856), where he demonstrated his linguistic gifts by studying Latin, Greek, German, and Anglo-Saxon, while pursuing his interests in law, medicine, and music. Upon graduation he took a teaching position at Albemarle Female Institute in Charlottesville, where John A. Broadus

(1827-1895) was head of the trustees. Toy came to the attention of and was baptized by Broadus at Charlottesville Baptist Church. They became lifelong friends. In 1857 Charlotte (“Lottie”) Diggs Moon (1840-1912) enrolled at Ambemarle Female Institute. She too was baptized by Broadus during a revival meeting in 1859. In that same year Toy volunteered as a candidate for foreign missions in Japan. He entered the first class at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Greenville, South Carolina, to prepare for missionary work, quickly establishing his reputation for scholarship. His language skills soon surpassed those of his professor, Basil Manly, Jr. Crawford completed three-fourths of a three-year program in a single year.

When the Civil War broke out, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary closed its doors (1862). Crawford Toy joined the Confederate army and fought in many battles. Some suppose that during the early years of the Civil War Crawford possibly proposed marriage to Lottie, but the war intervened. Once Lottie was on Chinese soil, they exchanged a flurry of letters and it was presumed that they would be married. After the war he traveled to Germany where he studied at the University of Berlin (1866-1868). While there “Toy began to see Darwin’s theories as truth revealed by God ‘in the form proper to his time. Shaped by the historicalcritical method of studying scripture that had been popularized in Europe by Julius Wellhausen, Toy came to believe that the writers of the New Testament—using a rabbinical hermeneutic of their day—misunderstood the original meaning of several Old Testament passages (e.g., Psalm 16:10, Isaiah 53) when they placed a Christological emphasis on them.”[25] Toy favored the rabbinical interpretation that Isaiah’s suffering servant was national Israel rather than Christ.

Returning to the United States, Toy became Professor of Greek at Furman University (1868). In May 1869, he was elected professor of Old Testament interpretation and Oriental languages at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1869-1879) in Greenville, and then in Louisville, Kentucky, when the seminary moved in 1877.

In his inaugural address as Professor of Old Testament Interpretation and Oriental Languages, Crawford Toy argued that the Bible has both a human and a divine element. As his theological pilgrimage revealed, Toy would use this hermeneutical distinction to argue that the Bible contains nothing but truth in its divine element, even as its human element shows all the marks of human fallibility. According to Toy, the human element contains both errors and myths,

but the Bible's religious thought is independent of this outward form. Seminary president James P. Boyce urged Toy to refrain from teaching contrary to the *Abstract of Principles*, as did Basil Manly, Jr., and John A. Broadus, admonishing him that he could drift into Unitarianism if he persisted. Nevertheless, Crawford Toy's notions came under public scrutiny when they were published in two articles (1879). He was called upon to defend them. At the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta in 1879 he submitted his defense of his opinions along with his resignation. To his surprise, the trustees accepted his resignation. Toy left Southern, never to return. He began teaching at Harvard University in 1880. He was appointed the Hancock Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages and the Dexter Lecturer on Biblical Literature. Toy broke ties with Southern Baptists and became a practicing Unitarian. His later works rejected nearly every doctrine central to Christianity. He retired from Harvard (1909) and lived in Massachusetts until his death in 1919. "The effects of Toy's dismissal continued to rumble through Southern Baptist life. Two young missionaries appointed by the Foreign Mission Board (SBC) were ultimately dismissed for holding views similar to Toy's."[26]

William Heth Whitsitt (1841-1911) was the third president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1895-1899). Born in Nashville, he graduated from Union University, Jackson, Tennessee (1861), and proceeded to postgraduate studies at the University of Virginia. Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and was accepted at the University of Leipzig and at the University of Berlin where he completed his graduate studies in about 1871. William first served as a Southern Baptist pastor in Albany, Georgia and then applied for a professor's position in Ecclesiastical History in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Greenville, South Carolina. Whitsitt joined the staff of that school in the fall of 1872 and moved with the rest of the staff when the seminary was relocated in Louisville, Kentucky in 1877. Prior to that relocation, Whitsitt received his D.D. from Mercer University in 1874. Whitsitt taught at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary as a well-respected professor of Church History and Polemical Theology until his elevation to the office of President in 1895, when he became the third head of the seminary since its original founding in South Carolina. Whitsitt served with distinction in his new office, winning the respect of staff and students alike, even though his modern religious and theological views were considerably in advance of many members and other leaders within the ranks of the Southern Baptist Convention. While he was President, the student body at the school became the largest in America and it has ever since retained one of the largest enrollments of any Christian seminary in the world.

As a student in Europe, Whitsitt had conducted investigations into Baptist church history and the gist of his findings there was somewhat contrary to accepted Baptist notions back in the States. According to his diary, Whitsitt made "an exhaustive study of Mormonism to record the progress of that work" to which he gave the title "*Sidney Rigdon, the Real Founder of Mormonism* (1885). Once the Biography of Sidney Rigdon was completed, Whitsitt turned to *The Origin of the Disciples of Christ* (1888).[27] In 1896, the year following his elevation to the Seminary Presidency, he published an article in *Johnson's Universal Encyclopedia* which made public some of the understandings in Baptist history he had developed out of his European research. In brief, Whitsitt merely asserted that there had not been an unbroken continuance of the Baptist practice of immersion for adults seeking membership in the denomination. It was practically an article of faith among many Southern Baptists during that period that their ordinance of adult baptism by immersion had been handed down from generation to generation all the way back to New Testament times. Many viewed Whitsitt's assertion to be an undermining of Baptist legitimacy and authority. Whitsitt's progressive approach to ecclesiastical matters, along with his controversial stance in theological and historical discussions, soon raised severe problems for him and his adherents within the Southern Baptist Convention. Whitsitt received some support from the trustees of the Seminary and other scholars. "Landmarkism" is a type of Baptist ecclesiology championed since 1851 by James Robinson Graves (1820-1893) of Tennessee. Supporters of that ecclesiology were offended by Whitsitt's treatment of baptism and opposed him through T. T. Eaton, editor of *The Western Recorder*. They threatened to separate from the denomination, held back support, and student enrollment began to fall. They prevailed and the Seminary President soon found himself and his views quite unpopular among certain influential Baptist circles.

By 1898 the controversy among the Southern Baptists had reached such heights that the denomination's future support for the Seminary was in doubt. Although Whitsitt's views would win out in the long run, he was at that time causing too much trouble to continue in the highly visible position of President of the Convention's flagship seminary. With dismissal a very real possibility, Whitsitt tendered his resignation, effective June 1, 1899. After taking a few months to get his personal and professional affairs in order, he accepted a position as Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Richmond College in Virginia (1901-1910). At his death in 1911, Whitsitt's papers were donated to the Library of Virginia in Richmond and to the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. While Whitsitt will probably be best remembered for his contributions in

Baptist history, it is conceivable that his biography of Sidney Rigdon will yet receive some belated attention from historians of the Campbellite (Disciples of Christ) and Latter Day Saint restoration movements during their earlier phases. Should any of Whitsitt's singular theories regarding Mormon origins ever be proved true, he will perhaps be accorded a substantial amount of credit in future histories of the Latter Day Saints.

Edgar Young (E.Y.) Mullins (1860-1928),[28] became the fourth president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the aftermath of the Whitsitt controversy. Born the fourth of eleven children born to Seth and Corrine Mullins of Franklin County, Mississippi, he was ambitious as a youth. He ran errands for the telegraph office before taking charge of the operation at age fifteen. When civil order broke down in Reconstruction, Mississippi, Seth Mullins moved his family to Corsicana, Texas. At age sixteen E. Y., as he was known, entered the first cadet class at the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical (Texas A&M) College. After graduation he began to study law but redirected his career after his conversion at a revival service. Desiring to be a missionary, he moved to Louisville in 1881 to study theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This was in the wake of the turmoil of the Toy controversy. Toy, the first faculty member added to the founders, resigned and was replaced by Basle Manly, Jr., one of the original four faculty members. Mullins was recognized as a "full graduate" of the seminary in 1885 and was chosen by his peers to speak at commencement. He made application to the Foreign Mission Board but his appointment as a foreign missionary was denied due to insufficient funding. He married Isla Mary Hawley and had two sons who died in early childhood.

"During his studies under the founding faculty at Southern Seminary, Mullins had become thoroughly acquainted with the evangelical Calvinism Boyce and his faculty colleagues represented and taught. But in the fifteen years between his graduation from the seminary and his appointment as president, Mullins had been taking stock of other theological systems."[29] From 1885 to 1899 he served as the associate secretary of the Foreign Mission Board and in 1888 he was called as a pastor of the Lee Street Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. He served the church for seven years, learning a great deal about the challenges of an urban church in a diverse city. Like Louisville, Baltimore was a meeting place of northern and southern cultures. Mullins was influenced by the proximity to the facilities at Johns Hopkins University as well as the squalor of the city of Baltimore. These influences gave Mullins sensitivity to social issues that remained throughout his life. Later on, Baltimore would be later associated with

H. L. (Henry Louis) Menken (1880-1956) and John Gresham Machen, the son of a leading Baltimore family. He next served as a pastor in a prosperous, well-educated, and cultured congregation at Newton Centre Baptist Church in suburban Boston, Massachusetts. The church identified with northern Baptists, and not the Southern Baptist Convention. It placed Mullins in close proximity to the Newton Theological Institution as well as Harvard College and Boston University. “Through these and other influences, Mullins began explorations in the writings of European theologians such as Germans Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl. More directly, he was introduced to the pragmatism of William James at Harvard and the personalism of Borden Parker Bowne at Boston University. . . .James’ philosophy of pragmatism set the stage for dramatic change in several disciplines, insisted that truth and experience are inextricably linked. . . .Bowne’s personalism would become firmly established as a central influence in Mullins’ theological system, affirming and undergirding Mullins’ shift from the Calvinism of Boyce to a theological position centered—not on revelation—but on religious experience. “[30] He set forth his view in “Pragmatism, Humanism, and Personalism—The New Philosophic Movement.”[31] “His pastorates in Baltimore and Boston exposed Mullins to the theological systems then current among northerners—systems which had hardly touched Baptists in the South.” Mullins thrived in the rich intellectual environment and enjoyed his four-years of ministry in Boston, and he was far removed from Southern Seminary and the second theological controversy (the Whitsitt controversy) that threatened its very existence. In late 1898 the Southern Seminary sent an agent to offer Mullins its presidency. He was reluctant until the unanimous call of all the trustees persuaded him and he assumed the presidency of his *alma mater* in 1899. Mullins admired Boyce, and used the revised edition of his *Abstracts of Systematic Theology* as a text until he published *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression*. In later years his teaching would be curtailed by administrative and denominational responsibilities. Under his leadership Southern Seminary grew in both enrollment and reputation, and the faculty doubled in number. During the Mullins years, Southern Seminary was the largest seminary in the world, and before his death it would be relocated to a new campus in 1926.

The Mullins presidency was marked by boldness as he became one of the towering figures in Southern Baptist life and spokesperson for the second generation of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary leadership. As the Southern Baptist Convention entered the twentieth century, E. Y. Mullins emerged as one of the denominations most formative influences. He launched

the Twentieth Century Endowment Campaign (1902) and established *The Baptist Review and Expositor* (1904). He wrote regularly for this publication which at the time was Southern Seminary's faculty journal. He sought and fulfilled his role as denominational statesman. In 1905 Mullins was involved in establishing the Baptist World Alliance, a worldwide fellowship of Baptist conventions and organizations, which chose John Clifford as its first president. The Northern Baptist Convention's Publication Society published Mullins' *Why is Christianity True?* (1905) for the Baptist Young People's Union of America (BYPUA). Although the BYPUA was northern based, it enjoyed some southern support. In his book, Mullins declared his intention to prove the compatibility of Christianity with modern culture, citing William James some fifteen times. In 1907 the Northern Baptist Convention was organized but refused to adopt a confession of faith. This action caused no small reaction among its more conservative and/or fundamental churches which attempted to remain within the denomination.

Following the example of James P. Boyce, Mullins served as professor of theology as well as president. His most famous books include *The Axioms of* Religion (1908); *The Christian Religion in Its Doctrinal Expression* (1917); and *Christianity at the Crossroads* (1924), which was his critique of modernism written at the height of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. His contribution to Christian apologetics received broad-based approval across denominational and regional boundaries, except for his Southern Baptist fundamentalist brethren. At the apex of his reputation in 1923, Mullins presented his presidential address to the Southern Baptist Convention. In it he addressed what was a necessary condition of service for teachers in Baptist schools:

> Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. He was the Divine and eternal Son of God. He wrought miracles, healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead. He died as the victorious atoning Savior of the world and was buried. He arose again from the dead. The tomb was emptied of its contents. In His risen body He appeared many times to His disciples. He ascended to the right hand of the Father. He will come again in person, the same Jesus who ascended from the Mount of Olives. We believe that adherence to the above truths and facts is a necessary condition of service for teachers in our Baptist schools.
>
> *—Address to 1923 Southern Baptist Convention*[32]

Southern Baptist colleges competed for limited funds, as did Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (founded in 1907), with Benajah Harvey (B. H.) Carroll (1843-1914) serving as its president. The newly founded Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary adopted the New Hampshire Baptist Confession of Faith as its doctrinal standard. Following his 1923 speech at the Southern Baptist Convention and in response to action by the Southern Baptist Convention, “The 1925 Baptist Faith and Message Statement” was approved on May 15, 1925. It was the first official statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention. As president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Mullins was chairman of the committee and primary architect of the convention’s first official confession of faith, “The Baptist Faith and Message,” proposed in 1922 and adopted in 1925. It was a revised version of the New Hampshire Baptist Confession (1850), and addressed the question of “Science and Religion” in a three-paragraph statement appended to but not part of “The Baptist Faith and Message” (1925). Mullins was regarded as the convention’s most articulate theologian, and served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1921 to 1924, and president of the Baptist World Alliance (1923-1928). Due to failing health, his 1928 presidential address to the Baptist World Alliance was delivered by his friend and colleague in Southern Baptist leadership, George W. Truett.

Trevor Wax and others comment on the Mullins dilemma, “If you want to understand the history of the Southern Baptist Convention and the theological discussions among Southern Baptists in the past hundred years, you need to get acquainted with E. Y. Mullins. In my estimation, the Southern Baptist Convention has been more strongly influenced by Mullins than by any other theologian. . . . Others on the Mixed Legacy of E.Y. Mullins:”[33]

> Literary critic Harold Bloom: Edgar Young Mullins I would nominate as the Calvin or Luther or Wesley of the Southern Baptists, but only in the belated American sense, because Mullins was not the founder of the Southern Baptists but their re-founder, the definer of their creedless faith. An endlessly subtle and original religious thinker, Mullins is the most neglected of major American theologians.
>
> Fisher Humphreys: Mullins was wise to insist that Christianity is about persons – about a personal God in interpersonal relationships with human persons. Mullins saw that science and philosophy threatened the personal categories, but he did not seem to notice the greater threat of the

psychology of the unconscious to persons.

William E. Ellis: Mullins personified the dilemma of moderate Southern Baptists and, more generally, moderate evangelicals in America. His theological position remained consistently stable between that of modernism, which eventually disavowed supernaturalism, and fundamentalism, which relied almost entirely on its nineteenth-century antecedents. His devotion to evangelicalism never wavered, but he desired something more than old-fashioned camp meeting religious fervor for his denomination.

Albert Mohler: The central thrust of E. Y. Mullins' theological legacy is his focus on individual experience. Whatever his intention, this massive methodological shift in theology set the stage for doctrinal ambiguity and theological minimalism. The compromise Mullins sought to forge in the 1920s was significantly altered by later generations, with personal experience inevitably gaining ground at the expense of revealed truth.

Russell Moore and Gregory Thornbury: If appropriators of Mullins see themselves in the mirror as they study his work, it is due to the fact that Mullins's thought itself was largely a mirror of his times and culture. The parties within the SBC that contend with each other over Mullins, disagree not so much over particular doctrines or positions Mullins held as they do over agreement as to the center of his thought.[34]

The Shadow of Charles Haddon Spurgeon in America

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was highly regarded among Baptist circles, and especially among those who held to a fundamentalist persuasion. The appellation "Spurgeon" was bestowed on various Baptist preachers including W. W. "Spurgeon" Harris, Baptist preacher-evangelist, and part time missionary, who was named first pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas (1868-1870), Texas. George W. Truett (1867-1944), pastor of the First Baptist Church in Dallas (1897-1944) had a ministry distinguished by pulpit eloquence. Truett was introduced as "a young Spurgeon" as a teenage preacher. As a student at Baylor University, Truett served as pastor of the East Waco Baptist Church. He received his B. A. in 1897, and became pastor of the First Baptist Church, Dallas, where he remained until his death in 1944. Truett's ministry was distinguished by pulpit eloquence, pastoral effectiveness and outstanding denominational leadership. He

served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention for three years (1927-1929) and as president of the Baptist World Alliance (1934-1939). He was active in founding the first Baptist hospital in Texas. President Woodrow Wilson invited him to preach to American troops in Europe in 1918. In 1919 he was elected to lead in raising $75,000,000 for denominational causes. In 1920 he preached his most famous sermon, “Baptists and Religious Liberty,” to 15,000 people from the Capitol steps in Washington. He was succeeded as pastor of the First Baptist Church by W(allie) A(mos) Criswell (1909-2002).[35]

The dominating figure in Oregon in the rising fundamentalist movement was Walter Benwell Hinson (1860-1926). Born in London, England, during Charles Haddon Spurgeon’s heyday as pastor at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Hinson prepared for a missions ministry before migrating to Canada in 1883. There he pastored a number of churches before entering the United States and moving westward and winding up at the First Baptist Church of San Diego, California. He pastored there for almost ten years, with a brief interlude as pastor of first Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. In 1910 Hinson returned to Portland to pastor the First Baptist Church until 1915. In 1916 and1917 he served as evangelist for the American Baptist Home Mission Board. In 1917 he returned to Portland to pastor the East Side Baptist Church. “Hinson was the most outstanding pulpiteer ever to minister from an Oregon Baptist pulpit. It was not unusual for his preaching to be compared to that of Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the great pulpit master, who in the nineteenth century preached to thousands in the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London.”[36] Hinson, “the Spurgeon of the West,” along with Dr. John James Staub (1869-1934), Dr. Mark Allison Matthews (1867-1940), and Dr. Albert Garfield Johnson (1888-1971), is one of *Four Northwest Fundamentalists*[37]

Amzi Clarence (A. C.) Dixon (1854-1925) was born on a plantation in Shelby, North Carolina, to Baptist preacher Thomas and Amanda Elizabeth (McAfee) Dixon. He was converted in 1865 while his father was preaching and was baptized by his father in 1866. In his youth he read the sermons of Charles Haddon Spurgeon and through them received his call to preach the gospel. He entered Wake Forest College in 1869, received an A. B. degree in 1874, and pastored Baptist churches in North Carolina before continuing theological studies at Southern Baptist Seminary (then in Greenville, South Carolina) from 1876-1879, where he was a student of John A. Broadus. He also attended the University of North Carolina while there as pastor. He Married Susan Mary (Mollie) Faison (1880) and had five children. He was pastor in Asheville, North

Carolina (1879-82) before serving as pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Baltimore (1882-1890). In 1886 he received the Doctor of Divinity degree from Washington and Lee University (conferred over his protest). In 1890-1901 he was pastor of Hanson Place Baptist Church in Brooklyn, New York. His popularity as a preacher allowed him to rent the Brooklyn Opera House for Sunday afternoon evangelistic services. After leaving Brooklyn, he served as pastor of the Ruggles Street Baptist Church in the Roxbury suburb of Boston, Massachusetts (1901-1906). While in Boston, Dixon also taught at the Gordon Bible and Missionary Training School and turned his passion to writing. He published *Old and New*, an attack on the Social Gospel. Dixon attended the first Baptist World Alliance held in London (1905). In 1893, Dixon preached with D. L. Moody, the most highly regarded evangelist of the day, during Moody's evangelistic campaign at the Chicago World's Fair. He became pastor of Chicago Avenue Church (founded by D. L. Moody) in Chicago (1906-1911). Two years after Dixon's arrival the church name was changed to the Moody Church. While at Moody Church, Dixon became a syndicated columnist. His articles appeared in the *Baltimore Sun*, *Boston Daily Herald*, and *Chicago Daily News* before pastoring Spurgeon's church, the Metropolitan Tabernacle, in London, England (1911-1919). From 1912 to 1922 Dixon lectured at the Los Angeles Bible Institute (Biola), Los Angeles, California, and for missionary conferences in China and Japan. In 1922, Mrs. Dixon died while attending a missionary conference with her husband in China. Dixon returned to the pastorate in Baltimore, Maryland and attended the Baptist World Alliance in Stockholm (1924). He remarried in England and traveled extensively in England and the United States until his death in 1925. A. C. Dixon was a clergyman, pastor, and evangelist for over fifty years. His life motto was "To me to live is Christ."[38]

"The consistent theme throughout Dixon's career was a staunch advocacy for fundamentalist Christianity during the movement's development period. His preaching was often fiery and direct, confronting various forms of apostasy. He spoke against a wide range of things, from Roman Catholicism to Henry Ward Beecher's liberalism, Robert Ingersoll's agnosticism, Christian Science, Unitarianism and higher criticism of the Bible."[39] "Because he was interested primarily in the conversion of individuals, Dixon engaged in few debates about either doctrinal or social issues during the first decades of is ministry. His displeasure with the increasingly respectability of theological modernism and the threats Darwinian evolutionary thought and biblical criticism posed to the Christian Gospel, however, eventually led Dixon to become a spokesman for the fundamentalist movement."[40] The history of fundamentalist organizations began

when “a small group of ministers, meeting in Montrose, Pennsylvania, in 1916 had reached the conclusion that ‘The time has come for a correlation of the orthodox conservative forces yet found in the Churches. . .’ From such humble beginnings arose the World Christian Fundamentals Association, which came on the scene earlier and survived long after most of the leaders had foundered. . . .”[41] In 1925, Dixon abruptly resigned from one of fundamentalism’s most militant organizations, the Baptist Bible Union (BBU). The BBU was founded in 1923 by Riley and T. T. Shields (1783-1955), with assistance from J. Frank Norris. Its origin can be traced to the Indianapolis convention of 1922. . . .

> [Charles Henry] Heaton, an eyewitness from the beginning, wrote, “In 1922 we met in Indianapolis and there the Baptist Bible Union was conceived. It followed a rejection by the convention of the resolution to adopt the New Hampshire Confession. . . .Years later Van Osdel wrote, “Dr. R. E. Neighbour was one of the leading spirits in this movement, and later when a meeting was called for interested parties to meet in Chicago he prevailed upon Dr. W. B. Riley and Dr. J. Frank Norris to join our ranks and make plans for the first great meeting held in Kansas City just previous to the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Dr. Riley succeeded in persuading Dr. T. T. Shields to be present at the Kansas City meeting and to accept the presidency.” In the same article Van Osdel stated that the Baptist Bible Union began during the 1922 convention, when quite a number of men from various parts of the country gathered “in an upper room in one of the hotels, and there prayed and conferred together as they expressed their desire for a fellowship uncontaminated by unbelief and unbelievers.” This statement confirms that at the beginning there was real separatist sentiment in the Bible Union.[42]

Gerald L. Priest points out that George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, “incorrectly states that Dixon deserted [fundamentalism] because of the stigmas and battles of separatism.” He concurs with David O. Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850*, that Dixon was “a contending fundamentalist until ‘the midnight hour of his life, then virtually gave up the militant stance.’. . .On the contrary, Dixon maintained strong defense of the faith until his death five months later.”[43]

“In almost every major American denomination, sometime between the late 1870s and World War I serious disagreements broke out between conservatives and liberals. In these struggles traditionalists were not necessarily

fundamentalists in any strict sense. They were first of all denominational conservatives who had their own distinct traditional and characters."[44] George Marsden defines "fundamentalism" as

> . . .militantly anti-modernist Protestant evangelicalism. Fundamentalists were evangelical Christians, close to the traditions of the dominant revivalist establishment of the nineteenth century, who in the twentieth century militantly opposed both modernism in theology and the cultural changes that modernism endorsed. Militant opposition to modernism most clearly set off fundamentalism from a number of closely related traditions: evangelicalism, revivalism, pietism, the holiness movements, millenarianism, Reformed confessionalism, Baptist traditionalism, and other denominational orthodoxies. Fundamentalism as a "movement" was a patchwork coalition of representatives of other movements. "Although it developed a distinct life, identity, and eventual subculture of its own, it never existed wholly independently of the older movements from which it grew. Fundamentalism was a loose, diverse, and changing federation of co-belligerents united in their fierce opposition to modernist attempts to bring Christianity into line with modern thought.[45]

In a note at this point, Marsden makes an important but moot statement: "While militancy against modernism was the *key distinguishing* factor that drew fundamentalists together, militancy was not necessarily the *central* trait of fundamentalists. Missions, evangelism, prayer, personal holiness, or a variety of doctrinal concerns may often or usually have been their first interest. Yet, without militancy, none of these important aspects of the movement set it apart as 'fundamentalist.'"[46] David Beale offers a more precise definition. He asserts, "Fundamentalism is not a philosophy of Christianity, nor is it essentially an interpretation of the Scriptures. The essence of Fundamentalism goes much deeper than that—it is the *unqualified acceptance of and obedience to the Scriptures*."[47] Beale adds, "Both friends and foes have regarded Fundamentalism as the lengthened shadow of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and the apostles, of Augustine and Calvin, of the English Separatists and Puritans, of Wesley and Whitefield, of the German Pietists and the English Brethren, of London's Spurgeon and Princeton's Warfield—and of all who continue loyal to its principles and genius. Noted theological liberals, such as Kirsopp Lake, have concluded that Fundamentalism is virtually synonymous with orthodox Christianity."[48] Marsden maintains that,

> Some, like the traditionalists among the Disciples of Christ, were regarded as a part of the fundamentalist movement largely because their aims were parallel and in their attacks they had common opponents. What made others more fundamentalist was their combination of militant anti-modernism with participation in a larger movement that, despite its mix of separate elements, possessed some degree of conscious unity. The active cooperation of denominational traditionalists with the theologically innovative dispensationalists and holiness advocates in the battle against modernism was particularly important in the shaping of fundamentalism. These traditionalists were found mostly among Baptists and Presbyterians.[49]

The major opponent of Briggs and his New School colleagues was B. B. Warfield, born to William and Mary Cabell Breckinridge near Lexington, Kentucky.[50] He was a descendant of Richard Warfield, who lived and prospered in seventeenth century Maryland. His mother brought the finances and heritage of the Breckinridge family of Kentucky. Her father, Robert Jefferson Breckinridge, was a teacher of Old School Presbyterians, an author, a prominent Kentucky educational administrator, a periodical editor, and a politician. Young Warfield prepared for college by private study before taking his arts degrees at Princeton (1871, 1874). Later he trained for the ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary and the University of Leipzig (1876-77). He became assistant minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Baltimore. In 1878 he became professor of New Testament languages at Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, holding the rank of professor from 1879 to 1887. In later years he became professor of didactic and polemical theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he succeeded A. A. Hodge. Warfield wrote a score of books on theological and biblical subjects. An accomplished linguist in Hebrew, Greek and modern languages, he was at home with patristic as well as with systematic theology. He was a committed Calvinist, a staunch defender of the Westminster Confession of Faith who held dogmatically to the inerrancy of Scripture, original sin, predestination, and limited atonement. He wrote *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* and other studies in theology during his lifetime. After his death, collections of his articles were published in book form. Among these are *Revelation and Inspiration*, *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine*, *Calvin and Calvinism*, *The Westminster Assembly and It Works*, *Perfectionism* (2 vols.). In addition, he engaged Charles Augustus Briggs, Henry Preserved Smith (1847-1927), Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1861-1933), and Henry van Dyke (1852-1933) in their assaults on traditional Christian doctrines.

From 1900 to 1910, Henry van Dyke, who graduated from Princeton College (1873) and Princeton Theological Seminary (1877) before serving as Professor of English Literature at Princeton (1899-1923) headed a movement of modernists and New Schoolers to revise the Westminster Confession of Faith. His views on several basic doctrines were incompatible with the Old School beliefs of B. B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen, who succeeded Warfield upon his death in 1921. In 1909 a heated debate occurred in the New York Presbytery about whether or not to ordain three men (graduates of Union Theological Seminary) who refused to assent to the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus. Although they did not deny the doctrine outright, they did refuse to affirm it. The Presbytery's majority eventually ordained the men, but the minority complained to the General Assembly. This complaint formed the basis of the subsequent controversy. Under the order of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, the General Assembly was not authorized to accept or dismiss the complaint. Nevertheless, the General Assembly, acting outside it scope of authority dismissed the complaint against the three men and instructed its Committee on Bills and Overtures to prepare a statement for governing future ordinations. The committee reported, and the General Assembly passed the "Doctrinal Deliverance of 1910."[51] The Deliverance declared that five doctrines were "necessary and essential" to the Christian faith:

- • The inspiration of the Bible by the Holy Spirit and the inerrancy of Scripture as a result of this.
- • The virgin birth of Christ.
- • The belief that Christ's death was an atonement for sin.
- • The bodily resurrection of Christ.
- • The historical reality of Christ's miracles

These five propositions would become known to history as the "Five Fundamentals" and by the late 1910s, theological conservatives rallying around the Five Fundamentals came to be known as "fundamentalists."[52] Marsden summarizes these points: "(1) the inerrancy of Scripture, (2) the Virgin Birth of Christ, (3) his substitutionary atonement, (4) his bodily resurrection, and (5) the authenticity of the miracles." Although "not intended to be a creed or a definitive statement. Yet in the 1920s they became the 'famous five points' that were the last rallying position before the spectacular collapse of the conservative party. Moreover, because of parallels to various other fundamentalist short creeds (and an historian's error), they became the basis of what (with premillennialism

substituted for the authenticity of miracles) were long known as the ‘five points of fundamentalism.’”[53]

Charles William Eliot and Harvard University

Charles William Eliot (1834-1926)[54] was an American academic who was selected as president of Harvard in 1869 and served until 1909—the longest tenure as president in the university’s history. He transformed Harvard from a provincial college into America’s preeminent research university. The son of wealthy banker Samuel Atkins Eliot, and grandson of banker Samuel Eliot, and Mary Lyman Eliot, who was descended from early Massachusetts Bay Colony. He graduated from Boston Latin School in 1849 and from Harvard (1853). He was appointed Tutor in Mathematics in 1854, and studied chemistry. In 1858 he was promoted to Assistant Professor of Mathematics and chemistry. With the failure of his father’s bank in the Panic of 1857, he had the prospect of having to live on his teacher’s salary and the legacy from his grandfather. He did not receive appointment to the Rumford Professorship in Chemistry and left Harvard in 1863.

Instead of going into business, he used his grandfather’s legacy and a small borrowed sum to travel and study the educational systems of the Old World in Europe. Eliot understood the interdependence of education and enterprise. Unlike European institutions depended on government for their support, American institutions would have to draw on the resources of the wealthy. Every one of the famous universities of Europe was founded by Princes or privileged classes—every Polytechnic School he visited in France and Germany has been supported in the main by Government. The respective the government does not receive a return on its investment for ten years or more. The Puritans, by contrast, thought they must have trained ministers for the Church and they supported Harvard—when the American people are convinced that they require more competent chemists, engineers, artists, architects, than they now have, they will somehow establish the institutions to train them.

> In the 1800s American higher education was in trouble. The colleges, controlled by clergymen, continued to embrace classical curricula that had little relevance to the industrializing nation. Few offered courses in the sciences, modern languages, history, or political economy—and only a handful had graduate or professional schools. As businessmen became increasingly reluctant to send their sons to schools whose curricula offered

> nothing useful—or donate money for their support, some educational leaders began exploring ways of making higher education more attractive. Some backed the establishment of specialized schools of science and technology: Harvard's Lawrence Scientific School, Yale's Sheffield Scientific School, and the newly chartered Massachusetts Institute of Technology. . . .Others proposed abandoning the classical curriculum in favor of more vocational training."
>
> Harvard was in the middle of this crisis. After three undistinguished short-term clerical presidencies in a ten-year period, the college was slowly fading out. Boston's business leaders, many of them Harvard alumni, were pressing for change—though with no clear idea of the kinds of change they wanted.[55]

Upon his return to the United States in 1865, Eliot accepted an appointment as Professor of Analytical Chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). In that year an important revolution occurred in the government of Harvard University. Previously the board of overseers consisted of government officials and thirty others elected by joint ballot of the two houses of the state legislature. In 1865 the governor and other state officers ceased to form part of the board, and the power to elect the overseers was transferred from the legislature to the graduates of the college. These changes greatly strengthened the interest of the alumni in the management of the university, thus preparing the way for extensive and thorough reforms. Shortly afterward Dr. Thomas Hill resigned the presidency. Following a considerable interregnum, Charles W. Eliot succeeded to that office in 1895. Ironically, these innovations in education and the impact of ideas also provided new challenges to American life and values occurred during the periods of Reconstruction (1865-1877), the Gilded Age (1877-1893) and the Progressive Era (1890-1920) previously discussed.

As president, Eliot's educational vision incorporated important elements of Unitarian and Emersonian[56] ideas about character development, framed by a pragmatic understanding of the role of higher education in economic and political leadership. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) was born in Boston Ruth Haskins and Rev. William Emerson, a Unitarian minister who died of stomach cancer in 1811. He was raised by his mother. Emerson's formal education began at the Boston Latin School in 1812. He entered Harvard College in 1814, and graduated in 1821. He attended the divinity school there before accepting a pastorate in 1829 at Boston's Second Church (at that time

Congregational). Emerson descended from nine successive generations of ministers. He gradually moved away from the religious and social beliefs of his contemporaries. Faced with poor health, he moved to warmer climes in Charleston, South Carolina, and then in S. Augustine, Florida. He formulated and expressed the philosophy of Transcendentalism in his essay, *Nature* (1836). Following this ground-breaking work, he gave a speech entitled "The American Scholar" (1837), which Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr. considered to be America's "Intellectual Declaration of Independence." "Emerson's mature religious thought was essentially pantheistic and syncretistic. His essays were more suggestive than closely reasoned, and in pieces like "Self-Reliance" he advocated a religion of self. His rebellion against Lockean epistemology was an intuitionist strongly influenced by German Romanticism via [Samuel] Coleridge and [Thomas] Carlyle. His extreme optimism about man's moral nature and potential was tempered somewhat in his later writings."[57]

"Eliot's ultimate goal, like those of the secularized Puritanism of the Boston elite, was a spiritual one. The spiritual desideratum was not otherworldly.

> It was imbedded in the material world and consisted of measurable progress of the human spirit towards the mastery of human intelligence over nature—the "moral and spiritual wilderness." While this mastery depended on each individual fully realizing his capacities, it was ultimately a collective achievement. Like the Union victory in the Civil War, triumph over the moral and physical wilderness and the establishment of mastery required a joining of industrial and cultural forces. . . .Echoing Emerson, he believed that every individual mind had "its own peculiar constitution". The problem, both in terms of fully developing an individual's capacities and in maximizing his social utility, was to present him with a course of study sufficiently representative so as "to reveal to him, or at least to his teachers and parents, his capacities and tastes. An informed choice once made, the individual might pursue whatever specialized branch of knowledge he found congenial. [58]

But Eliot's goal went well beyond Emersonian self-actualization for its own sake. Framed by the higher purposes of a research university in the service of the nation, specialized expertise could be harnessed to public purposes. "When the revelation of his own peculiar taste and capacity comes to a young man, let him reverently give it welcome, thank God, and take courage,"[59] Eliot declared in his inaugural address.

Under Eliot's leadership, Harvard elected an "elective system" which vastly expanded the range of courses offer and permitted undergraduates unrestricted choice in selecting their courses of study—with a view to enabling them to discover their "natural bents" and pursue them into specialized studies. A monumental expansion of Harvard's graduate and professional school and departments facilitated specialization, while at the same time making the university a enter for advanced scientific and technological research. A revised grading system was also introduced. Eliot repeatedly sought to bring MIT under the Harvard umbrella until his retirement from the presidency in 1909. Continued efforts were made as MIT moved into its new campus in Cambridge. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in 1917 rendered a decision that effectively cancelled those plans for a merger.

Still, Eliot's aggressive plans to expand and liberalize American education did not stop at his retirement from Harvard in 1909. He "had stated in speeches that the elements of a liberal education could be obtained by spending 15 minutes a day reading from a collection of books that could fit on a five-foot shelf (Originally he had said a three-foot shelf.) The publisher P. F. Collier and Son saw an opportunity and challenged Eliot to make good on his statement by selecting an appropriate collection of works, and the *Harvard Classics* was the result. . . .The Harvard Classics, originally known as Dr. Eliot's Five Foot Shelf, is a 51-volume anthology of classic works from world literature, compiled and edited by Harvard University president Charles W. Eliot and first published in 1909."[60] Ironically, this was the same year the *Scofield Reference Bible* was published by Oxford University Press. The juxtaposition of Eliot's program for a "conquest" of the American education agenda was formulated during the days of Reconstruction and financed by industrialists during the Gilded Age, while the southern and western Christian communities were struggling for survival rather than waging a conquest of their Civil War conquerors. Instead of militancy and confrontation, evangelical Christians were developing their own advanced (not to call them progressive) notions for reaching the souls of men and women with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Eliot's selection of materials, his aggressive approach, and his militant (if not bigoted) language were used to describe his "conquest." Eliot's concept of education through systematic reading of seminal works themselves (rather than textbooks), was carried on by John Erskine at Columbia University, and, in the 1930s, Mortimer Adler and Robert Hutchins at the University of Chicago, carried this idea further with the concepts of education through the study of the "great books" and "great ideas" of Western civilization. This led to the publication in 1952 of *The Great Books of the Western World*,

which is still in print and actively marketed. In 1937, under Stringfellow Barr, St. John's College introduced a curriculum based on the direct study of "great books." These sets are popular today with those interested in homeschooling.

REFERENCE BIBLES, STUDY BIBLES, AND *THE FUNDAMENTALS*

Following the publication of the English Revised Version (ERV) in 1881, 1885, and the American Standard Version (ASV (1901) of the Bible, an old tradition was renewed with significant ramifications for Bible publication—the reference (or study) Bible. Three of these that remain a force in Bible publication were published in the first decade of the twentieth century: *Nave's Topical Bible: A Digest of the Holy Scriptures* (1896, 1897, 1905), based on the KJV, and Nave's *The Student's Bible* (1907), based on the ASV; *The Thompson Chain-Reference Bible* (1908, 1913); and *The Scofield Reference Bible* (1909, 1911). Both Orville J. Nave and Frank C. Thompson were Methodist preachers who were dissatisfied with contemporary reference Bibles. Both of their first editions were published with Methodist denominational publishers; their later editions were published by independent publishing houses. On the occasion of the KJV's 300th anniversary in 1911, Oxford University Press held a tercentenary celebration on both sides of the Atlantic. In England they engaged Alfred Pollard to write a book-length introduction to two 1611 editions. In America the Press published *The 1911 Tercentenary Commemorative Bible* 'with a new system of references prepared by C. I. Scofield,"[61] a Congregationalist pastor who had already published the first edition of his annotated Bible (1909) as the *Scofield Reference Bible* (1911). Correspondence Courses and Study Bibles became a major feature of Christian education throughout the twentieth century, and especially with the Moody Bible Institute which featured the "Scofield Correspondence Course" as a major feature of its program beginning in 1934. [62] Study Bibles, Bible and Prophetic Conferences, and Correspondence Courses were not the only foundational elements of traditional Christianity.

Milton Stewart (1838-1923) and Lyman Stewart (1840-1923) grew up in a devout Presbyterian home in Titusville, Pennsylvania. When Edward Drake discovered oil in Titusville in 1859, Lyman Stewart (1840-1923) tried unsuccessfully to drill wells in the same area. He then served a three-year enlistment in the Pennsylvania Cavalry during the Civil War. After the war, success again eluded him until he was introduced to Wallace Hardison who

agreed to financially support him. They purchased some land but were only moderately successful. When John D. Rockefeller began to consolidate oil holdings in the eastern U. S., Hardison and Stewart sold their interests to Standard Oil and moved to California where they became successful. In 1886 their Adams Canyon #16 struck the first gusher ever in California and they were responsible for 15% of all oil production in California by year's end. In 1890 they merged their interests with Thomas Bard and Paul Calonico to form the Union Oil Company. As president of Union Oil, Lyman Stewart invested in new wells and expanded his company's market capitalization from $10 million in 1900 to over $50 million in 1908.

In 1894 Lyman attended the Niagara Bible Conference and became interested in publishing literature on the fundamentals of the Christian faith. The Niagara "Statement of Faith" listed fourteen articles (or statements).[63] In 1907 Lyman Stewart and his brother Milton helped bankroll the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (now Biola University). They also gave money to help publish the *Scofield Reference Bible*. According to Don Johnson, "Lyman still hadn't settled on a grand project by 1908, when he wrote his brother, 'The Lord certainly has something a great deal better for both of us than to have us spend our time and thought dealing with business affairs.'"[64] "In August of 1909, Stewart attended a service at the Baptist Temple in Los Angeles, where A. C. Dixon, pastor of Moody Church, was preaching. He believed he had found the man who could help fulfill his desire. When Dixon returned to Chicago, he established the Testimony Publishing Company, which then published the twelve volumes of *The Fundamentals* from 1910 to 1915. Each volume contained about 125 pages of articles written by many of the leading conservatives in America, Canada, and Great Britain. Lyman and his brother Milton each contributed about $150,000 to the project."[65] Lyman's plan was to create a massive series of publications to discredit modernism. The tomes were to be distributed to every pastor, missionary, professor, theology student, Sunday School superintendent, and religious editor in America and Britain. . . .A few months later, the first of twelve volumes of *The Fundamentals* was sent to 175,000 addresses. (From 1910 to 1915, the publishers printed about 250,000 copies, pressing 3 million altogether.) The books contained 90 articles by 64 authors who defended the authority of Scripture and other Christian doctrines."[66] According to Glen Lehman, "There were several results [of the publication of *The Fundamentals*]. First, orthodox theology was presented and defended. Second, apostasy was exposed. Third, Bible-believing Christians were galvanized into a more cohesive force. And fourth, those who opposed 'Modernist Christians' were given a new name as

Bible-believers: 'Fundamentalists.'"[67] In 1913, Curtis Lee Laws (1868-1946) resigned from his pastorate to become editor of the independent by influential *Watchman-Examiner*. In 1920 Laws met with 22 Baptist leaders including William Bell Riley, J. Frank Norris, and others to plan and lead the Buffalo Conference on "The Fundamentals of the Baptist Faith." Following that conference Laws wrote an editorial in the *Watchman-Examiner* in which he rejected such terms as "landmark," "conservative," and "premillennialist" in favor of the neutral and inclusive term "fundamentalist." He felt the greatest achievement of the 1920 conference was the agreement of the fundamentalists to work within the Northern Baptist Convention and to cease boycotting general meetings.[68] The troubled relations between William B. Riley and J. Frank Norris seem to have started as early as "1917, Norris began a paper called *The Fence Rail*, which in 1921 became *The Searchlight* and again changed its name in 1927 to *The Fundamentalist*. Riley would hardly appreciate this name for the paper since his own was called *The Christian Fundamentals*."[69] Riley's relations with Norris had already begun to cool when Norris' scandalous public behavior in opposition to the Southern Baptist Convention, perjury and arson trials, and a not guilty verdict by reason of self-defense in a murder trial in 1926.[70] In his conflict with Southern Baptists, Norris was expelled from the Tarrant County Baptist Association, and L. R. Scarborough (second president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) led a vitriolic public campaign in a tract 'The Fruits of Norrisism' and accused Norris of starting 'a New Cult' and his ways were likened to Bolshevism. Epithets used against Norris on the radio were, 'liar,' 'diabolical,' 'thief,' 'devilish,' 'dastardly,' 'corrupt,' perjurer,' and 'reprobate.'" In 1924, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, with the full backing of Dr. Truett, ousted Norris and his church. Norris was waging all-out war against 'The Baptist Machine.'"[71] Norris continued to support the BBU and the WCFA throughout the 1920s. He was separated from the Southern Baptist Convention in 1931.[72]

"Insofar as *The Fundamentals* represented the fulfillment of a lifelong ambition for Lyman Stewart, it was a success. Stewart read the mail that poured into the Testimony Publishing Company office with great enthusiasm (two hundred thousand letters were eventually received). . . .The denominational press did not react with much excitement to the publication of the volumes, however, perhaps because the editors assumed that all their ministers had received their own free copies and could judge the work for themselves."[73] In view of the evidence from the Testimony Publishing Company office, one must agree with Priest's observation that it is difficult to understand why George Marsden says

the Fundamentals were "little studied."[74] Priest also asserts that "David Beale correctly accepted Sandeen's conclusion that the *Fundamentals* failed in halting modernism, but stated that the work did constitute the earliest major text for educating fundamentalists in a broad range of specialized subjects. In that regard, the set helped to prepare the movement for the controversies and battles of the 1920s." Priest also brings balance to a militant fundamentalist: "Writing in 1973, historian George Dollar interpreted the *Fundamentals* as having more value for the orthodox 'allies' of fundamentalism (especially the conservative Princeton and Southern Baptist scholars) than for the fundamentalists. Fundamentalist fellowships never used this as a complete statement of their faith, since literalism in prophecy, immanency of the Lord's Coming, and a premillennial stand are not found in them. These booklets should be hailed as the Fundamentals of Orthodoxy." In footnotes Priest adds, "Dollar fails to point out, however, that the doctrines he cites as being absent from the *Fundamentals* were not crucial issues in the apostasy. Dixon and most other fundamentalists were premillennialists, but the editorial committee did not consider premillennialism a fundamental of the faith, that is, an *essential* doctrine for salvation."[75] In point of fact, the Fundamentals were a teaching tool presenting the premillennial alternative to the postmillennial or amillennial approaches that remained strong until after the atrocities of World War I (1914-1918), the Great Depression (1930-1940), and World War II (1939-1945). This hardly comports with Priest's claim cited above that "Dixon and most other fundamentalists were premillennialists."

The *Princeton Theological Review* commented, "the ablest of our conservative scholars have been secured for this enterprise. We do not see how it can but do much good, and we wish it great success." The Missouri Synod Lutheran *Theological Quarterly* called *The Fundamentals* one of "the most grateful surprises which this year's book market has brought us. . . .The Southern Baptist *Review and Expositor* called *The Fundamentals* "a notable undertaking," and the *Methodist Review* reprinted the entire text of Howard Kelly's personal testimony from volume I."[76] Priest adds the following observation about *The Fundamentals*:

> Because of popular demand, the twelve original paperback volumes, completed by 1915, were republished by BIOLA as a four-volume set in 1917, under the direction of Bible teacher and evangelist Reuben A. Torrey (1856– 1928). Baker Book House reissued these four volumes in 1988. With Charles L. Feinberg overseeing the project, faculty from Talbot

> Theological Seminary selected what they believed were “theologically and culturally relevant articles from the original” volumes and updated them. Kregel Publications produced them in 1958, and again in 1990 in a one-volume edition with added biographical sketches by Warren Wiersbe. Such interest testifies to the continuing significance of the *Fundamentals*.[77]

After editing the first five volumes of *The Fundamentals*, Dixon accepted a call to become pastor of London’s Metropolitan Tabernacle, here Charles Haddon Spurgeon and his son had served previously. Dixon was succeeded by a Jewish-Christian evangelist, Louis Meyer, who edited volumes 6-10 before his death in 1913. The third editor was Reuben A. Torrey who had recently left Moody Bible Institute to be a full time evangelist. Both of these men were on the original editorial committee forming the Testimony Publishing Company with Dixon.

The illusory notion of a coming “Christian America” was involved in *The Fundamentals* project prior to World War I. As George Marsden observes, “The impasse that was to come could only dimly be perceived in the early twentieth century. . . .Competing denominationalists, liberals and conservatives, individualists and social reformers, confessionalists and primitives had long worked together in many of the same interdenominational agencies, published in the same journals, prayed for the same mission causes, and shared the same hopes. . . .The new conservative coalition against liberalism was part of this establishment. . . .Basic differences and internal tensions were temporarily obscured in the movement by the anti-modernist agitation of the 1920s. Yet the lines of fissure were always present so that fragmentations were likely whenever it attempted positive programs.” Marsden goes on to illustrate this point: “At one end of the spectrum was a small group of dispensationalist spokesmen who pushed the cultural pessimism of premillennialism to its logical extreme. . . .Arno C. Gaebelein, editor of *Our Hope*, Isaac M. Haldeman, vigorous writer and pastor of the First Baptist Church of new York City, and Philip Mauro, who wrote several essays in *The Fundamentals*.”[78] At the 1914 conference they attacked both democracy and socialism, and expressed their views in very pessimistic terms. William B. Riley, just beginning to emerge as one of the chief architects of fundamentalism was more typical. Riley also spoke on “The Significant Signs of the Times” at the 1914 conference, but without the attacks on democracy and socialism, and his mood was distinctly optimistic. The battles to save the denominations had been lost when the Northern Baptists organized the Northern Baptist Convention but refused to follow William Bell Riley in his

effort to adopt the New Hampshire Baptist Confession (1907).

James Orr (1844-1913), was born in Glasgow and spent his childhood in Manchester and Leeds. Orphaned, he became an apprentice bookbinder before entering Glasgow University in 1865. He received an M. A. in Philosophy of Mind (1870), and after graduating from the theological college of the Presbyterian Church, he was ordained a minister in Hawick. In 1883 he received a D. D. from Glasgow University and in the early 1890s delivered a series of lectures that became the influential book, *The Christian View of God and the World* (1893).[79] He was appointed professor of church history (1891 at the theological college of the United Presbyterian Church. He advocated for the union of the United Presbyterian Church with the Free Church of Scotland, representing the United Presbyterians in the negotiations. After their merger (1900) he moved to Free Church College (now Trinity College), as professor of apologetics and theology. He lectured widely in Britain and the United States.[80] He wrote *The Progress of Dogma* (1902) as well as a series of books on various liberals. Orr wrote several articles in various volumes of *The Fundamentals*. Unlike modern fundamentalists and his friend B. B. Warfield, Orr did not agree with the stronger position on biblical inerrancy. Like Warfield, but also unlike modern Christian fundamentalists, he advocated a position he called “theistic evolution,” but which today is called “progressive creationism.” He was chosen General Editor of *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia [ISBE]*, 5 volumes (1915).[81] This reference tool was interdenominational in scope with General Editor Orr (Scottish Presbyterian); Assistant Editor, John L. Nuelsen (Swiss Methodist); Assistant Editor, Edgar Y. Mullins (American Southern Baptist); and Managing Editor, Morris O. Evans (Welsh Congregationalist, Cincinnati, Ohio). Orr, Nuelsen, and Mullins each contributed to *The Fundamentals* in addition to their work on the ISBE.

In 1927 Riley wrote, “Fundamentalism undertakes to reaffirm the greater Christian doctrines, Mark this phrase, ‘the greater Christian doctrines.’ It does not attempt to set forth every Christian doctrine. It has never known the elaboration that characterizes the great denominational confessions. But it did lay them side by side, and, out of their extensive statements, select nine points upon which to rest its claims to Christian attention. They were and are as follows:

1. 1. We believe in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally

inspired by God, and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.

2. 2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. 3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
4. 4. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death, but also that spiritual death which is from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed.
5. 5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all that believe in him are justified on the ground of his shed blood.
6. 6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord. In his ascension into Heaven, and in his present life there for us, as High Priest and Advocate.
7. 7. We believe in "that blessed hope," the personal, premillennial, and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
8. 8. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become the children of God.
9. 9. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting felicity of the saved, and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

It would seem absolutely clear, therefore, that many of the liberal writers of recent years have never taken the pains to ask for the basis of our belief."[82]

BIBLE INSTITUTES, COLLEGES, AND SEMINARIES

"The character of this ill-defined middle position is clearer when viewed in the context of the emerging movement's most characteristic and increasingly important institution, the Bible institute."[83] Again, the concept may have come from Charles Haddon Spurgeon. Originally named The Pastors' College when it opened in 1856, it was renamed in honor of its founder, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, when it moved to its present building in 1923. C. H. Spurgeon's own lectures were published in several volumes as *Lectures to My Students*.

Spurgeon's College is in membership with the Baptist Union of Great Britain, which Spurgeon helped to launch. Spurgeon's College has since its foundation aimed to give opportunities for training to persons with little academic background. In the nineteenth century different courses were offered depending on ability. Spurgeon himself said in 1871 that someone who needed help with English "should not muddle his head with Hebrew." To this day the College offers tailor-made packages to those who are called by God to train for Christian ministry. Biblical Greek and Hebrew are offered on several of its courses but are never compulsory. Spurgeon's good friend H. Grattan Guinness (1835-1910), "organized the East London Institute for Home and Foreign Missions in 1872 for the purpose of bypassing university training for those called to the mission fields. This institute majored in the knowledge of the Bible and practical experience."[84] It was here that Walter B. Hinson, "The Spurgeon of the West" received his training and where Spurgeon served as a director. Henry Grattan Guinness' Institute had a great effect on A. B. Simpson, who wrote an article in the March issue of *The Gospel in All Lands* calling for the erection of a missionary training college." The institute did open under his leadership in October 1882—in the rear of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Tabernacle, then meeting in the Twenty-Third Street Theatre in New York. It was formally opened in 1883 as A. B. Simpson's Nyack Missionary College and relocated to Nyack, New York. The institute was patterned after Guinness' school and opened as a three-year training course with forty students and two teachers."[85] In 1886, Moody had a leading part in the genesis of The Chicago Evangelistic Society, the forerunner of the Moody Bible Institute, It became preeminent due to the outstanding leadership of Reuben A. Torrey, first superintendent (from 1889 to 1908), and James M. Gray, who served from 1908 to 1934, first as dean and later as president. In 1789 Moody opened the Northfield Seminary, a high school for young women, and later added a similar school for boys.

In Minneapolis, William Bell Riley founded the first of three schools 1902: the Northwestern Bible and Missionary Training School to provide pastoral leadership for neglected small-town and rural churches, the Northwestern Evangelical Seminary (1938) to meet the needs of urban congregations seeking orthodox leadership, and Northwestern College (1944) to provide a liberal arts education under evangelical auspices. Upon retirement from an active pastorate, Riley spent the last years of his life promoting these institutions. In 1907 Lyman and Milton Stewart helped to launch the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Biola). Charles Blanchard, second president of the Presbyterian college at Wheaton, Illinois, wrote the "Wheaton College Statement of Faith and Educational

Purpose" (1924) to guide the leadership, faculty, and students at Wheaton as an academic community of faith. In the fall of 1924 the first student body of the Evangelical Theological College (later Dallas Theological Seminary) met to study under the noted Bible teacher, Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer. This class of thirteen students was the result of Dr. Chafer's burden and vision to found a seminary that would emphasize expository preaching and teaching of the Scriptures. In 1935 the Seminary pioneered the four-year Master of Theology (ThM) degree, which is a year longer than the three-year Master of Divinity (MDiv) offered at most other seminaries. In the winter of 1925 the Portland Baptist Bible Institute was organized by Walter Benwell Hinson, who became pastor of Eastside Baptist Church in 1917. In 1926 efforts were begun to organize a graduate-level seminary to provide a more adequate theological education in the Northwest. Dr. Hinson suffered a stroke and died before William B. Riley and other leaders organized the expansion of the Bible Institute initiated by Hinson and Western Baptist Theological Seminary was dedicated in October, 1927.

Presbyterians William Jennings Bryan (1880-1925) and William Ashley "Billy" Sunday (1862-1935) "represent the more 'American' side of that denominational tradition—a broad somewhat tolerant, not highly doctrinal, moralistic, patriotic, and often optimistic version of evangelical Protestantism." According to Marsden, "these attitudes could be found in all the major American denominations of the era." He adds that these "were the ideals of the evangelical consensus of the first half of the nineteenth century," and argues, "It is possible to distinguish conservatives within the mainstream American evangelical tradition from more strictly denominational conservatives. . . .Within a group as diverse as the Baptists, however, such lines cannot be clearly drawn."[86] Both Bryan and Sunday had a broad-based public forum. Bryan was raised by Bible-reading parents in Illinois. He received a B. A. degree from Illinois College (1881) and was admitted to the bar in 1883. He practiced law in Illinois and Nebraska (1883-89) and was editor of the Omaha *World-Herald* (1894-96). Bryan was elected congressman from Nebraska (1891-95). He championed agrarian causes and drew large crowds for his populist speeches. He was catapulted onto the national scene with his famous "Cross of Gold" speech (1896). He was a three-time unsuccessful presidential candidate (1896, 1900, and 1908). In 1899 he founded *The Commoner,* a weekly magazine calling on Democrats to dissolve the trusts, regular the railroads more tightly, and support the Progressive Movement. He regarded prohibition as a local issue and did not endorse it until 1910. From 1900 to 1912 Bryan was the most popular

Chautauqua speaker, delivering thousands of paid speeches across the land. In London in 1906 he presented a plan to the Inter-Parliamentary Peach Conference for arbitration of disputes that he hoped would avert warfare. He served as Secretary of State (1913-1915) during the first administration of President Woodrow Wilson (1912-1920) and negotiated arbitration treaties with thirty nations. Following the sinking of the *Lusitania* in 1914, Wilson's administration was divided over the effectiveness of such treaties and Bryan resigned as Secretary of State in 1915. From 1916 to 1925 he campaigned for constitutional amendments on prohibition and women's suffrage. He moved to Miami, Florida, partly to avoid the immigrant German "wets" in Nebraska. This is hardly the profile depicted by Henry Louis "H. L." Mencken (1880–1956). Mencken is known for writing *The American Language*, a multi-volume study of how the English language is spoken in the United States, and for his satirical reporting on the Scopes trial, which he dubbed the "Monkey Trial." He was skeptical about economic theories and particularly critical of anti-intellectualism, bigotry, populism, fundamentalist Christianity, creationism, organized religion, the existence of God, and osteopathic/chiropractic medicine.

Modernism (Liberalism)

In this setting the Rauschenbusch family rose to prominence. Augustus Rauschenbusch (1816-1899) was the son of Lutheran clergyman in Germany. At nineteen he entered the University of Berlin to study for the Lutheran ministry. Subsequently he entered the University of Bonn in the study of natural science and theology. On the death of his father, Augustus was chosen as his successor (1841). His ministry there aroused hostile opposition and he resolved to emigrate to the United States. He arrived in Missouri and then moved to New York (1847) where he wrote German tracts for the American Bible Society. During these years his views on baptism changed and he became a Baptist, while retaining his position with the Tract Society until 1853. From 1853 to 1858 he served German Baptist churches in Missouri. From 1858 to 1888 he was in charge of the German department of Rochester Theological Seminary. He returned to Germany in 1890 to devote himself to literary work. Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918) was born in Rochester, New York. He was raised on the orthodox Protestant doctrines of his time, including biblical literalism and the substitutionary atonement. At seventeen he experienced a personal religious conversion which "influenced my soul down to its depths." When he attended Rochester Theological Seminary, his views were challenged and he felt his

experience left him incomplete because it focused on repentance from personal sins but not from social sins. He also learned of Higher Criticism, which led him to state that his "inherited ideas about the inerrancy of the Bible became untenable." He also began to doubt the substitutionary atonement because "it was not taught by Jesus; it makes salvation dependent upon a Trinitarian transaction that is remote from human experience; and it implies a concept of divine justice that is repugnant to human sensitivity." After seminary, Walter seriously considered undertaking missionary work in India but instead accepted a calling with a congregation of German immigrants outside a slum in New York City known as Hell's Kitchen. Max L. Stackhouse writes that he was actually turned down for missionary work "because of his 'unorthodox' interpretation of the message of the biblical prophets." Regardless, it was in New York that he was fully exposed to the harsh realities of urban life among immigrants. He often said it was not his formal education that developed his passion for social reform.[87] "Rauschenbusch became the acknowledged leader of the social gospel movement with the publication of *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907)."[88] For about a decade after this, "Walter Rauschenbusch was one of the best-known ministers in America. He became a national figure suddenly and unexpectedly in 1907. From then until his death in 1918, he published five books and a number of smaller pieces. He was regarded as the central figure in the movement known as the 'social gospel.'"[89] "Class divisions and tensions were on the rise during this period and a political movement known as the Progressive Movement was attempting to address in political terms what Rauschenbusch was addressing in theological terms."[90] In 1917 Rauschenbusch wrote a chapter entitled, "The Challenge of the Social Gospel to Theology." In it he wrote, "If theology stops growing or is unable to adjust itself to its modern environment and to meet its present tasks, it will die."[91]

With regard to sin, Rauschenbusch writes, "Two things strike us as we thus consider the development of sin from its cotyledon leaves to its blossom and fruit. First, that the element of selfishness emerges as the character of sin matures. Second, that in the higher forms of sin it assumes the aspect of a conflict between the selfish Ego and the common good of humanity; or expressing it in religious terms, it becomes a conflict between self and God." He goes on to say, "The three forms of sin,—sensuousness, selfishness, and godlessness,—are ascending and expanding stages, in which we sin against our higher self, against the good of men, and against the universal good."[92] In terms of personal salvation, Rauschenbusch states, "The new thing in the social gospel is the clearness and insistence with which it sets forth the necessity and the

possibility of redeeming the historical life of humanity from the social wrings which now pervade it and which act as temptations and incitements to evil and as forces of resistance to the powers Its chief interest is concentrated on those manifestations of sin and redemption which lie beyond the individual soul."[93]

For Rauschenbusch, "If theology is to offer an adequate doctrinal basis for the social gospel, it must not only make room for the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, but give it a central place and revise all other doctrines so that they will articulate organically with it. This doctrine is itself the social gospel. Without it, the idea of redeeming the social order will be but an annex to the orthodox conception of the scheme of salvation." He asserts, "To those whose minds live in the social gospel, the Kingdom of God is a dear truth, the marrow of the gospel, just as the incarnation was to Athanasius, justification by faith alone to Luther, and the sovereignty of God to Jonathan Edwards. It was just as dear to Jesus. He too lived in it, and from it looked out on the world and the work he had to do." He points out that, "Jesus always spoke of the Kingdom of God. . . .Yet immediately after his death, groups of disciples joined and consolidated by inward necessity. Each local group knew that it was part of a divinely founded fellowship mysteriously spreading through humanity, and awaiting the return of the Lord and the establishing of his Kingdom. This universal Church was loved with the same religious faith and reverence with which Jesus had loved the Kingdom of God. It was the partial and earthly realization of the divine Society, and at the Parousia the Church and the Kingdom would merge. But the Kingdom was merely a hope, the Church a present reality."[94] The beginning of the twentieth century "revealed a trend toward a more radical approach to economic problems and their solution. Appeals to individual regeneration, and love as the means to establishing industrial harmony, were definitely recognized as quite inadequate apart from social reorganization. As early as 1890, this tendency appeared in a greater friendliness toward socialism, particularly in the demand of the latter for fundamental social reorganization. . . .it was at the point of *criticism* of the competitive and predatory features of unregulated capitalism that Christian ethics and the socialist critique seemed to have the most in common."[95] In this setting America was experiencing its "Third Great Awakening" with apparent strength and influence undiminished. "Churches were crowded, financial support was generous, programs were proliferating, and a host of good causes elicited eager and ardent devotion."[96]

The Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy

The Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy in the Presbyterian Church is part of a wider set of developments in American religious life. Yet it also contained many aspects that were continuations of long-term conflicts within American Presbyterianism. These conflicts were matched by intellectual dislocations that fragmented Protestant Christianity which for a century or more had dominated public religion in the United States.[97] In addition there were resurgences of anti-Catholicism, Americanism, the Ku Klux Klan, the Red Scare, political scandals, and Prohibition. Some assert that the Controversy in the Presbyterian Church was disproportionately prominent in the press because of the role played in it by William Jennings Bryan. Although the "Fundamentalist–Modernist Controversy" is the term used to describe this major schism in the Presbyterian Church, very similar and far-reaching reactions against the growth of liberal Christianity also occurred in other major Protestant denominations. At the beginning of the Controversy, Presbyterians were the fourth-largest Protestant group in the United States. Methodists were the largest, followed by Baptists (who became the largest during the period), Lutherans, Disciples of Christ, and Episcopalians were in sixth place.[98] After considerable internal tensions, every major Protestant denomination came to accommodate liberalism within the denomination, to one degree or another. Some conservatives remained within their denomination. Others left their denomination and established smaller denominations with fundamentalist-conservative foundations. Still others disassociated with denominations and, sensitized by what they saw to be successful liberal infiltration into other denominations, formed independent fellowships. The process resulted in the modern division of Protestant American religious life into mainline Christianity on the one hand and evangelical and fundamentalist Christianity on the other. "Internal dissensions which beset the Baptists and Presbyterians as a result of the modernist-fundamentalist conflict were a little less apparent among Episcopalians and Methodists. In both churches, however, the conflict remained close to the surface and occasionally erupted in dramatic incidents."[99]

Two individual cases stand out in these conflicts. The first involved the modernist position of Percy Stickney Grant of New York which prompted a belligerent reaction from conservatives. He had been educated at Harvard and the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge (Massachusetts) before moving to the church as Rector of the Ascension in New York City. He became known for his support of socialism and published *Socialism and Christianity* (1909).[100] His "forum" was used to express views on labor and living conditions. Although advocates of all political and social doctrines were permitted to speak freely, the

practice was widely criticized and finally, in 1923, following action taken by Bishop William T. Manning, the forum was greatly modified in its character. Grant had also come into controversy with Bishop Manning on the question of divorce when he became engaged to Rita de Acosta Lydig, who had been divorced. Bishop Manning refused to authorize their marriage. In June of 1924, Grant resigned his rectorship. He died at the height of the fundamentalist crusade in 1927.

The second case was William Montgomery Brown, Bishop of Arkansas (1899-1912). He was the first Episcopal bishop to be tried for heresy since the Reformation. Brown, the Southern Episcopal Church bishop who became a communist[101] had published *The Church for America* (1895) before taking an interest in Marxism, socialism, and communism during the 1910s. Brown's publication of *Communism and Christianism* (1920) resulted in his heresy trial before the House of Bishops and expulsion from the Episcopal Church (1924-25). Following his expulsion, Brown was offered a place in both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Old Catholic Church. He chose the Old Catholic Church because its orders were accepted as valid by the Episcopal Church in the USA, and his position as a bishop in Apostolic Succession could not be challenged by his former church. Many Old Catholic bishops and churches of the present count Bishop Brown as in the line of succession of their bishops.[102]

In 1876, Borden Parker Bowne, philosopher and theologian in the Methodist tradition, became Professor of Philosophy at Boston University. By the beginning of the twentieth century, he came to deny the traditional view of miracles and argue against the blood atonement and, by implication, the resurrection. This led him into troubles with the conservative constituency of his church. This is the only heresy trial in the history of the Methodist Church. William James remarked to Bowne in a letter that he (James) was "a better Methodist" than Bowne. He went on to say, "If the ass and the blatherskite succeed in their efforts to *weed you out* of the body [of the church], I hope they will have the wisdom to get me voted in to fill the vacuum." (December 29, 1903). James' remark about "weeding out" Bowne was a reference to the controversy brewing in 1903 which resulted in Bowne's heresy trial in the spring of 1904.

In addition to the issues described above, Bowne had defended the teaching of controversial higher criticism of the Bible at Boston University, where a religion professor had been dismissed for teaching this approach. Bowne was not

intimidated by those who pointed fingers and threw epithets his way, but calmly defended himself and was acquitted of all charges, unanimously, by a council of Methodist bishops (some of whom were his former students). In many ways this episode served to bring Methodist theology into an influential role in the forging of what has since been called the "liberal Protestant consensus" with other mainline denominations so influential in twentieth century philosophical theology and social ethics. The Bowne heresy trial was one of many turning points in the creation of that important perspective.[103]

With reference to the Grant and Brown heresy trials, "No such extraordinary events befell Methodists. During the 1920s their focus was on questions of denominational unity and prohibition, although both northern and southern branches of the church became concerned to an unusual extent with theological issues. With a few notable exceptions, local skirmishes between modernists and fundamentalists that threatened to disrupt denominational tranquility were contained by bishops adept at the 'fine arts of Methodist diplomacy' and there were relatively few permanent scars and schisms as a result."[104] The fine arts of Methodist diplomacy found their model in the Borden Parker Bowne controversy.

After considerable internal tensions, most major Protestant denominations came to accommodate liberalism within the denomination, to one degree or another. Some conservatives remained within their denomination. William B. Riley remained in the Northern Baptist Convention until just prior to his death in 1947. Princeton Theological Seminary is an outstanding example of a denominational school that remained in the Presbyterian Church. Much of the credit goes to J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937), successor to B. B. Warfield's chair of theology in 1921. Machen was born in Baltimore, educated at Johns Hopkins University, Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary, Marburg, and Göttingen. He was ordained in 1914 and taught New Testament at Princeton Seminary from 1906 to 1929. Two years after assuming his chair, Machen wrote his foundational text, *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (1923) and the definitive *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923). This classic defense of orthodox Christianity, written to counter liberalism, establishes the importance of scriptural doctrine and contrasts the teachings of liberalism and orthodoxy on God and man, the Bible, Christ, salvation, and the church. Gaustad, in introducing a selection from Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism*,[105] writes "It is easy to caricature fundamentalism as the religion of the illiterate and untrained, J. Gresham Machen. . .effectively refutes that stereotype. . .Machen

ultimately broke with his own Presbyterian church over the growing divergence between their respective theological positions. While Machen did not flaunt the label of 'fundamentalism,' he wrote that if it were necessary for him to choose between only two alternatives, namely liberalism and fundamentalism, he would without hesitation choose the latter. Fundamentalism had to do with Christianity, while liberalism—in Machen's view—was something quite separate and distinct."[106] Two years later he published the *Origin of Paul's Religion* (1925) and *What is Faith* (1925). He then wrote his masterful study, *Virgin Birth of Christ* (1930), which has never been refuted. Then, in the year of his death, he wrote the *Christian View of Man* (1937).

Oswald Thompson Allis (1880-1973) received an A. B. degree from the University of Pennsylvania (1901), a B. D. degree from Princeton Theological Seminary (1905), an A. M. degree from Princeton University (1907) and a Ph.D. from the University of Berlin (1913), before receiving an honorary D. D. degree from Hampon Sidney College (1927). Allis was Instructor in the Department of Semitic Philology (1910-1922) and Assistant Professor of Semitic Philology at Princeton Theological Seminary (1922-1929). After the previously-mentioned General Assembly of 1927, the reorganization of Princeton Seminary in 1929 placed its control into the hands of modernists, prompting the resignations of Machen, Allis, Robert Dick Wilson, and Reformed apologist Cornelius Van Til (1895-1987) who went on to found Westminster Theological Seminary. Allis was independently wealthy and his property in Philadelphia initially served as the home of Westminster Seminary. He served as Professor of Old Testament History (1929-1930) and Professor of Old Testament (1930-1936). He retired in 1936, when Machen and others were forced to leave the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. denomination over their involvement with the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. Allis chose to remain in the denomination and retired from his teaching post to devote himself to writing and study. In 1946 Allis lectured at Columbia Theological Seminary.[107] Allis was editor of the *Presbyterian Theological Review* (1918-1929), and beginning in 1929 he was Editorial Correspondent of *The Evangelical Quarterly* until the time of his death in 1973.

Other fundamentalists left their denominations and established smaller denominations with fundamentalist-conservative foundations. The Presbyterian example was Machen and others who organized Westminster Theological Seminary (1929) and founded the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (1936). Among Northern Baptists, after departing from the Baptist Bible Union (founded in

1922), the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC) was organized in 1932. These departures occurred in the decades following the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy of the 1920s. Still others disassociated with denominations and, sensitized by what they saw to be successful liberal infiltration into other denominations, formed independent fellowships. An example of this was the meeting of 24 men at the Lake Okoboji Tabernacle in Arnold Park, Iowa, on September 4-6, 1923. They met to organize a fellowship for true Bible-believing pastors and churches who were opposed to the apostasy of their denominations. They called themselves the "American Conference of Undenominational Churches." However, due to internal strife, loose affiliation, and a wide doctrinal spectrum, the A.C.U.C. did not consolidate until "O. B. Bottorff, a Christian businessman St. Louis, Missouri and Director of the St. Louis Gospel Center was elected president in 1929."[108] He learned that several Congregational pastors in the Chicago area were engaged in discussions concerning their need for fellowship and the possibility of some mutual cooperation in ministry. "Apostasy had swept through Chicago's conference of Congregationalists resulting in the establishment of several Independent Churches. These new churches were healthy and growing and the ministry of the Word was enjoying a tremendous acceptance. Many left the apostate denomination. Separatist Fundamentalism was in its infancy but rapidly growing beyond that stage. Growth stimulated hunger and their hunger was for fellowship and cooperation. Bottorff learned about the Fundamental Congregational churches and pastors in the Chicago area and went to see their leader, Pastor William McCarrell of the (Independent) Congregational Church of Cicero."[109] From this meeting came further discussion and prayer and a call for a meeting to be held on February 6, 1930. "The Chicago group of 39 men met in February 1930 and voted to join the A.C.U.C. The motion was made by Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., President of Wheaton College."[110] The minutes of that February 6, 1930 meeting appeared in the April, 1930 issue of the A.C.U.C.'s magazine *Pioneer of a New Era*. It related the discussions of the meeting. Dr. James Oliver Buswell, Jr., President of Wheaton College made the following motion:

> "It is the sense of this meeting that we favor uniting with the A.C.U.C. with the understanding that the organizations and individuals represented by this meeting will work toward an improvement in the name of the organization, the drafting of a stronger and more comprehensive doctrinal platform and plans to enforce this same program." The motion was seconded by several and unanimously carried.

Now the die was cast. Out of the motion by Dr. Buswell came the organization that would soon be named the Independent Fundamental Churches of America (what we know today as IFCA International). The First Annual Convention of the Independent Fundamental Churches of America was held June 24-27, 1930. It was an historic event in a church which had a most blessed history under the ministry of Pastor William McCarrell. This great convention was an affirmative answer to this question which appeared in the February, 1930 edition of the Moody Bible Institute Monthly magazine, "Has the time come for Fundamentalists to promptly and literally obey the emphatic commandment given to believers in 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 5:11; and 2 John 9-11?" These positive actions hardly sound like the pathetic cry of a vanquished foe. Instead of resulting in the modern division of Protestant American religious life into mainline Christianity on the one hand and evangelical and fundamentalist Christianity on the other, this suggests that evangelical and fundamentalist Christianity had decided to take different paths. They had decided emphatically to follow the biblical charge to Joshua after the death of Moses (Joshua 1:1-9).

According to Mark Edwards, "Perhaps no aspect of early Christian fundamentalism has been more misunderstood than the decline of antievolution politics during the 1920s. The dominant scholarly explanation for that decline has been what I call the 'modernist thesis,' largely because archetypical modernists like H. L. Mencken and Walter Lippmann laid its foundations." He adds, "According to this interpretation, American fundamentalists were publicly humiliated at the 1925 Scopes trial, and, after a brief flurry of uncoordinated political agitation, they were forced to retreat because of continued national score."[111] He names George Marsden, Richard Wightman Fox, Harry S. Stout and D. G. Hart, Joel A. Carpenter, Robert D. Linder, and Jerry Falwell, with Ed Dobson and Ed Hindson as followers of this "modernist thesis."[112] Edwards goes to investigate "several problems with this interpretation, the most important being that its truth is in some doubt."[113] He goes on to affirm Edward Larson's convincing arguments that "the Scopes trial contributed only indirectly to any *apparent decline* of fundamentalism."[114] Note the "apparent decline." The previous discussion demonstrates that the facts speak directly against the "modernist thesis" regardless of its adherents. What Edwards does indicate is that the death of William Jennings Bryan within a week of the end of the trial in 1925 "mortally wounded the once promising movement in two intertwined ways: it removed the only person with the respect, ability, and willingness to lead a national crusade; and, in turn it destroyed the broad antievolution coalition, leaving a much smaller number willing to carry on the war."[115]

After Bryan resigned as President Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State in 1915, he was seeking another platform to maintain a role on the national scene. Bryan's distinctive version of evangelical Christianity served as an "inclusive force" in the antievolution crusade. "Ultimately, it was this broad, syncretic faith that Bryan set out to defend during the 1920s. . . .Perhaps more importantly, Bryan became the recognized intellectual leader of the popular crusade against Darwin. . . .Bryan further blamed Darwinism for domestic and international problems outside the sphere of organized religion. He was particularly fearful that the 'mainsprings' of evolutionary ideas, public schools and colleges, were currently producing a generation of 'cynics, agnostics, or atheists.'"[116] With the advent of the Scopes trial in the summer of 1925, Bryan had succeeded in making political antievolutionism a national controversy. He had also won many to his cause. Given Bryan's inclusive evangelicalism, intellectual persuasiveness, and political leadership, it is not surprising that a large coalition comprised of millions of average Americans, nonevangelicals, denominational conservatives, and interdenominational fundamentalists gradually coalesced around his name and cause. It is important to understand the dynamics of this loosely constructed bloc in order to understand why it fell apart after Bryan's death."[117] Bryan also maintained a surprising amount of support from nonevangelical circles, prominent Catholics, Congregationalists, Jewish Zionists, Mormons and even the *New York Times*. "Though the popular press proclaimed again and again that 'Mr. Bryant is Fundamentalism,' the earliest support for Bryan's religious activities actually came from denominational conservatives in the Presbyterian church. Presbyterian conservatives generally adhered to the 'fundamentals' of Christian doctrine, yet unlike interdenominational fundamentalists, they were not ready to abandon mainline religious institutions to theological liberals. During the early 1920s, this rather large group rallied behind the man they considered the greatest layman in their church."[118] "It is important to recognize. . .that Presbyterian conservatives were more interested in Bryan's apologetics and denominational labors than his antievolutionism. After his death, they would quickly abandon his cause. Bryan's attack on evolution meant much more to the interdenominational fundamentalists. Because of his effort, fundamentalist leaders had gradually begun to identify their chief enemy, modernism or theological liberalism, solely with Darwinism."[119] "In fact, Bryan's death ruined the antievolution movement in two interrelated ways: it removed the only person with the talents, experience, and desire to head a national political movement; and it displaced the central, unifying focus of the antievolution coalition. Fundamentalist leaders lacked what had made Bryan the leader of the crusade, namely, a national reputation, a tolerant evangelicalism, a believable ideology,

and political expertise. . . .Nonevangelicals who had supported Bryan's defense of the faith found little in common ground with interdenominational fundamentalism; while after 1925, Presbyterian conservatives became preoccupied with preserving their place in the Northern Presbyterian church."[120]

Although H. L. Mencken's caricature Christianity was woefully inaccurate, his reposting related to the Scopes trial in Dayton, Tennessee (1925) and thereafter did much to subvert the Fundamental Conservative cause. He was an American journalist, essayist, magazine editor, satirist, critic of American life and culture, and scholar of American English. Known as the "Sage of Baltimore," he is regarded as one of the most influential American writers and prose stylists of the first half of the twentieth century. He commented widely on the social scene, literature, music, prominent politicians, pseudo-experts, and the Temperance Movement. A keen cheerleader of scientific progress, he was very skeptical of economic theories and particularly critical of anti-intellectualism, bigotry, populism, fundamentalist Christianity, creationism, organized religion, and the existence of God. Mencken was known for his controversial ideas. A frank admirer of German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, he was not a proponent of representative democracy, which he believed was a system in which inferior men dominated their superiors. During and after World War I, he was sympathetic to the Germans, and was very distrustful of British propaganda.[121] He and Walter Lippmann were harsh critics of fundamentalism. Their savage attacks, bigoted reports, and crude stereotypes during and after the Scopes trial, which Mencken dubbed "the Monkey Trial," were used to discredit and defame William Jennings Bryan, J. Frank Norris, Aimee Semple McPherson, and fundamentalists in general.[122] Hankins' presentation on the Scopes trial offers some added perspective overlooked by most writers. He emphasizes the "post-Scopes Trial reporting" and the "Inherit the Wind" movie to point out incorrect *post facto* reporting on the trial to reinforce stereotypes of fundamentalists. Hankins illustrates the distortions made by Stephen Jay Gould's description of *Inherit the Wind*, the play (1955) and later movie (1960), and Ray Ginger, *Six Days or Forever?* (1958), corrected by Edward Larson, *Summer of the Gods* (1997). His purpose is to show how stereotypes are made regardless of their being truthful or false. In addition to the distortions by Mencken and Lippmann, Frederick Lewis Allen's *Only Yesterday* (1931) enshrined the stereotype of ignorant, intolerant, and bigoted fundamentalists.[123]

Conclusion

The titanic struggle between traditional, orthodox Christianity and the emerging theologies of Modernism (Liberalism) is one of the most traumatic episodes of the early twentieth century. Its interpretations are manifold, but may be narrowed down to a spectrum of two polar extremes. Naturalism, secularism, relativism, and humanism at one end of the spectrum result in a liberal tradition endorsed by mainstream theologians and historians. This is what J. Gresham Machen identifies "not as Christianity, but as another religion altogether." At the other end of the spectrum is what has been called a "militant, separatist, literalist, anti-intellectual and bigoted community of traditionalists who are out of step with modern times." The Kaleidoscopic picture portrayed here, demonstrates two vastly different approaches to the historical narrative. The first is the so-called Hegelian Dialectic developed in the Marxist tradition from which the social sciences emerged. The other is the grammatical-historical method drawing truth from God and His Word, the Bible, and responding to its challengers rather than absorbing their relativistic elements. Instead a being characterized by the so-called "Five Fundamentals," the twelve volumes of *The Fundamentals* demonstrate a vastly broader perspective. Instead of anti-intellectual, narrow-minded southerners, their reference works, such as *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (1915), were produced by the collaboration of members from a diversity of denominations. Many Fundamentalist leaders were offered positions in the new liberal institutions being funded by great industrialists of the Gilded Age (Mullins and Riley were offered positions at the new University of Chicago Divinity School funded by John D. Rockefeller). Several southerners who yielded to the opportunity to go into liberal institutions in the North drifted from their biblical faith and even went from skepticism to agnosticism to rejection of their Christian faith altogether. The important lesson to be drawn from this model is that literal biblical truth cannot be mixed with relativist natural scientific theories without losing the truthfulness of their faith. As Martin Luther said, "God's truth abides forever."

[1] George F. Moore, "Kuenen, Abraham," in Isidore Singer (ed.), *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, Complete in Twelve Volumes, [Vol. VII] (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1904, 1910; Skokie, IL: Varda Books, 2002, 579b-580a.

[2] Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction*, 160. Also see Gleason L. Archer, Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Revised Edition (Chicago: Moody Press, 1964, 1974) 87.

[3] Smith also published *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church: A course of*

lectures on biblical criticism (Edinburgh: A. & C. Black 1881); second edition (London: A. & C. Black 1892).

[4] Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *From God to Us: How We Got Our Bible,* Revised and Expanded (Chicago, Moody Press, 1974, 2012), 222.

[5] Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction*, 161.

[6] Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us*, 223.

[7] Ibid., 228-29.

[8] Ibid., 230.

[9] Ibid., 231.

[10] Woodbridge, Noll, and Hatch, 111.

[11] Ibid., 110.

[12] Ibid., 111.

[13] This data is based on "Charles Hodge – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia," based on George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (2006) 9-20, 111-113; and Mark A. Noll, "Introduction" (nttp://www.questia.com/library/102198692/). In Mark A. Noll, *Charles Hodge: The Way of Life* Sources of American Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press – via Questia (subscription required). Retrieved 10 April 2013.

[14] "Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy," Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamentalist%E2%80%93Modernist_Controversy (accessed 9/10/2013).

[15] Albert Mohler, Jr., "To Train the Minister Whom God Has Called," *Founders Journal*, 19/20 (Winter 1995): 4 (online accessed August 29, 2013). The following discussion follows Mohler.

[16] Andrew Lindsey, "Biographical Sketch: James P. Boyce," (Sunday, July 15, 2007). Accessed http://archives.sbts.edu/partner/Article_Display_Page/o,,PTID325566|CHID7179

Internet.

[17] Mohler, “To Train the Minister.”

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Edwin S. Gaustad (ed.), *A Documentary History of Religion in America since 1865, 2nd ed*. (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 36.

[23] Noll, 364.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Phyllis R. Tippit, W. H. Bellinger, Jr., “Repeating History: Crawford Toy,” *Baptist History and Heritage*, 38, 1 (Winter 2003).

[26] Ibid.

[27] Excerpted from W. O. Carver, “William Heth Whitsitt. The Seminary’s Martyr,” *The Review and Expositor*, vol. LI, no. 4 (October 1954): 450-468, passim. Also see E. B. Pollard, “The Life and Work of William Heth Whitsitt,” *The Review and Expositor*, vol. IX, no. 2 (April, 1912), 159-184.

[28] The following discussion follows Albert Mohler, “E. Y. Mullins: The Axioms of Religion,” from http://ww.alertmohler.com/2009/07/16/e-y-mullins-the-axioms-of-religion/ (accessed 09/02/2013).

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] E. Y. Mullins, “Pragmatism, Humanism, and Personalism—The New Philosophic Movement,” *Review and Expositor*, 5 (1908), 503.

[32] Cited in "sbcnet, E. Y. Mullins," http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/heritage/mullins.asp (accessed 9/10/ 2013).

[33] Trevan Wax, "The Enigmatic Edgar: Why E. Y. Mullins Is Essential To Understanding Southern Baptists." http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevinwax/2012/09/10/the-enigmatic-edgar-why-e-y-mullins-is-essential-to-understanding-southern-baptists/ (accessed 9//10/2013).

[34] Ibid.

[35] C. Allyn Russell, "Viewpoint: W. A. Criswell: A Case Study in Fundamentalism," *Review and Expositor*, 81(Winter, 1981), 107-131.

[36] Albert W. Wardin, Jr., *Baptists in Oregon* (Portland: Judson Baptist College, 1969), 403.

[37] Foster, John W., *Four Northwest Fundamentalists* (Portland, OR: privately published, 1975), 63-80.

[38] Discussion extracted from A. C. Dixon, "Amzi Clarence Dixon Papers, AR 111," *Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives*, (Nashville: Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives), Original inventory, 1964; Revised and updated, 2002, updated March 2012. www.sbhla.org/downloads/111.pdf (accessed 9/11/2013).

[39] "A. C. Dixon" from *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A._C._Dixon (accessed 9/10/2013).

[40] Ibid.

[41] Norman F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalis Controversy, 1918-1931* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 49. Furniss has an excellent survey of "Fundamentaslist Organizations," 49-75.

[42] Anonymous "Formation Of The Baptist Bible Union," *Central Bible Quarterly*, 7:3 (Fall 1964): 34.

[43] Gerald L. Priest, "A. C. Dixon, Chicago Liberals, and *The Fundamentals*," *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 1 (Spring, 1996), 113, n2.

[44] Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism*, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980, 2006. 102.

[45] Ibid., 4.

[46] Ibid., 261.

[47] David O. Beale, *Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1986), 3.

[48] Ibid. 3-4.

[49] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 102-103.

[50] Samuel G. Craig, "Benjamin B. Warfield," At: http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org z9accesed 8/15/2013); John E. Meeter and Roger Nicole, *A Bibliography of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, 1851*-1921 (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1974). Harold Lindsell, "Warfield, Benjamin Breckinridge (1947-1927)," in J. D. Douglas (Gen. Ed.), *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Revised Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974, 1978), 1030; see Barry Waugh, "Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (5 November 1851-16 February 1921), *The Southern Presbyterian Review*, Digitization Project: Author Biography; Barry Waugh, "A Manuscript By B. B. Warfield Concerning The Trial Of Charles A. Briggs." *Westminster Theological Journal*. *WTJ*, 66, 2 (2004).

[51] Documents in the PCA Historical Center: Historic Presbyterian Documents contain the complete text of this document as well as the complete text of the "Auburn Affirmation and the Reformed Response" (1924) which was written almost entirely in opposition to the "Doctrine of Deliverance (1910); in 1927 the General Assembly overturned the Deliverance with the conclusion that the Assembly cannot mandate certain doctrines as "essential and necessary." This action by the 1927 General Assembly essentially loosed the Church from its moorings. Documents are available online in http://www.pcahistory.org/documents/ (accessed 8/8/2013).

[52] Discussion follows Wikipedia, but previous discussions provide alternate interpretations "Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy," see

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamentalist%E2%80%93Modernist_Controversy (accessed 8/16/2013).

[53] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 117; the source he provides is not by an historian, but a layman "architect" who is writing "recollections" and not providing specific details. He also ignore the clear 1929 statement by William Bell Riley (nine points), who is generally regarded to be the architect of fundamentalism as previously discussed.

[54] This discussion follows "Charles William Eliot, *Wikipedia*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_William_Eliot (accessed 9/12/2013).

[55] Ibid.

[56] "Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)" was an American essayist, lecturer, and poet, who led the Transcendentalist movement of the mid-19th century. He was seen as a champion of individualism and a prescient critic of the countervailing pressures of society, and he disseminated his thoughts through dozens of published essays and more than 1,500 public lectures across the United States. Like his father and brother William he was a Unitarian minister. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Waldo_Emerson (Accessed 9/13/2013).

[57] Joan Ostling, "Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1803-1882)", in Douglas, *Dictionary*, 340.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] "Harvard Classics," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_Classics. (accessed 9/13/2013).

[61] See "Guide to William A. BeVier, "Collection on C. I. Scofield (1866-1960, an undated William A. BeVier Collection on C. I. Scofield, CN 015, Archives, Dallas Theological Seminary.

[62] This discussion follows Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us*, 330-333.

[63] Dollar, *Fundamentalism*, 72-73; They are cited with references in Sandeen,

Roots, “Appendix A,”.273-277

[64] Don Johnson, “Lyman and Milton Stewart, Fundamentalist, Biography,” in Militants, Moderates, & Millionaires (Part 2), Issue 55. http://www.christianity.net/christianity/55H/55H28a.html (accessed 9/10/2013).

[65] Larry R.Oats, “The Priorities of ‘The Fundamentals’,” *The Maranatha Baptist Theological Journal*, 2, 1. http://more.mbbc.edu/journal/volume-two/the-priorities-of-fundamentals/#wrap (accessed 9/9/2013)

[66] John, Lyman and Milton Stewart”.

[67] Glen Lehman, *75 Years of IFCA History*, in http://ifcamedia.org/ifcaweb/docs/75YearsOfIFCAHistory-Lehman.pdf (accessed 8/15/2013).

[68] See Kelvin Crow, “Curtis Lee Laws” in “A Gallery of Militants, Moderates, & Millionaires,” *Church History Magazine* Issue 55 https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/gallery-of-militants-moderates-and-millionaires/ (accessed 8/15/2-13)

[69] Dollar, *Fundamentalism*, 126.

[70] C. Allyn Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism: Seven Biographical Studies* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), passim.

[71] David R. Stokes, “The Famous Texas Feud of First Baptist Preachers,” I n “History in the News,” https://davidstokeslive.wordpress.com/tag/j-frank-norris/(accessed 9/16/2013).,

[72] Russell, *Voices*, 24.

[73] Sandeen, *Roots*, 198.

[74] Priest, A. C. Dixon, 128, n.57. See Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 119. See also, p. 158, where Marsden states that the *Fundamentals* had “produced little perceptible effect.”

[75] Ibid, 129, n 69 and n 70.

[76] Ibid., 198-199.

[77] Priest, A. C. Dixon, 126-127, n. 57.

[78] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 124-125.

[79] *The Christian View of God and the World* (1893) online version is available a Christian Classics Ethereal Library (CCEL) at http://www.ccel.org/ccel/orr/view.html.

[80] His discussion follows "James Orr (theologian)," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Orr_(theologian) (accessed 8/22/2013).

[81] James Orr (General Editor), *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*; John L. Nuelsen, and Edgar Y. Mullins Assistant Editors, and Morris O. Evans, Managing Editor, in 5 volumes (Chicago: The Howard Severance Company, 1915);), Melvin Grove Kyle (1844-1933) was Revising Editor for revision published by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939..

[82] William Bell Riley, "The Faith of the Fundamentalists, *Current History*, XXVI (June 1927), 434-436, cited in Gatewood, "The Fundamentalist Credo: William Bell Riley, James M. Gray, J. Gresham Machen," 74-75."

[83] Ibid, 128.

[84] Dollar, *Fundamentalism*, 70.

[85] Ibid, 60-71.

[86] Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 135.

[87] Chuck Currie, "Walter Rauschenbusch and the Social Gospel," in Modern Theologians. (n.p., nd.) 3.

[88] Dillenberger and Welch, 248.

[89] Robert T. Handy, "Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918),"in George L. Hunt (ed.), *Ten Makers of Modern Protestant Thought* (New York: Association Press, 1958), 31-40.

[90] Currie, 4.

[91] Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917), 1.

[92] Ibid. 46-47.

[93] Ibid, 96.

[94] Ibid. 131.

[95] Ibid. 250.

[96] Hudson, 357.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Gaustad, Edwin Scott, *Historical Atlas of Religion in America, Revised Edition* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1976), 52-112.

[99] Willard B. Gatewood, Jr. (ed.), *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*. (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 31.

[100] Percy Stickney Grant (transcribed by Wayne Kempton). *Socialism and Christianity*, reprinted from *The North American Review* (August, 1909). New York: The Vestry of the Church of the Ascension, 2012.

[101] Ronald M. Carden, *William Montgomery Brown (1855-1937): The Southern Episcopal Church Bishop Who Became a Communist*. [n.p.] Edwin Mellen, 2007, passim.

[102] See "William Montgomery Brown," in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Montgomery_Brown (accessed 8/15/2013).

[103] See "Borden Parker Bowne," in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borden_Parker_Bowne#Heresy_trial (accessed 9/14/2013, emphasis added).

[104] Gatewood, 31.

[105] Gaustad, *Documentary History since 1865*, 395; Gaustad's source is J. G. Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1923), 6-8, 15-16.

[106] Gaustad, *Documentary History since 1865*, 395.

[107] See "Oswald Thompson Allis," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oswald_Thompson_Allis and in http://www.pcahistory.org/findingaids/allis/ (accessed 9/6/2013).

[108] Lehman, *75 Years of IFCA History*, 2.

[109] Ibid.

[110]Ibid. Also see William A. BeVier, *History of the I.F.C.A.*, Th.M. Thesis (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary,1958).

[111] Mark Edwards, "Rethinking the Failure of Fundamentalist Political Antievolutionism after 1925," *Fides et Historia*, vol. XXXII, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2000), 89.

[112] Ibid., 89, n. 1.

[113] Ibid., 90-106.

[114] Ibid., 90, emphasis added.

[115] Ibid., 91.

[116] Ibid., 93-94.

[117] Ibid., 95-96.

[118] Ibid., 97.

[119] Ibid., 97-98.

[120] Ibid., 101.

[121] “Mencken” *Wikipedia*. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki.H_L_mencken (accessed 9/12/2013).

[122] See Barry Hankins, “The (Worst) Year of the Evangelical: 1926 and the Demise of American Fundamentalism,” *Fides et Historia* 43, 1 (Winter/Spring 2011): 1-14.

[123] Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1931. Also available online at http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/allen/cover.html (accessed 2/14/2013).

CHAPTER 8

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY ON THE DISCIPLINE OF ITS MEMBERSHIP

Norman L. Geisler



Introduction

The Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) was founded in 1949 on the basis of a single doctrinal statement which affirmed: “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is **therefore** inerrant in the autographs” (*emphasis added*). The word “therefore” logically connects “the word of God” and “inerrant” to make it clear that neither God nor the Bible errs. This meaning of the word “therefore” was confirmed by the context and by the living framers of the statement.

In 2003, Open Theists confessed both God and the Bible erred in the sense understood by the framers of this doctrinal statement, namely, Open Theists believe that the Bible affirms some things that are not factually correct. For example, John Sanders agrees that there are biblical prophesies that go unfulfilled. Clark Pinnock claimed that Chronicles gives exaggerated numbers that do not correspond with the facts. If this reasoning of Pinnock is accepted, this would signify that these Open Theist ETS members had violated the doctrinal statement they had signed and should no longer be members. However, as we shall see, they were never expelled from ETS.

From its inception in 1949 up to the Pinnock case, the ETS leaders had monitored the doctrinal statement more carefully. A complete search of the ETS minutes reveals several cases where persons were denied membership (i.e., they had or were seeking) for failure to agree with the doctrinal statement.

The Richard Bube Case

The 1970 Minutes of ETS affirm that “Dr. R. H. Bube, who has for three years signed his membership form with a note on his own interpretation of infallibility. The secretary was instructed to point out that **it is impossible for the Society to allow each member an idiosyncratic interpretation of inerrancy**, **and hence Dr. Bube is to be requested to sign his form without any qualifications,** his own integrity in the matter being entirely respected” (*emphasis added*). This makes it clear that members could give their own meaning to the statement but are bound by what the framers meant by it.

As will be seen below, this precedent was violated by ETS in the case of Clark Pinnock in 2003, for he held views contrary to what the Founders meant by the doctrinal basis of ETS and yet he received approval of the Society.

Long-Standing ETS Journal Policy

In 1965 ETS *Bulletin* policy demanded a disclaimer and rebuttal of Dan Fuller's article denying factual inerrancy published in the ETS *Bulletin* (the precursor of *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society)*. They insisted that "an article by Dr. Kantzer be published simultaneously with the article by Dr. Fuller and that Dr. Schultz include in that issue of the *Bulletin* a brief explanation regarding the appearance of a viewpoint different from that of the Society" (1965).

This long-standing-policy was disregarded in the case of the ETS vote on Clark Pinnock's and John Sander's membership. No such disclaimer or rebuttal was published, even though some 63% of the membership favored their removal from the Society (388 to 231)—which fell short of the two-thirds majority necessary to do so.

ETS Presidential Decision of 1983

Speaking of some who held "Barthian" views of Scripture, the Minutes of the ETS Executive Committee read: "President Gordon Clark invited them to leave the society" (1983). Here there was a membership discipline of a member who rejected the ETS Doctrinal Statement by the action of the President of the Society, Dr. Gordon Clark. This was apparently done with the approval of the Executive Committee. But what is noteworthy is that the dismissal was accomplished without any vote of the Society.

However, twenty years later, Clark Pinnock held a similar Barthian view of Scripture and yet was retained by the Society. Pinnock said flatly: **"Barth was right to speak about a distance between the Word of God and the text of the Bible**."[1] But if Barth was right, then the ETS statement is wrong since it claims the Bible is the written Word of God. Even the minority of the ETS Executive Committee who refused to vote to expel either Pinnock or Sanders from the Society admitted that a Barthian view of Scripture would be grounds for dismissal.[2] Yet, Pinnock expressed this unrecanted, unorthodox written view, and they refused to expel him.

The Case of Robert Gundry 1983

For two years, ETS discussed the matter of Robert Gundry as to whether his denial of certain sections of Matthew (like the story of the Wise Men in Matt 2) was a denial of the inerrancy of Scripture. The ETS Bylaws read (in Article Four Section 4): “A member whose writings or teachings have been challenged at an annual business meeting as incompatible with the Doctrinal Basis of the Society, upon majority vote, shall have his case referred to the executive committee, before whom he and his accusers shall be given full opportunity to discuss his views and the accusations. The executive committee shall then refer his case to the Society for action at the annual business meeting the following year. A two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting shall be necessary for dismissal from membership.”

After following the Bylaws, eventually the vote was taken, and 70% of the membership asked Gundry to resign from ETS membership, which he did. The issue of denying historicity had already been discussed by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI) which declared (in 1978) that: “We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the test or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, **dehistoricizing**, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship” (Article XVIII, *emphasis added*). This takes on even more significance since the ICBI statement was adopted by the ETS on 2003 as a guide to understanding what ETS means by inerrancy. The ETS adoption reads in part: “For the purpose of advising members regarding the intent and meaning of the reference to biblical inerrancy in the ETS Doctrinal Basis, the Society refers members to the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* (1978). The case for biblical inerrancy rests on the absolute trustworthiness of God and Scripture’s testimony to itself” (Bylaws #12).

The case of Robert Gundry is interesting and more crucial to ETS because he not only confesses to inerrancy but he also belonged to ETS. Yet like the other examples, he held a methodology that seems inconsistent with the ETS doctrine of inerrancy. Like the sometimes unorthodox church father Origen, he confesses that the Bible is inspired. Gundry rejected the literal truth of certain sections of Matthew and takes a kind of allegorical (i.e., midrashic) interpretation of them. For example, Matthew reports that wise men followed a star, conversed with Herod and the scribes, went to Bethlehem, and presented gifts to Christ. Gundry, however, denies that these were literal events. He denies that Jesus literally went up on a mountain to give the Sermon on the Mount as Matthew reports it. He

denies that the saints were literally resurrected after Jesus died as reported in Matthew 27, and so on. So while Gundry confesses to believe that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, he denied that these events reported by Matthew are literally and historically true.

But to deny that what the Bible reports in these passages actually occurred is to deny in effect that the Bible is wholly true. As the 1982 "Chicago Statement on Hermeneutics" declares, "We deny that any event, discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the biblical writers or by the traditions they incorporated" (Article XIV). This is precisely what Gundry does—namely, he claims that some events reported in Matthew did not actually occur but were invented by the Gospel writer. The membership believed overwhelmingly (70%) that it is unacceptable to claim that Gundry should be included because he conscientiously confesses inerrancy whereas others do not. For, as previously noted, it is not mere confession of a doctrine that is the test for the truthfulness of a belief but actual conformity to what that doctrine means. So while Gundry made a *de jure* (official) confession of inerrancy, nevertheless, he engaged in a *de facto* denial of inerrancy, for he denies that some events reported in Scripture did in fact occur.

First of all, the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture is a major doctrine, and Gundry's method is a *de facto* denial of the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture. Even if his method never leads him actually to a denial of any other doctrine, it does deny one important doctrine, the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture. In fact, as far as ETS is concerned, this is the only explicitly stated doctrine by which one is tested for membership. So Gundry's denial of the occurrence of some events reported in the gospel of Matthew is a denial of the ETS doctrine that all Scripture is true.

Although Gundry did not apply his allegorical (midrashic) interpretation to any major doctrine, the midrash methodology seems to be applicable nonetheless. For example, why should one consider the report of the bodily resurrection of the saints after Jesus' resurrection (Matt 27) to be allegorical and yet insist that Jesus' resurrection, which was the basis for it (cf. 1 Cor 15:23), was literal? By what logic can we insist that the same author in the same book reporting the same kind of event in the same language can mean spiritual resurrection in one case and literal bodily resurrection in another case? Gundry's method leads (by logical extension) to a denial of major doctrines of Scripture. The ETS membership accepted this kind of criticism and overwhelmingly voted

to ask Gundry to resign.

Second, the similarities between Robert Gundry's views and those of Mike Licona are striking. Both confess to believe in inerrancy. Both held ETS membership. Both used genre criticism to reject the historicity of parts of the Gospels. Yet, there is a striking difference: Gundry was asked to leave ETS by a 70% vote, but to date no such rejection of Licona by ETS leadership or membership has occurred.

The Case of a Roman Catholic Inerrantist

A Roman Catholic scholar applied for ETS membership in the early 2000s while I (Geisler) was still on the ETS Executive Committee. He was rejected on the testimony of one ETS framer (Roger Nicole) who said (orally) in an ETS meeting that the ETS doctrinal statement was meant to exclude Roman Catholics. In spite of the fact that no evidence was presented for the exclusion, and that the Roman Catholic applicant emphatically confessed that he held to the ETS Doctrinal Statement, the application was turned down by a majority vote of the executive committee (one vote to the contrary).

Yet, in the case of Clark Pinnock in which all the living framers of the ETS contended in writing that Clark Pinnock's view was contrary to what they meant by the ETS doctrinal statement, the ETS executive committee rejected their view. Further, the Society as a whole failed to dismiss Pinnock since they could not get the needed 2/3 majority to do it (getting only 63%). On what grounds could the Executive Committee reject a Roman Catholic who could conscientiously sign the ETS statement on the testimony of one living framer when it rejected all the living framers insistence that Open Theism was contrary to the ETS statement?

New Names on the Horizon

Defending inerrancy, like defending democracy, takes *eternal vigilance*. It is a never-ending battle. In our recent book**,** *Defending Inerrancy*, we have named several other scholars who are in fact denying inerrancy while confessing to believe in it. These include Kenton Sparks, Peter Enns, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Craig Blomberg.[3]

One notable example is that of Mike Licona. He confessed to believe in

inerrancy of the ETS and ICBI variety. Yet, like Gundry who was excluded from ETS, he believes that certain sections of the Gospels may be unhistorical.[4] Licona even goes so far as to affirm that there can be contradictions in the Gospels and yet they could still be inerrant. How so? Because the Greco-Roman genre (which Licona determined the Gospels to be) allows for contradictions.[5] He claims this is a "flexible genre," and "it is often difficult to determine where history ends and legend begins."[6] Indeed, he claims "*Bios* offered the ancient biographer great flexibility for rearranging material and *inventing speeches*. . .and they often *included legends.*"[7]

In a debate with Ehrman at Southern Evangelical Seminary (Spring 2009), Licona revealed, "I think that John probably altered the day [of Jesus's crucifixion] in order for a theological—to make a theological point there. But that does not mean that Jesus wasn't crucified." In short, he believed that John contradicts the other Gospels on which day Jesus was crucified, but claims that this does not negate the doctrine of inerrancy. Just how the Bible can be inerrantly false in places we are not told. Yet this is allowed by Greco-Roman genre which he appears to take to be actually true! Later, in a professionally transcribed interview (by Lenny Esposito) of Mike Licona on YouTube on November 23, 2012 at the 2012 Evangelical Theological Society meeting,[8] Licona affirmed the following: **"So um this didn't really bother me in terms of if there were contradictions in the Gospels.** I mean I believe in biblical inerrancy but I also realized that biblical inerrancy is not one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity." He added hopefully**, "I mean there are only maybe a handful of things between Gospels that are potential contradictions and only one or two that I found that are really stubborn for me at this point** and they are all in the peripherals again."[9]

Unfortunately, Licona believes inerrancy is a "peripheral" matter, but this is not so. It is part and parcel of the doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Bible which is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian Faith. Further, a divinely inspired error is a contradiction in terms. What is more, Greco-Roman genre status does not trump the law of noncontradiction. Just because the Greek biographers allowed contradictions does not justify God using them in His Word. Indeed, God commands us to "avoid. . .contradictions" (Gk. *antitheseis*, 1 Tim 6:20). In fact the undeniable law of noncontradiction transcends all literary genre. For opposite affirmations within any literary genre are still false because opposites cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense.

Furthermore, there is no necessity to accept the Greco-Roman genre for the New Testament. Many scholars reject this genre as applied to the Gospels, particularly when it involves accepting contradictions. Indeed, one of the Gospel writers clearly rejected the dehistoricizing aspect of Greco-Roman genre accepted by Licona. Luke declares emphatically that he is recording accurate history when he wrote: "Just as those who from the beginning were **eyewitnesses and ministers of the world have delivered them to us**, it seemed good to me also**, having followed all things closely** for some time past, to write an **orderly account** for you, most excellent Theophilus**, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught**" (Luke 1:1-4, *emphasis added*).

Finally, no one has proven a contradiction in the Gospels. As for one case Licona embraced, no contradiction has been demonstrated. For example, the alleged contradiction critics see between John 19:31 and Mark 15:42 on the day of the crucifixion—whether Thursday or Friday—is not a real contradiction at all. "Preparation" is a word used for "Friday" (not Thursday), the day of preparation for a Sabbath or feast. For example, "Since it was the day of preparation, and so the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken. . ." (John 19:31 cf. Mark 15:42). A.T. Robertson said, "That is, Friday of Passover week, the preparation day before Sabbath of Passover week (or feast)."[10] D.A. Carson wrote: "('Preparation') regularly refers to Friday—i.e. the Preparation of the Sabbath is Friday."[11] So both Gospels have the crucifixion on the same day—Friday.

While it is admirable to confess inerrancy, it is inconsistent to deny it in principle and practice. Licona claims to be an inerrantist of the ETS and ICBI variety, but ICBI framers have flatly rejected his views. R.C. Sproul wrote: "As the former and only President of ICBI during its tenure and as the original framer of the Affirmations and Denials of the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, I can say categorically that Dr. Michael Licona's views are not even remotely compatible with the unified Statement of ICBI."[12]

How ETS Lost Its Doctrinal Integrity

As we have seen, ETS from the beginning (1949) through the Gundry issue (1983) maintained its doctrinal integrity. When confronted with doctrinal deviation on inerrancy, they enforced what the framers meant by its statement

that “The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs.” With the official decision to retain in membership persons who clearly deny what the ETS framers meant by this statement, ETS lost its doctrinal integrity. By a vote of 388 to 231 (nearly 63%) Clark Pinnock was retained in the Society. John Sanders was also retained but by a lesser vote. In view of Pinnock’s blatant and unrecanted written views that contradict the meaning of the ETS framers, this is the straw that broke the camel’s back. There were many unacceptable facets of their procedure and decision, such the following.

ETS Refused to Seriously Consider Pinnock’s Major Work on the Topic

The ETS Committee knowingly refused to consider any quotations from a major work of Clark Pinnock on the topic, *The Scripture Principle* that had been provided them. In spite of the fact that a former president (me) provided them in advance with four pages of damning quotations from this book, any consideration of it was ruled out of order in considering Pinnock’s innocence or guilt. Whatever the alleged technical merits of the decision, it was a practical disaster. Their decision to exclude citations from this work because they were not presented in the original complaint is akin to claiming that the testimony of a prime witness of a murder cannot be allowed to testify since they were not cited in the original brief to the court. This was a tragic and arbitrary decision that led to the Pinnock exoneration of the charges and made a sham out of the proceedings. How can a man be considered innocent of the charges when a prime work of his on the topic was knowingly and deliberately not considered? This is an especially grievous error since this work contains at least four pages of citations which show the incompatibility of his views with that of the framers of the ETS doctrinal statement.

ETS Has Adopted a Revisionist Interpretation of Its Own Doctrine.

Further, ETS knowingly adopted a revisionist hermeneutic that undermined that for which it stood on inerrancy. For the report of the Executive Committee, confirmed by the membership vote, knowingly allows in its membership persons who do not hold the same view on inerrancy as that of the framers of the

doctrinal statement. This they have knowingly done since 1976 when the Executive Committee confessed that "Some of the members of the Society have expressed the feeling that a measure of **intellectual dishonesty prevails among members who do not take the signing of the doctrinal statement seriously**." Other "members of the Society have come to the realization that they are not in agreement with the creedal statement and have voluntarily withdrawn. That is, **in good conscience** they could not sign the statement" (1976 Minutes, *emphasis added*). By this criterion then we now have nearly 37 percent of the Society who approve of persons who are not signing the statement "in good conscience," since they voted to retain Clark Pinnock whose views are clearly not in accord with what the ETS framers meant by their Doctrinal Basis. For in November 2000**, all the living Founding Fathers signed a statement that "The denial of God's foreknowledge of the decisions of free agents is incompatible with the inerrancy of Scripture.**"

Further, an ETS Ad Hoc Committee recognized this problem when it posed the proper question in 1983: "Is it acceptable for a member of the society to hold a view of biblical author's intent which disagrees with the Founding Fathers and even the majority of the society, and still remain a member in good standing?" (*emphasis added*). The Society never said "No." And actually the Society has given a resounding "Yes" in response to this question with its vote to retain Clark Pinnock in its membership.

Conclusion

The sad conclusion of the history of the ETS regarding the monitoring of its doctrinal statements is this: When a society no longer requires that its members accept its doctrinal statement as its framers meant it, then it has sown the seeds of its own demise. Honesty demands that when a member comes to no longer agree with the doctrinal standing as the framers meant it, then he should resign. They should not reconstruct and reengineer the statement to their own liking in order to stay in the society. For example, if one is a member of the square earth society, and he comes to believe the earth is really round, he should not attempt to redefine square to mean round so that he can stay in the society. Rather, he should leave the square earth society and join the round earth society.

[1] Clark H. Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle*. 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) 99, *emphasis added*.

[2] October 23 *Report*, p. 6.

[3] See Norman L. Geisler and William C. Roach, *Defending Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012) Part Two.

[4] See Michael R. Licona The *Resurrection of Jesus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010) 306, 548, 552-53.

[5] Ibid., 34.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., *emphasis added*.

[8] See http://youtu.be/TJ8rZukh_Bc.

[9] Ibid., *emphasis added*.

[10] *Word Pictures*, vol. 5, p. 299.

[11] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 603.

[12] Letter, May 22nd, 2012.

PART FOUR

BEWARE OF "CRITICAL" POSTMODERN HISTORY

What Can We Learn from the Past "Critical" & "Postmodern" Attempts to Reconstruct the "Historical" Jesus?

Does the Method Yield the True Jesus of History?



CHAPTER 9

SEARCHING FOR THE "HISTORICAL" JESUS: THE RISE OF THE THREE SEARCHES

F. David Farnell



INTRODUCTION TO "SEARCHING" FOR THE "HISTORICAL JESUS"[1]

For the past several hundred years, scholars have conducted what is known as "the search for the historical Jesus" or also today as "historical Jesus research." Such a search operates under the *a priori* assumption that the four canonical Gospels, the only documents written about the life of Jesus, are in some significant ways deficient, incorrect, or inadequate in their presentation of Jesus' life and work in actual history. This search posits a sharp cleavage between the Gospel portraits of Jesus and his actual existence in first century Palestine and seeks to establish a scholarly consensus view of Jesus that would be considered a more accurate representation of His life than what is contained in the Gospels. This chapter covers the rise of the three periods of activity known as "searching for the 'historical Jesus,'" the overarching purpose of which is to deliberately destroy the influence of the Gospels and the church upon society. While this purpose is openly and honestly admitted by theological liberals, evangelicals who participate now in the "third" quest are far less candid as to its design. These searches started with the rise in dominance of the ideology of historical criticism over two hundred years ago and are a natural consequence of the innate

historical skepticism replete in them. The first two searches ended as declared failures by those who engaged in them. Now some of the same scholars who have inspired the New Perspective on Paul have also been largely influential in stimulating the "third search for 'the historical Jesus'" (e.g. Sanders, Wright, Dunn). When the evidence is examined, only one overall "search for the 'historical Jesus'" has actually existed. All three are unified by sharing, to some degree, the unifying characteristics of significant degrees of suspicion regarding the Gospels, similar ideological approaches in utilizing historical criticism, a refusal to accept the biblical accounts as truly depicting Jesus as He actually was in history, and a marked preference for developing a view of Jesus that is acceptable to scholarship.

The Consistent Testimony of the Orthodox Church for 1700 Years

From the nascent beginnings of the church until the seventeenth century, orthodox Christians held that the four canonical Gospels (Matthew, Luke, Mark and John) were historical, biographical, albeit selective (cf. John 20:30-31) eyewitness accounts of Jesus' life[2] written by the men whose names were attached to them from the beginning.[3] These Gospels are virtually the only source for our knowledge of the acts and teachings of Jesus.[4] The Gospels were considered by the Church as the product of Spirit-energized minds (John 14:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:4) to give the true presentation of Jesus' life and work for the thirty-plus years that He lived on the earth. The consistent, as well as persistent, testimony expressed in early church history was that the Apostle Matthew, also known as Levi, wrote the book of Matthew as the first account of Jesus' life; the physician, Luke, companion of the Apostle Paul, wrote his Gospel based on careful interviews of those who interacted with Jesus (Luke 1:1-4); Mark, the interpreter for Peter, wrote his Gospel based on the preaching of Peter; while the Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved as well as a specially intimate disciple of Jesus, wrote the last canonical Gospel that bears his name. Since these men had either accompanied Jesus' ministry from its inception (Matthew, John) or been in direct contact with those who had (Mark, Luke), the accounts were considered absolutely trustworthy witnesses to Jesus' life and ministry as it actually occurred in history.

The Gospels: Four Independent and

Reliable Witnesses to Jesus' Life

Most likely, the reason why four independent Gospels would exist to His life is found in the Old Testament Mosaic legal concept of establishing matters on the basis of eyewitness testimony: "on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed" (Deut. 19:15b; cf. 17:6-7). God, who knows that we depend on the testimony of those who themselves saw and heard Jesus, made sure that the message necessary for salvation was transmitted to us not singly but through multiple eyewitnesses to affirm the matter. The independent witnesses confirm one another in a complementary fashion.[5] The Old Testament penalty for false testimony regarding anyone who would lead God's people astray in prophecy or toward false gods was death. The early church maintained that the Gospels are supplementary and complementary, not contradictory, to one another. Importantly, from the early church until the seventeenth century no differences between these Gospel accounts and how Jesus actually was in history was conceptualized.[6] The Jesus of the Gospels was the Jesus of history down to His uniqueness as well as His supernatural character as God-man. The rise of modern *philosophical* ideologies inherent in historical criticism generates such distinctions.

Philosophical Context of Searching

The Rise of Hostile and Alien Philosophies Creates a Chasm Between the Gospels and the Jesus of History

One cannot overstress that the rise of modern *philosophical* ideologies inherent in historical criticism generates any such distinctions between the Jesus as he is presented in the canonical Gospels and any conceptualizations of how he is alleged to have been actually in history. Hostile philosophical underpinnings of the ideology in terms of a virulent *antisupernaturalism* create these hypothetical distinctions.[7] *The overarching intent in these searches is the destruction of the influence of the Gospels, as well as the church, over society.*

The "Historical Jesus" Research is Searching for a Definition of the Term

The term “historical Jesus” cannot truly be defined with any degree of satisfaction or consensus among those who advocate such research. These researchers search for a concept of Jesus that cannot be defined. The irony of this state of affairs in its definition has resulted from the fact that no consensus has occurred as to what the “historical Jesus” is or was. Hagner incisively comments,

> It deserves to be emphasized that in both the nineteenth-century writing on Jesus and that of today, what seems to be wanting is not so much *a truer* view of Jesus as an *alternative* view. The traditional view of Jesus, the view held by the early church, is old-fashioned, uninteresting, and thought to be unconvincing. What the world craves is a debunking of the traditional Jesus, a Jesus rescued from the dogma of the church for twenty-first century human beings. What will sell books and bring fame or notoriety are new explanations of Jesus—explanations acceptable to the proclivities and sensitivities of the modern world.[8]

After two hundred-plus years of questing for whatever the “historical Jesus” might be, involving possibly three perceived “quests” (whether three exist is debated as will be discussed), no general agreement exists among biblical scholars who pursue this discipline as to what the term means. Renowned British theologian, N. T. Wright, himself a strategic impetus for a “Third Quest” for the “historical Jesus” now known officially as the “Life of Jesus Research,” laments, “The current wave of books about Jesus offers a bewildering range of competing hypotheses. There is no unifying theological agenda; no final agreement about method; certainly no common set of results.”[9] All quests, however, have in common the refusal to allow the possibility of the truly supernatural in history and thus take away any adequate or Gospel-based understanding of Jesus. An acute subjectivity reigns in every presentation of whatever the “historical Jesus” is/was. William Hamilton, reflecting somewhat of a Bultmannian or Tillichian mode that assumes *a priori* negative historiography involved in historical criticism, rejects the whole process as “beyond belief,” concluding “Jesus is inaccessible by historical means,” preferring instead a “Quest for the Post-Historical Jesus.” According to Hamilton, Jesus in history can never be defined or known. Thus, not only is the Gospel portrait rejected but no certainty can exist or be known about Jesus even in an alleged post-Easter circumstance.[10] Perhaps the crescendo of this type of thought is found with Jewish theologian Neusner when he stated that the questing for the historical Jesus is “disingenuous” and “irrelevant,” since modern standards of historiography “cannot comprise

supernatural events," and "religious writings such as the Gospels cannot, and should not, attempt to meet [such standards]."[11] Since the heart of the Gospels entails the supposition that God entered human history with Jesus, anything supernatural is *a priori* ruled out from being investigated historically.

Whatever the "Historical Jesus" is, it must NOT be the Christ of the Gospels

In 1959, James M. Robinson, a leader of what is now known as the "second quest" period, did, however, stress what the term could *not* mean:

> The term "historical Jesus" is not simply identical with "Jesus" or "Jesus of Nazareth," as if the adjective "historical" were a meaningless addition. Rather the adjective is used in a technical sense, and makes a specific contribution to the total meaning of the expression. "Historical" is used in the sense of "things in the past which have been established by objective scholarship." Consequently the expression "historical Jesus" comes to mean: "What can be known of Jesus of Nazareth by means of scientific methods of the historian." Thus we have to do with a technical expression which must be recognized as such, and not automatically identified with the simple term "Jesus."[12]

Robinson continues regarding the first alleged quest that "[t]his was in fact the assumption of the nineteenth century quest of the historical Jesus. For this quest was initiated by the enlightenment in its effort to escape the limitations of dogma. . . . unrestricted by the doctrinal presentations of him in the Bible, creed and Church."[13] Because no perceived agreement or consensus exists as to who or what the "historical Jesus" is or even if such a definition can even be determined, the consequence appears to be that it is to be defined negatively since a general agreement exists among questers that whatever the "historical Jesus" is or was, He is not, and indeed cannot be, equated fully with the Jesus who is presented in the Gospels. Since historiography, *i.e.* hypotheses of what can take place in a time-space continuum in reference to historical critical ideology, cannot encompass the supernatural, and indeed, rules it out from the very beginning, whatever the "historical Jesus" is, He cannot be equated with the Jesus presented in the Gospels.[14]

The Existential Jesus or

“What the ‘Historical Jesus’ Means to You”

As a result, the term “historical Jesus” is best perhaps termed the “existential Jesus,” for, as will be seen, a close examination of the questing reveals that the “historical Jesus” is whatever the quester *a priori* determines Jesus to be or wants him to be as somehow significantly in distinction from the biblical documents. This subjectivity is highlighted in reviewing terms used today in the “third search” to define the “historical Jesus”: an eschatological prophet, a Galilean holy man, an occult magician, an innovative rabbi, a trance-inducing psychotherapist, a Jewish sage, a political revolutionary, an Essene conspirator, an itinerant exorcist, an historicized myth, a protoliberation theologian, a peasant artisan, a Torah-observant Pharisee, a Cynic-like philosopher, a self-conscious eschatological agent, and the list could go on and on.[15] No one embraces all of these images, but they are presented by their advocates as the most reasonable reconstruction of “the historical Jesus.” After an arbitrary *a priori* decision has been made on a preconceived concept of Jesus, criteria of authenticity stemming from tradition criticism can be applied to the Gospels in order to affirm that same preconceived concept of Jesus. Since the criteria are subjective and conflicting, other criteria can be invented and applied to ensure the outcome desired. The critical weakness, as well as subjectivity, of these criteria lies in the fact that the same criteria can be applied or countered with different criteria to ensure whatever view has already been assumed.[16] It is in essence a game in which all the participants make up their own rules in order to make sure that they win. The current situation of widely conflicting views on whom the “historical Jesus” was has prompted Jesus Seminar participant John Dominic Crossan to comment that “*Historical Jesus research* today is becoming something of a scholarly bad joke” and “an academic embarrassment” as well as giving the “impression of acute scholarly subjectivity in historical research.” He goes on to note, however, something he deems positive, “the number of competent and even eminent scholars producing pictures of Jesus at wide variance with one another.”[17] As a consequence, he deems necessary a reexamination of methodologies involved in the search.[18]

The Searching Defined

Importantly, therefore, the “questing” or “searching” for the “historical” Jesus may be defined as *a philosophically-motivated historicalcritical* construct that the Jesus as presented in the Gospels is not the same or not to be identified fully

with the Jesus who actually lived in history. Underlying the questing is the assumption that "scientific" research has shown that the Jesus of history was different from the Christ of Scripture, the creeds, orthodox theology, and Christian piety.[19] To one degree or another, such an activity has as its underlying operating assumption the premise that the Gospels cannot be taken as wholly trustworthy in their presentation of Jesus' life since belief or faith has mediated their presentation. In other words, faith and history are perceived as in opposition in reference to proper or legitimate historical methods due to its standard pronouncement of a closed-continuum of cause and effect. This idea of historiography means that the phrase "historical Jesus" is oxymoronic. If Jesus is to be understood historically, according to the standards of accepted historiography replete in the ideology of historical criticism, then He cannot be the Jesus presented in the Gospels. If one accepts the Jesus in the Gospels, then such a Jesus is not historical. One must default to a departure from the New Testament presentation of Jesus out of perceived necessity so that the "historical Jesus" *must be* something other than exactly the Jesus of the Gospels.[20]

One cannot overstress that *presuppositional philosophical underpinnings* of historical criticism have driven a qualitative, as well as quantitative, wedge between how Jesus is presented in the Gospels and current hypothesizing as to how Jesus actually was alleged to be in history in ALL quests for the "historical Jesus." This philosophical, presuppositional basis for the "historical Jesus" or the "Jesus of history" results in a Jesus removed from the supernatural as well as much of the uniqueness of Jesus as He is presented in the Gospels. The degree of separation is, admittedly, somewhat one of degree depending upon the philosophical underpinnings arbitrarily accepted by the individual "searcher," but usually, it is a very sharp separation, especially in terms of any violation of a closed-continuum of cause and effect. As a result, biblical scholars who follow this mode of thought are forced *a priori* to "search" for the historical Jesus to find how He actually was in reality. Thus, "questing" for who Jesus actually was has been done since the 1700s.

Importantly, the idea of a "historical Jesus" distinct from the Gospel presentations as well as the practice of "questing" or "searching" for this presumed historical Jesus is an axiomatic consequence foundational to the tenets of historical criticism. The more one is consistent with the application of historicalcritical ideology, the further the concept of a "historical Jesus" is removed from the Gospels' presentation of Him. To put it bluntly, the "historical Jesus" is a *chimera* of historical criticism that has philosophical motivations at

its foundation. For evangelicals who hold to an orthodox view of inspiration and inerrancy as maintained in church history, the great irony is that the true “myth” of historical criticism is its idea of the “historical Jesus.”

Baruch Spinoza Stimulated the Questing

Questing is usually traced to the Enlightenment as its stimulating force, for it was during this period that a strong “prejudice against prejudice” was developed, whereby scholars rejected previous opinions of the ancients as tenuous. Orchard and Riley observe, “The Enlightenment not only witnessed the rise of critical history. . . it also signaled the triumph in the eighteenth century and subsequent European culture of rationalist ideals and antipathies, and the consequent divorce of Reason both from the tradition of faith and from tradition in principle, that is, from all tradition. The result was an era of wholesale ‘prejudice against prejudice’. . . the emasculation of tradition.”[21] Whatever the ancient, early church said about the Gospels in terms of their authorship or integrity was rejected in favor of more current approaches of the time.

While very few ideas stem from an absolute beginning or a single root cause, the nascent beginnings of the historicalcritical ideology of all these searches can be largely traced, not only to the Enlightenment, but to the profound, albeit belated, influence of the Jewish apostate Benedict Spinoza (1632-1677).[22] Spinoza, to a large degree, may truly be regarded as the progenitor or father of modern historicalcriticism of the Bible. Spinoza himself was a rationalist and pantheist who, for overriding personal reasons, disdained the plain meaning of the biblical text because of the implications as well as affect that it had upon him as a person as well as society as a whole.[23] Put bluntly, Spinoza’s ideology stemmed from an innate rejection of both the Old and New Testaments, their implications for him as a person, and their influence on society.

To have sympathy with Spinoza’s situation that inspired his philosophical approach, one must remember that he grew up in a world where he observed the use and abuse of Scripture as applied by both government and institutionalized religion. Both before and during his lifetime, Jews in many places had been forced to deny Judaism or be killed; gentile kings had justified their dubious actions by using Scripture in policy and war; and personal freedoms and actions considered contrary to Scripture were forbidden in many places impacted by Christianity.[24] In other words, Spinoza’s views arose at a time of a “war of worldviews” that competed with Scripture and what role in society Scripture

should play, if any. For Spinoza, his intent was that Scripture should have no role or influence in the modern world. His magnum opus, *Theologico-Political Treatise*,[25] was a landmark as "both the first theoretical defense of the idea of liberal democracy and the first extended treatise on biblical criticism to employ recognizably modern methods of analysis."[26]

Spinoza's method had a simplistic genius behind it. He set in motion the modern nature of biblical criticism "*as a weapon to destroy or at least discredit the traditional metaphysics of Christianity and Judaism*" [italics in original].[27] Its purpose was to remove all influence of the Bible not only in the religious sphere, but also in the economic as well as political areas of society. Commenting on the antecedent developments of historical critical ideology, Dungan relates,

> Spinoza and his followers multiplied questions about the physical history of the text to the point that the traditional theological task could never get off the ground. That, however, was precisely the intended effect of the first step: to create an endless "nominalist barrage" if you will, an infinitely extendable list of questions directed at the physical history of the text, to the point where the clergy and the political officials allied with them *could never bring to bear their own theological interpretations* of the Bible. In other words, Spinoza switched the focus from the *referent* of the biblical text (e.g., God's activity, Jesus Christ) to *the history of the text*. In doing so, he effectively eviscerated the Bible of all traditional theological meaning and moral teaching.[28]

Dungan goes on to comment, "In short, the net effect of what historical critics have accomplished during the past three hundred years—apart from accumulating an enormous heap of data about the physical history of the text—has been to eviscerate the Bible's core religious beliefs and moral values, preventing the Bible from questioning the political and economic beliefs of the new bourgeois class [that arose in the modern historicalcritical era]."[29] Simply put, biblical criticism from this point on would spend its time on issues regarding the accuracy and relevancy of the text (questions behind the text) that would leave very little room for exegesis or authority of the actual text itself.

Spinoza's "weapon" succeeded, perhaps not in his lifetime but soon afterwards, even more than Spinoza may have hoped or imagined. One need only examine modern Gospel commentaries, liberal, conservative and evangelical, to observe how much effort is today expended in

historicalcriticism's ideologies of source, form/tradition, redaction criticism, *etc.* studies of the Gospels (and other OT and NT books), or to notice how much discussion space is utilized on such issues where the text of the Gospels is largely mixed, intermingled, or even deflected, to realize that Spinoza's handy-work was accomplished. As Geisler commented, "virtually all the central emphases in modern liberalism. . . are found in Spinoza."[30] The German philosopher, Heinrich Heine, remarked well: "All of our contemporary philosophers, perhaps often without knowing it, see through the lenses ground by Baruch Spinoza."[31]

Spinoza's mantle was taken up by the English deists who, "together with Spinoza on the Continent, may be regarded as the forerunners of biblical criticism" and "the initiators of the quest for the historical Jesus" who attempted "to desupernaturalize and secularize religion in general and Jesus in particular."[32] Although English deists disappeared by 1750, their ideas took root everywhere. The most pervasive thought was that the miraculous cannot be accepted as a factor in history. According to deism, reason precludes the supernatural so that miracles and prophecy must be rejected. This idea eventually lead to the concept of searching for the real Jesus of history, since the historical Jesus according to this type of thinking could not have been the supernatural person who performed miracles in the New Testament.[33] This helped create deist Lessing's "ugly ditch" of a large, unknowable gap between the Jesus as He was in history and the Christ of faith (miracles of Jesus and especially His resurrection): "That, then, is the ugly ditch which I cannot get across, however often and however earnestly I have tried to make the leap."[34] To this day, all searching for the historical Jesus has not surmounted this abyss, for its negative historiography has not been overcome, *i.e.* the historical Jesus must be someone other than the Jesus of the Gospels.

A Historical Sweep of Stimuli. Due to space limitations, only a sweeping selective summation of events after Spinoza can be given. Spinoza's seventeenth-century ingenious deflection away from the Scriptures as credible sources due to rationalism's virulent antisupernaturalism (in this case with reference to the historiography of the Gospels) to issues behind the text and deist Lessing's (a promoter of Reimarus' thinking) philosophically imposed gap between the Jesus of the Gospels and any certainty of who Jesus was in history became crystallized and popularized in subsequent philosophical movements to the present day.[35] The philosophy of the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century popularized a prejudice against prejudice so that any testimony of the early

church regarding the Gospels could be dismissed. Importantly, everyone, both liberal and conservative, who engages in being cavalierly dismissive of early church statements regarding the canonical Gospels has been influenced by Enlightenment thinking in Western culture. Although Spinoza's view found little following in his day, in the Age of Enlightenment he attracted many followers. Hasel notes that the rationalists had quite an influence on historical criticism:

> René Descartes made reason the sole criterion of truth and elevated doubt to range unchecked through the whole fabric of customary convictions. Shortly later Benedict de Spinoza published his famous *Tractatus Theologico-Politicous* (1670) in which he dealt with the question of the relation of theology to philosophy. He argued that both needed to be carefully separated and suggested that reason is men's guide to truth. All of these influences were powerful catalysts toward the formation of the full-fledged historicalcritical method.[36]

The philosophy of Romanticism that followed later in the eighteenth century sought a naturalistic mechanistic explanation of all history in terms of development and change so that any concept of inspiration was removed.[37] The nineteenth century philosophy of evolution sought that mechanistic development in terms of simple to complex that became a large impetus around the popular Synoptic Gospel source hypothesis, while the existentialist philosophy of Kierkegaard (1813-1855) opened up the door to the idea that even if a belief in the historical credibility of Scripture could no longer be maintained, an irrational leap into subjective belief was still allowable. Jesus could now be defined as to the personal predilections of the interpreter.[38] Nothing could be known of Him with any objective certainty.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the New Testament Enlightenment scholar David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874),[39] who popularized the "mythical" view of Scripture, would characterize Reimarus as one of Christianity's "most courageous and worthy representatives" of biblical criticism in the eighteenth century.[40] The views of Strauss were close to that of Reimarus. In 1862, Strauss published a tribute to Reimarus, who maintained a rationalistic interpretation of Jesus' life.[41] In 1835-36, Strauss wrote *Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet* ("The Life of Jesus Critically Examined") that set forth the concept of "myth" in the Gospel accounts. Strauss removed any element of the supernatural from history, especially biblical history. He saw a closed-continuum of cause and effect that admitted no divine intervention. To Strauss, whenever the biblical data presents

the supernatural or abnormal, the mythopoeic faculty has been at work. Although Strauss allowed a minimal historical framework for the life of Jesus, he considered the vast majority of material in the Gospels to be myth.[42] Neill and Wright remarked regarding his work that "if Strauss's interpretation of the Gospels came to be accepted, Christianity as it has been understood though the centuries would come to an end in a generation."[43]

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Wilhelm Wrede, in *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* ("The Messianic Secret"—1901) would undertake a similar tactic in rejecting the historicity of Mark and asserting that Mark's Gospel represents creative, dogmatic ideas which the evangelist imposed on the tradition, i.e., Jesus never claimed to be Messiah during his lifetime; the church superimposed this post-Resurrection idea upon the lips of Jesus.[44] Any perceived historical elements or markers were merely a vehicle to conveying the theology of the evangelist. Perrin remarks that "Wilhelm Wrede (1859-1906). . . sounded the death knell" regarding the historicity of Mark "by demonstrating that a major aspect of the Marcan narratives was precisely the 'mythic' and, in so doing, opened the door for the entry of redaction criticism upon the scene."[45] History was no longer a consideration or a factor in Gospel composition, for according to form criticism the Gospels were an expression of the theology of the church, not Jesus, and in redaction criticism the theology of the unknown evangelist was expressed rather than Jesus, so that any expression of Jesus' actual teaching was rendered highly dubious.

Around this same time as Wrede, Ernst Troeltsch, whose essay "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" (1898) delineated the principles of historical criticism, believed that the unifying factor in the thinking of the Enlightenment was the rejection of the supernatural and that deism was its religious philosophy.[46] Troeltsch's three principles of historical criticism evidence the antisupernatural bias: 1) the principle of criticism or methodological doubt: in the realm of history there are only judgments of probability, nothing can be known for certain so doubt everything, one must subject religious tradition (i.e., especially the miraculous) to rigorous criticism; 2) the principle of analogy: present experience is the key to probability in the past, thus miracles or the supernatural did not occur in the past because they do not occur today; 3) the principle of correlation or mutual interdependence: a closed continuum of cause and effect exists, i.e., no miracles or salvation history is possible.[47] Troeltsch argued that "It was not until the Enlightenment that an essentially historical [i.e., historicalcritical] outlook emerged."[48] Krentz concurs, arguing that "Historical

method is the child of the Enlightenment."[49]

All searches for the "historical Jesus" originate in common philosophical roots. All searches, however many and varied, for the "historical" Jesus must admit these shared roots as the ground cause for their existence, whether acknowledged by liberals or evangelicals. This is the developmental heritage of historical criticism.[50] Such a heritage has been clearly set forth in such works as Edgar Krentz's *The Historical Critical Method* that gives an honest assessment of the discipline. Hostile, alien philosophies and worldviews have succeeded in separating Jesus from the documents that gave primary witness to His life and teaching (Col. 2:8; 2 Cor. 12:5). By the beginning of the twentieth century, Bible-believing people had been marginalized through the overwhelming predominance of such thinking and withdrew to contend for an orthodox presentation of the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints through the Gospels and Epistles (Jude 3).

An intellectually honest assessment in light of the historical developments of historicalcritical ideology is that a pronounced atheism and unbelief, as well as virulent anti-Christ sentiment, are at the historical, presuppositional core of historical criticism and its concomitant and variegated searching for the "historical Jesus" as traditionally developed, expressed, and refined from Spinoza onward. It stands in stark antithesis to the Apostle Peter's statement, "For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His Majesty" (2 Peter 1:16).

How Many Searches Have Been Conducted for the "Historical Jesus?"

New Testament scholarship today almost unanimously identifies at least three major periods in questing for the "historical Jesus." Debate, however, still surrounds how many searches have been conducted or whether all searches conducted have been really one unified search operating from these common philosophical roots. Reumann's scheme is widely followed:

I. The Old Quest (from 1778, according to Schweitzer, with its four either/or decisions: Purely historical or supernatural? Synoptics or John? Eschatological Jesus or not? Mark as a whole the basis for a "life" or Chrstology as post-

Easter?);

II. The No-Quest Period (Bultmann and the form critics: all Gospel accounts are colored by the church; or, the “no biography is possible” view);

III. Now, the New Quest and its fragmentation (Reumann, 1974).[51]

To this prevalent scheme must be added what has now become entitled the “Third Quest” for the historical Jesus widely popularized at the end of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. This Third Quest has received its major impetus and name from British theologian N. T. Wright, proposing this new term “Third Quest” in a 1982 article and also in his update of Stephen Neill’s work on a historical sweep of New Testament study, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1961-1986*.[52] It has become an all-inclusive term to designate all historical Jesus research since the late 1970s and early 1980s.[53] In this latter work, Wright said the following,

> Stephen Neill was correct to write in 1962 that ‘the historical reconstruction of the life and history of Jesus has yet hardly begun,’ but he could not have written those words today. For, while the so-called ‘New Quest’ was still cautiously arguing about presuppositions and methods, producing lengthy histories of tradition out of which could be squeezed one or two more drops of authentic Jesus-material [Schillebeeckx], a quite different movement was beginning in a variety of places and with no unified background or programme. Fortified by Jewish materials now more ready available, these scholars worked as historians, under no doubt that it is quite possible to know quite a lot about Jesus of Nazareth and that it is worthwhile to do so—the two things which the orthodox Bultmann school had denied. This movement of scholarship has become so pronounced that it is not fanciful to talk in terms of a ‘Third Quest.’[54]

For Wright, this third quest could be separated from the other quests for three essential reasons:

> First, much of the last century (from Schweitzer to Käsemann, if you like) has *not* been trying to find Jesus—in fact, it has been spent by theologians actually trying *not* to find him, lest they base their faith on history and so corrupt it. Secondly, this non-quest of the first half of the century was undertaken (if one may so speak) for. . . the desire to preserve

> orthodoxy and to protect ordinary Christians from the ravages of historical criticism. Conversely, where the Quest has been and is undertaken, the pious and orthodox are not noticeably welcoming it with open arms. One does not see copies of Vermes's *Jesus the Jew* or Sander's *Jesus and Judaism* on too many church bookstalls. Thirdly, actual historical enquiry after Jesus has not reached an impasse: it could not have, since until a few years ago it had hardly started, and in fact shows every sign of healthy young growth, needing pruning sooner or later no doubt, but at the moment to be encouraged.[55]

Wright's profound influence today among theologians has been a major factor in what is now seen as another attempt at searching for the historical Jesus.[56] The "Third Quest" has its special emphasis centering in the relationship of Jesus to Second Temple Judaism and its literature and therein finds its distinctiveness. Brown notes, "If there is a common theme [in the Third Search], it lies in the belief that Jesus was not the Jesus of liberal Protestantism or of the New [i.e. Second] Quest but a historical figure whose life and actions were rooted in firstcentury Judaism with its particular religious, social, economic and political conditions."[57] Importantly, Wright claims that this "Third Quest" displays "a real attempt to do history seriously" [in contrast to the other periods where historiography was so negative].[58] It also stands in contrast to other quests in that it displays a holistic approach to Jesus that attempts to place him in a large-scale, fleshed out hypothesis within His Jewish context, rather than the atomistic approach of other searches that surrounds bits of Jesus' words as exemplified in the Jesus Seminar activities.[59] So in regard to Reumann's overview, Wright insists that his "Third Quest" should be added and seen as a qualitative departure from previous quests, as well as new discussion, on searching for "the historical Jesus" that justifies its separate consideration. In light of Wright's assertions, a brief review of these previous periods is necessary in order to mark out their characters in any comparison with the "third" search.

THE FIRST OR OLD QUEST (1778-1906)

This first quest or "old quest" is marked from the work of the deist Reimarus (1694-1768—promoted by Lessing)[60] to Wrede (1859-1906).[61] Although this quest was largely influenced by German theologians, English Deist influence was also significant as seen with Reimarus. Brown notes, "Reimarus's views do not appear (as they did to Schweitzer) like a bolt from the blue but the German expression of a Deism which Reimarus himself had got to know at first hand in

England over half a century previously and which was already known in German intellectual circles."[62] As this present work has shown, the real roots of this quest go back to rationalist Spinoza (d. 1677).[63] This first search for the historical Jesus was well-documented in Schweitzer's famous work, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (German title *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*) whose incisive conclusion was that these questers only succeeded in making a Jesus in their own image, noting: "He is a figure designed by rationalism, endowed with life by liberalism, and clothed by modern theology in an historical garb."[64] In other words, they reflected in a mirror how they wanted Jesus to appear existentially, "a Liberal Protestant face, seen at the bottom of a deep well."[65]

Schweitzer's hypocrisy. Schweitzer, however, was also guilty of the same rationalistic and existentialist interpretations that he recognized in others and wanted to perceive Jesus eschatologically. He praises the radical deist Reimarus' work, "The Aims of Jesus and His Disciples," as "one of the greatest events in the history of criticism" and relates that Reimarus "had no predecessors; nor had he any disciples. His work is one of those supremely great works which pass and leave no trace, because they are before their time; later generations pay them a just tribute of admiration, but owe them no gratitude," because of Reimarus' apocalyptic approach to understanding Jesus.[66] He dismisses previous liberal attempts at reconstructing a life of Jesus as failed due to their lack of appreciation for the apocalyptic element that he had identified previously, while also lauding D. F. Strauss' *Life of Jesus* since "we. . . find in it also an historical aspect of a positive character, inasmuch as the historical Personality which emerges from the mist of myth is a Jewish claimant of the Messiahship whose world of thought is purely eschatological."[67] For Schweitzer, all scholarship between Reimarus and Johannes Weiss, "appears retrograde" because of their failure to appreciate apocalyptic thought.[68] Schweitzer's heroes in this work were four: Reimarus, Strauss, Weiss and Schweitzer himself.[69] His *Quest* crescendos to the following thought about Jesus' apocalyptic hopes in the Gospels:

> The Baptist appears, and cries: 'Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' Soon after that comes Jesus, and in the knowledge that He is the coming Son of Man lays hold of the wheel of the world to set it moving on that last revolution which is to bring all ordinary history to a close. It refuses to turn, and He throws Himself upon it. Then it does turn; and crushes Him. Instead of bringing in the eschatological conditions, He has destroyed them. The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the

> spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to His purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is His victory and His reign.[70]

Schweitzer's sum of Jesus' life: Jesus had miscalculated both personally and apocalyptically and was killed for His error. Schweitzer had no room for the supernatural in his presuppositions either. As noted, fifteen years before, Kähler had called "the entire Life-of-Jesus movement" during this time as "a blind alley" as well as "[t]he impossibility of [writing] a biography of Jesus."[71] All paths, even Schweitzer's, were "dead ends" due to its presuppositions that affected their virulently negative concept of historiography.

Schweitzer's Honesty. Schweitzer's view, however, on the purpose of the "search" for "historical Jesus" was frank and honest. He wrote, "*The historical investigation of the life of Jesus did not take its rise from a purely historical interest; it turned to the Jesus of history as an ally in the struggle against the tyranny of dogma. Afterwards when it was freed from this* pa,qoj *it sought to present the historical Jesus in a form intelligible to its own time* [italics added]."[72] This statement confirms that the first search was solidly anchored with the Spinozan purpose of removing the influence of Christianity as a governing influence in society. It also did not seek Jesus as presented in Scripture but a Jesus who was compatible with modernism and antisupernaturalism. As will be seen, this overarching purpose would not change through the various periods of searching.

THE SO-CALLED "NO QUEST" PERIOD (1906-1953)

The demise of the "First" or "Old Quest" and entrance into the "No Quest" period is largely attributed to the work of Schweitzer as well as Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) later in the period. Wrede's "Messianic Secret" of Mark expressing theology through the vehicle of a pseudo-historical framework had significant impact during this period. The term "No Quest" is largely a misnomer, however, since Jesus research continued—it never stopped. Weaver catalogued an intensive study of the "historical Jesus" at the turn of the twentieth century, chronicling the ongoing research that occurred, and remarked:

> The impression that remains with me after completing this work is that our usual views of the "Quests" of the historical Jesus do not do justice to

> the actual history. We have grown accustomed to appealing to the "Old Quest-No Quest-New Quest-Third Quest," but we may have to reconsider, for the common language represents a distinctively German perspective for the most part. . . . but something distinctive was nevertheless going on. . . [during this time] that deserves a memorial and here is given a voice.[73]

Thus, while research was slowed it did not stop completely. Moreover, due to the influence of the presuppositions of the First Quest, this period's historiography was still decidedly negative, especially in German circles.

English-Speaking Circles. In English circles, especially, many continued to pursue the Old Quest, with presuppositions that were not quite as negative as the Germans but influenced by them nonetheless. R. H. Lightfoot, the bridge between *formgeschichte* and *redaktionsgeschichte* in the English-speaking world, wrote in his *History and Interpretation in the Gospels*, "It seems, then, that the form of the earthly no less than of the heavenly Christ is for the most part hidden from us. For all the inestimable value of the gospels, they yield us little more than a whisper of his voice; we trace in them but the outskirts of his ways."[74] Other significant English works in Britain and America resulted from this period as well, with varying conceptions of historiography impacting the "historical Jesus," such as Vincent Taylor, *The Work and Words of Jesus* (1950); A. C. Headlam, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ* (1923 and 1927); F. C. Burkitt, *Jesus Christ: An Historical Outline* (1932); Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Man from Nazareth as His Contemporaries Saw Him* (1949); Edgar Goodspeed, *A Life of Jesus* (1950); and A. T. Robertson, *Epochs in the Life of Jesus: A Study of Development and Struggle in the Messiah's Work* (1908).

German-Speaking Circles. In Germany, Bultmann concurred with Wrede's conclusions, arguing that Mark is not history because it "is really dominated by the theology of the Church and by a dogmatic conception of Christ."[75] Benoit relates, "This [Wrede's view] is exactly the same attitude adopted by the Form Critics. All they add to Wrede's position is a more methodological research into the way in which Christian dogma was created and elaborated by the primitive Community."[76] Relying heavily upon this historicalcritical presupposition originally expressed by Troeltsch for his form critical analysis, Bultmann argued the following:

> The historical method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum in which individual events are connected

> by the succession of cause and effect. This does not mean that the process of history is determined by the causal law and that there are no free human decisions that determine the course of events. But even a free decision does not happen without cause or motive; and the task of the historian is to come to know the motives of human actions. All decisions and acts have their causes and consequences; historical method presupposes that it is possible in principle to exhibit them and their connection and thus to understand the whole historical process as a closed unity.
>
> This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be broken by the interference of supernatural powers from beyond the world and that, therefore, there is no "wonder" in this sense of the word. Such a wonder would be an event whose cause did not lie within history. . . . It is in accordance with such a method as this that the science of history goes to work on all historical documents. And there cannot be any exceptions in the case of biblical texts if the latter are at all to be understood historically.[77]

Bultmann accepted only around forty sayings as genuinely attributable to Jesus. He also considered only the bare facts of life and death (not the resurrection) of Jesus to be authentic. The rest of the material is attributable to the fabrication or adaptation of the Christian community that had no biographical interest in the life of Jesus or desire for historical accuracy. In later life, Bultmann moderated his thinking but only very slightly.[78]

Still Bultmann did write a work on Jesus' life entitled *Jesus and the Word* that presented "a strictly historical presentation of the teaching of Jesus in the setting of the thought of his own time. Its aim is to free that teaching from certain accretions and reinterpretations, often superficial and inaccurate, which have grown up around it in modern times."[79] This work ensconced Bultmann's now famous statement that while not denying the historical existence of Jesus and his role as founder of a historical movement, he did "indeed think that we can now know almost nothing concerning the life and personality of Jesus, since the early Christian sources show no interest in either, are moreover fragmentary and often legendary; and other sources about Jesus do not exist."[80]

Form critic Dibelius was not quite as radical as Bultmann regarding historical judgments, for he asserts at times, "That the words of Jesus were preserved, that they were put together to form 'speeches' with a single theme, and. . . that the

sayings and parables were edited in the interest of exhortation, shows the Church's concern for shaping the life according to the commands of the Master."[81] Ernst Käsemann, remarks, "[T]he work of the Form Critics was designed to show that the message of Jesus as given to us by the Synoptists is, for the most part, not authentic but was minted by the faith of the primitive Christian community in its various stages."[82]

The Presupposition of Actual vs. Faith-Interpreted History. The original term *formgeschichte* for the English "form criticism" reveals also the negative philosophical presuppositions during this period of historical criticism and subtly reveals its negative underpinnings. While the German word *historie* refers to objective historical facts of history (external and verifiable), the usage of *geschichte* dichotomizes the concept of history further into interpretations of history, i.e., history as significance (internal and non-verifiable). According to this distinction, that Jesus was a man who lived in the first century is an objective statement of historical fact, or *historie*, that may be verified by canons of "historical reason," while the assertion that he was the Son of God is an interpretive statement and belongs to the realm of *geschichte* in that it is affirmed only by an assumption of faith. In addition, such a distinction permits assertions that something may be interpretively "true" (history as significance) that may not be "true" in the sense of objectively verifiable (history as fact). For such form critics as Bultmann, no real continuity exists between the Jesus of history (*historie*) and the Christ of faith (*geschichte*)—the Christ of the kerygma.[83]

Three central convictions generally prevailed throughout this period: (1) a strong sense of the theological irrelevance of historical Jesus research; (2) a strong conviction that little could be known about the historical Jesus; and (3) the minimalist picture of Jesus' message that could be recovered centered in eschatological elements that Jesus expected and proclaimed the imminent end of the world.[84] The fruits of this period were minimal and the figure of Jesus seemed remote and irrelevant, especially in German circles. Porter correctly notes, however, "the rubric 'no quest' describes an abandonment in some, perhaps mostly German circles of the agenda of some nineteenth-century questing after Jesus, but it can hardly be used as an adequate label for the entire period of research on Jesus in the first half of the twentieth century."[85]

THE SECOND OR NEW QUEST (1953-1988)

The minimalistic, negative state of affairs regarding historical Jesus studies

was not substantially changed by the inauguration of the "New" or "Second Quest." Moreover, the advent of redaction criticism after World War II created emphasis on another layer of tradition that prevented investigators from discovering Jesus' personal teaching, *i.e.* that of the unknown evangelists or composers of the Gospels who conveyed not only the church's theology but also their own particular theological biases. Borg noted,

> The historical skepticism engendered by Bultmann's form-critical work was reinforced after World War II by redaction criticism, the meticulous study of how the evangelists modified the traditions they received to adapt them to their own times and convictions. It became very clear that everything in the gospels—not just the doctrinal and supernatural elements, but also Jesus' teaching—was thoroughly shaped by the experiences, situations and theological beliefs of the early Christian communities, both during the oral period and in the redactional activity of the gospel authors themselves. Recovering the "message of Jesus" behind the documents seemed increasingly problematic.[86]

Ironically, however, Bultmann's own students reacted against some of his negative historical assessments. Yet, their reassessment did not really change the state of affairs in the search for the historical Jesus to any significant degree in terms of historiography. The "New Quest" was dominated by the same negative presuppositions and methods as the old quest with some slight changes in emphasis and approach. Borg again summarizes important characteristics of this second search:

> Important as the new quest was, it continued to share the central characteristics of the "no quest period: a minimalist portrait of the message of Jesus conceived in eschatological terms, coupled with existentialist interpretation. Its methods and results remained largely the same. What made it "new" was a theological concern: the question of the degree of continuity between the message of Jesus and the preaching of the early church. Yet, even this question was pursued within an existentialist framework which made it seem quite esoteric: whether the understanding of existence mediated by the message of Jesus was the same as the understanding of existence mediated by the kerygma. This, it was affirmed, was the proper subject matter of the quest for the historical Jesus.[87]

Ernst Käsemann Sparks the Second Quest. This "New" or "Second Quest"

was sparked by Ernst Käsemann in his “The Problem of the Historical Jesus,” a lecture given at the reunion of former Marburg students on October 20, 1953.[88] A former student of Bultmann, Käsemann stated: “I now find myself at variance with my own past, with the school of theology in which I grew up and particularly with my teacher, Bultmann.”[89] He reacted against two basic propositions that his teacher Bultmann had maintained for a long time: (1) nothing could be known about the historical Jesus and (2) no continuity exists between the preaching of Jesus and the preaching of the Church.[90] Instead, Käsemann argued that “there are still pieces of the Synoptic tradition which the historian has to acknowledge as authentic if he wishes to remain an historian at all.”[91] That is, something had to be acknowledged as able to be known about the “historical Jesus” for the searching to have any substantive material to continue investigating and, as a result, one must allow that some continuity existed between the preaching of Jesus and the preaching of the Church. This minimalistic material, if acknowledged, could keep the search ongoing. Hence, Käsemann proposed that with the “utmost caution and reserve” something may be reconstructed “like a life of Jesus.[92]”

Käsemann also continued to place great stress on the work of form criticism, noting that “the obligation now laid upon us is to investigate and make credible not the possible unauthenticity of the individual unit of material but, on the contrary, its genuineness.”[93] He continued,

> We can only sketch in a few bold strokes the embarrassment of critical research. It lies in this: while the historical credibility of the Synoptic tradition has become doubtful all along the line, yet at the same time we are still short of one essential requisite for the identification of the authentic Jesus material, namely, a conspectus of the very earliest stage of primitive Christian history; and also there is an almost complete lack of satisfactory and water-tight criteria for this material. In only one case do we have more or less safe ground under our feet; when there are no grounds either for deriving a tradition from Judaism or for ascribing it to primitive Christianity, and especially when Jewish Christianity has mitigated or modified the received tradition, as having been too bold for its taste.[94]

This statement’s intent is clearly pessimistic about the possibility of questing for the “historical Jesus” and rests heavily upon the criterion of dissimilarity. This latter criterion was first formulated by his mentor, Bultmann, as part of the development of form criticism during its period of highest skepticism in Jesus

research, the “No Quest” period. This is known also as the criterion of distinctiveness, dissimilarity or discontinuity. Bultmann first formulated it in his treatment of the parables, asserting “[w]e can only count on possessing a genuine similitude of Jesus where, on the one hand, expression is given to the contrast between Jewish morality and piety and the distinctive eschatological temper which characterized the preaching of Jesus; and where on the other hand we find no specifically Christian features.”[95] Thus, skepticism was at the very heart of the “New” or “Second Quest” and “fully integrated into the quest through Käsemann’s highly skeptical extension and clear solidification of it,” at the outset.[96] Käsemann admitted the severe strictures of such a criterion on the Gospels, stating “in doing so we must realize beforehand that we shall not, from this angle of vision, gain any clear view of the connecting link between Jesus, his Palestinian environment and his later community.”[97] Dahl, recognizing the implications, related that such a criterion resulted in a minimalistic Jesus or what is euphemistically termed “a critically assured *minimum*” [italics in original] of Jesus tradition.[98] Marshall notes that the results of this Second Quest were “quite meager,” but he prefers to dwell on a positive note for this endeavor started by Käsemann, “the important thing was that a prominent member of the Bultmann ‘school’ had declared that knowledge of the historical Jesus was both possible and legitimate.”[99] If the proverbial door was “open” to knowledge of Jesus, however, it was barely ajar.

Günther Bornkamm. In Germany, Günther Bornkamm, another pupil of Bultmann, followed Käsemann’s thinking and in 1956 wrote what some consider the classic treatment of Jesus during this second quest, *Jesus of Nazareth*.[100] Ironically, although Bornkamm was Bultmann’s pupil, he reflected more of Dibelius’ openness to a meager amount of historicity. Bornkamm, however, made no attempt to write a life of Jesus, instead saying that “an exposition of the history and message of Jesus” is “certainly not” capable of being carried through. He believed that all efforts at “detailed description of the course of his life biographically and psychologically” are “doomed to failure” and that they “can only be carried through with a lack of criticism which alleges everything to be historical, or with the display of an imagination no less critical.” He conceded only the following possibility, “Quite clearly what the Gospels report concerning the message, the deeds and the history of Jesus is still distinguished by an authenticity, a freshness, and a distinctiveness not in any way effaced by the Church’s Easter faith. These features point us directly to the earthly figure of Jesus.”[101]

Hans Conzelmann. Hans Conzelmann summarized the methods and conclusions of the Second Quest in an expanded form in his *Jesus*.[102] Here the impact of *redactionsgeschichte* that developed as a corrective to *formgeschichte* (the Gospels express the theology of the faith of the Church) became prominent, stressing the unknown evangelists' unique contribution to their respective Gospel works as an additional layer that must be considered in discovering anything about the historical Jesus. Like Bultmann, Conzelmann regarded the following methodological principle for any attempt at reconstructing Jesus' teaching: "whatever fits neither into Jewish thought nor the views of the later church can be regarded as authentic."[103] Conzelmann argued that "Jesus' self-consciousness is not comprehensible in terms of the Christological titles [found in the Gospels]. These titles were conferred on him by the faith of the church."[104] For him, a large gap existed between how Jesus was in history and later church interpretations of His significance, believing this to be the "central problem" of New Testament theology.[105] His historiography remains quite negative, for "that the resurrection is not a historical event must be adhered to quite clearly. This assertion implies that theology can postulate no historical facts. . . and does not need to do so, since it lives by proclamation."[106] Interestingly, Conzelmann eventually became dissatisfied with this new quest and withdrew.[107]

Bultmann eventually responded to this new quest conducted by his former students in an article entitled, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus."[108] He denied that his work had destroyed any continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygma of the church.[109] He argued, "The Christ of the kerygma is not a historical figure which could enjoy continuity with the historical Jesus. The kerygma which proclaims him is a historical phenomenon. . . . it is obvious therefore that the kerygma presupposes the historical Jesus, however much it may have mythologized him."[110]

The English-Speaking World. In the English-speaking world, two leading proponents of the Second Quest stand out: James M. Robinson and Norman Perrin. In 1959, Robinson's work, *A New Quest for the Historical Jesus*,[111] was both a history and defense for this second quest that had been taking place among pupils of Bultmann. In it, Robinson declared the first quest impossible and illegitimate. Instead, the Gospels were to be understood as "kerygmatic" products, reflecting the faith of the early church.[112] The Old Quest's objectifying historiography must be replaced by an existentialist historiography. His historiography remains quite negative, for he maintains "modern historiography mediates an existential encounter with Jesus."[113] Central to his quest is that the

"modern historical methodology" should be the basis of that quest, *i.e.* historical criticism, and that one must "recognize its limitations" for identifying "historical material."[114]

In 1967, Norman Perrin produced his *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* wherein he set forth what he deemed was a serious weakness of this new quest, assuming the identity of the historical Jesus with the kerygmatic Christ.[115] His historiography remains essentially negative, for he states "*the nature of the synoptic tradition is such that the burden will be upon the claim to authenticity*" [italics in original].[116] He continues, "if we are to ascribe a saying to Jesus, and accept the burden of proof laid upon us, we must be able to show that the saying comes neither from the church nor from ancient Judaism. . . . There is no other way to reasonable certainty that we have reached the historical Jesus."[117] Accordingly, "we reach the fundamental criterion for authenticity upon which all reconstructions of the teaching of Jesus must be built. . . the criterion of dissimilarity," *i.e.* "the earliest form of a saying we can reach may be regarded as authentic if it can be shown to be dissimilar to characteristic emphases both of ancient Judaism and of the early Church, and this will be particularly the case where Christian tradition oriented towards Judaism can be shown to have modified the saying away from its original emphasis."[118]

One can only wonder if such differences between the first and second quests were that qualitatively distinctive. Both quests remained overwhelmingly negative historiographically and both quests sought a Jesus who was only acceptable to the questers, so long as He was decidedly not the same as the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospels with any of their supernatural content. As stated in the introduction to this article, Robinson's frank statement that the "historical Jesus" cannot be the same as the Jesus portrayed in the New Testament demonstrates firmly that the second quest allied itself with the Spinozan purpose of removing the influence of Christianity from society.[119] Brown's summary is cogent in contrasting the demise of the second with the first quest:

> If Harnack's Jesus had the face of a liberal Protestant, and Schweitzer's the heroic demeanor of Nietzche's superman, the Jesus of the New Quest was an existentialist philosopher whose presence in history was barely discernable behind the kerygma. He is encountered in a kind of existentialist vacuum from which the historical conditions of the first century are largely excluded. The New Quest ended scarcely two decades after it started. Its demise coincided with the end of the Bultmann era and

the passing of existentialist philosophy.[120]

Like in the First Quest and No Quest periods, proponents the New Quest sought a Jesus wholly acceptable to their own subjective *a priori* conceptions and also in terms of the popular existentialist mode of philosophy that guided their thinking. Importantly, very similar, if not identical, naturalistic presuppositions of historiography in historical criticism dominated this new quest. It had no room for breaking with Troeltsch's closed-continuum of historicalcritical ideology and hence no room for any idea of God acting in and through the historical process. Borg noted, "its methods and results remained largely the same" as in the putative No Quest period.[121] This Second Quest was increasingly characterized as reaching a "dead-end."[122]

THE MOST RECENT QUEST: THE THIRD QUEST (1988-)

The reviews on the current endeavor of a possible "Third Quest" for the "historical Jesus" are quite mixed. In spite of current hopes among some scholars who promote its viability, terming it "A Renaissance in Jesus Studies" (1988),[123] and another who sees both "loss and gain,"[124] strong pronouncements of its demise have already come out. In 1994, Braaten pronounced the failure of all such quests, even the ongoing "Third Quest," emphasizing all three quests' inherently negative historiography as well as bias against the supernatural:

> The New [Second] Quest is now a thing of the past. It failed both as an enterprise of critical historical scholarship and as theological exegesis of the NT. . . . But lo and behold, now at the end of this century a 'Third Quest' is underway. Its headquarters are no longer in Germany, but in the English-speaking realm of theology. . . . all three quests have failed for the same fundamental reason. They have fallen into a chasm that separates Jesus from the church . . . . the treatment of the resurrection, or lack of it, in the Jesus-research of today is a telltale sign that the Enlightenment and not the faith of the church is in charge of the enterprise.[125]

Again in 1994, William Hamilton, reflecting an apparent Bultmannian or Tillichian mode that assumed the *a priori* negative historiography involved in historical criticism, rejecting the whole process as "beyond belief," concluding that "Jesus is inaccessible by historical means," and preferring instead a "Quest

for the Post-Historical Jesus." He held that the Jesus in history can never be defined or known. Thus, not only is the Gospel portrait rejected but no certainty can exist or be known about Jesus even in an alleged post-Easter circumstance.[126]

Perhaps the extreme of this thought is presented by Jewish theologian Neusner who called the questing for the historical Jesus "disingenuous" and "irrelevant," since modern standards of historiography "cannot comprise supernatural events," and "religious writings such as the Gospels cannot, and should not, attempt to meet [such standards].[127] Jewish theologians have made effective use of these same historicalcritical ideologies to remake Jesus into an image that is acceptable to them as well. Hagner provides the strategic clue as to how a Jewish "reclamation" of Jesus was made possible: "Building on the results of radical Protestant scholarship, Jewish writers argue that the Jesus of the Gospels is to a very large extent the product of the faith of the later Church. The actual Jesus of history, on the other hand, is regarded as belonging with Judaism rather than Christianity."[128] In essence, modern Jews have used philosophically driven historicalcritical ideologies (source, form, redaction, tradition criticism, History-of-Religions-School, etc.) derived from radical Christian scholars who denigrated the historicity and factuality of the Gospel accounts in order to remake Jesus into an image acceptable to them. Through these ideologies, they found a convenient avenue to drive an artificial wedge between "The Jesus of History" (how Jesus actually was in "history") and "the Christ of faith" (how Jesus is portrayed in the canonical Gospels) thereby reinventing Jesus into an image that satisfied Jewish sensibilities as non-offensive to them. The NT's "rock of offense" and "stumbling stone" impact (Rom. 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8; Is. 28:16) upon Jews was removed by inventing a qualitatively different Jesus than the Gospel portrayals. Even if the heart of the Gospels entails the supposition that God entered human history with Jesus, supernatural, miraculous events are automatically ruled out from being investigated historically—at best they can be explained perhaps psychologically. Yet, as has been seen repeatedly in this review of the searches, gentile Protestants have also effectively used these searches to invent an image of Jesus that is acceptable to their subjective proclivities in contrast to the Gospels' presentation in the First, No Quest, and Second Quest periods. Why should the Third Quest be different?

Here Come the British!

The beginnings of what is now being termed the "Third Quest" are not easily

marked by a particular year but seem to have been gradually implemented through the 1970s and into the 1980s. Some choose the 1985 publication of E. P. Sanders' *Jesus and Judaism* as the starting point. This work continued a similar line of thinking from Sanders' approach with Paul in his *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (1977) by placing Jesus within Judaism.[129] Others mark the beginning as 1988 with Neill's and Wright's *History of Interpretation* which uses the phrase, "the Third Search" as already coined by Wright in his 1982 article. Wright himself cites twenty scholars as particularly important to developing the Third Quest from the year 1965 to the present.[130] What can be said, therefore, is that somewhere in the latter third of the twentieth century, another attempt was brewing to search for the historical Jesus. The place of the Jesus Seminar (1995), within this period of time receives debate also. For Wright, the Jesus Seminar is really a continuation of the old "New Quest," although this work received great prominence after the publication of books that Wright assigned to the Third Quest.[131] However, Johnson, in his *Real Jesus* (1996), declared that "The Jesus Seminar likes to think of itself as the vanguard of the 'Third Quest.'"[132]

Two professional societies have also developed during this period. In 1981, The Society of Biblical Research established a subgroup devoted to historical Jesus research which became permanent in 1983. In 1985, the Jesus Seminar was established by R. W. Funk, a former administrator at the Society of Biblical Literature. In addition, *The Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* was founded under the auspices of E. J. Brill in Britain. It describes its "Aim & Scope" on the information page of the journal in the following terms,

> [The journal] provides an international forum for the academic discussion of Jesus within the context of firstcentury Palestine. . . . The journal investigates the social, cultural and historical context in which Jesus lived, discusses methodological issues surrounding the reconstruction of the historical Jesus, examines the history of research on Jesus and explores how the life of Jesus has been portrayed in the arts and other media. The *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* presents articles and book reviews discussing the latest developments in academic research in order to shed new light on Jesus and his world.[133]

While the first two quests for the historical Jesus were largely German inspired, the Third Quest has been stimulated, although not exclusively, by British and British-trained theologians like N. T. Wright and James D. G. Dunn, although both have also been stimulated by Sanders' thinking regarding Judaism

and have made it a key factor in their theological research. Braaten observed, “now at the end of this [twentieth] century a ‘Third Quest’ is underway. Its headquarters are no longer in Germany, but in the English speaking realm of theology.”[134] These diverse, and often conflicting images of Jesus in the Third Quest bear a “striking resemblance” to the First Quest in the “sheer fantastic variety of images of Jesus,” all claiming to be based on documentary evidence and soberly sketched by using the most scientific methods of historicalcritical scholarship,” with a similar goal to that of the First Quest: presenting a Jesus that is acceptable to the searcher in marked distinction to that of the Gospels.[135]

In 1994, Telford, in his “Major Trends and Interpretive Issues in the Study of Jesus,” set forth some general distinctives of this Third Quest.[136] Prominently cited in the article in its development are (1) a broadening of the scholars’ source-base as especially seen in Jewish sources, hellenistic sources, extracanonical Christian sources and archaeology; and (2) the application of new critical methods and approaches (especially those of the social sciences) within historical criticism. He also listed several distinctives of this recent research that would distinguish it as a third search: (a) it has a “historical rather than theological orientation;” (b) it pays “attention to broader questions than the authenticity of single pericopae”[137] (what is now known as the “holism” vs. “atomism” approach);[138] (c) “confidence that a reasonably comprehensive account can now be given of Jesus’ ministry (though not, of course, of his life) from an historical point of view;” (d) a “critique of the New [Second] Quest’s over-emphasis on traditio-critical analysis of Gospel material, especially the sayings material;” (e) a “frequent critique of form criticism in particular, and especially the criterion of dissimilarity;” (f) an “emphasis on placing Jesus in a wider context;” and (g) an “interdisciplinary openness, and especially their use of or ‘conversation’ with the social sciences.”[139] In spite of these differences, Telford concluded that “recent developments are broadly in continuity with the New Quest [i.e. second quest]. Both agree that the historical Jesus can be reached to a greater extent than was thought in the Bultmannian period. Both agree that he can be reached by an historicalcritical method operating on received traditions about him and through background supplied by other sources” [e.g. Second Temple Jewish literature). Telford prefers to describe this trend as a “revitalization movement” in Jesus studies. [140]

Strategically, some of the same theologians who have been largely influential in stimulating the “New Perspective on Paul” (NPP) have also been influential in giving new stimulus to these “New Perspectives [note the plural] on Jesus”

(NPJ) known in the Third Quest, notably N. T. Wright, E. P. Sanders, and James Dunn.[141] These two theological movements seem to share a similar motivation at times. As the New Perspective on Paul sought to bring Paul in more correlation with his Semitic roots in contrast to a perceived German Lutheran distortion of him during the Reformation, so also this new search for the historical Jesus seeks to reconcile Jesus with his Jewish roots.[142] All this hints at one prominent theme in the Third Quest: to rescue any concept of Jesus from the liberal German Protestantism of the previous two quests and root him in the firstcentury context of Judaism, with it particular religious, political, economic, and social condition. In typical British fashion, a moderation of German radicalism is sometimes sought in this Third Quest but does not always succeed. Yet, the Third Quest, as will be seen, is still quite skeptical nonetheless, even though at times it attempts to shift the burden of proof away from the Gospel record and back onto skeptics.

This third search for Jesus is also marked by some unanimity in approach but much more divergence, while at the same time expressing an even larger degree of complexity and diversity among participants. This situation makes characterization even more difficult. Wright, remarked, “The current wave of books about Jesus offers a bewildering range of competing hypotheses. There is no unifying theological agenda; no final agreement on method; certainly no common set of results.”[143] Ironically, the more methods seem to change or at least are claimed to change, the more the results appear the same.

The Third is like the Second is like the First Quest—the Old is New Again!

The Third Quest has a striking resemblance to the First and Second Quests, all being expressions of the results of historicalcritical ideology that are used to make a Jesus acceptable to the interpreter conducting the “search.” This difficulty is born out in a survey of the various pictures that have been produced concerning the “historical Jesus” in this third period. Pelikan, in his book, *Jesus Through the Centuries*, depicts the many ways Jesus has been imaged: from the Rabbi of firstcentury Judaism, to the Cosmic Christ of Christianized Platonic Philosophy, through to the Teacher of Common Sense in the First Quest, the Poet of the Spirit of Romanticism and the Liberator in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[144] Importantly, these images arose as a consequence of interpreters departing from the four Gospels as the sole, credible source of who Jesus truly was as recorded by the eyewitnesses who wrote of his ministry. One is reminded

of Schweitzer's words regarding the acute subjectivity of the first search, "*But it was not only each epoch that found its reflection in Jesus; each individual created Him in accordance with his own character. There is no historical task which so reveals a man's true self as the writing of the life of Jesus* [Italics added]."[145] A fatal weakness for all three searches in an obvious and total lack of any objectivity governing the activity. For departing from an orthodox viewpoint of the Gospels as the only source for a true understanding of Jesus, all questers found a Jesus who was wholly acceptable to themselves and seemed to accept anything whatsoever, so long as it was distinctly different from the biblical portrayal in the Gospels.

So far, the results of this Third Quest are no different and no less acutely subjective than in previous quests. Wright, in citing the twenty scholars as "particularly important within the Third Quest," made a telltale remark, "Anyone familiar with these books will at once see how very different many of them are from each other, and yet how similar are the questions being addressed."[146] This period, therefore, would include not only the radical results of the Jesus Seminar (1995) but also now evangelical questors who have come on board. In the most recent work, *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* (2009), the spectrum of "who is Jesus" ranges from Robert Price's vanishing or nonexistent Jesus, to John Dominic Crossan's nominalistic Jesus as Galilean Jew within Judaism within the Roman Empire, to Luke Timothy Johnson's literary-portrayed or narrative Jesus as a character in the Gospels, to Dunn's Jewish Jesus, to one evangelical's Jesus of the Gospels as the historical Jesus who was the Jewish Messiah. Telling also is that when the latter attempts to identify Jesus more fully with the Gospels, he is criticized for his subjective "'evangelical' reading. . . from the pages of the gospels, no criticism necessary."[147] This tells interestingly that within the Third Quest disagreements and agreements exist on who Jesus was, but *what cannot be condoned in this Third Quest is any view of Jesus that would dare come close to recognizing the Gospel records as entirely trustworthy sources*.

Is There Truly, Really, Honestly a Third Quest?

With the resultant bankruptcy of the first two "quests" for the historical Jesus based upon historicalcritical ideology, the Third Quest for the historical Jesus has now been declared at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries. As has been related, the label "Third Quest" has come from N. T. Wright in his 1982 article, "Towards a Third 'Quest'?," and is the earliest marker to distinguish the "New" or "Second Quest" from what is now taking place. This

term was later placed in his update of *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*.

In protesting this "Third Quest" designation, Porter's observation about one unified search is quite telling:

> There is a great deal of evidence that there has always been just one multi-faceted quest for the historical Jesus. This quest has undergone development in a number of ways and in different circles, though not all in the same way or to the same degree. . . . this quest is also unified by a fundamental underlying attempt to discover the proper means to be able to speak of the historical Jesus. This unbroken line of scholarly investigation reveals more than a century of ongoing research, one that cannot be easily dismissed.[148]

Porter goes so far as to say that "Wright has engaged in what appears to be his own form of historical revisionism, reading his 'third quest' back even much earlier."[149]

What would appear to buttress Porter's contention is that "there is little in this 'third quest' that cannot be seen in continuity with previous questing after the historical Jesus."[150] All searches share the same historicalcritical ideological basis, in spite of recent protests or denials. As will be seen, the supposed "Third Quest" is also negative historiographically even if some might maintain that it is not at times as negative as the previous two searches. For example, Dunn, who supports this Third Search, asserts that at best "historical methodology can only produce probabilities. . . . depending on the quality of the data and the perspective of the historical enquirer" and "the acceptance of the fact that in historical investigation we are dealing with probabilities rather than certainties should not be so alarming to those of faith as it is sometimes thought to be."[151] He goes on, "[t]he possibility that later faith has in some degree covered over that historical actuality cannot be dismissed as out of the question. So a genuinely critical historical inquiry is necessary if we are to get as close to the historical actuality as possible." [152] Thielman strikes to the heart of this matter,

> What unites all three 'quests' and makes their separation from each other somewhat superficial is the consistent application from Reimarus to the present of a hermeneutics of suspicion to the canonical gospels. The various Jesus books from the late eighteenth century forward are virtually

> unanimous in their presuppositions that the four gospels do not describe the real Jesus. The gospels are at worst deceptive attempts to use the authority of Jesus to oppress the poor and disenfranchised. At best, their portraits of Jesus are incomplete and need the fuller detail supplied by the historian if they are to be used to reveal the Jesus who really lived.[153]

Although there are differences in emphasis and a wide variety of conclusions regarding the "life of Jesus research" in this Third Quest, as with the Second Quest, a broad continuity exists in that (1) both agree that the historical Jesus can be reached to some greater extent (relative to the historiography of the searcher) than was thought in Bultmann's day and (2) both operate under the assumption that historicalcritical ideology is the requisite operating hermeneutic as well as background materials supplied by other sources.[154] Thus, source criticism with its Markan supposition and Q, form, tradition, and redaction criticism, and criteria of authenticity are all applied in significant extent to the Gospel texts. Important also is the fact that although a wide divergence of opinion is seen, the in major works display a unified commonality with the old quests. The same modern ideas and values are superimposed. Keck notes, "THE MARKED [caps in original] differences among the three Quests should not obscure the continuity that results from the shared reliance on key aspects of historicalcritical method and its judgments about the Gospels and early Christianity. Basic for all three Quests is the view that Matthew and Luke used both Mark and Q, and that between Jesus and all written sources stands oral tradition which shaped and expanded the Jesus materials, so that recovering the Jesus of history entails differentiating what the texts report from what Jesus really said and did."[155] As a result of such skepticism, the "hard data" on which a construction of what Jesus really said and did is smaller than the sources. Because of the "relentless use of methodological skepticism" by the participants of this Third Quest that closely reflects the First Quest, Keck euphemistically labels the Third Quest as "a second coming of the liberal Jesus." That is, each man sees Jesus in ways that resemble previous quests so that the same ideas and values are again superimposed on Jesus.[156] The subjectivity is evident; for each man can make a Jesus that is right in his own eyes as Schweitzer criticized the liberals for doing. This quest thus well earns the tag of a "consensus-less consensus."[157]

Some Prominent Distinctives of the Third Quest

Several ideas stand out especially in the Third Quest: First, there is a desire to place Jesus within the confines of firstcentury Judaism that found impetus in

Sanders' work (noted above) and James Charlesworth's *Jesus Within Judaism* (1988). This desire has led to a growing interest in the relationship between Second Temple Jewish literature (e.g. Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Nag Hammadi Codices, Josephus) and Jesus with hopes of shedding light on Him. Charlesworth comments, "Jesus Research has become captivatingly rewarding. Today we can peruse some Jewish documents roughly contemporaneous with him, hearing terms, concepts, and dreams that were once considered unique to, or at least typical of, Jesus."[158] As will be seen, this also expresses itself in what is known as a "holistic" approach to studying Jesus in which the "big picture" of Jesus within Judaism is emphasized rather than the "atomistic approach" of previous quests that concentrated on individual sayings of Jesus. This emphasis on Judaism and Jesus is perhaps the most salient endeavor in the Third Quest. Second, there is an emphasis on Jesus' message being predominantly eschatological. Third, some perceive a degree of greater optimism than in past searches regarding the historical reliability of traditions concerning Jesus in the canonical Gospels. Wright remarks about the Third Quest, "There is now a real attempt to do history seriously. . . . Serious historical method, as opposed to the pseudo-historical use of home-made 'criteria,' is making a comeback in the Third Quest." [159] Thus, a perceived shift in historiography in terms of burden of proof has shifted away from the negativity of previous searches. The supernatural elements of the Gospels, as will be seen, however, still remain problematic among a large portion of the questers in the Third Quest as is evidenced in their application of historicalcritical ideologies (e.g. source, form/tradition, and redaction criticism).

Moreover, as will be demonstrated in the following, while some in the Third Quest allow a *modicum* of history to the biblical accounts of Jesus' life, this quest is still strongly allied to the Spinozan purpose of removing the influence and impact of orthodox Christianity from the modern world. This Third Search remains solidly anchored to historicalcritical ideologies that would ensure that the New Testament's influence would never again be able to become a dominant force in society.

Important Background Personages in the Third Quest

A very prominent feature of the Third Quest is the development of different approaches by significant questers. Brown notes, "Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the 'third quest' of the historical Jesus is the development of new approaches by way of forming general hypotheses to answer questions often

neglected in the past, and endeavor to understand Jesus in the context of the religious, social, economic world of Judaism."[160] Although a multiplicity of scholars have contributed to this new trend, the following individuals have played a very significant role in its development and are its important representatives today.

Ed Parish Sanders (b. 1937)

Strategic stimuli to this Third Quest helped solidify this current undertaking. The work of E. P. Sanders in his *Jesus and Judaism* (1985) must be given a very prominent position.[161] Because of his work in the "Third Quest," Sanders is also sometimes characterized as "*The* most influential scholar on Paul in the last quarter-century."[162] He was also the catalyst who brought the New Perspective thinking in regard to the Apostle Paul to the forefront of NT theology. His book, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism, A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (1977) and its impact upon Pauline studies, led to a perceived collapse of the Reformational consensus regarding the Pauline view of the law.[163] In this latter work, Sanders reveals an *a priori* among his "chief aims" that he is "trying to accomplish" as "to destroy the view of Rabbinic Judaism which is still prevalent in much, perhaps most, New Testament scholarship."[164] Although he denies that his purpose is polemically biased in dealing with antiSemitism,[165] he less than subtly reveals that his thinking is imbued with the *a priori* motivation of improving Judaism and Christian relations coupled with the holocaustic hermeneutical preunderstanding so prevalent in NPP. It also reveals here that Sanders' portrayal is intentionally designed to refute notions that Judaism in Jesus' as well as Paul's day was a religion of "legalistic works-righteousness."[166]

In his writing *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (1993), Sanders denies the apostolic origin of the canonical Gospels, asserting that "[w]e do not know who wrote the gospels. . . These men—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—really lived, but we do not that they wrote gospels."[167] Sanders also strongly differentiates between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. He argues that the Gospels are limited in their information about Jesus as a historical person: "Nothing survives that was written by Jesus himself. . . The main sources for our knowledge of Jesus himself, the gospels in the New Testament, are, from the viewpoint of the historian, tainted by the fact that they were written by people who intended to glorify their hero"[168] and "the gospels report Jesus' sayings and actions in a language that was not his own (he taught in Aramaic, the gospels are in Greek). . . . Even if we knew that we have his own words, we would still have

to fear that he was quoted out of context."[169] Again, he argues that the authors of the New Testament "may have revised their accounts to support their theology. The historian must also suspect that the ethical teaching that has so impressed the world has been enhanced by homiletical use and editorial improvements between the time of Jesus and the publication of the gospels."[170] He also strongly affirms historicalcritical ideologies centering in form and redaction-critical principles, stating that, "The earliest Christians did not write a narrative of Jesus' life, but rather made use of, and thus preserved, individual units—short passages about his words and deeds. These units were later moved and arranged by editors and authors. This means that we can never be sure of the immediate context of Jesus' sayings and actions" and that, "Some material [in the Gospels] has been revised and some created by early Christians."[171] Sanders denies the orthodox concept of the deity of Jesus, arguing,

> "While it is conceivable that, in the one verse in the synoptic gospels that says that Jesus' miracles provoked the acclamation 'Son of God,' the phrase means 'more than human', I doubt that this was Matthew's meaning. In any case there is no reason whatsoever to attribute such an idea to the sympathizers and supporters of Jesus. If Jesus' followers in Galilee, or those who saw his miracles, ever said that he was the Son of God, they would have meant what Matthew probably meant: he could rely on his heavenly Father to answer his prayers. . . . This title. . . . would not make Jesus absolutely unique."[172]

And,

> "Jesus' miracles as such proved nothing to most Galileans beyond the fact that he was on intimate terms with God. . . . there appear to be two explanations of the relative lack of support for Jesus among the general populace. One is that the Gospels exaggerate Jesus' miracles; the other is that miracles in any case did not lead most people to make an important commitment to the miracle-worker. Probably most Galileans heard of a few miracles—exorcisms and other healings—and regarded Jesus as a holy man, on intimate terms with God."[173]

He also denies the virgin birth when he argues about Romans 8:14-17 in discussing the term "Son of God," that "[t]his is another passage that shows the definition of sonship as adoption. . . and he [Jesus] had been declared Son, not literally sired by God. . . Nor does the title require a story of a miraculous

conception. . . . [early Christians] regarded ‘Son of God’ as a *high* designation, but we cannot go much beyond that.”[174]

What Sanders did for interpreting Paul he also applied to Jesus in His relationship to Judaism in *Jesus and Judaism*. In the work, he describes himself in the following terms: “I am a liberal, modern, secularized Protestant, brought up in a church dominated by low Christology and the social gospel. I am proud of the things that religious tradition stands for.”[175] Sanders takes as his starting point his idea, shared by a large portion of third questers, that previous quests failed to find Jesus because they relied on an atomistic rather than holistic approach, that is, the other quests pursued an agenda surrounding Jesus’ speech or alleged authentic words rather than a holistic approach of placing him within the context of first century Judaism as well as his deeds and activities. To Sanders, such an atomistic approach will never lead to a proper picture of Jesus: “[t]here are a few sayings on which there is wide consensus, but hardly enough to allow a full depiction of Jesus.”[176] While the Jesus Seminar took the atomistic approach by voting on words, Sanders proposed the holistic approach of what can be known of Jesus’ life. Sanders maintained that “one should begin with what is relatively secure and work out to more uncertain points.”[177] His study “is based primarily on the facts about Jesus and only secondarily on a study of some of the sayings material.”[178] Sanders lists as “almost indisputable facts” about Jesus the following:

1. 1. Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.
2. 2. Jesus was a Galilean who preached and healed.
3. 3. Jesus called disciples and spoke of there being twelve.
4. 4. Jesus confined his activity to Israel.
5. 5. Jesus engaged in a controversy about the temple.
6. 6. Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem by Roman authorities.
7. 7. Jesus' followers continued as an identifiable movement after his death.
8. 8. At least some Jews persecuted at least parts of the new movement (Gal. 1.13, 22; Phil. 3.6), and it appears that this persecution endured at least to a time near the end of Paul's career (2 Cor. 11.24; Gal. 5.11; 6.12; cf. Matt. 23.34; 10.17).[179]

What is immediately revealed in this list is that Sanders has entertained no supernatural events as indisputable facts, revealing the still very negative underpinnings of the Third Quest. He decided upon these events by using the same historicalcritical lenses all questers have been blinded by over the centuries, including subjective criteria of authenticity. What Sanders has done is *a priori, arbitrarily, by his own choice, shifted the burden of proof toward a modicum of reliability of the historical traditions about Jesus* in the Gospels due to prevalent scholarly emphases on placing Jesus within Judaism. He argued, "The dominant view today seems to be that we can know pretty well what Jesus was out to accomplish, that we can know a lot about what he said, and that those two things make sense within the world of firstcentury Judaism."[180] His basic confidence in these events centers in the use of historicalcritical ideology, especially the use of criteria of authenticity. His first and salient criterion is that of putting Jesus believably within the confines of Judaism. Sanders notes, "[a] good hypothesis with regard to Jesus' intention and his relationship to Judaism should meet. . . [this] test: it should situate Jesus believably in Judaism and yet explain why the movement initiated by him eventually broke with Judaism."[181] This criterion becomes a double-edged sword for credibility with Sanders because he also uses it to discredit the Gospel at points, especially when Judaism is portrayed in what he perceives as a bad light. For instance, in Matthew 9:9-13 // Mark 2:13-17 // Luke 5:27-32, where the Pharisees appear censorious and critical, Sanders argues, "The story as such is obviously unrealistic. We can hardly imagine Pharisees as policing Galilee to see whether or not an otherwise upright man ate with sinners."[182] He also uses this criterion to deny the historicity of the negative portrayals of the Pharisees in John 7:49 and Luke 18:9-14,

arguing “[n]either passage can be regarded as actually indicating the views of Pharisaism before 70, and the second may reflect nothing other than Luke’s anti-Pharisaism.”[183]

Sanders dismisses Matthew 5:17-20 (and related material) because of it describes a Jesus who is contrary to Judaism, “the evidence from the early church counts strongly against accepting the Jesus of Matt. 5:17-20 (and related material) as the historical Jesus.”[184] Again, regarding the Sermon on the Mount, due to its anti-law and anti-pharisaical language, he says, “I am inclined to reject the entire section, Matt. 5:17-6:18, except for the prayer (6:9-13).”[185] For Sanders, “the Jesus of Matt. 23:5-7, 23-26 is not the historical Jesus,” and he dismisses the substance of it.[186] He considers these passages to be later creations of the church and the evangelists revealing “anti-Judaism” that supposedly existed in the church when they were written. To Sanders, the only credible events are those that fit well within his own ideas of a believable description of Judaism. One might get the impression from Sanders that he is more interested in creating an apologetic for first century Judaism than in “finding” Jesus—at least the Jesus presented in entirety in the Gospel presentation.

Two other interrelated criteria proposed by Sanders for an acceptable viewpoint of Jesus’ life are (1) that which offers a reasonable and well-grounded connection between Jesus’ activity and his death and (2) that which explains the continuation of the movement initiated by Jesus which subsequently broke from Judaism. Sanders writes, “It is conceivable that Jesus taught one thing, that he was killed for something else, and that the disciples, after the resurrection, made of his life and death something else, so that there is no thread between his life, his death and the Christian movement. This is possible, but it is not satisfying historically.”[187] While Sanders allows more historicity than some, his historiography is still decidedly negative nonetheless.

James D. G. Dunn (b. 1939)

Another strategic figure in the Third Quest is Dunn who operates his historiographical assertions totally apart from any consideration of inspiration, whether orthodox or aberrant. Dunn, like Sanders, has been heavily influenced by historicalcritical ideology, although he gives his own particular interpretation of it. Dunn asserts that the canonical Gospels cannot produce a secure starting point to formulate Jesus’ theology, thus an accurate theology of Jesus from the Gospels is not possible: “though a theology of Jesus would be more fascinating

[than one of Paul], we have nothing firsthand from Jesus which can provide such a secure starting point. The theologies of the Evangelists are almost equally problematic, since their focus on the ministry and teaching of Jesus makes their own theologies that much more allusive."[188] In Dunn's work, *Jesus Remembered* (2003), he states that third questers consider the neglect of the "Jewishness of Jesus" as "the most blatant disregard of history in the quest."[189]

For Dunn, questers at best can hope for "probability, not certainty" in their approach to the Gospels. He makes his own critical distinction between event, data, and fact in the formulation of historical events,

> All the historian has available are the "data" which have come down through history—personal diaries, reminiscences of eyewitnesses, reports constructed from people who were present, perhaps some archaeological artifacts, as well as circumstantial data about climate, commercial practice, and laws of the time. . . . From these the historian attempts to reconstruct "facts." The facts are not to be identified as data; they are always an *interpretation* [italics in original] of the data. Nor should the fact be identified with the event itself, though it will always be in some degree of approximation to the event. Where the data are abundant and consistent, the responsible historian may be confident of achieving a reasonably close approximation. Where they are much more fragmentary and often inconsistent, confidence in achieving a closes approximation is bound to be much less. It is for this reason that the critical scholar learns to make carefully graded judgments which reflect the quality of the data—almost certain (never simply "certain"), very probable, probable, likely, possible, and so on. In historical scholarship the judgment "probable" is a very positive verdict. And given that more data always emerge—in ancient history, a new inscription or, prize of prizes, a new cache of scrolls or documents—any judgment will have to be provisional, always subject to the revision necessitated by new evidence or by new ways of evaluating the old evidence.[190]

For Dunn, "'facts' properly speaking are always and never more than interpretations of the data. . . . the Gospel accounts are themselves such data or, if you like hard facts. But the events to which the Gospels refer are not themselves 'hard facts'; they are facts only in the sense that we interpret the text, together with such other data as we have, to reach a conclusion regarding the events as best we are able."[191] Dunn defines the Gospel "facts" as

“interpretations of the data” regarding the events to which they refer. They do not have certainty since they are mediated through the evangelists’ interpretation of those events and “The possibility that later faith has in some degree covered over the historical actuality cannot be dismissed as out of the question.” The consequence of his thinking is that “historical methodology can only produce probabilities, the probability that some event took place in such circumstances being greater or smaller, depending on the quality of the data and the perspective of the historical enquirer.”[192]

At best, to Dunn, the Gospels may give probabilities, but certainty is not a factor in historiography. In references to miracles, Dunn relates,

> It was the Enlightenment assumption that necessary truths of reason are like mathematical axioms, and that what is in view is the certain QED of mathematical proof that has skewed the whole question. But faith moves in a totally different realm from mathematics. The language of faith uses words like “confidence” and “assurance” rather than “certainty.” Faith deals in trust, not in mathematical calculations, nor in a “science” which methodologically doubts everything which can be doubted. Nor is it to be defined simply as “assent to propositions as true” (Newman). Walking “by faith” is different from walking “by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). Faith is commitment, not just conviction.[193]

To Dunn, “it is the ‘lust for certainty’ which leads to fundamentalism’s absolutizing of its own faith claims and dismissal of others.”[194] In chastising evangelicals for their greater certainty regarding the Gospels and their supernatural elements, he relates that only probability—not certainty—is the stinging “nettle” that evangelical Christians must grasp, qualifying his remark by noting that “genuinely critical historical inquiry is necessary if we are to get as close to the historical as possible. *Critical* [italics in original] here, and this is the point, should not be taken to mean negatively critical, hermeneutical suspicion, or dismissal of any material that has overtones of Easter faith. It means, more straightforwardly, a careful scrutiny of all the relevant data to gain as accurate or as historically responsible a picture as possible.”[195] Dunn notes “[i]n a day when *evangelical,* and even *Christian* [italics in original], is often identified with a strongly right-wing, conservative and even fundamentalist attitude toward the Bible, it is important that responsible evangelical scholars defend and advocate such critical historical inquiry.”[196] In this way, for Dunn, the term “evangelical (not to mention Christian) can again become a label that men and women of

integrity and good will can respect and hope to learn from more than most seem to do today."[197] Apparently, anyone who holds to certainty regarding such miracles as Christ's resurrection moves into this criticism by Dunn. As to the greatest event in the Gospels, the resurrection of Jesus (Acts 1:3), Dunn, comparing the Passion accounts in the Gospels to that of Second Temple Judaism's literature, relates that Jesus' hope for resurrection reflected more of the ideas of Second Temple Judaism's concept of vindication hope of a general and final resurrection: "The probability remains, however, that any hope of resurrection entertained by Jesus himself was hope to share in the final resurrection."[198] For Dunn, Jesus had in mind that "His death would introduce the final climactic period, to be followed shortly ('after three days'?) by the general resurrection, the implementation of the new covenant, and the coming of the kingdom."[199] Yet, even to speculate this much on the resurrection, he turns negative: "To be even able to say as much is to say more than historical questers have usually allowed."[200] For Dunn, any proof of Jesus' resurrection centers in the "impact made by Jesus as it impressed itself into the tradition." This "impact summarized in the word 'resurrection'. . . requires us to concede that there was a something which happened 'on the third day' which could only be apprehended/conceptualized as 'resurrection.'"[201] Dunn summarizes his thinking on data and facts regarding the resurrection:

> [T]he resurrection certainly cannot be numbered among the data which have come down to us. Nor can we speak of empty tomb and resurrection appearances as data. The data are *reports* [italics in original] of empty tomb and of seeing/visions of Jesus. If historical facts are *interpretations* [italics in original] of the data, then the historical facts in this case, properly speaking, are at best the fact of the empty tomb, and the fact that disciples saw Jesus. The conclusion, "Jesus has been raised from the dead," is further interpretation, an interpretation of interpreted data, an interpretation of the facts. The resurrection of Jesus, in other words, is at best a second order "fact," not a first order "fact"—an interpretation of an interpretation.[202]

Dunn's thinking here reflects the skepticism of Hume as well as Kant, having praised the former by stating, "As David Hume had earlier pointed out, it is more probable that the account of a miracle is an untrue account than the miracle recounted actually took place."[203] Therefore Jesus being raised from the dead was possibly just an interpretation by the first disciples. For Dunn, this is why the resurrection of Jesus is so "problematic" for the twenty-first century quester:

> [T]he conclusion that "God has raised Jesus from the dead," as a conclusion of the quest, is a further act of interpretation—again, an interpretation (evaluation) of the firstcentury interpretation (evaluation) of the firstcentury interpretation. . . . that departure from this life (death) can be described as a historical event, whereas entry on to some further existence can hardly be so described—it can be seen just how problematic it is to speak of the resurrection of Jesus as historical.[204]

Dunn also describes the term "resurrection" as a "metaphor" wherein he says that "the power of a metaphor is the power 'to describe a reality inaccessible to direct description' (Ricoeur), 'reality depicting without pretending to be directly descriptive' (Martin Soskice)." Thus in Dunn's thinking it defines an undefinable something—"*something which could not otherwise be said*" [italics in original]. Furthermore, "to translate 'resurrection' into something more 'literal' is not to translate it but to abandon it." Finally, he notes,

> Christians have continued to affirm the resurrection of Jesus, as I do, not because they know what it means. Rather, they do so because, like the affirmation of Jesus as God's Son, "the resurrection of Jesus" has proved the most satisfying and enduring of a variety of options, all of them inadequate in one degree or other as human speech, to sum up the impact made by Jesus, the Christian perception of his significance. . . In short, the "resurrection of Jesus" is not so much a criterion of faith as a paradigm for hope.[205]

If one applied this same logic to Dunn's writing, then the data of his writing are merely interpreted facts of what Dunn certainly intended to express, and therefore, no one can be certain as to what Dunn meant except that what he says is a metaphor for what he meant because it is beyond anyone's true comprehension to discern the intentions only understood by Dunn himself. Thus Dunn offers us, as he did with Paul, "a new perspective on the Jesus tradition."[206]

James H. Charlesworth (b. 1940)

As with Sanders and Dunn, Charlesworth has been instrumental in placing Jesus within the Judaism of his day.[207] He has advocated that a much greater importance be placed on Jewish Second Temple literature, "Work is progressing throughout the world in an attempt to ascertain how and in what ways Jewish writings help us understand the historical Jesus."[208] For him, previous pessimism

regarding historiography is largely a thing of past quests, not the third. However, Charlesworth does allow that: (1) “the Gospels are from a later generation than Jesus’ own; but while the evangelists were not eyewitnesses, they were informed by eyewitnesses;” (2) “the Gospels and other New Testament documents reflect the needs of the Church. . . . dedication to historical tradition does not imply or demand perfection in transmission;” (3) “the Gospels do contain legendary and mythical elements, such as Jesus’ walking on the water. . . . While the presence of non-historical and non-verifiable legends and myths in the Gospels should be admitted, the basic story about Jesus derives from authentic and very early traditions. And in the search for authentic Jesus material, we must acknowledge. . . that inauthentic Jesus words may accurately preserve Jesus’ actual intentions.”[209]

In his *The Historical Jesus An Essential Guide* (2008), he has defended the Jewishness of Jesus and stated that the starting place for understanding Him must include consideration of the increasing knowledge of Second Temple Judaism.[210] His *Essential Guide* expresses much of the standard approach to studying Jesus in this Third Quest period. Charlesworth, in his *Jesus Within Judaism*, encapsulates his new approach:

> I once stood in admiration of New Testament scholars who are cautiously reticent until they can defend virtually infallible positions. Now I have grown impatient with those who feign perfection, failing to perceive that knowledge is conditioned by the observer. . . and missing the point that all data, including meaningful traditions, are categorically selected and interpreted phenomena. Moreover, such scholars have severely compromised the axiom that historians do not have the luxury of certainty; they work, at best, with relative probabilities.
>
> It is wise and prudent to be cautious; but, pushed to extremes, even a virtue can become a vice. As the rabbis stated, timidity is not a virtue in pursuing truth. The search for uninterpreted data, like Jesus’ own acts (*bruta facta Jesu*) and his very own words (*ipsissima verba Jesu*), erroneously implies that the historian can approximate certainty, miscasts the complex structure of the Gospels, and betrays the fact that New Testament interpretation is an adventure.[211]

To Charlesworth, the Gospels cannot serve as a totally reliable guide to understanding Jesus in first century Judaism. He relates that due to recent

discoveries someone may portray a more accurate historical knowledge of Jesus today than even the Gospels present: “Jesus’ story was told by writers that we called the Evangelists in the first century C. E., less than one hundred years after his death. Two thousand years later, in some significant ways, we may more accurately retell the story of Jesus.”[212] Why is this necessary? “Intensive examination” of the “widely held assumption” that Matthew and John were apostles in Jesus’ inner circle has ended in “sadness and failure.”[213] He relates that “The Evangelists were not eyewitnesses of Jesus’ life and thought. . . . If Matthew depends on Mark as a source, as most scholars think, and if Mark is either someone unknown or Peter’s scribe who never met Jesus, then Matthew cannot be the ‘Matthew’ of the Twelve. The Evangelists worked on traditions they received. Most of these came to them in oral form and had taken shape over three decades (from the 30s through the 50s at least).”[214] Charlesworth supports modern scholarship in the idea that “the Evangelists composed their Gospels shortly before or long after 70 C.E. This year was a significant divide in Jewish history. In September of 70 C. E. . . . the Roman legions conquered and destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple, bringing an end to the history of ancient Israel and Second Temple Judaism. However, Jesus lived when the Temple defined Judaism. . . . Mark, Matthew, Luke and the author of the Gospel of Thomas forgot, or never knew, the vibrant, exciting, and diverse Jewish culture that shaped and framed Jesus’ brilliantly poetic insights. . . . John may be intermittently better informed of Jesus’ time than the first three evangelists” and “ [John] must not be jettisoned from consideration in seeking to find the historical Jesus.”[215] Therefore, he contends that “[t]hanks to the recovery of a Jewish library containing scrolls once held by Jesus’ contemporaries—The Dead Sea Scrolls—we can read about the hopes of some of his fellow Jews and discern how they interpreted God’s word, Scripture. Studying these and other Jewish documents from Jesus’ time allows us to learn more about the terms and concepts presupposed by Jesus and his audience.” To Charlesworth, “It seems obvious now, given the date of the Gospels and the struggle of the Evangelists to establish a claim that was unpopular to many Jews and Gentiles, that the evangelists missed much of the dynamism of the pre-70 world of Jesus and the Jewish context of his life and thought. These are now clearer to us because of the terms, concepts, and dreams preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls, that is, these documents that represent many aspects of Second Temple Judaism predate 70 C.E. and are not edited by later Jews or Christians.”[216]

To Charlesworth, the Gospels present a problem in determining who the historical Jesus was because: “First, the evangelists sometimes significantly and

deliberately edited Jesus' sayings. Second, we have learned that it is imperative to distinguish between the Evangelists' theology and Jesus' thought."[217] This process is compounded by the fact that "the Evangelists were not eyewitnesses of Jesus' life and thought."[218] His solution to finding an accurate portrayal of Jesus as he truly was is to "[i]nclude all Gospels and extracanonical sources" and that "all relevant sources, literary and nonliterary (e.g. archaeology), should be collected for examination if we are to obtain a clearer and more representative picture of the man from Nazareth."[219] Charlesworth does shift the burden of proof, noting that "we should also assume a tradition is authentic until evidence appears that undermines its authenticity. Only this position is faithful to the intention of our Evangelists. Within a few decades of Jesus' death his followers handed on many reliable traditions. . . . I stress that some of those who had been with Jesus remained alive to preserve the authenticity of many traditions. Most, but not all, of these traditions were shaped by oral teaching and preaching."[220] Recent research has placed "a new, and promising, emphasis on the early nature, and reliability, of the traditions about Jesus. His original meaning is now widely seen as preserved in the Gospels, even though his exact words may be altered."[221]

Since "traditions about Jesus often are shaped by the belief about his resurrection and the needs of the post-Easter Palestinian Jesus Movement," their works involve interpretation, *i.e.* "All canonical and extracanonical gospels are edited versions of Jesus traditions." To get behind their interpretation and discern "reliable and meaningful information about Jesus' action and message," criteria of authenticity need to be applied to this tradition. He cites five criteria as most important: (1) *Embarrassment*—Some deeds and sayings of Jesus were an embarrassment to the Evangelists, *i.e.* that which was embarrassing to the Evangelists would not have been invented by them; (2) *Dissimilarity*—This is only appropriate regarding Jesus' sayings, especially in reference to the Christology and theology of the members of the Palestinian Jesus Movement, *i.e.* "if a saying is embarrassing or dissimilar to his followers' way of thinking, then it most likely did not arise with them. Since it is attributed to Jesus by the Evangelists, it may well have originated with him" (these first two criteria of authenticity are the most important); (3) *Multiple Attestation*—"a saying or action attributed to Jesus preserved in two or more independent primary sources is more probably original to Jesus than if it were found in only one source." He includes the following hypothesized sources: Q, S (a possible sayings source used by John), Pl (Paul's references to Jesus), Mark, J^1 (a first edition of John), M (traditions inherited by Matthew), L (traditions inherited by Luke), A

(preservation of Jesus traditions in Acts), J^2 (a second edition of John), and T (the *Gospel of Thomas*). Charlesworth admits, however, that this principle has its limits and that "should be used only to include traditions that may ultimately originate with Jesus" and "It should not be used to reject as inauthentic a tradition that appears in only one source;" (4) *Coherence*—"When a deed or saying of Jesus is virtually identical with what has already been shown to be most likely authentic to Jesus, the deed or saying under scrutiny may also with some reliability be attributed to Jesus;" and (5) *Palestinian Jewish setting*—which "suggests that a tradition of Jesus may be authentic if it reflects his specific culture and time and not the world defined by the loss of land and temple after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E."[222]

Charlesworth also contends that an objective biography of Jesus is not possible. Basing this argument in the Documentary Hypothesis, Charlesworth argues: "As we search the sources for reliable traditions that may originate with Jesus, we should always remember that our first Evangelist, *Mark*, whoever he was, *never was with Jesus in Capernaum or Jerusalem*. That means he could not appeal to his own memory for clarifying when and where Jesus said or did something. The earliest evangelist was forced to create an order for Jesus' life. Mark's task may be compared to the attempts of someone who had broken a woman's pearl necklace and was forced to put the pearls back in their original order. That is as impossible as it was for Mark to recreate accurately the order of Jesus traditions."[223] Here Charlesworth reflects the form-critical assumptions of K. L. Schmidt. In Schmidt's work, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (1919), Schmidt concentrated on the chronological and geographical framework imposed on Mark by the evangelist. Schmidt asserted that the episodes of the Gospel accounts were isolated units of tradition linked together by the author (like pearls on a string). References to time, place, and geography did not form part of the episodes and had little value. The evangelist strung the episodes together unhistorically and artificially. Schmidt concluded his work with the following, "On the whole there is [in the Gospels] no life of Jesus in the sense of a developing story, as a chronological outline of the history of Jesus, but only isolated stories, pericopes, which have been provided with a framework."[224] Charlesworth's thinking on the historical Jesus in the third search can be seen also in some of his other major works, *Jesus Within Judaism* (1988) and *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1992).[225]

N. T. Wright (b. 1948)

Wright has been one of the most profound influences on this "Third Search for the historical Jesus" as he has been for the New Perspective On Paul. In his *Jesus and the Victory of God*, he contends, "I still believe that the future of serious Jesus research lies with what I have called the 'Third Quest', within a broadly post-Schweitzerian frame."[226] As noted, this questing period, even its name, largely received its impetus from Wright's efforts. Although labeled as the least skeptical of the quests, this assertion about "least" is only relative in comparison to the other two quests, since it still remains heavily skeptical and continues the "search" for the "historical Jesus." Moreover, the question still remains as to whether a Third Quest actually should be distinguished from the Second Quest. Wright, who is largely responsible for promulgating this distinction, admits,

> Does this flurry of activity belong with the older 'New Quest' [what Wright now labels the 'Second Quest'], or with what I have called the 'Third Quest'. . . . From one point of view this is a mere matter of labels. It does not much matter whether we think of the "Jesus Seminar," and its key players such as Mack and Crossan, as being on the radical wing of the 'Third Quest,' or whether we recognize the major differences between them [and others involved in this most recent questing].[227]

Wright makes the distinction because of his personal demarcations that have become accepted now by others. He would have us believe that the New Quest is old (the Second Quest) and the "Third Quest" is new due to its emphasis on Jewish studies when it well could be just a matter of emphasis rather than distinction.[228] This statement reveals, nonetheless, that the so-called "Third Quest" may not be easily separated from the previous ones because it is still rooted in historicalcritical ideologies and significant skepticism. Wright goes on to insist, "It would not. . . be much of a caricature to say that orthodoxy. . . has had no clear idea of the purpose of Jesus' ministry."[229]

Adding more caution to Wright's typical British-modifying approach are the following samplings of his ideological approach: First, he affirms application of tradition criticism to the texts of the Gospels ("criterion of dissimilarity") but with "great caution," which principle in still puts the burden of proof upon the Gospels for authenticity, no matter how much Wright tries to make it palatable to evangelicals;[230] second, Wright asserts, "The critics of form-criticism have not, to my knowledge, offered a serious alternative model to how the early church told its stories;"[231] third, he refers to the Gospel stories in terms of his own modified

version of “myth”: “The gospels, then, are myth in the sense that they are foundational for the early Christian worldview. They *contain* ‘mythological’ language which we can learn, as historians, to decode in the light of ‘other apocalyptic’ writings of the time.”[232] For Wright, “Jesus and his contemporaries” did not take apocalyptic language “literally, as referring to the actual end of the time-space universe.”[233] Instead, “the language of myth, and eschatological myths in particular. . . are used in the biblical literature as complex metaphor systems to denote historical events and to invest them with their theological significance.”[234] Wright is also very unclear as to his viewpoint regarding the authorship of the Gospels, for he asserts, “I make no assumptions about the actual identity of the evangelists, and use the traditional names for simplicity only.”[235]

Paraphrasing Acts 25:12, where Festus used Paul’s own words to sentence Paul to a hearing before Caesar, “You have appealed to Caesar, to Caesar you shall go” to send him to Rome, Wright rephrases this conversation as a guiding principle in the Third Search with regard to Christianity’s appeal to historical claims, “Christianity appeals to history; to history it must go.”[236] He argues that the Third Quest expresses a “real attempt to do history seriously” as opposed to the other quests.[237] As with Sanders, Dunn, and Charlesworth, Wright lauds “a real willingness to be guided by firstcentury sources, and to see how Judaism of that period in all its complex pluriformity, with the help now available from modern studies of the history and literature of the period.”[238] Along with the others, he prefers a holistic rather than atomistic approach, “We do not need to detach Jesus’ sayings from the rest of the evidence, and examine them in isolation.” Wright notes that Sanders’ holistic approach “is right.”[239] As with the others, he stresses that “Jesus must be understood as. . . a firstcentury Jew.”[240] Wright concurs with Charlesworth when the latter “‘tells of how he abandoned his previous admiration for New Testament scholars who were ‘cautiously reticent until they [could] defend virtually infallible positions.’“[241] For Wright, “the pursuit of truth—historical truth—is what the Third Quest is all about. Serious historical method, as opposed to the pseudo-historical use of home-made ‘criteria’, is making a comeback in the Third Quest. How much vaunted ‘normal critical tools’, particularly form-criticism, are being tacitly (and in my view rightly) bypassed in the search for Jesus; enquiry is proceeding by means of a proper, and often clearly articulated, method of hypothesis and verification”.[242]

Wright goes on to note that “much of the impetus for form-critical and redaction-critical study came from the presuppositions that this or that piece of

synoptic material about Jesus *could not* be historical. . . that *an historical hypothesis about Jesus could already be presupposed* which demanded a further tradition-historical hypothesis to explain the evidence."[243] Instead, he prefers "a viable alternative historical hypothesis" about Jesus or the early church where "the need for tradition-criticism within the search for Jesus. . . could in principle be substantially reduced and altered in shape."[244] Wright cites the work of Sanders and Meyer as supporting his claim: "This is exactly what happens in the hypotheses of (say) Sanders and Meyer: all sorts of things in the gospels, which on the Bultmannian paradigm, needed to be explained by complex epicycles of *Traditionsgeschichte* turn out. . . to fit comfortably within the ministry of Jesus."[245] Regarding the Synoptic Gospels, he argues, "It is becoming apparent that the authors of at least the synoptic gospels, which still provide the bulk of relevant source material, intended to write about Jesus, not just their own churches and theology, and they substantially succeeded in this intention."[246]

To Wright, this Third Quest has "certain solid advantages" of which he lists three: (1) "it takes the total Jewish background seriously;" (2) "its practitioners have no united theological or political agenda, unlike the monochrome New Quest and its fairly monochrome renewal;" and (3) "there has increasingly been a sense of homing in on the key questions which have to be asked to make progress." He also lists five key questions: First, how does Jesus fit into Judaism? Second, what were Jesus' aims? Third, why did Jesus die? Fourth, how and why did the Early Church begin? And fifth, why are the Gospels what they are?[247]

In dealing with understanding Jesus' miracles, for Wright, it involves a "suspension of judgment." He relates, "It is prudent, methodologically, to hold back from too hasty a judgment on what is actually possible and what is not within the space-time universe."[248] He rejects extremes found in Hume, Lessing, and Troeltsch as well as post-Enlightenment philosophy. He also rejects the views of "convervative apologists": "The appeal for suspension of judgment. . . cannot be used as a Trojan horse for smuggling in an old-fashioned 'supernaturalist' worldview under the pretense of neutrality; this is sometimes done by conservative apologists, who are often interested at this point, not in Jesus himself, but in miracles as test cases for whether the Bible is believed to be 'true' or not—a position that brings its own nemesis."[249] Instead, he argues that words used in the Gospels for Jesus' actions such as "*paradoxa*" (things one would not normally expect), "*dunameis*" (displays of power and authority,) "*terata*," or "*semeia*" (signs or portents), as well as "*thaumasia*" (marvels—

Matt. 21:15):

> [D]o not carry, as the English word "miracle" has sometimes done, overtones of invasion from another world, or from outer space. They indicate, rather, that something has happened, *within* what we would call the "natural" world, which is not what would have been anticipated, and which seems to provide evidence for the active presence of an authority, a power, at work, not invading the created order as an alien force, but rather enabling it to be more truly itself. And that describes equally as well the impression that other aspects of Jesus' ministry made on people: here was an unexpected phenomenon, a prophet apparently questioning the nationalistic hope.[250]

Jesus' mighty works are to be understood best in terms of Jesus' proclamation as "signs that the kingdom of Israel's god was indeed coming to birth." [251] In terms of Jesus' resurrection, after long discourse and many pages of equivocation, Wright argues that the early church believed "that Jesus of Nazareth was bodily raised from the dead. This belief was held by virtually all early Christians for whom we have evidence."[252] For Wright, the two factors that are "historically secure" about Easter are the emptiness of the tomb and the meetings with the risen Jesus.[253] Wright then argues for factors that caused this belief regarding Jesus' resurrection. He distinguishes differences between necessary and sufficient conditions: "a *necessary* condition is something that has to be the case for the conclusion to follow. . . . A *sufficient* condition is something that will certainly and without fail bring about the conclusion."[254] While the empty tomb and appearances of Christ to the disciples are individually "insufficient to generate early Christian belief. . . . they form, in combination, a sufficient condition."[255] The matter of the resurrection does, however, lie "beyond strict historical proof" since "[i]t will always be possible for ingenious historians to propose yet more variations on the theme of how early Christian belief could have arisen, and taken the shape that it did, without either an empty tomb or appearances of Jesus."[256] Yet, Wright himself believes that both the empty tomb and the appearances both constitute necessary conditions for belief in Jesus' resurrection: "We are left with the conclusion that the combination of the empty tomb and appearances of the living Jesus forms a set of circumstances which is itself *both necessary and sufficient* for the rise of early Christian belief."[257] Such a belief "remains, of course, unprovable in logical or mathematical terms."[258] Wright concludes that "the historian, of whatever has no option but to affirm both the empty tomb and 'meetings' with Jesus as 'historical

events'. . . they took place as real events; they were significant events. . . they are. . . provable events."[259] His claim is: "that the bodily resurrection of Jesus provides a *necessary* condition for these things; in other words, that no other explanation could or would do. All the other efforts to find alternative explanations fail."[260] Wright admits that this does not constitute "proof" of the resurrection in terms of some neutral standpoint. It is, rather, a historical challenge to other explanations, other worldviews."[261] So with Wright, the resurrection cannot be proven with ideas of certainty, but perhaps that the evidence points to that conclusion as the most likely or probable conclusion.

The Basic Operating Procedures of the Third Quest

The basic operating procedures of the Third Quest share much in common with the first two searches: the use of criteria of authenticity, the operating assumption of the 2-document or 4-document synoptic hypotheses (2DH and 4DH, respectively), as well as assuming the historicalcritical interpretative assumptions of form/tradition and redaction criticism. To be sure, some criteria have been modified and new ones proposed (such as criteria of embarrassment, rejection and execution, and historical plausibility),[262] but all three searches share much in common in spite of apparent diversity.

Criteria of Authenticity

The present writer has already discussed much of the usage of criteria of authenticity in the first two searches in *The Jesus Crisis* and the reader is referred there for a more lengthy discussion.[263] The purpose of the criteria in the first two searches for the historical Jesus had design or intent behind them, mainly to result in "a critically assured *minimum*" of Gospel material to find a Jesus acceptable to the subjective biases of the searcher.[264] Importantly, philosophical presuppositions were deliberately applied in the formulation of these criteria to guarantee that a minimalistic Jesus was found by those who applied these criteria. The *a priori* operating bias helped produce criteria that guaranteed the searcher's desired result, hardly a scientific approach. The apparent shift in burden of proof in the Third Search, however, has really happened by arbitrary, fiat decree. The general consensus among third questers was that the previous two quests and the pause during Bultmann's time were too skeptical, so this Third Quest would allow for more historicity in broad or holistic terms. As seen with the writings of Charlesworth and Porter,[265] the Third

Quest has suggested different criteria and modifications of existing ones. Much of a *similar negative bias* is seen in the criteria of many of the Third Search, although perhaps, depending on the quester, not to the same degree of dehistoricization (e.g. Sanders). While the pessimism of Butlmann may be a thing of the past, *pessimism is still replete in the Third Quest*.[266] Even if third questers desire to move the burden of proof away from the replete skepticism of the first two quests, the application of such criteria immediately casts doubt on the substantive portion of the Gospel material, requiring it to prove itself to the biases of the interpreter. Stein's comment in 1996 was very telling: "Today we are experiencing a renewed interest in the Jesus of history. This has been called by some as the 'third quest'. . . . The results so far are disappointing. The same historicalcritical method remains foundational for many of the researchers."[267] Importantly, in this so-called "Third Quest," instead of desiring "a critically assured *minimum*," the third questers have desired to have a credibly assured *modicum* (slightly more historicity in broad outlines of Jesus' life) and have designed new criteria and modified old ones to ensure that *modicum a priori*.

In the above review of Sanders, Dunn, Charlesworth, and Wright, the present writer has noted their desire to find a more holistic approach that allows for more historicity in the Gospels. This goal is laudible. However, the same subjective bias of previous quests is found in that the criteria designed for this search have been *a priori* designed to ensure that very same desired outcome. Their criteria allow them to find a *modicum* of more historicity in broad outlines of Jesus' life. The outcome is guaranteed based on their already perceived subjective bias as well as intent. These criteria, however, cut both ways, revealing their subjectivity in application. Sanders has expressed his desire to place Jesus within the Judaism of his day. Applying his criteria for finding Jesus believably within Palestinian Judaism allows him to be dismissive of large portions of the Gospel material, such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) or Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees in Matthew 23. Moreover, even if one places Jesus within Judaism and uses this to affirm Gospel content, the reply of greater skeptics could merely be that whoever wrote the Gospels conformed their works to this period with the result that nothing historical would be affirmed. It might well be interpreted as the intent of the unknown evangelists to conform their story to elements of Judaism rather than indicating anything historical.

Significantly, the criteria of Palestinian Judaism almost has as its unstated operating procedure that much like the criteria of embarrassment in Sanders application. Sanders is embarrassed by Jesus' anti-Judaistic attitude many times

reported in the Gospels. His application of the criteria of Judaism allows him to remove any material that would conflict with his intended desire to remove any statements that would embarrass him as a liberal Protestant who is trying to avoid any charges of holding to an anti-Semitic perception of Judaism that he perceives was operating in much of the Christian tradition. Sanders, however, must make a distinction between anti-Judaistic statements expressed by Jesus and antiSemitism which never was expressed in the Gospels by Jesus or His disciples. In the Gospels, Jesus was clearly opposed to the Judaism of His day, but this does not make Him anti-Semitic, for the Gospels clearly portray Him as loving His Jewish brethren.

Important in all of these criteria is their underlying purpose—*guaranteeing the desired outcome or conclusions of the Third Quest*. If they want to perceive broad outlines of history in Jesus' life while avoiding the subjectively perceived offensive areas, criteria are designed for this purpose. This overarching scheme is found in all three searches.

The Documentary or Markan Hypothesis and Q as an Operating Synoptic Approach

As with the other searches, the Third Search also takes the Documentary Hypothesis and its Markan priority as its operating synoptic assumption. Farmer long ago referred to this as a "skeleton" in the closet of Gospel research. This hypothesis has been labeled as one of the assured results of nineteenth century criticism. [268] The criteria in all three searches are heavily weighted for their operational procedure (e.g. multiple attestation in Mark, Q and M, L) to affirm tradition as "authentic."[269] This theory rules more by consensus-makers among twentieth century New Testament scholars rather than by any demonstrable proof. More recently, this hypothesis has been called into question, as there have even been calls to dispense with Q among some of the hypothesis' adherents, such as A. M. Farrer.[270] Increasing doubts about the 2DH and 4DH at the end of the twentieth century suggest that the criteria centering around this hypothesis are dubious at best, with its supposition in direct opposition to very early Christian testimony that Matthew was composed first (Gospels with genealogies composed before those without). Indeed, the early fathers evidence no conception of literary dependence as is advocated in all three searches. [271] If the documentary synoptic hypothesis is wrong, then working within its confines proves absolutely nothing about historicity. Nonetheless, *The Critical Edition of*

Q has been produced that offers hundreds of pages of analysis on a nonexistent document centering in the imagination of New Testament scholarship that refuses as a whole to abandon this flawed conception.[272]

Important also is that the 2DH/4DH theory already has an *a priori* built-in bias against the miraculous. Mark does not have the genealogies or as great a miraculous content as do Matthew and Luke. Q is touted to be primarily a sayings source of material common to Matthew and Luke but not appearing in Mark, revealing a clear *a priori* bias against the miraculous portions of the Gospels since these sources ignore large sections of Matthew and Luke that contain such content. Indeed, an anti-miraculous bias was part of the impetus for the acceptance of the 2DH/4DH. Edwin Abbott (1838-1926) provides an important clue in the acceptance of Mark as the first and most "primitive" Gospel: antisupernaturalism. Abbott based his acceptance of the "antiquity" of Mark on the fact that it does not mention "supernatural events" like Matthew and Luke, such as reference to the details of Jesus' birth (e.g., virgin birth, angelic visitation, the Bethlehem star) and "only the barest prediction of His resurrection."[273] Because Mark was relatively "simple," without any reference to the miraculous birth narratives and post-Resurrection appearances, the antisupernatural climate of the time naturally gravitated to the Markan hypothesis.[274]

Form and Redaction Criticism as Operating Assumptions

As with the other two searches, a large number of the third questers presume a distortion or bias in the early church as well as the Gospel writers. Simply put, a strategic layering between what Jesus actually said and did is often *a priori* assumed in both form (reflecting the theology of the church) and redaction (reflecting the theology of the evangelist). The question of if and how much of Jesus' theology can be derived from the Gospels is always a problem for the three quests and the non-quest period, for large portions of the Gospels are seen as products of the church or some unknown evangelist who composed the Gospels with their own distinctive biases. As noted above, Sanders wants to peel away the anti-Jewish bias of the evangelist that he perceives was superimposed on Jesus. Dunn wants to distinguish between data and the interpretation of the data, a hypothesis which *a priori* assumes stripping away the bias of the evangelist or early church is necessary. Charlesworth has declared the Gospels as

not written by eyewitnesses. The moment he operates on the assumption that the Gospel material was mediated through the interpretive bias of the church as well as the evangelists, these layers must be stripped away to determine the real historical event or intent of Jesus.

The Trojan Horse of the Third Search: Jesus Within the Confines of Judaism

The emphasis of the Third Search on placing Jesus within the confines of Judaism is not only tenuous, but *complete nonsense*. It is actually a Trojan horse that destroys the canonical Gospels' portrait of how Jesus really was in history as He walked the confines of Palestine in His day. The canonical Gospels, as well as other portions of the New Testament, present Jesus consistently as walking in complete conformity, *NOT with the corrupt Judaism of His day*, but *with the Old Testament Law*. After His birth he was circumcised on the eighth day as the Mosaic Law prescribed (Luke 2:21-24 cf. Lev. 12:1-8). He also told the Jews that He did not come to abolish the Old Testament but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17-19). Paul reminds Christians in Galatians 4:4 that "when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law." Jesus told the Jews of His day to search the Old Testament Scriptures in John 5:39-40: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life." After His physical resurrection, in Luke 24:13, He told the disciples on the road to Emmaus how the Old Testament testified of Him: "And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." The Gospels portray Him in complete conformity to the Old Testament. Jesus loved His Jewish people, especially the common Jew (Matt 9:36-38; Mark 6:34; Luke 2:29-30; 14:14). The cleansing of the Temple in all four Gospels drives home the fact that Jesus perceived the Judaism of His day as corrupt (Matt. 21:12-17; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-47; John 2:13-16).[275]

However, what Jesus reacted to quite decisively and negatively in the Gospels was ***precisely*** the degraded spiritual state of Judaism in firstcentury Palestine. To Jesus, the Judaism of His day had departed from the teachings of the Old Testament and degenerated into being hypocritical (Matt. 5:20; Matt. 23), corrupt (e.g. the Law of Corban where their oral law violated the Word of God—Matt. 15:1-6; Mark 7:1-23; Luke 11:39-52), and apostate. In Matthew 15:7 He

quoted Isaiah 29:13 about apostate Israel: “This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. ‘But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’“ (Matt. 15:7-9). The oral law (τὴν παράδοσιν ὑμῶν—Mat 15:3) of Judaism had violated and outright contradicted the Word of God in His day. Jesus’ main opposition came from the Pharisees, the progenitors of modern Judaism, who sought to kill Him because He violated their Jewish traditions—”the traditions of the elders” (τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων) that Jesus termed “the traditions of men” (Matt. 12:14; Mark 7:5-8) that were in violation of God’s Word in the OT. He called them “blind guides of the blind” for their false teaching (Matt. 14:14). Jesus taught that because of their corruption and hypocrisy, “I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline *at the table* with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:11-12). As a result of Jesus’ criticism, the leaders in Judaism sought to kill Him (Mark 3:6; Luke 11:53-54; John 7:1). One cannot overstate that to place Jesus within the confines of the legalistic, self-righteous Judaism of His day fails to take the Gospels seriously. The Gospels portray firstcentury Judaism as standing in opposition to the Old Testament, the heart of the Gospel, and the purpose for which He came to save (Luke 18:10-14; Matt. 9:9-13 cf. Philippians 3:8). As a result, to place Jesus within the confines of the Judaism of His day is to destroy the true Jesus in history and create a false Jesus who, once again, appeals to the predilections and whims of today’s scholars.

Conclusion

The present writer finds that the Jesus Seminar has issued a warning that is *very pertinent* to the activity involved in searching for the historical Jesus: “Beware of finding a Jesus that is entirely congenial to you.”[276] All three searches, as well as the non-search period, are guilty of violating this apothegm, including the Jesus Seminar, for all three seek a Jesus that is in some way or another separated from the biblical portrait of Jesus. The only portrait that conveys how Jesus truly was is that which was given by the eyewitnesses and followers of Jesus in the Gospel accounts. The only portrait that can produce belief and salvation is that found in the Gospels written by those who had direct, eyewitness contact with Jesus. As John, a direct eyewitness to Jesus’ life and ministry, wrote in his portrayal: “these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in

His name" (John 20:31). The irony of these searches is that they are the ones who truly have produced a fictional account of Jesus since they have departed from the Gospel testimony that alone is sufficient in truly understanding Jesus as He actually was in history. The moment one departs from this fundamental understanding, the search for a truly fictional "historical" Jesus has begun.

The three searches for the "historical Jesus" are really one overarching endeavor. What makes the Third Search qualitatively different is that evangelicals are now finding virtue in participating in it while having rejected the first two searches. The second part will cover evangelical participation in this Third Search. This searching is rapidly becoming a watershed issue. Evangelical Darrell Bock, who diligently searches for the "'historical' Jesus," attributes disagreement with his searching as due to evangelical ignorance: "this book [*Key Events*] will likely not be understood by some. What we have done is to play by the rules of Historical Jesus study and made the case for 12 key events in Jesus' life in the process."[178] To Bock (and perhaps other evangelicals who participate in it), any other approach than the historical searching that they are involved in is not "serious historical engagement" in terms of the Gospels.[179] Evangelical Norman Geisler counters such an assertion by noting that the word *historical* "bristles" with hostile "philosophical presuppositions" whose "premises and procedures undermine the very divinely authoritative Scripture they confess."[180]

A decisive question remains—would any true skeptics of the Jesus tradition accept or be persuaded by any positive conclusions ("key events") of these evangelical searchers who, while using postmodernistic historiography and the ideology of historical criticism, attempt to impose *a priori* evangelical prepositions on the Gospels, *i.e.* assuming what they are trying to prove? Or, is it more likely that these evangelicals will further erode the Gospels' trustworthiness by surrendering the Gospels to such replete skepticism? The present writer sees the latter as far more likely.

[1] A shorter version of this chapter appeared in The Master's Seminary Journal, F. David Farnell, "Three Searches for the 'Historical Jesus' But No Biblical Christ (Part 1): The Rise of the Searches," *MSJ* 23/1 (Spring 2012) 7-42.

[2] In a disputed passage, Josephus has a brief reference to Jesus' ministry, see Josephus *Antiquities* 18.3.3 § 63-64; Acts 20:35 has a record of a saying of Jesus quoted by Paul but not found in the canonical Gospels ("it is more blessed to give than receive").

[3] These views of the early church regarding the four Gospels as coming from the eyewitness Apostles whose names were attached to them are ancient and persistent. For example, Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.1-6, 14-16; 5.11.1-4; 5.20.4-8; 6.14.5-7; Clement *Hypotyposeis* 6; Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 5.33.3-4; Clement *Stromateis* 1.1.1.11 For greater delineation of these references, see F. David Farnell, "The Synoptic Gospels in the Ancient Church: The Testimony to the Priority of Matthew's Gospel," *MSJ* 10/1 (Spring 1999) 53-86.

[4] In a disputed passage, Josephus has a brief reference to Jesus' ministry, see Josephus *Antiquities* 18.;3.3 § 63-64; Acts 20:35 has a record of a saying of Jesus quoted by Paul ("it is more blessed to give than to receive").

[5] For an excellent discussion of this point, see "The Purpose of the Four Gospels," in Eta Linnemann, *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 195-203.

[6] See F. David Farnell, "The Case for the Independence View of Gospel Origins," in *Three Views on the Origins of the Synoptic Gospels*. Ed. Robert L. Thomas (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002) 235-241.

[7] For a much more detailed discussion, see F. David Farnell, "The Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism, in *The Jesus Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998) 85-131.

[8] Donald A. Hagner, "An Analysis of Recent 'Historical Jesus' Studies," in *Religious Diversity in the GraecoRoman World*. Eds. Dan Cohn-Sherbok and John M. Court (Sheffield: T & T Clark, 2001), 82.

[9] N. T. Wright, "Jesus, Quest for the Historical," *ABD*, III, 800.

[10] William Hamilton, *A Quest for the Post-Historical Jesus* (New York: Continuum, 1994) 8-9, 19. See also Dieter Georgi, "The Interest in Life of Jesus Theology as a Paradigm for the Social History of Biblical Criticism," *Harvard Theological Review* 85/1 (1992) 51-83.

[11] Jacob Neusner, "Who Needs, 'The Historical Jesus'? An Essay-Review," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 4 (1994) 113-126. For how Jewish theologians have used historicalcritical ideologies to find a Jesus compatible to them, see Donald A. Hagner, *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and

Stock, 1997).

[12] James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959) 26-27.

[13] Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus*, 27-28.

[14] For further discussion of the operating agenda of historical criticism, see F. David Farnell, "The Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis*. Ed. Robert Thomas (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998) 85-131; Edgar Krentz, *The HistoricalCritical Method*. Ed. Gene M. Tucker (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975); Ernest Troeltsch, "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology" (1898), in *Religion in History*. Essays Translated by James Luther Adams and Walter F. Bense with an Introduction by James Luther Adams (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991) 11-32.

[15] For these various portraits of what or whom the "historical Jesus" has been in the search since its beginnings to the present day, consult Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. Translated by W. Montgomery from the first German edition, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* (1906). Introduction by James M. Robinson (New York: MacMillan, 1968); Walter P. Weaver, *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century 1900-1950* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International, 1999); John K. Riches, *A Century of New Testament Study* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity International, 1993); Eds. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy, *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009).

[16] For discussion of these criteria of authenticity as conflicting, see F. David Farnell, "Form Criticism and Tradition Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis*, 199-207. As will be shown in this chapter, the Third Quest has developed additional criteria of authenticity.

[17] John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus, The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991) xxvii-xxviii.

[18] Crossan, *The Historical Jesus, The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant,* xviii.

[19] See Colin Brown, "Historical Jesus, Quest of." *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Eds. Joel B. Green Scot McKnight, I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, IVP, 1992) 326.

[20] Hagner, “An Analysis of Recent ‘Historical Jesus’ Studies,” 83.

[21] Bernard Orchard and Harold Riley, *The Order of the Synoptics, Why Three Synoptic Gospels?* (Macon, GA: Mercer, 1987), 111.

[22] See Travis L. Frampton, *Spinoza and the Rise of Historical Criticism of the Bible* (New York and London: T & T Clark, 2006), 199-234

[23] For an excellent overview of Spinoza’s ideology, as well as other factors that gave rise to historical criticism, especially in terms of the synoptic “problem,” see David Laird Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem* (New York: Doubleday, 1999) 171-176; 198-260; see also Norman L. Geisler, “Philosophical Presuppositions of Biblical Errancy,” in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), 316-320; F. David Farnell, “Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism,” in *The Jesus Crisis*, 89-92.

[24] For an excellent review of Spinoza’s life, consult Matthew Stewart, *The Courtier and the Heretic Leibniz, Spinoza, and the Fate of God in the Modern World* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006).

[25] For more information on Spinoza’s work, see Benedict De Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise and A Political Treatise*, in *The Chief Works of Benedict De Spinoza*. Translated from the Latin with an Introduction by R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1951); *The Collected Works of Spinoza*. 2 vols. Edited and Translated by Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University, 1985).

[26] Roy A. Harrisville and Walter Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture, Theology and the Historical Critical Method from Spinoza to Käsemann* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) 39.

[27] Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem*, 199. Emphasis in original

[28] Ibid., 172.

[29] Ibid., 174 cf. 171. Dungan goes so far as to say that “modern biblical hermeneutics [i.e. historical criticism] was an essential part of the main attack on the traditional institutions of Throne and Altar.”

[30] Norman L. Geisler, “Inductivism, Materialism, and Rationalism: Bacon, Hobbes, and Spinoza,” Norman L. Geisler Ed. *Biblical Errancy: An Analysis of*

Its Philosophical Roots (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1981) 19.

[31] For the tremendous influence of Spinoza on subsequent philosophers in Germany, see Heinrich Heine, *On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany and Other Writings*. Ed. Terry Pinkard (Cambridge: University Press, 2007) xx, 50-54, 59, 99, 108, 110 (quote from p. 187).

[32] Colin Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 47; idem. *Christianity and Western Thought* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 199) 203; idem. *Jesus in European Protestant Thought 1778-1860 (Durham, NC: Labyrinth, 1985)* 29, 50.

[33] Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought*, 212.

[34] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Lessing's Theological Writings*. Selection in translation with an Introductory Essay by Henry Chadwick (Stanford: Stanford University, 1957) 55.

[35] For more detailed information, see Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought*, 173-330; Farnell, "The Theological and Philosophical Bent of Historical Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis*, 92-117.

[36] Gerhard Hasel, *New Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 26. Baird notes that Spinoza's views in *Tractatus* and elsewhere "made significant contributions to biblical study." See William Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, vol. 1: From Deism to Tübingen (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992), 6. See also Sylvain Zac, *Spinoza et l'interprétation de l'*écriture (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1965); Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*. Translated by E. M. Sinclair (New York: Schocken, 1965).

[37] For the impact of Romanticism on views of gospel inspiration, see Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem*, 308-326; F. David Farnell, "How Views of Inspiration Have Impacted Synoptic Problem Discussions," *MSJ* 13/1 (Spring 2002) 33-64.

[38] Due to space limitations, the author has been selective. For a detailed elaboration of this summation, see F. David Farnell, "The Philosophical and Theological Basis of Historical Criticism," 106-117; Eta Linnemann, *The Historical Critical Method: Methodology or Ideology* (Grand Rapids: Baker,

1990), 83-159; Norman Geisler, “Philosophical Presuppositions of Biblical Errancy,” in *Inerrancy*. Ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) 307-334.

[39] Strauss himself espoused the philosophy of Hegel. For further information on Hegel’s influence upon Strauss and others, consult such works as Cornelio Fabro, *God in Exile*. Translated and Edited by Arthur Gibson (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1968); Bruno Bauer, *The Trumpet of the Last Judgement Against Hegel the Atheist and Antichrist*. Translated by Lawrence Stepelevich (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen, 1989).

[40] See David Friedrich Strauss, “Hermann Samuel Reimarus and His Apology,” in Hermann Samuel Remairus, *Reimarus: Fragments*. Edited by Charles H. Talbert. Translated by Ralph S. Fraser (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 44.

[41] See Strauss, “Hermann Samuel Reimarus and His Apology,” in *Reimarus: Fragments*, 44-57.

[42] For further information, see David Friedrich Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*. Edited by Peter C. Hodgson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 52-92.

[43] See Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-1986*. Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University, 1988), 14.

[44] For a critical analysis of Wrede’s assertions, see William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*. Translated by J. C. Greig (Cambridge and London: James Clarke & Co., 1971); James D. G. Dunn, “The Messianic Secret in Mark,” in *The Messianic Secret*. Edited by Christopher Tuckett (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 116-131.

[45] Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969) 7.

[46] Ernst Troeltsch, *Gesammelte Schriften* (Leipzig and Berlin: Teubner, 1927), vol. 3, 131.

[47] For further information on these points, see Ernst Troeltsch, “Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology (1898),” in Ernst Troeltsch, *Religion in History*.

Essays translated by James Luther Adams and Walter F. Bense with an Introduction by James Luther Adams (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 13-15.

[48] Troeltsch, “Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology,” 24.

[49] Krentz, *The HistoricalCritical Method*, 55.

[50] Ibid., 55-72.

[51] John Reumann, “Jesus and Christology,” in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*. Eds. Eldon J. Epp and George W. MacRae (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989). 502.

[52] See N. T. Wright, “Towards a Third ‘Quest’? Jesus Then and Now,” ARC 10/1 (Autumn 1982):20-27; Stephen Neill and Tom Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*. New Edition. Second Edition by Stephen Neill and Tom Wright (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1988 [1964].

[53] Beilby and Eddy, *The Historical Jesus Five Views*, 29.

[54] Neill and Wright, *The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986*, 379.

[55] Ibid., 379-380.

[56] *Christianity Today* in 1999 declared N. T. Wright one of the “top scholars” in the church at the end of the Twentieth century. His influence has been profound. See Tim Stafford, “The New Theologians (February 8, 1999) 30-49.

[57] Colin Brown, “Historical Jesus, Quest of,” in *Dictionary of the Gospels and Jesus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), 337.

[58] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, vol. 2 in Christian Origins and the Question of God (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1996) 85.

[59] Beilby and Eddy, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus: Five Views*, 39 cf. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Philadelphia: Minneapolis, 1992) 98-120; Donald L. Denton, Jr., *Historiography and Hermeneutics in Jesus Studies An Examination of the Work of John Dominic Crossan and Ben F. Meyer*, in Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus Supplement Series. Ed. Robert L. Webb (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 154-167.

[60] See “Introduction” in *Reimarus: Fragments* for an overview of Reimarus’ life and Lessing’s promotion of his work, 1-43.

[61] *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien* 1901.

[62] Reimarus himself was in England while the deistic controversy was raging, and his personal library included most of the English Deists: Toland, Shaftesbury, Collins, Tindal, Morgan and Middleton, while a close study of his works demonstrated his indebtedness to them. See Colin Brown, *Christianity in Western Thought,* 304*;* idem. *Jesus in Protestant European Thought,* xviii-xviii; See also Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1 1799-1870 (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1972) 38; Farnell, “Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism,” 92-96.

[63] Brown notes that this tracing of the first search back to Reimarus is due to the influence of Schweitzer’s *Quest* in 1906. See Colin Brown, *Jesus in European Protestant Thought 1778-1860*, 1.

[64]Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. Translated by W. Montgomery from the first German edition, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede,* 1906. Introduction by James M. Robinson (New York: Collier, 1968), 398.

[65] George Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Crossroads*. Third Impression (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910) 44.

[66] Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus,* 15-16, 26.

[67] Ibid., 95.

[68] Ibid., 23.

[69] For the agenda behind Schweitzer’s Quest, see S. J. Gathercole, “The Critical and Dogmatic Agenda of Albert Schweitzer’s *The Quest of the Historical Jesus,*” *Tyndale Bulletin* 51/2 (2000): 261-283.

[70] Oddly, this quote does not appear in the latest addition of Schweitzer’s *Quest, i.e.* Bowden’s edition, see Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus.* First Complete Edition. Edited by John Bowden (Minneapolis: fotress, 2001) 333—this version skips this quote in the old Robinson translation (pp. 366-371). For the quote, see Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical*

Jesus. Introduction by James M. Robinson. Trans. W. Montgomery from the first German edition, *Von Reimarus zu Wrede* [1906] (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 370-371.

[71] Martin Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ*. Forward by Paul J. Tillich. Translated, edited, and with an Introduction by Carl E. Braaten (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1964), 46.

[72] Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus,* 4.

[73] Walter P. Weaver, *The Historical Jesus in the Twentieth Century 1900-1950*, xi-xii (review also 72-229). For an overview of this period in Jesus research, see Riches, *A Century of New Testament Study*, 14-30.

[74] R. H. Lightfoot, *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1934), 225.

[75] Rudolf Bultmann, "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels," in *Form Criticism, Two Essays on New Testament Research*. Translated by Frederick C. Grant (New York: Harper & Row, 1962 [1934] 23.

[76] Pierre Benoit, "Reflections on 'Formgeschichtliche Methode,'" in *Jesus and the Gospel*. Translated by Benet Weatherhead (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973), vol. 1:41.

[77] Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?, *The New Testament and Mythology and Other Basic Writings*. Selected, edited, and translated by Schubert M. Ogden (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984 [1957]), 14-148. In light of such a statement as this, it is no wonder that Bultmann does not allow for the miraculous in his form critical approach.

[78] Rudolf Bultmann, "Allgemeine Wahrheit und christliche Verkündigung," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 54 (1957): 244-254; see also J. M. Robinson's comments regarding Bultmann's moderation of his thinking, A New *Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959), 20 footnote 1.

[79] "Translators' Preface to the New Edition," in Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*. Translated by Louise Pettibone Smith and Erminie Huntress Lantero (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958 [1934; German Edition 1926], v.

[80] Bultmann, *Jesus and The Word*, 8, 13.

[81] Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, 289.

[82] Ernst Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," in *Essays on New Testament Themes*. Translated by W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 15.

[83] See "*Historie/ Geschichte; historisch/geschichtlich;*," in *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*. Third Edition. Revised and Expanded. Edited by Richard N. Soulen and R, Kendall Soulen (Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 80.

[84] Marcus Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship* (Valley Forge, Penn.: Trinity International, 1994) 3-5.

[85] Stanley E. Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 191 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000) 47.

[86] Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 4.

[87] Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 4-5.

[88] See Ernst Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," in *Essays on New Testament Themes*. Translated by W. J. Montague (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982 [1964 SCM], 15-47. This was first published *ZTK* 51 (1954) 125-153.

[89] Käsemann, "Preface to the English Edition," in *Essays on New Testament Themes*, 8.

[90] Later in Bultmann's life, Robinson noted that Bultmann had eventually come to acknowledge that something could be known. Robinson commented, "Bultmann himself has conceded in a letter to me the possibility and legitimacy of the [new] quest." See James M. Robinson, "The Historical Question," *The Christian Century* 76 (October 21, 1959) 1210.

[91] Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," 46.

[92] Ibid., 45.

[93] Ibid., 34.

[94] Ibid.,36-37.

[95] Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. Translated by John Marsh. Revised Edition. Reprint by Hendricksen Publishers (Basil Blackwell: Oxford, 1963) 205; also Bultmann, *Jesus and the Word*, 12-13.

[96] Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research*, 72-73.

[97] Käsemann, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," 37.

[98] Nils A. Dahl, "The Problem of the Historical Jesus," in *Kerygma and History*. Edited by Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 156. See Barbour, p. 50 footnote 11.

[99] I. Howard Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 130.

[100] Günther Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*. Translated by Irene and Fraser McLuskey with James M. Robinson (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960). The German edition was published in 1956.

[101] Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, 24.

[102] This book originally stemmed from an encyclopedia article from *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart* written by Conzelmann in 1959. English translation, Hans Conzelmann, *Jesus*. Translated by J. Raymond Lord. Edited, with an Introduction, by John Reumann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973).

[103] Hans Conzelmann, *Jesus*, 16.

[104] Ibid., 49.

[105] Ibid., 90.

[106] Ibid., 94.

[107] See John Reumann, "Editor's Introduction," in *Jesus*, ix.

[108] Rudolf Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical

Jesus," in *The Historical Jesus and the Kerygmatic Christ*. Translated and Edited by Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville (New York: Abindon: 1964) 15-42

[109] Bultmann, "The Primitive Christian Kerygma and the Historical Jesus," 17-18

[110] Ibid., 18.

[111] James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus and other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983 [1959]).

[112] Ibid., 44-47

[113] Ibid., 90.

[114] Ibid., 100.

[115] Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976 [1967].

[116] Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus*, 39.

[117] Ibid., 39.

[118] Ibid.

[119] See above, p. 5 as well as James M. Robinson, *A New Quest*, 26-27.

[120] Brown, "Historical Jesus, Quest of," 337.

[121] Borg, *Jesus in Contemporary Scholarship*, 5.

[122] James I. H. MacDonald, "New Quest—Dead End? So What about the Historical Jesus?," *Studia Biblica* 1978: II Papers on the Gospels. Ed. E. A. Livingstone. *Journal for the Study of the New Testament, Supplement Series 2* (Sheffield: Sheffileld University 1980), 152.

[123] Marcus Borg, "A Renaissance in Jesus Studies," *Theology Today* XLV/3 (October 1988) 280-292.

[124] J. P. Meier, "The Present State of the 'Third Quest' for the Historical Jesus:

Loss and Gain," *Biblica* LXXX (1999) 459-487.

[125] Carl E. Braaten, "Jesus and the Church," 61.

[126] William Hamilton, *A Quest for the Post-Historical* Jesus (New York: Continuum, 1994) 8-9, 19. See also Dieter Georgi, "The Interest in Life of Jesus Theology as a Pradigm for the Social History of Biblical Criticism," *Harvard Theological Review* 85/1 (1992) 51-83.

[127] Jacob Neusner, "Who Needs, 'The Historical Jesus'? An Essay-Review," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 4 (1994) 113-126.

[128] Donald A. Hagner, "Paul in Modern Jewish Thought," in *Pauline Studies*. Essays Presented to Professor F. F Bruce on his 70th Birthday. Eds. Donald A. Hagner and Murray J. Harris (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 143-165 (143); For an excellent study of this Jewish reclamation of Jesus, also consult idem., *The Jewish Reclamation of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

[129] E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977).

[130] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 84.

[131] See Wright, "Jesus, Quest for the Historical," 799 where he places the Jesus Seminar under the New or Second Quest.

[132] Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Real Jesus* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996) 4.

[133] See back of the front cover, *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 7/2 (2009).

[134] Braaten, "Jesus and the Church," 61.

[135] Ibid., 62.

[136] William R. Telford, "Major Trends and Interpretive Issues in the Study of Jesus," in *Studying the Historical Jesus, Evaluations of the Current State of Research*. Eds. Bruce Chilton and Craig Evans (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994) 33-74.

[137] This is the “holistic” vs. “atomistic” approach which is discussed in this chapter.

[138] Denton, “Holism and Its Implications,” in *Historiography and Hermeneutics in Jesus Studies*, 154-167.

[139] Telford, “Major Trends and Interpretive Issues in the Study of Jesus,” in *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 57-58.

[140] Ibid., 60-61.

[141] See F. David Farnell, “The New Perspective on Paul: Its Basic Tenets, History and Presuppositions,” *MSJ* 16/2 (Fall 2005) 189-243.

[142] See Peter M. Head, “The Nazi Quest for an Aryan Jesus,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 2.1 (January 2004) 55-89.

[143] Wright, “Jesus, Quest for the Historical,” 800.

[144] Jaraslov Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1985).

[145] Schweitzer, *Historical Jesus*, 4.

[146] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 84.

[147] Luke Timothy Johnson, “Response to Darrell Bock,” in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* 294; Dunn also similarly criticizes Bock for his evangelical imposition (i.e. resembling the canonical Gospels too closely) on his search for Jesus. See Dunn, “Response to Darrell Bock,” in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*, 299-300.

[148] Porter, *The Criteria for Authenticity in Historical Jesus Research*, 51-52.

[149] Ibid., 53.

[150] Ibid., 53 n. 58.

[151] James D. G. Dunn, “Response to Darrell L. Bock,” in *The Historical Jesus: Five views*, 299.

[152] Ibid., 300.

[153] Frank Thielman, “Evangelicals and The Jesus Quest: Some Problems of Historical and Theological Method,” *Churchman* 115 (2001) 64.

[154] Telford, “Major Trends and Interpretive Issues in the Study of Jesus,” in *Studying the Historical Jesus*, 34, 49-51.

[155] Leander Keck, “The Second Coming of the Liberal Jesus*?,” Christian Century* (August 31, 1994): 785-86.

[156] Hagner, “An Analysis of Recent ‘Historical Jesus’ Studies,” 88.

[157] Eddy and Beilby, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus: Five Views*, 49.

[158] James H. Charlesworth, “Preface,” in *Jesus Within Judaism*. New York: Doubleday, 1988) ix.

[159] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress) 19

[160] Colin Brown, “Christology and the Quest of the Historical Jesus,” in *Doing Theology for the People of God, Studies in Honor of J. I. Packer*. Eds. Donald Lewis and Alister McGrath (Downers Grove: InterVaristy,1996) 76.

[161] E. P. Sanders, Jesus and Judaism (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985).

[162] Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) xiii.

[163] E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism, A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (London: SCM & Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

[164] Ibid., xii.

[165] Ibid., xiii.

[166] Ibid., 33.

[167] E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1993), 63.

[168] Ibid., 3.

[169] Ibid., 4.

[170] Ibid., 8.

[171] Ibid., 57.

[172] Ibid., 162.

[173] Ibid., 164.

[174] Ibid., 244.

[175] Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, 334.

[176] Ibid.,4.

[177] Ibid., 3.

[178] Ibid., 5.

[179] Ibid., 11.

[180] Ibid., 2.

[181] Ibid., 18.

[182] Ibid., 178.

[183] Ibid., 180.

[184] Ibid., 261.

[185] Ibid., 263.

[186] Ibid., 263, 276-277.

[187] Ibid., 22.

[188] James D. G. Dunn, *Theology of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 13.

[189] James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003),

92.

[190] Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 102-103.

[191] Dunn, “Response to Darrell Bock,” *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*, 299.

[192] Ibid., 299-300.

[193] Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 104.

[194] Ibid.

[195] Dunn, “Response to Darrell Bock,” *The Historical Jesus Five Views*, 300.

[196] Ibid., 300.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 821-824 (824).

[199] Ibid., 824.

[200] Ibid., 824.

[201] Ibid., 876.

[202] Ibid., 877.

[203] Ibid., 103-104.

[204] Ibid., 877.

[205] Ibid., 878-879.

[206] Ibid., 881.

[207] James H. Charlesworth, “Jesus Research Expands with Chaotic Creativity,” in *Images of Jesus Today*. Eds. James H. Charlesworth and Walter P. Weaver (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994), 5, 9.

[208] Charlesworth, “Jesus Research Expands with Chaotic Creativity,” 9.

[209] Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 1988) 19-20.

[210] James H. Charlesworth, *The Historical Jesus An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2008).

[211] James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 1988) 17-18.

[212] Charlesworth, *The Historical Jesus An Essential Guide*, xiii.

[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid., xiv.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Ibid.

[217] Ibid., 15.

[218] Ibid., 16.

[219] Ibid., 17.

[220] Ibid., 18.

[221] Ibid., 19.

[222] Ibid., 20-25.

[223] Ibid., 31.

[224] The quote is translated. The German text reads: “Aber im ganzen gibt es kein Leben Jesu im Sinne einer sich entwickelnden Lebensgeschichte, keinen chronologischen Aufriß der Geschichte Jesu, sondern nur Einzelgeschichten, Perikopen, die in ein Rahmenwerk gestellt sind.” Karl L. Schmidt, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), 317. The work was originally published in 1919 (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn) and has never been translated into English.

[225] James H. Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism* (New York: Doubleday,

1988) and idem. *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).

[226] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 78.

[227] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 34.

[228] A demonstration that much subjectivity is involved in this distinction is found in John Reumann who sees Wright's so-called "Third Quest" as a part of the Second (or "New Quest"). John Reumann, "Jesus and Christology," in *The New Testament and Its Modern Interpreters*, 501-564. Wright's response is to contend that the majority support the idea of a "New Quest" and the paradigm needed time to become fully established. See Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 83-84. Nonetheless, great subjectivity is involved in determining the "Third Quest" from the "Second" or "New Quest" as well as both quests demonstrating significant skepticism.

[229] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 14.

[230] Ibid., 86.

[231] Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, 424.

[232] Ibid., 426.

[233] Ibid., 425.

[234] Ibid., 425.

[235] Ibid., 372 n. 4.

[236] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 11.

[237] Ibid., 84.

[238] Ibid., 85.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Ibid.,86

[241] Ibid., 87 cf. Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism*, 17.

[242] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 87.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Ibid.

[245] Ibid.

[246] Ibid., 89.

[247] Ibid., 89-113.

[248] Ibid., 187.

[249] Ibid., 187.

[250] Ibid., 188.

[251] Ibid.,191.

[252] N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 685.

[253] Ibid., 686.

[254] Ibid., 687.

[255] Ibid., 692.

[256] Ibid., 694.

[257] Ibid., 696.

[258] Ibid., 706.

[259] Ibid., 709.

[260] Ibid., 717.

[261] Ibid., 717.

[262] See Porter, “Table 2. “The Rise of the Criteria and the Development of Form and Redaction Criticism in ‘Quests’ for the Historical Jesus,” in *The Criteria for Authenticityin Historical-Jesus Research*, 102.

[263] See F. David Farnell, “Form and Tradition Criticism,” in *The Jesus Crisis*, 203-207.

[264] Nils A. Dahl, “The Problem of the Historical Jesus,” in *Kerygma and History*. Edited by Carl E. Braaten and Roy A. Harrisville (New York and Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), 156.

[265] Porter devoted half of one of his recent works to “recent developments in the criteria of authenticity.” Porter, *The Criteria of Authenticity in Historical-Jesus Research*, 103-242.

[266] Brown, “Christology and the Quest of the Historical Jesus,” in *Doing Theology for the People of God*, 75.

[267] Robert H. Stein, *Jesus the Messiah* (Downers-Grove: InterVarsity, 1996), 13.

[268] Since the 2DH and 4DH obtained dominance during the first search for the “historical Jesus,” this approach predominates in all three searches. See William R. Farmer, “A ‘Skeleton in the Closet’ of Gospel Research,” in *Biblical Research*, Papers of the Chicago Society of Biblical Research, (Chicago: SBR, 1961)18-43.

[269] For an excellent discussion of the criteria in the first two searches, see William O. Walker, “The Quest for the Historical Jesus: A Discussion of Methodology,” *Anglican Theological Review* 1969 51/1 (January 1969) 38-56; Harvey K. McArthur, “Basic Issues: A Survey of Recent Gospel Research,” *Interpretation* XVIII (1964) 39-55.

[270] A. M. Farrer, “On Dispensing with Q,” *Studies in the Gospels: Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*. Ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955): 55-88.

[271] Thomas C. Oden and Christopher A. Hall, *Mark*, vol. 2 of Ancient

Christian Commentary on Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998) xxix; F. David Farnell, “The Synoptic Gospels in the Ancient Church: The Testimony to the Priority of Matthew’s Gospel,” 53-86.

[272] *The Critical Editon of Q*. Eds. James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann and John S. Kloppenborg (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000).

[273] The article was originally published in 1879. For the full text, see Edwin A. Abbott, “Gospels” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. R. S. Peale Reprint (Chicago: R. S. Peale, 1892), vol. X, 801-802.

[274] See Farmer’s excellent discussion, *The Synoptic Problem*, 25-26, 178-79.

[275] The present writer sees the depth of corruption in Judaism in the fact that Jesus had to cleanse the temple twice: Once in the beginning of His ministry (John) and another time at the end (Synoptics).

[276] Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover and The Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels* (New York: Macmillan, 1993) 5.

CHAPTER 10

SEARCHING FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS: DOES HISTORY MATTER TO NEOEVANGELICALS?

F. David Farnell



Introduction: Forgotten Lessons of History

A wise old saying has warned, “Those who do not learn from the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.” Does history repeat itself? Pondering this question is important for current evangelical Gospel discussions, especially in reference to modern Gospel research. In terms of searching for the “historical Jesus,” history has repeated itself at least two, if not three, times as catalogued in the preceding chapter. All three quests have failed to find Him and have been declared a failure.

The First Quest for the Historical Jesus (1778-1906): Failure That Produced a New Beginning

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the battle between liberals and fundamentalists had reached somewhat of a crescendo.[1] In response to the alarming inroads of perceived liberalism in the mainline denominations at that time, conservatives in many places, especially in the United States, broke away from them and started their own denominations and schools. This separation occurred almost concomitantly with the end of the

First Search's declared failure in the early part of the 1900s (see Chapter Twelve). In late nineteenth-century Britain, "in a period of theological decline,"[2] Charles Spurgeon warned the Baptist Union regarding "New Theology" that was arising within its ranks. Eventually, Spurgeon withdrew from the Union and was censured by vote in what became known as the "Downgrade Controversy" when evolution and higher critical thought raged within his denominational group.[3] History proved Spurgeon was correct, but no one listened to him at the time. He died a broken man in 1892.

R. A. Torrey and *The Fundamentals*

In 1909, A. C. Dixon, Louis Meyer, and others produced a work called *The Fundamentals.*[4] Originally, this work consisted of a twelve-volume set that set forth the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith and was sent without cost to over 300,000 ministers, missionaries, and other Christian workers throughout the world. It had been funded by Lyman and Milton Stewart who were involved with Union Oil and were influential in the founding of Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Biola) in 1908. The work was essentially a firm reaction against the fundamentalist-modernist controversy that occurred at the end turn of the twentieth century. At the time, many Bible-believing conservatives considered it one of the finest apologetic stances for Scripture and against the current liberalism of the day. *The Fundamentals* was one of the most widely distributed statements of Christian doctrine ever produced and was written to combat the inroads of liberalism that had spiritually deadened the mainline denominations. The work defended the deity of Christ, the full inspiration of Scripture, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and other foundational truths of Scripture that had been historically held by orthodox Christianity. It also constituted a strong apologetic against the history of higher criticism produced during this time and decried the atheistic philosophies that lay at the core of historicalcritical ideologies.

Modernists, or what is now known as "critical scholarship," during this time had refused to give voice to anything approaching the trustworthiness of Scripture. Conservatives were isolated and shunned within mainline denominations. In reaction to this denominational liberalism, six thousand gathered in Philadelphia from May 25 to June 1, 1919, for the "World Conference on Christian Fundamentals." The conference's importance was compared to Luther's nailing of the Ninety-five Theses on the door at Wittenberg.[5] The 1925 Scopes Trial regarding evolution also marked a watershed

issue for fundamentalists during this period.[6] Fundamentalists refused to participate in the First Search for the "historical Jesus," because they realized its *a priori* destructive presuppositional foundations and its intent to destroy the influence of the Gospels and Christianity on society.

The Separation of the Faithful from the Modernistic Critical Scholars

In subsequent years, scores of Bible schools and seminaries were launched by fundamentalists across America. Moody Bible Institute was founded in 1886 by evangelist Dwight L. Moody. In 1907 Lyman Stewart funded the production of *The Fundamentals* which heralded the founding of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles. By 1912, Torrey, coming from Moody Bible Institute, became Dean of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles and assumed editorial leadership in publishing *The Fundamentals* as a four-volume work in 1917. The warning of J. Gresham Machen that "as go the theological seminaries, so goes the church" struck deep at the heart of Bible-believing scholars everywhere: "many seminaries today *are* nurseries of unbelief; and because they are nurseries of unbelief the churches that they serve have become unbelieving churches too. As go the theological seminaries, so goes the church."[7] In 1929, Machen was influential in founding Westminster Theological Seminary as a result of Princeton's direction.[8] Dallas Theological Seminary was founded in 1924[9] and Fuller Theological Seminary was founded in 1947 by Biola graduate, Charles E. Fuller along with Harold Ockenga. These are just a select few of the many schools founded by faithful men in this period.

The Second Quest (1953-1988)

This minimalistic, negative state of affairs regarding historical Jesus studies was not substantially changed by the inauguration of the "New" or "Second Quest" (1953-1988). During this time, evangelicals continued to found more Bible colleges and seminaries: in 1952 Talbot Theological Seminary was started as a graduate training arm of Biola.[10] In 1949, the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS) was formed. In 1958, Charles Feinberg republished *The Fundamentals* in the 1958 Biola *Year of Jubilee* (fifty years after its founding) to reaffirm Biola's historical positions against the encroachment of modernism and historical criticism. This is admittedly a selective-history that mentions just a few of the many events that happened as a result of the fundamentalist-modernist

controversy and its questing for Jesus.

Lessons Soon Forgotten

After this strategic withdrawal by fundamentalists of the first generation who fought the battle to preserve Scripture from the onslaught of historical criticism as well as its subsequent searching for the historical Jesus, subsequent generations from fundamentalist groups became discontent with their isolation from liberal-dominated mainstream biblical scholarship. By the mid-1960s, prominent voices were scolding fundamentalists for continued isolation and dialogue and interaction once again became the rallying cry. Carl F. H. Henry's criticisms struck deep, "The preoccupation of fundamentalists with the errors of modernism, and neglect of schematic presentations of the evangelical alternative, probably gave neo-orthodoxy its great opportunity in the Anglo-Saxon world. . .If Evangelicals do not overcome their preoccupation with negative criticism of contemporary theological deviations at the expense of the construction of preferable alternatives to these, they will not be much of a doctrinal force in the decade ahead."[11]

Echoing similar statements, George Eldon Ladd (1911-1982) of Fuller Theological Seminary became a zealous champion of modern critical methods, arguing that the two-source hypothesis should be accepted "as a literary fact" and that form criticism "has thrown considerable light on the nature of the Gospels and the traditions they employ" adding, "Evangelical scholars should be willing to accept this light."[12] Indeed, for Ladd, critical methods have derived great benefit for evangelicals, "it has shed great light on the historical side of the Bible; and these historical discoveries are valid for all Bible students even though the presuppositions of the historicalcritical method have been often hostile to an evangelical view of the Bible. Contemporary evangelicals often overlook this important fact when they condemn the critical method as such; for even while they condemn historical criticism, they are constantly reaping the benefits of its discoveries and employing critical tools."[13] Ladd asserts, "One must not forget that. . .everyday tools of good Bible study are the product of the historicalcritical method."[14] George Ladd catalogued the trend of a "substantial group of scholars" whose background was in the camp of "fundamentalism" who had now been trained "in Europe as well as in our best universities" and were "deeply concerned with serious scholarship."[15] He also chided fundamentalists for their "major preoccupation" with defending "inerrancy of the Bible in its most extreme form," but contributing "little of creative thinking

to the current debate."[16] Although Ladd acknowledged that historicalcritical ideology was deeply indebted for its operation in the Enlightenment and the German scholarship that created it openly admitted its intention of "dissolving orthodoxy's identification of the Gospel with Scripture,"[17] Ladd sent many of his students for subsequent study in Britain and Europe in order to enlarge the influence of conservatives, the latter of which influence was greatly responsible for the fundamentalist split at the turn of the twentieth century.[18]

Today, Ladd serves as the recognized paradigm for current attitudes and approaches among evangelical historicalcritical scholarship in encouraging evangelical education in British and Continental institutions as well as the adoption and participation in historical criticism to some form or degree, actions which previously were greatly responsible for the fundamentalist-modernist split.[19] Lessons from what caused the last theological meltdown had long been forgotten or carelessly disregarded.[20]

Yet, significantly, Ladd had drawn a line for his scholarly participation that he would not cross. Ladd (d. 1982) lived during the second "search for the 'historical Jesus'" and had correctly perceived, "The historicalcritical method places severe limitations upon its methodology before it engages in a quest for the historical Jesus. It has decided in advance the kind of Jesus it must find—or at least the kind of Jesus it may not find, the Jesus portrayed in the Gospels" and "If the Gospel portrait is trustworthy, then 'the historical Jesus' never existed in history, only in the critical reconstructions of the scientific historians. A methodology which prides itself in its objectivity turns out to be in the grip of dogmatic philosophical ideas about the nature of history."[21] Ladd countered, "[i]n sum, the historicalcritical method is not an adequate method to interpret the theology of the New Testament because its presuppositions limit its findings to the exclusion of the central biblical message." Instead, Ladd recognized the contribution of a "historical-theological" method of theology based in the *Heilsgeschichte* ("salvation history") approach that takes the New Testament as serious history and said, "[m]y own understanding of New Tesatment Theology is distinctly *heilsgeschichtlich*."[22]

In 1976, a book came on the scene that sent massive shockwaves throughout the evangelical movement: *The Battle for the Bible* by Harold Lindsell.[23] Lindsell catalogued what he perceived was and alarming departure from the doctrine of inerrancy among evangelicals. Around this same time, Francis Schaeffer had argued, "Holding to a strong view of Scripture or not holding to it is the

watershed of the evangelical world."[24] Lindsell catalogued departures from inerrancy by the Lutheran Missouri Synod, the Southern Baptists, and other groups. He listed what he perceived as deviations that resulted when inerrancy is denied as well as how the infection of denial spreads to other matters within evangelicalism. Because Lindsell was one of the founding members at Fuller Seminary, he especially focused on what he felt were troubling events at Fuller Seminary regarding the "watershed" issue of inerrancy.[25] Most strategically, Lindsell attributed the "use of historicalcritical method" as a foundational cause of the destruction of inerrancy among denominations. He noted, "there are also those who call themselves evangelicals who have embraced this [historicalcritical] methodology. The presuppositions of this methodology. . . go far beyond mere denial of biblical infallibility. They tear at the heart of Scripture, and include a denial of the supernatural."[26] In *The Bible in the Balance*, Lindsell dedicated a whole chapter to historical criticism, labeling it "The Bible's Deadly Enemy":

> Anyone who thinks the historicalcritical method is neutral is misinformed. . . . It appears to me that modern evangelical scholars (and I may have been guilty of this myself) have played fast and loose with the term because they wanted acceptance by academia. They seem too often to desire to be members of the club which is nothing more than practicing an inclusiveness that undercuts the normativity of the evangelical position. This may be done, and often is, under the illusion that by this method the opponents of biblical inerrancy can be won over to the evangelical viewpoint. But practical experience suggests that rarely does this happen and the cost of such an approach is too expensive, for it gives credence and leads respectability to a method which is the deadly enemy of theological orthodoxy.[27]

As an interpretive ideology, Lindsell noted that both form and redaction criticism are destroying the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels. He noted: "When the conclusion is reached that the Gospels do not reflect true history the consequences are mind-boggling. We simply do not know who the real Jesus was. This undermines Scripture and destroys the Christian faith as a historical vehicle. It opens the door wide to a thousand vagaries and brings us right back to trying to find the canon within a canon."[28]

Reaction to Lindsell's first book was exceedingly swift.[29] Some praised it while others vilified it. In response to the book, many concerned evangelicals

began to form what would become known as the “International Council on Biblical Inerrancy” in 1977 that would produce the Chicago Statements on Biblical Inerrancy (1978) and Hermeneutics (1982) as a response.[30] Lindsell himself catalogued the reaction in a second companion volume, *The Bible in the Balance*. Donald Dayton recounted the fear that it produced among evangelicals in the following terms, “Evangelicals are jittery, fearing Lindsell’s book might herald a new era of faculty purges and organizational splits—a reply of earlier conflicts, this time rending the evangelical world asunder.”[31] Dayton later wrote that “‘Evangelical’ and ‘fundamentalist’ controversies over scriptural authority and biblical inerrancy seem endless” citing Lindsell’s works as continuing to disturb the evangelical world.[32]

In 1979, then Fuller professor Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim responded directly to Lindsell’s assertion that plenary, verbal inspiration was the orthodox position of the church in their *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible* by attempting to argue that Lindsell’s position on inerrancy was inaccurate.[33] They argued, “The central Christian tradition included the concept of accommodation”[34] and that modern views of inerrancy did not reflect the church’s historic position, but resulted from “extreme positions” taken both from fundamentalism and modernism” “regarding the Bible.”[35] Lindsell’s and many others’ views of inerrancy, Rogers and McKim alleged, were from “the old Princeton position of Hodge and Warfield” who had drunk deep from “Scottish common sense realism” rather than reflecting the historic position of the church.[36] They noted, “Our hypothesis is that the peculiar twists of American history have served to distort our view of both the central Christian tradition [concerning inerrancy] and especially of its Reformed Branch.”[37] They went on to note:

> The function, or purpose, of the Bible was to bring people into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The Bible was not used as an encyclopedia of information on all subjects. The principle theological teachers of the church argued that the Bible not be used to judge matters of science, for example, astronomy. Scripture’s use was clearly for salvation, not science. The forms of the Bible’s language and its cultural context were open to scholarly investigation. The central tradition included the concept of accommodation. . .God had condescended and adapted himself in Scripture to our ways of thinking and speaking. . .To erect a standard, modern technical precision in language as the hallmark of biblical authority was totally foreign to the foundation shared by the early church.”[38]

The Bible was to be viewed as reliable in matters of faith and practice but not in all matters. In 2009, as an apparent result of his approach to Scripture, Rogers released *Jesus, The Bible and Homosexuality*, that calls for evangelical tolerance and acceptance of homosexuality, gay, lesbian, and transgender issues not only for church membership but for ordination in ministry.[39]

As a direct response to Rogers and McKim, John Woodbridge published his *Biblical Authority, A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* as an effective critique of their proposal.[40] Lindsell's negative historical take on problems has received counter-balancing by Marsden's *Reforming Fundamentalism* produced in 1987. By 1978, conservative evangelicals who knew the importance of inerrancy as a doctrinal watershed felt the need to produce *The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy* and produced another on *Hermeneutics* in 1982 to reaffirm their historical positions in these areas as a response to Rogers' and McKim's work.[41] As a direct consequence of these events, Robert Gundry was removed from membership of ETS in 1982 due to his involvement in alleged dehistoricizing of Matthew as reflected in his commentary *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art*.[42] His removal, as will be seen, still raises strong feelings among evangelical scholarship. Gundry contended that Matthew's story of the slaughtering of the babies in Bethlehem should not be seen as historical but as a type of allegorical, midrashic device or illustration.[43] Genre was now being used by evangelicals as an excuse or hermeneutic to dehistoricize the plain, normal sense of the Gospels. Using redaction critical hermeneutics centering in genre issues about Matthew 2:7-8, he argued that the theological editor of Matthew redacted/edited the offering of two turtledoves or two young pigeons in the temple (Luke 2:24) and transformed it into Herod's slaughter of the babies in Bethlehem.[44] As another example, Gundry also asserted that Matthew transformed the Jewish shepherds that appear in Luke 2 into Gentile Magi[45] and had also changed the traditional manger into a house. For Gundry, then, the nonexistent house was where the nonexistent Magi found Jesus on the occasion of their non-visit to Bethlehem. Gundry's use of genre issues based in historicalcritical ideology (redaction criticism) as a means to negate the historicity of events that were always considered genuine historical events by the orthodox community from the beginnings of the church alarmed the vast majority (70%) of evangelicals in the Evangelical Theological Society.

Another result of Lindsell's works in addition to the formation of ICBI was James Barr's response as penned in his two strategic works *Fundamentalism* and *Beyond Fundamentalism*. In 1977, Barr composed his *Fundamentalism* as a

direct reaction against the "fundamentalism" of Lindsell, noting in his foreword: "It is not surprising that, in a time of unusual ferment and fresh openness among evangelicals, there should appear a book like Harold Lindsell's *The Battle for the Bible*. . .insisting on a hard position of total inerrancy of the Bible."[46] Instead, Barr praised Jack Rogers' work, *Confessions of a Conservative Evangelical*,[47] as "a work indicating an openness to new trends among evangelicals" and characterized it as "an interesting expression of a search for an evangelical tradition different from the dominant fundamentalist one."[48]

In *Fundamentalism*, Barr urged evangelicals to separate from and reject fundamentalism's characteristics in three specific areas:

(a) A very strong emphasis on the inerrancy of the Bible, the absence from it of any sort of error.

(b) A strong hostility to modern theology and methods, results and implications of modern critical study of the Bible.

(c) An assurance that those who do not share their religious viewpoint are not really 'true Christians' at all.[49]

In his 1984 work, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, Barr again continued to urge evangelicals to continue separation from fundamentalism in these areas: "This [work] seeks to offer help to those who have grown up in the world of fundamentalism or have become committed to it but who have in the end come to feel that it is a prison from which they must escape."[50]

Lindsell's work, as well as ICBI, continued to send shockwaves through evangelical society. In 1982, Alan Johnson in his presidential address to ETS asked through analogy whether higher criticism was "Egyptian gold or pagan precipice" and reached the conclusion that "the refinement of critical methodologies under the magisterium of an inerrant scriptural authority can move us gently into a deeper appreciation of sacred Scripture."[51]

Craig Blomberg, in 1984, soon after the ICBI statements, raised questions regarding biblical interpretation in the Gospels, arguing for genre distinctions. In reference to the story of the coin in the fish's mouth in Matthew 17:24-27, Blomberg defended Robert Gundry's midrashic approach to the Gospels in the following terms:

> Is it possible, even inherently probable, that the NT writers at least in part never intended to have their miracle stories taken as historical or factual and that their original audiences probably recognized this? If this sounds like the identical reasoning that enabled Robert Gundry to adopt his midrashic interpretation of Matthew while still affirming inerrancy, that is because it is the same. The problem will not disappear simply because one author [Gundry] is dealt with *ad hominem*. . .how should evangelicals react? Dismissing the sociological view on the grounds that the NT miracles present themselves as historical gets us nowhere. So do almost all the other miracle stories of antiquity. Are we to believe them all?[52]

Barr's criticisms also stung deep among evangelicals. At an annual Evangelical Theological Society meeting in Santa Clara, California, in 1997, Moisés Silva, who himself had studied under Barr ("my admiration for Barr knows no bounds"), chided conservative scholarship for their lack of openness to methods of modern critical in his presidential address entitled, "Can Two Walk Together Unless They Be Agreed? Evangelical Theology and Biblical Scholarship."[53] Silva took his mentor, Barr, to task for misrepresenting evangelicals by failing to notice that many evangelicals were open to historicalcritical hermeneutics, citing not only recent evangelicals who espoused critical methods but also earlier evangelicals like Machen who took "seriously the liberal teachings of his day."[54] Silva asserted that "there is the more direct approach of many of us who are actually engaged in critical Biblical scholarship."[55] Thus, by 1997, many evangelicals were openly disregarding Lindsell's warning about historical criticism.

The next year, in 1998, Norman Geisler, took quite the opposite approach and warned evangelicals regarding the negative presuppositions of historicalcritical ideologies in his "Beware of Philosophy," citing lessons from history as demonstrating their negative consequences.[56] In his address, Geisler featured a 1998 work entitled, *The Jesus Crisis*, that detailed growing evangelical involvement in historicalcritical ideologies like questing for the "historical Jesus." Just like Lindsell's books, *The Jesus Crisis* stirred up a hornet's nest of controversy among evangelicals. To say the least, Geisler's address as well as his praise for *The Jesus Crisis* revealed a significant cleavage within evangelicalism that had developed since ICBI. While some praised *The Jesus Crisis* as needing to be written,[57] other evangelicals disdained the work as strident, fundamentalist rhetoric that was closed-minded to a judicial use of historical criticism.[58] Darrell Bock reacted to *The Jesus Crisis* with the following: "As a whole, *The Jesus*

Crisis displays a lack of discernment about the history of Gospels study. The book should have given a more careful discussion of difficult details in the Gospels and the views tied to them, especially when inerrantists critiqued by the book are portrayed as if they were denying the accuracy of the Gospels, when in fact they are defending it."[59] Bock contended, "Careful consideration also does not support the claim that even attempting to use critical methods judiciously leads automatically and inevitably to denial of the historicity of the Gospels. Unfortunately this work overstates its case at this basic level and so places blame for the bibliological crisis at some wrong evangelical doorsteps."[60]

In a highly irregular move for the Evangelical Theological Society that disallowed book reviews in the form of journal articles, Grant Osborne was given an opportunity in the next issue of *JETS* to counter Geisler's presidential address, wherein Geisler's address as well as *The Jesus Crisis* were criticized, saying, "the tone is too harsh and grating, the positions too extreme."[61] In 2004, Geisler, a world-renown Christian apologist and long-time member of ETS, decried the society's acceptance of open theists among its ranks and withdrew his membership, perceiving a drift in the wrong direction for the Evangelical Theological Society of which he was a founding member. Grant Osborne, however, in his use of redaction-critical hermeneutics, advocated that the Great Commission was not originally spoken by Jesus in the way that Matthew had recorded it, but that "It seems most likely that at some point the tradition or Matthew expanded an original monadic formula."[62] He later reversed his position in the following terms:

> A misunderstanding of my position with respect to this, in fact, has led to widespread dissatisfaction regarding my approach to the triadic baptismal formula of Matt 28:19. There I posited that Matthew had possibly expanded an original monadic formula in order "to interpret the true meaning of Jesus' message for his own day. . .However, Matthew has faithfully reproduced the intent and meaning of what Jesus said." [23] In my next article mentioned above I clarified this further by stating, "The interpretation must be based on the original words and meaning imparted by Jesus." [24] Here I would like to clarify it further by applying the implications of my second article to the first. I did not mean that Matthew had freely composed the triadic formula and read it back onto the lips of Jesus. Rather, Jesus had certainly (as in virtually every speech in the NT) spoken for a much longer time and had given a great deal more teaching than reported in the short statement of Matt 28:18-20. In it I believe that he probably elucidated the

> trinitarian background behind the whole speech. This was compressed by Matthew in the form recorded. Acts and Paul then may have followed the formula itself from the commission speech, namely the monadic form.[63]

In 2001, Craig Blomberg, in his article "Where Should Twenty-First Century Biblical Scholarship," decried *The Jesus Crisis*: "It is hard to imagine a book such as Thomas and Farnell's *The Jesus Crisis* ever appearing in Britain, much less being commended by evangelical scholars as it has been by a surprising number in this country. Avoiding Thomas's and Farnell's misguided separatism and regular misrepresentation of others' works, a higher percentage of us need to remain committed to engaging the larger, scholarly world in contextually sensitive ways that applaud as much as possible perspectives that we do not adopt while nevertheless preserving evangelical distinctives."[64] Blomberg went on to praise his own brand of scholarship: "It still distresses me. . . how many religious studies departments in the U.S. (or their libraries) are unaware of the breadth and depth of evangelical biblical scholarship. This situation need not remain this way, as witnessed by the fact that this is an area in which our British counterparts have made considerably more progress in, at times, even less-promising contexts."[65]

Such a response by Blomberg serves as an illustration of the startling erosion of inerrancy among New Testament scholars, especially those who have been schooled on the European continent. Many of these European-trained scholars ignore the lessons of history learned by evangelicals at the turn of the twentieth century and as highlighted in the Chicago Statements of 1978 and 1982. Significantly, Blomberg and those agreeing with him exemplify the significant, substantive shift in hermeneutics that these evangelicals are now engaging in. The Chicago Statement on Inerrancy in 1978 expressly commended the grammaticohistorical approach in Article XVIII:

> We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammaticohistorical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

Why did they commend the grammaticohistorical approach? Because the men who expressed these two watershed statements had experienced the history of

interpretive degeneration among mainstream churches and seminaries ("As go the theological seminaries, so goes the church")[66] in terms of dismissing the Gospels as historical records due to historicalcritical ideologies. Blomberg, instead, now advocates "The HistoricalCritical/Grammatical View"[67] of hermeneutics for evangelicals that constitutes an alarming, and especially unstable, blend of historicalcritical ideologies with the grammaticohistorical hermeneutic. Blomberg argues for a "both-and-and-and-and" position of combining grammaticohistorical method with that of historicalcritical ideologies.[68]

Blomberg chose to ignore *The Jesus Crisis* (1998) that has already catalogued the evangelical disaster that such a blend of grammaticohistorical and historicalcritical elements precipitates in interpretive approaches.[69] Stemming from this blending of these two elements are the following sampling of hermeneutical dehistoricizing among evangelicals: The author of Matthew, not Jesus, created the Sermon on the Mount; the commissioning of the Twelve in Matthew 10 is a compilation of instructions collected and gathered but not spoken on a single occasion; Matthew 13 and Mark 4 are collections or anthologies not spoken by Jesus on a single occasion; Jesus did not preach the Olivet Discourse in its entirety as presented in the Gospels; the scribes and Pharisees were good people whom Matthew portrayed in a bad light; the magi of Matthew 2 are fictional characters; Jesus did not speak all of the parables in Matthew 5:3-12.[70]

This section also tellingly reveals Blomberg's "both/and" approach of combining grammaticohistorical with historicalcritical, a telling admission of the strong impact of British academic training on evangelical hermeneutics, as well as his willingness to create a bridge between Christian orthodoxy and Mormonism. While Blomberg is irenic and embracing with Mormons, he has great hostility toward those who uphold the "fundamentals" of Scripture.

In his article on "The HistoricalCritical/Grammatical" hermeneutic, he asserts that historical criticism can be "shorn" of its "antisupernatural presuppositions that the framers of that method originally employed" and eagerly embraces "source, form, tradition and redaction criticism" as "***all essential*** [italic and bold added—not in the original] tools for understanding the contents of the original document, its formation and origin, its literary genre and subgenres, the authenticity of the historical material it includes, and its theological or ideological emphases and distinctives."[71] He labels the "The

HistoricalCritical/Grammatical" approach "the necessary foundation on which all other approaches must build."[72] However, history is replete with negative examples of those who attempted this unstable blend, from the neologians in Griesbach's day to that of Michael Licona's book currently under discussion (see below).[73] Baird, in his *History of New Testament Research*, commented: "The neologians did not deny the validity of divine revelation but assigned priority to reason and natural theology. While faith in God, morality, and immortality were affirmed, older dogmas such as the Trinity, predestination, and the inspiration of Scripture were seriously compromised. . .The neologians. . .appropriated the results of the historicalcritical work of Semler and Michaelis."[74]

Interestingly, Craig Blomberg blames books like Harold Lindsell's *Battle for the Bible* (1976) and such books as *The Jesus Crisis* for people leaving the faith because of their strong stance on inerrancy as a presupposition. In an online interview conducted by Justin Taylor in 2008, Blomberg responded this way to books that hold to a firm view of inerrancy. The interviewer asked, "Are there certain mistaken hermeneutical presuppositions made by conservative evangelicals that play into the hands of liberal critics?" Blomberg replied,

> Absolutely. And one of them follows directly from the last part of my answer to your last question. The approach, famously supported back in 1976 by Harold Lindsell in his *Battle for the Bible* (Zondervan), that it is an all-or-nothing approach to Scripture that we must hold, is both profoundly mistaken and deeply dangerous. No historian worth his or her salt functions that way. I personally believe that if inerrancy means "without error according to what most people in a given culture would have called an error" then the biblical books are inerrant in view of the standards of the cultures in which they were written. But, despite inerrancy being the touchstone of the largely American organization called the Evangelical Theological Society, there are countless evangelicals in the States and especially in other parts of the world who hold that the Scriptures are inspired and authoritative, even if not inerrant, and they are not sliding down any slippery slope of any kind. I can't help but wonder if inerrantist evangelicals making inerrancy the watershed for so much has not, unintentionally, contributed to pilgrimages like Ehrman's. Once someone finds one apparent mistake or contradiction that they cannot resolve, then they believe the Lindsells of the world and figure they have to chuck it all. What a tragedy![75]

To Blomberg, apparently anyone who advocates inerrancy as traditionally advocated by Lindsell is responsible for people leaving the faith.

It is also the hermeneutic of historical criticism through which Blomberg developed his globalization hermeneutical approach. In a very telling article of Blomberg's historical-grammatical hermeneutical approach, he advocates "The Globalization of Biblical Interpretation: A Test Case—John 3-4."[76] This "hermeneutic" clearly has an *a priori* agenda that is imposed on the text when Blomberg summarizes the approach as "asking new questions of the text, particularly in light of the experiences of marginalization of a large percent of the world's population."[77] From Blomberg's perspective "[s]tudents of scripture. . . have realized that the traditional historicalcritical interpretation has been disproportionately Eurocentric and androcentric. . . and various new methodologies have been developed to correct this imbalance."[78] That such a conclusion has any substantial basis in fact, beyond opinion, is not substantiated by the article. Apparently, for Blomberg, the goal of exegesis and interpretation is not to understand the text as was originally intended but to search the biblical text for an already prescribed agenda of "globalization." This is telling, for under this scheme the meaning and significance of the biblical text would be its usefulness in promoting an agenda that is already predetermined, *i.e.* subjecting Scripture to the shifting sands of interpretation that Blomberg identifies as follows: "issues of liberation theology, feminism, religious pluralism, the disparity between the world's rich and poor, and contextualization of biblical material."[79]

In response to Blomberg's assertions regarding such newly developing issues, one cannot help but be reminded of Paul's own warning to the Ephesian church about the purpose of teaching and preaching by God's shepherd's over the church:

> And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even*

Christ. (Eph 4:11-15)

Here Paul clearly warns the Church against subjecting the Word of God to "waves" and "winds" of every doctrine and by application, whatever trends may predominate society through the centuries until Jesus' return. A question left unanswered by Blomberg is what happens to the imposition of such interpretation of the text when the next fade or "ism" replaces these emphases. Nor have these emphases necessarily been subjected to Scripture to form any biblical bases whatsoever that they should be imposed on the text of Scripture *a priori* as interpretive principles. Second Corinthians 10:5 warns believers to take every thought captive.

Yet, where he teaches at Denver Seminary, the seminary has such an interpretive approach that it has embraced reflecting "a more central place in its [Denver Seminary's] curriculum. . .focusing on historical Christianity's mandate to worldwide mission" and "goes on to elaborate 'an empathetic understanding of the different genders, races, cultures, and religions to be able to contextualize the gospel more effectively,' 'increased application and promotion of biblical principles to such global issues as economic development, social justice, political systems, human rights, and international conflict,' and related concerns."[80] Blomberg argues "it is perhaps best to think of the globalization of biblical interpretation as the processes either of asking questions of the biblical passage which are not traditionally asked within a particular interpretive community or of allowing new answers, more supportive of the world's oppressed, to emerge from old questions out of a more careful exegesis of the text itself."[81] He asserts that "these new questions and answers are often suggested as we read the Bible through the eyes of the individuals quite different from ourselves."[82] How one can subjectively view the Bible through the eyes of other individuals is not explained but it does highlight the existentialist basis of the new hermeneutic (Ebeling, Fuchs) where truth rests, not in the text, but in the interpreter's subjective experience. Here also Blomberg makes a telling omission that his goal in globalization hermeneutics is not necessarily to elucidate original intent of the authors of Scripture but to devise interpretive decisions that are "more supportive of the world's oppressed."[83]

What is even more concerning is his application of these principles to the biblical text. One example must suffice in John 4 with the woman at the well. Here Blomberg's concern for reading feminist issues causes him to see the woman as a "victim rather than a whore" where he dismisses the idea that the

woman was sexually promiscuous, which he terms “an unfounded assumption.” Instead, Blomberg asserts that “[t]he fault could well have resided more with the men than with the woman; we simply have no way of knowing. That she was currently living with a man to whom she was not legally married might just as easily have stemmed from her fifth husband having abandoned here without a legal divorce and from her need to be joined to a man for legal and social protection.”[84] Such an interpretation requires Blomberg to ignore the woman’s summoning of the men of the village with the following words: “So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city and said to the men, ‘Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?’” This latter confession is best understood as an admission that Jesus correctly knew the spiritual condition of her immoral lifestyle (cf. 4:18 where Jesus knows how many husbands she had, otherwise it is an empty statement apart from its moral implications.

What is patently obvious is that Blomberg’s concern for sociological and political correctness greatly clouds his exegesis of John 3-4. Fortunately, Blomberg realizes that the passage remains “fundamentally Christocentric; Jesus is the principle personage in both passages” and that “the person and work of Christ subordinates all liberationist, feminist, and postmodernist readings, important as they may be.”[85] Nevertheless, his assertion that “Biblical scholarship which does not yet acknowledge such ‘metacriticism’ lags behind the social sciences in this respect” is quite disturbing, for it opens up the proverbial “Pandora’s box” for a host of foreign elements to be imposed on the biblical text, resulting in Scripture being reduced to a tool for the promotion of globalist and/or fleeting agendas that are not anchored to a grammaticohistorical understanding of the Scriptures’ content or meaning.

Evangelicals Join in the Third Quest

After decrying Geisler’s presidential address as well as the warnings set forth in *The Jesus Crisis*, as the next chapter will review in a much more lengthy discussion, in 1999 evangelicals who embraced historicalcritical ideologies began a significant endeavor at joining in a Third Quest for the “historical Jesus.” Most evangelicals up to that time did not participate in the first or second quests, but this evangelical corroboration in searching was a decade-long process of engaging in the effort. In 2010, Darrell Bock and William Webb produced *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus* that recorded the research of scholars associated with the Institute of Biblical Research (IBR). Operating from the

position of postmodernistic historiography, this work asserted that only twelve events in the Gospels had the best chance of probably happening in history. In examining this work, one wonders whether Harold Lindsell's warning regarding historicalcritical ideologies was not very prescient: "the use of the historicalcritical method. . .leads, as night follows day, to the need for finding the canon within the canon." Lindsell labeled such a result as a "requirement" of historical criticism.[86] Interestingly, in 2010, Scot McKnight withdrew from the Third Search, citing similar reasoning: "a fundamental observation about all genuine historical Jesus studies: *Historical Jesus scholars construct what is in effect a fifth gospel*. The reconstructed Jesus is not identical to the canonical Jesus or the orthodox Jesus. He is the reconstructed Jesus, which means he is a 'new' Jesus." [87]

In a recent IBR article, "Faith and the Historical Jesus," Bock "defends the value of having mediated presentations of Jesus" as exhibited in the third search for the historical Jesus.[88] Bock comments, "For many evangelicals, especially lay evangelicals, the skepticism surrounding much of historical-Jesus work is to be shunned as a rejection of the Bible as the Word of God."[89] Apparently Bock believes that while some Bible students are limited in understanding and ability and, as a result of their educational deficiencies, might not appreciate Jesus research, some New Testament scholars who are as highly trained as he is can engage in the discussion, so long as "one must appreciate the nature of what historical-Jesus work seeks to achieve as well as the limitations such a historically oriented study operates under when it seeks to cross thousands of years to do its work."[90] The problem, for Bock, lies not in the historicalcritical approach but in the skill, or lack of skill, of a researcher and realizing that such studies have limitations "in understanding and ability" in making a case for the New Testament traditions tied to Jesus.[91]

What is, however, even more fascinating is Robert Miller's reply to Bock's article supporting evangelical participation in searching for the "historical Jesus": "When It's Futile to Argue about the Historical Jesus."[92] Miller is an active member of the Society of Biblical Literature and a critic of evangelical participation in historiographical questions that the latter attempt to marginalize or limit in searching for the "historical Jesus." He argues that evangelicals who participate in these studies aren't consistent or critical enough in the historiographical principles needed for answers that academic scholarship is seeking: "I maintain that the arguments about the historical Jesus can be productive only among those who already agree on a number of contested

questions about historiographical method and the nature of the Gospels. Therefore, debates about the historical Jesus that occur between the 'evangelical' camp (which sees the canonical Gospels as fully reliable historically) and the 'traditional' camp (which sees the Gospel as blends of fact and fiction) are futile."[93] Furthermore, he argues that the idea that the Gospels are to be compared to ancient *bios* genre is wrong, for he asserts that ancient *bios* genre was more historically accurate than the Gospels, *i.e.* the comparison is wrong! Miller asserts that no camp is persuaded by the other in their assertions: "Scholarship from one camp is unavoidably unpersuasive to the other camp. . . . That's why debates about basic issues in our field never change people's minds in any fundamental way."[94] For evangelicals, the critical scholars go too far in their denigration of the Gospels; for the critical scholars the evangelicals do not go far enough in allowing dehistoricizing of the Gospel material. The end result of such an impasse would appear to be that the Gospels are subject to a scholarly tug-of-war and that, in the process, are denigrated as historically trustworthy, *i.e.* the Gospels are undermined as reliable historical documents rather than affirmed as is insisted by Bock, Webb, and Keener.

Miller's argument, interestingly, is similar to Perrin's argument against Eldon Ladd that Ladd refused to allow his acceptance of historical criticism to move him too far. Norman Perrin regarded Ladd's passion for approval among liberals as a motivation that led to Ladd's misconstruing some of the more liberal scholars' positions in order to make them support his own views.[95] Perrin bluntly argued,

> We have already noted Ladd's anxiety to find support for his views on the authenticity of a saying or pericope, and this is but one aspect of what seems to be a ruling passion with him: the search for critical support for his views altogether. To this end he is quite capable of misunderstanding the scholars concerned. . . .
>
> Ladd's passion for finding support for his views among critical scholars has as its counterpart an equal passion for dismissing contemptuously aspects of their work which do not support him. These dismissals are of a most peremptory nature.[96]

Perrin labeled Ladd's support for the credibility of the Gospels as accurate historical sources for the life of Jesus as "an uncritical view" and that Ladd was guilty of eisegesis of liberals' views to demonstrate any congruity of their

assertions with his brand of conservative evangelical. Marsden continues:

> [Ladd] saw Perrin's review as crucial in denying him prestige in the larger academic arena. . . . The problem was the old one of the neoevangelical efforts to reestablish world-class evangelical scholarship. Fundamentalists and conservatives did not trust them. . . and the mainline academic community refused to take them seriously.
>
> Perhaps Perrin had correctly perceived a trait of the new evangelical movement when he described Ladd as torn between his presuppositional critique of modern scholarship and his eagerness to find modern critical scholars on his side. . . No one quite succeeded philosophically in mapping the way this was to be done, though. The result was confusion, as became apparent with subsequent efforts to relate evangelical theology to the social sciences at the new schools. For. . . Ladd, who had the highest hopes for managing to be in both camps with the full respect of each, the difficulties in maintaining the balance contributed to deep personal anxiety.[97]

As a direct result of Bock's and Webb's *Key Events* and its support for postmodernistic historiography, Geisler and Roach dedicated a whole chapter of their work to analyzing its efforts in their recently released *Inerrancy Defended* (2011).[98] Geisler's and Roach's book arose out of concern for a perceived drift away from the concerns for inerrancy of the ICBI movements in 1978 and 1982. They noted their concern especially in relationship to the Evangelical Theological Society: "many young evangelicals trained in contemporary higher criticism have grown increasingly dissatisfied with the traditional view of unlimited inerrancy that was embraced by Warfield, the ETS founders, and the ICBI."[99] They noted that two camps now existed within ETS: those who adhered to the Chicago Statements and their view of unlimited inerrancy and those who did not. They wanted, therefore, evangelicals to remember recent problems surrounding inerrancy in the history of evangelicals that led to the founding of ETS as well as the events that created the Chicago Statements on Inerrancy (1978) and Hermeneutics (1982).

Geisler and Roach counter Bock's claim that historical criticism allows "serious historical engagement" decidedly in the negative: It is *not* serious historical engagement but "bristles" with presuppositions that Bock and Webb choose to ignore; in postmodernistic historiography the term "history" "bristles with presuppositions."[100] While commending Bock and Webb for their response

to the Jesus Seminar, as well as their sincere efforts in seeking to know the actual Jesus of history, Geisler and Roach listed several significant concerns that directly impact the doctrine of inerrancy, among which are: (1) late dating of New Testament books; (2) the use of evangelical redaction criticism that denigrates the role of eyewitnesses involved in the composition of the canonical Gospels; (3) the assumption of methodological naturalism, especially in terms of their assumptions of postmodernistic historiography; (4) failing to account for the fact that the idea of a "quest" for the "historical Jesus" constitutes a de facto denial of inerrancy and impugns the Gospels as historical records; and (5) disregarding the Spinozian impact of dealing with alleged sources behind the text rather than the inspired text itself; and (6) neglecting the role of the Holy Spirit in the production of the Gospels (John 14:26; 16:13).[101] Their conclusion was that such participation by Bock, Webb, and other participants in *Key Events* undermine the doctrine of inerrancy as well as the trustworthiness of Scripture. Geisler and Roach argue "Bock-Webb wrongly believe that they have cleansed the critical-historical method of its naturalistic biases and purified it for appropriate use by evangelicals to find the historical Jesus. . .this is as naïve as the belief that methodological naturalism as a science, to which they compare their approach (KE, 45) will escape the web of naturalistic conclusions. . .Many young scholars seem slow to learn that methodology determines theology. And a naturalistic methodology will lead to a naturalistic theology."[102] As a result, their adoption of "an unorthodox methodology. . .undermines the inerrancy of Scripture."[103]

An Evangelical Crisis of Attitude toward Inspiration and Inerrancy

A very recent work reflecting current thinking among evangelicals who received training and/or influence from British and European continental schools, *Do Historical Matters Matter to the Faith?*, (2012)[104] highlights changing views regarding inerrancy and historicity issues centering in the Bible. The work relates its purpose as follows:

> We offer this book to help address some of the questions raised about the historicity, accuracy, and inerrancy of the Bible by colleagues within our faith community, as well as those outside it. There will be a special emphasis placed on matters of history and the historicity of biblical narratives, both Old and New Testaments, as this seems presently to be a

> burning issue for theology and faith. Hence, we begin with a group of essays that deal with theological matters before moving on to topics in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and archaeology."[105]

In reacting against those critical of evangelical scholarship's refusal to embrace historical critical ideologies, such as James Barr and, more recently Kenton Sparks in his *God's Word in Human Words*,[106] the work boasts about the academic degrees of the contributors: "(The contributors of this book who did their doctoral work in British universities—Aberdeen, Oxford, and Cambridge—would hardly agree with this assessment!) The readers need only to review the list of contributors to see where they completed their PhDs, and it will be abundantly clear that the vast majority worked in secular and critical contexts and had to deal directly with critical issues. In fact, even in the context of Near Eastern studies, the critical approaches of *Altstestamentlers* were a part of the curriculum" [parenthetical marks in original].[107] Because the focus of the present chapter is on New Testament issues, not every chapter in this work will be discussed, but only those that focus on inerrancy and New Testament issues that demonstrate this crisis of attitude among evangelicals.

In Chapter One, "Religious Epistomology, Theological Interpretation of Scripture, and Critical Biblical Scholarship," Thomas McCall sets forth a philosophy of biblical scholarship for the group. McCall advocates a type of "methodological naturalism": "MN holds only that the method of CBS [critical biblical scholarship] 'can be followed and may be valuable for historians' but do not give the only or final word on all matters (historical or otherwise)."[108] What McCall fails to consider in his discussion is that often a "methodology" is really an ideology with an underlying agenda in its presuppositional foundations (Col. 2:8; 2 Cor. 10:5). This chapter suggests a Hegelian/Fichtian dialectic: Fundamentalism (i.e. Reformed Epistomology) is too dismissive or critical of critical biblical scholarship (thesis) and critical biblical scholarship in its historic form is too "binding and obligatory" (antithesis), so the synthesis is expressed by evangelicals who use critical methods to engage in dialogue because "critical biblical scholarship can be 'appropriated' in a way that is both intellectually and spiritually healthy."[109] Acceptance of critical biblical scholarship in various, limited ways is the only way to have influence in the larger marketplace of ideas in biblical criticism.

McCall's idea of influencing, however, is attenuated by 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:14, where Paul sets forth the myth of influence, *i.e.* the fact that the default

response of anyone who does not have the Spirit of God (i.e. unbelievers) is to conclude that the things of God are “foolishness” or “an offense” (1 Cor 1:23) and that God deliberately has planned that wisdom of unsaved men is inherently unable to arrive at a true understanding of the truth of God’s Word (1 Cor 2:8-14). This places “critical biblical scholarship” in a tenuous light, for it operates decidedly on foundational unbelief. Only those with the Spirit of God can understand the thoughts of God, for no one will boast before God concerning his own wisdom (1 Cor 1:30).

In Chapter Three, “The Divine Investment in Truth, Toward a Theological Account of Biblical Inerrancy,” Mark Thompson asserts a belief in inerrancy but argues strongly that suspicion regarding inerrancy “stems from the way that some have used assent to this doctrine [inerrancy] as a shibboleth. Individuals and institutions have been black-listed for raising doubts about the way the doctrine has been construed in the past. Only those who are able to affirm biblical inerrancy without qualification are to be trusted.” [110] Thompson singles out Harold Lindsell as “one of the most conspicuous examples” of those who cause this distrust. For Thompson, the greatest suspicion against inerrancy is as follows, “[m]ost serious of all. . . is the way still others, reared on the strictest form of the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, have abandoned the faith under the intense questioning of biblical criticism. Forced to choose between a perfect, unblemished text and seemingly incontrovertible evidence of error in Scripture, such people begin to lose confidence in the gospel proclaimed throughout Scripture. In light of such cases, the doctrine of biblical inerrancy might even be deemed dangerous.”[111] These evangelicals have apparently forgotten that it was Harold Lindsell who was a great impetus in the ICBI discussion of both 1978 and 1982. History is now being forgotten. He blames people who hold to a strong view of inerrancy for causing people to depart from the faith. Apparently, for Thompson, inerrancy is a cause of defection especially if one holds to it strongly.

Thompson argues instead that, “the doctrine should not be judged by the abuse of it or by inadequate explanations.”[112] He argues for a solution in the following terms: “Strong convictions about the inerrancy of Scripture need not mean that this aspect of Scripture is elevated above all others in importance. Biblical inerrancy need not entail literalism and a failure to take seriously the various literary forms in which God’s words come to us, nor need it repudiate genuine human authorship in a Docetic fashion.”[113] Such a statement clearly indicates that Thompson places Scripture on the same level as any other book and is therefore

subject to the same assault that historicalcritical ideologies, far from neutral, have perpetrated upon it. Thompson concludes that a solution toward resolving any distortions in the doctrine of inerrancy is as follows: “the doctrine of inerrancy almost inevitably becomes distorted when it becomes the most important thing we want to say about Scripture.”[114] He affirms Timothy Ward’s solution, “Timothy Ward’s assessment that inerrancy is ‘a true statement to make about the Bible but is not in the top rank of significant things to assert about the Bible’ is timely.” Thus, Thompson’s solution appears to downplay the significance of inerrancy for biblical issues as a way of overcoming difficulties regarding the doctrine as well as recognizing that not all statements in the Bible are to be taken as literal in terms of genre.

In Chapter Fourteen, “God’s Word in Human Words—Form-Critical Reflections,” Robert W. Yarbrough argues for seeing a value to historical critical approaches such as form critical studies by evangelicals even if in a limited way: “Form criticism did call attention to the important point that the Gospels comprise units of expression that may be sorted into discernible categories. Admittedly, form critics approached Gospel sources with premises and convictions that created blind spots in their observations. Limitations to the method as typically practiced amounted to built-in obsolescence that would eventually doom it to irrelevancy in the estimation of most Gospels interpreters today.”[115] However, Yarbrough argues that “to study works from the form-critical era is to be reminded that literary sub-units—even sacred sources—can be grouped and analyzed according to the type of discourse they enshrine and the clues to the cultural surroundings they may yield.”[116] He acknowledges that Eta Linnemann “renounced her lifelong professional and personal commitment to what she called historicalcritical theology. . . she tested the claims of historicalcritical views that she had been taught as a student and then as a professor had inflicted on hapless university undergraduates in an attempt to disabuse them of their Christian faith in Jesus and the Bible, the better to equip them for service in enlightened post-Christian German society.”[117]

Yet, Yarbrough, delving into his perceived psychoanalysis of Linnemann’s perceptions of biblical scholarship, labels her as someone among evangelicals who overreacted to the historicalcritical approaches. He noted that “In academic mode, whether lecturing or writing, Linnemann tended toward overstatement and polemics. It is as if a couple of decades of vehement rejection of the Gospels’ trustworthiness created a corresponding zeal for their defense once she rejected the ‘critical’ paradigm she embraced in Bultmann’s heyday and under

the spell of her identity as one of his students. Her scholarly pro-Bible writings are not a model of balanced scholarship, cautious investigation, and measured, gracious interaction with those she viewed as soft on the question of the Bible's inaccuracy."[118]

However, Yarbrough's psychoanalysis of Linnemann is directly challenged by Linnemann's own story as a former post-Bultmann who witnessed firsthand the dangerous nature of historical criticism, for she based it on a thorough understanding and analysis of the approach as an ideological one. Eta Linnemann, herself a student of Rudolf Bultmann, the renown *formgeschichtliche* critic, and also of Ernst Fuchs, the outstanding proponent of the New Hermeneutic, notes regarding Historical Criticism,

> [I]nstead of being based on God's Word. . .it [historical criticism] had its foundations in philosophies which made bold to define truth so that God's Word was excluded as the source of truth. These philosophies simply presupposed that man could have no valid knowledge of the God of the Bible, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Father of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ."[119]

She stresses that the Enlightenment laid not only the atheistic staring point of the sciences but that of biblical criticism as a whole.[120] One comment is especially insightful that in the practice of the historicalcritical methods, "What is concealed from the student is the fact that science itself, including and especially theological science, is by no means unbiased and presuppositionless. The presuppositions which determine the way work is carried on in each of its disciplines are at work behind the scenes and are not openly set forth."[121] Linnemann notes, "a more intensive investigation [of historical criticism] would show that underlying the historicalcritical approach is a series of prejudgments which are not themselves the result of scientific investigation. They are rather dogmatic premises, statements of faith, whose foundation is the absolutizing of human reason as a controlling apparatus."[122] Her rejection stemmed not from psychological motives but years of academic research into its dangers.

In Chapter Fifteen, "A Constructive Traditional Response to New Testament Criticism," Craig Blomberg sets forth "constructive" solutions to problems in the New Testament text that he believes would be in line with inerrancy and solve difficulties that evangelicals face. In Blomberg's article, he decries the Evangelical Theological Society's dismissal of Robert H. Gundry in 1982 and

reaffirms his support for Gundry to be allowed to make a midrashic approach to dehistoricizing (i.e. allegorizing) the story of Herod's killing of babies in Bethlehem in Matthew 2 as consistent with a belief in inerrancy:

> For Gundry, inerrancy would only be called into question if Matthew were making truth claims that were false. But if Matthew were employing a different style, form of genre that was not making truth claims about what happened historically when he added to his sources, then he could not be charged with falsifying the truth. Preachers throughout church history have similarly added speculative detail, local color, possible historical reconstruction, and theological commentary to their retelling of biblical stories. As long as their audiences know the text of Scripture well enough to distinguish between the Bible and the preacher's additions, they typically recognize what the preacher is doing and do not impugn his or her trustworthiness.
>
> A substantial number of voting members of the Evangelical Theological Society present at the annual business meeting of its annual conference in 1983 disagreed that Gundry's views were consistent with inerrancy, at that time the sole tenet in the Society's doctrinal statement, and requested his resignation from the society. I voted with the minority. Following the papers and writings of my own professors from seminary, especially D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo, I believed Gundry had shown how his view could be consistent with inerrancy, even though I did not find his actually approach to Matthew convincing. in other words, the issue was a hermeneutical one, not a theological one. The trustees of Westmont College, where Gundry taught, agreed, and he continued his illustrious teaching and writing career there until his retirement.[123]

In accordance with Gundry, one of Blomberg's solution for difficult problems in New Testament in relationship to inerrancy is to allow for a genre of non-historicity to be considered: "Though not a panacea for every conceivable debate, much more sensitive reflection over the implications of the various literary and rhetorical genres in the Bible would seem an important first step that is not often taken enough. . . . in some contexts it may take some careful hermeneutical discernment to determine just what a text is or is not affirming. Style, figures of speech, species of rhetorical and literary form and genre all go a long way toward disclosing those affirmations."[124] For Blomberg, difficulties can be resolved at times by realizing the non-historical nature of some portions of

the New Testament.

In a 1984 article, Blomberg uses this as an explanation of the story of the coin in the fish's mouth in Matthew 17:21-24: "Is it possible, even inherently probable, that the NT writers at least in part never intended to have their miracle stories taken as historical or factual and that their original audiences probably recognized this? If this sounds like the identical reasoning that enabled Robert Gundry to adopt his midrashic interpretation of Matthew while still affirming inerrancy, that is because it is the same. The problem will not disappear simply because one author [Gundry] is dealt with *ad hominem*. . .how should evangelicals react? Dismissing the sociological view on the grounds that the NT miracles present themselves as historical gets us nowhere. So do almost all the other miracle stories of antiquity. Are we to believe them all?"[125] Blomberg noted, "It is often not noticed that the so-called miracle of the fish with the coin in its mouth (Matt 17:27) is not even a narrative; it is merely a command from Jesus to go to the lake and catch such a fish. We don't even know if Peter obeyed the command. Here is a good reminder to pay careful attention to the literary form."[126] Unfortunately, this solution would seem to be at odds with the ICBI statement on Hermeneutics when it states in Article XIII: "We deny that generic categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual."

Blomberg offers another solution toward solving problems surrounding pseudonymity in relation to some New Testament books whereby the "critical consensus approach could. . .be consistent with inerrancy, 'benign pseudonymity.'"[127] Blomberg also uses the term "ghostwriter" to describe this activity.[128] Another more common name for this would be pseudepigraphy (as some scholars claim for Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastoral Epistles) but Blomberg desires to change normally used terminology:

> A *methodology* consistent with evangelical convictions might argue that there was an accepted literary convention that allowed a follower, say, of Paul, in the generation after his martyrdom, to write a letter in Paul's name to one of the churches that had come under his sphere of influence. The church would have recognized that it could not have come from an apostle they knew had died two or three decades earlier, and they would have realized that the true author was writing thoughts indebted to the earlier teaching of Paul. In a world without footnotes or bibliographies, this was one way of giving credit where credit was due. Modesty prevented the real

> author from using his own name, so he wrote in ways he could easily have envisioned Paul writing were the apostle still alive today. *Whether or not this is what actually happened*, such a hypothesis is thoroughly consistent with a high view of Scripture and an inerrant Bible. We simply have to recognize what is and is not being claimed by the use of name 'Paul' in that given letter.[129]

For Blomberg, the key to pseudonymity would also lie in motive behind the writing. Blomberg argues that "One's acceptance or rejection of the overall theory of authorship should then depend on the answers to these kinds of questions, not on some *a priori* determination that pseudonymity is in every instance compatible or incompatible with evangelicalism."[130] He argues, "[i]t is not the conclusion one comes to on the issue [of pseudonymity] that determines whether one can still fairly claim to be evangelical, or even inerrantist, how one arrives at that conclusion."[131] Yet, how could one ever know the motive of such ghostwriters? Would not such a false writer go against all moral standards of Christianity? Under Blomberg's logic, Bart Ehrman's *Forged* (2011) only differs in one respect: Blomberg attributes good motives to forgers, while Ehrman is honest enough to admit that these "benign" writings are really what they would be in such circumstances: *FORGED WRITING IN THE NAME OF GOD—WHY THE BIBLE'S AUTHORS ARE NOT WHO WE THINK THEY ARE.*[132] Is either one of these scholars able to read the proverbial "tea leaves" and divine the motives behind such perpetrations? Not likely!

Blomberg also carries this logic to the idea of "historical reliability more broadly." He relates, "Might some passages in the Gospels and Acts traditionally thought of as historical actually be mythical or legendary? I see no way to exclude the answer *a priori*. The question would be whether any given proposal to that effect demonstrated the existence of an accepted literary form likely known to the Evangelists' audiences, establishes as a legitimate device for communicating theological truth through historical fiction. In each case it is not the proposal itself that should be off limits for the evangelical. The important question is whether any given proposal has actually made its case."[133]

Blomberg evidences the strong leanings of evangelical critical scholarship toward historicalcritical ideologies when he applies his historicalcritical/grammatical hermeneutic to the Gospel texts. He notes regarding his *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* that "Christians may not be able to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Gospels are historically

accurate, but they must attempt to show that there is a strong likelihood of their historicity. Thus the approach of this book is always to argue in terms of probability rather than certainty, since this is the nature of historical hypotheses, including those that are accepted without question."[134] Again, Blomberg argues, "[A] good case can be made for accepting the details as well as the main contours of the Gospels as reliable. But. . .even if a few minor contradictions genuinely existed, this would not necessarily jeopardize the reliability of the rest or call into question the entire basis for belief."[135]

The fact, however, is that "probability" logically rests in the "eye of the beholder" and what is probable to one may be improbable to another. For instance, what Blomberg finds "probable" may not be to critics of the Gospels who do not accept his logic. This also places Scripture on an acutely subjective level where the logical impact of this approach is to reduce the Gospels to a shifting sand of "oneupmanship" in scholarly debate as to who accepts whose arguments for what reasons or not. Blomberg argues that "an evenhanded treatment of the data [from analysis of the Gospel material] does not lead to a distrust of the accuracy of the Gospels."[136] But this is actually exceedingly naïve, for who is to dictate to whom what is "evenhanded?" Many liberals would think that Blomberg has imposed his own evangelical presuppositions and is *very far* from being "evenhanded." He convinces only himself with this assertion. Blomberg admits "critical scholarship is often *too* skeptical."[137] The phrase "*too* skeptical" is relative to the critic. Who is to judge whether something is too critical when evangelicals adopt the same ideologies? Yet, since he has chosen to play with the rules of the critical scholars' game concerning the Gospels (however much he modifies their approach—they remain its inventors), they may reply on an equally valid level that Blomberg is too accepting. This is especially demonstrated when Blomberg accepts "criteria of authenticity" that are used to determine whether or not portions of the Gospels are historically reliable. He argues, "Using either the older or the new criteria, even the person who is suspicious of the Gospel tradition may come to accept a large percentage of it as historically accurate."[138] One would immediately ask Blomberg to cite an example, any example, of someone who was previously skeptical but has now come to a less skeptical position, but he does not. Criteria of authenticity are merely *a priori* tools that prove what one has already concluded.[139] If one is skeptical regarding tradition, one can select criteria that enforce the already conceived position. If one is less skeptical, then one can apply criteria that will enforce the already accepted less-skeptical conclusion. Each side will not accept the data of the other. What does suffer, however, is the Gospel record as it is torn

apart by philosophical speculation through these criteria. For Blomberg, one may speak only of the "general reliability" of the Gospels since he has deliberately confined himself to these philosophically-motivated criteria.

Very telling with Blomberg is that he sees two "extreme positions" on historical reliability: the first being those who affirm the Gospels reliability "simply because they believe their doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture requires them to" and the second being "the other end of the confessional spectrum" consisting of "many radical critics" who "would answer the question [regarding reliability] negatively, thinking that proper historical method requires them to disbelieve any narrative so thoroughly permeated by supernatural events, theological interpretation and minor variation among parallels as are in the four Gospels."[140] Blomberg instead asserts his position as in-between: "the Gospels must be subjected to the same type of historical scrutiny given to any other writings of antiquity but that they can stand up to such scrutiny admirably."[141] The naiveté of this latter position is breath-taking, since historical criticism has been shown to be replete with hostile philosophical underpinnings that apparently Blomberg is either unaware of or choosing to ignore.[142] These presuppositions always control the outcome. Moreover, would those who use such radical ideologies in approaching Scripture be convinced of Blomberg's moderation of them? Most likely, they would interpret his usage as biased. What does suffer, however, is the Gospels' historical credibility in the process.

Blomberg argues that "[i]f it is unfair to begin historical inquiry by superimposing a theological interpretation over it, it is equally unfair to ignore the theological implications that rise from it."[143] A much more pertinent question, however, for Blomberg to answer is, "Is it fair for the Gospel record to be in turn subjected to historical critical ideologies whose purpose was to negate and marginalize the Gospel record?" Blomberg is so willing and ready to remove the former but very welcoming in allowing the latter in his own subjective approach to the Gospels.

Finally, Blomberg, seemingly anticipating objections to many of his ideas, issues a stern warning to those who would oppose the proposals that he has discussed:

> [L]et those on the 'far right' neither anathematize those who do explore and defend new options nor immediately seek to ban them from organizations or institutions to which they belong. If new proposals. .

> .cannot withstand scholarly rigor, then let their refutations proceed at that level, with convincing scholarship, rather than with the kind of censorship that makes one wonder whether those who object have no persuasive reply and so have to resort simply to demonizing and/or silencing the voices with which they disagree. If evangelical scholarship proceeded in this more measured fashion, neither inherently favoring nor inherently resisting 'critical' conclusions, whether or not they form a consensus, then it might fairly be said to be both traditional *and* constructive.[144]

Blomberg had earlier received strong criticism due to his involvement in co-authoring a book with Stephen E. Robinson, a New Testamest professor at Brigham Young University, entitled *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation*.[145] As a result, he states, "Many of us who were trained at seminaries that were vigorously engaged in labeling (rightly or wrongly) other historically evangelical seminaries as no longer evangelical and who then came to the UK for doctoral study found the breadth of British definitions of evangelicalism and the comparative lack of a polemical environment like a breath of fresh air."[146] Yet, this desire for lack of criticism and just an irenic spirit in Christian academics hardly finds legitimacy in terms of the biblical model displayed in the Old and New Testaments. Much of the Old Testament castigated God's people for their compromising on belief or behavior (e.g. Numbers 11-14; Psalm 95). Under today's sentiments, the Old Testament might be labeled anti-Semitic due to its criticism of Jewish people. In the New Testament, whole books were composed to criticize false teaching and wrong behavior on the part of God's people, such as Galatians, 1-2 Corinthians, the Pastoral Epistles, the Johannine Epistles, and chapters two and three of Revelation. Jesus himself fearlessly castigated powerful groups of important people (Matt 21-23). One is reminded of the satirical pieces that have been done on the fact that if Paul wrote Galatians today, he would have been vilified in many popular Christian magazines.[147]

In Chapter Sixteen, "Precision and Accuracy," Bock asserts that the genre of the gospels is a form of ancient Greco-Roman biography known as *bios*: "[w]hen we think about the Gospels, there sometimes is a debate about the genre of this material. There was a time when this material was considered unique in its literary orientation. However, recently a consensus has emerged that the Gospels are a form of ancient *bios*."[148] He echoes the thinking of Charles Talbert and British theologian Richard Burridge who popularized this view.[149] This assertion that the Gospels are a form of ancient *bios* is fraught with dangers regarding

historical matters surrounding the Gospels since it can readily lead to de-emphasizing the Gospels as historical documents.

This growing opinion among evangelical scholars that the Gospels are *bios* recently created a storm of controversy when Michael Licona, in his work *The Resurrection of Jesus A New Historiographical Approach*,[150] used *bios* as a means of dehistoricizing parts of the Gospel (i.e. Matthew 27:51-53 with the resurrection of the saints after Jesus crucifixion is nonliteral genre or apocalyptic rather than an actual historical event).[151] Licona argued "*Bioi* offered the ancient biographer great flexibility for rearranging material and **inventing speeches. . . and they often included legend.** Because *bios* was a flexible genre**, it is often difficult to determine where history ends and legend begins**."[152]

Licona's work exhibits many commendable items, such as a strong stance on the historical basis for Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead. One might be encouraged that in light of historical criticism's assault on the miraculous since Spinoza and the Enlightenment, Licona has maintained the historical, orthodox position of the church. However, like Robert Gundry before him in 1983, Licona (2010) uses genre issues in historical criticism to negate portions of Scripture that have always been considered historical by orthodox Christianity from the earliest times. He has stirred up much controversy that parallels that of the Gundry/ETS circumstance that resulted in the ICBI documents of 1978 and 1982. Being influenced by historical criticism, Licona has accepted a consensus that has emerged among critically-trained historicalcritical scholars that the Gospels are a form of ancient "*bios*."[153]

Bock argues, "[i]n ancient biography actions and sayings are the focus of the portrayal. The timing of the events is of less concern that the fact that they happened. Sometimes figures from distinct periods can be juxtaposed in ways that compare how they acted. The model of the figure that explains his greatness and presents him as one worthy of imitation stands at the core of the presentation. The central figure in a *bios* often is inspiring. The presentation of Jesus in the Gospels fits this general goal. . .This genre background is our starting point."[154]

Operating from this consensus of the gospel as *bios*, Bock argues that the Olivet Discourse may have an "updated" saying. Comparing the disciples' question in Mark 13:4 (""Tell us, when will these things be, and what *will be* the sign when all these things are going to be fulfilled?" with Luke 21:7 ("Teacher,

when therefore will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when these things are about to take place?") and Matthew 24:3 ("Tell us, when will these things be, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"), Bock notes that "something is going on between the versions in Mark and Luke in comparison to Matthew." Bock continues, "Matthew has taken the question as it was in Mark and Luke and has presented what the disciples essentially were asking, even if they did not appreciate all the implications in the question at the time. . . . Whether the disciples say the end is in view or Matthew is drawing that out as inherent in the question asked, the point is that Matthew is drawing that out as inherent in the question asked, the point is that Matthew has made the focus of the question clearer than the more ambiguous way it is asked in Mark and Luke." Bock asserts that "Matthew may actually be giving us the more precise force and point of the question, now paraphrased in light of a fuller understanding of what Jesus's career was to look like." Apparently, Bock allows for the possibility that the disciples may not have asked the question as is set forth in Matthew 24:3 but that Matthew updated the question by adding this comment to the lips of the disciples regarding the "end of the age: "Matthew has simply updated the force of the question, introducing the idea of the end [of the age] as the topic Jesus implied by his remark about the temple."[155] One is left wondering with Bock's postulation whether the disciples actually asked the question as Matthew presented ("end of the age") or did Matthew add words to their lips that they did not say? Bock's approach here is essentially a subtle form of dehistoricizing the Gospels at this point. Equally plausible, however, is that the disciples did ask the question in the way in which Matthew phrased it and that a harmonization of the passage could be postulated that would not require such creative invention on the part of Matthew.

Echoing the same kind of thinking in this book, Darrell Bock states in a self-review of his own work in *Do Historical Matters Matter?*: "I do not often note books to which I have contributed on this blog, but this work is an exception. D*o Historical Matters Matter to Faith?: A Critical Appraisal of Modern and Postmodern Approaches to Scripture* (Edited by James Hoffmeier and Dennis Magary) explores issues tied to the authority and inspiration of Scripture. This series of essays covers an array of issues from the Old and New Testaments."[156] Yet, this book clearly maintains that inerrancy is not a critical issue in Biblical studies.

In Bock's own review of his *Key Events* work as coeditor with Robert Webb, Bock distances himself not only from inerrancy but also from the subject of

inspiration as alien to Third Search evangelical critical scholars like himself:

> As a coeditor of this volume, I should explain what this book is and is not. It is a book on historical Jesus discussion. It is not a book that uses theological arguments or categories (as legitimate as those can be) to make its case. This means we chose as a group to play by the rules of that discussion, engage it on those terms, and show even by those limiting standards that certain key events in the life of Jesus have historical credibility. So in this discussion one does not appeal to inspiration and one is asked to corroborate the claims in the sources before one can use the material. This is what we did, with a careful look at the historical context of 12 central events. To be accurate, the article by Webb accepts the resurrection as a real event, but argues for a limitation on what history (at least as normally practiced today) can say about such events. The problem here is with what history can show, not with the resurrection as an event. Many working in historical Jesus study take this approach to the resurrection. I prefer to argue that the best explanation for the resurrection is that it was a historical event since other explanations cannot adequately explain the presence of such a belief among the disciples. Webb explains these two options of how to take this in terms of the historical discussion and noted that participants in our group fell into each of these camps. Some people will appreciate the effort to play by these limiting rules and yet make important positive affirmations about Jesus. Others will complain by asking the book to do something it was not seeking to do.[157]

What is most remarkable is that nowhere in such evangelical collaborative works as *Key Events* or *Who Is Jesus*?[158] does Bock (or any other evangelical involved) mention how such principles stand presuppositionally opposed to affirming the Scriptures, especially its inerrancy, nor does Bock issue any warnings in these works that the searchers are conducting their search apart from any consideration of inerrancy. Apparently, critical-evangelical scholars may have personal, subjective beliefs about inerrancy or inspiration, but in Third Search activities that they conduct such ideas are shunned as not a part of this scholarly endeavor. Nowhere in any of Bock's searching books does he mention that this all is an effort to use the arguments of the historicalcritics against them. He merely assumes these ideas and it results in a weakening of the Gospels. No apologetic is ever offered in countering such things; no history or presuppositions are mentioned. He treats historicalcritical principles such as source, form, redaction, tradition criticism and postmodernistic historiography as

fully valid. Indeed, at the expense of both inspiration and inerrancy, he has succeeded in making the term “historical Jesus” normal when it is truly aberrant from an orthodox understanding. It is founded on a German critical scholarship of *historie* (actual history) versus *geschichte* (faith interpretation of those events); a concept that at its foundation rejects the Jesus of the Bible. He nowhere even hints that these principles are flawed or inconsistent when he writes these works and apparently buys into them substantially. One cannot tell qualitatively where any of these critical evangelical scholars substantively disagrees with any of these “searching” principles. They wrote no caveat about postmodernistic historiography; no counter-chapter or alternative to it was presented. It was treated as normative for these books and not even so much as a footnote was written that would indicate that not all the authors agree with postmodernistic historiography. Bock and those allied with him appear to assume historicalcritical validity of the principles as if they completely accept these concepts. He treats searching as normative, standard and as if all evangelical scholars do this kind of thing.

In another work, evangelical Daniel Wallace also plays down the importance of inspiration and inerrancy. In a statement from his chapter entitled **“***Who’s Afraid of the Holy Spirit? The Uneasy Conscience of a Non-Charismatic Evangelical,”* Wallace admits a personal struggle:

> **(3) This emphasis on knowledge over relationship can produce in us bibliolatry**. For me, as a New Testament professor, the text is my task—but I made it my God. The text became my idol. Let me state this bluntly: The Bible is not a member of the Trinity. One lady in my church facetiously told me, “I believe in the Trinity: the Father, Son and Holy Bible.” Sadly, too many cessationists operate as though that were so. One of the great legacies Karl Barth left behind was his strong Christocentric focus. It is a shame that too many of us have reacted so strongly to Barth, for in our zeal to show his deficiencies in his doctrine of the Bible, we have become bibliolaters in the process. Barth and Calvin share a warmth, a piety, a devotion, an awe in the presence of God that is lacking in too many theological tomes generated from our circles.[159]

The present writer finds this kind of statement not in accordance with the assertions of Scripture itself. Scripture presents its foundational importance of inspiration and inerrancy with hundreds of verses that present this constant truth. God’s Words has exalted status, “I will bow down toward Your holy temple and

give thanks to Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word according to all Your name" (Ps. 138:2). God's Word is a sanctifying force, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (John 17:17). Jesus affirmed "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35) and 2 Timothy 3:16-17 states, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." Wallace's logic here is startlingly poor. If the documents cannot be trusted—if they are not inspired and inerrant—then one cannot have a "Christocentric" anything. Apparently, however, good critical scholars are obliged never to bring these verses up in scholarly discussions or risk being labeled unscholarly.

In seeking to counter the damage to the determination of the wording of Scripture by Bart Ehrman's work *Misquoting Jesus*, Wallace is more than willing to surrender inerrancy as an issue:

> Second, what I tell my students every year is that it is imperative that they pursue truth rather than protect their presuppositions. And they need to have a doctrinal taxonomy that distinguishes core beliefs from peripheral beliefs. When they place more peripheral doctrines such as inerrancy and verbal inspiration at the core, then when belief in these doctrines starts to erode, it creates a domino effect: One falls down, they all fall down. It strikes me that something like this may be what happened to Bart Ehrman. His testimony in *Misquoting Jesus* discussed inerrancy as the prime mover in his studies. But when a glib comment from one of his conservative professors at Princeton was scribbled on a term paper, to the effect that perhaps the Bible is not inerrant, Ehrman's faith began to crumble. One domino crashed into another until eventually he became "a fairly happy agnostic." I may be wrong about Ehrman's own spiritual journey, but I have known too many students who have gone in that direction. The irony is that those who frontload their critical investigation of the text of the Bible with bibliological presuppositions often speak of a "slippery slope" on which all theological convictions are tied to inerrancy. Their view is that if inerrancy goes, everything else begins to erode. I would say rather that if inerrancy is elevated to the status of a prime doctrine, that's when one gets on a slippery slope. But if a student views doctrines as concentric circles, with the cardinal doctrines occupying the center, then if the more peripheral doctrines are challenged, this does not have a significant impact on the core. In other words, the evangelical community will continue to produce liberal

> scholars until we learn to nuance our faith commitments a bit more, until we learn to see Christ as the center of our lives and scripture as that which points to him. If our starting point is embracing propositional truths about the nature of scripture rather than personally embracing Jesus Christ as our Lord and King, we'll be on that slippery slope, and we'll take a lot of folks down with us.[160]

Even more startling is Wallace's assertions regarding evangelical theological views like inerrancy or inspiration that apparently reflect a similar view to Rogers and McKim (mentioned earlier in this article): "our theology is too often rooted in Greek philosophy, rationalism, the Enlightenment, and Scottish Common Sense realism" which he defines as "a philosophical departure from that of the sixteenth-century Reformers, though it was a handmaiden of Princetonian conservative theology in the nineteenth century."[161] For Wallace, evangelicals operate on a "docetic bibliology" regarding Scripture when they insist on the *ipsissima verba* or similar ideas.[162] Thus, Wallace's view encompasses such ideas as Luke altering the meaning of Jesus' words in Luke 5:32 (cf. Mark 2:17; Matt 9:13) so that he asserts that "To sum up: There seems to be evidence in the synoptic gospels that, on occasion, words are deliberately added to the original sayings of Jesus" and "[i]n a few instances, these words seem to alter somewhat the picture that we would otherwise have gotten from the original utterance; in other instances, the meaning seems to be virtually the same, yet even here a certain amount of exegetical spadework is needed to see this. On the other hand, there seem to be examples within the synoptics where the words are similar, but the meaning is different."[163] These statements leave one to wonder if Jesus truly said what is recorded in the Gospels or that the substance has been changed redactionally. Wallace concludes, "it seems that our interpretation of inspiration is governing our interpretation of the text. Ironically, such bibliological presuppositions are established in modern terms that just might ignore or suppress the data they are meant to address and which are purportedly derived. And there is an even greater irony here: the fact of the Incarnation—an essential element in orthodox Christology-*invites* (italics in original) rigorous historical investigation. But what if our bibliological presuppositions *reject* (italics in original) that invitation?"[164] What "rigorous historical investigation" entails is not clearly specified, except that it involves at least the utilization of the criteria of authenticity and dissimilarity.[165]

In a recent blog entry, Wallace related: "I am unashamedly a Protestant. I believe in *sola scriptura*, *sola fidei*, *solus Christus*, and the rest. I am convinced

that Luther was on to something when he articulated his view of justification succinctly: *simul iustus et peccator* ("simultaneously justified and a sinner")."[166] However, he laments the lack of unification on Protestant theology, and says that three events in his life are having an impact on his thinking: (1) His attendance of Greek Orthodox worship services: "I have spent a lot of time with Greek Orthodox folks. It doesn't matter what Orthodox church or monastery I visit, I get the same message, the same liturgy, the same sense of the 'holy other' in our fellowship with the Triune God. The liturgy is precisely what bothers so many Protestants since their churches often try very hard to mute the voices from the past. 'It's just me and my Bible' is the motto of millions of evangelicals." (2) His own personal experience of seeing a personal friend of his in Protestantism deny Jesus' deity, where he laments the lack of an ecclesiastical hierarchy: "This cancer could have been cut out more swiftly and cleanly if the church was subordinate to a hierarchy that maintained true doctrine in its churches. And the damage would have been less severe and less traumatic for the church." (3) His realization on ecclesiastical hierarchy involved in canon formation: "What is significant is that *for the ancient church, canonicity was intrinsically linked to ecclesiology*. It was the *bishops* rather than the congregations that gave their opinion of a book's credentials. Not just any bishops, but bishops of the major sees of the ancient churches." He relates, "we Protestants can be more sensitive about the deficiencies in our own ecclesiology rather than think that we've got a corner on truth. We need to humbly recognize that the two other branches of Christendom have done a better job in this area. Second, we can be more sensitive to the need for doctrinal and ethical accountability, fellowship beyond our local church, and ministry with others whose essentials but not necessarily particulars don't line up with ours. Third, we can begin to listen again to the voice of the Spirit speaking through church fathers and embrace some of the liturgy that has been used for centuries." Wallace's hinting at a unified ecclesiastical hierarchy superseding the local church appears to reveal his persuading toward seriously contemplating membership in the Anglican Church.[167] In a reply to a comment on the blog entry, Wallace writes:

> Russ, I have thought about the Anglican Church quite a bit actually. I love the liturgy, the symbolism, the centrality of the Eucharist, the strong connection with the church in ages past, and the hierarchy. And yes, I have seriously considered joining their ranks–and still am considering it. There are some superb Anglican churches in the Dallas area. Quite surprising to me has been my choice of academic interns at Dallas Seminary in the last few years. Over half of them have been Anglican, and yet when I picked

> them for the internship I didn't know what their denominational affiliation was. Exceptional students, devoted to the Lord and his Church, and committed to the highest level of Christian scholarship. And they have respect for tradition and the work of the Spirit in the people of God for the past two millennia.[168]

Sadly, what Wallace fails to discern is that such overwhelming ecclesiastical hierarchy is what caused the need of reformation. The Church had rotted from the top down with the rise of Romanism and even later with Anglicanism. Infection spreads much more rapidly in "topdown" hierarchies. Independent local churches such as those exhibited in Protestantism generally preserve a greater safeguard against spreading heresy.

Interestingly, William Craig, professor of apologetics at Talbot School of Theology, uses historical criticism to question the veracity of guards being at Jesus' tomb. In a recent Ankerberg interview, Craig negates the guards in the following manner. In response to Ankerberg's question, "Were there guards at the tomb?" Craig replied:

> Well now this is a question that I think is probably best left out of the program, because the vast, vast majority of New Testament scholars would regard Matthew's tomb story, or guard story as "unhistorical". Um, I can hardly think of anybody who would defend the historicity of the guard at the tomb story and the main reasons for that are two: one is because it's only found in Matthew, and it seems very odd that if there were a Roman guard or even a Jewish guard at the tomb that Mark wouldn't know about it, and there wouldn't be any mention of it. The other reason is that nobody seemed to understand Jesus' resurrection predictions. The disciples who heard them most often had no inkling of what he meant, and yet somehow the Jewish authorities were supposed to have heard of these predictions, and understood them so well that they were able to set a guard around the tomb. And again, that doesn't seem to make sense. So, most scholars regard the Guard at the Tomb story as a legend or a Matthean invention that isn't really historical. Fortunately, this is of little significance for the empty tomb of Jesus, because the guard was mainly employed in Christian apologetics to disprove the conspiracy theory that the disciples stole the body—but no modern historian or New Testament scholar would defend a conspiracy theory because it's evident when you read the pages of the New Testament that these people sincerely believed in what they said. So, the conspiracy

> theory is dead, even in the absence of a guard at the tomb. The true significance of the guard at the tomb story is that it shows that even the opponents of the earliest Christians did not deny the empty tomb, but rather involve themselves in a hopeless series of absurdities trying to explain it away, by saying that the disciples had stolen the body. And that's the real significance of Matthew's "Guard at the Tomb" story.[169]

In reply to this "logic" of Craig, note that *if* evangelicals accepted what the early church always and consistently witnessed—that Matthew was the first Gospel written—instead of accepting historicalcritical presuppositions, then Mark actually left out Matthew's guard story. Moreover, if Matthew made up guards around Jesus' tomb, then what stops Craig's reasoning from being extended to the fact that the writers made up the "sincere" response of belief, or for that matter, the whole idea of the resurrection? To start throwing out parts of the Gospels because they aren't recounted in Mark or because "no modern historian or New Testament scholar" thinks they are is not only illogical but dangerous to Christianity.

In another place, Craig seems to give credence to the guards:

> So although there are reasons to doubt the existence of the guard at the tomb, there are also weighty considerations in its favor. It seems best to leave it an open question. Ironically, the value of Matthew's story for the evidence for the resurrection has nothing to do with the guard at all or with his intention of refuting the allegation that the disciples had stolen the body. The conspiracy theory has been universally rejected on moral and psychological grounds, so that the guard story as such is really quite superfluous. Guard or no guard, no critic today believes that the disciples could have robbed the tomb and faked the resurrection. Rather the real value of Matthew's story is the incidental—and for that reason all the more reliable—information that Jewish polemic never denied that the tomb was empty, but instead tried to explain it away. Thus the early opponents of the Christians themselves bear witness to the fact of the empty tomb.[170]

The impression one might receive from this is that Craig believes the guards at the tomb story but, at the same time, is not sure of its validity since he leaves it an open question. If Matthew said guards were there, can it be left an "open question" for those who believe in the trustworthiness, let alone, inerrancy of Scripture?

At another point, he echoed a similar statement to Michael Licona regarding the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27:51-53. In a Youtube video of Craig debating in 2007 at the University of Sheffield, in the United Kingdom against James Crossley on the bodily resurrection of Jesus, Craig sets forth the idea that admitting to legendary elements in the Gospels (i.e. the resurrection of the saints) "does nothing to undermine the remaining testimony of the gospels to things like the crucifixion of Jesus, the empty tomb, the resurrection appearances" (citing Dale Allison as his authority for this statement). When asked directly by a questioner in the audience if he believed in the story of the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27:51-53, "I'm not sure what to think." He also says "it could be part of the apocalyptic imagery of Matthew which isn't meant to be taken in a literal way. That this would be part of the typical sort of apocalyptic symbolism to show the earth shattering nature of the resurrection and need not to be taken historically literally." He goes on to conclude, "this is not attached to a resurrection narrative. This story about the Old Testament saints is attached to the crucifixion narrative. So that if you try to say that because Matthew has this unhistorical element in his crucifixion account, that therefore the whole account is worthless, you would be led to deny the crucifixion of Jesus which is one indisputable fact that everyone recognizes about the historical Jesus. So it really doesn't have any implications for the historicity of the burial story, the empty tomb story or the appearance accounts. It's connected to the crucifixion narrative." Notice that his adoption of historical criticism drives him toward allowing for non-historicity in narrative accounts in the Gospels.[171] The key question for Craig to answer must be that if they made up stories of the saints' resurrection, what would stop them from making up stories about Jesus' resurrection? One cannot have it both ways by saying that one story is historical but the other may be made-up fiction due to apocalyptic imagery.

This view is not uncommon among evangelicals. Craig Evans, an active participant in British-influenced searching for the 'historical' Jesus, when commenting on the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27:51b-53, argues:

> I do not think the tradition in Matthew 27:51b-53, which describes at the time of Jesus' death the resurrection of several saintly persons, has any claim to authenticity. This legendary embellishment, which may actually be a late-first century or early-second-century gloss, is an attempt to justify the Easter appearances of Jesus as resurrection, in the sense that Jesus and several other saints were the "first fruits" of the general resurrection. This is, of course, exactly how Paul explains the anomaly (1 Cor. 15:23).[172]

Similarly, Michael Green, while Senior Research Fellow at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford University, in his *Message of Matthew*, is abruptly dismissive of the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27:51-53. Green comments,

> Does Matthew mean us to take this literally? Does he mean that the tombs were broken open, and that the bodies were somehow clothed with flesh and brought to life, as in Ezekiel's vision? It is possible, but unlikely that this is how Matthew intended us to read it. After all, he says that these bodies of the saints went into the holy city *after* Jesus' resurrection. By that phrase he is guarding the primacy of the resurrection of Jesus, "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep," yet he presents us with these resuscitated bodies at the cross itself, long before the resurrection. If Matthew meant us to think of these people from a bygone age walking into Jerusalem that Friday evening, how would that accord with his plain insistence throughout this chapter (especially 40-50) that no compelling proofs of Jesus' deity were given at this time of his death any more than they were during his life?
>
> No, Matthew seems to be giving us a profound meditation on what the crucifixion of Jesus means for the destiny of humankind. His death is an eschatological event; it is a foretaste of the end of the world.[173]

Again, citing his agreement with Donald Hagner,[174] Green comments in a footnote on this passage,

> I agree with Donald Hagner that in recording this story [of the saints' resurrection] Matthew wanted, at the very point when Jesus died, to draw out its theological significance. A straightforward historical reading of these verses is hard to contemplate. Who were these people? Were they resurrected or resuscitated? Why did they go into the holy city? What happened to them subsequently? Indeed, what happens to the priority of Jesus' resurrection? And if they *appeared to many people (53)*, why is there no reference to this event elsewhere, either inside or outside the New Testament?[175]

Donald Hagner, after an extensive discussion of the passage, dismisses any substantial historicity to the saints' resurrection, and remarks that,

> I side, therefore, with recent commentators. . . in concluding that the

> rising of the saints from the tombs in this passage is a piece of theology set forth as history. . . . It is obvious that by the inclusion of this material Matthew wanted to draw out the theological significance of the death (and resurrection of Jesus). That significance is found in the establishing of the basis of the future resurrection of the saints. We may thus regard the passage as a piece of realized and historicized apocalyptic depending on OT motifs found in such passages as Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2; and especially Ezek 37:12-14.[176]

Interestingly, Hagner wrongly attributes this dehistoricized view to Gundry. While Gundry did dehistoricize, a careful examination of his commentary on *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* reveals that while Gundry attributed Old Testament motifs to the passage, he believed that the saints resurrection actually happened.[177]

Finally, Leon Morris, in his *Gospel According to Matthew*, also appears to place significant doubt on the historicity of this section. Morris notes,

> Nobody else mentions this, and we are left to conclude that Matthew is making the point that the resurrection of Jesus brought about the resurrection of his people. Just as the rending of the temple curtain makes it clear that the way to God is open for all, so the raising of the saints shows that death has been conquered. Those so raised went into Jerusalem and *appeared to many.* Since there are no other records of these appearances, it appears to be impossible to say anything about them. But Matthew is surely giving expression to his conviction that *Jesus* is Lord over both the living and the dead.

Instead, Morris prefers to see it as possibly being linked to an idea of general resurrection of God's saints at the end of the age: "It seems that here Matthew has the great death-and-resurrection in mind and links his raising of the saints to the whole happening. Thus he mentions it when he speaks of the death of Jesus but goes on to what he says happened at the time of the resurrection."[178] He concludes that one thing is certain in the passage, "Matthew is surely giving expression to his conviction that Jesus is Lord over both the living and the dead."[179]

The Honesty of Bart Ehrman

Interestingly, Bart Ehrman directly blames historical criticism as a large reason for his departure from the faith. Ehrman is very honest and open to note that an important, strategic factor in his loss of confidence in his faith was explicitly that of historicalcritical ideologies and their impact on seminary students' thoughts:

> The approach taken to the Bible in almost all Protestant (and now Catholic mainline seminaries) is what is called the 'historicalcritical" method. . .
>
> The historicalcritical approach has a different set of concepts and therefore poses a different set of questions. . .
>
> A very large percentage of seminaries are completely blind-sided by the historical critical method. They come in with expectations of learning the pious truths of the Bible so that they can pass them along in their sermons, as their own pastors have done for them. Nothing prepares them for historical criticism. To their surprise they learn, instead of material for sermons, all the results of what historical critics have established on the basis of centuries of research. The Bible is filled with discrepancies, many of them irreconcilable contradictions. . .
>
> But before long, as students see more and more of the evidence [of contradictions], many of them find that their faith in the inerrancy and absolute historical truthfulness of the Bible begins to waver. There simply is too much evidence, and to reconcile all of the hundreds of differences among the biblical sources requires so much speculation and fancy interpretive work that eventually it gets to be too much for them.[180]

He goes on to note that "I came to see the potential value of historical criticism at Princeton Seminary. I started adopting this new (for me) approach, very cautiously at first, as I didn't want to concede too much to scholarship. But eventually I saw the powerful logic behind the historicalcritical method and threw myself heart and soul into the study of the Bible from this perspective." He then immediately goes on to note, "It is hard for me to pinpoint the exact moment that I stopped being a fundamentalist who believed in the absolute inerrancy and verbal inspiration of the Bible."[181] The cause of Bart Ehrman's fall from faith came when he embraced historical criticism! Not one of his mentors at the Bible-believing schools he attended had prepared him for

historicalcriticism's massive assault on Scripture by pointing out the presuppositional biases that anchor historical criticism's assault on Scripture. Bart Ehrman is a tragic figure in that none of his "evangelical" mentors had properly prepared him for the onslaught of historicalcritical ideologies.

Judging by Ehrman's comments, perhaps he should not be seen so much as a defector, but as an example of the tragic failure of mentoring in evangelical biblical education. He began his training in a conservative theological school (Moody Bible Institute), but somewhere along his path at Wheaton College someone encouraged him to attend a more prestigious "critical" school (i.e. Princeton) to study. It was at Princeton Seminary, which had abandoned any sense of faithfulness to God's Word long ago, that Ehrman was exposed to historical criticism.[182] Moreover, the evangelical institutions that had previously trained him apparently did not prepare him for the onslaught of historical criticism that would impact his thinking. Erhman should serve as a salient and very recent example that Hagner is wrong both academically and especially spiritually to encourage students to dabble in historical criticism. When seminaries become degree mills focused on maximizing headcounts and prestigious academia at the expense of quality spiritual formation of the individual students through careful mentoring, disaster always ensues. Notice that while Marshall, Hagner, and other evangelicals call pseudepigraphy by a euphemism and accept it as in line with inspiration, Ehrman recognized this complete inconsistency and was honest enough to call such activity what it truly is: FORGED! [183]

While Ehrman is honest, evangelicals who are involved in historicalcritical research are not quite as open and frank. Yarborough feels that Linnemann went too far. Ehrman would find commonality in Linnemann's assessment that historicalcritical ideologies are an overwhelmingly strategical, negative influence. Harold Lindsell, in his *The Battle for the Bible* (1976) as well as his subsequent work, *The Bible in the Balance* (1979), was instrumental in sounding the warning among Bible-believing people of historical criticism's destruction of inerrancy and infallibility. Lindsell warned "The presuppositions of this methodology. . .go far beyond a mere denial of biblical infallibility. They tear at the heart of Scripture, and include a denial of the supernatural."[184] In *The Bible in the Balance*, Lindsell devoted an entire chapter to the issue, entitled "The Historical Critical Method: The Bible's Deadly Enemy" in which he argued,

> Anyone who thinks that the historicalcritical method is neutral is

> misinformed. Since its presuppositions are unacceptable to the evangelical mind this method cannot be used by evangelicals as it stands. The very use by the evangelical of the term, the historicalcritical method, is a mistake when it comes to his own approach to Scripture. . . . It appears to me that modern evangelical scholars (and I may have been guilty of this myself) have played fast and loose with the term perhaps because they wanted acceptance by academia. They seem too often to desire to be members of the club which is nothing more than practicing an inclusiveness that undercuts the normativity of the evangelical theological position. This may be done, and often is, under the illusion that by this method the opponents of biblical inerrancy can be won over to the evangelical viewpoint. But practical experience suggests that rarely does this happen and the cost of such an approach is too expensive, for it gives credence and lends respectability to a method which is the deadly enemy of theological orthodoxy. [185]

Yet, these current critically-trained evangelicals apparently believe that they themselves are somehow immune to its subversive power that Linnemann, Lindsell, and others warned of. Is this the case, or is this hubris on the part of these critically-trained evangelicals? Church history stands as a monumental testimony against any such boldness on their part.

Conclusion: Historical Matters Don't Seem to Matter to HistoricalCritical Evangelicals.

In answering the question posed by the book, *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith?*, an alarming trend has been noticed among these evangelicals who pursue such a *modus operandi* based in historicalcritical ideologies as delineated above. A subtle and, at times, not so subtle dehistoricizing of the Gospels is taking place. Such an evangelical trend dangerously impacts the ICBI statements crafted in 1978 (Inerrancy) and 1982 (Hermeneutics) for views of the inerrancy and interpretation of the Gospels as well as the entire Old and New Testaments. While the evangelicals involved are to be commended for their assertion that they affirm a belief in inerrancy, their practice seems to be at odds with such an assertion. This question of historical matters mattering would seem to need a negative answer in many instances. Because these evangelicals have a problematic view of the historical basis of the Gospels, many of them have joined together in the pursuit of what is termed "searching for the 'historical

Jesus'" which is based on a philosophically-driven postmodernistic historiography.

It is now clear that the influence of European training upon American evangelicals has had a very deleterious impact on the trustworthiness of God's Word for a new generation of scholars. Sadly, these evangelicals apparently believe that they themselves are immune to the subversive powers of historical criticism that no one previously ever surmounted. By contrast, the ICBI Statements on Inerrancy (1978) and Hermeneutics (1982) were designed to be a warning and safeguard to future generations of evangelical scholars. The next chapter will delineate the nature and characteristics of the evangelical participation in searching for the "historical Jesus" in light of these developments regarding inerrancy and biblical criticism in British-and Continental-trained and influenced evangelicals.

[1] For further information on this period, see George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture, The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1980).

[2] History proved Spurgeon's perceptions regarding encroaching liberalism were correct. David P. Kingdom, "C. H. Spurgeon and the Down Grade Controversy," in *The Good Fight of Faith*, 1971 Westminster Conference Papers (London: Westminster Chapel, 1971) 35.

[3] Dennis Swanson, "The Down Grade Controversy and Evangelical Boundaries: Some Lessons from Spurgeon's Battle for Evangelical Orthodoxy," *Faith and Mission.* 20:2 (2003): 16-39.

[4] R. A. Torrey, A. C. Dixon and Others, *The Fundamentals, A Testimony to the Truth*. Reprinted without alteration or abridgment from the original, four-volume edition issued by the Bible Institute of Los Angeles in 1917. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972 [1917].

[5] William Riley, a leader of this movement, commented "The importance of this occasion exceeds the understanding of its originators. The future will look back to the World Conference on Christian Fundamentals, held in Philadelphia, May 25, to June 1, 1919, as an event of more historical moment than the nailing up, at Wittenberg, of Martin Luther's ninety-five thesis." William B. Riley, "The Great Divide, or Christ and the Present Crisis," in *God Hath Spoken*

(Philadelphia: Bible Conference Committee, 1919), 27.

[6] See George Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 36-37.

[7] J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian Faith in the Modern World*. Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1965 [1936], 65.

[8] For a revealing look at Machen's struggle, see J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946 [1923]); idem. *The Virgin Birth of Christ*. Second Edition (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1932 [1930]; idem. *What is Faith?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946 [1925].

[9] For a recent recounting of the history of Dallas Theological Seminary, see John D. Hannah, *An Uncommon Union:*

Dallas Theological Seminary and American Evangelicalism (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).

[10] See Charles Feinberg, *The Fundamentals for Today* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1958).

[11] Carl F. H. Henry, *Jesus of Nazareth, Savior and Lord* (London: Tyndale, 1970 (1966), 9.

[12] George Eldon Ladd, *NT and Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967) 141, 168-169.

[13] Ladd, *NT and Criticism*, 10.

[14] Ladd offers two examples: Kittel and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* and Arndt, Gingrich, Baur and Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*; Ladd, *NT and Criticism*, 11.

[15] George E. Ladd, "The Search for Perspective," *Interpretation* XXV (1971), 47.

[16] Ladd, "The Search for Perspective," 47. In a hotly debated book, Harold Lindsell in the mid-1970s detailed the problems facing Fuller, the Southern

Baptist Convention and other Christian institutions due to the encroachment of historical criticism from European influence. See Harold Lindsell, "The Strange Case of Fuller Theological Seminary," *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 106-121. Marsden's book also covers this period in *Reforming Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987).

[17] Ladd, "The Search for Perspective, 49 cf. Ladd's citing of this admission by Ernst Käsemann may be found in the latter's, *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM, 1964), 54-62.

[18] An example of one of Ladd's students is the late Robert Guelich who wrote *The Sermon on the Mount, A Foundation for Understanding* (Waco, TX: Word, 1982). Guelich promoted an exegesis "that. . . makes use of the literary critical tools including text, source, form, tradition, redaction, and structural criticism" and goes on to assert "for many to whom the Scriptures are vital the use of these critical tools has historically been more 'destructive' than 'constructive.' But one need not discard the tool because of its abuse."

[19] Mark Noll conducted a personal poll/survey among evangelicals and has, as a result, described Ladd as "the most widely influential figure on the current generation of evangelical Bible scholars." Ladd was "most influential" among scholars in the Institute for Biblical Research and was placed just behind John Calvin as "most influential" among scholars in the Evangelical Theological Society. See Noll, 97, 101, 112-114 [note especially p. 112 for this quote], 116, 121, 159-163, 211-226. Moreover, Marsden described Noll's book, *Between Faith and Criticism*, as making "a major contribution toward understanding twentieth-century evangelical scholarship." See George M. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 250 fn. 9. Since Noll marked out Ladd as the outstanding figure influencing the recent paradigm shift in twentieth-century evangelical scholarship toward favoring historicalcritical methods and since Marsden promotes Noll's book as making "a major contribution toward understanding twentieth-century evangelical scholarship," this paper uses Ladd as the outstanding paradigmic example, as well as typical representative, of this drift among evangelicals toward historicalcritical ideologies that favor literary dependency hypotheses.

[20] For further historical details, see F. David Farnell, "The Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism, in *The Jesus Crisis*, 85-131.

[21] George E. Ladd, “The Search for Perspective,” *Interpretation* XXV (1971) 51.

[22] Ladd, “The Search for Perspective,” 47.

[23] Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

[24] Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Crisis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1984) 51.

[25] Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, 23.

[26] Ibid., 204.

[27] Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance*, 283.

[28] Ibid., 297

[29] For a more detailed history on this period, see chapters 1-3 detailing the developmental, historical details surrounding the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, Norman L. Geisler and William C. Roach, *Defending Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 17-42.

[30] Christianity Today, “Taking a Stand on Scripture” (December 30, 1977), 25.

[31] Donald W. Dayton, “‘The Battle for the Bible’: Renewing the Inerrancy Debate,” *Christian Century* (November 10, 1976), 976.

[32] Donald W. Dayton, “The Church in the World, The ‘Battle for the Bible’ Rages On,” *Theology Today* (January 1, 1980), 79.

[33] Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (San Francisco: Harper & Ro2, 1979). Rogers and McKim relied heavily upon the work of Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970).

[34] Rogers and McKim, “Introduction,” xxii.

[35] Ibid,” xxiii.

[36] Ibid., 289-298.

[37] Ibid., xxii.

[38] Ibid., xxii.

[39] Jack Rogers, *Jesus, the Bible, and Homosexuality*. Revised and Expanded Edition (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

[40] John D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority, A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982).

[41] "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," *JETS* 21/4 (December 1978) 289-296 and "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics," *JETS* 25/4 (December 1982) 397-401.

[42] Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

[43] Ibid., 34-35.

[44] Ibid, 34-35.

[45] Ibid., 31.

[46] James Barr, "Foreword to the American Edition," in *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), vi.

[47] Jack Rogers, *Confessions of a Conservative Evangelical* (Philadelphia: Westminster 1974).

[48] Barr, "Foreword to the American Edition," in *Fundamentalism*, iv.

[49] Ibid., 1.

[50] James Barr, "Preface," in *Beyond Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984), vii.

[51] Alan F. Johnson, "HistoricalCritical Method: Egyptian Gold or Pagan Precipice," *JETS* 26/1 (March 1983) 3-15. See also, Carl F. H. Henry, "The Uses and Abuses of Historical Criticism," vol. IV: God Who Speaks and Shows, in

God Revelation and Authority (Waco, TX: Word, 1979) 385-404.

[52] Craig L. Blomberg, "New Testament miracles and Higher Criticism: Climbing Up the Slippery Slope," *JETS* 27/4 (December 1984) 436.

[53] Moisés Silva, "Can Two Walk Together Unless They Be Agreed? Evangelical Theology and Biblical Scholarship*" JETS* 41/1 (March 1998) 3-16 (quote from p. 4).

[54] Ibid., 8.

[55] Ibid., 10.

[56] See also Norman L. Geisler, Ed. *Biblcal Inerrancy An Analysis of its Philosophical Roots* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981). The book gives the philosophical background to ideas that lead inevitably to a denial of inerrancy and result in a supposition of errancy regarding Scripture.

[57] See the back cover page of the work where some called it "a blockbuster" and "the best up-to-date analysis in print of the dangerous drift of evangelical scholarship into negative higher criticism"—Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell, *The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998).

[58] Osborne's article constitutes a criticism of not only Geisler but *The Jesus Crisis*, Grant Osborne, "Historical Criticism and the Evangelical," *JETS* 42/2 (June 1999) 193-210.

[59] Darrell L. Bock, "Review of The Jesus Crisis," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157 (April-June 2000) 232.

[60] Bock, "Review of *The Jesus Crisis*," 236.

[61] Osborne, "Historical Criticism and the Evangelical," 209.

[62] Grant Osborne, "Redaction Criticism and the Great Commission: A Case Study Toward a Biblical Understanding of Inerrancy," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 19/2 (March 1, 1976) 80.

[63] Grant R. Osborne, "The Evangelical and Redaction Criticism: Critique and

Methodology,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 22/4 (December 1979) 311 cf. idem. “Great Commission,” 80, 85; idem. “The Evangelical and *Traditionsgeschichte*,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21/2 (June, 1978) 128.

[64] Craig Blomberg, “Where Should Twenty-First Century Scholarship Be Heading?,” in *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 11.2 (2001): 172. This article was also published in “The past, present and future of American Evangelical theological scholarship,” in *Solid Ground* (Leicester: Apollos, 2000) 314-315.

[65] Craig Blomberg, “Where Should Twenty-First Century Scholarship Be Heading?, 172.

[66] J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian Faith in the Modern World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1936) 65.

[67] *Craig L. Blomberg*, “The HistoricalCritical/Grammatical View,” in *Biblical Hermeneutics Five Views (Downers Grove: IVP, 2012): 27-47*.

[68] Blomberg, “The HistoricalCritical/Grammatical View,” 28.

[69] See Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell, *The Jesus Crisis*, noting especially the “Introduction The Jesus Crisis: What is it?,” 13-34.

[70] Ibid., 15.

[71] Blomberg, “The HistoricalCritical/Grammatical View,” 46-47.

[72] Ibid.,” 47.

[73] For Griesbach and his association with Neologians as well as its impact on his synoptic “solution,” see F. David Farnell, “How Views of Inspiration Have Impacted Synoptic Problem Discussion,” *TMSJ* 13/1 (Spring 2002) 33-64.

[74] William Baird, *The History of New Testament Research: From deism to Tübingen* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1992) 116.

[75] See http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2008/03/26/interview-with-craig-blomberg/ Accessed on 5/25/2013.

[76] Craig L. Blomberg, “The Globalization of Biblical Interpretation: A Test Case John 3-4,” *Bulletin of Biblical Research* 5 (1995), 1-15.

[77] Ibid., 1.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Blomberg, “The Globalization of Biblical Interpretation,” 2; cf. Craig L. Blomberg, “The Implications of Globalization for Biblical Understanding,” in *Globalization*. Eds. Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans, and David A. Roozen (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993) 213-28; 241-45.

[80] “Final Report on the Globalization Project at Denver Seminary” (Denver: Denver Seminary, 1993) 2.

[81] Blomberg, “The Globalization of Biblical Interpretation,” 3.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 12.

[85] Ibid., 14.

[86] Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance*, 292-293.

[87] Scott McKnight, “The Jesus We’ll Never Know, Why scholarly attempts to discover the ‘real’ Jesus have failed. And why that’s a good thing,” *Christianity Today* (April 2010) 25.

[88] Darrell L. Bock, “Faith and the Historical Jesus: Does A Confessional Position and Respect for the Jesus Tradition Preclude Serious Historical Engagement?,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9 (2011) 3.

[89] Ibid., 4.

[90] Ibid.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Robert J. Miller, “When It’s Futile to Argue about the Historical Jesus: A Response to Bock, Keener, and Webb,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9 (2011): 85-95.”

[93] Ibid., 85.

[94] Ibid., 89-90.

[95] Perrin commented, “One aspect of Ladd’s treatment of sayings and pericopes which the reviewer [Perrin] found annoying is his deliberately one-sided approach to the question of authenticity.” Norman Perrin, “Against the Current, A Review of *Jesus and the Kingdom: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism,*” by George Eldon Ladd, 229 cf. Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 250.

[96] Ibid., 230.

[97] Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 250.

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

[99] Ibid., 13.

[100] Ibid., 209.

[101] Ibid., 193-211.

[102] Ibid., 201.

[103] Ibid., 211.

[104] For a more complete review of this work, see F. David Farnell, “Review of *Do Historical Matters Matter to the Faith?”* Eds. Hames K. Hoffmeier and Dennis R. Magary (Wheaton IL: Crossway, 2012) in *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 24/1 (Spring 2013) 149-157.

[105] “Preface,” in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith?*,” 23.

[106] Kenton Sparks, *God’s Word in Human Words: An Evangelical*

Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

[107] "Preface," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith?,* 22.

[108] Thomas H. McCall, "Theological Interpretation and Critical Biblical Scholarship," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith?*," 52.

[109] Ibid., 54.

[110] Mark D. Thompson, "The Divine Investment in Truth, Toward a Theological Account of Biblical Inerrancy," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to the Faith?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012) 71 ft. note 2.

[111] Ibid., 72.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., 97

[115] Robert W. Yarbrough, "God's Word in Human Words: Form-Critical Revelations, in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith*, 328.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 332.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Eta Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 17-18.

[120] Ibid., 29.

[121] Ibid, 107.

[122] Ibid., 111.

[123] Craig L. Blomberg, "A Constructive Traditional Response to New

Testament Criticism," in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith?*, 349.

[124] Ibid., 351.

[125] Craig L. Blomberg, "New Testament Miracles and Higher Criticism: Climbing Up The Slippery Slope," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27/4 (December 1984) 436.

[126] Blomberg, "A Constructive Traditional Response to New Testament Criticism," 354 fn. 32

[127] Ibid., 353, 360.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid., 352.

[130] Ibid., 353.

[131] Ibid., 352.

[132] See Bart Ehrman, *Forged* (New York: One, 2011).

[133] Blomberg, "A Constructive Traditional Response to New Testament Criticism," 354.

[134] Craig L. Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007) 36.

[135] Ibid., 37.

[136] Ibid., 297.

[137] Ibid., 310.

[138] Ibid., 312.

[139] For this see, F. David Farnell, "Form Criticism and Tradition Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis*, 185-232.

[140] Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 322-323.

[141] Ibid., 323.

[142] See F. David Farnell, “The Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism,” in *The Jesus Crisis*, 85-131.

[143] Blomberg, *Historical Reliability*, 325.

[144] Ibid., 364.

[145] Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997).

[146] Carl R. Trueman, Tony J. Gray, Craig L. Blomberg, Eds., *Solid Ground, 25 Years of Evangelical Theology* (Leicester: IVP and Apollos, 2000), 315.

[147] For a wonderful satire of this very issue, see “If Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians was published in Christianity Today,” in http://sacredsandwich.com/archives/2781. Acccessed on 5/27/2013.

[148] Darrell L. Bock, “Precision and Accuracy,” in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith?*, 368.

[149] See Charles H. Talbert, *What is a Gospel? The Genre of the Canonical Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977); Richard A. Burridge, *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with GraecoRoman Biography*. Second Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004).

[150] Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus, A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010).

[151] Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus, A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2010).

[152] Ibid., 34.

[153] Bock also accepted this basic genre classification, see Darrell L. Bock, “Precision and Accuracy: Making Distinctions in the Cultural Context,” in *Do Historical Matters Matter to Faith?* (Wheaton: Crossway,2012) 368.

[154] Bock, “Precision and Accuracy,” 368.

[155] Ibid., 372.

[156] http://blogs.bible.org/bock/darrell_l._bock/do_historical_matters_matter_to_faith Accessed on 5/27/2013.

[157] Amazon review at http://tinyurl.com/9p7r99j. Accessed on 5/27/2013.

[158] Darrell L. Bock and Robert W. Webb, *Key Events* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); Darrell L. Bock, *Who is Jesus? Linking the Historical Jesus with the Christ of Faith* (New York et al: Howard, 2012).

[159] Daniel Wallace, “Who’s Afraid of the Holy Spirit? The Uneasy Conscience of a Non-Charismatic Evangelical,” in *Who’s Afraid of the Holy Spirit? An Investigation into the Ministry of the Spirit of God Today*, edited by M. James Sawyer and Daniel B. Wallace (Dallas, TX: Biblical Studies, 2005), 8.

[160] Daniel B. Wallace, “The Gospel according to Bart, A Review of Bart D. Ehrman’s *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (Bible Studies Foundation, 2006 Bible.org); http://bible.org/article/gospel-according-bart. Accessed on 5/27/2013. Note: this quote is from the full version of Wallace’s review of Ehrman.

[161] Daniel B. Wallace, “An Apologia for a Broad View of Ipsissima Vox,” Presented at the 51st Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, November 18, 1999, 1 (also note p. 1 ft. 2).

[162] Ibid., 10

[163] Ibid., 12.

[164] Ibid., 19.

[165] Ibid., 15.

[166] http://danielbwallace.com/2012/03/18/the-problem-with-protestant-ecclesiology/ (Accessed on 5/10/2013).

[167] Wallace cites a work by Dungan that strongly influenced his belief in an

ecclesiastical hierarchy. See David Laird Dungan, *Constantine's Bible Politics and the Making of the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). Dungan's work highlights Eusebius' record (*Ecclesiastical History*) of the influence of ancient bishops in canon formation. Dungan, however, records the formation of canon prior to the onslaught of Romanism as well as Greek Orthodoxy.

[168] http://danielbwallace.com/2012/03/18/the-problem-with-protestant-ecclesiology/ (accessed on 5/10/2013).

[169] Transcribed from youtube video of Ankerg interview of Craig on May 25, 2010. Accessed and transcribed on June 22, 2013 (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8UMb7NlxkU).

[170] William L. Craig, "The Guard at the Tomb" *New Testament Studies* 30 (1984): 273-81(quote from page 80).

[171] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SNuhjRZZI4 (accessed on September 30, 2013).

[172] Craig A. Evans, "In Appreciation of the Dominical and Thomistic Traditions: The Contribution of J. D. Crossan and N. T. Wright to Jesus Rearch," in *The Resurrection of Jesus, John Dominic Crossan and N. T. Wright in Dialogue*. Ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2006), fn. 30, p. 195.

[173] Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew*. Ed. John R. W. Stott (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 302-303.

[174] Donald A. Hagner, Matthew 14-28, vol. 33b in the Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1995),

[175] Green, *The Message of Matthew*, footnote 18 page 302-303.

[176] Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, vol. 38b in the Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word, 1995), 851-852.

[177] Hagner identifies his view of non-historicity as being also Gundry's view; see Hagner, 851. However, Gundry nowhere in commenting on this passage negates its historicity. See Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew A Commentary on His*

Handbook for a Mixed Church Under Persecution. 2nd Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 576-577.

[178] Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 725.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Bart D. Ehrman, "A Historical Assault on Faith," *in Jesus Interrupted* (New York: Harper One, 2009), 4-6

[181] Ibid., 15.

[182] See Ehrman, "Preface," in *Jesus Interrupted*, x-xii.

[183] Bart D. Ehman, *Forged and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2013) and *Forged Writing in the Name of God—Why the Bible's Authors are Not Who We Think They Are* (New York: Harper One, 2011).

[184] Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eermans, 1976), 204.

[185] Harold Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 283.

CHAPTER 11

SEARCHING FOR THE HISTORICAL JESUS: EVANGELICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE THIRD SEARCH[1]

F. David Farnell



Introduction

After reviewing changes in evangelical scholarship in the previous chapter, we now flash forward to the latter third of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries.[2] Another historicalcritical crisis may well have been brewing in the fundamentalist camp, now also known as the evangelical camp, that reveals a widening cleavage among its members due to the growing evangelical participation in questing.[3] What clearly distinguishes the Third Quest from the other two questing periods is the rapidly growing evangelical participation in it, rather than evangelical rejection as happened in the previous two. These evangelicals have largely been stimulated by their participation in the *Society of Biblical Literature's* renewed interest in "historical Jesus" studies that was led by Robert Funk of the Westar Institute, resulting in the latter's work entitled *The Five Gospels, The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* that demonstrated "atomistic" voting (vs. "holism," from the Greek word o[loj or "whole") on the historicity of Jesus' sayings in the four canonical Gospels as well as the Gospel of Thomas.[4]

However, with the perceived shift from a minimum to a *modicum* of historicity in the Gospels—a shift in the burden of proof—as well as a perceived openness to the miraculous among some Third Questers, some evangelicals now desired to participate. While protesting the charges in Geisler's presidential speech as well as *The Jesus Crisis* (1998), soon afterwards a significant number of evangelicals joined the effort. One young evangelical wrote, "this Third Quest for the historical Jesus. . . provides the greatest possible hope for a more sympathetic reading of the gospels as historical sources and is likely to provide a reasonable answer as to why the church began, and why it believed what it did and acted how it did."[5] Craig Evans wrote about the Third Quest that "the miracle stories are now treated seriously and are widely accepted by Jesus scholars as deriving from Jesus' ministry" and "myth has ceased to be an item of importance. . .the miracle tradition is no longer the stumbling block that it once was."[6] In 2004, Evans edited *The Historical Jesus: Critical Concepts in Religious Studies*, as well as the *Enclycopedia of the Historical Jesus* (2008) wherein many evangelicals participated.[7] No exaggeration exists to say that a plethora of books by evangelicals, to some degree or another favorable to questing, have been produced in the last decade of the twentieth and first decade

of the twenty-first centuries.

As of 2010, however, Scot McKnight, in *Christianity Today*, made public that he had withdrawn from participation in the Third Search as an evangelical, citing that "historical method cannot prove. . .that Jesus died for our sins and was raised for our justification" and that scholarly attempts at discovering the "'real' Jesus have failed," with the attempts resulting in "making Jesus in their own [historical Jesus scholars'] image."[8]

Other evangelicals have reacted strongly to McKnight's withdrawal. British evangelical N. T. Wright, in the same edition of *Christianity Today*, reacted negatively to McKnight's declared failure of the Third Search. Wright declared that "[n]ot all historical Jesus scholarship is skeptical in intent or effect." He also attacks "shallow would-be 'orthodox' Christians, who misreading the texts, marginalize Jesus' firstcentury Jewish humanity."[9] Evangelical Craig Keener also reacted negatively, encouraging evangelicals "to stay in the conversation" and stating that "historical Jesus studies remain valuable."[10] In the same *CT* article, evangelical Darrell Bock argues for the importance of historical Jesus research, asserting "historical Jesus work matters, and it matters a lot." He argues that "History at best is reconstructive work, based in probability and working in a discipline that is severely limited by what it can deliver." Bock admits that: "Yes, we cannot 'prove it all, but we can make a compelling case for much of it, even key parts of it. When a compelling case is made, and when the burden of proof is high, that is impressive." He continues, "historical Jesus studies give us a context for Jesus' actions and help us understand the sources, and that it is good because this discussion is happening in the public square." He insists that historical Jesus studies push "people to appreciate that if even the gist of the gospel story is right, then they must think through who Jesus is" and the Gospels convey "the footprints God leaves behind when we appreciate the context in which he acted."[11] For evangelical Darrell Bock, Gospel study has, at best, "burden of proof," "probability," and "gist" in historical demonstration of the Gospels.

Bock has also declared that one of his works on the Gospels, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, "belongs to the third quest" even though he admits that the Third Quest is not "fundamentally conservative."[12] He sees the "strength" of the Third Quest in the following terms, "the strength of the so-called third quest, whether or not it is really a third quest, is its starting point in the very milieu in which Jesus lived and spoke. . . . So there is value in seeing what can be shown

historically to be likely in understanding Jesus and his relationship to his Second Temple Jewish context, as long as one keeps in mind that the Jesus of Scripture is a Jesus remembered."[13] In 2009, in a very recent book on the Third Quest, Bock wrote:

> Can the lion and the lamb lay down together? For many people, the idea of an evangelical engaging in a historical Jesus discussion is oxymoronic. For many critics, the evangelical view of Scripture is said to skew evangelicals' discussion of Jesus issues. . .So can there be evangelical approaches to the historical Jesus?
>
> I believe the answer is yes. To get there, however, one must appreciate the nature of what historical Jesus work seeks to achieve as well as the limitations under which such a historically oriented study operates when it seeks to cross thousands of years to do its work. [14]

Some evangelicals also display some interesting parallels with their more liberal counterparts in their questing for Jesus. Similar to Sanders' list of Gospel events that are considered historically certain, the evangelical *Institute for Biblical Research* Jesus Group identifies twelve events having probability of occurrence, while, as has been cited previously, E. P. Sanders identified eight (see Chapter 12):

> The IBR Jesus Group has been meeting annually since 1999 to consider twelve key events in Jesus' life for which the group thought it could show core authenticity and the combination of which made a case for what Jesus' mission was about. The project also has introductory and concluding essays that were discussed. . . The twelve events and the authors: John the Baptist and Jesus (Robert Webb), Choosing the Twelve (Scot McKnight), Exorcisms and Jesus' Kingdom Teaching (Craig Evans), Sabbath Healings (Donald Hagner), Jesus' Table Fellowship with Sinners (Craig Blomberg), Peter's Declaration at Caesarea Philippi (Michael Wilkins), Entry into Jerusalem (Brent Kinman), The Temple Act (Klyne Snodgrass), The Last Supper (Howard Marshall), Jesus' Examination by the Jewish Leadership (Darrell Bock), Jesus before Pilate and Crucifixion (Robert Webb), and Resurrection (Grant Osborne). [Bob did the introductory essay, and I have the conclusion].[15]

At this point, one is left wondering about the implications of their positions on

"core authenticity" as well as the historiographical "probability, "possibility," "footprints" not only of the twelve *Key Events* but also of many other events in the Gospels not on their list.

Although the IBR Jesus Group distances itself from the Jesus Seminar's voting on sayings of Jesus, they have developed their own scheme of certainty, probability, *etc.* on their evaluation of events in Jesus' life, noting:

> Unlike the Jesus Seminar, the Jesus Group does not vote on the specific sayings or events from the life of Jesus. Rather, each event is assessed as a complete unit. It is examined to determine the evidence for the event in question, as well as the elements that make up this event. Then, given these results, the examiner develops the event's significance for understanding Jesus' life and ministry. Sometimes ratings assessing the possibility or probability of an event or a detail within it are used as a way of expressing what can be demonstrated historically. In other cases, alternative configurations of the sequencing of events are assessed. Judgments like these belong to the author of the article, not necessarily to the entire group, but they are made after interaction with the group.[16]

Thus, in terms of Jesus' baptism, coeditor and contributor to *Key Events* Robert Webb asserts, "The historicity of Jesus' baptism by John is virtually certain. The historicity of the theophany (the Spirit's descent and divine voice) is probable, but its timing as contemporaneous with the baptism is open to question. As a prophetic call-vision, the theophany quite possibly happened at a later time."[17] In *Key Events,* Webb updates his conclusions as follows: "My own judgment is that it is *probable* that Jesus did at some time experience a prophetic call-vision, and it is *somewhat probable* that it incorporated the elements of divine sonship and spirit anointing. It is *possible* that such a call-vision may have taken place at Jesus' baptism, but there are also problems with their association. It is equally possible that it occurred at some point in time subsequent to the baptism" and again "the theophany narrative is somewhat problematic. . . rendering such a temporal placement only a possibility."[18] He makes this assertion especially in his comparison of the Synoptics (Matt 3:13-17// Mark 1:9-11//Luke 3:15-22) with John 1:32 where, in John's Gospel, John and Jesus meet and John relates that he saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and remaining on Him.

Webb's comments regarding the "possibility" of a disjuncture between Jesus'

baptism and His commission/call, however, are highly unlikely and cast a completely unnecessary pall of doubt regarding Gospel writers as careful historians. One does not at all have to imagine that the writers of the Gospels, especially the Synoptics, played so loose with history in their records as Webb would lead his readers to suppose is a distinct possibility. All three Synoptics place the prophetic vision in clear language right after time of Jesus' baptism. The Synoptic language, with its use of εὐθὺς ("immediately"—Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10) would not seem to allow for such loose language to imagine separating Jesus' baptism from His call. Plus, John's statement that he "did not recognize Him" twice (John 1:31 and 1:33) would give the strong implication that John the Baptist had baptized Jesus earlier, as indicated in the Synoptics, but that John did not recognize the full implications of who Jesus was at that time, *i.e.* John did not immediately know, at Jesus' earlier baptism, that he was the Coming One. John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus in John the Apostle's Gospel (John 1:29-34) is viewed most naturally subsequent to the Synoptic event with John gaining full understanding about Jesus sometime after Jesus' baptism. This does not mean that John did not know Jesus at all, but that John's full recognition came after Jesus' baptism, so that John's Gospel reveals the aftermath. Such a conclusion is also enforced by the τεθέαμαι ("I have beheld") that would imply a settled conviction following Jesus' baptism. Furthermore, while Jesus himself witnessed the descent of the Spirit and the Father's declaration in the Synoptics, John testifies to his own vision of the Spirit's descent as a confirming witness, separate from the previous events in the Synoptics.[19]

Evangelicals Embrace Aberrant and Unorthodox Concepts of Historical Criticism

What immediately becomes apparent in this evangelical participation in "questing" is that many are now embracing concepts that have deep roots in unorthodoxy and atheism. That which is truly aberrant is now normalized or standardized as acceptable to evangelical scholarship in their efforts to sanitize its negative underpinnings. As demonstrated in chapter 12, the term "historical Jesus" is historically, presuppositionally, and in practice a technical term that sharply distinguishes between the Jesus who is presented in the Gospels and how He is theorized to have actually existed in history. Ladd well recognized this cleavage when he wrote regarding the term "historical Jesus": "This is a technical term which is easily misunderstood and misinterpreted, even by New Testament scholars. It does *not* mean the Jesus who lived in history, Jesus as he

actually was. It means rather the Jesus who is reconstructed by the historicalcritical method—a Jesus who is altogether and only human—a Jesus without transcendence."[20]

James Robinson also understood the implications of this term when he notes,

> The term "historical Jesus" is not simply identical with "Jesus" or 'Jesus of Nazareth', as if the adjective 'historical' were a meaningless addition. Rather the adjective is used in a technical sense, and makes a specific contribution to the total meaning of the expression. "Historical' is used in the sense of 'things in the past which have been established by objective scholarship.'" Consequently the expression "historical Jesus" comes to mean: "What can be known of Jesus of Nazareth by means of the scientific methods of the historian." Thus we have to do with a technical expression which must be recognized as such, and not automatically identified with the simple term "Jesus". . . .
>
> Since the twentieth century worked out its initial attitude toward the 'historical Jesus' in terms of the only available reconstruction, that of the nineteenth century with all its glaring limitations, it is not surprising to find as a second consequence a tendency to disassociate the expression 'the historical Jesus' from 'Jesus of Nazareth as he actually was,' and to reserve the expression for: 'What can be known of Jesus of Nazareth by means of the scientific methods of the historian.' The clear implication is that the term signifies "Jesus of Nazareth as he actually was" may be considerably more than or quite different from "the historical Jesus."[21]

Evangelicals are now attempting to wrest this term away from its normative sense and apply an abnormal meaning to it. In doing so, they also attempt to turn an aberrant, unorthodox term into something that they willingly embrace. They also cast doubt upon the Gospels' record of Jesus' life, placing those canonical records as somehow contrary to or inadequate for explaining what actually happened in history.

Perhaps some of these evangelicals think that their recent dialogue and participation in the Third Search has now sanitized the term from its roots. "After all," they might reason, "has not 250 years of discussion of the historical Jesus caused changes in ideology?" An examination of the Third Search has revealed that no substantial differences in ideology have changed, except that

some now allow arbitrarily for a *modicum*, rather than minimum, of historical accuracy in the Gospels. No amount of evangelical dialogue has successfully sanitized historical criticism from its presupposition's roots and ideology. For evangelicals to think otherwise is to rationalize the facts to justify their participation. The net result is that evangelicals are now creating a fifth Gospel that is different from the canonical Gospels in that these evangelicals separate parts of the Gospels as demonstrably more historically probable than others. McKnight has now withdrawn from such studies for this very reason, openly admitting "a fundamental observation about all genuine historical Jesus studies: *Historical Jesus scholars construct what is in effect a fifth Gospel*.[22] The reconstructed Jesus is not identical to the canonical Jesus or the orthodox Jesus. He is the reconstructed Jesus, which means he is a 'new' Jesus."[23] Questing makes the "authentic Jesus" different from the Jesus in the Gospels and also creates shades of gray as to what can be trusted as historically verifiable in those four canonical documents. While evangelicals who participate in the questing attempt to separate themselves sharply from the Jesus Seminar and its voting on Jesus' sayings, their approach results practically in a similar scheme of what may be affirmed and what may not be confirmed in the Gospel records.

Twelve Key Events Based on Probability of Occurrence According to an Evangelical Adoption of PostModernist Historiography

At the end of the twentieth century (ca. 1999), the *Institute for Biblical Research* began a series of meetings "that spanned more than a decade from start to finish," resulting in the publication of *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus, A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (2009).[24] At the time of the writing, this work constitutes one of the latest, and most significant, evangelical attempts at the Third Quest. The editors discussed this decade-long meeting in the following terms as they dialogued on historical Jesus research among a diverse group of evangelicals:

> [T]he meetings of the IBR Jesus Group have been a pleasure from start to finish. Our participants came from three continents, and though separated by geographical distance, close relationships have been built, and friendships have been deepened as a result of our annual meetings. Our meetings were marked by lively conversations about Jesus, Second Temple Judaism and historical method. But these times also included wonderful

> snacks as we worked (M&Ms, cake, cookies, and chips) as well as marvelous evening meals out to close our meetings. The closing meal each year became a traditional adjournment of our time together. Nothing quite equals a Brazilian steak house to a bunch of hungry scholars![25]

One is immediately impressed by this statement as an oddly casual comment since these evangelical scholars met to decide the future of evangelical conceptions of the Gospels as well as Jesus in history.

Bock's and Webb's IBR group chose twelve events that they considered strategic in this work, relating that the group made the decision "to focus our attention on exploring key events and activities in the life of Jesus which met two criteria: a strong case could be made for a judgment of high probability that the core event was historical, and that it was likely significant for understanding Jesus."[26] They continue,

> "The goal was to see the extent to which a study of key events might provide an overall framework for understanding Jesus. Once these key events had been selected, each essay was to do three things: first, it was to set forth a case for the probable historicity of the event using the criteria of authenticity. The focus was to, first, establish the probable historicity of the event's core rather than concerning itself with all of the details. Second, explore the socio-cultural contextual information that contributes to understanding the event in its firstcentury context. Third, in light of this context, to consider the significance of the event for understanding Jesus. Thus, each study would have both macro and micro concerns, being both analytic and synthetic.[27]

The term "probability" or even "high probability" as a label to apply to the historicity of these events also strikes one as an odd term for evangelicals to apply to Gospel events, for it immediately implies a relative degree of doubt as to the event or at least the possibility that the event. That is, it casts a pale of uncertainty over the Gospel materials. To assert that an event probably happened or even had a high probability also allows the possibility for the event not to have taken place at all or at least not to have taken place as described. To assert that the "core" of the Gospels is reliable in probability opens up the issue that other elements apart from the core may not be reliable.

Bock and Webb go on to issue a caveat, "[I]n a very real sense this work

reflects the input of the group. The collaborative learning experience was very stimulating. Each author, however, remains alone responsible for the views expressed in their particular essay. In other words, the author of each essay had the final call on its contents" but they also assert that "Among the team there are differences in particulars, but *in general the synthesis set forth is one the team* [italics added] embraces as providing the most coherent understanding of what Jesus did as a historic figure."[28]

Bock and Webb note, significantly, that Robert Webb's article on history, historiography, and historical method ["The Historical Enterprise and Historical Jesus Research"] is important because it "opens the book *to set the direction of what we sought to do and the issues we consistently faced throughout our* meetings [italics added]. It reflects discussions that regularly came up as individual events were considered and assessed. In other words, this essay was written at the end of our process; it was not written as a guideline at the beginning of it."[29] They continue,

> We write for an audience interested in historical Jesus study. . .Such a study concentrates on what it thinks can be demonstrated in a corroborative manner about Jesus. All sources are available for consideration and each is sifted critically. By working with the criteria, our goal was to work with a method that is generally used in such study. We are quite aware that such methods have been subject to important critiques from all sides of the debate, but in many ways these are the best means we have to engage in such a sifting process. *Webb's essay summarizes the criteria we used and how we intended to see their importance after we completed our study. It also places the criteria within a larger framework of broad historical method* [italics added]."[30]

The introduction concludes by acknowledging "the importance of recognizing, taking into account, and making one's horizon, including one's biases and preunderstanding," noting that this IBR Jesus Group has as its vision "to foster excellence in biblical studies, doing so within a faith commitment. Thus each of us has a commitment to the Christian faith. While some of us would call ourselves 'Evangelical Christian,' others might prefer 'biblically orthodox Christian.'"[31] The often repeated use of the term "probable" or "probability" of Gospel events in this introduction also struck the present writer of this chapter with unease as to the possible widespread implications of the term for evangelicals today.

Questing Evangelicals Embrace a PostModernistic View of Biblical History: Certainty is Out, Probability is In

Since Webb's article plays such an important role in fostering their approach to Jesus studies in *Key Events*, one must examine its assertions. The article is complex but an examination of it reveals how history is now being theorized and approached by many evangelicals. Webb's article follows immediately after the introduction to the work and constitutes Chapter Two, "The Historical Enterprise and Historical Jesus Research."[32] One notices immediately that Webb attempts to issue a counter in Bock's and Webb's "Introduction" that focused on the importance of his essay, asserting that his discussions "represent my [Webb's] view on the subject, and they do not necessarily represent all members of the project. . .I remain solely responsible for its contents. . .this chapter was written at the conclusion of this project. . .but it never functioned as the guide that preceded the project."[33] Webb's statement, however, is immediately reduced in its attempt to distance his assertions from others participating in the work when one observes that the volume presents no substantial counter to his view of the philosophy of history and historiography. His essay also received prominence as setting the stage after the Introduction and prior to any discussion or evaluation of the "historicity" of the key events chosen by the participants. The very nature of choosing twelve key events that the group as a whole felt could be demonstrated as historically "probable" also affirms this chapter as the underlying thinking of the project. It also subtly reveals that the editors of the work should realize the implications of its impact on the Gospel material.

For Webb, the distinctions between concepts of the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith" are "not to be preferred over the other" for both "are equally legitimate subjects of inquiry" that use "different means to provide answers to different questions."[34] The logical result of his assertion here is to legitimize fully possible distinctions of a sharp cleavage between Jesus as He is presented in the Gospel accounts and scholarly speculations of how He might have "actually" existed in history. This distinction of Webb also smacks of the German theological distinction between *historie* (actual history) and *geschichte* (faith interpretation).

He next provides "the foundation for the historical enterprise" in questing by defining history, historiography, and historical method. In Webb's view, history

is not what happened in the past, since "we do not have *direct* access to these past events. . . . What survives might be a written document or some form of inscription alluding to the event." Instead, what remains, according to Webb, are "traces" that have survived. [35] He adopts Elton's view of postmodernistic history that "historical study is not the study of the past but the study of present traces of the past."[36] The term "traces" is used because "in most cases (if not all) these are only partial and fragmentary, but they are all we have to provide access to the past event. Thus, rather than having direct access to past events, all we really can access today is the surviving traces from the past."[37] The practical impact is "in actuality what one really 'knows' [about what happened] is based on the surviving traces. . .Thus, while in popular parlance the term 'history may be used to refer to past events, this usage is problematic and may ultimately be misleading."[38] He continues:

> Surviving traces (i.e., ST) are the material used by the historian. Usually this material consists of written records of past events as reported and recorded by those closely (or not so closely) involved in the events. These written accounts may be based upon oral traditions that have been collected later or an account derived from eyewitnesses of the events. It may even be written by an eyewitness or, to the other extreme, it may be written by someone who has no real knowledge of the events but has an idea what could have, or should have, happened. Whatever is the case, surviving traces involve the perspectives and interests of the eyewitnesses, the perspectives and traces of those who passed on the traditions, and the perspectives and interests of the person who wrote the account. . .Surviving traces (ST) are hardly "raw" or "objective" data. The nature of those surviving traces is such that they require the later historian to develop a historical method. . .to properly handle these surviving traces. So these surviving traces are not "history" either, for they are only the "stuff" that has survived from the past—fragmentary, incomplete, and quite possibly biased, and perhaps even contradictory and incorrect.[39]

What the modern historian must do, in Webb's reasoning, is to "sift through and interpret these surviving traces using the tools and processes of the historical method to come to their understanding of the past event being studied."[40] After completing all the research and analysis, "the historian procures an account of his/her understanding of the past event which narrates a description and explanation of it."[41] Thus, according to this view, all events are mediated through the subjective understanding of the interpreter of the events (i.e. historian) as

he/she understood them through the surviving traces.

For Webb, “the term ‘history’ should be reserved for a later historian’s narrative account (i.e. NA) of a past event (i.e. PE) that is his/her understanding of that event based upon *the interpretation* [italics added] of surviving traces (i.e. ST).”[42] In other words, “history” is a narrative account that involves INTERPRETATION or, in other words, the potential biases of the historian, conscious or otherwise, that interplay with the surviving traces, thus history is mainly indirect knowledge rather than direct. Webb directly applies these principles to the Gospels and historical Jesus studies with some observations: “[w]ith reference to Jesus, the surviving traces. . .consist of two basic types: the discrete narrative episodes in the Gospels (i.e. the individual pericopae) and other sources (e.g. Josephus), as well as the overall portraits created by these early authors. . .these earliest portraits are. . .the earliest surviving attempts” [to give] “a coherent picture” [about Jesus].[43] (This term “surviving traces” seems to correspond closely to Bock’s “footprints” of Jesus in the Gospels.[44])

Importantly, the writing of history involves one’s philosophy of history or what is known as “historiography.” Webb contends that under the Enlightenment’s influence, history has been wrongly understood as “scientific history,” or a scientific endeavor that can be pursued with neutrality, objectivity, and value-free observations. Webb rejects the possibility of these factors in the writing of history or historiography, and instead argues, “The rise of postmodern historiography has contributed significant insights into the historical enterprise. . .All historians interpret and write from their own perspective.” As a result, “the historian’s explanation and interpretation of the facts and providing causal and explanatory links between them is a contribution made by the historian and thus is ‘invention.’“[45] For Webb, such an invention “*does not mean* that which is fictional and purely imaginary” and “It is possible to embrace the strengths of what postmodern historiography can teach us, without slipping into total relativism.”[46]

To avoid extremes of postmodernistic historiography, he adopts twin principles: understanding of history as representation (a “representation of the past” and “not a description referring to something in the past; rather, it is a representation portraying something about the past”) and adopting the philosophical stance of the principle of critical realism (exemplified by the hermeneutical circle or spiral as expressed by existentialist Gadamer).[47] Practically, this involves allowing one’s own experience, initial understanding,

and continuing critical judgment (the subject) to affect understanding of what one is studying (the object). Such resulting understanding is only provisional and subject to expansion and development as the process continues and these two elements interact and fuse with each other. Although Webb may not admit the practical impact of this approach, the *practical impact, nonetheless, is that understanding of history is always changing and temporary, greatly impacted by the changing bias(es) of the interpreter as he "dialogues" or examines the object studied. Any such information gained in the process would be fleeting and temporary as views changed through time and interaction*. Biblical understanding has no objective basis, because the moorings are always subject to change and even contradiction.

Yet, such complexity is dubious in understanding God's Word. Objectivity in interpretation is possible and must be defined in understanding God's thoughts as a Spirit-guided process of thinking God's thoughts in His Word as He intended. This latter position is a firm biblical position for those who are truly born again. Jesus promised the disciples that the Spirit of truth (John 14:26; 16:13; cf. 1 John 4:6) would guide them into truth. Such is the result of the New Covenant process whereby the genuine believer is provided with the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:26-27 cf. Ezekiel 36:25-27; Jeremiah 31:31-33). To today's evangelicals, this explanation might appear simplistic compared to the perceived sophistication of historical criticism that is rooted in the wisdom of men (1 Cor 1:18-2:14). The ground for understanding the Gospels as God intended is fully provided by the Holy Spirit, who indwells the believer, providing a check against false teaching as well as an affirmation of the truth of God's Word. As a result of postmodernism, evangelicals reject any such certainty and replace it with, at best, probability, *i.e.* these events probably happened. The latter leaves the door wide open for the significant possibility that the events did not occur as asserted in the Gospels or cannot be affirmed. Moreover, because some believers are not entirely filled with God's Spirit (or controlled by Him), as well as due to differing mental capacities by exegetes, some variance in interpretation is to be expected.

In terms of historical criticism, evaluation of the Gospel material, or for that matter, any historical record, for Webb (and others in *Key Events*) involves: (1) the preliminary phase where the interpreter must be self-aware of his/her horizon or biases/predispositions that are brought to the study; (2) the first main phase then involves the historian gathering and interpreting/evaluating the surviving traces or "raw data;" (3) the second main phase is the historian interpreting and

explaining the relevant data with hypotheses; and (4) the concluding phase is to gather the evidence (i.e. surviving traces), arguments and hypotheses into a coherent and complete historical narrative that the historian considers to be the most plausible representation (i.e. "narrative account" or N/A) of that chunk of past reality being considered (i.e. the "past event" or PE).[48] Again, although Webb may not directly admit the impact of such assertions, *the practical impact here in interpreting the Gospels would again depend upon the* a priori *biases and prejudices of the interpreter and be anchored firmly in the relativity and subjectivity of the resulting interpretation*.

Applying his study to the Bible accounts like the Gospels, Webb allows for possible distinctions between the biblical event itself (the event that is being described by the biblical author) and the biblical author's interpretive explanation of divine causality for that event. He also asserts that "the possible history of an event itself is a distinct matter from discussing the causal explanation provided in the ancient text."[49]

Tools and Methods in Historical Jesus Research

Further doubt is cast regarding the Gospel material as seen in the discussion of the tools and methods in historical Jesus research that were utilized throughout the work. Webb allows for a distinction between what the Gospels relate about Jesus' life as He lived in A.D. 30 with alleged beliefs that arose later in the composition of the Gospels after those events, so that the Gospels do not necessarily convey what actually happened in Jesus' day but may be beliefs of His life that developed later: "As primary sources written some 40 to 60 years after the events they portray, these three Synoptic Gospels are first and foremost evidence for the beliefs and viewpoints of their authors and some within their respective communities in the 70s and 80s C. E." and the question should center around "what extent can the pieces of the data also be used as evidence for 30 C. E.? This is the question of 'historicity' or 'authenticity.'"[50] One is left wondering if and when the Gospels are truly portraying the events of Jesus' life or that of the church and how would one know the difference.

Webb also allows for creativity involved in the composition of the Gospels as well as a layering process ("stages") that occurred prior to the Gospels being written:

> [T]he traditions contained within the Gospels are understood to have

> passed through various stages before they were written down in the Gospels. . .At any time in this process, it is historically possible and even likely that an event or saying that had been observed or heard was later added to or changed in some way, and it is equally possible that an event or saying was created by someone and inserted into the traditioning process at any stage, whether as an oral tradition, a part of an early collection, or a periscope in a written Gospel. . .Thus, the purpose of the critical methods and criteria are to ascertain the probability of whether or not—and to what extent—something stated in the written Gospels can be traced back to the events stage.[51]

Critical methods are applied in order to evaluate whether or not a particular piece of data was changed and how it might have been changed because their purpose is to "ascertain the probability of whether or not—and to what extent—something stated in the written Gospels can be traced back to the events stage" and again "Gospel studies generally and historical Jesus studies in particular have developed a number of critical methods and criteria to help the historian evaluate the Gospel data, weighing the probability of whether or not a particular piece of data or part thereof is 'historical' or 'authentic.'"[52] These are preliminary (source, redaction, and tradition criticism), primary (criteria of authenticity —"criteria given the heaviest weight in making a judgment concerning the authenticity of an event or saying, or a particular element within such a periscope"), and secondary criteria (criteria of authenticity that "contribute less weight to judgment concerning the authenticity of a particular piece of tradition").[53] Importantly, in response to such criteria, *their practical impact would automatically cast further doubt about the trustworthiness of the Gospel traditions as practiced by the evangelical questers* rather than add confidence to trustworthiness.

The natural result of evangelical questers utilizing these "preliminary" criteria of source, redaction, and tradition criticism is an opening up to the distinct possibility that the Gospels are not direct eyewitness accounts (Matthew, John) or related to eyewitnesses (Luke carefully investigating information from eyewitnesses-Luke 1:1-4; Mark relating Peter's preaching), but instead may have had multiple layers that must be peeled back to discover what actually happened in Jesus' life. The impact is that these eyewitness accounts no longer are direct but indirect mediation of Jesus' life.

In terms of these primary criteria of authenticity, Webb admits that "[t]he

relative importance or weight for each of these primary criteria is somewhat subjective among scholars–I have placed them. . .in an order that makes sense to me."[54] This statement constitutes a tacit admission that criteria of authenticity are replete with subjectivity and contribute little to any valid discussion, since they assume what they are trying to prove (see Chapter Twelve for further discussion). Criteria of authenticity are *a priori* assumptions used to guarantee the desired outcome of what has already been decided as the conclusion regarding Gospel historicity. They lack any objective anchor or ground for the interpreter. If the outcome desired is not forthcoming, then questers invent new criteria that ensure the outcome they desire. Such criteria also place a burden on the Gospel material to prove any ground or basis in historicity, *i.e.* their mere application implies doubt about historicity or authenticity.

In discussing, for instance, the primary criterion of multiple attestation (based in the 2-or 4-Source Hypotheses), Webb had related, "Most of the scholars in this project hold to the Two-Source Hypothesis, but they differ over the extent to which they use a reconstructed *Sayings Gospel Q*."[55] One must remember that multiple attestation depends for its validity on the 2/4 Source hypothesis (e.g. Mark, Q). In in order to prove anything about "probability," multiple attestation operates directly from this assumption. If this Synoptic approach is invalid, then all operating principles based directly upon it, such as multiple attestation, prove nothing regarding the Gospel material whatsoever. It does, however, raise questions of doubt about material that cannot be in some way affirmed through these criteria.

In discussing the criterion of multiple attestation, Webb protests that "just because a particular event has only one eyewitness and/or chain of transmission, does not make it any less probable than one that has multiple witnesses and chains of transmission," (i.e. single attestation) but he argues at the same time

> [M]ultiple attestation raises the level of probability because the material has independent corroboration. But single attestation means that this material does not benefit from independent corroboration; this does not, by itself, lower the judgment on the material. Viewed comparatively, material benefiting from multiple attestation has a higher probability than singly attested material, but this is only because this criterion has raised the probability of multiply attested material; it has not lowered the probability of singly attested material. . .Just because a tradition is multiply attested does not mean it is *necessarily* authentic, but more so, just because it is

singly attested does not *necessitate* a judgment of inauthenticity.[56]

One is immediately impressed by the obvious confusion that this criterion presents, rendering it dubious in effectiveness. To raise one Gospel element as multiply attested is to immediately or naturally lower other elements that cannot be multiply attested, whether Webb (or other evangelicals) admit this or not. One cannot have it both ways with one raised in probability, the other not impacted. If something is raised in probability through multiple attestation, then shades of doubt are automatically implied about other elements that cannot be multiply attested. Of course, one could perhaps "suspend judgment" about the historicity of a singly attested event, but the mere act of suspension of judgment automatically casts doubt on the event itself by the need to suspend judgment.

An example of another primary criterion that Webb commends is the criterion of dissimilarity. His conclusion regarding the historicity of Matthew 16:18 in his application of dissimilarity is significant:

> An example of this criterion functioning to lower the level of probability may be observed in Jesus' statement in Matthew 16:18, ". . .and upon this rock I will build my church." Evidence in the Gospels indicate that the focus of Jesus' ministry was upon "the kingdom of God" and not the "church" as it would have been understood by Matthew's audience—A Christian entity distinct from Israel. The term "church" is only found one other time on the lips of Jesus in the canonical Gospels, also in Matthew (18:15). This suggests the probability that this language is a result of Matthean redaction, and it is quite unlikely that this clause, at least as it is understood in Matthew 16:18, is authentic.[57]

Webb continues that his conclusion here "does not mean that the entire periscope of Matt 16:17-19 should be viewed as inauthentic."[58]

Also strategic is Webb's admission about using this criteria in opposite directions: at one time proving and at another time disproving Gospel material. He relates caution regarding language of raising and lowering levels of probability: "All judgments of this nature should be understood on a scale of probabilities: Yes, it is possible in either example to conceive of a way that the opposite could be the case. But historical judgments using the criteria of authenticity are a means of judgment which is more probable."[59] One can only wonder: *How valid is such a principle (or principles) that can be used either*

way in antithetical possibilities regarding historicity? Ironically, not only do these evangelicals allow doubt about the Gospel materials, but they also have great doubt as to their own scale for assessing the surrounding level of doubt.

Webb also is driven to admit that use of criterion of authenticity "is much more an art than it is science." Furthermore, and perhaps more telling, he goes on to note,

> [G]iven the nature of historiography [i.e. the adoption of a form of postmodernism by these evangelicals] discussed. . .and the manner in which the criteria of authenticity function, one must realize that judgments of authenticity or historicity are matters of greater or lesser probability, as are the explanations and hypotheses built upon them. Certainty—as one assumes in mathematics or hopes for in the sciences—is not realistic or possible in the historical enterprise. . .Thus the judicious historian weighs the evidence and provides judgments along a scale of "highly probable" through "possible" to "unlikely"' Occasionally a historian might even use terms like "virtually certain" or "most unlikely," but such extreme judgments should probably be reserved for situations in which virtually all the evidence overwhelmingly points in one direction. Otherwise, readers and other historians may in turn judge the evidence as "going beyond the evidence."[60]

Apparently, in this reckoning, to believe in the virtual certainty of the Gospels as a whole would be "an extreme judgment." While distancing themselves from the voting of the Jesus Seminar on sayings of Jesus, these evangelicals create a scale of probability that resembles what the Jesus Seminar attempts, except on the macro level of events rather than Jesus' sayings. Barriers that might exist between the conclusions of these evangelicals and the Jesus Seminar have little substance, except perhaps in terms of the degree of dehistoricization. What Webb, and other evangelical questers who would agree with his approach, has done is to take the Gospel accounts and place them on the shifting sands of acute subjectivity and every whim of the interpreter. All objectivity is lost. Certainty is now viewed as an extreme position in relation to the record of Jesus as presented in the Gospels.

Finally, Webb concludes his discussion by giving the reasoning behind why these particular twelve events were chosen in the work: "Three overarching questions have guided the project: (1) What are the key events in the life of Jesus

that we think can be best demonstrated as being probably historical? (2) . . .what is the significance of each event for understanding the historical Jesus? (3) What is the portrait of Jesus that results from considering these events and their significance?"[61]

Thus, the practical impact of such an approach is that a fifth Gospel has been created by these evangelicals associated with IBR in this work in their decision as to which events in the Gospel material have the best chance of being "probably historical," *i.e.* the historically probable, essentially affirmable core Gospel. One wonders about the events that they left out—are they now to be considered less historical? Should evangelicals suspend judgment about the historicity of those not mentioned? Does this not result in a fifth Gospel that actually constitutes a *qualitatively different* gospel that Paul warned about (ἕτερον εὐαγγέλιον—Gal 1:6) in that they cast doubt on the Gospels received in the canon that were written by eyewitnesses to Jesus' life? Who would be convinced to trust the canonical Gospels by such an evidential "apologetic" of the material? Webb also attempts to insulate the work against criticism in concluding his article by noting that "each author remains alone responsible for his views expressed in his particular essay. . .the authors of the essays. . .in this volume do not all agree with everything that is stated in this introductory essay. . .it is quite possible that there may be some tensions between the views expressed in this chapter [Webb's introduction to historiography] and particular elements in some of the chapters to follow. Though I suspect that they will be relatively few and not overly significant."[62]

A Brief Cataloging of Some Assertions in Twelve Key Events

In light of Webb's setting forth of historiography, a brief examination of some of the various assertions regarding historicity in the Gospels is warranted. An examination of this IBR collaborative work reveals some interesting conclusions among some of the essays. Only a few examples can be cited due to space limitations. These observations reveal that some of these evangelicals are all too readily willing to surrender the Gospels to dubious synoptic hypotheses that are fleeting, arbitrary, and subjective (i.e. 2-or 4-Source Hypotheses, *Q*, criteria of authenticity). Moreover, if these current approaches are ill-founded, then they have actually proven ***NOTHING*** about Gospel historicity, or the lack of it—depending on their approach, in the end. All that was accomplished was an

exposure of their willingness in opening up the Gospels to the subjective bias of scholarly whim that allows for the definite possibility that the Gospels are not historically trustworthy or, at best, that they cannot be affirmed beyond probability. Moreover, one receives the strong impression that a rule by scholarly consensus prevails among them, somewhat reminiscent of indirect voting on the historical nature of the events.

While Craig Evans, in his chapter in *Key Events*, affirms the historicity of Jesus' exorcisms, he allows for a level of creativity in the Gospel accounts that, in turn, denigrates Gospel historicity: (1) "The evangelist Luke [he does not identify if this is actually the historical physician Luke] draws upon his Markan source at this point [in Luke 11:16-20] pulling together elements from Mark 3, as well as the request for a sign in Mark 8:11-13 (cf. Luke 11:16)" alleging that "the synthetic nature of the composition complicates the question of the original context."[63] He argues that "[i]t is quite possible that the saying in v. 20 [Luke 11] derives from a different context" and "the parallel [to Luke 11] saying in Matthew 12:28 also seems to be out of its original context, being coupled—somewhat at cross-purposes—with 12:27. . . . Either the sayings of vv. 27 and 28 were uttered in different contexts or they related to one another in a different way." [64] For Evans, some evidence exists that Jesus' healings were linked to a perception of disease as being caused by demons and the need for exorcism: "We see this in the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law, where Jesus is said to have 'rebuked the fever' (Luke 4:39), as though a sentient being was responsible for the fever." [65] One is left with the impression that Evans implies that the Gospel had misperceptions of demons behind physical maladies, which were wrong, primitive, or cultural accommodations here. The entertainment of the possibility of dubious compositional factors being involved here immediately raises questions about the historicity of the passage that give conflicting elements with his attempts at confirming the historicity of Jesus' exorcisms at the same time.

Craig Blomberg, in defending the historicity of Jesus' table fellowship, readily admits that he proceeds on a basis "in an order that progresses from those [12 passages he cites in his article] with the strongest cases for authenticity to those that are not quite as secure."[66] Security of historicity for Blomberg centers in evaluative compliance with Markan priority and the Q hypothesis as well as the value criteria of authenticity that are applied. Based in Blomberg's historicalcritical approach, the story of Jesus' participation at Levi's party (Mark 2:13-17 and parallels) has the greatest chances of historicity with verse 2:17 "on

form critical grounds" having "the most demonstrably historical core of the passage."[67] Such wording as "historical core" leaves one with the impression of varying elements of surety regarding historicity in the individual Gospel narratives as well. He asserts that the "core of the Markan version of the feeding of the 5000 is most likely authentic" leaving open the definite possibility that it might not be.[68]

Commendably, Donald Hagner recognizes clearly that questions of historicity center in *a priori* thinking, "One's *a priori* inclination becomes a crucially important factor in deciding for or against historicity"[69] and "the initial bias one assumes regarding the historicity of the gospel tradition, whether negative or positive, will largely determine the conclusion to which one is attracted."[70] He then further relates,

> What does seem to emerge is one indisputable fact: the crucially determinative role that is played by one's predisposition to the question [historicity of the synoptic Sabbath controversy passages]. This should not be surprising in a day when we are learning that there is no truly 'objective' or 'neutral' knowledge and that *every* position necessarily begins from some kind of 'faith' basis. This does not excuse us from doing our homework well. Nor does it mean that we accept everything blindly and uncritically, 'by faith' so to speak. But we are made freshly aware of the difficulty of the historical enterprise.[71]

Hagner then delineates "the strange paradox, then, is there is no more helpful tool for the Gospel interpreter than faith in the truthfulness of the Gospels themselves."[72] For him, "The burden of proof here must remain with those who would deny historical authenticity to the material."[73] If he affirms such a position in his lengthy discussion, then subjecting the Gospels to such dubious and fleeting ideology (e.g. criteria of authenticity) does little but significantly raise questions of doubt, skepticism, and uncertainty that settle nothing about historicity. Such an effort is futile from its start and is defeated before it even begins. It is unable to accomplish anything. Hagner also labels the reference to Abiathar in Mark 2:26 as "the mistaken reference" and says that "it hardly seems fair to make this confusion of names, really a minor point and found in other texts, a determining factor in whether Jesus spoke these words."[74] While Hagner allows historical inaccuracy on some things, he chooses to maintain the general accuracy of the pericope. Once this level of inaccuracy is allowed or permitted, it becomes even more difficult or capricious (a slippery slope) for evangelicals to

insist on the general accuracy of the story as a whole.[75] He concludes his article by noting the "'quest of the historical Jesus' is a misnomer. It is not the search that can bring us the real Jesus. . .but rather a search that provides what necessarily and finally must remain an artificial construct. . .The fact remains that the historical method, strictly practiced. . .is ill-equipped to deal with the uniqueness represented by the story of Jesus."[76] Interestingly, here Hagner runs away from historical criticism while attempting to apply it to the Gospels.

In his work on Peter's declaration concerning Jesus' identity in Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21 and John 6:66-69), Michael Wilkins spends a great deal of effort and length in applying criteria of authenticity to the events surrounding this incident. He argues, "the collective testimony of the criteria of Semitism and Palestinian background, Embarrassment, and Historical Coherence present convincing evidence that Peter's declaration of Jesus as the Messiah is historical" and "These collective criteria lead to the conclusion that the Gospel writers recorded an [sic] historically authentic account of Peter's declaration that Jesus was the Christ/Messiah."[77] Yet, at the end of his article, Wilkins laments, "The so-called distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith is an unhelpful divide. Jesus is the Christ of history *and* the Christ of faith."[78] On the one hand, Wilkins affirms the validity of these criteria in his article, while at the same time rejecting the divide that the application of such criteria of authenticity *a priori* create and, in practice accentuate, between Jesus in the Gospels and Jesus in history. The standard operating assumption in these criteria is that a divide exists, and their application is to determine the extent or nature of the divide. Why then does Wilkins so diligently affirm such criteria while at the same time insisting no divide exists? This is a manifest contradiction.

For Klyne Snodgrass, the Temple cleansing incident in the Synoptics, placed at the end of Jesus' ministry after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt 21:12-17 // Mark 11:12-19 // Luke 19:45-48), versus John 2:12-22, where the latter places a cleansing at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, leads to the conclusion that only one cleansing really occurred, not two: "The difference between the Synoptics and John on the chronology of the temple incident leads some to conclude there were two cleanings. While this cannot be absolutely precluded, it is not likely. Not only are the accounts very close in what happened, both traditions have the temple incident followed by questioning from the religious leaders. . .Whether the Synoptic or the Johannine chronology is to be preferred is not easily determined."[79] Snodgrass concludes, "I lean toward the

Synoptic chronology because of the incident's logical connection with Jesus' arrest, but in the end I do not think that either option may be excluded."[80] To Snodgrass' credit, he does not deny the historicity of a temple cleansing—just the idea of two cleansings. However, his allowance for such latitudes in historicity, in that only one cleansing is proposed as possible, immediately opens up a Pandora's Box that leads to the destruction of the trustworthiness of the Gospels as historical records. If the Gospel writers are postulated to have such laxity in inventing separate, as well as disparate, contexts for the same events for alleged theological (redactional) reasons, very little if anything in the Gospels can be trusted as historical. Snodgrass is reflecting the capricious scholarly bias against doubles occurring in Scripture and also its bias for an evolutionary development in the Gospel tradition, resulting in one account developing into another, the latter of which is grossly speculative. The temple connections in the Synoptics as well as John make the events rather tight, not allowing for such creative liberty. One would also wonder why Jesus' cleansing would occur only once. Why would the Temple authorities, who rejected Jesus' Messianic claims, ever respond to His cleansing the first time in conforming to Jesus' corrections of their activities? Most likely, they would have immediately returned the Temple to its prior status after Jesus disrupted it the first time as witnessed by John. The idea of necessary cleansing is far more natural in light of the persistent rejection of Jesus by the authorities. If he did it once at the beginning of His ministry, that He did it again at the end of His ministry would be very natural in light of such resistance to His messianic authority.

I. Howard Marshall's article, "The Last Supper," affirms, "denials of the historicity of the essential elements in that narrative are untenable. It is one thing to cast doubt on details of the story; it is another thing to rule out any possibility of basic historicity. . .The suspicions that may attach to some parts of the story and the historical difficulties created by others are not on such a scale as to call in question the essential historicity of what is recorded."[81] Marshall is also strategic, not only for his article's inclusion and its affirmation of "basic historicity" but also for the influence Marshall has had on some contributors to *Key Events*. Several were mentored in their doctoral program by Marshall at Abeerdeen University and his influence among them is frequently seen.

In 1977, Marshall wrote *I Believe in the Historical Jesus*.[82] In this book, Marshall did much to add confusion to the term "historical Jesus" among British evangelicals and Americans who studied theology in British universities. He attempted to take the term "historical Jesus" and redefine the traditional meaning

of its usage in terms of its presuppositions, history, and origins in an attempt to somehow rehabilitate the term from the radical contexts of Schweitzer and Käsemann. Michael Green (who also studied under Marshall), in the editor's preface to Marshall's book, comments that the purpose of the book will have "a very wide impact in clarifying these muddied waters" that the first and second searches for the historical Jesus had caused.[83] Previous chapters have demonstrated that the term makes a distinction between what the Gospels assert about Jesus and hypotheses about how he actually was based in historicalcritical suppositions that a difference exists between the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life and how he is alleged to have truly existed in history. Marshall, however, did not add clarification but muddied the waters further, relating that the term could also mean that the person actually existed so that the person is historical. So his title, "I believe in the historical Jesus" means that, for Marshall, Jesus was truly a person who existed in history—"I believe that there was a historical person called Jesus."[84] Both Schweitzer and Käsemann, however, never denied Jesus' existence in history but the Gospel portrayal of Jesus in history. For Marshall, to define the term otherwise was to assign an aberrant significance to the term. Marshall went on to argue that "methods of historical study applied to the Gospels leave us in no doubt that *some* [italics added] knowledge of Jesus is possible and that the existence of such knowledge naturally implies that Jesus really existed."[85]

Furthermore, much of the postmodernistic historical approach of *Key Events* is foreshadowed in Marshall, who explains the historian's task as determining what actually happened as opposed to a historian's account that related what happened. In other words, history always involves interpretation of what happened.[86] This means that the historian must evaluate evidence with critical skill and knowledge to separate "reliable evidence" from "unreliable." For Marshall, "historical statements are attended by various degrees of probability, and that the lines between 'certainly historical,' 'probably historical' and 'possibly historical' are hard to draw" for "the historical is compelled to use 'probably' and 'possibly' very often."[87] Such an approach, for Marshall, leads to a more accurate knowledge of "what happened," for the aim of the historian (or, gospel critic) is "to ascertain precisely what can be proved to have taken place during a particular period in time" and to be aware of his own biases as an interpreter.[88]

As applied to Gospel studies, Marshall chiding of British evangelical Donald Guthrie for his "traditional approach" is very significant and reflects an attitude

that has undoubtedly influenced some of his students today,

> A very traditional type of picture of Jesus is presented by D. Guthrie in *Jesus the Messiah*. Although Guthrie is well aware of the methods of modern historical research, he tends to ignore them in this book and to take it rather for granted that we can read the Gospels more or less as they stand as straight historical sources for the life of Jesus. The result is that the reader who is puzzled by historical questions will not find any help with his problems, and the insight which might be gained by the application of historical methods are missing. The modern reader needs more help than Guthrie is prepared to give him and might mistakenly conclude that there are in fact no historical problems.[89]

Apparently for Marshall, to take the Gospels as straight historical sources is to be uncritical and unscholarly as a historian. In addition, Marshall believed that traditional views of Gospel authorship (e.g. Matthew written by tax-collector Matthew or John the Apostle writing the Gospel of John) are to be rejected: "In various ways this simple picture of the situation has been shattered" so that "[t]he case that the Gospels are reliable because they were written by eyewitnesses seems to have evaporated."[90] Again, "even if the original apostles were writing the story, this was no guarantee that they themselves have not modified the facts in the course of repeated retellings by themselves and under the influence of the way in which other Christians recounted them."[91] For Marshall, the 2-or 4-Document Hypotheses, form and redaction criticism, and criteria of authenticity must all be applied in adjudicating the historical claims of the Gospels. Marshall notes especially that criteria of authenticity (dissimilarity, multiple attestation, coherence, unintentionality, traditional continuity) are helpful "for separating off inauthentic elements from authentic elements" in the Gospels.[92] Marshall's conclusion is positive toward such historicalcritical ideologies: "historical study can be the servant of faith."[93] In another work, *New Testament Interpretation*, Marshall defined such "historical criticism" as "the study of any narrative which purports to convey historical information in order to determine what actually happened and is described or alluded to in the passage in question" as well as "*to test the historical accuracy* of what purports to be historical narrative."[94]

Darrell Bock's intent in his article is partly to defend the Markan account of Jewish charges against and examination of Jesus as "essential historicity."[95] He considers Mark 14:61-64 (//Matthew 26:63-66 // Luke 22:66-71) under the Two-

Document Hypothesis, “likely to be the earliest form of this tradition”[96] and applies criterion of historical plausibility, dissimilarity, ambiguity, and Jewishness to the pericope of their examination of Jesus. He concludes his discussion by noting that “the scene has great historical plausibility” and that it is “far more likely that it goes back to the examination and not to Mark.”[97] Furthermore, “the scene as a summary of trial events has a strong claim to authenticity, a stronger claim than the alternative, that the scene was created by Mark or by the early church,” and “I have argued that the case for the authenticity of this historic clash is strong.”[98] Bock’s usage of such terms as “essential historicity” and “historical plausibility” in terms of this Gospel account is troubling for evangelicalism. One wonders, is Bock’s decision for this commendable conclusion regarding historicity firmly centered in his assumptions of the validity of criteria of authenticity that he has applied and the alleged earliest nature of Mark that he assumes to be true? What if these criteria and his synoptic assumptions in succeeding generations are dismissed and demonstrated to be invalid or tenuous. What if others apply these same criteria and reach the opposite conclusion? Church history is littered with such examples of scholarly trends that dominate in one period but are rejected in another. What has Bock proved ultimately? The only thing that has happened is that Bock has centered questions of historicity upon the shifting sands of scholarly opinion and fads. Surely one would hope that Bock would still believe the historicity of the Gospels even without the application of these assumptions and criteria. Do these assumptions add any real demonstration to the historicity of this event in the Gospels or are the Gospels self-validating as God’s inspired Word? Are people convinced of God’s Word through argument or through God’s Spirit (Rom 1:18-20; 1 Cor 1:22-24). The latter assertion is admittedly not attached to any scholarly trends or ideologies that are currently practiced by some evangelicals. One is reminded of Jesus’ words in Luke 16:31, “But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’“ In other words, if belief in God’s Word is not already (*a priori*) present, even the most convincing arguments will *never* succeed in fostering belief or assurance of historicity, including assumptions of criteria as well as the early nature of Mark. Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 are vital:

> And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of

> wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

And again, in 1 Corinthians 2:6-8:

> Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory; *the wisdom* which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Conviction or assurance of God's Word always rests in God's Spirit (John 14:26; 16:8-11, 13). Accentuation of doubt is produced by historical criticism. Does IBR's approach to affirm the "essentials" of the Gospel rest in God's power or the wisdom of human ideology? The responsibility of believers is to proclaim that Word that is inherently a sharp two-edged sword (Heb 4:12), for it alone has the power to persuade regarding its historicity, *not* criteria of authenticity or shifting beliefs in synoptic approaches. Would these historical critics claim that such ideologies have any power to convince through approaches that were historically designed not to affirm, but to destroy the Word? Would they affirm that they have greater powers of persuasion through these endeavors than God's Spirit?

In another recent book, *The Historical Jesus: Five Views* (2009), James Dunn rightly criticizes Bock's approach of erroneously trying to equate the term "historical Jesus" with the biblical Jesus of the Gospels: "The question of what we mean by *historical* is also raised by. . . [his] somewhat casual use of the term 'the historical Jesus.'"[99] Dunn goes on to criticize this evangelical rightly in his incorrect use of this term in that "properly speaking, 'the historical Jesus' denotes Jesus as discerned by historical study. Those engaged in the quest of the historical Jesus, those at least who have sought to clarify what the phrase 'the historical Jesus' denotes, have usually made the point that the term properly denotes the life and mission of Jesus as they have been 'reconstructed' by means of historical research—'historical' in that sense." He then criticizes Bock for his improper defining of the term "as a reference to the historical actuality of the firstcentury Jesus of Nazareth."[100] For Dunn, this evangelical's concept of Jesus came too close to the biblical presentation of Jesus for it to be a permissible view of the "historical Jesus" in the Third Quest, especially in any certainty of the

resurrection.[101] In other words, the view in the Third Quest that will NOT be accepted is one that comes closest or wholly approximates that of the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospels. While Bock commendably sought to convince Third Questers that the Jesus of the Bible can be proven through the ideologies of Third Questing, such an attempt is flatly rejected as coming too close to the biblical portrait of Jesus. While Dunn, Sanders, Charlesworth, and Wright will allow a *modicum* of historicity in the Gospels as noted above, they do not appear to tolerate these evangelicals superimposing their evangelical presuppositions upon the text, even for "core" or "essential" historicity. For Dunn, at best, only "probabilities" are possible "rather than certainties."[102] Ironically, under the Third Search, the closer evangelicals attempt to equate the "historical Jesus" with the biblical Jesus, the more the Third Questers outright reject their suppositions and cry fowl for imposing evangelical views on the concept.

Grant Osborne's article on the resurrection concludes, "The empty tomb and appearance narratives show a core of history"[103] and "This essay has contended that a genuine resurrection event supplies the best explanation for why we have the creed of a resurrection early on. . . . This case has been made using the criteria of historical Jesus study and setting these events in their conceptual and historical background. With this perspective, the most natural conclusion would be that there is a personal God who acted that remarkable day and raised Jesus from the dead."[104] Osborne affirms N. T. Wright's observation as "*a propos*: Not only does a true bodily resurrection provide a 'sufficient condition' for the empty tomb and appearances; it provides 'a necessary condition for these things. . . no other explanation could or would do. All the efforts to find alternative explanations fail, and they were bound to do so.'"[105] While Osborne's assertion is welcome, his somewhat tepid endorsement of the resurrection through the language of historical criticism stands in stark contrast to the bold assertions in the language of the New Testament:

> After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace *be* with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed." Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been

written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 21:26-31)

Also Acts 1:3: “To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs (Greek—πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις—), appearing to them over *a period of* forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.” As well as in 2 Peter 1:16-17:

> For we did not follow cleverly devised tales [Greek—μύθοις—”myths”] when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased.”

Finally, Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 reveal the startling facts of His resurrection:

> Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that ***He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now***, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.

Concluding Observations

Serious Historical Study?

In reply to Bock’s labeling of his historicalcritical and postmodernistic approaches as employed in *Key Events* as “serious” historical study, [106] in “searching for the ‘historical Jesus,’” [107] several comments are necessary.

First, it is highly dubious that postmodernistic historiography, as well as

historical criticism, can truly be considered “serious” historical study. These evangelicals fail to understand, or choose to ignore, that these ideologies bristle with hostile *a priori* criteria that always place the burden of proof heavily on the NT, resulting in acute accentuation of uncertainty and doubt about the documents that can never be overcome. Both historical criticism and postmodernism do not operate from any perceived “scientific” or “objective” basis. They are ***DESIGNED*** to make the Scriptures wholly pliable to modern sensibilities and remove any perceived objectionable elements that the documents may have to critical scholarship (e.g. the supernatural, uniqueness of Jesus). When critical scholarship applies postmodernism to the NT, they are seeking to remake any objectionable elements in the NT into images that are acceptable to them as is clearly demonstrated in searching for the ‘historical’ Jesus. That is the overarching purpose of historical critical ideologies, *i.e.* it is the “magic” that makes the NT text pliable, dissolvable to meet the subjective biases of the critic. If the critic does not like something, then historical criticism is generously applied to guarantee the desired outcome. These ideologies deliberately render all opinions tenuous so that no one view is able to prevail. The NT documents can never overcome the skepticism of postmodernism or historical criticism, and indeed, these ideologies intend to keep it so. Pliability and skepticism regarding the NT documents are BY DESIGN.

Evangelical scholarship’s excuse, of course, is that they are playing to a qualitatively different audience with such studies, *i.e.* to a critical audience. Such dubious activities telegraph the wrong impressions, not merely to the scholarly that these evangelicals choose to embrace but to evangelicalism as a whole, that the trustworthiness of the Gospels is clearly to be suspected. While these evangelicals try to convince one audience that they embrace the reliability of the NT, they present another audience with the conflicting message that they believe marked doubt exists in the Gospels. That is, they telegraph a contradictory message, *i.e.* one to the predominantly critical world of scholarship that they too are truly skeptical of the text, yet to the more simple, perhaps faithful, believing [lay?] audience, they give personal assurances/statements of belief in spite of the ideological doubts that their adoption of these approaches raise, leaving one to naturally wonder where they really do stand on these issues. Apparently, *they conveniently* have “one foot” on one side, while “another foot” on the other.

Second, if someone truly is to undertake “serious” historical study, one must clearly identify presuppositional and ideological factors involved in evaluating NT historical issues. This axiom applies to all evangelical approaches with no

exceptions, for all have presuppositions. BUT not all presuppositions are equal or benign in their evaluative impact. Evangelicals are adopting current trends in postmodernistic historiography with weight given to the negative ideology behind them or their impact on the perimeters of conclusions reached. The old adage of "a text without a context is a pretext," applies here. *Why do these evangelicals remain oddly SILENT as to these presuppositions? Here ignorance or failure to acknowledge history and presuppositions is very much ENABLING these evangelicals to engage in popular trends while ignoring the proverbial "elephant" in the room—its negative underpinnings*. It also enables them to convince their readers of their conclusions, readers who probably do not fully realize the existence of these negative bases. Clearly, the defense of the NT documents as reliable history comes through decisively, openly delineating these negative operational bases—NOT assuming them. Apparently, these evangelicals seek to find as many places as possible to agree with their more critical, and skeptical, counterparts. Perhaps under the idea that evangelicals can defeat them by using the same or similar approach, they have assumed the "search." A close, careful examination of historicalcritical ideology both historically and philosophically, however, reveals that the approach(es) is/are cunningly stacked against these evangelicals, nor will their critical, skeptical counterparts easily allow these evangelicals to change the rules of the "game" and not cry foul. To assume otherwise, is to invite pride before a fall ("When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom"—Pro 11:2).

Third, many of the operating assumptions of searching and criteria of authenticity are based on other dubious foundational assumptions, such as source criticism (2or 4-Source Hypotheses) or form/tradition criticism (the latter contradicted by eyewitnesses who stabilized tradition). If the foundations are tenuous, any conclusions involved in searching are rendered entirely suspect.[108]

Fourth, the "myth of influence" needs crucial attention by these evangelicals. Scripture makes it clear that any convincing of an unbelieving person by human logic is dubious (1 Cor 1:18-2:14). The whole message involved in Jesus is REJECTED by the unbelieving as a default response (1:18-21). The default response of Jews to a crucified Messiah is to see it as "offensive" (1:22-23). God has deliberately designed a "foolish message" (1:21) to save AGAINST human logic. Thus, the human logic involved in posting "criteria of embarrassment" is dubious since it only accentuates Jewish offense to Jesus, resulting in further offense. The default response of unsaved Gentiles is to view information about Christ as "foolishness" so no human logic applied will convince them. Instead,

God has chosen “foolish people,” “base things,” “despised” with a “foolish message” to nullify human wisdom (1:24-28) so that no person can boast of human wisdom leading to faith (1:29-30). For as Paul says, “your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God” (1 Cor 2:5). The power to convince, biblically, resides in the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, not the wisdom of men (1 Cor 2:14). True power to convince is through the proclamation of God’s Word and the power of the Holy Spirit, otherwise man could boast before God (1:29). At the very least, such NT passages place severe limits on human logic for persuasion. *Would anyone suggest that their powers of persuasion are on par with or greater than the Holy Spirit?* Perhaps this is too simple an approach for sophisticated evangelicals today (cf. Rom 10:17). The New Testament documents find much safer harbor among “lay evangelicals” who are identified as not having the same level of education or skill as these scholars.[109]

Fifth, closely associated with the previous points is the question: who among NT skeptics would be convinced by evangelical adoption of these ideologies or resulting conclusions? Do these evangelicals believe in the NT assertions of resurrection because criteria of authenticity affirmed it, or did they already (*a priori*) believe in the resurrection and impose their beliefs upon their research in such works as *Key Events*? The latter is more likely. It is also more likely that skeptics also would realize such impositions and reject any such evangelical assertions outright. The dismissive retort of the Society of Biblical Literature’s Robert Miller suffices, “arguments about the historical Jesus can be productive only among those who already agree on a number of contested questions about historiographical method and the nature of the Gospels. Therefore, debates about the historical Jesus that occur between the ‘evangelical camp’ (which sees the canonical Gospels as fully reliable historically) and the ‘traditional camp’ (which sees the Gospel as blends of fact and fiction) are futile.”[110] He further notes, “Scholarship from the one camp is unavoidably unpersuasive to the other camp.”[111] To the present writer, the result of this interaction is clear: the Gospels lose in being defamed and undermined in the process by both of these camps because both engage in the same skeptical approach although differing in degree of skepticism.

Perhaps a trusted acceptance of the Gospels is too simple an approach for sophisticated evangelicals today since their critical counterparts would not accept such simplicity in the club of scholarship (cf. Rom 10:17). The *real* criterion of embarrassment is how quickly these evangelicals are willing to

subject the Gospels to such alien philosophies. The New Testament documents find much safer harbor among “lay evangelicals” who are identified as not having the same level of education as these scholars.[112]

The answer to the question imposed as to whether faith precludes “serious historical engagement” finds its answer: clear doubt exists as to whether these evangelicals have truly engaged in serious historical debate. The present writer still searches for genuine examples of true gospel skeptics who are now believers due to the work of these evangelicals in “searching for the ‘historical’ Jesus.” The real embarrassment is that these evangelicals so quickly subject the Gospels to such ideologies that attenuate their testimony *a priori* for the opportunity to be identified with scholarship that clearly does not share the same or similar values.

Sixth, one receives the impression from many of these evangelicals who participate in some form of questing for “the historical Jesus” are sincere and sincerely have convinced themselves that they are benefiting gospel studies through such activities. The reality of the evidence reviewed here is that they have subjected the Gospels to marked doubt as well as the shifting sand of scholarly whim and opinion. The Gospels have clearly lost. An old proverb relates that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. In this case, however, a mega-size corridor has been opened on this highway to the Gospels’ destruction. The impact on the next generation of preachers is ominous, for will “probability” put proverbial “fire in the belly” of their preaching of the Gospels? Not likely.

Seventh, while attacking the Jesus Seminar for their radical opinions, the solution of these evangelicals is hardly better. The Jesus Seminar uses the same or similar approaches to criteria of authenticity as do these evangelicals, but reaches startling opposing or contradictory conclusions regarding historicity. If such polar opposite conclusions can be reached using basically the same method, then the application of this ideology is highly suspect. No distinct line of demarcation prevents evangelicals from slipping further into skepticism, since they operate on a similar presuppositional and ideological grid.

Eighth, evangelical questing gives strong evidence that the views of Rogers and McKim regarding inerrancy may be now predominate among those who participate. The question must be posed as to whether a recent revival of Rogers’ and McKim’s viewpoint exists among conservative evangelicals. Rogers and McKim attacked fundamentalist belief in inspiration and inerrancy as a product of seventeenth-century Protestant scholasticism that allegedly was wrongly

associated with classic orthodoxy by nineteenth-century Princeton theologians.[113] The concept here is that while the Bible may be accurate in terms of faith and practice, it may not necessarily be in terms of science, history, geography, origins. The watch-cry that fundamental, conservative evangelicals impose a twentieth-century concept of inerrancy upon an ancient world that did not have such high standards may be heard in their approach.

History, however, is being overlooked or forgotten. As a result of Rogers' and McKim's misleading historical association of inerrancy with scholasticism, the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy" was formulated by the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy.[114] The purpose of the organization along with its statements on inerrancy was expressed as follows: "to counter the drift from this important doctrinal foundation [of inerrancy] by significant segments of evangelicalism and the outright denial of it by other church movements."[115] Furthermore, Article XVI states: "We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history. We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism."[116]

In 1978, evangelicals met in Chicago to discuss biblical inerrancy in response to the trends of the day that were largely inspired by the works of evangelicals like Rogers and McKim at Fuller Seminary who attempted to rework views of inerrancy. In response, Article XVIII of the ICBI Chicago Statement reads:

> We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammaticohistorical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.
>
> We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship. [117]

The Chicago Statement continues,

> Since the Renaissance, and more particularly since the Enlightenment, world views have been developed that involve skepticism about basic Christian tenets. Such are the agnosticism that denies that God is knowable, the rationalism that denies that He is incomprehensible, the idealism that denies that He is transcendent, and the existentialism that denies rationality

> in His relationships with us. When these un-and anti-Biblical principles seep into men's theologies at presuppositional level, as today they frequently do, faithful interpretation of Holy Scripture becomes impossible.[118]

The review of the current evangelical discussion on the Third Quest and searching clearly places much of the questing into a dubious category that contradicts the Chicago agreement. However, the Evangelical Theological Society never adopted it as a basis for defining inerrancy. The concept of the "historical Jesus" in all three quests is motivated by hostile philosophical concepts that stand opposed to the full integrity of the Gospels. In other words, no "historical" Jesus ever existed except in the minds of those who pursued all three quests, for the conception of "the historical Jesus" is that of a Jesus divorced from the biblical portrayal in important ways, especially in terms of Jesus' distinctiveness as well as the supernatural content relayed about him in the Gospels. Hence, the term "historical Jesus" is very, very ironic in that it really is a fiction of historical criticism without any connection to how Jesus really was. For those who would take the Bible as *a priori* an inspired work, as hopefully all evangelicals would, the Jesus in the Gospels is how He actually was. No separation exists between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith." The desire for pursuit of acceptable currents in scholarship must not attenuate this principle.

Evangelical participation in the Third Search is a direct consequence of the growing evangelical acceptance of historicalcritical ideologies of source, form/tradition, and redaction criticism, as well as other scholarly fads. These are philosophically-motivated hermeneutical constructs that, regardless of whatever search, philosophically construct a separation of Jesus in the Bible from some concept of Jesus in history. The more one adopts these premises as well as their philosophical underpinnings, the more one is forced to search for the "historical" Jesus. These evangelicals are merely reactive and adaptive to current trends. If, however, the integrity of the Gospels is maintained, as the early church so strongly and unanimously espoused from its nascent beginnings, then these documents are eyewitness accounts of the actual life and activities of Jesus written by the men whose names the Gospels were connected with in church history. The anonymity of the canonical Gospels is a potently powerful witness to the apostolic origin of these documents, for only the certainty of their having come from apostolic origins can reasonably explain their unanimous acceptance. If evangelicals are operating from this supposition instead of adopting

historicalcritical approaches, any need to search for the “historical” Jesus is null and void—completely unnecessary.

The data as reviewed in these chapters demonstrates that fundamentalist, evangelical history is *once again* repeating itself in a debate between fundamental beliefs and a cancerous encroachment of modernism. The conditions of the early twentieth century that resulted in separation of believers to preserve the fundamentals of the faith are now again repeating in the twenty-first century. Lessons of history have not been learned, have been forgotten, or worse, are being outright ignored. Since ETS is now largely influenced by evangelicals who affirm and practice historicalcritical ideologies, perhaps the Society should merge with the Society of Biblical Literature, for the distinctions between these organizations grow less and less as time progresses. What separates them now appears to be twelve events instead of Sanders’ eight. The thin line that distinguishes many prominent evangelicals is now just four key events, Sanders’ list of eight versus these evangelicals’ twelve as listed in *Key Events*, as well as the “probability” or “possibility” that the “core historicity,” or “essential historicity” of these “footprints” or “historical traces” actually happened. They have not succeeded in their attempt but instead placed a significant shadow of doubt over the record of Jesus’ life as contained in the Gospels.

Ninth, all the efforts of these evangelicals are now dubious. Recent British-influenced scholars are now calling for the rejection of these criteria so diligently used by Bock, Webb, *et al*. Keith, echoing Hooker, says about these criteria that “they cannot deliver” what they are designed to do.[119] Keith argues instead that scholars need “to set these particular tools down and find other means of searching” such as “memory” theories.[120] The bottom line is that all of these efforts are futile and founded on the constantly shifting sands of scholarly whim. The loser will always be God’s Word. (See Chart below comparing The Jesus Seminar with Evangelicals).

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

THE JESUS SEMINAR (Westar Institute)

vs.

BRITISH-INFLUENCED EVANGELICAL CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIP

IDEOLOGICAL & METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

USED TO DETERME VERACITY OF GOSPELS

Jesus Seminar	**British-trained evangelical**
Westar Institute	**critical scholars**
2/4 Source Hypothesis	**2/4 Source Hypothesis**
form criticism	**form criticism**
redaction criticism	**redaction criticism**
criteria of authenticity tradition criticism	**criteria of authenticity tradition criticism**
postmodernistic historiography	**postmodernistic historiography**
ATOMISTIC approach (part):	**HOLISTIC approach (whole):**
Centers on Jesus' sayings, *i.e.* what <u>did Jesus really say?</u>	**Centers on Jesus' deeds & events, *i.e.* <u>what did Jesus really do?</u> Investigates predetermined key events in Jesus' life to see if the event is postmodernistically verifiable**
***IMPORTANT—Also HOLISTIC:**	
focuses on what Jesus did	**in terms of history.**
Robert Funk: *Acts of Jesus* (1998)	**IMPORTANT: Considers many events not verifiable historically using postmodernistic**

	historiography.
BURDEN OF PROOF:	**BURDEN OF PROOF:**
Shifted to The Jesus Seminar scholars to demonstrate reliability:	**Shifted to the evangelical-critical scholars' historical skills in applying criteria of authenticity:**
"The Seminar has accordingly assumed the burden of proof: the Seminar is investigating in minute detail the data preserved by the gospels and is also identifying those that have some claim to historical veracity" (*The Five Gospels*, p. 5)	**"burden of proof should lie with historian who is making the case, whether for authenticity or against it" (*Key Events*, p. 74)**
&	
"What do we know about the deeds of Jesus? About the shadowy figure depicted in snapshots in more than twenty gospels and gospel fragments that have survived from antiquity? The short answer is that we don't know a great deal. But there are some stories that probably preserve distant historical memories, and we can infer some deeds from his parables and aphorisms." (*What Did Jesus Really Do*?, 527)	
The "whisper of his voice"	**The "footprints" of Jesus contained in the Gospels**
contained in the Gospels	
Posits Christ of faith vs.	**Posits Christ of faith vs.**
historical Jesus	**historical Jesus**
Color-coding of Jesus-sayings	**Probability scaling of Jesus' events "probability," "possibility" or**
in terms of red, black, gray, white that indicates probability of whether the real Jesus actually	

spoke the saying or performed a deed.	**historically non-verifiable scale for pericopes as to whether Jesus; deeds or events surrounding Jesus happened or did not happen.**
RESULT:	**RESULT:**
15 SAYINGS & A FEW DISTANT HISTORICAL MEMORIES (events) DEEMED "PROBABLY" AUTHENTIC out hundreds of sayings in the Gospels	**12 EVENTS DEEMED HISTORICALLY "PROBABLE" out of hundreds of acts/deeds in the**
RESULT: COMPLETELY REJECTS	**Gospels**
any assertions of "probability" from evangelical critical scholarship!	**RESULT: REJECTS many assertions from The Westar Institute!**
score = 0	**score = 0**
***i.e.* neither convinces the other**	***i.e.* neither convinces the other**

[1] A modified version of this article appeared in *The Master's Seminary Jou*rnal 24/1 (Spring 2013), 25-67.

[2] For an excellent review of evangelicals problems at the end of the A.D. Twentieth Century, especially in England, see Ian Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000).

[3] See, for example, John H. Armstrong, Gen. Ed., *The Coming Evangelical Crisis* (Chicago: Moody, 1996).

[4] Robert W. Funk, Roy W. Hoover, and The Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels, The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 5. A debate has raged among evangelicals as to where the Jesus Seminar relates to the

third quest. Some place it as part of the third quest, while others, like N. T. Wright assign it to the period of the New or Second Quest. See Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Philadelphia: Minneapolis, 1992), 98-120.

[5] Michael Bird, "Shouldn't Evangelicals Participate in the 'Third Quest for the Historical Jesus?,'" *Themelios* 29/2 (1994): 8.

[6] Craig Evans, "Life of Jesus-Research and the Eclipse of Mythology," *Theological Studies* 54/1 (March 1993): 19, 36.

[7] Craig Evans, ed. *The Historical Jesus: Critical Concepts in Religious Studies, 4 volumes* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004); idem. *Encylopedia of the Historical Jesus* (New York and London: Routledge, 2008).

[8] Scot McKnight, "The Jesus We'll Never Know, Why scholarly attempts to discover the 'real' Jesus have failed. And why that is a good thing." *Christianity Today*, April 13, 2010, 26, 23.

[9] N. T. Wright, "No, We Need History," in "Should We Abandon Studying the Historical Jesus? Two Responses." *Christianity Today*, 28.

[10] Craig Keener, "No, We Need to Stay in the Conversation," in Should We Abandon Studying the Historical Jesus, *Christianity Today*, 27.

[11] Darrell Bock, "Abandon Studying the Historical Jesus? No, We Need Context, A Response to 'The Jesus We'll Never Know,'" posted in *Christianity Today* on April 9, 2010. Located at www.Christianity Today.com/ct/2010aprilweb-only/24-51.0.html. Accessed on 5/27/2013.

[12] Darrell L. Bock, *Studying the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005) 148, 152.

[13] Darrell L. Bock, "The Historical Jesus, An Evangelical View," in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. Eds. James K. Beilby and Paul Rhodes Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), 250-251.

[14] Ibid., 249.

[15] Darrell L. Bock, "IBR Jesus Group Report, IBR News" (December 8, 2008). http://www.ibr-bbr.org/ibr-jesus-group-report-2008 Accessed on 5/27/2013.

[16] Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, “Introduction of the IBR Jesus Group” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10.2 (2000), 259.

[17] Robert L. Webb, “Jesus’ Baptism: Its Historicity and Implications,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 10.2 (2000), 261-309 (361).

[18] Robert L. Webb, “Jesus’ Baptism by John: Its Historicity and Significance,” in *Key Events*, 112.

[19] See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (InterVarsity and Eerdmans: Leicester and Grand Rapids, 1991), 151.

[20] Ladd, “The Search for Perspective,” 50.

[21] James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 1959), 26, 30.

[22] In a very similar way, Ernest Rénan posited a “fifth gospel” by adding to the canonical Gospels his own subjective experience of visiting the Holy Land. See Ernest Rénan, *The Life of Jesus* (London: A. L. Burt, 1863), 61.

[23] McNight, “The Jesus We’ll Never Know,” 26-27, 31.

[24] Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb, Eds. “Preface,” in Key *Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus, A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009). This book is now in simplified form to influence a larger audience, see Darrell L. Bock, *Who is Jesus? Linking the historical Jesus to the Christ of Faith* (New York:Howard Books, 2012).

[25] Bock and Webb, “Preface,” in *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus*, v.

[26] Ibid., 4.

[27] Ibid., 5.

[28] Ibid., 5.

[29] Ibid., 5-6.

[30] Ibid., 6.

[31] Ibid., 7.

[32] Ibid., 9-93.

[33] Ibid., “The Historical Enterprise and Historical Jesus Research,” 11.

[34] Ibid.,10.

[35] Ibid., 11, 13.

[36] Geoffrey R. Elton, *The Practice of History*. 2nd Edition. Reprint. Afterward by Richard J. Evans (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 8. See 13 Webb’s article footnote 8 and footnote 11.

[37] Webb, “The Historical Enterprise and Historical Jesus Research,” 13-14

[38] Ibid.,14.

[39] Ibid., 14.

[40] Ibid.,14.

[41] Ibid.,14.

[42] Ibid.,15.

[43] Ibid.,16 note 13.

[44] Bock, “Abandon Studying the Historical Jesus? No, We Need Context, A Response to ‘The Jesus We’ll Never Know,” posted in *CT* on April 9, 2010. Located at www.ChristianityToday.com/ct/2010aprilweb-only/24-51.0.html. Accessed on 5/28/2013.

[45] Webb, “The Historical Enterprise and Historical Jesus Research,” 23.

[46] Ibid., 23-24.

[47] Ibid., 24, 26-29 cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Second Revised Edition, Trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (London and

New York: Crossroad, 2004 [1975, 1989]), 172-267.

[48] Webb, “The Historical Enterprise and Historical Jesus Research,” *Key Events*, 32-36.

[49] Ibid., 39.

[50] Ibid., 55.

[51] Ibid., 55-56.

[52] Ibid., 56, 57.

[53] Ibid., 60, 69.

[54] Ibid., 60.

[55] Ibid., 59.

[56] Ibid., 61-62.

[57] Ibid., 65-66.

[58] Ibid., 66.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.,73.

[61] Ibid., 83-84.

[62] Ibid., 83-84.

[63] Craig Evans, “Exorcisms and the Kingdom: Inaugurating the Kingdom of God and Defeating the Kingdom of Satan,” in *Key Events*, 170.

[64] Evans, “Exorcisms and the Kingdom,” in *Key Events*, 170 and 170 n. 43.

[65] Ibid., 174.

[66] Craig Blomberg, “The Authenticity and Significance of Jesus’ Table

Fellowship with Sinners," in *Key Events*, 227.

[67] Ibid., 227.

[68] Ibid., 238.

[69] Donald Hagner, "Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies," in *Key Events*, 254.

[70] Ibid., 262.

[71] Ibid., 269.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid., 254.

[74] Ibid., 259-260.

[75] This reference may be anything but mistaken. Simple solutions to its resolution are readily available. For instance, the phrase "in the days" can also mean "during the lifetime." According to 1 Samuel 21:1, Ahimelech was the priest who gave the bread to David, while Abiathar was his son who later was the High-Priest during the David's reign. Since Ahimelech died shortly after this incident (cf. 1 Sam 22:19-20), it is likely that this mention of Abiathar was used since he was the well-known companion of David who later became High Priest in David's reign, along with Zadok (2 Sam 15:35).

[76] Donald Hagner, "Jesus and the Synoptic Sabbath Controversies," in *Key Events*, 288.

[77] Michael J. Wilkins, "Peter's Declaration Concerning Jesus' Identity in Caesarea Philippi," in *Key Events*, 349, 367.

[78] Ibid., 371.

[79] Klyne R. Snodgrass, "The Temple Incident," in *Key Events*, 445.

[80] Ibid., 447.

[81] I. Howard Marshall, "The Last Supper," in *Key Events*, 577.

[82] I. Howard Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).

[83] Michael Green, "Editor's Preface," in *I Believe in the Historical Jesus*, n.p.

[84] Marshall, *I Believe in the Historical Jesus*, 11-16, note esp. p. 16.

[85] Ibid., 16.

[86] Ibid., 28.

[87] Ibid., 36.

[88] Ibid., 37.

[89] Ibid., 136 cf. Donald Guthrie, *Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972).

[90] Ibid., 143, 144.

[91] Ibid., 144.

[92] Ibid., 200-211.

[93] Ibid., 211.

[94] I. Howard Marshall, "Historical Criticism," in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 126.

[95] Darrell L. Bock, "Blasphemy and the Jewish Examination of Jesus," in *Key Events*, 589.

[96] Bock, "Blasphemy and the Jewish Examination of Jesus," in *Key Events*, 592.

[97] Ibid.,656.

[98] Ibid., 660-661.

[99] James D. G. Dunn, "Response to Darrell Bock," in *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*, 298.

[100] Ibid., 298-299.

[101] Ibid., 298-299.

[102] Ibid., 299.

[103] Grant R. Osborne, “Jesus’ Empty Tomb and His Appearance in Jerusalem,” in *Key Events*, 818.

[104] Ibid., 818-819.

[105] Ibid., 819.

[106] Contra Darrell Bock, “Faith and the Historical Jesus: Does A Confessional Position and Respect for the Jesus Tradition Preclude Serious Historical Engagement?” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9 (2011): 3-25.

[107] Contra Darrell Bock, “Faith and the Historical Jesus: Does A Confessional Position and Respect for the Jesus Tradition Preclude Serious Historical Engagement?” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9 (2011): 3-25.

[108] Much has already been written about this point. See F. David Farnell, “Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism,” and “Form and Tradition Criticism,” in *The Jesus Crisis*, 85-131 and 185-232.

[109] See Bock, “Faith and the Historical Jesus,” 3-4.

[110] Robert J. Miller, “When It’s Futile to Argue about the Historical Jesus: A Response to Bock, Keener, and Webb,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 9 (2011), 85.

[111] Ibid., 89.

[112] See Bock, “Faith and the Historical Jesus,” 3-4.

[113] Rogers and McKim use this logic of “Scottish ‘Common Sense’ Philosophy or Realism” to attack orthodox concepts of inerrancy. See Jack Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 235-248. Interestingly, Daniel B. Wallace seems to have revived a similar argument to Rogers and

McKim that evangelicals maintain too exacting a concept of inerrancy, arguing that "Our modern descriptions of bibliology grow out of this [Scottish common sense and 19th century Princeton] era." See Daniel B. Wallace, "An Apologia for a Broad View of Ipsissima Vox," Unpublished ETS Paper, 51st Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Danvers, MA, November 18, 1999, p. 2-3 fn. 2 and p. 18-19 fn. 76.

[114] Rogers and McKim's work raised a number of responses, one of which was the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy with its "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy." See Marsden, *Reforming Fundamentalism*, 285.

[115] See the purpose statement printed on the back cover of the "Catalogue" of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (Oakland, CA: np, 1983).

[116] See "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," *JETS* 21 (December 1978): 289-296 (note especially page 292).

[117] "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," *JETS* 21/4 (December 1978): 292.

[118] "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy," *JETS* 21/4 (December 1978): 295-296.

[119] Morna D. Hooker, "On Using the Wrong Tool," *Theology* 75 (1972): 570.

[120] Chris Keith, "The Indebtedness of the Criteria Approach to Form Criticism and Recent Attempts to Rehabilitate the search for an Authentic Jesus," *Jesus, Criteria and the Demise of the Authenticity* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2012): 48.

CHAPTER 12

HISTORICAL CRITICISM VS. GRAMMATICOHISTORICAL: *QUO VADIS* EVANGELICALS?

F. David Farnell



The Jesus Crisis Has Now Become the Lost Jesus

In 1998, *The Jesus Crisis*[1] sounded a warning to neoevangelicals about their drift toward historicalcritical ideologies. While many evangelicals ignored the warning, others directed significant hostility toward it. Bock claimed that the book "displays a lack of discernment about Gospels study. . .The book should have given a more careful discussion of difficult details in the Gospels and the views tied to them, especially when inerrantists critiqued by the book are portrayed as if they were denying the accuracy of the Gospels, when in fact they are defending it."[2] In the day it was written, evangelicals were in "crisis" and now—fifteen years later—they are "searching" to find Jesus. The Gospels are now "probability" based. Inerrancy is being redefined or submerged into a historicalcritical philosophical morass. Subsequent history since its writing has proved *The Jesus Crisis* accurate even if some evangelicals will not admit it. The drift has continued unabated at the cost of the historical integrity of the Gospels, the only documents that testify to the true life of Jesus. Bock's recent summary book on searching, *Who is Jesus?*, fully accepts the German philosophical concept of *historie* (what actually happened) and *geschicthe* (history as imagined through the eyes of faith). The crisis we warned of at the end of the twentieth century has become a full-fledged reality in the twenty-first.

TWO ROADS FACING EVANGELICALISM: GRAMMATICOHISTORICAL OR HISTORICALCRITICAL INTERPRETATION?

A large portion of evangelicals now march toward the acceptance of some form of historicalcritical ideology rather than the time-tested grammaticohistorical approach that has dominated sound scholarship throughout church history and upheld the integrity of God's Word among Bible-believing people. Many of the more recent evangelical works reviewed in this book, especially *Key Events*, evidence little to celebrate as critically-influenced evangelical scholarship predominates. Instead, it is clear, demonstrable proof that *The Jesus Crisis* was correct in its prediction that a horrific crisis regarding the inerrant reliability of the Gospel documents exists among European and British trained evangelical scholars who differ little from New Testament critical scholarship as a whole. Books like *Key Events*[3] constitute strong evidence that *The Jesus Crisis* sounded the correct warning. Many evangelical scholars no longer accept the Gospels at face value, but now must apply rules of critical scholarship to demonstrate "probability" (i.e. postmodernistic historiography) that the Gospels might have a core of historicity in them. For them, demonstrating this kind of scholarship is even their priority. Why? Because this is what critical scholars do.

The term "historical Jesus" is an historicalcritical fiction as well as aberration that is now being normalized among these evangelicals. It posits a heretical position that the Jesus of the Gospels and the Jesus of history are somehow different—THEY ARE NOT. It is best perhaps termed the "existential Jesus," since a close examination of the questing reveals that the "historical Jesus" is whatever the quester *a priori* determines Jesus to be or wants to make Him as somehow significantly in distinction from the biblical documents. After an arbitrary *a priori* decision has been made on a preconceived concept of Jesus, criteria of authenticity which stem from tradition criticism, are applied to the Gospels so that their preconceived concept of Jesus is affirmed. Since the criteria are subjective and conflicting, other criteria can be invented and applied to ensure the desired outcome. The critical weakness of these criteria, in addition to their inherent subjectivity, lies in the fact that the *same* criteria can be applied or countered with different criteria to ensure whatever view has already been assumed by the quester. If critical evangelical scholars can utilize these criteria to affirm "probability," while their more liberal counterparts use them to negate

“probability” and even discredit the Gospel material, then these principles have no real value. Instead, they are acutely subjective. In reality, these evangelicals have proved nothing. Like some kind of scholarly jujitsu, evangelicals’ critical counterparts can apply equally negating arguments to fend off any evangelical assertions. The looser again, however, is the Gospels and their integrity.

“Questing” or “searching” for the “historical” Jesus is as a *philosophically-motivated historicalcritical* construct which assumes that the Jesus presented in the Gospels is not the same or not to be identified fully with the Jesus who actually lived in history. Underlying the questing is the assumption that “scientific” research has shown that the Jesus of history was different from the Christ of Scripture, the creeds, orthodox theology, and Christian piety. These evangelicals have bought into philosophical systems that are inherently hostile to God’s Word without due consideration of their destructive nature. One cannot overstress that the rise of modern *philosophical* ideologies inherent in historical criticism generates such distinctions between Jesus as he is presented in the canonical Gospels and any conceptualizations of how he is alleged to have actually existed in history. Hostile philosophical underpinnings of the ideology in terms of a virulent *antisupernaturalism* are a major factor in creating these hypothetical distinctions. True to Spinoza’s original design for historical criticism, *the overarching intent in these searches is the destruction of the influence of the Gospels, as well as the church, over society*. Evangelicals now are unwittingly participating in the destruction of the Gospels by normalizing such principles in research.

A simple question should be asked: beyond themselves, who among critical scholarship have these evangelicals convinced of the wisdom of their approach? I would doubt that any true opponents of the Gospels have ever been convinced by these methods. What has resulted is the subjecting of the historicity and reliability of the Gospels to the shifting sands of the “oneupmanship” of those who can beg the question in applying these principles by assuming what they are trying to prove.

The ICBI Statements of on Inerrancy (1978) and Hermeneutics (1982) arose as hard-won documents from previous decades of attacks on the trustworthiness of the Bible. Significantly, these documents affirm “grammaticohistorical” rather than “historical critical” hermeneutics as employed by these critically trained evangelicals. Why? Because the authors and those who signed their affirmation to these documents knew the ruinous impact that historicalcritical ideologies had

upon God's Word in church history. However, these British and European critically trained evangelicals who now advocate the adoption of some form of historicalcriticism have effectively annulled these two hard-won documents because they have forgotten history. Article XVIII reads:

> We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammaticohistorical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture. We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

What is the true essence of this term "historical criticism" which arose from the days of Spinoza? It is the ingredient that is used to make the Bible say whatever the researcher wants it to say. It is the dissolvent that destroys the plain, normal sense of Scripture and, in turn, can make the Bible reflect any prejudice of the interpreter that is imposed on the text. When Bible "scholars" want to make the Bible say something that it does not naturally say, they apply judicious and generous portions of historical criticism to accomplish that magic! When Bible "scholars" are offended by something in Scripture, *i.e.* find it unacceptable to them for a variety of their own prejudices, it allows the scholar to remake anything in Scripture to their own liking–either by negating it entirely or manufacturing an entirely different sense or meaning for a particular portion of Scripture. It allows the Bible to be REMOLDED into something acceptable to the "critical" scholar's whims. The philosophical pedigree of historical criticism guarantees that magic of transforming the Bible into something more acceptable to the modern, critical mind. This has been most prominent in "historical Jesus" research in which historicalcritical criteria are the tools that German-and British-trained critical scholars use (borrowed from Spinoza) to find a Jesus that they have already decided on in order to determine how they think He must really, truly be—a Jesus they find acceptable to them. These authenticity criteria tools are the "solvent" that allows critical scholars to dissolve the canonical Gospels and the information therein in order to find a Jesus that they prefer through the genius of historical criticism. *However, no two critical scholars agree on the same list of criteria or their exact definition and nature—**proof positive that great evangelical confusion exists over terminology and the practice of interpretation.***

In contrast, the goal of the grammaticohistorical method is to find the meaning

which the authors of Scripture intended to convey and the meaning comprehended by the recipients. Special allowance/provision is made for (1) inspiration, (2) the Holy Spirit, and (3) inerrancy. It may be understood as *the study of inspired Scripture designed to discover under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the meaning of a text dictated by the principles of grammar and the facts of history.*

"Grammaticohistorical" criticism, advocated by the both the Reformers as well as the signers of the ICBI statements of 1978 and 1982, allows the Bible to say what it naturally says plainly and normally without an *a priori* agenda as with historicalcritical ideologies. As more recent evangelicals receive their education from schools that advocate some form of historical criticism, an unstable blending of these two approaches is occurring. Much confusion exists in current evangelical circles regarding grammaticohistorical and historicalcritical approaches to exegesis.[4] These two hermeneutical disciplines are distinct and must not be confused by evangelicals. In contrast to the Reformation roots of the grammaticohistorical method, the historicalcritical hermeneutic has its roots in deism, rationalism, and the Enlightement. Edgar Krentz, favorable to the practice, readily admits in his *The HistoricalCritical Method* that "Historical method is the child of the Enlightenment."[5] Maier, opposed to historical criticism, argued, "historical criticism over against a possible divine revelation presents an inconclusive and false counterpart which basically maintains human arbitrariness and its standards in opposition to the demands of revelation."[6]

Because of its distinct philosophical differences and developments, the grammaticohistorical method is open to the supernatural and miraculous, while the historicalcritical is inherently hostile to such ideas. It assumes the Scriptures are true regarding their assertions and posits the idea that God can and does intervene in human history. The historicalcritical method, however, assumes Troeltsch's ideological principles of (a) criticism or methodological doubt—history achieves only probability, nothing can be known with any certainty; (b) analogy (somewhat like the modern idea of uniformitarianism) that present experience becomes the criteria of probability in the past (hence, if no supernatural events occur today, they do not occur in the past either); and (c) correlation or mutual interdependence that postulates a closed-continuum of cause and effect with no outside divine intervention.[7] Therefore, anytime evangelicals dehistoricize the gospels or the Scriptures as a whole, they practice historicalcritical, not grammaticohistorical hermeneutics. Grammaticohistorical

exegesis does not shift the burden of proof upon the Scriptures to demonstrate their truth, reliability, or historicity as does historicalcritical ideology like source criticism. The goal of the grammaticohistorical approach is to understand the Scripture as was intended by the original author, not what is desired by the critical scholar.[8] It seeks single, not multiple, layers of meaning, while emphasizing the perspicuity of Scripture. In contrast, the historicalcritical approach does not attempt to understand the Scripture as was necessarily intended. It pursues a deductive approach that *a priori* assumes an interpretation and forces Scripture into that mold. It often practices an allegorizing hermeneutic that sees multiple layers of meaning. [9] At root, philosophy controls the exegetical approach of historicalcritical approaches like source, form/tradition, and redaction criticism. The grammaticohistorical method of interpretation has been the safeguard in hermeneutics, because it downplays subjectivity and emphasizes the need for Spirit-guided objectivity in exegeting Scripture.

The grammaticohistorical has a required spiritual dimension that is entirely lacking in historical criticism: the interpreter *must* be indwelled by the Holy Spirit to interpret Scripture properly (which involves acceptance and understanding—Romans 8:3; 1 Cor 2:6-16). Certain areas of meaning will be hidden to the natural man because he will lack the necessary spiritual guidance to use the exegetical data properly. As Paul warned, "But a natural [unsaved] man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised (1 Cor 2:14).

In spite of this, critically-trained evangelicals now apparently advocate a blending, or acceptance, of historicalcriticism with grammaticohistorical approaches. They maintain, of course, that some form of modification of any elements in historical criticism that are hostile to the supernatural is possible. For example, I. Howard Marshall argued, "the study of any narrative which purports to convey historical information in order to determine what actually happened and is described or alluded to in the passage in question" and "conservative scholars may often seem unduly reactionary in their refusal to accept hypotheses which depend on the presence of errors and contradictions in the NT."[10] Likewise, Robert Guelich said, "for many to whom the Scriptures are vital the use of these critical tools has historically been more 'destructive' than 'constructive.' But one need not discard the tool because of its abuse."[11] Evangelical Darrell L. Bock thinks that the current generation of evangelicals is

intelligent and wise enough to overcome the bane of historicalcritical approaches, “In the hands of a skilled exegete who uses the tools of interpretation in a way that fits what they are capable of, Form Criticism can be a fruitful aid to understanding and to exposition.”[12] A recent generation of evangelicals produced *New Testament Criticism & Interpretation* that included the following in the Editor’s preface: “For many years American evangelicals assumed that a high view of Scripture was incompatible with the employment of higher-critical methods. While Moses Stuart, the great nineteenth-century scholar, actually served as the pioneer introducing American Christian to the field of biblical criticism, it was the work of Ned B. Stonehouse and George Eldon Ladd that paved the way for recent discussions among American evangelicals. . .One thing, however, is certain: If American evangelicals are to have an impact in the academy and in the church, they must enter into dialogue with contemporary scholarship.”[13] The preface continues, “To deny that the Bible should be studied through the use of literary and critical methodologies is to treat the Bible as less than human, less than historical, and less than literature.”[14]

Immediately apparent is the startling blindness, or intentional overlooking, of the hostile presuppositions and historical antecedents in the development of historical criticism by these contemporary evangelicals who are now training pastors and teachers in evangelicalism.[15] Somehow these evangelicals believe that they are immune to historical criticism’s biases. The roots of historicalcriticism are the same roots as those of biblical errancy—there is no essential, qualitative difference.[16] As Geisler noted, “It is often näively assumed that because contemporary theologians are evangelical in doctrine and practice they somehow are immune from adverse philosophical influences. . .often in the history of Christianity some of the most philosophically unorthodox writers believe themselves to be defending and preserving ‘true’ Christianity.” [17] A very telling remark about how quickly historical criticism negatively overshadowed the gains of grammaticohistorical methods espoused in the Reformation is also noted by Geisler:

> [W]ithin a little over one hundred years after the Reformation the philosophical seeds of modern errancy were sown. When these seeds had produced their fruit in the church a century or so later, it was because theologians had capitulated to alien philosophical presuppositions. Hence, the rise of an errant view of Scripture did not result from a discovery of factual evidence that made belief in an inerrant Scripture untenable. Rather, it resulted from the unnecessary acceptance of philosophical premises that

undermined the historic belief in an infallible and inerrant Bible.[18]

Stephen Davis, far from espousing fundamentalist views, confirms this,

> What leads them to liberalism, apart from cultural and personal issues, is their acceptance of certain philosophical or scientific assumptions that are inimical to evangelical theology—e.g., assumptions about what is "believable to modern people," "consistent with modern science," "acceptable by twentieth-century canons of scholarship," and the like.[19]

Many of the evangelical historicalcritical writings cited in this work as well as *The Jesus Crisis* in 1998 constitute demonstrable proof that these evangelicals who have advocated such a blending of historical criticism with grammaticohistorical criticism now operate very similar to their liberal counterparts and are using the same ideologies. Not only has inerrancy been diminished in importance, but now neoevangelicals display in such works as *Key Events* such terminology as "core historicity," "probability," "possibility," or "essential historicity" of these "footprints," "surviving traces," or "historical traces," all showing the reduction of the value of inerrancy since they openly invite the speculation that some parts may not be accurate. Bock and Webb argued,

> The goal was to see the extent to which a study of key events might provide an overall framework for understanding Jesus. Once these key events had been selected, each essay was to do three things: first, it was to set forth a case for the probable historicity of the event using the criteria of authenticity. The focus was to, first, establish the probable historicity of the event's core rather than concerning itself with all of the details. Second, explore the socio-cultural contextual information that contributes to understanding the event in its firstcentury context. Third, in light of this context, to consider the significance of the event for understanding Jesus. Thus, each study would have both macro and micro concerns, being both analytic and synthetic.[20]

Importantly, these types of concessions by evangelicals to historical criticism show just how negative the impact has been upon the Gospels as well as biblical literature as a whole. Any evangelical attempts at modifying historical criticism have failed to arrest the negative impact upon Scripture research by these evangelicals, for these chapters have catalogued numerous ways in which the

Scriptures, especially the Gospels, have been brought into suspicion as reliable documents. The *key question* remains unanswered in all of the works of these critically-trained evangelicals: will the more radical (i.e. tradition liberal critics of Scripture) accept these evangelical modifications of historical criticism or will they say that these evangelicals have not gone far enough in their adoption of historical criticism? So far, none have warmly embraced these evangelical modifications, for they say, evangelicals have not gone far enough! These critically-trained evangelicals play to a very small audience—themselves.

EVANGELICAL FAITH AND THE "MAGIC" OF HISTORICAL CRITICISM

A recently published work, *Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism*, offers a salient example of the dangers involved in historical criticism for orthodox Christianity and its faithfulness to Scripture. Perhaps a better title should be "Evangelical Faith and the *Magic* of Historical Criticism Demonstrated" since it demonstrates clearly how historical criticism can be used to develop novel views of Scripture. The book not only exemplifies the psychological operation that historical criticism conducts upon evangelical students who desire to further their education for ministry, but also opens these students up to heterodoxy and heresy, as well as highlighting the dangers of the historical criticism that is rapidly overwhelming evangelical colleges and seminaries. The book in essence constitutes a "Trojan Horse" that allows historical criticism to surreptitiously replace centuries of faithful, orthodox understanding of both the Old and New Testaments with aberrations that would not have been espoused by the church from its beginnings. Written by evangelicals who were trained and influenced at either Wheaton Graduate School or in prestigious British schools (such as Oxford, Aberdeen, and St. Andrews), it constitutes a warning among the evangelical camp that such British-influenced schools are rapidly gaining significant influence upon evangelical educational systems and theological positions in America through the hiring of those who are trained in pastoral and higher education from such places.

One editor/author, Christopher Hays, thanks "the British Academy for funding my postdoctoral research, for it was under the aegis of the British Academy that this book came to completion. . .I owe a debt of gratitude to the Warden and Fellows of Keble College, and to the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies

at the University of Oxford."[21] The other editor/author is a doctoral graduate of Wheaton.

The book's purpose is "a call for conservative interpreters of the Bible to be both critical *and* evangelical."[22] The book "aims to stimulate evangelicals to engage seriously with the historical critical method by demonstrating that the very fact of such engagement does not jeopardize one's Christian's confession."[23] If this is the stated purpose, the book proves the opposite and highlights the central thesis of *The Jesus Quest, The Danger from Within*. The book also contends that "it is not our intention to offer our pennyworth to the inerrancy debate" so that it attempts to distance itself from the impact its assertions would make on such a cardinal doctrine. Indeed, the authors want to ignore the doctrine of inerrancy for a special purpose, "we would like to set aside the subject of inerrancy, especially because evangelicals have been leery of joining historical criticism for *another* reason: *fear of heresy* (i.e., fear of beliefs that imperil the legitimacy of one's claim to Christianity)."[24] The editors argue, "[w]hat this book provides is an accessible and succinct account of the theological consequences of historicalcritical scholarship."[25] An examination of its contents reveals that the book only succeeds in what it is not trying to accomplish, *i.e.* raising startling, shocking fears about the abdication of evangelicals from the historical position of inerrancy and orthodoxy as well as its presentation of views that may be considered heretical by the orthodox Christian community. It constitutes a *raison d'*être for an immediate, urgent clarion call among evangelicals to re-examine how far the drift from the cardinal doctrine of inerrancy is has gone and continues to drift as exemplified among young, future scholars in evangelicalism. The book provides many examples for alarm.

In Chapter Two, Hays and Herring use historical criticism to examine the historicity of Genesis 2 and 3. They contend that "[i]n the end. . .wherever the debate about the historicity of Adam may end, essential Christian doctrine will remain on sure footing, even though certain features of that doctrine may need to be refined."[26] They also argue that Paul's account of human sinfulness in Romans 5 "does not include *original* guilt" and that his teaching does not require about Christ's work does not *require* originating sin.[27] They also assert that James 1:13-15, along with Romans 5, "propound a harmartiology of concupiscence, without requiring originating sin or original guilt."[28] To the authors, a historicalcritical denial of the historicity of Adam's fall "would require rejigging of the way that one understands harmartiology and how one reads some specific texts. But

sometimes people fail to realize that historical criticism can help ameliorate certain problems created by older doctrinal constructions."[29] The authors assert, "if we were to agree with a historicalcritical perspective and deny the historicity of the fall, would we be obliged to deny the existence of concupiscence? That seems quite unlikely."[30] They contend that "original guilt is not an idea endorsed in Scripture, not even in Romans 5."[31] While they label their chapter as an "imaginative and speculative endeavor," they argue that "[n]one of this [chapter] is to conclude that Genesis 2-3 must be unhistorical or that original guilt must be false; we have been speculating; imagining, musing. What we do hope to have shown is that a historical criticism reading of Genesis 2-3 does not destroy Christian faith, even if it would challenge some parts of our theological framework."[32] So, the reader is left with the definite impression that whether or not Adam's fall was historical is not really pivotal to the Christian faith, *i.e.* it has no important impact on theology.

In Chapter Three, "The exodus: fact, fiction or both?," Ansberry contends,

> [H]istorical criticism also indicates that the exodus even may not have occurred in history the way in which it is portrayed in the biblical text. This does not mean that we should despair of our theological convictions that God acted in the exodus, nor does it entail that we cannot be Christians and listen to historical criticism. There is much more middle ground between these two extreme positions. We can still hold to our religious understanding of the exodus' meaning and countenance a critical assessment of the historicity of the exodus narrative, as long as we maintain that God achieved some sort of deliverance of his people from Egypt.
>
> Whether this deliverance is described in terms of several smaller movements by distinct groups that were conflated into a single theological narrative or conceptualized through Israel's liberation from Egyptian hegemony within Canaan, something of its historical occurrence is essential to Israel's identity, her theological vision, as well as Christian orthodoxy. Without some sort of "exodus" through divine intervention, the grounds for Israel's election, identity and unique relationship with Yahweh are bogus. Without some sort of "exodus" through divine intervention, Israel's future hope of redemption from exile is baseless. In the same way, without some sort of Israelite "exodus" through divine intervention, the Christian hope of release from spiritual bondage and the "Babylon" of this present age are diminished, thinned, attenuated.[33]

Yet, even if the “exodus” did not happen in the way Scripture indicates, “[t]he Christian tradition is able to withstand the ahistorical nature of the exodus, since the primary ground of our belief is in God’s redemptive action in Christ.”[34] Yet, the writer does not explain how if the Old Testament has misrecorded the historical Exodus, how then does the writer think that the New Testament accurately recorded Christ’s redemptive act? The writer contends that “[i]n suggesting that some sort of historical exodus occurred via divine intervention, we have moved beyond the realm of historical inquiry and entered into the realm of faith.”[35] Moreover, “we must recognize that direct historical evidence for the exodus does not exist and that the precise historical minutiae of the event will most likely not materialize in our lifetimes. . .our faith is one that is rooted in history; it demands historicalcritical inquiry.”[36] So, the reader is left with the definite impression that whether or not the Exodus was historical is not really pivotal to the Christian faith, *i.e.* it also has no important impact on theology.

In Chapter Four, “No covenant before the exile?,” Ansberry and Hwang argue that “reflections on authorship and reappropriation of Deuteronomic covenant suggest that historicalcritical research on Deuteronomy can make evangelicals more attuned to its locus of authority as well as to the way in which Deuteronomy’s theological ideas have been received by Israel throughout her history.”[37] Ansberry and Hwang contend that scholars must make a “decisive move away from modern construals of authorship and authority, which have often hobbled the work of both evangelical scholars and their more skeptical interlocutors.” [38] Moreover, the “urgent dynamism of the Mosaic voice in Deuteronomy simply cannot be relegated to a single time or place, whether, Mosaic, Josianic or otherwise; nor can the authority of the document be located in a single person.”[39] Those evangelicals who contend for the importance Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy have the wrong focus, “[w]hen Deuteronomy’s authority as Christian Scripture is located in the content of the document in general and the Holy Spirit’s work through authorized tradents in particular, even the most trenchant attacks on its Mosaic authorship fail to usurp its authoritative status or muffle its revelatory voice.”[40] To them, such a perspective, “coupled with the canonical posture of Deuteronomy, indicates that historicalcritical work on the document not pose a threat to Orthodox Christianity.”[41] So, the reader is left with the definite impression that whether Deuteronomy was written by Moses or by many authors over diverse periods of Israel’s history is not really pivotal to the Christian faith, *i.e.* this too has no important impact on theology.

In Chapter Five, “Problems with prophecy,” Warhurst, Tarrer, and Hays argue

that while “all evangelicals recognize the importance of prophecy,” the Scripture has places where “prophesied events do not occur as foretold.”[42] They argue that “[t]here is no denying that the Old Testament harbours examples of prophetic predictions not materializing in the manner adumbrated by the prophets” (e.g., Ezek 26:1-21; Isa 13:17-19; Jer 51:11-12).[43] They conclude,

> [O]ur study has focused on the apparently ‘problematic’ instances of prophecy, it was also quite often the case that things did occur in history as they were foretold. But prophecy can also be a much more flexible phenomenon than that: sometimes fulfillments overflowed what the prophet foretold, all the while remaining congruous with the essential will of God revealed in prophecy.[44]

They also assert,

> [S]ometimes prophecy could be composed “after-the-fact,” not in an effort to deceive, but as an expression of the confidence of God’s people that God has been sovereign over history and that God will indeed deliver them. Once one appreciates how prophecy professes to work, the apparently trenchant problems in the biblical record of prophecy and fulfillment/failure melt away.[45]

So, the reader is left with the definite impression that accurate fulfillment of prophecy is also not really pivotal to the Christian faith and has no important impact on theology.

In Chapter Six, “Pseudepigraphy and the canon,” Ansberry, Strine, Klink, and Lincicum argue that pseudepigraphy in the Old and New Testaments is quite possible. To them, evangelicals must understand that “ancient conceptions of authorship and authority provide a framework through which to understand the phenomenon and theological implications of pseudepigraphy in the canonical Pentateuch.”[46] Furthermore, those in the modern era must understand the “environment of the ancient world;” [w]hen the Penteteuch is understood within the conceptual environment of the ancient world, questions concerning its authorship appear anachronistic.”[47] Furthermore, “[w]hen the Pentateuch is understood within the conceptual environment of the ancient world, questions concerning its authorship appear on several accounts.”[48] Two especially are cited: first, the Pentateuch is an anonymous work and, second, the striking lack of interest in authorship throughout the Hebrew Bible, as well as the absence of the

term ‘author’ in the Classical Hebrew language, indicates that the search for the ‘author’ of the Pentateuch is misguided.”[49] One must understand “ancient conceptions of authorship” where “author” represented not necessarily an individual as in modern conceptions of the notion, but “the ancient oriental world valued the group as well as collective tradition over autonomous, individual expression.”[50] To these evangelicals, “‘authorship’ does not represent a claim of literary origins; it represents a claim of authoritative, revelatory tradition.” This is key. Accordingly, they allow for the possibility of three “Isaiahs,” (“a product of multiple authors”),[51] the Gospel of John as a collective work (Johannine “community”),[52] as well as some in the Pauline group (e.g. the Pastoral Epistles).[53] They argue that “the historical evidence suggests that new models are needed for evangelicals to make sense of pseudepigraphical compositions that may at some level have an intention to deceive, but still function as canonical Scripture.”[54] Furthermore, “[t]o claim that pseudepigraphy is irreconcilable with infallibility can arguably only result in subjecting Scripture to our own autonomous standard of perfection, instead of *seeking the perfection Scripture* has in a historically *a posteriori* act of discipleship.[55] Their conclusion is quite startling:

> If the biblical documents locate authority in the context and canonization of the inspired text rather than their “author(s)’, then historical criticism helps us to problematize modern conceptions of authority and to understand the nature of the biblical text. And if ancient perceptions of authorship and the realities of text production were more fluid than are modern conceptions, then historical criticism opens new horizons for thinking about the way in which God worked through the Holy Spirit to compose and codify the biblical text.[56]

Furthermore, “the acceptance of pseudepigraphy or pseudonymity in the biblical canon neither undermines the principal tenets of the Christian faith nor operates outside the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy.”[57] So, the reader is left with the definite impression that pseudepigraphy or pseudonymity is not really pivotal to the Christian faith, *i.e.* it too has no important impact on theology.

In Chapter Seven, Daling and Hays contend that “the discipline of historical Jesus scholarship does not lead inevitably to heresy, so much as it engages both believing and non-believing scholars in debates of real significance for the beliefs of the Church.”[58] They argue that “Christian theology ought not to resist the idea that Jesus was ignorant of certain things” (Mark 13:32; Matt 24:36).[59]

Accordingly, “Jesus was a human, and thus experienced human ignorance, not as an ontological defect but as a constitutive feature of his humanity.”[60] Again, “[W]e should also ask if it is theologically necessary that Jesus possessed or disclosed awareness of his own divinity. Probably not. It is imaginable that Jesus could have been God without ever knowing it. What’s more, even without a divine self-awareness, one could conceivably still affirm that Jesus was fully obedient and faithful to God unto death, accomplishing whatever was necessary for our salvation without knowing precisely how or why he was doing it.”[61] They are to be commended that they affirm the virgin birth (“the present authors would eschew” its rejection),[62] as well as the resurrection of Jesus (“the facticity of Jesus’ unique and divinely effected resurrection from the dead in space and time is the defining trait, the *conditio sine qua non*, of the Christian faith.”).[63] One is left wondering, however, at their logic in this work. That is, if God was responsible for the miracle of the Virgin Birth as well as the historical resurrection of Jesus, why could He not guard in His faithfulness other parts of His Word in the Old and New Testaments from such dubious assertions found in the rest of this work about history, authorship, prophecy, and faithfully preserving his Word from error? These writers seem rather arbitrary in their picking and choosing!

Finally, Ansberry and Hays sum up their work in Chapter Nine. They content that “historical criticism is not a dead-zone, irradiated and left lifeless by atheistic historiography.”[64] They admit that “[t]his book does not doubt that historical criticism can be dangerous fuelled by atheistic hostility or over-weaning skepticism, some historical critics have suggested devastating theses.”[65] The writer of this current chapter suggests that these young evangelicals have failed to apprehend that they too have fallen into an alarming pattern of thought. The trap of historical criticism has been sprung on them. The form of historical criticism they present is just as dangerous for evangelicalism as any of its previous manifestations. They argue that “conservative Christian seminaries and academics can cease their embargo of historical criticism” based on their book’s presentation.[66] The book, however, fails significantly here. It actually is a proverbial poster child for avoiding historical criticism. These writers accept historical criticism in a vacuum, away from its philosophical presuppositions and historical antecedents. They contend that “this book has aimed to show that historical criticism can provide the Church with exciting and significant resources, especially once that criticism has been harnessed by the perspective of faith.”[67] This statement demonstrates that these young writers exhibit incredible **naïveté. They do not understand history.** They do not remember or regard

evangelical history, nor do they realize the ever-present dangers historical criticism possesses (cf. James 3:1). The whole book constitutes a warning to evangelicals that historical criticism has not changed and no degree of modification can redeem it for evangelical study. A key question remains: do these young evangelicals believe that they have found a form of historical criticism that should be acceptable to evangelicals in their presentation? If so, that is also incredible hubris.

CONCLUSION TO *QUO VADIS*

In 2007, Andreas Köstenberger edited a work entitled, *Quo Vadis Evangelicalism?* The work consisted of a highly selective choice of presidential addresses of Evangelical Theological Society scholars who, in the history of the Society, favored the move in the Society toward historicalcritical ideologies. No presidential addresses that warned against historicalcritical ideologies were allowed. The work related that ETS has been "polarized" into two camps, one represented by Eta Linnemann and Norman Geisler who warned against historicalcritical ideologies and the other by Darrell Bock and others who heartily embrace "the judicious use of a historicalcritical approach."[68] The book was extremely prejudiced toward one side, hardly objective. Köstenberger never stated what a "judicious" use of historical criticism was or whose version would be accepted. He did note, however, that "the pendulum [at ETS] seems to have swung toward the side of the latter ['judicious use'] group."[69] It actually constituted a personal vanity toward praising a direction that the editor apparently embraced. He concluded his preface by noting "[s]peaking personally, reading and digesting these presidential addresses—spanning a half-century and delivered by some of evangelicalism's most distinguished leaders—has given me, a third-generation scholar in the ETS, a much fuller and deeper appreciation for the history of the evangelical movement and my place within it."[70] He concluded with "In my judgment the present volume offers great hope for the future of a movement whose best days, by God's grace and abundant mercy, may yet lie ahead."[71] The writer of this chapter had a rather aged church history professor during his days at Talbot Seminary who issued a warning that he has not forgotten to this day. He would say that church history teaches consistently that by the third generation of any Christian group, the original intent of the organization was lost (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, etc.), and the loss in these organizations is always away from a steadfast trust in the Word of God and being faithful to it. What is noticed here is that Köstenberger admits that

ETS is now in its third generation. The new third generation is in charge of ETS.

Long ago, Harold Lindsell, the scorn of much of these younger scholars today, said this about his own day that is worth repeating again:

> Anyone who thinks the historicalcritical method is neutral is misinformed. Since its presuppositions are unacceptable to the evangelical mind this method cannot be used by the evangelical as it stands. The very use by the evangelical of this term, historicalcritical method, is a mistake when it comes to describing its own approach to Scripture. The only way he can use it is to invest it with a different meaning. But this can only confuse the uninformed. Moreover, it is not fair to those scholars who use it in the correct way with presuppositions which are different from those of the evangelical. It appears to me that modern evangelical scholars (and I may be guilty of this myself) have played fast and loose with the term because they wanted acceptance by academia. They seem too often to desire to be members of the club which is nothing more than practicing an inclusiveness that undercuts the normativity of the evangelical theological position. This may be done, and often is, under the illusion that by this method the opponents of biblical inerrancy can be one over to the evangelical viewpoint. But practical experience suggest that rarely does this happen and the cost of such an approach is too expensive, for it gives credence and lends respectability to a method which is the deadly enemy of theological orthodoxy.[72]

Church history stands as a monumental testimony against this third generation of ETS evangelicals who have thought that they are somehow special, endowed with exceptional abilities, and able to overcome historical criticism's negativity that no one else in church history has been able to accomplish.

A warning is sadly necessary: evangelicals have wrongly blended or used grammaticohistorical and historical criticism as synonymous. History and philosophy are being ignored, overlooked, or disdained. Evangelicals must always remember or be reminded of three essential axioms in scholarly activity:

The First Axiom:

GRAMMATICO HISTORICAL

≠ (does not equal and cannot be equated with)

HISTORICAL CRITICISM

The Second Axiom:

A BAD METHODLOGY/IDEOLOGY
ALWAYS LEADS TO BAD THEOLOGY

The Third Axiom:

LORDSHIP ALWAYS OVER SCHOLARSHIP

"When pride comes, then comes dishonor,
But with the humble is wisdom"
(Pro 11:2)

or, stated more bluntly in another way
in the warnings of the New Testament. . .

It is required of stewards [of God's Word]
that one be found trustworthy.
(1 Cor 4:2)

The things which you have heard from me
in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men
who will be able to teach others also.
(2 Tim 2:2)

[3] *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,*

[4] *and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. (2 Tim 4:3-4)*

[1] *The Jesus Crisis*. Eds. Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998).

[2] "Review of The Jesus Crisis by Darrell Bock, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157 (April-June 2000), 232.

[3] Darrell L. Bock and Robert W. Webb, *Key Events* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009); Darrell L. Bock, *Who is Jesus? Linking the Historical Jesus with the Christ of Faith* (New York et al: Howard, 2012).

[4] See Robert L. Thomas, "Current Hermeneutical Trends: Toward Explanation or Obfuscation*?, JETS* 39 (June 1996): 241-256.

[5] Edgar Krentz, *The HistoricalCritical Method* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 55.

[6] Gerhard Maier, *The End of the HistoricalCritical Method* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1974), 25.

[7] See Krentz, *The HistoricalCritical Method*, 55; Ernest Troeltsch, "Historical and Dogmatic Method in Theology (1898)," in *Religion in History*. Essays translated by James Luther Adams and Walter F. Bense (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 11-32.

[8] Milton Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), 173.

[9] Evangelical drift from the single-meaning principle is alarming. Wallace, reflecting the evangelical drift into multiple-layers of meaning, argues: "One of the reasons that most NT grammarians have been reticent to accept this category [plenary genitive] is simply that most NT grammarians are Protestants. And the Protestant tradition of a singular meaning for the text (which, historically, was a reaction to the fourfold meaning employed in the Middle Ages) has been fundamental in their thinking. However, current biblical research recognizes that a given author may, at times, be *intentionally* ambiguous. The instances of double entendre, sensus plenior (conservative defined), puns, and word-plays in the NT all contribute to this view. . . . Tradition has to some degree prevented Protestants from seeing this." See Dan B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 120 fn 134.

[10] I. Howard Marshall, "Historical Criticism," in *New Testament Interpretation*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 126-138 (quotes from pp. 126 and 133).

[11] Robert Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount, A Foundation for Understanding* (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 23.

[12] Darrell L. Bock, "Form Criticism," in *New Testament Criticism and Interpretation*. Edited by David A. Black and David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 192.

[13] "Editors' Preface," David Alan Black and David S. Dockery, eds., *New Testament Criticism & Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 13.

[14] Ibid., 14.

[15] For the history and presuppositional developments of historical criticism, see F. David Farnell, The Philosophical and Theological Bent of Historical Criticism," in *The Jesus Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 85-131.

[16] See Norman L. Geisler, ed., *Biblical Errancy An Analysis of Its Philosophical Roots* (Eugene, OR: Reprint Wipf and Stock, 2004; Zondervan, 1981).

[17] Ibid., 7.

[18] Ibid., 11. This excellent work presents a variety of articles that trace the underpinnings of historicalcritical methodologies to baneful philosophical methodologies. Unfortunately, Geisler's warning has not been heeded by evangelicals who continue their connections with Historical Criticism.

[19] Stephen Davis, *The Debate about the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 139. What is refreshing about Davis's statement is the outright candor of the remark compared to some evangelicals who refuse to admit the philosophical basis of such crucial issues.

[20] Bock and Webb, "Introduction," in *Key Events*, 5.

[21] "Acknowledgements," *Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism*. Editors Christopher M. Hays and Christopher M. Ansberry (London: SPCK, 2013), x.

[22] Christopher M. Hays, "Towards a faithful criticism," *Evangelical Faith and the Challenge of Historical Criticism*, 17.

[23] Ibid., 18.

[24] Ibid., 4.

[25] Ibid., 9.

[26] Ibid., 20.

[27] Christopher M. Hays and Stephen Lane Herring, “Adam and the fall,” *Evangelical Faith*, 45.

[28] Ibid., 46.

[29] Ibid.. 49.

[30] Ibid., 51.

[31] Ibid., 54.

[32] Ibid., 53-54.

[33] Christopher B. Ansberry, “The exodus: fact, fiction or both?,” 71.

[34] Ibid., 71.

[35] Ibid., 72.

[36] Ibid., 72.

[37] Christopher B. Ansberry and Jerry Hwang, “No covenant before the exile?, 93.

[38] Ibid., 93-94.

[39] Ibid., 94.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Amber Warhurst, Seth B. Tarrer and Christopher M. Hays, “Problems with

prophecy," *Evangelical Faith*, 95.

[43] Ibid., 96.

[44] Ibid., 123.

[45] Ibid., 123-24.

[46] Christopher B. Ansberry, Casey A. Strine, Edward W. Klink III and David Lincicum, "Pseudepigraphy and the canon," *Evangelical Faith*, 129.

[47] Ibid., 130.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid., 130, 136

[52] Ibid, 146.

[53] Ibid., 147-56.

[54] Ibid., 154.

[55] Ibid., 155.

[56] Ibid., 156.

[57] Ibid., 157.

[58] Michael J. Daling and Christopher M. Hays, "The historical Jesus," *Evangelical Faith*, 159.

[59] Ibid., 162.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 164.

[62] Ibid., 174.

[63] Ibid., 180.

[64] Christopher B. Ansberry and Christopher B. Ansberry, “Faith criticism and a critical faith,” *Evangelical Faith*, 204.

[65] Ibid., 205.

[66] Ibid., 206.

[67] Ibid., 206.

[68] Andreas Köstenberger, *Quo Vadis Evangelicalism*? (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 18.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 26.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Harold Lindsell, *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 283.

PART FIVE

BEWARE OF HERMENEUTICS

A BAD METHODOLOGY YIELDS A BAD THEOLOGY



CHAPTER 13

DOES GENRE DETERMINE MEANING?[1]

Thomas A. Howe



Introduction

From the beginnings of the development of the critical methodology, as it was being applied to the study of the Bible, understanding the Bible as literature has become more important and more central to hermeneutics. As Jeffrey Weima remarks, “The past few decades have witnessed a paradigm shift taking place in biblical studies. The old perspective that viewed Scripture as primarily a historical or theological document has been replaced by a new conviction that the Bible is literature and as such ought to be interpreted from a literary perspective.”[2] It is notoriously difficult to identify what constitutes literature. After a lengthy consideration of several attempts at developing a definition of “literature,” one theorist concluded,

> A piece of writing may start off life as history or philosophy and then come to be ranked as literature; or it may start off as literature and then come to be valued for its archaeological significance. Some texts are born literary, some achieve literariness, and some have literariness thrust upon them. . . . In this sense, one can think of literature less as some inherent quality or set of qualities displayed by certain kinds of writing all the way from *Beowulf* to Virginia Woolf, than as a number of ways in which people *relate themselves* to writing. . . . Literature, in the sense of a set of works of assured and unalterable value, distinguished by certain shared inherent properties, does not exist.[3]

As difficult as it may be to define literature, there is one thing upon which all theorists agree and that is that literature comes in various shapes and kinds. Not all that is identified as literature is of the same character. The different kinds of literature are identified as *genres*. The term ‘genre’ comes to us through the French originally from Latin and means “kind” or “class.” Margaret Davies defines genre as, “A kind of literature or literary species; for example, tragedy, comedy, novel, biography, romance, history, essay or letter. Each genre makes use of a particular style in its treatment of specific subjects and motifs within a structure whose unity gives meaning to its part.”[4] Definitions like the one given by Davies’ definition are fairly common in the literature.

Questions of genre have become standard practice in most contemporary

commentaries. For example, James A. Montgomery produced his critical and exegetical commentary on the book of Daniel in 1927 and his introduction includes no considerations of the possible classifications of genre in the book of Daniel.[5] By contrast, Stephen R. Miller's commentary on Daniel,[6] published in 1994, has an entire section of his introduction, titled "Type of Literature," devoted to the discussion of genre classification for the book of Daniel.

Considerations of genre as part of the introductory matter of recent commentaries have become virtually required because most commentators hold that genre is important for interpretation. A recent text on hermeneutics puts it this way: "Biblical authors used different literary conventions in order to accomplish different purposes. . . . Each literary form, therefore, reveals literary function. Determining what the author is trying to say involves our recognition of the genre employed—a literary decision which facilitates authorial intent as well as a reader's comprehension. Hence, before we can discover the meaning of what was written, we need to understand how it was written."[7] Grant Osborne states this view in a manner that is quite typical: "As I will argue in appendix two and in the section on special hermeneutics below, the genre or type of literature in which a passage is found provides the 'rules of the language game' (Wittgenstein), that is, the hermeneutical principles by which one understands it. Obviously, we do not interpret fiction the same way as we understand poetry. Nor will a person look for the same scheme in biblical wisdom as in the prophetic portions."[8] These are not isolated examples of this conviction. Leland Ryken asserts, "Each genre has its distinctive features and its own 'rules' or principles of operation. As readers, we need to approach passages in the Bible with the right expectations. Our awareness of genre programs our encounter with a biblical text, telling us what to look for and how to interpret what we see."[9] As we have said, this view is pervasive and almost universally accepted as a critical feature of a good hermeneutic.

Genre and Meaning

The notion that genre "gives meaning," as Davies puts it, is almost a universally accepted idea about the relationship of genre to semantics. But a serious omission in the accepted notion becomes apparent once one introduces a simple question. How does one come to discover in which genre a particular piece of writing should be classified? In other words, How does genre classification work? In order to classify a particular piece of literature as having been produced according to the principles of a particular genre, the interpreter

must read the text and attempt to discern the patterns that would indicate conformity to the characteristics of a particular genre. For example, if the text reads like a story having characters, a plot, a setting, conflict, etc., then one might broadly classify it as narrative, or perhaps more narrowly as a novel. If the text contains expressions that conform to identifiable figures of speech, such as metaphor, simile, synecdoche, etc., being structured in short lines composed of two brief and complementary parts that seem to have some reciprocal relation, one might classify the material as Hebrew poetry. But, what is the interpreter doing when he reads a text in order to discover its patterns? Is he engaging in interpretation at this stage? It certainly cannot be the case that the interpreter is interpreting the text by employing a certain type of genre classification, for that is the very thing that is being sought. An interpreter cannot know the genre of a text before he knows how the text is structured or before he finds the characteristics in the text that suggest its genre. And an interpreter cannot discover how a text is structured until he reads the text, grasps the meanings of the words and sentences, and thereby uncovers the structure of the piece. In other words, the genre must be discerned and discovered in the text as one reads it.

But if, as many commentators and theorists assert, meaning is genre-dependent, then this seems to imply that in order to interpret the text the interpreter must first identify the genre. In fact, this is precisely what most hermeneutic theorists assert. Sidney Greidanus declares, “The recognition of different forms (‘forms’ used here in a general, non-technical sense) of biblical literature is important for hermeneutics because it provides the initial clue to the meaning of a passage. Grant Osborne states that ‘genre plays a positive role as a hermeneutical device for determining the *sensus literalis* or intended meaning of the text. Genre is more than a means of classifying literary types; it is an epistemological tool for unlocking meaning in individual texts.’”[10] But, how can an interpreter attempt to classify a piece of writing into its appropriate genre unless he is able to read and understand what the text is saying prior to deciding its genre? Osborne himself admits as much when he says, “Each writer couches his message in a certain genre in order to give the reader sufficient rules by which to decode that message. These hints guide the reader (or hearer) and provide clues for interpretation.”[11] But the “hints” to which Osborne refers are the words and sentences of the text. An interpreter must discover the hints and discern the clues as he reads (or hears) by understanding the meanings of the words and sentences in order to discover the genre. A certain level of interpretation and understanding must accompany the reading (hearing) for the

interpreter correctly and successfully to identify the hints and clues and accurately associate them with the appropriate genre. But then the reading (hearing) and understanding of the meaning of the text comes logically and necessarily before the identification of the genre. In other words, some level of meaning cannot be genre-dependent. Some level of meaning must be communicable and understandable in order to make genre identification possible.

What kind of interpretation occurs when an interpreter is reading a text in order to discover its genre? John Hayes and Carl Holladay may have indicated the answer to this question:

> The required effort and means necessary for the exegesis and interpretation of texts thus vary greatly, depending upon the nature of the texts and their relationship to normal communication. Some texts merely need to be read to be understood. Others require very detailed analysis. Some use normal, everyday language, grammar, and sentence structure. Others use a very specialized vocabulary, involved grammatical and sentence structure and distinctive forms of expression. Some texts employ symbolic and metaphoric language. Others seek to employ language and words so as to limit severely the range of meaning and the potential to persuade. Others seek to merely inform. Some texts are produced to entertain. Others seek to produce some particular response and actions.[12]

The key statement in the above quote is, “and their relationship to normal communication.” In other words, according to Hayes and Holladay, some communications are normal and “merely need to be read to be understood.” But what is a “normal” text? How can someone identify a “normal” text as distinct from those texts that, according to Hayes and Holladay, “require very detailed analysis”? As they go on to say, “Some [texts] use normal, every day language, grammar, and sentence structure.”[13] In other words, some texts can be approached according to the normal-grammatical-historical interpretive methodology. That is to say, the kind of interpretation that occurs as the interpreter is reading a text prior to genre identification and in order to discover its genre is the normal-grammatical-historical interpretation. And an interpreter must have a rudimentary understanding of the meaning of the text in order to discover its genre. That being the case, it follows that genre does not determine meaning.

Genre and Form

We might say the genre of a piece of literature is the form that it takes. As Gilson puts it, form "might also be described as that arrangement which makes the parts of a whole out of a plurality of elements and thereby structures the latter into a distinct object."[14] But perceiving the form involves an apprehension of the elements that constitute the plurality in their unity as this distinct object. The text is not perceived first and followed by the examination of the words and sentences. The text as a unity is perceived in terms of the plurality of elements that constitute it as a unity of these very elements. Putting these notions in terms of genre, the genre is roughly equivalent to the form of the piece of literature. The words and sentences, the grammar and syntax, the figures of speech, colloquialisms, idioms, and the various literary devices are the plurality of elements that are arranged in such a manner so as to constitute this distinct literary object. As Gilson points out, the author "finds his material ready-made in the language, whose words, structural forms and essential rules he accepts."[15] The author works within the parameters of his language and the conventions of his culture. Although an artist may stretch the boundaries, he cannot work completely outside the confines of his language and culture else he runs the risk of not communicating at all.

In order to discover the genre, it is necessary first to apprehend the elements in their arrangements. But, we are not dealing here with simple objects. Grammar and syntax, words and their meanings, are themselves complex entities that require perception in their unities. Thankfully, much of this is virtually intuitive for a reader of his native language. However, when considering a piece of poetry, for example, persons not trained in the nature of poetry may not be able to perceive the literary devices that are used by the poet to construct this distinct literary piece, and in some instances a literary piece may not even be recognizable as poetry even to the trained eye. This is one reason for the controversy over what seems to be a literary unit in Genesis 2:23:

> "And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh;
> She shall be called Woman Because she was taken out of Man.'"16

Is this the first piece of poetry in the Hebrew Bible? Some say, yes, others say, no. One reason for this disagreement may be that the elements, the poetic devices, that were used in this ancient culture have not been transmitted so completely as to make it possible in every instance conclusively to identify the

form of every literary unit that might be a piece of poetry. Nevertheless, those involved in the debate have identified the plurality of elements and even understood the meanings of the words, the grammar, and the syntax.

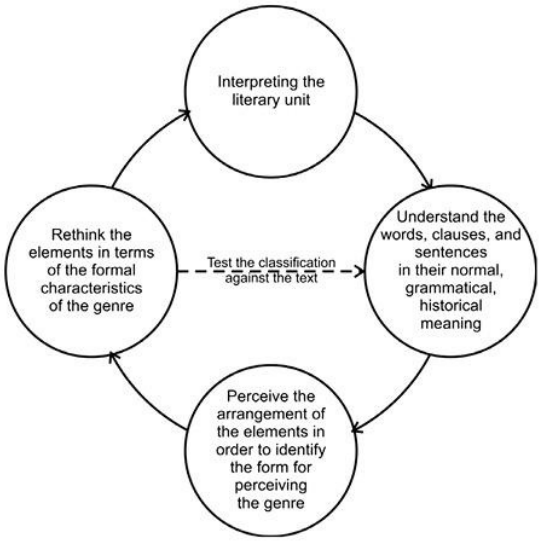
Understanding the genre, that is the form of the literary piece, is necessary for understanding the literary unit as a piece of literature. As Gilson says, “Strictly speaking, form is proper to each art, and its discernment in the very process of perceiving it is what is called ‘understanding’ a work of art.”[17] But, understanding the literary piece as a piece of literature, or a work of art, is not the same as apprehending the multiplicity of elements that constitute it. In literature, these elements must be apprehended in their own right as the elements they are. There is a hermeneutical circle in the relationship of genre to the elements that are arranged into this particular form. But, this is not a vicious circle. Understanding the form is not a necessary part of understanding all of the elements as elements. In the case above, it is not necessary to understand the form, whether or not this arrangement constitutes a poetic structure, in order to apprehend the various parts. A reader of the language can understand the individual words, and the syntactical arrangement makes it possible for the reader to understand the sentences and their straightforward meaning. This is accomplished by means of the grammatical-historical approach, that is, understanding the words and clauses in their normal, grammatical, historical meaning. However, whether this is a poem is predicated on understanding what constitutes poetic structure in this culture and whether these particular words and clauses are arranged in such a manner so as to discover whether this particular arrangement reflects the basic characteristics of poetry. Again Gilson points out, “A critic has a hard job to determine whether a work lacks form or whether he fails to perceive it.”[18] This may be precisely the problem in this instance. Those involved in the debate are arguing about whether this material indeed has the form of Hebrew poetry or not, and the problem arises from the lack of available information from the culture about poetry, which complicates the capacity to see its form. In other words, because we possess no genre criticism from the ancient Hebrews, we may not possess sufficient information to make the determination about the form/genre. Of course another problem is that, as we have noted above, genres are not straight jackets that require authors slavishly to follow a set of rules in order to produce Hebrew poetry. As Gilson says, “The artist is free; no one is authorized to prescribe rules for him, nor impose upon him limits.”[19] No two poems in the Hebrew Bible are exactly alike. Nevertheless, we can discern some general characteristics that distinguish poetry from narrative.

If it is possible to demonstrate that this particular literary piece does exhibit some of the characteristics of Hebrew poetry, then it becomes necessary to reconsider the words and clauses in terms of the function of poetry in this culture. In this effort one may discover that certain words are not being used in their strictly normal-lexical-grammatical manner, but are being used in a poetic or figurative manner. Nevertheless, the poetic or figurative function of words is predicated on their normal-lexical-grammatical use. *Genre classification enhances our understanding of meaning, or it may qualify our initial understanding of meaning, but genre does not determine meaning.*

The following chart sets out the relationship between genre and the material that forms the literary work:

Table 1: Genre and Material

Genre	Words and Sentences
The Whole	The Parts
Enhances Meaning	Determines Meaning
Form of the Text	Material of the Text
Arises from the Text	Constitutes the Text
Secondary Consideration	Primary Consideration



Genre and the Hermeneutic Spiral

As we mentioned above, what seems to be the case here is yet another instance of the hermeneutical spiral (see Figure 1). In order to identify the genre, one must read and understand the text to some degree. Understanding the text allows the reader to discover the hints that guide him into the discovery of the genre in which the writer has couched his communication. Once the reader has made a preliminary classification of genre, he must then apply the "rules" of that genre to the text in order to discover whether or not that particular classification bears out in the text. If it does not, then the interpreter will need to search for other hints more accurately to identify the genre. When this process has successfully arrived at the identification of the appropriate genre, the characteristics of that genre will help the reader to interpret the text more completely by discovering aspects of word play, repetition, parallelism, figure of speech, or even aspects of significance. Alastair Fowler puts it this way: "What signals, it asks, were originally sent? What vocabulary selections were originally made? What local meanings were originally conveyed? What rhymes and other rhetorical patterns and structures? What conventions? What innovations or variation?"[20] For example, Exodus 23:19 declares, "You are not to boil a young goat in the milk of its mother."[21] When this statement is seen in its context, the hints of the context and the particular statement might lead the interpreter to identify this as legal code. This classification does not alter the straightforward meaning of the statement, but it does alert the reader to its significance and to its application in its historical context.

A particular interpreter may be alerted to a genre type before reading a given text. This alert may come because the interpreter has been taught to expect a certain kind of genre in certain places in the biblical text. For example, an interpreter may have been taught to expect historical narrative in historical books. But, poetry occurs in these books as well, so although an interpreter may expect to find historical narrative, he must still read the text in such a way as to allow the features of the text to indicate its genre. *Ideally the interpreter should not impose upon the text certain genre expectations. Genre expectations should grow out of the text itself.* Of course that reinforces the notion that genre does not determine meaning.

Fowler and others appear to argue against the notion that the identification of genre depends upon a preliminary level of interpretation. Arguing against the notion of a hermeneutical spiral in the discovery of genre, Fowler quotes Ralph Cohen; "'statements about identification of generic features operate on a quite different level from those about poetic functions.' For 'concepts of forms. . . can be arrived at by comparison of classification systems and are not dependent upon interpretation within a work.'"[22] But Fowler and Cohen are not arguing about the interpretation of a particular piece of literature and the role that genre plays. Rather, they are arguing on the level of genre criticism and the construction or reconstruction of genre classifications on the abstract level. As Fowler notes, "Genres have an institutional existence that transcends (or lack) the privacy and fine shades of meaning of the individual work."[23] In terms of genre construction, this may be true. But even genre construction begins with the interpretation of the individual works, at least to the level of understanding the words and phrases so as to discern the patterns and nuances that serve to identify the characteristics of a given genre. Also, Fowler makes a distinction between criticism and reading. He says, "Once the construction corresponds as far as possible to the intended original, criticism moves on to the phase of interpretation. This is the heart of criticism, as distinct from reading."[24] What seems at first to be an objection to the notion that one must obtain a rudimentary understanding of a text before genre classification turns out to be an objection to too closely binding genre construction in genre criticism to the interpretation of specific works, and here interpretation means going beyond simply reading the text.

So, again, what is the interpreter doing as he reads a text in order to discover its genre? Is he not reading and interpreting the text prior to any genre classifications? As Tremper Longman puts it, "One must have a theory of genre before asking about the genre of a particular text. At the same time, one must

work with particular texts and see the similarities between them before formulating a theory of Genre."[25] In other words, in order to discover the genre of a particular text, one must already have developed a genre theory. But a genre theory comes from studying and comparing individual texts, and this is done prior to and apart from genre classification. If this is so, then it must be the case that there is some meaning communicated to the interpreter apart from whether the interpreter has recognized any given genre classification. But, if genre determines meaning, then this scenario is impossible. The interpreter must know the genre before he knows the text. But this is tantamount to imposing genre expectations upon the text.

First: Read and understand the text in its normal-grammatical-historical signification.

Second: Discover any patterns that may indicate genre type.

Third: Relate discovered patterns to accepted genre classifications.

Fourth: Test selected genre classification against text.

Fifth: Use proven genre classification as grid through which to read the text to enhance one's understanding of the text.

One might wonder how genre enhances meaning without determining meaning. An example might be the story of Jonathan and his armor bearer as told in 1 Samuel 14. Anyone can read the story and understand the events as they are recounted. However, knowing that this account may be generically identified as historical narrative, the interpreter may begin to look for those characteristics that are commonly associated with such a story. The interpreter may discover that Jonathan serves as a literary foil to Saul, his father and the protagonist in this portion of the text. Jonathan's faith in God as the One who fights for His people accentuates Saul's lack of faith, evidenced by the useless oath that he had imposed on the necks of his warriors. Saul's actions serve to illustrate his belief that victory rested in his own ability as a military commander, not trusting in God as did his own son Jonathan.

Although genre did not determine the meaning of the words and sentences in the story, the genre enhanced the meaning of the story as a whole by highlighting the author's use of the foil to communicate to the reader the flawed character of Saul and the faithfulness of God to fight for His people. The interpreter enters

the genre-hermeneutic spiral by virtue of the normal-grammatical-historical understanding of the words and sentences of the text. The text provides the clues to indicate genre. Genre considerations are then applied to the text, and additional insight from the genre enhances the interpreter's understanding of the text's meaning.

Genre and Justifying Interpretations

All of this seems clear enough. Why then is it even an issue? Because some interpreters use genre to make the text mean what they want it to mean. Ernest Lucas gives an example of this in his recent commentary on Daniel:

> Genre recognition, then, is an important step in the understanding of a text. For most readers it is an intuitive step. Sometimes the intuition may be wrong. That is why a conscious, and careful, classification of a text to its genre is valuable. 'Genre criticism', as this is often called, is not classification for its own sake, concerned simply to pigeon-hole a text. Its aim is to clarify a text by indicating what are the right and wrong expectations that the reader might have of it. There is a particular likelihood that intuition may lead readers astray when they read something from a culture different from their own. Some genres are quite culture-specific, but may, to the unwary reader, seem to fit a genre from their own, different, culture. Other genres may occur in several cultures, but, even so, may differ somewhat in each culture.[26]

In his discussion of genre considerations with regard to the book of Daniel, Lucas asserts, "A factor I have not yet mentioned, but which some consider very important in genre classification, is the social setting, or social function, of a text. The problem with this is that the argument can get dangerously circular. The social setting has to be deduced from the text, and is then read back into it."[27] But, are not genre considerations in danger of the same kind of circularity? Genre determinations are made by reading the text, and then, when the genre is identified, these considerations are then "read back" into the text. To avoid this circularity, Lucas advises, "It seems better to let the social setting or function (as far as it can be discerned) be seen as part of the content, without giving it special emphasis."[28] But should the same not be done with reference to genre? Genre is supposed to be the grid through which proper interpretation is done. As Lucas points out, "We might expect, then, that any helpful genre classification of the stories in Dan. 1 – 6 (i.e. one that clarifies the meaning) will rest on

characteristics of both form and content."[29] Yet it was apart from any prior commitments to a specific genre classification that the interpreter understood the text in his effort to identify the patterns that might indicate genre classification. If interpretation apart from genre considerations is sufficient to identify the genre in the initial stages, why is genre then considered the grid through which interpretation must be done? Apparently, interpretation prior to genre commitment was sufficient successfully to identify the genre, why is it not sufficient to understand meaning apart from giving genre any "special considerations"?

Lucas goes on to lament the fact that, "finding answers to the questions about genres relating to the stories in Daniel has proved difficult for two different kinds of reasons."[30] The two reasons Lucas sites are the problem of the definition of genre and the "shortage of other similar texts from the same cultural setting as the stories in Daniel, with which to compare them."[31] The reasons for this difficulty are not important to this discussion. What is important is the fact of the difficulty of classification and the debate over genre classifications in Daniel. Yet these difficulties and this debate concerning genre classification did not forestall Lucas' production of his commentary or the claims to have understood the meanings of much of the book of Daniel.

Also, genre classification prior to the initial interpretation of a text can become the license to make the book say what the interpreter prefers. Stephen Miller's discussion of genre in Daniel presents this picture very clearly:

> According to those who espouse the Maccabean thesis, the Book of Daniel consists of romance, legend, myth, midrash, court tale, vision, quasi prophecy, apocalyptic, and other types of material. The stories of chaps. 1-6 are more precisely designated "court tales," or "court legends," and chaps. 7-12 are apocalyptic. Lacocque considers the book to be primarily a combination of midrash (the earlier legends) and apocalyptic. Lacocque's assessment is as follows: chaps. 1-6 are midrash, chaps. 8-12 are apocalyptic, and chap. 7 is a transitional section that contains both midrash and apocalyptic. Of course, those who hold that the accounts in Daniel are historical would not classify them as midrash and would differ with Lacocque concerning the nature of the apocalyptic material.[32]

What Miller seems to have identified is the tendency to employ genre classification as an extension of one's prior theological commitment. Because

critical scholars do not believe in the historicity of Daniel, they classify it as legend, or myth, or midrash. For example, John Goldingay does not accept the historical accuracy of much of Daniel's text. He says, "It is not merely that features such as the portrait of Nebuchadnezzar, the Median empire located between the Babylonian and the Persian, and the existence of Darius the Mede differ from what we otherwise know of the period and suggest that the stories may be attempts at history that failed."[33] But the fact that Daniel has presented false historical information as if it were accurate history does not in any way diminish the value of Daniel's book. The fact that stories in the book of Daniel are "unhistorical," according to Goldingay, is that "they manifest the positive features of romance and legend, genres that make use of fictional features as well as historical ones in order to achieve their aim of telling an edifying story."[34] Although conservative scholars would question the edifying value of a book that contains historical errors while presenting itself as historical fact, Goldingay chides all those who would engage in such criticism: "To imply that they are at fault if they contain unhistorical features is to judge them on alien criteria. . ."[35] And, just in case anyone would attempt to discover whether these stories are in fact accurate history, Goldingay warns, "to defend them by seeking to establish that at such points they are factual after all is to collude with such a false starting point."[36]

So, by the magic of genre classification, we have become content with the falsehoods in Daniel's, stories (or the stories or teaching of any other biblical book for that matter), and we have vilified those who would attempt to absolve Daniel of these charges by doing their historical homework. In other words, genre classification can be employed to excuse and authorize any kind of treatment of the biblical text. If you don't want to believe that Matthew's gospel is completely accurate, then simply classify it as midrash. If you don't accept the Genesis account as actually describing how God created the heavens and the earth, then simply classify it as poetry and chalk it up to symbolism.

But there is a problem, at least according to the words ascribed to Jesus in the Gospel of John. Jesus is reputed to have said to Nicodemus, "If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (John 3:12).[37] In other words, if we cannot trust the Bible when it tells us about the things on earth that we can verify by our independent investigations, then how can we trust it when it tells us about heavenly things, things that we do not have the capacity to verify? If Daniel's book contains inaccurate history that Daniel is presenting as if it were true, then how can we know whether the

spiritual lessons it teaches are not equally inaccurate? If we cannot trust Daniel with reference to history, how can we be edified with the possibility that any other lesson it teaches may be equally untrustworthy?

One Final Consideration

We must dispel one final notion. The function of genre in relation to meaning is not at all clarified by appealing to Wittgenstein's notion of language games. In fact, the whole concept of meaning is undermined by playing Wittgenstein's game. This is not the place to attempt an exposition and critique of Wittgenstein's notions, but we must say enough to show that his concept of language games is not helpful, but rather destructive of meaning. Wittgenstein illustrates his notion of language games by reference to actual games. When one considers all the games that one knows, one realizes that there is no one common characteristic that can be identified as the essence of all games: "Consider for example the proceedings that we call 'games.' I mean board-games, card-games, ball-games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all?"[38] But Wittgenstein does not want us to think about it: "don't' think, but look! [*denk nicht, sondern schau!*]"[39] What he means by this is, don't start with the supposition that because all these activities are designated "games" that they must have something in common. Rather, set aside this assumption and just look at the games themselves. Wittgenstein believes that if you look at all the games you will inevitably conclude that instead of a single characterizing essence or nature, you will "see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail."[40]

First of all it must be pointed out that Wittgenstein's characterization of the term 'games' is arbitrary and serves to define his position into existence. Wittgenstein's claim that there are no characteristics that can be found in all games is true only if one defines a game in Wittgenstein's terms. However, one can easily define what constitutes a game in such a manner as to capture one or more characteristics that are the same for all, and one can argue that the term 'game' is predicated on other activities only analogically. Wittgenstein never justifies his understanding of what constitutes a game. Rather, he simply and arbitrarily assumes that games are what he thinks them to be, and so his notion of language games follows. However, one is not constrained to define games in the manner of Wittgenstein. Someone throwing a ball against a wall is not properly a game but is characterized as a game only analogically. So, without a decisive argument for defining games the way Wittgenstein does, his argument

merely begs the question.

In terms of language, Wittgenstein's characterization means that there is no single essence or nature that encompasses all language use. Consequently, language games are incommensurable. It follows from this that language games cannot be like genres since genres can be compared and contrasted. A language game is not like a type the way E. D. Hirsch characterizes it.[41] Hirsch characterizes the role of genre in interpretation as illustrated in the case of communication: "The role of genre concepts in interpretation is most easily grasped when the process of interpretation is going badly or when it has to undergo revision: 'Oh! you've been talking about a book all the time. I thought it was about a restaurant,' or 'I thought I understood you, but now I'm not so sure.'"[42] But these characterizations do not fit the notion of language games. In fact, the first example is not a case of meaning but of reference, in the Fragean sense. To say "I thought you were talking about a restaurant," is not to be confused about meaning, but about the referent of a communication. Indeed, the hearer's confusion arises from the very fact that he has understood meaning but realizes that this meaning does not refer to what he surmises is the referent. Once the correct referent is identified, then the confusion is alleviated. If this had been a confusion about meaning, then identifying the referent would not have alleviated the confusion. But, according to Wittgenstein's characterization of language games, if the speaker and the hearer were playing two language games, then communication would not have occurred on any level, and the hearer would not be able to move from his own language game to the game being played by the speaker since there is no nature or essence that could make such a transition possible. Also, if the hearer is merely confused about the referent, then this indicates that some communication has occurred even though the two are employing different genres. It is the single essence or nature of language that makes the transition from one genre to another possible.

Hirsch goes on to say,

> Such experiences, in which a misunderstanding is recognized during the process of interpretation, illuminate an extremely important aspect of speech that usually remains hidden. They show that, quite aside from the speaker's choice of words, and, even more remarkably, quite aside from the context in which the utterance occurs, the details of meaning that an interpreter understands are powerfully determined and constituted by his meaning expectations. And these expectations arise from the interpreter's

conception of the type of meaning that is being expressed.[43]

But this characterization does not take into account that for there to be misunderstanding there must be some level of understanding. Unless there is some level of understanding, misunderstanding could never be identified. Hirsch's own examples indicate this fact.

Again, this is not the place to enter into a critique of Hirsch's proposals. Rather, it is hoped that these brief comments will serve to alert us to the fact that Wittgenstein's concept of language games is ultimately destructive of the very possibility of meaning. *Genre classification is possible because of the universal essence or nature of all language. And in every communication, some level of understanding must take place in order to make genre identification possible. This identification can be made only by means of the normal-historical-grammatical method of interpretation.*

Conclusion

Genre does not determine meaning, and meaning is not genre-dependent. The very fact that the genre classifications of so many portions of the biblical text are debated and disputed, and yet this does not hinder in the least our understanding of those passages, tells us that meaning is not genre-dependent. Of course that depends upon what you mean by the word 'meaning.' If the word 'meaning' is used to talk about the meanings of the words and sentences in their context, then this meaning is not genre-dependent. It is this very meaning that must be understood in order to discover in which genre a given text might be classified.

However, if by 'meaning' is meant the lesson that a text is attempting to convey or significance of a text, how the parts interplay to tell the overall story, then genre identification is often quite indispensable—often but not always. As is the case in biblical studies, genre classification for a particular text is frequently disputed, but this does not necessarily make understanding the meaning impossible. Genre often enhances our understanding of the meaning of a passage. It does not determine its meaning.

[1] This is an updated version of "Does Genre Determine Meaning?," *Christian Apologetics Journal* 6/1 (Spring 2007), 1-19.

[2] Jeffrey A. D. Weima, "Literary Criticism," in *Interpreting the New*

Testament: Essays on Methods and Issues, ed. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001), 150.

[3] Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, 2d ed. (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 7-9.

[4] Margaret Davies, "Genre," in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 265.

[5] James A. Montgomery, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927). Montgomery does have a discussion about Daniel as apocalyptic writing, but his discussion is primarily on the theological rather than the literary level.

[6] Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel*, vol. 18, *The New American Commentary*, ed. E. Ray Clendenen (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994).

[7] Bruce Corley, Steve Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy, *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1996), 264.

[8] Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 9.

[9] Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 16.

[10] Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 16-17.

[11] Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral*, 9.

[12] John Hayes and Carl Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 7; quoted in W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, 2d ed. (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 69-70.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Etienne Gilson, *Forms and Substances in the Arts*, trans. Salvator Attansio (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966; reprint, Chicago: Dalkey Archive Press, 2001), 4 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

[15] Ibid., 212.

[16] Cite BHS.

[17] Gilson, *Forms and Substances in the Arts*, 4.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 6.

[20] Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1982), 256.

[21] Cf. Ex. 23:19.

[22] Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 260.

[23] Ibid., 261.

[24] Ibid., 263.

[25] Tremper Longman, III, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987), 3.

[26] Ernest Lucas, *Daniel*, vol. 20, *Apollos Old Testament Commentary*, ed. David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham (Leicester, England: Apollos, 2002), 23.

[27] Ibid., 24.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 23.

[31] Ibid., 24.

[32] Miller, *Daniel*, 45.

[33] John E. Goldingay, *Daniel*, vol. 30, *Word Biblical Commentary*, ed. David A. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, Publisher, 1989), 321.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] John 3:12.

[38] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §66. “Betrachte z.B. einmal die Vorgänge, die wir ‘Spiele’ nennen. Ich meine Brettspiele, Kartenspiele, Ballspiele, Kampfspiele, u.s.w.. Was ist allen diesen gemeinsam?”

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid. “Wir sehen ein kompliziertes Netz von Ähnlichkeiten, die einander übergreifen und kreuzen. Ähnlichkeiten im Großen und Kleinen.”

[41] E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1967), 70f.

[42] Ibid., 71.

[43] Ibid., 72.

CHAPTER 14

OBJECTIVITY IN INTERPRETATION

Thomas A. Howe



The Problem of Objectivity

A universally accepted characteristic among contemporary interpreters is the rejection of objectivity as something that is or should be an attempt to "tell it like it is" or "get reality right." Almost everyone attempts to qualify his or her account of objectivity by distancing the definition or description from what seems to be the usual notion that objectivity is somehow a right conception of the real world or a right representation of the way the world really is. In other words, there is an inevitable attempt to distance oneself from a naïve realism, the notion that it is possible correctly to represent to one's mind the way reality actually is.

Attack on the Objectivity of Knowledge

It seems to be universally accepted in discussions on objectivity that it is impossible to be objective or have objective knowledge in the sense of "getting it right." The traditional sense of objectivity as an unbiased and ahistorical "view from nowhere" has come under severe attack. As one author asserts, "Not only has everyone his or her own preunderstanding but without such a conceptual framework observation and interpretation are not possible. The only way to approach an object such as a text with a so-called unbiased mind is to be mindless."[1] According to Gail Soffer, Hans-Georg Gadamer "sounds the death-knell of the traditional conception of objectivity, using the historicity of

understanding to refute the possibility of trans-historically valid interpretation."[2]

Historicity will be discussed later, but briefly it is the notion that "historical man always sees and understands from his standpoint in time and place; he cannot, says Gadamer, stand above the relativity of history and procure 'objectively valid knowledge.' Such a standpoint presupposes an absolute philosophical knowledge—an invalid assumption."[3]

For Gadamer, understanding is possible by virtue of the prejudice (*Vorurteilshaftigkeit*), or as David Weberman translates this term, the "essential prejudgmentladenness of all understanding."[4] As Gadamer explains, "the idea of an absolute reason is not a possibility for historical humanity. Reason exists for us only in concrete, historical terms—i.e., it is not its own master but remains constantly dependent on the given circumstance in which it operates."[5] Historicity, then, is the historical-cultural context from within which and in relation to which humans encounter the world. Gadamer refers to this phenomenon as *Wirkungsgeschichte*, "effective history."[6] We might call this someone's 'historical situatedness.' Because everyone encounters the world from a particular historical situatedness the notion of 'absolute knowledge,' or knowledge that transcends one's own historical context, must be rejected. As Jean Grondin puts it, "The quest for universally valid truth undeniably threatens to conceal the reality of understanding and orient it toward a cognitive ideal that it can never in fact realize."

Feminism has also mounted a sustained assault on the notion of objectivity, particularly as this is supposed to be operative in the sciences. Feminist writer Dale Spender declares, "Gone are the days when we could believe that all knowledge existed 'out there' in the wilderness, merely waiting for brilliant men to discover it and to make impartial records uncoloured by their own opinions and beliefs. Like it or not, we have to come to terms with more recent discoveries (to which feminism has made an enormous contribution) that human beings invent or construct knowledge in accordance with the values and beliefs with which they begin."[8] According to many feminist writers, not only is the scientific enterprise not free from the bias and idiosyncrasies of the individual inquirer, but, as Hawkesworth reports, "Claims of detachment, disinterest, distance, and universality merely serve as mechanisms for male hegemony, substituting certain men's perspectives for an impossible 'view from nowhere.'"[9]

Attack on Objectivity in Interpretation

The rejection of the possibility of objectivity is not only directed at the traditional notion of unbiased and ahistorical knowledge, but it is also directed at the notion of objectivity in interpretation. And this attack on objectivity in interpretation comes not only from non-religious or non-Christian sources, but from Evangelicals. W. Randolph Tate emphatically declares, “There is no such thing as a pure reading, an objective interpretation.”[10] The rejection of objectivity among Evangelicals has approached the status of a mantra. In their *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard declare, “No one comes to the task of understanding as an objective observer.”[11] Gerhard Maier asserts, “Since [the time of W. Wrede] we have come to realize that such ‘objective,’ presuppositionless exegesis is not possible.”[12] The title of an article in a book on Christian apologetics reads, “There’s No Such Thing as Objective Truth, and It’s a Good Thing Too.”[13] Alice Ogden Bellis notes that there is an “emerging consensus” among biblical interpreters that “objectivity is impossible and even dangerous.”[14]

Some theorists add the qualifying term “totally” or “completely”[15] to indicate this notion of being unbiased or free from all preconditions. We have already quoted Moisés Silva who declares, “total objectivity on the part of the interpreter. . . does not exist.”[16] As if it were a universally accepted matter-of-fact truth, Bellis remarks, “Of course no individual interpreter can be completely objective.”[17] Other authors, while not using the specific terms “objective” or “objectivity,” express the same notion by rejecting the idea of a preconditionless approach, or a view that does not come from a particular perspective or framework of preunderstanding. Duncan Ferguson defines preunderstanding as “the phenomenon of perspective which the observer of any event brings to its meaning.”[18] Ferguson goes on to assert, “Whenever anyone attempts to ‘hear’ what the text has to say, that person inevitably hears and identifies the sounds from within a prior structure of experience or preunderstanding. To doubt one’s own capacity to be free from preunderstanding which necessarily colors the perceptions and interpretations of reality is the beginning of epistemological wisdom.”[19] Grant Osborne affirms, “The simple fact is that all of us read a text on the basis of our own background and proclivities. . . . A close reading of the text cannot be done without a perspective provided by one’s preunderstanding as identified by a ‘sociology of knowledge’ perspective. Reflection itself demands mental categories, and these are built upon one’s presupposed worldview and by the faith or reading community to which one belongs.”[20] Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton make similar claims in their book on interpretation. They say, “Interpreting any text involves two different types of assumptions. First,

underlying all our thinking and interpreting are our presuppositions about life and ultimate realities, our worldview. These provide the basic foundation for how we understand everything. Second are the assumptions which we make about the nature of the text we are reading."[21] And again, Silva declares, "The very possibility of understanding anything depends on our prior framework of interpretation."[22]

Implications of the Attack upon Objectivity

There are, then, two notions that seem to attach to every discussion of objectivity. First, objectivity is understood to entail a neutrality, or a preconditionless approach to the text and to reality. So, objectivity is seen to be equivalent to neutrality. Secondly, preconditionless objectivity must be rejected as a naïve approach that ignores the fact that a person's interpretive framework, historical situatedness, or worldview. In fact, it is these very factors that constitute the means by which understanding is made possible. Indeed, to assume that one can approach the text with no preconditions is just as much a precondition in itself as any other precondition. Objectivity is seen to be equivalent to naivety.

There are two significant implications for biblical interpretation that follow directly from these two notions about objectivity. First, if objectivity is equivalent to neutrality, and no one can be neutral without jettisoning the very preconditional framework that makes understanding possible, then no one can approach the text apart from his own preconditional framework, and this framework unavoidably influences his interpretation of the text. Consequently, every interpretation will necessarily be a product of one's own preconditions, and this fact militates against one's degree of certainty about having arrived at *the* correct interpretation. As one text puts the point, "awareness of the problem should generate the appropriate caution, both in respect of method and in the degree of certainty we attach to our 'conclusions.' We need fully to recognize that *our* reading of the letter to Philemon (or whatever), however certain we may feel it is what Paul meant, *is actually only a hypothesis*—our *hypothesis—about the discourse meaning*. It is the result of seeing certain aspects of the text and providing what we understand to be the meaning that provides coherence to the evidence."[23] Commenting on similar conclusions by Rudolf Bultmann and Karl Barth, James Smart declared, "[Bultmann] and Barth were agreed that it is impossible for any interpreter of Scripture to be uninfluenced by his theological and philosophical convictions and that scholars who claim to achieve this are

guilty of an unconscious dishonesty."[24] So, the first implication is that no one can approach a text of Scripture apart from his own preconditional framework, and this framework unavoidably militates against the possibility of an objective, or totally objective, interpretation.

The second implication that follows is that, with the rejection of objectivity, there would seem to be no grounds upon which to adjudicate between conflicting interpretations. If every interpretation is the product of one's preconditions, and everyone's preconditions are the product of his own historical and cultural situatedness, then there can be no *correct* interpretation, only various interpretations or "readings." Smart identifies this problem as following from the very perspectivism which he identified in Bultmann and Barth: "The danger inherent in this development was that theological interpretations of Scripture would be its meaning for this or that theologian. Thus, theological exposition, instead of penetrating to the one word of God in Scripture that brings all Christians into fellowship with one another, would give each segment of the Christian community the license to read its own theological convictions out of the text of Scripture."[25]

The historicity of Gadamer seems particularly inimical to the notion of a correct interpretation. As James Reichmann explains, "That this view [Gadamer's *Wirkungsgeschichte*] has profound consequences for Gadamer's truth theory is clear. He may not allow that a text can be definitely interpreted, or that the fullness of its truth can ever be known. Or perhaps more exactly, one cannot properly speak of a correct interpretation of a text. Fresh interpretations are always possible, and each of these in its own way contributes to the rich, varied mosaic of tradition."[26] Indeed, the rejection of the notion of a *correct* interpretation is not only seen as a consequence of the rejection of objectivity, it is often a celebrated consequence among theoreticians. As one author put it, "in spite of Protestant tradition, Scripture does not constitute an objective, fixed, and inflexible source of authority. It is rather an authority which every individual interprets in the light of his total experience and present purpose. . . . Instead of hastily condemning those interpretations that differ from our own, we shall concede that other analyses of Scripture may be valid in relation to other interpreters. . . . In short we shall insist upon adopting those types of interpretations that are most productive of meaning for us."[27]

Unfortunately, with the rejection of objective meaning comes a rejection of objective truth. This is the conclusion of G. B. Madison in his book, *The*

Hermeneutics of Postmodernity: “The truth about what objectivists call ‘the truth’ is, as Nietzsche declared with uncompromising honesty [truth?], that there is no such thing. Does this mean that everything is up for grabs, that we have fallen back—O horror of horrors!—into the dreadful abyss of nihilistic relativism? Most assuredly not. For we are certainly seeking to be truthful when we say there is no such thing as ‘the truth.’ There is no good reason why we should allow ourselves to fall prey to the Cartesian anxiety, the metaphysical either-or (either there is meaning, in which case it is objectively determinate, or everything is meaningless).”[28] And again Ferguson categorically declares, “None may claim an ‘Archimedean vantage point’ from which to peer at truth.”[29] In other words, it seems that if there is no objective meaning, there can be no objective truth. As Robert Greer puts it, “absolute truth. . . is indeed elusive and ultimately unattainable.”[30]

Objectivity in Contemporary Biblical Interpretation

Evangelical Repudiation of Perspectivism

Many Evangelical authors adamantly repudiate the relativism that seems to follow from the perspectivism of a Gadamerian or historicist type of hermeneutics. After a lengthy discussion of the role of the preconditions of understanding in which they assert, “Interpreters approach texts with questions, biases, and preunderstandings that emerge out of their personal situations,” and that these preconditions “[i]nevitably. . . influence the answers they obtain,” Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard emphatically deny that this situation leads to subjectivity and relativism:

> Following such a discussion of preunderstanding, one may wonder if we are doomed to subjectivity in interpretation. Can we ever interpret the Bible in an objective fashion, or do we simply detect in its pages only what we want or are predisposed to see? Can we only say what is “true for me” and despair of finding truth that is universal or absolute?. . . Recognizing the role of our preunderstanding does not doom us to a closed circle—that we find in a text what we want to find in a text—though that looms as an ever-present danger. The honest, active interpreter remains open to change, even to a significant transformation of preunderstandings.[31]

McCartney and Clayton, who also acknowledge the unavoidability of the

preconditions of interpretation, make a similar claim to the possibility of arriving at a “right” interpretation.

> We will argue later that there is a right way to understand Isaiah 53 or any other passage and that the right way is indicated by the nature of the text itself. However, discerning this is not a matter of escaping or suspending our presuppositions, but changing and adapting them. We really cannot escape them. Since the things we assume are to us selfevident, we may be unconscious of them, but they still determine our understanding, and without them there is no understanding. Any time we find “meaning” in a text, we arrive at that “meaning” by fitting it in with our previous knowledge. And this involves assumptions or presuppositions about such things as the nature of the text we are reading, the meaning of life, and how we know things. All our interpreting activity in life involves assumptions, just as in geometry every theorem can only be proven on the basis of previous theorems, and “selfevident” assumptions. Presuppositions form the basis of the “interpretive framework” by which we understand things.[32]

On the one hand, Evangelical theories acknowledge the role of one’s historical situatedness, one’s worldview, and the preconditions of interpretation that are inescapable and that inevitably influence one’s interpretation, but on the other hand they shun the perspectivism, subjectivism, and relativism that seems to follow from this approach; a perspectivism that is not only acknowledged outside Evangelical circles, but is celebrated and promoted as the only rational approach. But this stance raises some questions: 1) How can one at the same time acknowledge the unavoidability of one’s preconditional framework and yet also retain some sense of a correct meaning or objective truth? As many theoreticians have argued, the preconditional framework seems necessarily to militate against the notion of objectivity. 2) Once objectivity is abandoned, on what basis can conflicting interpretations be adjudicated, and is adjudicating between interpretations even a desirable or reasonable task in light of a perspectivist approach? Can the claim of a *correct* interpretation be maintained against the historicist assumption? Let me illustrate the problem, Daniel B. Wallace makes the following comment in a footnote to his discussion about the relation between aspect and *Aktionsart* of a Greek verb: “As much as one might want the theology of a text to be a certain way, just to pull a grammatical category out of the hat—to employ it without regard for its normal semantic situation—is not responsible grammatical exegesis. Yet we all do this. . . partially because there are no unbiased exegetes (though some are more biased

than others). But an increasingly better grasp of the parameters of Koine Greek is helping all students of the NT to gain a valid interpretation of the NT message. This 'valid interpretation' is beyond what is merely possible; it has to do with what is probable."[33] The problem that arises is that since, according to Wallace "there are no unbiased exegetes," then who decides what is and what is not "valid"? Even his discussion of the affected and unaffected meanings involves the bias of the observer, and his estimation of what counts and does not count in estimating the relevant evidence must also be affected by one's bias. He talks about the "undisputed" instances of an historical present verb, but according to whose bias are they identified as undisputed? To whose bias does one appeal in order to decide what is a "normal semantic situation"? The data of the text is not selfinterpreting nor is it conveniently labeled for classification. Nevertheless, Wallace still insists that a "valid" interpretation is not merely possible, but in fact "has to do with what is probable." How can one justify the claim to a valid interpretation in the face of an unavoidable bias?

Evangelicals and the "Correct" Interpretation

In light of this seemingly wholesale rejection of objectivity, the possibility of a correct interpretation seems to be a moot point. This leads to the conclusion that there can be no means of adjudicating between conflicting interpretations. In fact, the very notion of adjudicating between interpretations seems meaningless since every interpretation is relevant to the preconditional framework of the interpreter. For those theorists who hold to the possibility of objective meaning, this poses a serious problem. Many Evangelical interpreters claim that there is in fact a *correct* interpretation of the biblical text and that it is possible to decide which interpretation is better. Also, many Evangelicals claim that a *correct* interpretation of the text is at least an important part of the interpreter's goal, and the achievement of this goal involves at least two lines of approach: 1) an interpreter must be aware of his own preconditional framework and be diligent to maintain a willingness for this framework to be challenged, reshaped, and redirected; and 2) an interpreter must employ the appropriate methods of interpretation. As Robertson McQuilkin puts it, "One must not only have the right attitude and approach; he must also use good methods and develop skill in their use."[34]

But do these principles work out in actual conflicts? Interpreters who hold conflicting views make claims and counter claims, appeal to Scriptures as evidence against contrary appeals, but little headway toward a solution seems to

be made. Everyone appeals to the same body of Scripture, and everyone seems to propose that his own interpretation is superior to the interpretations of his opponents. However, no one seems to convince anyone else, and, with the rejection of objectivity, there does not seem any longer to be an objective standard to which to appeal in order to resolve the conflicts. Often the combatants affirm an adherence to a preconditional framework and a set of hermeneutical principles that are virtually indistinguishable from their opponents.

Factors such as illustrated in the brief example above have caused many theorists to question whether objectivity in interpretation is possible or even desirable. The possibility of objectivity in interpretation has been called into question by both nonEvangelical and Evangelical interpreters. Cotterell and Turner assert, "Any confidence in the 'objectivity' of our findings must be further called into question by the frank recognition that many if not all scholars would be prepared to admit they are *ultimately* studying Paul (or Calvin or whomever) *in order to understand themselves and their God*."[35] They acknowledge that this notion implies the danger of misunderstanding and distortion, but they assert that this does not create a hopelessness in the interpreter's quest for the "discourse meaning." The influence of the interpreter, and the lack of objectivity should, they claim, "generate the appropriate caution, both in respect of method and in the degree of certainty we attach to our 'conclusions.'"[36] This approach is typical of contemporary Evangelical hermeneutic theorists. A multitude of similar assertions can be gleaned from both nonEvangelical and Evangelical authors.

Both Evangelicals and nonEvangelicals attribute the fact of conflicting interpretations to the preconditional framework of the interpreter. Of course this preconditional framework includes the hermeneutic principles and methodology which an interpreter adopts. Nonevangelical theorists generally applaud the diversity and multiplicity of interpretive conclusions. Evangelical theorists generally affirm the need to adjudicate between conflicting interpretations and the possibility of discovering the *correct* interpretation, or at least a "more" correct or better interpretation. However, the question remains, can the claim of a *correct* meaning be maintained in the face of the historicist assumption and the rejection of objective meaning? If there is no objectivity, if all conclusions are the product of equally viable preconditional frameworks, if everyone's framework is the product of his historical situatedness, then on what basis can interpreters adjudicate between conflicting interpretations? On what basis can

anyone claim to have “the correct” interpretation? On what basis can Van Kampen’s interpretation be accepted over Dake’s, or Dake’s over Van Kampen’s? Both seemed to employ what most Evangelicals would classify as acceptable hermeneutical principles, and both assumed the inerrancy of the text. A closer examination of the respective application of their principles might uncover inconsistencies, or a more thorough examination of their respective preconditional frameworks might uncover the presence of additional assumptions, but on what basis can either one’s interpretation be preferred?

If it is impossible to adjudicate between interpretations, perhaps it might be possible to adjudicate between preconditional frameworks. However, does not even the adjudication between preconditional frameworks necessitate objectivity? If everyone interprets the world through his or her own preconditional framework, then the possibility of adjudicating between frameworks becomes impossible. Everyone would simply understand his opponent’s framework in terms of his own, and any criticisms would be valid only within the framework of the particular interpreter. The rejection of objectivity seems to entail the loss of objective meaning, and the loss of objective meaning seems to entail the loss of objective truth. As William Lane Craig put it, “the abandonment of objective standards of truth and rationality could only undermine the Christian faith in the long run by making its call to repentance and faith in Christ but one more voice in the cacophony of subjectively satisfying but objectively vacuous religious interpretations of the world.”[37]

It will perhaps be helpful now to restate the issue with which we are concerned and the direction we will take in addressing this issue. We will do this in a series of assertions:

1. 1. Conflicting interpretations are often the result of conflicting perspectives.
2. 2. Conflicting interpretations that are the result of conflicting perspectives seem to be unresolvable.
3. 3. This has led to the generally espoused assertion that objectivity is not possible.
4. 4. However, Evangelicals almost universally agree that it is possible to have a *correct* interpretation of Scripture.
5. 5. Nevertheless, Evangelicals also almost universally agree that objectivity is not possible.

6. 6. The rejection of objectivity is predicated on the fact that everyone approaches the text with a set of preconditions that necessarily and unavoidably influence one's interpretive conclusions.
7. 7. The fact of preconditions seems to be selfevident and undeniable.
8. 8. But, if everyone approaches the text with his or her own set of preconditions, and these preconditions necessarily and unavoidably influence one's interpretive conclusions, it does not seem possible to maintain the assertion that there can be a *correct* interpretation.
9. 9. The recognition of the fact of preconditions seems to entail the rejection of objectivity.
10. 10. But, the rejection of objectivity seems to entail a perspectivism that disallows anyone from claiming that his or her interpretation is *the* correct interpretation, not only of the biblical text, but of anything whatsoever.
11. 11. Question: Is it possible to maintain a notion of a *correct* interpretation of Scripture in the face of the seemingly selfevident fact that everyone comes to the text with his or her own preconditional framework?

These above points are necessarily brief, and there are many other factors that may enter into a fully developed presentation of the current state of affairs in the question of objectivity in interpretation. Nevertheless, the above points set forth the basic contours of the contemporary perspective on the issue. It is the argument of this book that it is not only possible to retain objectivity while acknowledging the fact of the pervasiveness of preconditional frameworks, but that objectivity is unavoidable and undeniable. This argument will proceed along three lines. First, it will be our task to investigate the notion of objectivity in an effort to discover its nature. Is objectivity equivalent to neutrality? Is it possible, in the light of the preconditions of interpretation, to have any degree of neutrality? Secondly, it will be our task to investigate the notion of the preconditions of interpretation in an effort to uncover the factors that compose one's preconditions and to attempt to discover whether in fact preconditions are necessarily inimical to objectivity. Thirdly, this study will propose an alternative to the popular notions of objectivity and the preconditions of interpretation that will redefine the notion of preconditions in a way that will restore the possibility of objectivity in interpretation. The argument of this book is that objectivity in interpretation is possible, and that it is possible to resolve conflicts that arise as a result of the different preconditions of different interpreters.

The Root of the Problem

All claims against objectivity have a common thread. They all assert that the perspective, preconceptions, worldview, preunderstanding, presuppositions, or what ever other designations are used, necessarily predispose the observer or the interpreter to perceive in a manner that is molded, directed, or impacted by these preexisting conditions. The unavoidable impact of these preexisting conditions that necessarily predispose observation or interpretation according to one's point of view is due to the fact that no one has direct access to the world. Our contact with the world is always in terms of how the world is represented to a knowing mind. In other words, the root problem in all attacks on objectivity is a representationalist epistemology.

A representationalist epistemology asserts that the knower is able to contact the world only by means of some representation of the world to the mind. It is painfully obvious, so it is believed, that since the world is composed of corporeal bodies extended in space, and since the mind is incorporeal, that it is absurd to hold that the material world is able to enter the immaterial mind of a knower. Consequently, what the mind must do is to form some kind of representation of the world. This representation may be a concept, an idea, a picture, or a word. Regardless of what it is called, there is something in the mind that is supposed to represent the world to the mind. The world is always outside the mind, and what is in the mind is a representation of that world.

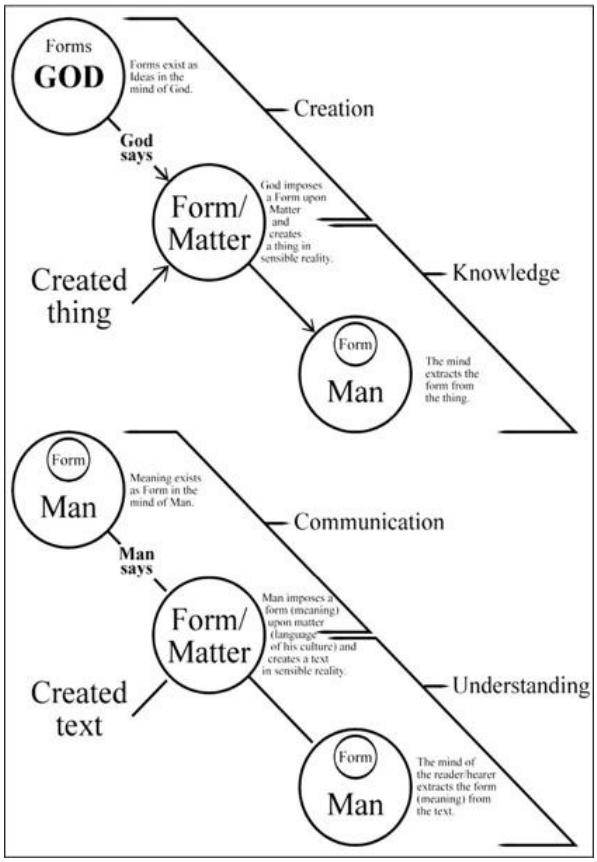
Of course the thorn in the flesh of this view has been the problem of justifying the claim to knowledge on the basis of a representational epistemology. If what is in the mind is a representation of the world, and if the world is always outside the mind, how can we know that our representation is accurate? Additionally, the Achilles' heel of this approach is the self-referential problem that plagues all versions of relativism. Whether the relativism is based on the claim that there is no direct access to the world, that these are no certain foundations—whether our own historical situatedness prevents a trans-historical perspective, or whether all observation is theory-laden—these proposals assumes the very objectivity and direct access to the data that is emphatically denied.

The Foundation of Meaning

The diagram in Figure 1 attempts to diagram the principles of the foundation of meaning. The first part of the diagram illustrates that the forms of all things that are created by God exist in the Divine intellect as Divine ideas. These ideas are the forms of things existing apart from the things themselves. As Etienne

Gilson explains, “the form of a thing can exist apart from the thing in two distinct ways; either because it is the exemplar of that of which it is said to be the form, or because it is the principle which enables us to know the things. In either case, we must assume ideas to exist in God.”[38] All things exist in God’s mind before their existence in the finite world of things. The creative act of God is characterized in the Scripture by the phrase, “and

Figure 11: Foundation of Meaning



God said.” God imposes a form upon the matter and creates a thing in reality. The resultant real object is composed of form and matter. When a man knows an object in reality, the form of the thing comes to exist in the mind of the knower. Consequently, it is not necessary for a man to go back into the mind of God in order to know reality. Rather, man knows reality by means of the form of the thing as it is in itself.

The second half of the diagram illustrates the event of communication and understanding. Analogous to the existence of the forms as Divine ideas in the mind of God, so the forms, or meanings, exist in the mind of man as ideas. A

man takes the matter, his language, imposes upon it a form, meaning, and creates a text in reality. In this act, man imitates God's creative act. A second man is able to extract the form of the text by which he understands the meaning of the text, for the form is the meaning. In this act man knows the meaning of the text in a way analogous to the way he knows a thing in reality. Consequently, it is not necessary for the second man to attempt to go behind the text into the mind of an author in order to discover the meaning of a text. The meaning of the text is located in the text as its form, which is analogous to the way the form of the thing in reality is located in the thing in reality. As God is the efficient cause of the being of things, a human author is the secondary efficient cause of the meaning of texts. God is not the Originator of *all* specific meanings, although He certainly is the Originator of some specific meanings, such as His Word. However, God, as the primary efficient cause, has created the universe in which specific meanings are possible. Human beings, as secondary *efficient* causes, are the originators of some specific meanings, such as the sentences they speak, but not the creators of meaning *qua* meaning. In short, God made all specific meaning possible and some specific meanings actual, while humans make some specific meanings actual.

If the illustration is accurate, then, by virtue of the forms of things that exist in the things, the proper object of knowledge is not our ideas, but the real world as it is in itself. So also, the proper object of communication is meaning of the text that has been informed by the author of the text. It is this analogous relation of God's creative activity by "saying" and man's communicative activity by "saying" that forms the foundation for objective meaning.

The Interpretation of Meaning

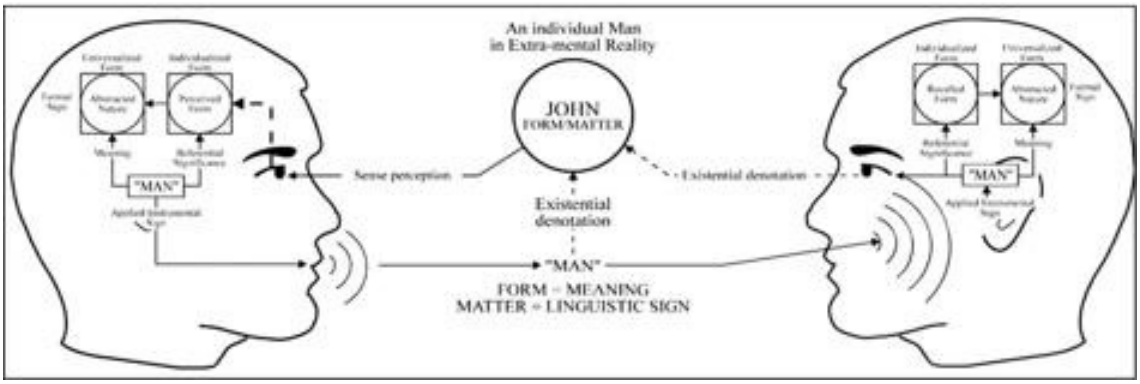
The fact of meaning cannot be meaningfully denied. Denying meaning assumes the fact of meaningful communication. The final step, therefore, in the staircase ascent involves an analysis of meaningful communication and a correlation of these observations with the conclusions of the above investigation in order to present an account of meaning in hermeneutics. This section will not deal in depth with the general principles of hermeneutics or hermeneutical methodology, but will consider the relationship of the Moderate Realist theory of the nature of meaning to the issues of the causes and locus of meaningful communication as they relate to hermeneutics in order to offer a paradigm for more detailed investigation. Hermeneutics is the science of understanding, so we will begin our application by a look at the relationship of meaning and

understanding.

Meaning and Understanding

In our previous study we talked about how the mind employs two powers in the act of understanding. Robert Brennan provides the following synopsis: “two separate powers are required in the soul if it is to understand; *agent intellect*, whose object is the potentially understandable, and *possible intellect*, whose object is the actually understandable.”[39] The agent intellect abstracts the essence from the particular, and in the possible intellect the concept is formed that is the means by which the mind understands the thing in reality. But the formation of a concept in the mind by which the intellect knows the thing in reality is nothing else but forming a meaning, for the concept or idea is meaning. Again Mortimer Adler makes this point clear: “. . . our ideas do not *have* meaning, they do not *acquire* meaning, they do not *change*, *gain*, or *lose* meaning. Each of our ideas is a meaning and that is all it is. Mind is the realm in which meanings exist and through which everything else that has a meaning acquires meaning.”[40]

Figure 2: Communication



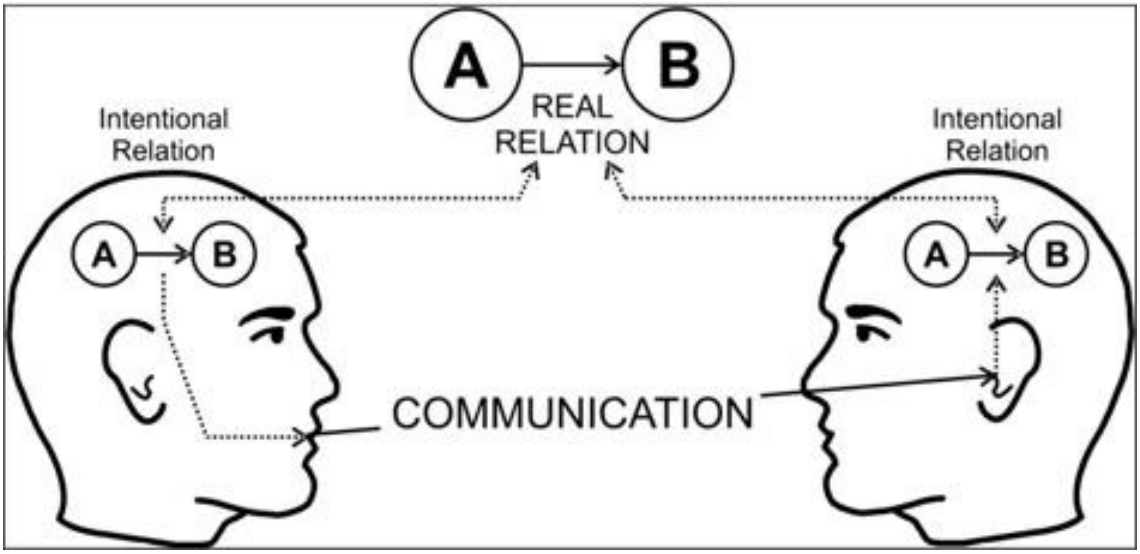
What, then, is understanding? In the words of Winfried Corduan, “understanding is the discernment of the meaning of a proposition.”[41] The diagram in Figure 2 illustrates this. Contrary to the scheme offered by Saussure, the act of communication involves a grounding in objective reality. The speaker speaks a word in the language common to both speaker and hearer. The hearer, upon hearing the word, recalls the individualized form to which the word refers. The meaning of the word is the nature or essence of the thing to which the word refers. In this diagram, the word employed also has existential denotation in that it denotes the actually existing thing. The word is composed of form and matter.

The formal aspect corresponds to the abstracted form existing in the minds of both the speaker and the hearer. The nature of reality and of the mind insures that all minds abstract according to the same principles. The individualized and universalized forms in the minds of each individual are precisely the same because they are determined by the thing in reality, not by the minds of the knowers. Consequently, meaning is grounded in being and is objectively verifiable.

The discernment of the meaning of a proposition presupposes the discernment of the meaning of the words in the proposition and their relationship in context. Not only is meaning derived in this manner concerning objects, but also concerning relations, as the illustration below in Figure 3 shows. William May has observed that because material being is composed and complex rather than simple, and because the intellect necessarily obtains knowledge through sensation, “We just do not have an intuitive grasp of a given being in its totality, in all its wealth.”[42] Human intellectual knowledge is necessarily partial and progresses by means of judgments. What the mind grasps in part, the judgment synthesizes. Consequently, the intellect is able to know relations in reality by means of the act of judgment. David Hume’s problem in discovering causality in sensible experience is that he endeavored to discover it by an analysis of the idea rather than by the function of judgment by which the mind unites or separates distinct ideas.[43]

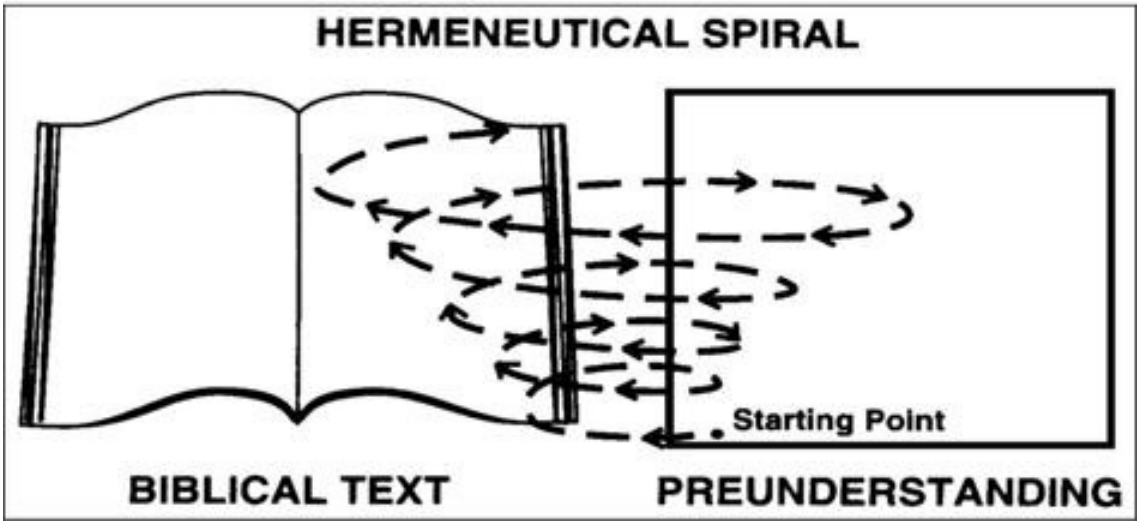
The Moderate Realist view of the nature of meaning, then, relates to understanding because it finds meaning in the concepts of the intellect, which are not themselves the objects of knowledge but are the means by which the intellect attains a knowledge of reality. If understanding is a discerning of meaning, then the Moderate Realist perspective provides meaning grounded in reality.

Figure 3: Communicating Real Relations



On the basis of these principles, an alternative view of the hermeneutical spiral that was depicted in the diagram from KBH (see Figure 4: Hermeneutical Spiral of KBH) can now be proposed. KBH indicated that the starting point of the hermeneutical spiral is within the Preunderstanding of the interpreter. Having identified all aspects of the interpreter's preunderstanding as subject to change, KBH proposed that the interaction of the text with the preunderstanding of the interpreter serves to alter the interpreter's preunderstanding to bring it ever more closely in line with the text.

Figure 4: Hermeneutical Spiral of KBH



The objection to this scenario was that it is nonsensical to suppose that the interpretive conclusions that are the product of the preunderstanding of the interpreter would yield conclusions that would serve to alter the very preunderstanding that has resulted in these interpretive conclusions. Also, since the interpreter does not have any non-preunderstanding mediated access to the text, there is no means by which an interpreter can tell whether he is in fact "getting closer to the text." Additionally, since all aspects of one's preunderstanding are subject to change, according to KBH, it would seem that their very assumption that one's preunderstanding ought to be subject to change is itself subject to change. But, if it is subject to change, then it could change only to the assumption that some aspects of my preunderstanding ought not to change. Indeed, KBH indicate that the assumption of the inevitability of and the mutability of one's preunderstanding are themselves immutable.

I would argue that there is **indeed** a starting point that is not based on anyone's background and proclivities, or basic commitments, or whatever other descriptions contemporary authors have given to preunderstanding. I believe this is precisely what Dr. Osborne and the other authors we have cited, with the exception of McCartney and Clayton, are doing without realizing it. They have intuitively employed this universal starting point because it is an inescapable, undeniable starting point that is not determined by anyone's own background or proclivities or even by their presuppositions. Scholastic philosophers identified this starting point as first principles. These are selfevident principles of thought and being that are part of the metaphysical make-up of human nature. These are not Kantian rational categories, but a Moderate Realist metaphysical structure.

The problem with all the popular assertions and declarations about preunderstanding is that they have all been confined to rational categories. First principles are ultimately not rational categories. Rather, they are metaphysical categories that constitute the very nature of reality and govern how all minds function in relation to reality. I understand Dr. Silva's desire to deny the "blank mind" approach to epistemology since this approach is selfdefeating. But, it is only selfdefeating if one understands the "blank mind" to refer to rational categories as John Locke did. If the mind is totally blank, then there is nothing to which bare experience can be related in order to make sense.

But, the problem with Locke's *tabula rasa* is that he ignored the fact that a blank slate is still a slate. And slates can be written on only in certain ways. In other words, Locke considered the blank slate only in terms of the

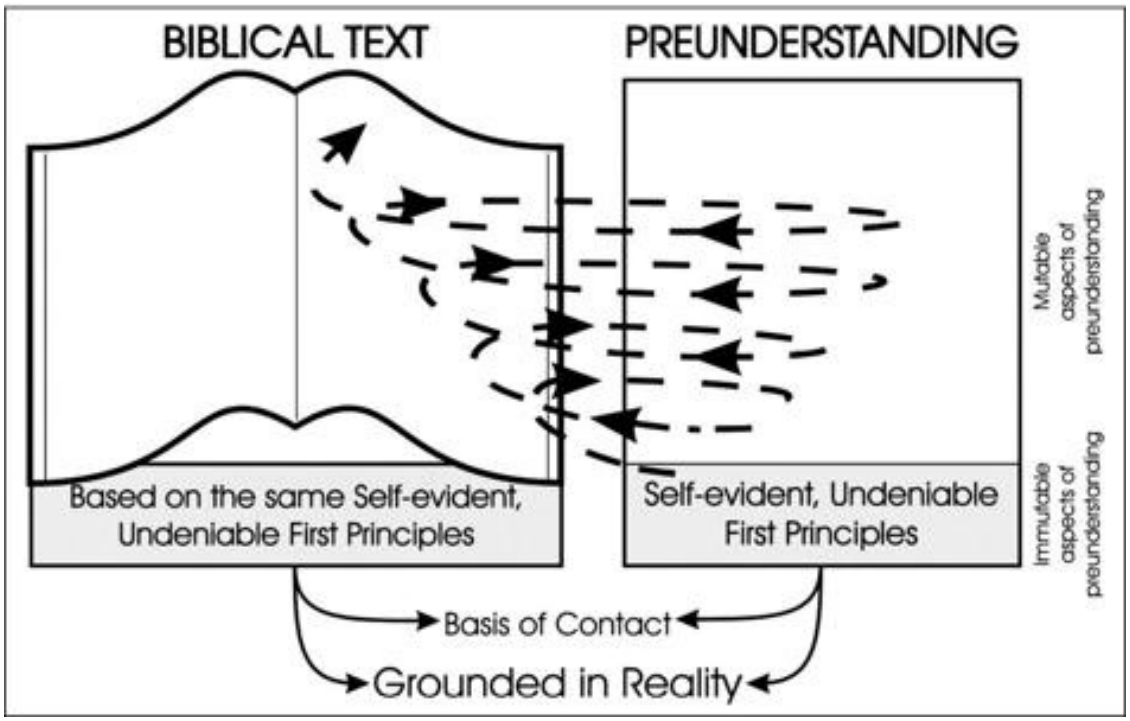
epistemological, or rational, not the metaphysical. For St. Thomas, the *tabula rasa* meant that there were not innate ideas or any rational categories with which one was born. So, from an epistemological or rational aspect, the mind was totally blank. But, the mind did have a metaphysical structure that was created in such a way so as to encounter external reality according to the nature of external reality. Knowledge was more than an epistemological exercise. It was a metaphysical event. Consequently, it was this metaphysical structure that enables the mind to categorize and interpret experience and make sense of the data. And, this metaphysical structure is not the product of any particular rational commitments or systems.

For example, one first principle of thought is the law of noncontradiction. This law states that a proposition cannot be both true and false in the same sense. Why is this a first principle of thought? Because it is grounded in the nature of reality. The reason a proposition cannot be both true and false in the same sense is because a thing cannot both be and not be in the same sense. The rational application of the law of noncontradiction to truth is grounded in the metaphysical nature of external reality. And, since reality is the same for all men everywhere at all times, the first principles of thought are necessarily the same for all men everywhere at all times regardless of their epistemological or philosophical systems or commitments. Even the Buddhist must submit to the law of noncontradiction. Any time anyone makes any truth claim about anything they necessarily deny its contradiction. It is inescapable as an aspect of the nature of reality, and as a first principle of thought. Two related first principles are excluded middle and identity. The law of excluded middle asserts that a proposition is either true or false, there is no middle – A or ~A. The law of identity says that if a proposition is true, it is true – A is A. So, when it comes to evaluating one's presuppositions or preunderstanding, we do have a set of first principles that transcend every set of presuppositions or every case of preunderstanding against which we can evaluate our presuppositions and preunderstanding in order to discover whether these conform to the nature of reality.

On the basis of the fact of the existence of selfevident first principles of thought and being, there is an alternative to the scenario proposed by KBH, and this is illustrated in Figure 5. We can adopt the basic position illustrated in the diagram by KBH, but modify it to include the selfevident, undeniable first principles of thought and being that ground interpretation in reality—namely, those assumptions that are not subject to change and are the same for everyone,

at all times, and in all places. This grounding offers an unshakable foundation against which the claims of the text can be evaluated, and against which one's interpretation of the text can be measured. The objective truths of the text, then, can be recognized as such by a preunderstanding that is created in the image of God. The mutable aspects of one's preunderstanding can then be adjusted as the truths of the text interact with the understanding of the interpreter, and adjudication between conflicting interpretations can proceed with reference to first principles that are the same for the interpreter and the text. Also, it is not the case that the interpreter becomes the judge of the text since both the text and the interpreter have the same selfevident first principles, which are the same for all people, at all times, in all cultures.

Figure 5: Objectively Grounded Interpretation



The Objectivity of Meaning

The grounding of meaning in being provides an objective standard to which interpretations may be related. The analogous relationship between the form/matter constitution of things in reality and the form/matter constitution of a text provides a foundation upon which the determinate aspect of meaning can be based. It provides a means by which an interpreter can distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate applications and understandings of the significance of

a text. It attempts to give priority to the text over extra-textual considerations. The Moderate Realist perspective does not eliminate historical research or attempt to separate an author from his text. Rather, the Moderate Realist perspective seeks to place these aspects in proper relation to the text, locating the meaning in the text and employing these necessary investigations as tools by which to better understand the meaning of the text. The distinction of causes of meaning and the different uses of intention help to clarify the issues and identify the problems in hermeneutic theory and practice. The Moderate Realist perspective endeavors to take hermeneutics out of the realm of the subjective Idealism, and place it in the realm of the objective reality.

At the beginning of our study we set forth three general acknowledgments accompanied by an eight-fold argument. The three acknowledgments were as follows:

First, we acknowledge that there are conflicting interpretations of the Bible, and, as Christians, we want to know which interpretation is the correct one. But, many contemporary thinkers declare that there is no such thing as a "correct" interpretation because everyone comes to the text with his own preconditional framework. Because it is impossible, according to these thinkers, to jettison one's preconditional framework, this necessarily obviates the possibility of objectivity in interpretation.

Secondly, we acknowledge that Evangelical thinkers adamantly maintain that there is a "correct" interpretation of the Bible, or at least one that is more correct than its competitors, and that this interpretation is, at least theoretically, attainable. However, Evangelical thinkers, along with theorists who do not espouse any particular religious commitment, reject the notion of objectivity, or what some call "total objectivity," and likewise assert that everyone comes to the text with his or her own preconditional framework.

Thirdly, we acknowledge that if contemporary thinkers are correct in claiming that our preconditional frameworks are unavoidable, and that if they are correct that these preconditional frameworks obviate objectivity, then it does not seem possible for Evangelical thinkers to maintain the notion of a correct or more correct interpretation while holding to the unavoidability of preconditions, and rejecting objectivity. This is the principle concern of this book, namely, how is it possible to maintain the fact of the preconditional framework of every interpreter and at the same time maintain the possibility of objectivity in interpretation?

The eight-fold argument was as follows:

1. 1. Everyone comes to the world with his own framework of understanding.
2. 2. No particular framework of understanding is universally valid.
3. 3. But, universal validity is precisely what is implied in the notion of objectivity.
4. 4. Therefore, no interpreter can be objective in interpretation.
5. 5. But, if no interpreter can be objective, then no interpretation is universally valid.
6. 6. But, if no interpretation is universally valid, then the concept of a "correct" interpretation is at best relative or at worst empty.
7. 7. Since there is no such thing as a correct interpretation, there is no means of adjudicating between interpretations.
8. 8. In fact, the very idea of adjudicating between interpretations is at best relative and at worst empty.

Also, we proposed to address the question of objectivity along three lines: 1) to investigate the notion of objectivity in an effort to discover its nature; 2) to investigate the notion of the preconditions of interpretation in an effort to uncover the factors that compose one's preconditions and to attempt to discover whether in fact preconditions are necessarily inimical to objectivity; and 3) to propose an alternative to the popular notions of objectivity and the preconditions of interpretation that will redefine the notion of preconditions in a way that will restore the possibility of objectivity in interpretation.

Restating the Problem of Objectivity

The First Acknowledgment: The Unavoidable Presuppositional Framework

It is now time to recap to see whether we have accomplished our goal. Our first line of investigation was concerning the notion of objectivity in an effort to discover its nature. By perusing the literature we discovered some aspects of objectivity that are generally believed. First, objectivity is associated with having a trans-historical perspective that is not mediated through worldview specific presuppositions or preunderstanding that constitute the framework of understanding. The notion of "total" objectivity implies a view from nowhere,

that is, a view that is not peculiar to one perspective. Objectivity is usually associated with “scientific” neutrality in which data is observed apart form a theoretical framework. Although there were a number of proposals about how to reconstitute the notion of objectivity, for example in terms of intersubjectivity or objectivity within a cultural framework, even these had significance only in terms of the possibility of replacing the more common notion of objectivity as neutrality.

Second, the notion of an Archimedean point from which one can know was the general characterization of objectivity and was the primary notion on the basis of which objectivity was rejected. It is universally acknowledged that no one can approach the text as from a *tabula rasa*. Everyone possesses a framework of presuppositions and preunderstanding that constitutes the very possibility of understanding. This framework is universally perceived as being a product of one’s culture and language, upbringing, background, training, *etc.* Since no two people are identical, it is argued that no two frameworks are identical, and therefore objectivity is eliminated.

The Second Acknowledgment: Evangelicals and Correct Interpretation

Our second line of investigation concerned the notion of the preconditional framework of interpretation in an effort to understand the nature of presuppositions. Our investigation discovered that all theorists, whether professing a commitment to Evangelical theology or not, whether theist or atheist, all theorists agree that all aspects of one’s life, including his culture, language, educational background, personal experiences, and even his disposition come together to form the presuppositional framework, and that this presuppositional framework constitutes the very possibility of understanding. Since no one encounters the world with a blank mind, one’s presuppositional framework is unavoidable. Presuppositions are of several types and function on several levels. If a truth claim rests on the truth value of a presupposition, the truth claim is necessarily false if its necessary presupposition(s) is false. If a necessary presupposition is true, this does not guarantee the truth of the truth claim that rests on it. Everyone acknowledges the fact and presence of this presuppositional framework, and that all interpretation is carried out by virtue of one’s presuppositional framework.

Some theorists, especially Evangelicals, argued that even though there can be no presuppositionless interpretation, this did not obviate the possibility of correct interpretation since are mutable and can be altered by the influence of the text. The interpreter should allow the text to interact with his presuppositional framework in order to alter those presuppositions that are not in concert with those of the text. This relationship serves to change the presuppositional framework of the interpreter to bring his framework into line with the presuppositional framework of the text.

The Third Acknowledgment: Evangelicals and the Possibility of Objectivity

In spite of the effort of some theorists to maintain the possibility of correct interpretation and the unavoidability of incommensurate presuppositional frameworks, we discovered that this approach is nonsensical since it proposes that the very presuppositional framework that produced the initial understanding of the text would yield an understanding that would serve to disqualify or alter the very presuppositions that produced this conclusion. Along the same lines, Harvey Siegel argued that to propose on the one hand that there is no framework-neutral perspective, and then to argue that anomalies can force the alteration or rejection of the aspects of the very presuppositional framework that unavoidably produced these conclusions is contradictory. The proposal by many Evangelical interpreters that one's interpretation of a text that necessarily and unavoidably takes place through one's presuppositional framework can yield interpretive conclusions that can alter or negate the very presuppositions that produced this interpretive conclusion is likewise contradictory. Consequently, it seems impossible to hold to the unavoidable presuppositional framework and at the same time to try to hold to some notion of objectivity. The unavoidable presuppositional framework of the interpreter seems necessarily to obviate the possibility of objectivity.

As a result, we proposed to present an alternative to the traditional notion of objectivity and the preconditions of interpretation that would redefine the notion of preconditions in a way that will restore the possibility of objectivity in interpretation. This proposal took the form of the rejection of the underlying assumption of representationalism in the traditional notion of objectivity, and to introduce the possibility of transcendental presuppositions that transcend all worldviews and all presuppositional frameworks to provide an objective

foundation for interpretation. We will summarize this proposal by addressing each proposition in the eight-fold argument.

Resolving the Problem of Objectivity

How does Moderate Realism serve to resolve the problems of objectivity in interpretation? Let us go through the issues in general and apply the claims of Moderate Realism in each case.

1. 1. **Presuppositions**: Moderate Realism is not a presuppositionless approach. It acknowledges the unavoidability of presuppositions and preunderstanding. However, Moderate Realism avoids the perspectivist or relativist problem by identifying the existence of selfevident, undeniable, first principles of thought and being that function as objective, transcendental presuppositions. These presuppositions are transcendental because they transcend every perspective and are the same for all people, at all times, in all cultures, and in all languages. Not only does Moderate Realism identify these first principles, such as but not confined to the laws of noncontradiction, excluded middle, and identity, but it also indicates how these function in knowledge and interpretation.
2. 2. **Foundationalism**: Moderate Realism is a foundationalism. However, it avoids the criticisms leveled against Cartesian foundationalism by denying that subsequent truths or subsequent knowledge is somehow deduced from, inferred from, or in any way necessarily derived from the foundation principles. Moderate Realism readily acknowledges that there are many avenues through which the mind obtains knowledge. The relationship between subsequent knowledge and the foundations is a relation of reduction rather than deduction. A truth claim may be subject to analysis in terms of its relation to first principles. So, knowledge has a foundation in first principles, but is not necessarily arrived at through these foundational principles.
3. 3. **Representationalism**: At the heart of the attack on objectivity is a universally held representationalist epistemology. Moderate Realism avoids this criticism by providing a philosophical explanation of how the mind is able to know the world directly. Consequently, Moderate Realism is not a form of representationalism. What is in the mind is the world by virtue of the very constitution of the world as form and matter. Since the mind is in direct contact with the world by virtue of the forms, the mind is able to

hook-up to the world. There is, then, a transcendental signified or transcendental signifier. Consequently, meaning is grounded in reality and can be objective and determinate. Moderate Realism also substantiates a correspondence view of truth. The mind corresponds to reality in the knowing process by virtue of the presence of the forms of things in the mind. Any truth claim can be evaluated in terms of its correspondence because the truth claim and that about which the claim is made are both in the mind. The mind can not only know the world, but can know that it knows the world by virtue of the very constitution of the world and the mind.

4. 4. **Historicism**: Moderate Realism does not deny the place of one's historical situation in the interpretive process. However, Moderate Realism avoids the relativism of historicism because the selfevident, undeniable, first principles are the same for all people at all times in all circumstances. The mind is able to transcend its own historical situation because truth transcends history, and truth is directly accessible to the mind.
5. 5. **Linguistic Relativism**: Moderate Realism avoids linguistic relativism by its explanation of the nature of signs and meaning. Rather than holding that all signs are only instrumental and conventional, Moderate Realism argues that the forms in the mind of the knower provide the universal, determinate meaning because they connect up with reality by virtue of the Formal Sign. Consequently, even though there are differences in the way cultures use their languages, there are some universal principles that apply across all language barriers. This accounts for the fact of translation. Every human being is encountering the same reality the same way. Moderate Realism explains how meaning is largely determined by the real world, but still allows for and accounts for variations from culture to culture.
6. 6. **Theory-ladenness of Observation**: Moderate Realism accounts for the observed fact of scientific progress and success. It is able to do this precisely because of the constitution of the world and the mind. The scientist is able to observe the world directly, and the world is able to overcome and alter the prior theory of the scientist because of the universal, undeniable, first principles of thought and being. Moderate Realism accounts for the fact that the world often forces the scientist to yield to its nature in spite of the expectations of his theory.
7. 7. **Objectivity**: Moderate Realism accounts for objectivity, but does not presume to guarantee objectivity in every instance. Objectivity is possible because of the direct connection that the mind has with world, and the fact that any truth claim may be subject to analysis in terms of first principles.

> Indeed, the denial of objectivity is selfdefeating because it ultimately reduces to a violation of the law of noncontradiction. The possibility of objectivity assures the possibility of adjudicating between truth claims and even between perspectives and worldviews.

Let us now apply the resolution of these general problems to the specific eight-fold argument.

1. 1. Everyone comes to the world with his own framework of understanding.

As we have pointed out, we do not deny the fact that everyone encounters the world from a presuppositional framework of understanding. In fact, we acknowledge that contemporary theorists have conclusively demonstrated that the presuppositional framework constitutes the very possibility of knowledge and understanding. However, we disagree that this framework is exclusively or even principally a rational construct that is the result of one's culture and language. The fact that there are transcendental presuppositions, such as the law of noncontradiction, the law of excluded middle, etc., demonstrate that there are presuppositions that are common to all humans as part of the nature of humanity. Two theses articulated by Mortimer J. Adler in *Truth and Religion* serve to make this point.

> a. The human race is a single biological species, renewed generation after generation by the reproductive determinations of a single gene pool. Hence, man is one in nature—that is, in specific nature. All individual members of the species have the same species-specific properties or characteristics.
>
> b. The human race being one, the human mind is also one. The human mind is a species-specific property found in every individual member of the species, the same in all, being subject to variations in degree. This precludes the notion that there is, within the human species, a primitive mind that is characteristically different from a civilized one, or an Oriental mind that differs in kind from an Occidental one, or even a child mind that differs in kind, not just degree, from an adult mind.[44]

These two theses, along with a third, are proposed by Adler for the purpose of attempting to identify the necessary basis for a world community in the face of cultural diversity. That basis, as Adler articulates it, is the unity of truth.

> To affirm the unity of truth is to deny that there can be two separate and irreconcilable truths which, while contradicting of one another and thought to be irreconcilably so, avoid the principle of noncontradiction by claiming to belong to logic-tight compartments. Thus, for example, one approach to the conflicts between religion and philosophy, or between science and either philosophy or religion, is to claim that these are such separate spheres of thought or inquiry, employing such different methods or having such different means of access to the truth, that the principle of noncontradiction does not apply.[45]

The relevance of these theses and the definition of the unity of truth for interpretation is that the unity of truth not only applies cross-culturally in a synchronic sense, but also through time in a diachronic sense.

It is a fact of space-time history that the revelation of God was given in certain periods of history, in certain historical situations, and in a cultural context quite different from our own. However, the principles of the unity of man and the unity of truth demonstrate that there was not a “Hebrew” mind or a “Greek” mind or an “ancient” mind such that truth among those cultures at those periods of time were somehow different than truth today. On the contrary, truth is the same for all ages and among all peoples. The issues relating to men and God were the same issues with which we struggle today, because man is one race and one mind. The differences, then, between these ancient cultures and our modern culture is not the nature of man, or of truth, but are the social and cultural expressions of the same truths.

For someone to claim that there is no such thing as absolute truth is to assert that it is absolutely true that there is no absolute truth. All such relativistic assertions are selfdefeating and false. Likewise, for someone to claim that there is no such thing as objectivity is to count on the objective meaning of this very claim, which is likewise selfdefeating and false. Truth is unavoidable. Likewise, objectivity is unavoidable. Although everyone encounters the world from a presuppositional framework, the foundations of this framework are the same for all people, at all times, in all cultures, regardless of language, background, training, worldview, perspective, horizon, or what have you. Absolute truth is predicated on the objectivity of truth.

1. 2. No particular framework of understanding is universally valid.

It is simply false to claim that no particular framework of understanding is universally valid. In fact, this very claim assumes its own universal validity. It is undeniably the case that there are aspects of every framework that are unavoidable, selfevident and true, and the same for all frameworks. The basic laws of logic and the undeniability of truth apply for all frameworks everywhere at all times. Consequently, any framework that attempts to deny these foundational principles is selfdefeating and false. Although there certainly are additional factors in any given presuppositional framework, it is selfdefeating and false to claim that these are the only kinds of presuppositions that constitute a presuppositional framework, and that therefore no framework is universally valid.

1. 3. But, universal validity is precisely what is implied in the notion of objectivity.

Not only is universal validity implied in the notion of objectivity, it is the very essence of objectivity. Every theorist who attempted to deny neutrality assumed that his own analysis was not simply the product of his own presuppositional framework, but made his claim as if it was a universally valid claim that there can be no universally valid claims. Every theorist who claimed that there could be no neutrality assumed that his own claim was neutral and not worldview specific. All such claims are selfdefeating and false.

What we have dubbed Transcendental Presuppositions form the foundation, the Archimedean point upon which objectivity is based. But as we have argued, this foundation is not a deductivist foundation after the manner of representational Cartesianism. Rather, this is the Classical foundationalism of Moderate Realism that maintains the existence of selfevident, undeniable first principles of thought and being. It is worth restating that Moderate Realist/Classical foundationalism does not rest on the assumption that there are indubitable propositions beginning with which one can construct a worldview. Rather, this position maintains that there is an undeniable and unavoidable reality on the basis of which certain undeniable first principles are based. Rather than proposing that one can construct a worldview by a deductive process from these undeniable first principles, Classical foundationalism holds that these first principles are grounded in reality and all truth claims are reducible to first principles, not deducible from first principles. These principles are discoverable because of the nature of reality and the fact that the mind is able to know the real

world directly. Contrary to popular opinion, there is a transcendental signifier that connects the mind with the real world directly and enables the mind to know reality directly.

1. 4. Therefore, no interpreter can be objective in interpretation.

In light of our investigation, this assertion has been demonstrated to be both selfdefeating and false. For anyone to claim that no interpreter can be objective in interpretation assumes that the one making the claim has been objective in his interpretation of the hermeneutical data. In fact, the very fact that all theorists, from contrary and contradictory perspectives, after having investigated the same data, arrive at the same conclusion about the unavoidability of one's presuppositional framework is an example of the very objectivity that these same theorists deny. The illicit conclusion that one's presuppositional framework necessarily obviates objectivity derives from an almost universally held representationalist epistemology, an epistemological perspective that is both selfdefeating and false. Regardless of the fact that interpreters do not always achieve the goal of objective interpretation, the fact is that objectivity in interpretation is possible.

1. 5. But, if no interpreter can be objective, then no interpretation is universally valid.

Evangelicals cling to the possibility of a correct interpretation because intuitively we all know that there is absolute truth that is universally valid. Although the fact of conflicting interpretations is part of the history of interpretation, this does not indicate that objectivity is not possible. Not only is it the case that there are correct interpretations, but on the basis of this it is possible to adjudicate between interpretations. It follows from this fact that there are some interpretations that are universally valid. This fact is attested to by the very theorists who attempt to discredit the notion. Theorists who claim that no interpretation is universally valid are assuming that their own interpretation that no interpretation is universally valid is in fact universally valid. They assume the very universality they seek to deny. It is selfdefeating and false to claim that no interpretation is universally valid.

1. 6. But, if no interpretation is universally valid, then the concept of a

“correct” interpretation is at best relative or at worst empty.

Since it is not true that there is no universally valid interpretation, then it does not follow that there is no “correct” interpretation. The fact that any interpretation that contradicts the first principles of thought and being cannot either be valid or true indicates that any such interpretation cannot be correct. As in each of the above cases, theorists who claim that there is no correct interpretation assume that their own interpretation is the correct one, namely, that there cannot be a correct interpretation. This too is selfdefeating and false.

1. 7. Since there is no such thing as a correct interpretation, there is no means of adjudicating between interpretations.

Although there are a great number of principles that enter into the possibility of adjudicating between interpretations, including semantic factors, syntactic factors, historical background information, cultural considerations, etc., it is indeed possible to adjudicate between interpretations. For example, any interpretation that issues in a conclusion that contradicts the first principles of thought and being cannot be correct. Any interpretation that issues in a conclusion that does not contradict the first principles of thought and being may not therefore be the correct one, but it is preferable to the one that does engage in contradiction. Consequently, one can reject the contradictory conclusion and adopt, at least provisionally, the non-contradictory conclusion as superior. Other factors are important, and every conflict may not be resolvable at our present level of knowledge, but such instances are not counterexamples. Rather, such instances prove that adjudicating is not only possible, but necessary. Every theorist who sought to demonstrate that those who advocate objectivity are wrong was engaging in the very act of adjudication that they sought to deny. To claim that it is not possible to adjudicate between interpretations is itself an act of adjudicating between interpretations. This too is selfdefeating and false.

1. 8. In fact, the very idea of adjudicating between interpretations is at best relative and at worst empty.

Evangelicals are right in maintaining that it is possible to adjudicate between interpretations. It is not only possible, it is unavoidable. Every act of understanding is, in one way or another, an act of adjudicating between interpretations. We hold one thing to be true, and its contrary false. We accept

one view and reject its opposite. We make claims that necessarily deny their contradictories. It is not necessary for Evangelicals to compromise on the notions of objectivity and truth in order to accept the undeniable fact that all understanding is mediated through one's presuppositional framework. The fact of the existence of what we call Transcendental Presuppositions, the selfevident, undeniable first principles of thought and being, constitutes a foundation upon which objectivity is based. We believe that the rejection of representationalism and adoption of a Moderate Realist epistemology that is grounded in the very nature of the reality that the God of the Christian Scriptures has created, and indeed upon the very nature of God Himself, insures the objectivity of truth and meaning.

[1] J. G. Davies, "Subjectivity and Objectivity in Biblical Exegesis," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 66 (Autumn 1983), 49.

[2] Gail Soffer, "Gadamer, Hermeneutics, and Objectivity in Interpretation," *Prexis International* 12 (October 1992), 231.

[3] Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston, Indiana: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 178.

[4] David Weberman, "A New Defense of Gadamer's Hermeneutics," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 60 (January 2000). See Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960), 254 (Hereinafter referred to as *WH*); *Truth and Method*, 2d ed. trans Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marxhall (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 270 (Hereinafter referred to as *TM*).

[5] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *WH*, 260, *TM*, 276. "dann ist die Idee einer absoluten Vernunft überhaupt keine Möglich keit des geschichtlichen Menschentums. Vernunft ist für uns nur als reale geschichtliche, d.h. schlechthin: sie ist nicht ihrer selbst Herr, sondern bleibt stets auf die Gegebenheiten augewiesen, an denen sie sich betätigt."

[6] Ibid., *WH*, 343ff, *TM*, 341ff.

[7] Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1994), 107.

[8] Dale Spender, *Invisible Women: The Schooling Scandal* (New York: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1982), 2; quoted in Shirley Dex, "Objective Facts in Social Science," in Objective Knowledge: A Christian Perspective, ed. Paul Helm (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 170-71.

[9] Mary E. Hawkesworth, "From Objectivity to Objectification: Feminist Objections," in *Rethinking Objectivity*, ed. Allan Megill (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1994), 154.

[10] W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*, 2nd Ed. (Peabody Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1997), 187.

[11] William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas:

Word Publishing, 1993), 8 (Hereinafter referred to as KBH).

[12] Gerhard Maier, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, trans. Robert W. Yarbrough (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1994), 334.

[13] Philip D. Kenneson, "There's No Such Thing as Objective Truth, and it's a Good Thing Too" in *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*. Eds. Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Okholm (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Pres, 1995), 153-70.

[14] Alice Ogden Bellis, "Objective Biblical Truth versus the Value of Various Viewpoints: A False Dichotomy," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 17 (June 1995), 25.

[15] One author says, "It is impossible to be totally detached and completely objective in studying anything—science or theology. We all have assumptions about life and God which color our view of Scripture." David G. Moore, "Raising Some Concerns Over the 'Inductive Method' of Bible Study," Reformation and Revival Journal 9 (Fall, 2000), 69.

[16] Moisés Silva, "Contemporary Approaches to Interpretation," in *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 244 (emphasis added).

[17] Bellis, “Objective Biblical Truth,” 29.

[18] Duncan S. Ferguson, *Biblical Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986), 6.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, ILL: IVP, 1991), 367, 412.

[21] Dan McCartney and Charles Clayton, Let the Reader Understand: A Guide to Interpreting and Applying the Bible (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor, 1994), 13.

[22] Moisés Silva, “The Case for Calvinistic Hermeneutics,” in *Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics*, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., and Moisés Silva (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 263.

[23] Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1989), 70. Cotterell and Turner define “discourse meaning” as “the meaning of Paul’s letter [for example] as it would be understood by a competent reader, fully aware of the linguistic conventions of Hellenistic Greek, after a careful hearing and reading of the entire letter and fully aware of the total situational context shared by Paul and the Corinthians.” Ibid., 69.

[24] James D. Smart, *The Interpretation of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 45.

[25] Ibid., 46.

[26] James B. Reichmann, “Language and the Interpretation of Being in Gadamer and Aquinas,” in *Hermeneutics and Tradition* (Proceedings of the American Catholic Association, Vol. 62). Ed. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Washington, D.C.: National Office of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, 1988), 226.

[27] Webb B. Garrison, “The Necessity and Relativity of Biblical Interpretation,” *Interpretation* 7 (October 1953), 437-38.

[28] G. B. Madison, *The Hermeneutics of Postmodernity* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University, 1988), 168.

[29] Ferguson, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, 6.

[30] Robert C. Greer, *Mapping Postmodernism: A Survey of Christian Options* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 33.

[31] *KBH*, 115.

[32] McCartney and Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*, 14.

[33] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 515 n. 5.

[34] Robertson McQuilkin, *Understanding and Applying the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 16.

[35] Cotterell and Turner, *Linguistics & Biblical Interpretation*, 70. (emphasis in original).

[36] Ibid.

[37] William Lane Craig, "Cumulative Case Apologetics: Responses," in *Five Views on Apologetics*. Ed. Steven B. Cowan (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 183.

[38] Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Dorset Press, 1948), 137.

[39] Brennan, Robert Edward, *Thomistic Psychology* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), 247.

[40] Mortimer J. Adler, *Ten Philosophical Mistakes* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1985), 66.

[41] Winfried Corduan, "Philosophical Presuppositions Affecting Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Hermeneutic Inerrancy, and the Bible*. Eds. Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984), 496.

[42] William May, “Knowledge of Causality in Hume and Aquinas,” *The Thomist* 34.2 (1970), 283.

[43] Ibid., 287.

[44] Mortimer J. Adler, Truth in Religion. *The Plurality of Religions and the Unity of Truth* (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 113-14.

[45] Ibid., 118.

PART SIX

REESTABLISHING A SOLID BASIS FOR KNOWING JESUS

Evangelicals Believe That The New Testament Provides An Accurate History Of The Main Events Of The True Jesus Of Nazareth. This Knowledge Is Based On Certain Premises That Are Examined And Defended Here.

This Provides An Answer To The PostModern Relativistic View Of History Which Has Invaded New Testament Scholarship.



CHAPTER 15

THE KNOWABILITY OF THE PAST[1]

Norman L. Geisler



Introduction

Whether we can know the past is logically prior to *what* we can know about the past. And if history is not knowable, then neither is Gospel history knowable. So, at the root of the whole question about the historical Jesus is the question of whether history—particularly ancient history is knowable at all.

Since Jesus of Nazareth is the central figure in the Gospels and since the New Testament documents are the primary documents from the first century about Jesus, then the so-called "Quest for the historical Jesus" boils down largely—at least with regard to primary contemporary sources—to the knowability and reliability of the New Testament Documents.

Unlike some other religions, historic Christianity is inseparably tied to historical events, especially to those in the Gospels that center around the life of Christ, his death and resurrection which are crucial to the truth of evangelical Christianity (cf. 1 Cor 15:12-19). Without them, orthodox Christianity would cease to exist. Thus, the existence and knowability of certain historical events is essential to maintaining biblical Christianity.

Objections to the Objectivity of History

Of course, numerous arguments have been leveled against the view that history is objectively knowable.[2] If these arguments are valid, they would make the essential historical basis of Christianity both unknowable and unverifiable. These arguments fall into several broad categories: methodological, epistemological, axiological, metaphysical, psychological, and hermeneutical.

Epistemological Objections

Epistemology deals with how one knows, and relativists believe that objective truth is unknowable. The focus here will be on the historical relativists. They contend that the very conditions by which one knows history are so subjective that one cannot have an objective knowledge of history. Three main objections are offered.

The Unobservability of History

The question of the knowability of history is dependent on the objectivity of history which has been severely challenged in the postmodern context in which we live. The historical subjectivists insist that the subject of history, unlike science, is not directly observable. Hence, the historian does not deal with past events but with statements about past events. It is this fact which enables the historian to deal with facts in an imaginative way, attempting to reconstruct events they did not observe occur. Historical facts, they insist, exist only within the creative mind of the historian. The documents do not contain facts but are, without the historian's understanding, mere ink lines on paper. Further, once the event is gone it can never be fully recreated. Hence, the historian must impose meaning on his fragmentary and secondhand record. "The event itself, the facts, do not say anything, do not impose any meaning. It is the historian who speaks, who imposes a meaning."[3]

There are two reasons offered as to why the historian has only indirect access to the past. First, it is claimed that, unlike a scientist, the historian's world is composed of records and not events. This is why the historian must contribute a "reconstructed picture" of the past. In this sense the past is really a product of the present.

Second, the historical subjectivists assert that the scientist can test his view whereas the historian cannot. Experimentation is not possible with historical events. The scientist has the advantage of repeatability; he may subject his views to falsification. The historian cannot. The unobservable historical event is no longer verifiable; it is part of the forever departed past. Hence, what one believes about the past is no more than a reflection of his own imagination. It is a subjective construction in the minds of present historians, but it cannot hope to be an objective representation of what really happened.

The Fragmentary Nature of Historical Accounts

The second objection to the objectivity of history relates to its fragmentary nature. At best a historian can hope for completeness of documentation, but completeness of the events themselves is never possible. Documents at best cover only a small fraction of the events themselves.[4] From only fragmentary documents one cannot validly draw full and final conclusions.

Furthermore, the documents do not present the events but only an interpretation of the events mediated through the one who recorded them. So at best we have only a fragmentary record of what someone else thought happened. So "what really happened would still have to be reconstructed in the mind of the historian."[5] Because the documents are so fragmentary and the events so distant, objectivity becomes a "will-o'-the-wisp" for the historian. He not only has too few pieces of the puzzle, but the partial pictures on the few pieces he does have are not the original but were painted out of the mind of the one who passed the pieces down to us.

Historically Conditioning of the Historian

Historical relativists insist that the historian is a product of his times. And as such he is subject to unconscious programming which makes him a product of his time. It is impossible for the historian to stand back and view history objectively because he too is part of the historical process. Hence, historical synthesis depends on the personality of the writer as well as the social and religious milieu in which he lives.[6] In this sense one must study the historian before he can understand his history.

Since the historian is part of the historical process, objectively can never be attained. The history of one generation will be rewritten by the next, and so on. No historian can transcend his historical relativity and view the world process from the outside.[7] At best there can be successive but less than final historical interpretations, each viewing history from the vantage point of its own generation of historians. Therefore, there is no such person as a neutral historian; each remains a child of his own day.

Axiological Objection

The historian cannot avoid making value judgments. This, argue historical relativists, renders objectivity unobtainable. For even in the selection and arrangement of materials value judgments are made. Titles of chapters and sections are not without implied value judgments. But such judgments are relative to the one making them.

As one historian put it, the very subject matter of history is "value-charged."[8] The facts of history consist of murders, oppression, and so forth, that cannot be described in morally neutral words. By his use of ordinary language the historian

is forced to make value judgments. Further, by the very fact that history deals with flesh-and-blood human beings with motives and purposes, an analysis of history must of necessity comment on these. Whether, for instance, one is called a “dictator” or a “benevolent ruler” is a value judgment. How can one describe Hitler without making some value judgments? And if one were to attempt a kind of scientifically neutral description of past events without any stated or implied interpretation of human purposes, it would not be history but mere raw-boned chronicle without historical meaning.

Once the historian admits what he cannot avoid, namely that he must make some value judgments about past events, then his history has lost objectivity. In short, there is no way for the historian to keep himself out of his history.

Methodological Objections

Methodological objections relate to the procedure by which history is done. There are several methodological objections to the belief in objective history necessary to establish the truth of Christianity.

The Selective Nature of Historical Methodology

As was suggested, the historian does not have direct access to the events of the past but merely to fragmentary interpretations of those events contained in historical documents. Now what makes objectivity even more hopeless is the fact that the historian makes a selection from these fragmentary reports and builds his interpretation of the past events on a select number of partial report of the past events. There are volumes in archives that most historians do not even touch.[9]

The actual selection among the fragmentary accounts is influenced by many subjective and relative factors including personal prejudice, availability of materials, knowledge of the languages, personal beliefs, social conditions, and so on. Hence, the historian himself is inextricably involved with the history he writes. What is included and what is excluded in his interpretation will always be a matter of subjective choice. No matter how objective a historian may attempt to be, it is practically impossible for him to present what really happened. His “history” is no more than his own interpretation based on his own subjective selection of fragmentary interpretations of past and unrepeatable events.

So it is argued that the facts of history do not speak for themselves. “The facts speak only when the historian calls on them; it is he who decides to which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context.”[10] Indeed, when the “facts” speak, it is not the original events that are speaking but later fragmentary opinions about those events. The original facts or events have long since perished. So, according to historical relativism, by the very nature of the project the historian can never hope for objectivity.

The Need to Select and Arrange Historical Materials

Once the historian takes his fragmentary documents which he must view indirectly through the interpretation of the original source, and takes his selected amount of material from the available archives, and begins to provide an interpretive structure to it, by the use of his own valueladen language, and within the overall worldview that he presupposes, then he not only understands it from the relative vantage point of his own generation but he must select and arrange the topic of history in accordance with his own subjective preferences. In short, the dice are loaded against objectivity before he picks up his pen. That is, in the actual writing of the fragmentary, secondhand accounts from his own philosophical and personal point of view there is a further subjective choice of arrangement of the material.[11]

The selection and arrangement of material will be determined by personal and social factors already discussed. The final written product will be prejudiced by what is included in and by what is excluded from the material. It will lack objectivity by how it is arranged and by the emphasis given to it in the overall presentation. The selection made in terms of the framework given will either be narrow or broad, clear or confused. Whatever its nature, the framework is necessarily reflection of the mind of the historian.[12] This moves one still further away from objectively knowing what really happened. It is concluded, then, by the subjectivists that the hopes of objectivity are finally dashed.

Metaphysical Objections

Several metaphysical objections have been leveled against the belief in objective history. Each one is predicated, either theoretically or practically, on the premise that one’s worldview colors the study of history.

The Need to Structure the Facts of History

Partial knowledge of the past makes it necessary for the historian to "fill in" gaping holes out of his own imagination. As a child draws the lines between the dots on a picture, so the historian supplies all the connections between events. Without the historian the dots are not numbered nor are they arranged in an obvious manner. The historian must use his imagination in order to provide continuity the disconnected and fragmentary facts provided him.

Furthermore, the historian is not content to tell us simply what happened. He feels compelled to explain why it happened.[13] In this way history is made fully coherent and intelligible. Good history has both theme and unity which are provided by the historian. Facts alone do not make history any more than the disconnected dots make a picture. Herein, according to the subjectivist, lies the difference between chronicle and history. The former is merely the raw material used by the historian to construct history. Without the structure provided by the historian, the mere "stuff" of history would be meaningless.

Further, the study of history is a study of causes. The historian wants to know *why*; he wishes to weave a web of interconnected events into a unified whole. Because of this he cannot avoid interjecting his own subjectivity into history. Hence, even if there is some semblance of objectivity in chronicle, nonetheless there is no hope for objectivity in history. History is in principle nonobjective because the very thing that makes it history (as vs. mere chronicle) is the interpretive structure of framework given to it from the subjective vantage point of the historian. Hence, it is concluded that the necessity of structure inevitably makes historical objectivity impossible.

The Unavoidability of Worldviews

Every historian interprets the past within the overall framework of his own *Weltanschauung*, that is, his world-and-life-view. Basically there are three different philosophies of history within which historians operate: the chaotic, the cyclical, and the linear views of history.[14] Which one of these the historian adopts will be a matter of faith or philosophy and not a matter of mere fact.

Unless one view or another is presupposed, no overall interpretation is possible. The *Weltanschauung* will determine whether the historian sees the events of the world as a meaningless maze, as a series of endless repetitions, or as moving in a purposeful way toward a goal. These worldviews are both necessary and inevitably value oriented. So, it is argued by the subjectivists that

without one of these worldviews the historian cannot interpret the events of the past. However, through a worldview objectivity becomes impossible.

Further, subjectivists insist that a worldview is not generated from the facts. Facts do not speak for themselves. The facts gain their meaning only within the overall context of the worldview. Without the *structure* of the worldview framework the "*stuff*" of history has no meaning. Augustine, for example, viewed history as a great theodicy, but Hegel saw it as an unfolding of the divine. It is not any archaeological or factual find but the religious or philosophical presuppositions which prompted each man to develop his view. Eastern philosophies of history are even more diverse; they involve a cyclical rather than a linear patter. But without some overarching viewpoint there would be no framework in which to interpret specific events.

Once one admits the relativity or perspectivity of his worldview as opposed to another, the historical relativists insist that he has thereby given up all right to claim objectivity. If there are several different ways to interpret the same facts, depending on the overall perspective one takes, then there is no single objective interpretation of history.

Miracles Are by Nature Suprahistorical

Even if one grants that secular history could be known objectively, there still remains the problem of the subjectivity of religious history. Some writers make a strong distinction between *Historie* and *Geschichte*.[15] The former is empirical and objectively knowable to some degree, but the latter is spiritual and unknowable in a historical or objective way. But as spiritual or super-historical, there is no objective way to verify it.

Spiritual history has no necessary connection with the spaciotemporal continuum of empirical events. It is a "myth" with subjective religious significance to the believer but with no objective grounding. Like the story of George Washington and the cherry tree, *Geschichte* is a story made up of events which probably never happened but which inspire men to some moral or religious good.

If this distinction is applied to the NT, then even if the life and central teachings of Jesus of Nazareth could be objectively established, there is no historical way to confirm the miraculous dimension of the NT. Miracles do not

happen as part of *Historie* and, therefore, are not subject to objective analysis; they are *Geschichte* events and as such cannot be analyzed by historical methodology.

Many theologians have accepted this distinction. Paul Tillich claimed that it is "a disastrous distortion of the meaning of faith to identify it with the belief in the historical validity of the Biblical stories."[16] He believed with Soren Kierkegaard that the important thing is whether or not it evokes an appropriate religious response. With this Rudolf Bultmann and Shubert Ogden would also concur, along with much of recent theological thought.

Even those like Karl Jaspers who oppose Bultmann's more radical demythologization view, accepted, nevertheless, the distinction between the spiritual and empirical dimensions of miracles.[17] On the more conservative end of those maintaining this distinction is Ian Ramsey. According to Ramsey, even C. H. Dodd must admit that "it is not enough to think of the facts of the Bible as 'brute historical facts' to which the Evangelists give distinctive 'interpretation.'" For Ramsey the Bible is historical only if "'history' refers to situations as odd as those which are referred to by that paradigm of the Fourth Gospel: 'the Word became flesh.'" Ramsey concludes: "No attempt to make the language of the Bible conform to a precise straightforward public language—whether that language be scientific of historical—has ever succeeded." More positively the Bible is about situations "to which existentialists refer when they speak of something being 'authentic' or 'existential-historical.'"[18]

According to the historical subjectivists, there is always something "more" than the empirical in every religious or miraculous situation. The purely empirical situation is "odd" and thereby evocative of a discernment that calls for a commitment of religious significance.[19]

Miracles are Historically Unknowable in Principle

On the Basis of Troeltsch's principle of analogy, some historians have come to object to the possibility of ever establishing a miracle based on testimony about the past. Troeltsch stated the problem this way: "On the analogy of the events known to us we seek by conjecture and sympathetic understanding to explain and reconstruct the past." And "since we discern the same process of phenomena in operation in the past as in the present, and see, there as here, the various historical cycles of human life influencing and intersecting one another."[20]

Without uniformity we could know nothing about the past, for without an analogy from the present we could know nothing about the past. In accord with this principle some have argued that "no amount of testimony is ever permitted to establish as past reality a thing that cannot be found in present reality. . .In every other case the witness may have a perfect character-all that goes for nothing. "[21] In other words, unless one can identify miracles in the present he has no experience on which to base his understanding of alleged miracles in the past.

The historian, like the scientist, must adopt a methodological skepticism toward alleged events in the past for which he has no parallel in the present. The present is the foundation of our knowledge of the past. As F. H. Bradley put it: "We have seen that history rests in the last resort upon an inference from our experience, a judgment based upon our own present state of things. . ." So, "when we are asked to affirm the existence in past time of events, the effects of causes which confessedly are without analogy in the world in which we live, and which we know-we are at a loss for any answer but this, that. . .we are asked to build a house without a foundation. . ." And "how can we attempt this without contradicting ourselves?"[22]

Psychological Objections

Another final objection may be briefly noted. It is argued, especially by those opposed to the NT, that history recorded by persons with religious motives cannot be trusted. Their religious passion is said to obscure their historical objectivity. They tend to reinterpret history in the light of their religious beliefs.

A similar criticism is at the basis of traditional Form and Redaction Criticism by which the NT writers are said to be *creating* or recreating the words of Jesus rather than strictly *reporting* them. That is, the Gospels as we now have them reflect the religious experience of the later Christian Church than the pure words of Jesus.

Hermeneutical Objections

Perhaps the most radical form of historical relativism is deconstructionism by which history is treated as literature. One of the foremost proponents of this view is Hayden White. In his book *Meta History,* White claims that history is poetry. He claims that no history can be written without bringing the material into a "coordinated whole" under some "unifying concept."[23] And he believes these

concepts are chosen from poetry. He writes, “I have identified four different archetypal plot structures by which historians can figure historical processes in their narratives as stories of a particular kind: Romance, Tragedy, Comedy, and Satire.”[24] No one of these is better than the others or correct as opposed to incorrect; they are simply different. This has “. . .permitted me to view the various debates over how history ought to be written. . .as essentially matters of stylistic variation within a single universe of discourse.”[25]

A Response to Historical Relativism

Despite these many strong objections to the possibility of historical objectivity, the case is by no means closed, for there are many flaws in the historical relativist position. First, a direct response will be offered to each objection. Then, some overall arguments against historical subjectivism will be given.

A Response to Specific Objections of Historical Relativism

The responses given are in the order of the above objections. First, a response to the epistemological problems will be offered.

A Response to the Epistemological Objection

There are several aspects of the problem that must be addressed. The first has to do with the unobservability of past events.

Response to the Problem of Unobservability of Events. The first and most fundamental response to the historical subjectivists is to point out that whatever is meant by the “objective” knowledge of history they deny, it must be possible, since they imply they have it in their very denial. For how could they know that everyone’s knowledge of history was not objective unless they had an objective knowledge of it by which they could determine these other views were not objective? One cannot know **not**-that unless he knows that. In short, the denial of historical objectivity implies an objective knowledge of history.

Further, if by “objective” the subjectivist means absolute knowledge, then of course no human historian can be objective. On the other hand, if “objective” means an *accurate and adequate*[26] presentation that reasonable men should accept, then the door is open to the possibility of objectivity.

Assuming this latter sense, it can be argued that history can be just as objective as some sciences.[27] For example, paleontology (historical geology) is considered to be an objective science. It deals with physical facts and processes of the past. However, the events represented by the fossil finds are no more directly accessible to the scientists or *repeatable* than are historical events to the historian.

True, there are some differences. The fossil is a mechanically true imprint of the original event and the eyewitness of history may be less precise in his report. But the historian may rejoin by pointing out that the natural processes that mar the fossil imprint parallel the personal filtering of events through the testimony of the eyewitness. At least it may be argued that if one can determine the integrity and reliability of the eyewitness, one cannot slam the door on the possibility of objectivity in history any more than on objectivity in geology.

The scientist might contend that he can repeat the processes of the past by present experimentation whereas the historian cannot. But even here the situations are similar, for in this sense history too can be “repeated.” Similar patterns of events, by which comparisons can be made, recur today as they occurred in the past. Limited social experiments can be performed to see if human history “repeats,” and widespread “experiments” can be observed naturally in the differing conditions in the ongoing history of the world. In short, the historian, no less than the scientist, has the tools for determining what really happened in the past. The lack of direct access to the original facts or events does not hinder the one more than the other.

Some have suggested that there is yet a crucial difference between history and science of past events. Thy insist that scientific facts “speak for themselves,” but historical facts do not. However, even here the analogy is close for several reasons.

First of all, if “fact” means the original event, then neither geology nor history is in possession of any facts. “Fact” must be taken by both to mean information about the original event, and in this latter sense facts do not exist merely subjectively in the mind of the historian. Facts are objective data whether anyone reads them or not.

What one does with data, that is, what meaning or interpretation he gives to them, can in no way eliminate the data. There remains for both science and

history a hard core of objective facts. The door is thereby left open for objectivity in both fields. In this way one may draw a valid distinction between propaganda and history: the former lacks sufficient basis in objective fact but the latter does not. Indeed, without objective facts no protest can be raised either against poor history or propaganda.

If history is entirely in the mind of the beholder, there is no reason one cannot decide to behold it any way he desires. In this case there would be no difference between good history and trashy propaganda. But historians, even historical subjectivists, recognize the difference. Hence, even they assume an objective knowledge of history.

Response to the Problem of Fragmentary Accounts. The fact that accounts of history are fragmentary does not destroy the objectivity any more than the existence of only a limited amount of fossils destroys the objectivity of historical geology. The fossil remains represent only a very tiny percentage of the living beings of the past. This does not hinder scientists from attempting to reconstruct an objective picture of what really happened in geological history. Some even go so far as to speak of their macro-evolutionary reconstruction of the past as a "fact," not merely a theory. Likewise, the history of human beings is transmitted to us by only a partial record. Scientists sometimes reconstruct a whole man on the basis of only partial skeletal remains-even a single jaw bone. While this procedure is perhaps rightly suspect, nonetheless one does not need every bone in order to fill in the probable picture of the whole animal. Like a puzzle, as long as one has the key pieces he can reconstruct the rest with a measurable degree of probability. For example, by the principle of bilateral similarity one can assume that the left side of a partial skull would look like the right side that was found.

Of course, the finite reconstruction of both science and history is subject to revision. Subsequent finds may provide new facts that call for new interpretations. But at least there is an objective basis in fact for the meaning attributed to the find. Interpretations can neither create the facts nor can they ignore them, if they wish to approach objectivity. We may conclude, then, that history need be no less objective than geology simply because it depends on fragmentary accounts. Scientific knowledge is also partial and depends on assumptions and an overall framework which may prove to be inadequate upon the discovery of more facts.

Whatever difficulty there may be, from a strictly scientific point of view, in

filling in the gaps between the facts, once one has assumed a philosophical stance toward the world, the problem of objectivity in general is resolved. If there is a God, and there is good evidence there is, then the overall picture is already drawn; the facts of history will merely fill in the details of its meaning. If this is a theistic universe, then the artist's sketch is already known in advance. The detail and coloring will come only as all the facts of history are fit into the overall sketch known to be true from the theistic framework. In this sense, historical objectivity is most certainly possible within a given framework such as a theistic worldview. Objectivity resides in the view that best fits all the facts into the overall system, that is, into systematic consistency.

Response to the Axiological (Value) Objection

One may grant the point that ordinary language is value laden and that value judgments are inevitable. This by no means makes historical objectivity impossible.[28] Objectivity means to be fair in dealing with the facts. It means to present what happened as accurately as possible.

Further, objectivity means that when one interprets why these events occurred, the language of the historian should ascribe to these events the value which they really had in their original context. If events are given the value they had within their original context, then an objective account of history is achieved. In this way objectivity demands value judgments rather than avoiding them.

The question is not whether value language can be objective, but rather whether value statements objectively portray the events the way they really were. Once the worldview has been determined, value judgments are not undesirable or merely subjective; they are in fact essential and objectively demanded. If this is a theistic world, then it would not be objective to place anything but a proper theistic value on the facts of history.

A Response to the Methodological Problems

Every historian employs a methodology. This in itself does not demonstrate the inadequacy of his history. The question is whether or not his methodology is good or bad. In response to this objection several dimensions of the problem need discussion.

Response to the Problem of Historical Conditioning. It is true that every historian is a product of his time. Each person occupies a relative place in the

changing events of the spaciotemporal world. However, it does not follow that because the historian is a product of his time that his history is also purely a product of the time. Simply because a person cannot avoid a relative place in history does not mean that his perspective cannot attain some meaningful degree of objectivity. This criticism confuses the content of knowledge and the process of attaining it.[29] It confuses the formation of a view with its verification. Where one derives a hypothesis is not essentially related to how its truth can be established.

Further, if relativity is unavoidable, then the position of the historical relativists is selfrefuting. For either their view is historically conditioned and, therefore, unobjective, or else it is not relative but objective. If the latter, then it thereby admits that it is possible to be objective in viewing history.

On the contrary, if the position of historical relativism is itself relative, then it cannot be taken as objectively true. It is simply a subjective opinion which has no basis to claim to be objectively true. In short, if it is a subjective opinion it cannot eliminate the possibility that history is objective knowable. And if it is an objective fact about history, then objective facts can be known about history. In the first case objectivity is not eliminated and in second relativity is selfdefeated. Hence, in either case, objectivity is possible.

Finally, the constant rewriting of history is based on the assumption that objectivity is possible. Why strive for accuracy unless it is believed that the revision is more objectively true than the previous view? Why critically analyze unless improvement toward a more accurate view is the assumed goal? Perfect objectivity may be practically unattainable within the limited resources of the historian on most if not all topics. But be this as it may, the inability to attain 100 percent objectivity is a long way from total relativity. Reaching a degree of objectivity which is subject to criticism and revision is a more realistic conclusion than the relativist’s arguments. In short, there is no reason to eliminate the possibility of a sufficient degree of historical objectivity.

Response to the Problem of Selectivity of Materials. The fact that the historian must select his materials does not automatically make history purely subjective. Jurors make judgments “beyond reasonable doubt” without having all the evidence. If the historian has the relevant and crucial evidence, it will be sufficient to attain objectivity. One need not know everything in order to know something. No scientist knows all the facts, and yet objectivity is claimed for his

discipline. As long as no important fact is overlooked there is no reason to eliminate the possibility of objectivity in history any more than in science.

The selection of facts can be objective to the degree that the facts are selected and reconstructed in the context in which the events represented actually occurred. Since it is impossible for any historian to pack into his account everything available on a subject, it is important for him to select the points representative of the period of which he writes.[30] Condensation does not necessarily imply distortion. The mini can be an objective summary of the maxi.

What is more, the evidence for the historicity of the NT from which Christian apologetics draws is primary evidence is greater than for that of any other document from the ancient world. Thus, if the events behind it cannot be known objectively, then it is impossible to know anything else from that time period.

A Response to the Metaphysical (Worldview) Objections

Admittedly, each historian has a worldview, and the events are interpreted through this grid. But this in itself does not make objectivity impossible, since there are objective ways to treat the question of worldviews.

Response to the Problem of Arranging Materials. There is no reason why the historian cannot rearrange without distorting the past. Since the original construction of events is available to neither the historian nor the geologist, it is necessary to reconstruct the past on the basis of the available evidence. But reconstruction does not necessitate revision; selecting material may occur without neglecting significant matters. Every historian must arrange his material. The important thing is whether or not it is arranged or rearranged in accordance with the original arrangement of events as they really occurred. As long as the historian incorporated consistently and comprehensively all the significant events in accordance with the way things really were he is being objective. It is neglecting important facts and twisting facts that distorts objectivity.

The historian may desire to be selective in the compass of his study. He may wish to study only the political, economic, or religious dimensions of a specific period. But such specialization does not demand total subjectivity. One can focus without losing the overall context in which he operates. It is one thing to focus on specifics within an overall field but quite another to totally ignore or deliberately neglect or distort the overall context in which the intensified interest

is occurring. As long as the specialist stays in touch with reality rather than reflecting the pure subjectivity of his own fancy, there is no reason why a measurable degree of objectivity cannot be maintained.

Response to the Problem of the Structuring the Material. Those who argue against the objectivity of history apart from an overall worldview must be granted the point. Without a worldview it makes no sense to talk about objective meaning.[31] Meaning is system-dependent within a given meaning, but within another system it may have a very different meaning. Without a context meaning cannot be determined, and the context is provided by the worldview and not by the bare facts themselves.

Assuming the correctness of this criticism, as we do, does not eliminate the possibility of an objective understanding of history. Rather, it points to the necessity of establishing a worldview in order to attain objectivity. In a Materialistic worldview, facts take on a different meaning than they do in a Theistic worldview. But once the evidence is given for a theistic worldview, such as is presented in the New Testament, then the metaphysical framework for an objective view of history is in place.

Without a metaphysical structure in place, one is simply begging the question with regard to the assumed causal connection and the attributed importance of events. To affirm that facts have “internal arrangement” begs the question. The real question is: how does one know the correct arrangement? Since the facts are arrangeable in at least three different ways (chaotic, cyclical, and linear), it begs the question merely to assume that one of these is the way he facts were really arranged. The same set of dots can have the lines drawn in many ways.

The assumption that the historian is merely discovering (and not drawing) the lines is gratuitous. The fact is that the lines are not known to be there apart from an interpretive framework through which one views them. Therefore, the problem of the objective meaning of history cannot be resolved apart from appeal to a worldview. But once the skeletal sketch is known, then one can know the objective placing (meaning) of the facts. However, apart from a structure the mere “stuff” means nothing.

Apart from an overall structure there is no way to know which events in history are the most significant and, hence, there is no way to know the true significance of these and other events in their overall context. The argument that

importance is determined by which events influence the most people is inadequate for several reasons. However, this is a form of historical utilitarianism and as such is subject to the same criticisms as any utilitarian test for truth. The most does not determine the best; all that is proved by great influence is great influence, not great importance or value. Even after most people have been influenced, one can still ask the question as to the truth or value of the event that influenced them. Significance is not determined by ultimate outcome but by overall framework. Of course, if one assumes as an overall framework that the events which influence the most people in the long run are most significant, then that utilitarian framework will indeed determine the significance of an event. But what right does one have to assume a utilitarian framework any more than a non-utilitarian one? Here again, it is a matter of justifying one's overall framework or worldview.

The argument advanced by some objectivists is that past events must be structured or else they are unknowable and faulty. However, all this argument proves is that it is necessary to understand facts through some structure, otherwise it makes no sense to speak of facts. The question of which structure is correct must be determined on some basis other than the mere facts themselves. Further, even if there were an objectivity of bare facts, it would provide at best only the mere *what* of history. But objective meaning deals with the *why* of these events as well; this is impossible apart from a meaning-structure in which the facts may find their proper placement. Objective meaning apart from a worldview is impossible.

However, granted that there is justification for adopting a theistic worldview, the objective meaning of history becomes possible. For within the theistic context each fact of history becomes a theistic fact. Granted the factual order of events and the known causal connection of events, the possibility of objective meaning surfaces. The chaotic and the cyclical frameworks are eliminated in favor of the linear. And within the linear view of events causal connections emerge as the result of their context in a theistic universe. Theism provides the sketch on which history paints the complete picture. The pigments of mere fact take on real meaning as they are blended together on the theistic sketch. In this context, objectivity means systematic consistency. That is, the most meaningful way all of the facts for history can be blended together into the whole theistic sketch is what really happened. In this way theism can provide an objective framework for historical facts.

Response to the Alleged Unknowability of Miracles. Even if the objectivity of history is accepted, many historians object to any history that contains miracles. This poses a further metaphysical problem for Christianity. This secular rejection of miracle-history is often based on Troeltsch's principle of analogy. This argument turns out to be similar to Hume's objection to miracles built on the uniformity of nature. Hume argued that no testimony about alleged miracles should be accepted if it contradicts the uniform testimony of nature. In like manner, Troeltsch would reject any particular event in the past for which there is no analogue in the uniform experience of the present. Now there are at least two reasons for rejecting Troeltsch's argument from analogy.

First, as C. S. Lewis insightfully commented, "If we admit God, must we admit Miracles? Indeed, indeed, you have no security against it. That is the bargain." He added, "Theology says to you in effect, 'Admit God and with Him the risk of a few miracles, and I in return will ratify your faith in uniformity as regards the overwhelming majority of events.'"[32] A miracle is a special act of God. Hence, if God exists then acts of God are possible. Hence, any alleged historical procedure that eliminates miracles is bogus.

Second, Troeltsch's principle begs the question in favor of a naturalistic interpretation of all historical events. It is a methodological exclusion of the possibility of accepting the miraculous in history. The testimony for regularity in general is in no way a testimony against an unusual event in particular. The cases are different and should not be evaluated in the same way. Empirical generalizations (e.g., "men do not rise from the dead") should not be used as counter testimony to good eyewitness accounts that in a particular case someone did rise from the dead. The historical evidence for any particular historical event must be assessed on its own merits completely aside from the generalizations about other events.

There is a second objection to the Troeltsch analogy type argument, namely, it proves too much. As Richard Whately convincingly argued, on this uniformitarian assumption not only miracles would be excluded but so would many unusual events of the past including those surrounding Napoleon Bonaparte.[33] No one can deny that the probability against Napoleon's successes was great. His prodigious army was destroyed in Russia; yet in a few months he led another great army in Germany which likewise was ruined at Leipzig. However, the French supplied him with yet another army sufficient to make a formidable stand in France. This was repeated five times until at last he was

confined to an island. There is no doubt that the particular events of his career were highly improbable. But there is no reason on these grounds that we should doubt the historicity of the Napoleonic adventures. History, contrary to scientific hypothesis, does not depend on the universal and repeatable. Rather, it stands on the sufficiency of good testimony for particular and unrepeatable events. Were this not so, then nothing could be learned from history.

It is clearly a mistake to import uniformitarian methods from scientific experimentation into historical research. Repeatability and generality are needed to establish a scientific law or general patterns (of which miracles would be particular exceptions). But this method does not work at all in history. What is needed establish historical events is credible testimony that these particular events did indeed occur. So it is with miracles. It is an unjustifiable mistake in historical methodology to assume that no unusual and particular event can be believed no matter how great the evidence for it. Troeltsch's principle of analogy would destroy genuine historical thinking. The honest historian must be open to the possibility of unique and particular events of the past whether they are miraculous or not. He must not exclude *a priori* the possibility of establishing events like the resurrection of Christ without a careful examination of the testimony and evidence concerning them.

It is a mistake to assume that the same principles by which *empirical* science works can be used in *forensic* science. Since the later deals with unrepeated and unobserved events in the past, it operates on the principles of *origin science*, not on those of *operation science*.[34] And these principles do not eliminate, but establish, the possibility of objective knowledge of the past—whether in science or history.

Observations on the Nature of Miracles and History. In response to these analyses of the historical objectivity of miracles it is important to make several observations.

First of all, surely the Christian apologist does not want to contend that miracles are a mere product of the historical process. The supernatural occurs *in* the historical but it is not a product *of* the natural process. What makes it miraculous is the fact that the natural process alone does not account for it, there must be an injection from the realm of the supernatural into the natural or else there is no miracle. This is especially true of a NT miracle, where the means by which God performed the miracle is unknown. So the miraculous dimensions of

a historical event are *in* but not *of* the natural process.

Second, in accordance with the objectivity of history just discussed, there is no good reason why the Christian should yield to the radical existential theologians on the question of the objective and historical dimensions of miracle. Miracles may not be of the natural historical process but they do occur in it. Even Karl Barth made a similar distinction when he wrote, "The resurrection of Christ, or his second coming. . .is not a historical event; the historians may reassure themselves. . .that our concern here is with the event which, though it is the only real happening in is not a real happening of history."[35]

But unlike many existential theologians we must also preserve the historical context in which a miracle occurs, for without it there is no way to verify the objectivity of the miraculous. Miracles do have a historical dimension without which no objectivity of religious history is possible. And as was argued above, historical methodology can identify this objectivity (just as surely as scientific objectivity can be established) within an accepted framework of a theistic world. In short, miracles may be more than historical but they cannot be less than historical. It is only if miracles do have historical dimensions that they are both objectively meaningful and apologetically valuable.

Third, a miracle can be identified within an empirical or historical context both directly and indirectly, both objectively and subjectively. A miracle possess several characteristics. It is an event that is both scientifically unusual as well as theologically and morally relevant. The first characteristic is knowable in a directly empirical way; the latter are knowable only indirectly through the empirical in that it is "odd" and "evocative" of something "more" than the mere empirical data of the event. For example, a virgin birth is scientifically "odd" but in the case of Christ it is represented as a "sign" that was used to draw attention to Him as something "more" than human. The theological and moral characteristics of a miracle are not empirically objective. In this sense they are experiences subjectively. This does not mean, however, that there is no objective basis for the moral dimensions of a miracle. Since this is a theistic universe, then morality is objectively grounded in God. Hence, the nature and will of God are the objective grounds by which one can test whether or not the event is subjectively evocative of what is objectively in accord with what is already know of God; otherwise one should not believe the event is a miracle. It is axiomatic that acts of a theistic God would not be used to confirm what is not the truth of God.

To sum up, miracles happen *in* history but are not completely *of* history. Miracles, nonetheless, are historically grounded. They are more than historical but are not less than historical. There are both empirical and super-empirical dimensions to supernatural events. The former are knowable in an objective way and the latter have a subjective appeal to the believer. But even here there is an objective ground in the known truth and goodness of God by which the believer can judge whether or not the empirically odd situations which appeal to him for a response are really acts of this true and good God.

A Response to the Psychological Objections

Another charge often heard is that the religious purposes of the Gospel writers, which are evident to all, negate their ability to present an objective historical report. Both Sherwin-White and Michael Grant have responded to this complaint.[36] Indeed, a form of this criticism is implied in both Form and Redaction Criticism by which the Gospel writers are said to be *creating* the words of Jesus in terms of their own religious setting rather than strictly *reporting* them. But this objection is without grounds for several reasons.[37]

First, there is no logical connection between one's purpose and the accuracy of the history he writes. People with no religious motives can write bad history, and people with religious motives can write good history.

Second, other important writers from the ancient world wrote with motives similar to the Gospel authors. Plutarch, for example declared: "My design was not to write histories, but lives."[38]

Third, complete religious propaganda literature such as some critics attribute to the NT was actually unknown in the ancient world. Sherwin-White declared: "We are not acquainted with this type of writing in ancient historiography."[39]

Fourth, unlike other ancient accounts, the Gospels were written at a maximum of only decades after the events. Many other secular writings, such as those of Livy and Plutarch, were recorded centuries after the events.

Fifth, as shown above, the historical confirmation of NT writings is overwhelming. So, the argument that their religious purpose destroyed their ability to write good history is simply contrary to the facts.

Sixth, the NT writers take great care to distinguish their words from the words

of Jesus, as any red letter edition of the Bible clearly indicates (see also John 2:20-22; 1 Cor 7:10, 12; 11:24-25; Acts 20:35). This reveals their honest attempt to separate what Jesus actually said from their own thoughts and feelings on the matter.

Seventh, in spite of the religious purpose of Luke's Gospel (Luke 1:4; cf. Acts 1:1), he states a clear interest for historical accuracy which has been overwhelmingly corroborated by archaeology. Luke said, "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as **they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses** and servants of the word." Therefore, "**since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught**" (Luke 1:1-4).

Eighth, the existence of religious bias is no guarantee of historical inaccuracy. One can recognize his own bias and avoid its crippling affects. If this were not so, then even persons with non-religious (or anti-religious) biases could not write accurate history either. Yet many claim to be able to do so.

Ninth, the NT is confirmed to be historical by the same criteria applied to other ancient writings. Thus, this criticism either misses the mark or else it destroys all ancient histories.

Tenth, if the historicity of an event must be denied because of the strong motivation of the person giving it, then virtually all eyewitness testimonies from survivors of the Holocaust must be discounted. But this is absurd, since they provide the best evidence of all. Likewise, a physician's passion to save his patient's life does not negate his ability to make an objective diagnosis of his disease. In like manner, an author's religious motives do not nullify his ability to record accurate history.

A Response to the Hermeneutical Objection

The hermeneutical objection fails to show that all history is relativistic. There are two basic reasons sufficient to demonstrate why the possibility of objectivity in history has not—and cannot—be systematically eliminated.

The Relativity Argument Presupposes Some Objective Knowledge. A

careful look at the arguments of the relativists reveals that they presuppose some objective knowledge about history. This is seen in at least two ways. First, they speak of the need to select and arrange the "facts" of history. But if they are really "facts," then they represent some objective knowledge in themselves. After all, it is one thing to argue about the *interpretation* of the facts but quite another to deny that there are any facts of history to argue about. For example, it is understandable that one's worldview framework will color how he understands the fact that Christ died on a cross in the early first century. But it is quite another to deny this is a historical fact.

Second, the very fact that relativists believe ones worldview can distort how one views history implies that there is a correct way to view it. Otherwise, how would one know that some views are distorted? That some views are incorrect (not-correct) implies that there is a correct view. This leads to the next criticism.

Total Historical Relativity is SelfDefeating. As a matter of fact, total relativity (whether historical, philosophical, or moral) is selfdefeating. How could one know that history was completely unknowable unless he knew something about it? How could he know all historical knowledge was subjective unless he had some objective knowledge about it? In truth, the total relativist must stand on the pinnacle of his own absolute in order to relativize everything else. The claim that all history is subjective turns out to be an objective claim about history. Thus, total historical relativism cuts its own throat.

Ironically, one of the noted historical relativists himself later gave one of the best critiques of it. Charles Beard wrote: "Contemporary criticism shows that the apostle of relativity is destined to be destroyed by the child of his own brain." For, "If all historical conceptions are merely relative to passing events. . .then the conceptions of relativity is itself relative." In short, *"the apostle of relativity will surely be executed by his own logic."*[40]

Of course, some might claim that historical knowledge is not totally relative but only partially so. To this the objectivists note two things. First, this is an admission that history, at least some history, is objectively knowable. Thus, it cannot claim to have eliminated in principle the possibility that the Christian claims are historically knowable. Second, since the historical evidence for the central truths of Christians are more amply supported by historical evidence than for almost any other event from the ancient world, then this is also an admission that a partial relativity view does not eliminate the historical verifiability of

Christianity. In brief, total historical relativism is selfdefeating, and partial historical relativism admits the historical verifiable truths of the Christian Faith.

Historical Relativists Attempt Objective History Themselves. Another inconsistency in historical relativism is that the heralders of this view sometimes attempt to write objective history themselves. For example, while Beard was the apostle of historical relativism, he nevertheless attempted to write his own "scientific work" on the "essence of history."[41] Beard believed his own understanding of the Constitution "was objective and factual."[42]

Ability to Recognize Bad History Implies Objective Knowledge. Another overlooked point is that the ability to detect bad history is itself a tacit admission that objectivity is possible. Nagel pointed out that "the very fact that biased thinking may be detected and its sources investigated show that the case of objective explanations in history is not necessarily hopeless."[43] In other words, the very fact that one can know that some histories are better than others reveals that there must be some objective understanding of the events by which this judgment is made.

Historians Employ Normal Objective Standards. Like science, history employs normal inductive measures that render the facts knowable. As W. H. Walsh observed, "Historical conclusions must be backed by evidence just as scientific conclusions must."[44] Thus, Beard adds, "The historian. . .sees the doctrine of relativity crumble in the cold light of historical knowledge."[45] Even Karl Manheim whom Gardiner called "the most forthright proponent of historical relativism in recent times," observes that the presence of subjective concerns does not imply renunciation of the postulate of objectivity and the possibility of arriving at decisions in factual disputes[46]"

Some General Remarks Concerning the Objectivity of History

There are several general conclusions to be drawn from the foregoing analysis of the subjectivity-objectivity controversy. First, absolute objectivity is possible only for an Infinite Mind. Finite minds must be content with systematic consistency, that is, fair but revisable attempts to reconstruct the past based on an established framework of reference which comprehensively and consistently incorporates all the facts into the overall sketch provided by the frame of

reference. Of course, if there is good reason to believe this Infinite Mind exists, and if this Infinite Mind (God) has revealed Himself, then an interpretation of history from an absolute perspective is available in His Word (the Bible).

Second, even without this absolute perspective an adequately objective finite interpretation of history is possible. For, as was shown above, the historian can be as objective as the scientist. Neither geologists nor historians have direct access to nor complete data on repeatable events. Furthermore, both must use value judgments in selecting and structuring the partial material available to them.

Third, in reality, neither the scientist nor the historian can attain objective meaning without the use of some worldview by which he understands the facts. Bare facts cannot even be known apart from some interpretive framework. Hence, the need for structure or a meaning-framework is crucial to the question of objectivity. Unless one can settle the question as to whether this is a theistic or non-theistic world on ground independent of the mere facts themselves, there is no way to determine the objective meaning of history. If, on the other hand, there are good reasons to believe that this is a theistic universe, then objectivity in history is a possibility. For once the overall viewpoint is established, it is simply a matter of finding the view of history that is most consistent with that overall system. That is, systematic consistency is the test for objectivity in historical matters as well as in scientific matters.

Summary and Conclusion

We began this chapter by noting that *whether* we can know the past is logically prior to *what* we can know about the past. And if history is not knowable, then neither is Gospel history knowable. So, at the root of the whole question about the historical Jesus is the question of whether history—particularly ancient history—is knowable at all. However, we have seen that history—even miracle history—is historically knowable.

The objections to the knowability of history are selfdefeating. History can be as objective as science. The geologist too has only secondhand, fragmentary, and unrepeatable evidence viewed from his own vantage point and in terms of his own values and interpretive framework. In this regard history can be as objective as geology. Although it is true that interpretive frameworks are necessary for objectivity, it is not true that every worldview must be totally relative and

subjective. Indeed this argument is selfdefeating, for it assumes that it is an objective statement about history that all statements about history are necessarily not objective.

As to the objection that miracle-history is not objectively verifiable, two points are important. First, miracles can occur *in* the historical process without being *of* that natural process. Further, the moral and theological dimensions of miracles are not totally subjective. They call for a subjective response but there are objective standards of truth and goodness (in accordance with the theistic God) by which the miracle can be objectively assessed. It can be concluded, then, that the door for the objectivity of history and thus the objective historicity for miracles is open. No mere question-begging uniformitarian principle of analogy can slam the door *a priori*. Evidence that supports the general nature of scientific law may not be legitimately used to rule out good historical evidence for unusual but particular events of history. This kind of argument is not only invincibly naturalistic in its bias but if applied consistently it would rule out much of known and accepted secular history. The only truly honest approach is to examine carefully the evidence for an alleged miracle in order to determine its authenticity.

[1] The discussion here follows that found in our *Christian Apologetics*, revised edition (Baker, 2013), chap. 17 and is used with the author's permission.

[2] Charles Beard, "That Noble Dream," in *The Varieties of History, from Voltaire to the Present***,** edited by Fritz Richard Stern (NY: Meridian Books, 1956), 323-25**.**

[3] Carl L. Becker, "What are Historical Facts?" in *The Philosophy of History in Our Time*. An Anthology Selected and Edited by Hans Meyerhoff (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 131

[4] Charles Beard, "That Noble Dream," in *The Varieties of History*, 323.

[5] Edward Hallett Carr, *What is History? With a New Introduction by Richard J. Evans* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001 [1961]), 20.

[6] Henri Pirenne, "What Are Historians Trying to Do?" in *Philosophy of History in Our Time*, 97.

[7] R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (New York: Oxford, 1994), 248.

[8] William H. Dray, *Philosophy of History* (London: Pearson, 1992 [1964]), 23.

[9] Beard, 324.

[10] Carr, 32.

[11] Collingwood, 285-290.

[12] Beard, 150-51.

[13] W. H. Walsh, *Philosophy of History*, An Introduction (New Dehli: Cosmo, 2008), 32.

[14] Beard, 151.

[15] Martin Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ*. Trans. by Carl E. Braaten (Fortress Press, 1964 [original *Der sogennante historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, biblische Christus*, 1896]), 63.

[16] Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 87.

[17] Karl Jaspers, et. al., *Myth and Christianity* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2005), 16-17.

[18] Ian T. Ramsey, *Religious Language* (Madison Heights, MI: Xpress Reprints, 1993), 118, 119, 122.

[19] Ramsey, Chap. 1.

[20] Ernst Troeltsch, "Historiography," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. by James Hastings *et al.* (New York: Scribner's, 1908-1926).

[21] Becker, 12-13.

[22] F. H. Bradley, *The Presuppositions of Critical History* (London: The British Library, 2010), 100.

[23] Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins, 1975), 89.

[24] Ibid., 41.

[25] Ibid., 42.

[26] To be adequate and accurate a historical presentation does not have to be either totally comprehensive or unrevisable. One can always learn more and improve a limited but accurate account.

[27] Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York: Random House/Vintage, 1964), 50.

[28] Butterfield, "Moral Judgments in History," in *Philosophy*, 244.

[29] Maurice Mandelbaum. *The Problem of Historical Knowledge* (New York: Liveright, 1938), 94.

[30] Collingwood, 100.

[31] Karl Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*. 2nd Edition (New York: Ruotledge, 2002), 150f.

[32] Lewis, 109.

[33] Richard Whateley, *Historical Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte, all* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1819)

[34] Norman L. Geisler, "Origins, Science of" in *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999) 567-571.

[35] Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man* (Peter Smith, 1978) 90.

[36] See A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament: The Sarum Lectures 1960-1961*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 189; Michael Grant, *Jesus: An Historian's Review of the Gospels* (New York: Collier, 1992).

[37] Our objections here are based largely on those given by Gary Habermas, "Philosophy of History, Historical Relativism and History as Evidence," in *Evangelical Apologetics*. Ed. Michael Bauman *et al* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1996), 155-156.

[38] Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans in Great Books of the*

Western World, ed. Robert Maynard (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica and University of Chicago, 1952), 541-576.

[39] Sherwin-White, 189.

[40] Meyerhoff., *The Philosophy of History*, 138 (emphasis added).

[41] Ibid., 200-201.

[42] Ibid., 190-196; 200-201.

[43] Ibid., 213.

[44] W. H. Walsh, Ed. Patrick Gardiner, *Theories of History* (Free Press, 1959), 301

[45] Beard, 148.

[46] Gary Habermas, “Philosophy of History, Historical Relativism and History as Evidence,” 155-156.

CHAPTER 16

THE RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

Richard G. Howe



The Question of the Reliability of the New Testament Writers Nested Within the Question of the Truth of Christianity: The Three-Step Approach

The question of the reliability of the New Testament writers is of paramount importance on several fronts. Since Christianity is (among other things) an historical religion, the integrity of the writers and their documents is a necessary condition for rationally believing in the truth of Christianity itself. The noted New Testament scholar F. F. Bruce summarizes it well.

> That Christianity has its roots in history is emphasized in the Church's earliest creeds, which fix the supreme revelation of God at a particular point in time, when "Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord. . . suffered under Pontius Pilate." This historical "once-for-all-ness" of Christianity, which distinguishes it from those religious and philosophical systems which are not specially related to any particular time, makes the reliability of the writings which purport to record this revelation a question of first-rate importance.[1]

In the context of this book, that integrity is also critical within the body of believers for maintaining a sound philosophy and orthodox theology about the

nature of inspiration, about certain crucial doctrines regarding who Jesus is and what God has done for us through Him, and even about the integrity of God Himself.

Philosophical Foundation

Seeing how the question of the reliability of the New Testament writers fits within the context of more fundamental questions serves to preempt certain objections stemming from erroneous philosophical presuppositions and methods. When addressing this question (or when just sharing our faith in any situation) we sometimes encounter those whose views about reality have been adversely affected by any number of factors. The days are quickly passing when Christians can assume that our hearers will hold the same notion of truth as we do when we claim that Christianity is true. What is more, assumptions about the nature of reality as such[2] and assumptions about how we know the real[3] will determine how our hearers (including fellow believers) understand our message. While not everyone we encounter will bring crippling assumptions with them, when the needs arises, laying the philosophical foundation is the first step in making the case for the Christian faith and for sound Christian theology.

The Existence of God

The second step focuses more narrowly on the question of God's existence. This step is sometimes ignored in some apologetic circles, causing conceptual problems for our hearers in assailing the reliability of the New Testament writers. Invariably, challenges to the reliability of the New Testament writers will arise when the reader of the New Testament encounters historical accounts of miraculous events. If one assumes (either consciously or unconsciously) that miracles cannot occur, he will discount as unreliable any historical account of a supposed miracle. Such a move is not itself irrational. Given how one understands the nature of reality, it is to be expected that anything that violates one's notion of reality itself cannot be regarded as real (or true). The question then becomes "Are miracles possible?" This question can only be answered in the affirmative by understanding the existence and nature of God.[4]

The Truth of Christianity

Once the hearer has come to hold certain of these basic truths, the specific

evidence for the case that Christianity is true can be made. Part of this case requires that one examine the reliability of the New Testament writers (and their documents). While it is beyond the scope of this chapter, the argument that Christianity is true would then take this reliability of the New Testament writers to show who Jesus is as the Son of God. The apologist could then show that Jesus, as the Son of God and as a divine authority, teaches that the Bible (both Old and New Testaments) is the inspired and inerrant written Word of God.[5]

The Reliability of the New Testament Writers

One can understand the issue of the reliability of the New Testament writers by answering two questions. First, is the New Testament we have today an accurate copy of the original New Testament? Second, did the events in the New Testament really happen? In answering these questions one must first appreciate what kind of questions these are. The first question involves the task of examining the reliability of the New Testament documents with regard to the transmission of the copies down to us through history. The second involves the task of examining corroborating evidence and judging the plausibility of eyewitness testimony. Note that both of the questions are historical. The significance of their being historical is that legitimate historical assessments of the New Testament must not be hampered with illicit philosophical assumptions. To discount an historical narrative that contains a miracle (like Jesus walking on water or rising from the dead) on the basis of the assumption that miracles cannot occur, is to make (consciously or unconsciously) a philosophical judgment, not an historical one.[6]

Is the New Testament We Have Today an Accurate Copy of the Original New Testament?

This question is asking “Do we have what the New Testament writers wrote?” In answering this question, we must begin by looking at what it was on which the original writers and the later the copyists physically wrote their documents. These materials included papyrus (pl. papyri), which was a plant from which paper was made.[7] Also the writers used vellum (or parchment), which was made from animal skin. These documents took several forms. Scrolls were sheets of papyrus that were glued together and rolled onto two sticks. Codices (pl. for codex, meaning “book”) were sheets of papyrus or parchment that were folded and sewn together in a form similar to our modern book.[8] The differences in the

materials may sometimes account for why earlier manuscripts made from papyrus failed to survive as long outside a more arid climate (such as in Egypt).

We can begin to appreciate the integrity of the transmission of the New Testament text when we compare and contrast it to other works of antiquity whose integrity is seldom called into question. We can make such comparisons and contrasts in two areas: (1) the time-gap between the oldest extant manuscript and the date of the original writing and (2) the number of extant manuscripts.

The Importance of the Time Gap

To our knowledge no original manuscripts of the New Testament exist today.[9] There are two possible reasons for this. As stated above, the papyrus material was of a fragile nature and could easily disintegrate in any but the most arid climates. This is probably why the oldest currently known papyri (the Chester Beatty Papyri) were discovered in Egypt. Second, it is believed that the Romans, under Diocletian, systematically destroyed (at least in certain regions) the Christian Scriptures.[10] Thankfully, the original writings were copied and those copies were disseminated throughout the Christian world. But even some of these copies no doubt eventually disintegrated. As older copies disappeared, a time gap began to develop between the date of the original composition and the oldest extant copy. All other things being equal, the narrower the time-gap between a copy and the date of original composition, the less one would suspect the introduction of variations into the readings. The question then is: How serious is it for our confidence in the integrity of the New Testament that this gap exists?

The Size of Time Gap: Ancient Sources Other than the New Testament

Scholars have collected the data on the time gaps that exist between the date of original composition and the oldest extant manuscript on many of the extant manuscript copies of the New Testament and other documents from the ancient world. These time gaps for the writings of Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus, Suetonius, and others can be compared and contrasted with the New Testament.[11] Examples include: Homer's *Iliad* (written c. 800 B.C.; earliest extant manuscript c. 400 B.C.; time gap of 400 years), Herodotus' *History* (written c. 480-425 B.C.; earliest extant manuscript c. A.D. 900; time gap of

1,350 years), Thucydides' *History* (written c. 460-400 B.C.; earliest extant manuscript c. A.D. 900; time a gap of 1,300 years), Tacitus' *Annals of Imperial Rome* (written A.D. 100; earliest manuscript c. A.D. 1,100; time gap of 1,000 years), and Suetonius' *The Twelve Caesars* (written c. A.D. 76-160; earliest manuscript c. A.D. 950; time gap of 800 years).

What the reader should take away from the comparison is how large the gap is for most of these ancient documents (400 to 1,300 and more years) and how small it is with the New Testament (as we will see in a moment). As Bruce commented above, the integrity of these other ancient documents is seldom doubted. Indeed, much of what is taught in the universities regarding, for example, Roman history, comes only from these documents.[12] If the New Testament fares at least as well as these (and we will see that it fares much better), then its integrity should be equally granted. The fact that it often is not betrays some other factors at work with those who disparage the reliability of the New Testament.

The Size of Time Gap: The New Testament

The John Rylands Fragment. Until recently, if one asked what is the oldest extant manuscript (or fragment) of the New Testament, the answer would have been the John Rylands Fragment. Located in the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester in Manchester, England, the fragment is dated to the first half of the second century.[13] The small fragment contains portions from John 18:31-33 on one side and John 18:37-38 on the other. As the library's web site indicates, "the importance of this fragment is quite out of proportion to its size" since it provides "invaluable evidence of the spread of Christianity in areas distant from the land of its origin," having been discovered in Egypt. Metzger comments: "Had this little fragment been known during the middle of the past century, that school of New Testament criticism that was inspired by the brilliant Tübingen professor, Ferdinand Christian Baur, could not have argued that the Fourth Gospel was not composed until about the year 160."[14]

The Chester Beatty Papyri. This is a collection of manuscripts housed in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, Ireland. The web site for the library tells us: "The Chester Beatty codex of Gospels and Acts (A.D. 250) along with the Pauline Letters codex (c. A.D. 180-200) and many other biblical papyri are the oldest known copies of these Christian works." [15]

The Bodmer Papyri. The Bodmer Papyri are primarily housed at the Bodmer Library in Geneva, Switzerland, though some of the papyri by that name are located in other places, including the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, Ireland.[16] The extensive collection contains eighty-eight Greek and Coptic manuscripts of both secular and sacred texts.[17] It contains all or part of the earliest known copies (so far) of Luke, John (c. A.D. 175-225), Acts, Jude, First & Second Peter, as well as parts of the Old Testament.[18]

Codex Vaticanus. Kept in the Vatican Library in Rome, Italy, Codex Vaticanus (indicated by the letter "B") dates c. A.D. 325-350. It has 759 extant folios or pages containing most of the Bible (and also some of the Apocrypha).[19]

Codex Sinaiticus. The Codex Sinaiticus, meaning "book of or from Sinai" contains the oldest complete New Testament in existence. It was "discovered" by Constantin von Tischendorf at St. Catherine's Monastery.[20] It is dated around the middle of the fourth century, slightly later than Vaticanus. The large codex (measuring 15 by 13.5 inches) contains 400 leaves or pages. Parts of the codex reside in four institutions: the British Library (principal portion of 347 leaves), the Library of the University of Leipzig (43 leaves), the National Library of Russia in Saint Petersburg (parts of six leaves), and the Holy Monastery of the God-Trodden Mount Sinai (Saint Catherine's) (further portions). In addition to the entire New Testament, the codex contains half of the Old Testament (otherwise known as the Septuagint), missing Genesis through First Chronicles, the Old Testament Apocrypha (2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, 1 & 4 Maccabees, Wisdom and Sirach), as well as two early Christian texts (an epistle by an unknown writer claiming to be the Apostle Barnabas and a work known as *The Shepherd of Hermas*).[21]

Codex Alexandrinus. Also residing in the British Library, this codex's earliest known location was in Alexandria, Egypt. Dated about c. A.D. 450, it contains the entire Greek Bible, except Matthew 1:1 through 25:6, John 6:50 through 8:52, and 2 Corinthians 4:13 through 12:6. It also contains some early Christian writings including the First Epistle of Clement, and the Second Epistle of Clement up to 12:4.

Codex Bezae. This Greek and Latin codex, also dated c. A.D. 450, gets its name from Theodore Beza, the friend and successor of Calvin. The University of Cambridge obtained it as a gift from Beza in 1581. It contains the Gospels in the order of Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark. Only Luke is complete. It also contains

Acts and a few Latin verses of 3 John.

Newest Discoveries. In an interview in February of 2012 at Dallas Theological Seminary where he teaches, Daniel Wallace commented on the newest New Testament manuscript discoveries. He had mentioned in a debate with Bart Erhman that seven New Testament papyri had been recently discovered, that six of them were "probably from the second century and one of them probably from the first." Wallace indicated that the newest findings would be published soon. Understandably, he has needed to be somewhat vague, especially in naming certain other scholars associated with the findings and publication to safeguard the integrity of the information until it can be officially made public. Regarding these newest findings, he summarizes:

> These fragments now increase our holdings as follows: we have as many as eighteen New Testament manuscripts from the second century and one from the first. Altogether, more than 43% of all New Testament verses are found in these manuscripts. But the most interesting thing is the firstcentury fragment. [22]

Besides the issue of the dates of these findings, another important point is summarized by Wallace.

> How do these manuscripts change what we believe the original New Testament to say? We will have to wait until they are published next year, but for now we can most likely say this: As with all the previously published New Testament papyri (127 of them, published in the last 116 years), not a single new *reading* has commended itself as authentic. Instead, the papyri function to confirm what New Testament scholars have already thought was the original wording or, in some cases, to confirm an alternate reading—but one that is already found in the manuscripts.[23]

In other words, as scholars continue to find early biblical manuscripts, what is already believed about the integrity of reliability of the text is repeatedly confirmed. As for the significance of the dating of all of these manuscripts, the words of Sir Frederic Kenyon and F. F. Bruce are noteworthy.

> The interval, then, between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us

> substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.[24]

F. F. Bruce concurs.

> The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be regarded as beyond all doubt.[25]

The Importance of the Number of Manuscripts

Invariably, as documents were copied, changes in the text occurred (known as "textual variants" or "variant readings").[26] The more manuscripts we have of a document, the better we are able to cross-check variant readings in order to reconstruct the original reading. The science of comparing variant readings in copies of ancient documents in order to ascertain the original reading is called Textual Criticism.[27] To illustrate, suppose you received an email from a trusted source that you suspect is telling you that you had won $1,000, 000. [28] But suppose the text of the email read actually reads "Congratulations! You have won one million %ollars!" The text obviously contains a typographical error and you are fairly certain that it is dollars you have won. Suppose, further, that you continue to receive emails from this source, each seemingly telling you the same thing, yet in each case, while it, too, contains a typo, the typo is in a different place (e.g., "Congratulations! %ou have won one million dollars!" and "Congratulations! You have won one %illion dollars!" and so on). The irony is that, even though no single email seemingly contains the message without a typo, and even though the more emails you receive the more typos you have accumulated, it is also the case that the more emails you receive, the more certain you are of what the intended (or original) message actually was. In an analogous way, the preponderance of manuscripts of the New Testament (ranging from fragments to the entire New Testament) allows textual critics to cross-check textual variants to judge what the original reading was.

The Number of Manuscripts: Ancient Sources Other than the New Testament

As with the issue of the time gap, we can get an idea of the integrity of the New Testament text when we compare and contrast it with other documents from the ancient world, again, whose authenticity no one dreams of questioning. A look at the number of manuscripts of the writings of Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus, Suetonius, and others shows the vast superiority of the testimony of the New Testament. Examples include: Homer's *Iliad* (1758 copies), Herodotus' *History* (8), Thucydides' *History* (8), Tacitus' *Annals of Imperial Rome* (20), and Suetonius' *The Twelve Caesars* (8).[29]

The Number of Manuscripts: The New Testament

We now have 127 papyri comprising 125 manuscripts.[30] As we saw from the Daniel Wallace interview reference above, that number is growing. Uncials (from the Latin for "a twelfth part") is a book-hand style of writing used in literary works (as opposed to a cursive style used in everyday documents) and characterized "by more deliberate and carefully executed letters, each one separate from the others, somewhat like our capital letters."[31] Uncials, sometimes referred to as majuscules[32] (meaning "all capitals"), are primarily manuscripts written on vellum. There are about 310 such manuscripts dating from the fourth to the ninth centuries.[33]

Minuscules (from the Latin for 'rather small') are manuscripts displaying a style of writing initiated about the beginning of the ninth century that was created for the production of books. It is more of a "running-hand" which was a modified form of cursive script smaller than the uncial style.[34] Geisler and Nix note that there are 2,907 such manuscripts ranging from the ninth through the fifteenth centuries.[35]

Lectionaries function similarly to our modern church bulletins or orders of worship that contain Scripture readings for the services. According to The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, lectionaries are:

> . . .manuscripts that have portions of the New Testament, especially the Gospels, which are to be read on select days throughout the year. They are unlike other New Testament manuscripts in that they are not continuous text manuscripts—that is, they do not give the passages from the New Testament in canonical sequence. Rather, there are special days in which portions of the New Testament are read. The verses to be read each day usually vary from about 15 to 30.[36]

Exploring their web site shows that it is likely that previously un-cataloged lectionaries have recently been discovered that will change the number previously thought to exist. As it stands, there are 2,434 lectionaries available to textual scholars.[37] All of these together give us 5,778 manuscripts (or 5,776 if you count the 127 papyri as 125 manuscripts) of all or part of the New Testament. The manuscript testimony for the New Testament is indeed vast and, by comparison, far outweighs the manuscript testimony for any other documents from the ancient world.

Other Support for the New Testament Text

Early Versions. The support for the integrity and reliability of the New Testament is not confined to this vast array of Greek manuscripts, for the New Testament was translated into other languages very early on. Scholars are able to add the manuscripts of these early translations to the mix in ascertaining the original readings of the New Testament. These early versions of the Bible include Latin (over 10,000 copies), Ethiopic (over 2,000 copies), Slavic (4,100 copies), Armenian (over 2,500 copies), and more equaling around 20,000 manuscripts.

Patristic Quotations. The first generation of Christians who had access to either the original books of the New Testament or to copies of the originals undoubtedly were in a position to make direct quotations or to make obvious allusions. The leaders in the early church (referred to as the Church Fathers or the Patristics) made numerous such quotes and allusions in their correspondence. Daniel Wallace points out that “to date, more than one million quotations of the NT by the church fathers have been tabulated. These fathers come from as early as the late first century all the way to the middle ages.”[38]

Metzger observes:

> Besides textual evidence derived from New Testament Greek manuscripts and from early versions, the textual critic has available the numerous scriptural quotations included in the commentaries, sermons, and other treatises written by early Church Fathers. Indeed so extensive are these citations that if all other sources for our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, they would be sufficient alone for the reconstruction of practically the entire New Testament.[39]

Did the Events Attested to in the New Testament Really Happen?

We now want to show that what the New Testament writers wrote historically took place.[40] We can approach this issue from two directions: (1) *Answering the Critics* in which we respond to the reasons critics give *against* believing the testimony of the New Testament writers and (2) *Making the Case* in which we give the reasons *for* believing the testimony of the New Testament writers.

Answering the Critics: Responding to the Reasons against Believing the Testimony of the New Testament Writers

Critic: The claims of the New Testament writers are too fantastic. Probably one the most common elements of the New Testament that critics stumble over is the presence of miraculous stories such as Jesus' healings or His resurrection from the dead. With the increasing influence of scientism[41] many have trouble believing in the historical integrity of a document if it contains supernatural elements. In response, it needs to be emphasized that whether these types of events can occur is not an historical question but, rather, a philosophical one. The reader should remember how we began this chapter in parsing out the three-step approach to the apologetic task. Before the specifics of the historical reliability of the New Testament can be evaluated, the proper philosophical foundations and the truth of God's existence must be settled first. Once the existence of God is shown, then there is no reason *on historical grounds* to reject an historical report of a purported supernatural event.[42]

Critic: The New Testament is full of contradictions. It is a common allegation (and myth) that the Bible is full of contradictions.[43] To be sure, there are problems or difficulties in the text that might give one pause. However, no problem or difficulty has ever been pointed out that does not have a plausible explanation. One of the best popular treatments of problem or difficult texts is *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties*.[44] Space will not allow an indepth look at specific difficulties. The reader is encouraged to consult the Geisler and Howe work and other texts. However, Geisler and Howe suggest a number of principles to bear in mind when dealing with Bible difficulties, a few of which bear mentioning here.

First, they point out that just because some difficulty is not yet explained, it does not follow that it can never be explained. It has happened on more than one occasion that critics attacked the biblical text for being historically inaccurate only to be silenced by the archeologist's spade or the discovery of a new manuscript.

Second, they argue that the text of the Bible should be presumed innocent until proven guilty. This is not an unreasonable principle by which to proceed when dealing with any text. But this principle is ignored by some Bible critics. For example, some Bible critics assume that if Josephus says something different than the Bible, then obviously the Bible is mistaken. This they do despite the fact that the writers of the Bible were more proximate to the events about which they wrote than was Josephus. But why could it not be that the Bible corrects Josephus? At the very least, neither should be accused of error until all the available evidence is weighed.

In dealing with Bible difficulties one should remember that there is virtually no criticism of the Bible that has not been addressed extensively in the literature. The Christian should have within his reach the resources to consult to understand the details of a given Bible difficulty. In my experience, there are no difficulties that have not been answered. Granted, some Bible critics will never be satisfied no matter how much evidence is marshaled. But the Christian has no need to be intimidated by the facts.

Attacks on the Bible's integrity and historical accuracy stem from a variety of mindsets. For example, some criticisms were leveled against the biblical narrative only to be corrected as more historical and archeological information came to light. For example, Luke makes a reference to Lysanias, the Tetrarch of Abilene at the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist. The date of this Lysanias would be around A.D. 27. At one point the only Lysanias known to historians was killed in 36 B.C., some sixty-three years earlier. Later, archeologists found an inscription dated between A.D. 14 and 29 that references another Lysanias the Tetrarch.[45] Once more historical evidence was brought to light the biblical text was shown to be accurate.

Other criticisms stem from a misreading of the available historical evidence. Once some evidence is misreported or misinterpreted, the misunderstanding of such evidence can become the standard reading of the history of the matter. This is the case with those who allege that the New Testament borrowed from the

pagan religions of the time. As both Ronald Nash and Larry Hurtado have argued, this common myth endures due to the mistaken reading of the available historical evidence by relying too heavily on secondary (and themselves mistaken) sources.[46]

Still other criticisms are leveled against the biblical narrative because the critic illicitly imposes his worldview of naturalism upon the text. Naturalism, in this context, is the worldview that says that every event must have had a natural cause; that there is no supernatural agent who can interfere with the laws of nature. As such, Naturalism denies the possibility of miracles. Because of this, the Naturalist will dismiss as historically unreliable any account of a miracle. But in doing so, the critic will claim that his case against the New Testament is historically substantiated. The problem, however, is that the dispute between Naturalism and Supernaturalism is not an historical dispute but a philosophical one.

With this, we can see that the critic's rejection of the reliability of the New Testament because of purported Bible difficulties is unwarranted. There is one last important point, however, that needs to be made before I leave the subject of Bible difficulties. There is a difference between showing the basic reliability of the New Testament and showing that the New Testament is inspired and inerrant. Mike Licona uses an illustration from the sinking of the Titanic.[47] According to Licona, the eyewitnesses to the sinking were divided over whether the ship split into two parts before it sank. Licona points out, rightfully, that just because the eyewitnesses contradict each other, no one is reasonable to conclude that the Titanic did not sink. Thus, Licona argues, even if there were conflicts or contradictions in the testimonies of the New Testament writers, no one is reasonable to conclude (for example) that Jesus did not rise from the dead. I believe this point is well taken and that this procedure is legitimate at one level when dealing with unbelievers. However, the point that must be made explicit is that, given that the eyewitnesses of the sinking of the Titanic contradict each other, it does follow necessarily that these eyewitnesses (or their written accounts) *are not inerrant and thus are not inspired.* Thus, while granting problems in the text of the New Testament might be called for at a certain level in our encounters with the unbeliever, we must press the issue to its conclusion and show that the New Testament is more than just basically reliable, but that it is the inspired and inerrant Word of God.

Critic: People from the ancient world were not interested in accurate history.

More than once during my early college education I encountered the claim that the Bible was a product of a culture and time when any distinction between history (as an account of actual events) and myth (as a series of stories to convey a moral point, but largely devoid of historical grounding) was nonexistent. If it was existent at all back then (the claim would go) it is entirely impossible for us today to separate out those elements that might be historical and those that are non-historical but mythical. Thus, we cannot be confident that any given account in the New Testament is a truthful account of what actually happened.

Such a claim has not been without its formidable proponents. Indeed, the legacy of nineteenth-and early twentieth-century liberal or radical theology affords a veritable who's who of the leading theologians and New Testament scholars of the time, particularly in Europe.[48] I cannot help but conclude, however, that this sentiment is but a species of the informal logical fallacy *argumentum ad annis*, otherwise known as the "argument because of age" and cleverly dubbed by C. S. Lewis as "chronological snobbery."[49] While it certainly is fair to ask of an ancient source whether particular elements are truthful or embellishments, it remains that the ancients were aware of the distinction, as evidenced by, for example, the writings of the Roman historians Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus, Suetonius, and others. Professor of European Thought at Oxford John Burrow points out:

> The central concerns—above all with history as truth-telling and, at least as an ideal, as free from bias—were already very old ones and, though shaken, are still in some sense with us, for those of us for whom a distinction between say, history and imaginative fiction is still an important one. In this view Herodotus was taking an important step in distinguishing his own *Histories* from the work of the poets, and Thucydides, though he may have judged unfairly, was invoking relevant criteria when he sneered by implication at Herodotus as belonging with authors less concerned to tell the truth than to entertain the public. . . . Of course, in the history of historiography zeal for truth had been a spectrum rather than an absolute—truth mattered, fairly obviously, more to Polybius than to Livy—but someone who wholly and perhaps willfully falls of the negative end of the scale . . . counts rather as a parodist or imitator of history.[50]

Aside from all of this, the Bible was not written by the ancient Greeks or Romans, but, instead, was written by and large by the Hebrews. The viability and truthfulness of history, and especially of one's own history, was especially

important to the Hebrews. Their very identity as a people was grounded in history. Without a real Abraham, there was no nation of Israel. What can be said of this mindset regarding the Old Testament can also be said of the New Testament. While having such a mindset does not guarantee the accuracy of every element, it does refute the claim that the biblical writers had no interest in the truthfulness of the history that they wrote.

Critic: The four Gospels were written much later and cannot be trusted to give an accurate account of the life of Jesus. Some have alleged that the Gospel accounts are too late to be trusted regarding the facts of the life of Jesus. From the last half of the nineteenth century and for the next one hundred plus years after, the Gospels were regarded as stemming from the middle of the second century. While scholars today have backed off from this late date,[51] novels such as Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* have caused a popular resurgence of the idea that the Gospels were late.[52]

In response, it can be said that the four Gospels of the New Testament were attested to long before Constantine and Nicaea.[53] The early attestation of the four canonical Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John can be seen in several early writings.[54] The *Muratorian Canon*, discovered in 1740, is an eight-century copy of a document dated around the late second century. The first few lines are missing, but the text reads "The third book of the gospel is that according to Luke. . . . The fourth of the gospels is that of John, one of the disciples."[55] It names only four gospels and names the writings of Valentinus, who was an important Gnostic[56] writer of that time, as excluded from the Church.[57]

The Church Father Irenaeus has an extended discussion why there are four Gospels.[58] Other early Christian writers or writings that attest, quote, or make allusions to the Gospels include Origen's *Homily on Luke* (A.D. 185-254), the *Epistle of Barnabas* (c. 70-79), the *Didache* (c. 70-130), Papias' *Interpretation of the Oracles of the Lord* (c. 70-163), Marcion (c. 140), the Epistles of Ignatius (c. 110-117), and Clement of Rome's *Epistle to the Corinthians* (c. 95-97).[59] These early attestations do not, in themselves, prove that what the New Testament says about Jesus is true. What they do show, however, are the early views of the Christians regarding which documents were authoritative at an early date. Thus, the critic is wrong when he says that the Gospels are too late to be reliable regarding the story of Jesus.

Critic: The writers of the New Testament were reading back into the life and

teachings of Jesus their own concerns and desires. The claim has been made in some sources that the story of Jesus is less historical and more an expression of the concerns of the writers of the New Testament themselves as they were writing their gospel accounts after the fact. But the presence of irrelevant material, the lack of relevant material, and the presence of counterproductive material indicate that the writers were not merely reading back into the life of Jesus.[60]

If the disciples or the early church invented the story of Jesus Christ, why would the story include elements that were unimportant to them? What would be the point of inventing the story of Jesus only to have him engaged in Sabbath controversies with the Pharisees? What purpose would it serve the writers of the Gospels to have Jesus displaying an attitude of favor to Israel? Why would the Gospel writers have Jesus talking in such phrases as the "Kingdom of God" and "Son of Man" when such phrases were not in common use in their day? The best explanation for why the Gospel writers have the story the way they do is because this is what actually happened.

Not only do the Gospel writers have elements that seemingly served no purpose for them (if they were fabricating the story of Jesus), but there is also the lack of material that would have been important to them and relevant to their immediate needs. If they were creating the story of Jesus, why is there nothing in Jesus' teaching to help settle the controversies about circumcision (Acts 15) or gifts like tongues (1 Cor 14)? Why is there a conspicuous lack of teaching from Jesus on food laws like eating meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor 8)? These issues were of paramount importance to the early church. Controversies could have easily been dispensed with by merely having Jesus make definitive statements. But none are forthcoming. The best explanation is that the Gospel writers were not creating the story of Jesus but were merely recording what Jesus actually said and not inserting things He did not say.

The presence of counterproductive material also points to the authenticity of the writers' story of Jesus. If the disciples or the early church invented the story of Jesus Christ, why would the story include elements that were counterproductive to the spreading of the message like the women's testimony of seeing the resurrected Christ? In some circles, the testimony of women was not admissible in court. Indeed, when Paul recounts the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus in 1 Corinthians 15, he never mentions the women. Why would the Gospel writers have the story this way? The best answer is because

that is the way the events really happened. In addition, you find embarrassing features of Jesus' disciples (e.g., their misunderstanding or missing altogether the point of some of Jesus' teachings) as well as embarrassing features of Jesus Himself (e.g., His seeming ignorance of His own second coming or His seeming tolerance of adultery in John 8). Again, the best explanation for why the writers have the story this way is because this is the way the events actually happened.

Critic: There are no extrabiblical (i.e., outside the Bible) references to New Testament people or events. Some may be surprised that there are references outside the New Testament to New Testament people and events. A few examples will illustrate. The Roman historian Tacitus (c. A.D. 55-120) in his *The Annals of Imperial Rome* claims: "To suppress this rumour, Nero fabricated scapegoats—and punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called). Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilatus."[61] One can note several New Testament people and events reported here: the term used for the followers was 'Christians', the Christians' leader was Christ, Christ had been executed, this execution was during the reign of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate had facilitated the execution, and Pilate was the governor of Judaea.

Regarding the Emperor Claudius, Tacitus' contemporary, Suetonius (b. A.D. 69), reports: "Because the Jews at Rome caused continuous disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he [Claudius] expelled them from the city."[62] Compare this report with Acts 18:1-2: "After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, *because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to heave Rome*. He came to them."[63] (emphasis added) While this might strike one as trivial, it is precisely because it is trivial that is says so much. It is significant that two unrelated historical sources relate the same event when the event itself is relatively unimportant to at least one of the sources. Luke only parenthetically mentions Claudius having commanded the Jews to depart from Rome to explain how it is that Paul had encountered Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth. It did not seemingly advance any kind of literary agenda for Luke. This is one of many indications of the historical accuracy of Luke's writings.[64]

The Jewish historian Josephus (c. AD 37-101) makes several references to New Testament events and people. In his *Antiquities of the Jews* he mentions the martyrdom of James, the author of the Book of James.

> Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he assembled the sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law he delivered them to be stoned.[65]

He also mentions John the Baptist.

> Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away, [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body: supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.[66]

Perhaps the most quoted from Josephus in this regard is his reference to Jesus himself. Though Josephus makes a reference to "Christ" in his comment about James (an obvious reference to Jesus), he has a more extended comment elsewhere. Controversy has surrounded the authenticity of the quotation because it strikes many critics as being too pious toward Jesus, not sounding like the words that a non-Christian Jew would say. Because of this, critics have alleged that the passage has suffered from Christian interpolations. Gary Habermas has summarized the discussion and shows how the passage would read with the interpolations removed. According to Habermas, this version of the passage is based on the study by Schlomo Pines of Hebrew University of an Arabic manuscript containing the alternate rendering.

> At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good and (he) was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. But those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion, and that he was alive; accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah, concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.[67]

Habermas goes on to discuss other non-Christian sources who corroborate

New Testament people, places, and events, including Thallus, Pliny the Younger, Emperor Trajan, Emperor Hadrian, the Talmud, Lucian, and Mara Bar-Serapion. It is clear that the New Testament is abundantly confirmed by many extrabiblical sources and that the criticism that it is not is completely unfounded.

Critic: The Gnostic Gospels are a more accurate picture of the real human (not divine) Jesus. Just as with the notion from Dan Brown's novel that the Gospels were late (either as written or as recognized), another criticism of the reliability of the New Testament writers and truthfulness of Christianity entered the pop culture from *The Da Vinci Code*.[68] Closely tied to this criticism is the notion that the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus was a late development and that the earliest Christians (as misrepresented in the Gospels but accurately represented in the Gnostic writings) regarded Jesus as nothing more than a human being.[69] However, a comparison of the Jesus of the New Testament with the Jesus of the Gnostic writings reveals some very interesting contrasts. Let us first take a look at the Jesus of the Gnostic writings.

These Gnostic writings are more accurately referred to as the Nag Hammadi Documents. These documents were discovered in 1945 in a cave in the Egyptian desert. The documents are eight-century Coptic[70] translations of original Greek documents dating from the second to fourth centuries, consisting of twelve codices and eight leaves from a thirteenth. Eliminating duplication, there are forty-five separate titles. Some of them have strange names like *The Hypostasis of the Archons*, *The Concept of Our Great Power*, and *The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth*. Others have titles that contain names of biblical characters such as *The Apocryphon of James*, *The Gospel of Thomas*, and *The Sophia of Jesus Christ*.[71] These documents have been translated into English and are easily accessible through libraries and bookstores.[72]

Interestingly, much of the teachings contained in these documents have been known to modern scholars by way of the criticisms of these teachings written in early church history by (for example) Irenaeus in his *Against Heresies*. But with the discovery of the primary sources, it allows us to read these teachings in the words of those who held them. The doctrines are a combination of Christian themes and Gnosticism, thus they are often referred to as the Gnostic Gospels or Gnostic writings.[73]

The term 'Gnosticism' comes from the Greek word γνωσις (*gnosis*), meaning 'knowledge.' The term refers to a religious movement that began to flourish

toward the end of or soon after the apostolic era. The movement taught that one is saved, not because of any atoning work of a Savior, but through a secret knowledge. Some tenets of Gnosticism include the notions that the true God is a pure, immaterial fullness of light, removed from the creation, that the material world is evil and is not a subject of ultimate redemption in the end, and that the one who suffered on the cross was not Jesus but a physical substitute.

Most of the documents are very strange and sometimes border on the incoherent, for example, "Jesus said 'Blessed is he who came into being before he came into being.'"[74] Thus, it is difficult to glean a consistent picture of anything, though most of the teachings fall within the Gnostic worldview. Several points, however, do come through regarding the nature of Jesus. First, in the Gnostic documents, there is a distinction between the Living Jesus and the fleshly Jesus, the latter being the one who was crucified.[75] Second, the true identity of the Gnostic Jesus seems to reside in his transcendence apart from his incarnation.[76] In other words, the *real* Jesus was an immaterial essence, not a physical human being. Third, the Gnostic Jesus is an exalted being and an associate of the unknowable creator.[77] Fourth, the Gnostic Jesus seemingly had little regard for women.[78] This point is significant in light of those critics of Christianity who maintain that Christianity is largely responsible for the repression of women and that women were much more liberated within the culture and worldview depicted by the Gnostic documents. Fifth, the Gnostic Jesus seemingly had little regard for human sexuality.[79] Sixth, the Gnostic Jesus seemingly had little regard for decency.[80]

In stark contrast to the bizarre picture of Jesus portrayed in the Gnostic Gospels, the New Testament gives a picture of a very human Jesus.[81] We find that Jesus had a human ancestry (Matt 1:20-25), a human birth (Luke 2:4-7), human flesh and blood (John 19:34), and a human childhood (Luke 2:21-22, 41-49, 52). In addition, Jesus experienced human hunger (Luke 4:2), human thirst (John 4:6-7), human fatigue (John 4:6), human sorrow (John 11:35), human temptation (Heb 4:15), human pain (Matt 26:38; 27:34, 46), and human death (Matt 16:21).

Further, the New Testament also gives a picture of a divine Jesus. Jesus claimed to have had glory with the Father (John 17:5; cf. Isaiah 42:8; 48:11) and to be the I AM (John 8:55-59; cf. Exod 3:14). He spoke with absolute authority (Matt 7:24-29). He claimed that God was His Father (John 5:17-18). He claimed to be one with the Father (John 10:30-33). He claimed to come forth from God

(John 8:42-47). He claimed to be the only access to the Father (John 14:6). He claimed to be able to forgive sins (Matthew 9:2-7). He claimed to deserve absolute allegiance (Luke 14:26). He claimed to be the judge of all mankind and that to dishonor Him is to dishonor the Father (John 5:21-23). Last, Jesus accepted worship (John 20:28; Matt 28:9; Luke 24:52).[82] We see from these, and many other references that could be marshaled, that it is the New Testament that acknowledges the reality of both the humanity and deity of Jesus, not the Gnostic Gospels.

Critic: The story of Jesus and doctrines of Christianity were borrowed from the pagan religions of the time. It is not uncommon to hear a critic make this accusation.[83] The ancient world, the critic alleges, is replete with stories of dying and rising gods all of whom were born of a virgin. The effect of this charge on some is to destroy in their minds the unique nature of Jesus and his teachings. If Christianity is only an amalgam of other ancient near eastern religions, then why should anyone believe that it is true? A number of responses to this claim have been produced including Ronald Nash's *Christianity and the Hellenistic World*.[84]

A summary of some important points out of Nash's work will help to show why this criticism is common yet unfounded. First, some themes or symbols present in religions come from common human experience. For example, water is commonly used as a symbol of cleansing. Also, rituals regarding eating are common among religions. Thus, to find these symbols in a given religion is to be expected.

Second, just because two religions use a common symbol or motif this does not in itself prove a causal influence of one religion upon another or a borrowing of elements of one religion from another.

Third, even if one religion "borrows" a theme or symbol, this does not entail that the doctrine represented by that theme or symbol is false. This would especially be true for Christianity since it builds many of its themes upon Judaism, taking Jesus to be the fulfillment of these Old Testament themes.

Fourth, some of the themes in Christianity that are thought to have been borrowed from other religions, actually predate those religions or were not present in those religions until after the beginning of Christianity. Thus it would be a mistake to hold that this latter addition to the religion was present throughout all its existence. One example is the Taurobolium ritual. This ritual

was practiced by the cult of Cybele. During the ritual, one stood in a pit underneath a slaughtered bull while the blood of the bull poured over him as the animal was dying. It has been alleged that this was the origin of Paul's teaching about being cleansed by the blood of Christ. However, studies show that the Taurobolium ritual did not arise within the cult until the second century, i.e., after the onset of Christianity. As such, one could more easily argue that if there was any "borrowing" going on, it was the cult of Cybele who "borrowed" the notion of blood cleansing from Christianity.

Last, and more directly to the issue at hand, some of the elements that are often construed to be similar between Christianity and other ancient religions are shown to be quite distinct upon closer examination. The supposed "dying and rising savior" theme of the mystery religions is said to be the origin of Christianity's doctrine of the death and resurrection of Jesus. However, the differences far outweigh any similarities. First, none of the so-called savior gods died for anyone else. The idea that a savior dies for his people is unique to Christianity. Second, it is never claimed that these figures died for sins. Only Jesus is said to have died for sins. Third, though Jesus died once for all, many of these pagan deities would die and be resuscitated repeatedly, depicting the annual vegetative cycles. Fourth, the death of Jesus Christ was an actual event of history whereas the deaths of the pagan deities were mythical stories not tied to any historical event. Last, Jesus gave up his life voluntarily whereas these other deities did not.

One can see, therefore, that nothing that defines Christianity in terms of its essential doctrine is the result of modifying or merely adopting another religious system (other than the obvious grounding Christianity has in Judaism) and that the allegation of the critic is unfounded.

Making the Case: Giving the Reasons for Believing the Testimony of the New Testament Writers

In the previous section, I made the negative case in responding to the reasons critics give for disbelieving the testimony of the New Testament writers. Here I am interested in the positive case of giving the reason for believing the testimony of the New Testament writers. Some of the case for is merely the inverse of the critics' case against, and, as such, the details have already been laid out.

The testimony is from contemporary eyewitnesses to the events. To be sure, some New Testament scholars deny the traditional view of authorship of some of the New Testament books.[85] It remains, however, that the traditional views are not without warrant. Space will not allow an indepth rehearsal of the arguments. Let it suffice to say that, giving the traditional view, the fact that the Gospels were written either by eyewitnesses (Matthew, John) or by someone with access to an eyewitness (Mark as the amanuensis of Peter) or by someone who engaged in meticulous research of eyewitness accounts (Luke), the story of Jesus was originally penned by those who knew the story as well as it could be known.

The testimony is accurately reported in the manuscript tradition. We saw earlier that the overwhelming evidence indicates that we have today what the New Testament writers wrote. This was shown not only by the vast amount of extant manuscripts of the New Testament (ranging from fragments to the entire New Testament), but also from the numerous quotations and allusions to the New Testament in the writings of the first few generations of Christians after the New Testament. What is more, the New Testament was very early on translated into a number of other languages. The manuscripts from all of these other versions help textual scholars reproduce the readings of the original New Testament.

It is reasonable to believe that the New Testament writers were willing and able to tell the truth.

There seems to be no plausible alternative explanation for the story that the New Testament writers have given other than that they were telling the truth. It is clear that they had nothing to gain from the story they were telling. It was not as if they profited monetarily or socially from fabricating the story of Jesus. What is more, they actually had much to lose by telling their story. Many of the New Testament writers went on to be martyrs. Surely, no one would die for what they *knew* was not true. It is certain that the New Testament writers *believed* what they were saying and writing. The questions then that have to be answered include: If the story of Jesus was false, how could the New Testament writers not know it was false? If the story of Jesus was false, how could the New Testament writers have been mistaken? Critics have offered explanations such as the disciples were hallucinating when they thought they saw the resurrected Jesus or the disciples went to the wrong tomb in seeking the body of Jesus and others. Such explanations have been thoroughly refuted by Christian apologists.[86]

The presence of adverse testimony would have hampered the spread of Christianity. If the witnesses' testimony was false, others would have been able to contradict and squelch the growth of Christianity. Clearly, those who opposed the story about Jesus should have been able to deftly refute the story told by the disciples. This is particularly true regarding the claim of the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead. The fact that the body of Jesus could not be produced to prove that Jesus was still dead shows that the tomb was empty. Generally, those who reject the resurrection of Jesus do so, not on historical grounds, but rather on philosophical grounds. Since they have an antipathy to the notion of resurrection (as a function of their having an antipathy to the possibility of miracles altogether) the answer to these types of objections must be with philosophical arguments.

Archeology testifies to the trustworthiness of the Bible. Many discoveries regarding people, places, and events have corroborated the text of the Bible. A few examples will suffice. The ruins of numerous places mentioned in the Old Testament and the New Testament have been uncovered by archeologists, including Ur of the Chaldees, Sodom and Gomorrah, Jericho, and all the cities of the seven churches mentioned in the Book of Revelation.[87]

In addition, artifacts have been discovered that mention people and places from the New Testament, including the ossuary, or bone box, of Caiaphas the High Priest, which I personally had the opportunity to view when it visited a museum near me. Additionally I was able to view the Pontius Pilate Inscription, or the Pilate Stone, a stone section of a building Pilate had made in honor of the Roman Emperor Tiberius. The partial inscription reads "[T]IBERIEUM [PON]TIUS PILATUS [PRAEF]ECTUS IUDA[EAE] meaning "Tiberius, Pontius Pilate, Prefect of Judea." It is the only known archeological evidence for Pilate.

Archeologists have also discovered the skeletal remains of a crucifixion victim named Yohanan dated around the time of Christ. The remains include the nail still imbedded in the heel bone with olive wood still attached to the nail.[88] Such findings confirm that crucifixion was indeed a manner of execution in the first century. The pool of Siloam, reference in John 9, was discovered in 2004 in what is now the Silwan neighborhood. Other sites that archeologists have identified (and which tourists can visit) include the theater in Ephesus and the ruins of the Temple of Diana (Acts 19:23-29) in what is now Turkey. With this, one can see that the archeological evidence for the Bible is indeed impressive.

Thus, those critics who suggest that the Bible is not corroborated by archeology are clearly wrong.

Conclusion

The evidence indicates that the evidence for the reliability of the New Testament writers is substantial. I have argued that New Testament that we have today is an accurate copy of the original New Testament by examining the time gap between original and oldest extant manuscripts, the number of manuscripts, early versions of the Bible, quotation and allusions from the early Christians. Further, I have argued that it is reasonable to believe that the events attested to in the New Testament really happened by responding to the critics who claim that the events of the New Testament are too fantastic to believe, who claim that people from the ancient world were not interested in accurate history, who claim that the writers of the New Testament were merely reading back into the life and teachings of Jesus their own concerns and desires, and who claim that there are no extrabiblical references to the New Testament. I then offered the positive case for the reliability of the New Testament. This case included a look at the nature of eyewitness testimony, the evidence that their testimony has been accurately preserved in the manuscript tradition, and that it was reasonable to believe that they were telling the truth in as much as they had nothing to gain and much to lose by telling the story of Jesus. In addition, I argued that the presence of adverse testimony would have hampered the spread of Christianity. I bolstered the case for the reliability of the New Testament writers by a look at the confirming archeological evidence. The conclusion of the matter is that the writers of the New Testament are indeed reliable.

[1] F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988), 8.

[2] Questions like: Is it only physical? Does it only operate according to inviolable laws and regularities?

[3] Questions like: Is it always or ever appropriate to use logic to assail reality? Can our senses provide a foundation for the beginning of knowledge? Is “science” (as it is commonly thought of today) the supreme method of knowing truth? Can religious experience tell us about reality? Can spoken or written text convey objective meaning? Is history knowable?

[4] The question of whether or how God's existence and nature can be demonstrated is certainly complex. In the interest of full disclosure, I maintain that God's existence and many of God's attributes can be rationally demonstrated.

[5] I am indebted to R. C. Sproul for this template (basic reliability of the New Testament, who Jesus is, what Jesus teaches about the Bible) in his "The Case for Inerrancy: A Methodological Analysis," *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1974): 242-261.

[6] For a treatment of this issue, see my chapter "In Defense of the Supernatural" in this work.

[7] For a discussion about these materials see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3-35 and Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *From God to Us: How We Got Our Bible*, revised and expanded (Chicago: Moody Press, 2012), 168-192.

[8] Larry W. Hurtado comments regarding the codex: "Even beyond the circles of those scholars acquainted with ancient Christian manuscripts, it is somewhat well known that Christians preferred the 'codex' (plural: codices) book form over the roll, the more traditional form in the early Roman period." (Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 43). Hurtado discusses the significance of the Christian's preference for the codex over the scroll.

[9] While some Christians have suggested that the reason God, in His providence, did not allow any original manuscripts to survive indefinitely was to prevent such documents from becoming idols, Norman Geisler has offered a more plausible and practical reason (heard by me on a radio interview in the 1980s). He suggests that, with the original New Testament documents being extinct, it is impossible for anyone to sabotage the reading, for, if these documents did exist to our knowledge, they would, no doubt, be in the possession of someone or some institution or church. Possessing such documents would create the possibility for an unscrupulous person or institution or church to alter the text to their liking.

[10] Textual scholar D. C. Parker says: “Most persecutions were local events . . . . On a few occasions, however, the persecution of Christians became imperial policy, and thus far greater in degree. The most systematic and longest took place in the reign of Diocletian; it began in 303 and lasted for nine years. The destruction of their sacred writings was seen as a vital part of the elimination of Christian identity, and so the persecution began with an edict requiring the destruction of church buildings and the burning of Christian Scriptures.” (*Codex Sinaiticus: The Story of the World’s Oldest Bible* (London: The British Library, 2010), 13).

[11] Charts showing the data of the time gaps and the number of extant manuscript of these and other ancient sources (as well as the data regarding the Patristic quotations) are abundant throughout the Christian apologetics publishing world, including Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 38, 43 and J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987), 135. To get back to the original sources for such data, the reader is encouraged to consult the Metzger text cited in note 7 (referenced in both the McDowell and Moreland texts) together with the scholarly sources Metzger himself cites. To my knowledge, this data is rarely, if ever, challenged even by those who deny the reliability of the New Testament writers.

[12] I was halfway through the course work for a Ph.D. in Philosophy (having already obtained an MA in Philosophy from a state university) before I heard the first words of any doubt as to the integrity of the text of any ancient philosopher. It was in a seminar on Aristotle. This is despite the fact that the time gap between when Aristotle wrote and the oldest extant manuscript is over 1,000 years. Does anyone think that one could do graduate work in Bible in a state university without anyone raising the specter of the integrity of the text of New Testament? The reasons for the unequal treatment can have nothing to do with the data and evidence for the New Testament’s integrity.

[13] Information about the fragment together with a photograph can be seen at the library’s web site at http://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/searchresources/guidetospecialcollections/stj (accessed 06/27/13)

[14] Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 39.

[15] The web site for the library is http://www.cbl.ie/. (accessed 06/28/13) The Library also contains papyri from Pharaohic and GraecoRoman Egypt ranging from 1,800 B.C. to A.D. 800.

[16] For a concise summary of the history of these papyri from their discovery to the present see James M. Robinson, *The Story of the Bodmer Papyri: From the First Monastery's Library in Upper Egypt to Geneva and Dublin* (Eugene: Cascade, 2011).

[17] "Coptic is the latest form of the ancient Egyptian language, which until Christian times was written in hieroglyphs and their two derivatives, hieratic and demotic script. In the first centuries of the Christian era the language came to be written in Greek uncial, with the addition of seven characters taken from demotic." (Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 79).

[18] Some of the specifics manuscripts are: P66 (meaning "papyrus number 66") which is most of John; P72 (3rd cent.) containing Jude, the epistles of Peter, Psalms 33 and 34 in Greek; P74 (6th or 7th cent.) containing virtually a complete Acts, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2, & 3 John; P75 (2nd or 3rd cent.) containing most of Luke and John. For more of the collection (in addition to the Robinson work cited in note 16) see Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 39-42.

[19] "At the beginning almost forty-six chapters of Genesis are missing; a section of some thirty Psalms is lost; and the concluding pages (from Heb. ix.14 onwards, including 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation) are gone." Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 47.

[20] "The story of the twenty-nine-year-old Tischendorf's first encounter with the Codex is often told in his own words, without any attempt to evaluate them. It is sometimes even stated that he 'discovered' it: a plainly ridiculous verb, since it was already known and had long been known to the monks of St. Catherine's. The most one can say that can be said is that he was the first modern western scholar to study it." (Parker, *Codex Sinaiticus*, 129) Parker corrects many of the common myths surrounding Tischendorf's exploits, including the myth that he had "rescued" the codex from being used by the monks as kindling for their fires.

[21] The number of the books in the New Testament in Codex Sinaiticus is the same as that in modern Bibles in the West, but the order is different. The Letter

to the Hebrews is placed after Paul's Second Letter to the Thessalonians, and the Acts of the Apostles between the Pastoral and General Epistles. Interestingly, one can purchase a nearly full-sized color facsimile of the codex.

[22] http://www.dts.edu/read/wallace-new-testament-manscript-firstcentury/. (accessed 06/28/13) See also the web site of Wallace's research institute, The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts at http://www.csntm.org/. (accessed 06/28/13)

[23] DTS interview.

[24] Sir Frederic Kenyon, *The Bible and Archeology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1940), 288ff.

[25] Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*, 15.

[26] Wallace defines a textual variant as "any place where at least two manuscripts disagree on the wording of what goes on in a particular passage." There are between three hundred thousand and four hundred thousand textual variants, most of which are too trivial to even be translated. Even with these variants, no essential doctrine of the Christian faith is in question because of variant readings. "Over 99% affect nothing," he says. Wallace is quick to point out that many apologetic sources misconstrue the way the number of variants is counted. They mistakenly have said that if (for example) one thousand manuscripts have 'Jesus' in a particular passage and one thousand have 'the Lord' in the passage, this counts as 1,000 textual variants. Counting this way would yield a count of about ten million variants. Wallace emphatically denied that this was the way New Testament textual critics have ever counted the variants. Instead, textual scholars count the number of wording differences, not the number of manuscripts that support those wording differences. (http://www.brianauten.com/Apologetics/interview-daniel-wallace.mp3, accessed 07/06/13)

[27] Sources on Old Testament textual criticism include Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3d ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012) and Ellis R. Brotzman, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994). For the New Testament see the Metzger, *Text of the New Testament* and David Alan Black, *New Testament Textural Criticism: A Concise Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994).

For treatments of both testaments see Paul D. Wegner, *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods, & Results* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

[28] I owe the form of this illustration to Norman Geisler.

[29] A comment by one translator of Tacitus' *Annals of Imperial Rome* is revealing: "Since the text of each half of the work depends entirely on a single medieval manuscript, there is ample room for suspicions that error may have crept in. However, let us now assume, optimistically, that the meaning is understood." Michael Grant, in "Translator's Introduction," Publius Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, trans. with introduction by Michael Grant (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 25-26; Martin L. West, *Studies in the Text and Transmission of the Iliad* (Munich-Leipzig: K.G. Saur Verlag, 2001).

[30] Larry W. Hurtado, "The Early New Testament Papyri: A Survey of Their Significance," 1 (http://larryhurtado.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/nt-papyri1.pdf, accessed 06/28/13)

[31] Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 9.

[32] J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1964), 27.

[33] Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us*, 204.

[34] Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*, 9.

[35] Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us*, 209.

[36] The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, www.csntm.org/Downloads/MSImagesFS/ Codex**Lectionary**2276.pdf (accessed 06/29/13)

[37] Geisler and Nix, *From God to Us*, 209.

[38] Daniel B. Wallace, "An Interview with Daniel B. Wallace on the New Testament Manuscripts," (http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2012/03/21/an-interview-with-daniel-bwallace-on-the-new-testament-manuscripts/, accessed 07/06/13).

[39] Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 86. One can find in some of the popular apologetic material the claim that all but eleven verses of the New Testament can be reconstructed from the quotations and allusions of the Church Fathers. This claim is disavowed by leading textual critics such as Daniel Wallace. (http://www.brianauten.com/Apologetics/interview-daniel-wallace.mp3, accessed 07/06/13) Wallace points out that the original claim was that all but eleven verses of the Gospel of John would be gleaned from the writings of the Church Fathers. The story was misreported to be about the whole New Testament and has been repeated within the apologetics community ever since. However, what does not follow from the refutation of the claim is the conclusion that the New Testament is poorly attested to in the patristic writings.

[40] Obviously, to claim that (for example) the gospel accounts are historical does not mean that the elements of a parable of Jesus had to have really happened. To make this point in another way, to say that the elements of a parable did not actually happen is not to say that the gospel account itself is not historically reliable. Parables and other literary devices are easily accounted for within a robust doctrine of the inerrancy of the Bible. For a thorough examination of these issues see Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus, eds. *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy & the Bible: Papers from ICBI Summit II* (Grand Rapids: Academie Books/ICBI, 1984).

[41] The term ‘scientism’ (a term usually used by its opponents) refers to the view that the tools and methods of the natural sciences can provide (at least in principle) all the knowledge that is possible about reality. Scienticism in effect says that there is nothing real or true that cannot be assailed by the tools and methods used by natural scientists. It is generally the same philosophical view from early in the twentieth century known as Logical Positivism exemplified by such works as A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic* (New York: Dover, 1952). Compare, for example, these comments from Ayer the philosopher and Richard Dawkins the scientist. “There is no field of experience which cannot, in principle, be brought under some form of scientific law, and no type of speculative knowledge about the world which it is, in principle, beyond the power of science to give.” (Ayer, *Language*, 48). “The presence or absence of a creative super-intelligence is unequivocally a scientific question, even if it is not in practice—or not yet—a decided one.” (Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 59-59).

One main difference between Logical Positivism and Scientism is that

Scientism is less deliberately philosophical and, as such, does not as carefully (or as consistently or legitimately) tease out or defend its own metaphysical implications. The quotes above show the commonality between Logical Positivism (Ayer) and Scientism (Dawkins). One only needs to read the respective sources to see the contrast of one being deliberately philosophical (Ayer) and the other only accidently (and naïvely) so (Dawkins). For a critique of the how logical positivism understands the nature of and rejects the viability of philosophy in general and metaphysics in particular see Richard G. Howe, "On the Function of Philosophy," *Christian Apologetics Journal* vol. 7, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 57-82.

[42] The fact that God exists and that, therefore, miracles are possible does not mean that any historical account of a purported miracle must be true. Instead, it means that, the objection that an historical account cannot be reliable because it contains a miracle is a philosophical objection not an historical objection.

[43] Some of this material first appeared in my "Are There Historical Errors in the Bible?" in the *Areopagus Journal: The Journal of the Apologetics Resource Center*, vol. 7, no. 6, November-December 2007: 4-9.

[44] Norman L. Geisler and Thomas Howe, *The Big Book of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers from Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008). This is a revision and republishing of *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1992). My points here are taken from this version. An abridged and revised edition is also available as *Making Sense of Bible Difficulties: Clear and Concise Answers form Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009). Other helpful resources are: Gleason L. Archer, *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1982); J. Sidlow Baxter, *Studies in Problem Texts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1960); and F. F. Bruce, *Answers to Questions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1973).

[45] F. F. Bruce, "Archaeological Confirmation of the New Testament," in Carl F. H. Henry, ed., *Revelation and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), 326-327.

[46] See below where I deal with this allegation in more detail.

[47] See his debate at Southern Evangelical Seminary with Bart Ehrman in April

2009. The video is available on the Internet.

[48] One is reminded of the likes of Rudolf Bultmann of the University of Marburg, Germany. See, for example, his *Jesus and the Word*, trans. Louise Pettibone Smith and Erminie Huntress Lantero (New York: Schribner's Sons, 1958), especially 3-15. For a critique of Bultmann see Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Scripture and Myth: An Examination of Rudolf Bultmann's Plea for Demythologization* (Nutley: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1956) and Herman Ridderbos, *Bultmann*, Modern Thinkers: An International Library of Philosophy and Theology, ed. David H. Freeman (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1974). For analyses of the influences on Bultmann, see Norman L. Geisler, ed. *Biblical Errancy: An Analysis of Its Philosophical Roots* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1981), passim. For a critical assessment of the encroachments of early twentieth-century liberalism (with its historical skepticism) see J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1923).

[49] C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1955), 206-208.

[50] John Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, Chronicles, Romances and Inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), xiv-xv.

[51] This revamping of the dates of the Gospels was due in part to work by John A. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1976). Robinson argues that all four Gospels were completed before A.D. 70.

[52] Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 231, 234, 244. Brown's thesis was that the New Testament as a gathering of books was the result of a deliberate action of the Christian bishops meeting together at Nicaea in AD 325 at the behest of Constantine. To be fair to Brown, he never specifically alleged that the writing of the Gospels was late. Instead, his point was that, regardless of when the Gospels were written, they were only seen as authoritative by the Church after and because of the Council of Nicaea.

[53] Some of this material first appeared in my "The New Testament, Jesus Christ, and *The Da Vinci Code*," in Norman L. Geisler and Chad V. Meister, eds., *Reasons for Faith: Making the Case for the Christian Faith* (Wheaton:

Crossway Books, 2007), 268-280.

[54] The term ‘canonical’ means that a given document was recognized by the Christian community as having apostolic authority and as being inspired by God. As such, it was included in what we now refer to as the Bible. The term means ‘standard’ or ‘rule.’ For a discussion of the process of canonicity, see Norman L. Geisler and William E Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, rev. and exp. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), 203-317.

[55] Cited in Darrell L. Bock, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code: Answers to the Questions Everyone’s Asking* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004), 112. See also Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction*, 288.

[56] The term refers to a religious movement which began to flourish toward the end of, or soon after, the apostolic era. I have more to say about Gnosticism below.

[57] Bock, *Breaking*, 112.

[58] *Against Heresies*, 3.11.7. See also 3.11.8 and 3.1.1.

[59] Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction*, 288-289.

[60] These points are from Moreland, *Scaling*, 145-147.

[61] Tacitus, *Annals*, xv.44, 365.

[62] Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus, *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. by Robert Graves (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 202. Regarding the name ‘Chrestus’, a footnote in the translation comments “i.e., apparently Christ (who had been crucified in the reign of Tiberius).”

[63] *New American Standard Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1977), emphasis added.

[64] For a defense of the historicity of the writings of Luke-Acts see I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971); Wm. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul: The Traveller and the Roman Citizen* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960) and his *The Cities of St. Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1960).

[65] Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XX, ix, §1, in *Josephus: Complete Works*, trans. William Whiston, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1960), 423.

[66] Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII, v, §2, Whiston, 382.

[67] Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* (Joplin: College Press Publishing, 1996), 193-194. The fuller quote is found in Josephus, *Antiquities*, XVIII, iii, §3, Whiston, 379.

[68] Some of this material first appeared in my "The New Testament, Jesus Christ, and *The Da Vinci Code*."

[69] Brown, *The Da Vinci Code*, 234, 235, 245-246, 248, and 255-256.

[70] See note 17 for a definition of the term 'Coptic'.

[71] It is important to note that none of the documents bearing the name of a biblical figure were actually written by that biblical figure. These Gnostic documents were written more than a century after the period of the New Testament.

[72] See, for example, James M. Robinson, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library: The Definitive Translation of the Gnostic Scriptures Complete in One Volume* 3rd rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1988). All of my citations come from this edition.

[73] Other Coptic Gnostic documents have been found apart from the Nag Hammadi documents and are sometimes grouped together with them in translations (e.g., *The Gospel of Mary*; discovered in Cairo in 1896).

[74] *The Gospel of Thomas*, 19.

[75] *Apocalypse of Peter* 81:4-21; *Second Treatise of the Great Seth* 56:6-19.

[76] *The Letter of Peter to Philip*, 136:16-23.

[77] *The Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, 69:22-26, 70:4-7.

[78] *The Gospel of Thomas*, 114.

[79] *The Book of Thomas the Contender*, 144.9; *The Testimony of Truth*, 30:19-31:6.

[80] *The Gospel of Thomas*, 37. In the passage, Jesus talks about disrobing and not being ashamed. In all fairness, the reference here likely has to do with shedding one's physical body.

[81] The following points on the humanity of Jesus were adapted from Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), s.v., "Docetism," 202-203.

[82] These points were recognized by some of Jesus' contemporary critics as claims to deity. The reason some critics today say that Jesus never claimed to be divine is because they are expecting Jesus to claim deity the way they themselves would claim deity in the western culture of the twenty-first century. But that is not at all how a firstcentury Jew would claim deity.

[83] Some of this material first appeared in my "Are There Historical Errors in the Bible?"

[84] Ronald H. Nash, *Christianity and the Hellenistic World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1984). This work was republished as *The Gospel and the Greeks: Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?* (Richardson: Probe Books, 1992) and then republished as *The Gospel and the Greeks: Did the New Testament Borrow from Pagan Thought?* 2nd ed., (Phillipsburg: P & R Publishing, 2002). For a broader treatment of Jesus and his times, especially regarding the doctrine of Jesus' divinity see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003) and *How on Earth Did Jesus Become a God? Historical Questions about Earliest Devotion to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005). For a thorough treatment of the role of miracles in the life of Jesus and earliest Christianity in light of other early "miracle workers" see Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, 2 vols., (Grand Rapid: Baker Academic, 2011).

[85] For a defense of many of the traditional views regarding the authorship and otherwise general historicity of the New Testament see Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2004), 251-274; David Alan Black, *Why Four Gospels?* (Gonzalez:

Energion Publications, 2010); Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2004); John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty: New Testament Edition* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983); Theodor Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. John More Trout, William Arnot Mather, *et al.* 3 vols. (Minneapolis: Klock & Klock, 1953).

[86] For a discussion of the attempted explanations critics make to counter the historicity of the story of Jesus see the Moreland, *Scaling*, 159-183; McDowell, *New Evidence*, 203-284; Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 301-312; Norman L. Geisler, *The Battle for the Resurrection* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989); and Peter Kreeft and Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions* (Downer Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 175-198.

[87] For photographs for purchase of such biblical sites see http://bibleplaces.com.

[88] Habermas, *Historical Jesus*, 173-175.

CHAPTER 17

IN DEFENSE OF THE SUPERNATURAL

Richard G. Howe



The Supernatural: The Existence and Acts of God

One often hears the term ‘supernatural’ in today’s culture. Usually the label is applied to the horror movies about ghosts or demons. Activities such as Ouija Boards and séances are sometimes categorized as supernatural. Some might say that those who practice occult religions such as witchcraft are engaged with the supernatural. I suggest that these are all misnomers. In the strictest sense, none of these is supernatural. While some may think I am being too much of a stickler here, I have tried over the years to disabuse people of such characterizations. To be sure, something real is happening with these occult events. But the term ‘supernatural’ is too good of a word to let its special meaning be blurred to the point of inaccuracy.

What then is the nature of the supernatural? Technically, to be supernatural is to be beyond the natural. However, the term ‘natural’ can have several uses. Sometimes it is used to refer to what usually does or what ought to happen. This use of natural gives rise to the notion of the natural (physical) laws or regularities. It is natural for a young person to feel winded after climbing very many steps but not natural after just one or two. Sometimes it is used in contrast to artificial or designed. Stalagmites are a natural occurrence whereas obelisks are not. The challenge comes when one tries to categorize the actions of spiritual entities such as angels or demons. Certainly angelic or demonic activity is not just another physical law or regularity.[1] There is a vast difference between the

waters being troubled because of an underground spring and the waters being troubled because of an angel (John 5). Yet to call such events ‘supernatural’ is to remove the option of having a term uniquely suited to refer to the nature and actions of God.[2]

Exactly what am I trying to preserve in confining the term ‘supernatural’ to God’s nature and activity alone? Philosophically, only God can be said to be beyond nature. There are only two realms within reality, viz., the Creator and the creation. To say something is supernatural is to say that it is beyond the creation. To say that an event is supernatural is to say that the cause of the event is a supernatural entity, i.e., God. This is what is commonly called a miracle. Thus, I would take great exception to the casual use of the term ‘miracle’ in describing events that evoke awe or wonder. Someone might, for example, refer to the “miracle” of childbirth. I would contend that childbirth is quite natural in as much as the event is caused by the laws of nature and the choices of humans. To be sure, these laws (as well as the humans) are themselves created by God. But if we allow that to be a sufficient condition for calling childbirth a miracle, then all of creation, together with all of its regularities or laws, are miraculous. The term, then, is evacuated of any significance since there would be nothing to which it did not apply. Even if one says that the term ‘miracle’ applies because it evokes feelings of awe and wonder, this also waters the term ‘miracle’ down too much.

As I will explore later on, miracles play the significant role they do in God’s program precisely because they are acts of God that are special and rare and carry a message regarding the revelation of God to mankind. The expression ‘revelation of God to mankind’ amounts to what Christians now refer to as the Bible. Miracles are the way God confirmed His revelation as God spoke to mankind through His prophets, apostles, and ultimately through His Son Jesus Christ.

In this chapter I want to discuss two issues. First, I want to defend that there is something supernatural. To this end, I want to demonstrate that God exists and that He is transcendent to His creation.[3] Because God exists, we can know that miracles are possible. Second, I want to unpack a philosophy, a theology, and an apologetic of miracles as acts of God. This template suggests itself for several reasons. First, the notion of God is prior to the notion of miracle.[4] No event can be consistently deemed a miracle unless one recognizes that there is a God to work the miracle.[5] For our purposes, it is vital to understand specifically the nature of the miraculous as a way of understanding the nature of God’s

revelation to us through His prophets, apostles, and, ultimately, through His Son, Jesus Christ. It is my contention that God's use of miracles is the means by which He vindicates His messenger and confirms the message as He reveals Himself to mankind. What is more, one must understand the questions surrounding the nature of miracles to avoid potentially misunderstanding the nature (and truthfulness) of that revelation.

The Existence of God

The need to establish the existence of God (together with establishing a philosophy, theology, and apologetic of miracles) as a prerequisite to properly understanding the Bible was vividly illustrated to me by a documentary I watched on PBS. On John McLaughlin's television show *One on One*, the Aurelio Professor of Scripture Emerita at Boston University and Distinguished Visiting Professor of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University Paula Fredriksen[6] together with freelance journalist Jeffrey L. Sheler[7] were discussing the historical Jesus with McLaughlin. When being queried about some particular point surrounding Jesus' virgin birth (and the Hebrew and Greek words utilized in specific verses marshaled to support the doctrine), Fredriksen pointed out that the Jewish Christians were using their Scriptures (what Christians refer to today as the Old Testament) to interpret (my word) or read into (my words) their understanding of who Jesus was. She likened such a procedure to McLaughlin writing a biography of John F. Kennedy by appealing to Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

The parallel is tendentious. Everyone would recognize (which is, of course, why Fredriksen uses the parallel) that there is absolutely no connection between the events surrounding the life of John F. Kennedy and the content of the Shakespearian tragedy. In contrast, the Jewish Christians believed (whether rightly or wrongly) that their Scriptures were inspired by the Creator God. Further, they believed (whether rightly or wrongly) that these Scriptures prophesied about their coming Messiah and that Jesus was He. It made perfect sense to these Jewish Christians to apply the prophecies of their Scriptures to the life of Jesus. This is true regardless of whether they were right in doing so.

But no scholar with whom I am familiar believes that the writings of Shakespeare are divinely inspired or that they are prophetic about John F. Kennedy. I know of no "Shakespeare religion" that regards his writings to be in any way prophetic. If they did, then the parallel might be justified. But then, the

rhetorical force Fredriksen seeks to make by employing the parallel would be evacuated. Since she (seemingly) assumes that the Jewish Scriptures were not inspired by God,[8] it would look to her like the connection between those Scriptures and Jesus is as insubstantial as the connection between *King Lear* and John F. Kennedy.

If she actually (or methodologically) denies God's existence (a stance some in this context would refer to as 'naturalism' or 'methodological naturalism')[9] this will distort her understanding and interpretation of the data surrounding the life of Jesus. If there is no God (or if she thinks she can weigh in on such matters as virgin births as if there is no God) then miracles (properly so called) are not possible and, thus, Jesus could not have been born of a virgin.

Interestingly, McLaughlin pressed her on the possibility of a virgin birth apart from mythological or technological considerations. She retreated into a stance of skepticism on the matter. After all, how could she (she argued) know whether a virgin birth was actually possible (which would mean it was not myth) without some technological procedures. Her stance here breathes naturalism. This is so because if the God of the Bible does exist then it is entirely possible that miracles can occur. If miracles are possible then it is possible that Jesus was born of a virgin. This, of course, does not prove that He actually was so born. Instead, it shows that such an event is not impossible. Ascertaining whether He actually was born of a virgin will bring in historical and theological issues. Supernaturalism (the opposite of naturalism) does not commit one to affirming every purported miracle account. Whether one is reasonable in accepting such an account will depend upon one's theology of miracles (about which I will have more to say later). But the analysis cannot even get started if one already (either explicitly or implicitly; either consciously or unconsciously) denies the existence of God and the possibility of miracles.

Thus, one can see that the issue of whether these Jewish Christians were warranted in applying their Scriptures to the life of Jesus presupposes whether there is a God and whether such a God can make prophecies that He will fulfill. If one denies (or ignores) the existence of God, then trying to find fulfilled prophesies in sacred Scripture would be ludicrous if not outright meaningless, just as trying to apply *King Lear* to John F. Kennedy would be so. But, the questions of God's existence and nature are philosophical questions, not historical ones (more on this below). Since Fredriksen denies (or at least ignores) God's existence vis-à-vis these matters, she can only offer what amounts to a

completely misleading and irrelevant analogy.

Philosophical Methodology

I suggest that such biblical skepticism is more widespread (and sometimes more subtle) than some may realize. Some versions of the skepticism arise from a flawed philosophical method. This flawed method might even mask to the skeptic himself and to others the presence (or extent) of his own skepticism. To illustrate, consider the following.

The New Testament contains quite a bit of narrative. Early on one encounters a number of purported miracles. Suppose one was trying to decide whether he believed that the New Testament account of (for example) Jesus walking on water was historically accurate. It is critical to ask what kind of question this inquiry is. More is present here than the ostensive historical aspect. There are significant philosophical issues that one must confront. Different aspects of reality require different methods of inquiry and tools of analysis.[10] Questions of mathematics require methods of inquiry and tools of analysis appropriate for quantifiable objects. Questions of science (as it is commonly understood) require methods of inquiry and tools of analysis appropriate for physical objects and forces. Questions of history require methods of inquiry and tools of analysis appropriate to historical events.

Reality has many different aspects besides mathematics, science, and history. There are aspects such as theology, logic, linguistics, ethics, aesthetics, and more. There are the disciplines of sociology, political science, economics, and psychology. Even particular aspects can be further divided. Science can be about the physical objects in as much as they are moving (physics) or in as much as they are living (biology) and more. To be sure, these have elements in common such as the laws of logic and language.[11] But what makes each aspect distinctive requires methods of inquiry and tools of analysis appropriate to that distinction. Confusion and error can arise when the methods of inquiry and tools of analysis for one aspect of reality are used inappropriately for another aspect of reality. For example, one cannot settle questions of ethics with only the methods and tools of science.[12] In addition, the beauty of a sunset is more than merely an assessment of the frequency of the light rays. What is required is that critics of the New Testament be held accountable for whether their criticisms legitimately arise from fair considerations or whether they are guilty of using the wrong methods of inquiry and tools of analysis in their assessment of the New

Testament.

Let us return to our question of Jesus walking on water. Sometimes it happens that the historicity of the event is called into question because the reader has trouble believing that a miracle can occur. Since he knows that a human being cannot naturally walk on water, and because he fails to consider the possibility that Jesus is supernaturally walking on water, he erroneously concludes that the event did not happen. But let not my point be misunderstood here. I am not criticizing the reader of the biblical text for denying that the miraculous event took place. Given his background beliefs about the nature of reality, it is quite understandable (and expected) that, if he believes that miracles are impossible, then he should reasonably discount any purported historical account of a miracle. Instead, I am criticizing the reader of the biblical text for regarding such a denial of the event as merely an *historical* judgment. It is not. Instead, it is an historical judgment in light of the philosophical assumption that miracles do not occur. Since, too often, the philosophical assumption is never acknowledged (much less defended), then, what is in reality a philosophical issue is being passed off as only an historical one. The judgment is passed off as entirely a historical matter with no regard as to the soundness of the unacknowledged philosophical assumption. But since the methods of inquiry and tools of analysis differ in relevant ways between history (as a discipline) and philosophy (as a discipline), to use the methods of one discipline to make a judgment in the other can be illicit.

This kind of confusion affected me as a young Christian. I remember being stumbled as a student when I heard the arguments that Isaiah could not have written the second half of the book that bears his name because this portion mentions Cyrus who did not live until 200 years after Isaiah. The result is the view known as DeuteroIsaiah.[13] Given that Jesus quotes from both halves of the book (John 12:38-39) and ascribes the words to Isaiah, some would argue that, if the Bible is inerrant, Isaiah must have written both halves. To conclude two different authors would be to ascribe error to the Bible.

Since this experience, I have used this issue to illustrate to my students (especially in my secular university classes) the role that assumptions can play in limiting one’s options for how they interpret a biblical passage. As an experiment, I would give them the argument for DeuteroIsaiah and ask them to brainstorm about any assumptions upon which the argument might rest. Some suggested that the argument assumes that the Cyrus mentioned in the latter part

of Isaiah is the same Cyrus who lived 200 years later than Isaiah. Perhaps there were two people from that era who were named Cyrus. Others suggested that perhaps Isaiah was written later than we thought or that Cyrus lived earlier than we thought. For each of the assumptions suggested, I would ask the students "To which department on the university campus would you go to explore whether the assumption was true?" Invariably the answer would be the history department or perhaps, with certain other assumptions, the literature department. Finally, someone would suggest (or I would suggest it for the class) that the argument assumes that Isaiah could not know the future. The thing to note here is that, to settle the issue of whether it is possible for a person to know the future, you would not go to the history or literature departments. Instead, you would need to go to the philosophy department. The lesson to be learned is that, often it would be the case that the DeuteroIsaiah scholar would pass his conclusion off to his readers as the assured result of a historical or literary analysis. What would potentially be lost on the readers is that the argument arises because the scholar has assumed that it is impossible that human beings can know the future. He has an antisupernatural bias.[14]

The above highlights what evangelicals have been claiming for quite some time, viz., that what underlies the (perhaps sometimes subtle) skepticism that certain biblical critics have regarding the historical reliability of the Bible is an antipathy towards the supernatural.[15] Because certain biblical narratives contain accounts of miraculous events, the narrative is doubted in direct proportion to the critic's worldview which regards all events as natural. This is to be expected. If one has (either deliberately or dispositionally) a commitment to the notion that all events come about by natural causes, then any reported event that suggests some divine causal activity will be denied, reinterpreted, or altogether overlooked.

The Question of God

With this one can see how critical it is that the question of God's existence be answered in the affirmative so as to preempt the illicit importing of antisupernaturalism into biblical analysis. Once one sees that God exists, then one can see that miracles are possible. Embracing theism will open the options when one comes to consider the truths of the Bible.

The world perhaps can hardly contain the amount of material that has been produced in exploring the question of God's existence. I can only hope here to

give a skeletal outline of the arguments and suggest to the reader sources for further reading.[16] I have found most compelling those types of arguments for the existence of God that argue from some feature of the physical universe. There are arguments that show that God is the cause of the beginning of the universe (i.e., its coming-into-existence) and those that show that God is the cause of the being of the universe (i.e., its current existing).[17]

The Beginning of the Universe

This argument says that since the universe began to exist a finite time ago, then it must have had a cause or a beginner. Since the cause could not itself be physical, temporal, or spatial (since it is the cause of these), then this cause must be non-physical, non-temporal, and non-spatial, making the cause look very much like what all have understood to be God. There are two versions of this argument. One is more philosophical and mathematical and the other is more scientific. The philosophical and mathematical version has been known historically as the Kalam Cosmological Argument.[18] It shows that a beginningless past would constitute what philosophers and mathematicians call an actual infinite. It further shows that it is impossible for an actual infinite to exist. Therefore, it follows that the past cannot be beginningless (i.e., it must have had a beginning). In addition, the argument shows that an actual infinite cannot be traversed. Since the present moment has arrived (meaning that the past has been traversed) then the past cannot be an actual infinite. It cannot, therefore, be beginningless. The details of the argument are a *tour de force* of mathematics, including infinite set theory and the transfinite math.[19]

The scientific version of this argument marshals the current astronomical evidence that the universe began a finite time ago. This evidence comes from what scientists tell us about the expanding universe, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and the Big Bang Theory.[20] Regarding the expanding universe, scientists maintain that every object in the universe is moving away from every other object such that even space itself is expanding. The significance of this is that the universe could not have been expanding from eternity otherwise it would be infinitely dispersed (which it is not). Therefore, the universe began to exist a finite time ago.

Albert Einstein observed, “Hubble’s discovery can, therefore, be considered to some extent as a confirmation of the theory [of an expansion of space].”[21] Physicist Steven Hawking commented, “The old idea of an essentially

unchanging universe that could have existed, and could continue to exist, forever was replaced by the notion of a dynamic, expanding universe that seemed to have begun a finite time ago, and that might end at a finite time in the future."[22]

Regarding the Second Law of Thermodynamics, scientists maintain that all closed systems (a system into which there is no energy input) will tend toward a state of maximum disorder or entropy. In a closed system the amount of energy available to do work decreases and becomes uniform, which amounts to saying that the universe is running down. The significance is that the universe could not have been running down from eternity otherwise it would have run down by now (which it has not). Therefore, the universe began to exist a finite time ago.

Physicist Rudolf Clausius, one of the central formulators of thermodynamics and the Second Law said, "We can express the fundamental laws of the universe which correspond to the two fundamental laws of the mechanical theory of heat in the following simple form: 1. The energy of the universe is constant. 2. The entropy of the universe tends toward a maximum."[23] Astronomer and former head of NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies Robert Jastrow pointed out, "The laws of thermodynamics . . . [point] to one conclusion; . . . that the Universe had a beginning."[24]

Regarding the Big Bang Theory, scientists maintain that the universe began in a colossal explosion a finite time ago. The significance is that the universe has not existed from eternity. Therefore, the universe began to exist a finite time ago. From Jastrow again: "Recent developments in astronomy have implications that may go beyond their contribution to science itself. In a nutshell, astronomers, studying the Universe through their telescopes, have been forced to the conclusion that the world began suddenly, in a moment of creation, as the product of unknown forces."[25] Astrophysicist Christopher Isham was even more pointed about the significance of the theory.

> Perhaps the best argument in favor of the thesis that the Big Bang supports theism is the obvious unease with which it is greeted by some atheist physicists. At times this has led to scientific ideas, such as continuous creation or an oscillating universe, being advanced with a tenacity which so exceeds their intrinsic worth that one can only suspect the operation of psychological forces lying very much deeper than the usual academic desire for a theorist to support his or her theory.[26]

These quotations summarize the general scientific arguments that the universe began to exist a finite time ago. The implications of such scientific evidence were not lost on MIT Theoretical Physicist Victor F. Weisskopf who said:

> The question of the origin of the universe is one of the most exciting topics for a scientist to deal with. It reaches far beyond its purely scientific significance, since it is related to human existence, to mythology, and to religion. . .It hits us in the heart, as it were. The origin of the universe can be talked about not only in scientific terms, but also in poetic and spiritual language, an approach that is complementary to the scientific one. Indeed, the Judeo-Christian tradition describes the beginning of the world in a way that is surprisingly similar to the scientific model.[27]

One common response the skeptic makes against the scientific versions of the cosmological and teleological arguments is that the theist is committing the fallacy of the god-of-the-gaps. This fallacy is committed (according to the skeptic) when someone appeals to God to explain a "gap" in one's understanding of how some event happened. The skeptic insists that there is no need to conclude that God caused the universe to begin to exist or that (for example) God created first life because, given enough time, we should be able to find a natural cause of these things.

Several things need to be said about this fallacy. First, the arguments that the universe could only have come about (or, for that matter, can only continue currently existing) by the act of God is not a god-of-the-gaps fallacy. I was accused of committing this fallacy during a debate with agnostic Michael Shermer after I had marshaled the above evidence (and more) that the universe was created by God. In response I pointed out that I was not positing God as the explanatory cause of the existence of the universe to fill some "gap" in my understanding. It was not the *lack* of any understanding I needed God to fill. Instead, it was the *presence* of evidence that pointed to God as the cause of the universe. My argument was like a fire official detective who concluded that a particular house fire was started by an arsonist. He had discovered partially burned accelerant soaked rags near the point in the house where the fire began. He also discovered a partially burned matchbook with a fingerprint on it. He knew that a fire insurance policy had been taken out on the house just the day before by the same person whose fingerprint was on the matchbook. Last, an eyewitness had seen the suspect leaving the house just minutes before the fire erupted. Because of this evidence, the detective concluded that this person was

the arsonist responsible for the house fire. But what sense would it make for some skeptic to come along and charge the detective with committing the arsonist-of-the-gaps fallacy? How reasonable would it be for the skeptic to insist that, given enough time, we should be able to find a natural cause of the house fire? Of course, it would not make any sense and it would not at all be reasonable because it was not the *lack* of evidence or some "gap" in his understanding that prompted the detective to make his conclusion. Instead, it was the *presence* of evidence that pointed to the arsonist. It is the same with my argument for the existence of God based on what we know scientifically about the origin of the universe. Something natural cannot be the cause of the universe because the universe *just is* all things that are nature. To be beyond the natural is to be supernatural. To be supernatural is to be God.

The Existing of the Universe

To be sure, most people hardly think that the current existing of a thing needs a causal explanation. A bit of background and explanation are in order. Suppose you saw what looked like a giant ten-foot crystal ball sitting in front of a local business. It might occur to you to ask where such a thing came from. If you were told that it was actually a giant balloon that was placed there to promote a grand opening and that it had been manufactured at a balloon factory not far away, I suspect that you would find such a response to your question entirely satisfactory. Now suppose that you began to hear music playing. Notice that you would not ask (as you did about the balloon) where the music *came from*. Instead, you would ask something to the effect of where the music *is coming from*. This is because you realize that the music exists as music only as long as it is being caused to be music (presumably either by a sound system or musicians). You further realize that as soon as the cause of the music stops causing the music, the music ceases to exist. For the Christian philosopher Thomas Aquinas, the existence of all finite things was like the music. For Aquinas, existence was act. It was something that essences do. You can find in his (and others') writings the expression "the act of existence."[28]

This notion of existence can figure into a philosophical argument for God's existence.[29] For Aquinas, there is a difference between essence and existence. Essence is *what* something is and existence is *that* (or *whether*) something is. The difference between being a human and being a dog is that the human possesses a human essence and the dog possesses a dog essence.[30] Consider yourself as a human being. Your essence is what makes you a human. Your

existence is what makes you a being. Now, whatever is true of you is true of you either by virtue of your essence or not. For example, the fact that you have rationality is because you are a human. It is part of your essence as a human to have rationality. You have rationality by virtue of being human. Rationality is caused by your essence. But consider the fact that you are reading this book. Is the reason you are reading this book (as opposed to reading some other book or not reading at all) because you are a human? Is it part of your essence as a human to be reading this book? Are you reading this book by virtue of being a human? Is reading this book caused by your essence? The answer to all these is no, otherwise, everyone else who is not reading this book would not be human. However, you can easily account for why you are reading this book even though it is not part of your essence to do so. You are reading this book because you caused yourself to be reading this book.

Now consider the fact that you are existing right now. Is the reason you exist because you are a human? Is it part of your essence to exist? Do you exist by virtue of being human? Is your existence caused by your essence? The answer to all these is no otherwise you would have always existed (as well have other attributes, as I will discuss below, which you clearly do not have). If not, then what is causing your existing right now? You cannot account for your existing in the same way that you can account for your reading this book. That is to say, you cannot be the cause of your own existing. The reason is that you would then have to exist (to be a cause) before you existed (to need to be caused) which is incoherent. As such, your current existing must be caused by something else. But what would we say about the existing of that thing? At some point, one has to admit that there must be something existing right now that exists by virtue of its essence. There must be something existing right now in which there is no distinction between its existence and essence. As Thomas succinctly remarked in another context: “All men know this to be God.”[31]

Two objections are sometimes leveled at this argument. The first objection questions why it cannot be the case that the chain of causes goes on infinitely. If the existence of each of the elements in the chain is accounted for by being caused by the antecedent element in the chain, then seemingly the existence of every element in the chain is accounted for, which means that the chain is accounted for. The second objection sees no reason why one should call this cause God. Atheist Richard Dawkins sums up both of these objections in one tendentious comment: “Even if we allow the dubious luxury of arbitrarily conjuring up a terminator to an infinite regress and giving it a name, simply

because we need one, there is absolutely no reason to endow that terminator with any of the properties normally ascribed to God."[32]

Dawkins' concerns can be directly addressed. First, regarding the infinite regress, whether he agrees with the philosophers' explanations and arguments or not, it is manifest that these explanations and arguments are anything but a "dubious luxury" that were "arbitrarily conjured" up. These explanations and arguments are indeed quite sophisticated, even if, after all is said and done, one finally rejects them. Dawkins has not done his due diligence in wrestling with these explanations and arguments for why there cannot be the infinite regress.

Second, it should be noted that the specter of an infinite regress here is not the same kind of infinite regress in the Kalam Cosmological Argument. Here I can only summarize how it is, given that the infinite that Aquinas denies is different than the infinite that the Kalam argument denies, that in this argument here, such an infinite is impossible.[33] Consider the causal chain of a child having been begotten by his parents who were begotten by their parents, and so on. According to the Kalam argument, such a regress cannot go back infinitely. This kind of infinite was known in medieval philosophy as an accidental infinite (Latin: *infinite per accidens*). Interestingly, however, Aquinas did not think that philosophy could demonstrate the impossibility of such an infinite.[34] He rejected the Kalam Cosmological Argument. He did not believe that philosophy could demonstrate that the universe has not always existed. As a Christian, he, indeed, believed that it had not always existed, but he held this belief by faith on the basis of revelation.

Contrast this causal chain with the causal chain of a stone being moved by a stick being moved by a hand. Aquinas argued that this causal chain could not be infinite. This kind of infinite was known in Medieval philosophy as an *infinite per se*. But what exactly is the difference? Notice in the first causal chain that when the parents of the child caused the child, their own parents were not involved in the causal relationship. To be sure, they brought the parents into existence. But the parents would be able to go on to cause their own child even if their own parents ceased to exist. The grandparents were not causing the parents to cause the child.

With the second chain, however, the causal relationship between the elements is different. Not only is the stick causing the stone to move, but, at the same time, the stick is being caused by the hand *to be a cause* of the stone being

moved. As such, if the hand ceases to exist, the stick cannot be a cause of the movement of the stone. The causality, if you will, runs through the entire chain simultaneously. The only way to account for the motion of the stone is to have something in the chain that itself is not moving and, thus, needs no cause.

Transfer this analogy to my examination of existence. If I exist right now, then either I exist by virtue of my essence (my existence would be, in a manner of speaking "caused" by my essence) or I am being caused to exist by something that *does* exist by virtue of its essence. Since it is clear that I do not exist by virtue of my essence, then there is something that exists that does so by virtue of its essence and is the current cause of everything else that is existing at every moment that it is existing. This cause is God. He is currently sustaining the universe in existence.

What about Dawkins' concern that "there is absolutely no reason to endow that terminator with any of the properties normally ascribed to God"? Assuming that by the phrase "properties normally ascribed to God" Dawkins means the classical attributes of God, if he had bothered to read Aquinas's discussion subsequent to his proofs (I should note that the context of the Dawkins quote is his examination of Aquinas's proofs) he would have seen that there is every reason to ascribe such properties to this cause. What Aquinas goes on to show is that, for any being whose essence is its existence, that being would necessarily have the attributes of perfection, goodness infinity, immutability, eternity, and unity. For Aquinas, being (or existence) as such contains all perfections without limit. Being is constrained by essence. As humans, we possess all the perfections of existence up to the limits of and according to the nature of our essences. A dog will possess all the perfections of existence up to the limits of and according to the nature of its essence. Because of the differences between a dog's nature and a human's nature, a dog will possess fewer perfections. Like a balloon that limits and shapes the air that infuses it, the essence of the creature binds the otherwise limitless fullness of the perfections of existence.[35] Aquinas says, "All perfections existing in creatures divided and multiplied, preexist in God unitedly."[36]

One can see that there is quite a bit to say about the question of God's existence. Admittedly, there are philosophers who have leveled their objections at almost every point. This certainly is not the place where the issue can be given a very thorough examination. But in light of all the detail we have just gone through, the reader should not forget the reason I broached the subject in the first

place. By way of reminder, one must understand that, since God exists who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and who is all powerful, miracles are very much possible. Thus, any skepticism about the integrity of the New Testament arising from the fact that it contains historical accounts of miraculous events that one deems impossible should be met with the appropriate philosophical tools that address the root cause of that skepticism, viz., antisupernaturalism; the denial of the existence of the God.

The Acts of God

To talk about the acts of God broadly considered is to talk about many things. My concern for our purposes is the issue of miracles. Miracles should be understood as a subset of the category of the acts of God. But all of this presupposes that there is a God who can so act. That is why we first had to address the existence of God. Without a God, there can be no acts of God. Without any acts of God, there can be no miracles.

Miracles warrant special consideration precisely because of what they are and why they occur. I said earlier that I take great exception to the casual use of the term ‘miracle’ in describing events that evoke awe or wonder. There are two reasons for this. First, it is important to maintain the proper distinction between those events that proceed according to the course of nature as created and superintended by God and those events that proceed according to an exceptional in by God. If such distinction exists, then surely God would not want us to blur that distinction. There must be some reason why God acts in these two very different ways. That reason takes me to the second reason why I take the position I do about the use of the term ‘miracle.’ Given what God’s working of miracles is and why it is, we can come to realize that miracles point to something that God is saying to us.

A Christian friend of mine once asked me why it was that the church today was not as the church in the beginning. I pressed her as to what she was referring. She expressed disappointment that the church today was not “walking in miracles” anymore. She made reference to Acts 2, claiming that the early church experience was replete with miracles. What is more, she took these experiences to be normative. I believe that she had a distorted perception of how prevalent miracles actually were in the time frame of biblical history. While one might argue that there were indeed a number of miracles surrounding the time of Christ and the apostles, how the number of those miracles looks within the

broader picture of biblical history is revealing. Herbert Lockyer notes well:

> Bible miracles—not including prophesies and their fulfillment, which are also miracles—fall into great periods, centuries apart: The establishment of the Jewish nation 1400 B.C. Moses and Joshua were conspicuous as miracle-workers. The crisis in struggle with idolatry 850 B.C. Elijah and Elisha are prominent in this era. The Captivity, when idolatry was victorious 600 B.C. Daniel and his friend were subjects of miracles. The introduction of Christianity 1 A.D. The virgin birth of Christ was the initial miracle of the New Testament. Christ and His apostles were the miracle-workers. The great tribulation. Great signs and wonders are to characterize this period.[37]

I think it says something that, in the vast millennia of biblical history, miracles are not that common and occur in clusters. It says that there is a purpose of miracles surrounding God's working His revelation and will with mankind. In this section I want to discuss a philosophy of miracles (what they are), a theology of miracles (why they are), and an apologetic of miracles (whether they are).[38]

A Philosophy of Miracles: Demonstrating What Miracles Are

Various definitions of miracles have been offered throughout the church. Augustine discusses these matters in his *City of God*. He comments, "For how can an event be contrary to nature when it happens by the will of God, since the will of the great Creator assuredly *is* the nature of every created thing? A portent, therefore, does not occur contrary to nature, but contrary to what is known of nature." [39] Aquinas draws a sharper distinction:

> Those effects are properly called miracles which are produced by God's power alone on things which have a natural tendency to the opposite effect or to a contrary mode of operation; whereas effects produced by nature, the cause of which is unknown to us or to some of us, as also those effects, produced by God, that are of a nature to be produced by none but God, cannot be called miraculous but only marvelous or wonderful.[40]

I take Aquinas to mean that not every act of God is a miracle. The act of creation itself is not miraculous since God is not acting "on things which have a

natural tendency to the opposite effect or to a contrary mode of operation." This is because, since creation is from nothing, there was not anything there (before creation) upon which God acted and which could be said to have any natural tendency.

C. S. Lewis begins his book on the subject with "I use the word *Miracle* to mean an interference with Nature by supernatural power."[41] Norman Geisler, following Aquinas, says "In brief, a miracle is a divine intervention into the natural world. It is a supernatural exception to the regular course of the world that would not have occurred otherwise."[42]

These, and others I could cite, in their respective ways, serve as good, succinct statements of what a miracle is. Richard L. Purtill says that a miracle is "an event in which God temporarily makes an exception to the natural order of things, to show that God is acting."[43] His definition gives a helpful template for exploring some points about miracles, viz., that miracles are temporary, miracles are an exception, and miracles are wrought by the power of God.[44] First, miracles are temporary, which is to say that they do not change our expectations of what will continue to happen. After the miracle, we expect nature to return to its normal operations. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, this did not change our belief that, by and large, dead people stay dead.[45]

Second, miracles are an exception. It went against the nature of Lazarus to rise from the dead, indicating that the event was supernatural. Miracles can be exceptions in two ways. No one came to believe that just anyone could start raising people from the dead. There was something significant about Jesus and this situation that warranted this intervention by God. The miracle workers (Jesus and His apostles) are an exception to the way people normally are. Second, no one came to believe that such miracles would become a matter of course. While Jesus and His apostles were able (for example) to heal, they did not necessarily heal everyone. Jesus' raising of Lazarus did not lead anyone to expect that He would then raise everyone from the dead.[46]

Third, miracles being an exception indicate that they are so because there is a natural order of things.[47] Being an exception makes sense only in this context. A miracle, then, goes against a law of nature. The notion of law here needs to be appreciated. Often we use the term 'law' to mean a course of action that one is obligated to obey or risk suffering punitive consequences. One might think of the law that obligates drivers to stop on a red light. With respect to nature, the notion

of law means a regularity that has been observed with such constancy that we reasonably expect reality to continue to behave the same way. What is more, one might argue that these laws arise out of the very nature of things themselves.[48]

Third, miracles are events wrought by the power of God. To be sure, everything in some sense is at the behest of the power of God in as much as God sustains all things in existence at every moment of their existence. But our normal understating of causality recognizes that events happen within nature whose efficient cause is also within nature.[49] As such, a miracle would be an event whose cause was God (either directly or through an agent such as a prophet or an angel) that is contrary to the normal course of the causal chain that would arise if left to its own devices. Last, miracles have a purpose. This will serve to be the most important aspect of a miracle (outside of the question of God as the cause). It is to this point that I now turn my attention.

A Theology of Miracles: Discovering Why Miracles Occur

It is one thing for someone to claim that an extraordinary event has happened. It is another to understand whether and how that event plays into God's revelation of Himself. I contend that, strictly speaking, miracles are given by God to vindicate His messenger and confirm the message. This notion is what I refer to as a theology of miracles. One can find this view of the purpose of miracles throughout church history. A few examples will illustrate. Augustine reasoned, "Men would have laughed [Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven] out of court; they would have shut their ears and their hearts against the idea, had not the possibility and actuality of these events been demonstrated by the divine power of truth itself or rather by the truth of the divine power, with confirmation by miraculous signs."[50] Thomas Aquinas argued:

> Now just as the knowledge which a man receives from God needs to be brought to the knowledge of others through the gift of tongues and the grace of the word, so too the word uttered needs to be confirmed in order that it be rendered credible. This is done by the working of miracles, according to Mark xvi. 20, *And confirming the word with signs that followed*: and reasonably so. For it is natural to man to arrive at the intelligible truth through its sensible effects. Wherefore just as man led by his natural reason is able to arrive at some knowledge of God through His

> natural effects, so is he brought to a certain degree of supernatural knowledge of the objects of faith by certain supernatural effects which are called miracles.[51]

John Calvin concurs:

> In demanding miracles from us, [our adversaries] act dishonestly; for we have not coined some new gospel, but retain the very one the truth of which is confirmed by all the miracles which Christ and the apostles ever wrought. . . . The deception would perhaps be more specious if Scripture did not admonish us of the legitimate end and use of miracles. Mark tells us (Mark xvi. 20) that the signs which followed the preaching of the apostles were wrought in confirmation of it; so Luke also relates that the Lord "gave testimony to the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done" by the hand of the apostles (Acts xiv. 3). Very much to the same effect are those words of the apostle, that salvation by a preached gospel was confirmed, "the Lord bearing witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles" (Heb. 2:4).[52]

James Arminius comments:

> An illustrious evidence of the same divinity is afforded in the miracles, which God has performed by the stewards of his word, his prophets and apostles, and by Christ himself, for the confirmation of *his* doctrine and for the establishment of *their* authority. For these miracles are of such a description as infinitely to exceed the united powers of all the creatures and all the powers of nature itself, when their energies are combined. But the God of truth, burning with zeal for his own glory, could never have afforded such strong testimonies as these to false prophets and their false doctrine: nor could he have borne such witness to any doctrine even when it was true, provided it was not his, that is, provided it was not divine.[53]

Nineteenth century Archibald Alexander Hodge (son of Princeton Seminary professor Charles Hodge) understands miracles this way as well. "A miracle is (1) an event occurring in the physical world, capable of being discerned and discriminated by the bodily senses of human witnesses, (2) of such a character that it can be rationally referred to no other cause then the immediate volition of God, (3) accompanying a religious teacher, and designed to authenticate his divine commission and the truth of his message."[54] Union Seminary professor,

chaplain, and Chief of Staff to General T. J. “Stonewall” Jackson, Robert Lewis Dabney argues, “From this view [of the Duke of Argyle] I wholly dissent. It is inconsistent with the prime end for which God has introduced miracles, to be attestations to man of God’s messages.”[55]

Dallas Seminary founder Lewis Sperry Chafer asserts, “Though miracles are wonders (Acts 2:19) in the eyes of men and display the power of God, their true purpose is that of a ‘sign’ (Matt 12:38; John 2:18). They certify and authenticate a teacher or his doctrine.”[56] Further on Chafer comments, “Turning more specifically to the miracles wrought by Christ, it may be asserted that they were intended to sustain His claim to be Jehovah, the theanthropic [God/Man] Messiah of Israel, and to give divine attestation to His teachings.”[57] Robert Duncan Culver, whose teaching career included Grace Theological Seminary, Wheaton College and Graduate School, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Southern Evangelical Seminary, summarizes the significance of miracles along the lines of the four Greek words used in the New Testament for such acts of God.

> Biblical miracles are extraordinary events (*ergon*) which capture public notice, producing amazement (*teras, thaumadzō*) and which have meaning (*sēmeion*). This meaning is the special presence of God in some special way usually declared by a prophet (Aaron, Elijah, Moses, Jeremiah). Finally a biblical miracle is *dunamis*, the product of and evidence of divine power and authority, not only in the event itself but of delegated power in the divinely authorized person at whose word the miracle took place.[58]

To say that miracles were for the purpose of vindicating the messenger and confirming the messages is not to deny that God can perform miracles as an act of His grace apart from this purpose. It is to say, however, that, where the Bible is concerned, the miracles of God were always for some reason related to the messenger and message. This is how we can explain (for example) why Jesus just did not (and does not) heal everyone. Take the episode in John 9 of Jesus healing the blind man. The man was born blind from birth. Jesus miraculously gives him his sight back. But if the end goal was merely so that the man could see, then why would God have allowed him to be born blind to begin with? Further, when the disciples ask whose sin it was that caused the man’s blindness, Jesus, in correcting their misunderstanding of the reason for the man’s blindness, comments, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was in order that the works of God might be displayed in him.”[59] Clearly, Jesus’ healing

of the blind man was more than just an act of grace in restoring his sight (though it certainly was that); it was also a means by which Jesus could demonstrate that He possessed supernatural powers given Him by His Father.[60]

Since only God has the power over His creation to be able to suspend the natural laws that He created, we see, then, that a miracle is an event that could not have happened without divine intervention. God's bestowal of supernatural power shows God's approval or vindication (or, if you will, the Father's approval or vindication in the case of Jesus) of the messengers on whom that power was bestowed and, therefore shows God's confirmation of their message.

Other miracles wrought by Christ were clearly done to demonstrate who Jesus was. While most of the sermons I have heard preached out of Matthew 14 about Jesus walking on the water resulted in many exiting the auditorium thinking about Peter, the concluding verse of the story (v. 33) indicates the real reason for the event. "And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, 'You are certainly God's Son!'" Thus, the purpose of the miracle was to demonstrate who Jesus was. Whatever lessons one might think to draw from the story about Peter can only be secondary.

Jesus' calming the storm prompted the disciples to marvel and ask, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matt 8:27). The account of Jesus' healing the paralytic man (Matt 9:2-7) indicates exactly why Jesus was performing the miracle.

> And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk '? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." And he got up and went home.

While Jesus was certainly showing mercy on the paralytic by healing him, He healed him not merely to make him well, but to demonstrate that He had the authority to forgive sins. The miracle pointed to a truth that the surrounding witnesses (and all who would subsequently read this account) needed to understand.

Luke records (7:16-17) the reaction within the region around Nain where Jesus raised the son of a widow. “Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, ‘A great prophet has arisen among us!’ and, ‘God has visited His people!’ This report concerning Him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district.”

The same purpose of miracles is evident with the apostles. Norman Geisler points out, “Not every follower of Christ was an apostle. . . . Apostles had a special task. They were the foundation of the Christian church. . . . Paul declared that the church is ‘built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ himself as the chief cornerstone’ (Eph 2:20). Indeed, the early church ‘devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching’ (Acts 2:42). Their special divine authority was exercised in both doctrine (Acts 15) and in discipline (Acts 5).”[61]

Walter J. Chantry observes, “New Testament miracles performed by men other than Jesus also confirmed the authority of prophets who were spokesmen of God’s infallible Word.”[62] He notes that in 2 Corinthians 12:12 Paul calls miracles “signs of an apostle” when Paul points out to the Corinthians that “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.” Paul makes a similar argument to the Romans, “For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed, in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Rom 15:18-19).

Not only can we see this purpose of miracles affirmed by the theologians in church history and modeled in the miracles wrought by Christ and His apostles, but it can be seen as the direct teaching of Scripture. Hebrews 2:2-4 says,

> For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

We can conclude that the notion of signs indicates that the purpose of miracles was to vindicate the messenger and confirm the message. In the case of the life

Jesus, miracles were always there to show that Jesus' message of who He Himself was, was true. They are there to move us to faith as John summarizes towards the end of his Gospel:[63] "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).

An Apologetic of Miracles: Defending Whether Miracles Occur

There are other challenges to the plausibility of miracles besides those stemming from naturalism. For example, some dispute whether it is even possible to know if a miracle has occurred. Others argue that the seeming proliferation of miracles among ancient miracle workers and the world's religions renders miracles useless as an indicator of truth for any given religion.

The New Testament writers apparently (the argument goes) borrowed stories of other miracle workers and ascribed them to Jesus. There is thus nothing special about Jesus since His story is merely variations on a theme of the day. In addition, miracles cannot adjudicate the world's religions since they all claim miraculous confirmation yet many of the doctrines of those religions are mutually incompatible. These types of challenges are, for the most part, independent of the question of God's existence. In other words, even if one granted the metaphysical possibility that there existed a God who could perform miracles in the manner I have delineated above, there are epistemological challenges that still need to be met.

Defending Miracles from the Challenges of David Hume

One such challenge was summarized by philosopher Antony Flew: "The argument to be presented now is epistemological rather than ontological. It is directed not at the question of whether miracles occur but at the question of whether—and if so how—we could know that they do, and when and where they have."[64] Flew is taking his cue from the formidable challenger to miracles, the eighteenth-century Scottish philosopher David Hume (d. 1776) who formulated his arguments regarding miracles in a section titled "On Miracles" in his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.[65] Hume took direct aim at a

fundamental position of this chapter and of most contemporary Christian apologists with whom I am familiar. He claims that he can "establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make it a just foundation for any such system of religion."[66] Hume defines a miracle thus: "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature."[67] He goes on, "Nothing is esteemed a miracle, if it ever happened in the common course of nature. . .There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the even would not merit that appellation."[68]

Based upon his definitions, Hume formulates the following argument against miracles. The argument is not trying to say that miracles *cannot* occur. Instead, it is trying to show that it would never be reasonable to *believe* that a miracle has occurred. Since, for Hume, a miracle is a violation of the law of nature, then "as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined."[69]

Responses to Hume. Philosophers and Apologists have made several responses to Hume. C. S. Lewis points out that the argument (as Lewis understands it) is circular. This is so because one can know that there is uniform experience against miracles only if one knows that all such reports are false. But whether such reports are false is the very issue being debated. Thus, according to Lewis, Hume is using what he is trying to prove as part of his proof. Lewis comments:

> Now of course we must agree with Hume that if there is absolutely "uniform experience" against miracles, if in other words they have never happened, why then they never have. Unfortunately we know the experience against them to be uniform only if we know that all the reports of them are false. And we can know all the reports to be false only if we know already that miracles have never occurred. In fact, we are arguing in a circle.[70]

In addition, Lewis levels another criticism to the effect that Hume is being inconsistent with his own theory of knowledge. Lewis argues that Hume's argument against miracles employs a notion of the uniformity of nature that Hume elsewhere denies. The uniformity of nature is the idea that those laws or principles (however they are labeled) hold more or less uniformly and serve as the basis of our ability to extrapolate from past experience to future expectations

and from present experience to past explanations. If water has always frozen at 32° Fahrenheit in the past, we expect it to freeze at 32° Fahrenheit in the future.[71] Such expectations are the grounds of certain types of scientific reasoning. Since Hume explicitly denies such uniformity (Lewis's argument goes), he cannot employ such uniformity to level an argument against the reasonableness of believing the report of a miracle. Lewis argues:

> There is also an objection to Hume which leads us deeper into our problem. The whole idea of Probability (as Hume understands it) depends on the principle of the Uniformity of Nature. Unless Nature always goes on in the same way, the fact that a thing had happened ten million times would not make it a whit more probable that it would happen again. And how do we know the Uniformity of Nature? A moment's thought shows that we do not know it by experience. . .Our observations would therefore be of no use unless we felt sure that Nature when we are not watching her behaves in the same way as when we are: in other words, unless we believed in the Uniformity of Nature. . .Clearly the assumption which you have to make before there is any such thing as probability cannot itself be probable. [72]

Rethinking Hume's Challenge. If, indeed, Hume is framing his arguments against the reasonableness of believing a report of a purported miracle based on these notions of uniform experience and intrinsic laws of nature, then the responses by Lewis evacuate the arguments of most of their force. What is worse, it exposes Hume as being a poor thinker (by employing a circular argument) and being inconsistent (by appealing to principles which he himself rejects elsewhere). However, I believe that these responses are taking Hume's arguments the wrong way. A different interpretation of the arguments shows that Hume is not employing any circular reasoning and is completely consistent with his own theory of knowledge. The problem with Hume's position is, I believe, much more sophisticated than first imagined. I can give here only the briefest account of Hume's views and what I think should be the proper responses.

It is important that we understand exactly what Hume is and is not saying. Lewis and others take Hume to be inconsistent with his own theory of knowing here, in as much as in other places he seemingly denies that we can know that there are intrinsic laws of nature such as (for example) cause and effect.[73] Hume imagines a person who is dropped into this world. His initial experiences of the world would never allow him to know whether any particular event is connected to another (what would commonly be thought of as a causal connection). But

Hume recognizes that, with continued experiences of the same patterns of one state of the world always following the same previous state of the world, that one dropped into this world could not help but come to believe and expect that the earlier state will always lead to the later state. Hume nevertheless denies that the experience can actually detect any real extra-sensible reality known as causality (as some sort of intrinsic feature of things). What then, according to Hume, accounts for the inevitable belief or expectation that the earlier state will always give rise to the later? "This principle is Custom or Habit."[74] Primarily for Hume, it is psychological. It is the nature of human understanding that it will incline to a particular belief precisely because of repeated experiences. He is not saying, however, that we philosophically *demonstrate* that these repeated experiences prove some intrinsic or metaphysical feature of the world that enables us to rationally (in the philosophical sense of the term during his day) make predictions and retrodictions about reality because of some necessity we have identified.

It is not unlike the experience a person may have upon hearing the phrase "Old McDonald had a farm" that makes him immediately think "ee-i-ee-i-o." One realizes that there is nothing in reality that necessitates the "ee-i-ee-i-o" to follow the "Old McDonald had a farm." What is more, no one upon hearing "Old McDonald had a farm" for the first time would immediately think "ee-i-ee-i-o." The expectation comes entirely by a "uniform experience" of the "constant conjunction" of the two. For Hume, this is exactly the same phenomenon that makes us expect that when (for example) the cue ball hits the eight ball, the eight ball will move. Since there is nothing real that connects the two (like causality) then Hume explains the expectation solely on the basis of custom or habit. He concludes:

> What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter?. . .All belief of matter of fact or real existence is derived merely from some object, present to the memory or senses, and a customary conjunction between that and some other object. All these operations are a species of natural instincts, which no reasoning or process of the thought and understanding is able either to produce or to prevent.[75]

With this, I do not think that the problem with Hume's arguments against miracles is that, in setting up the definition of miracles, he then goes on to play off of any notion of fixed (intrinsic) laws of nature composed of necessary causal connections. I do not take his comment "firm and unalterable experience has

established these laws" to mean that by experience we come to know that there are unalterable laws of nature arising from causal connections between physical objects. I take his notion that "unalterable experience has established these laws" to be completely consistent with his denial of any connection. The reason they are consistent is because what establishes the laws (in our understanding) is *the habit produced* by this "unalterable experience" and not some notion of a real necessary connection that he clearly denies elsewhere in his writings.

> The experimental reasoning itself, which we possess in common with beasts, and on which the whole conduct of life depends, is nothing but a species of instinct or mechanical power, that acts in us unknown to ourselves; and in its chief operations, is not directed by any such relations or comparisons of ideas, as are the proper objects of our intellectual faculties.[76]

In other words, Hume is merely saying that when, because of unalterable experiences, one develops the state of mind (habit) such that he cannot but believe that one particular state of affairs will always follow a previous particular state of affairs, it is *this state of the habit of mind* that prevents that one from believing a report that a miracle has occurred. Since miracles (in Hume's estimation) are always rare, then it would not be possible for anyone whose mind is working correctly to ever develop the habit such that he could believe in these types of events. If he experienced so many resurrections that he could develop such a belief, then resurrections (by definition in Hume's understanding) would not be regarded as miraculous.

He is not saying that we know that there are intrinsic laws of nature and therefore know that miracles cannot occur, as if the laws of nature here were necessary causal connections between states of affairs. He clearly denies that this is ever the case (which is why, due to how Lewis interprets Hume's comments on miracles, Lewis takes Hume to be inconsistent). It is the habit of mind that makes things such that, for anyone who possesses that habit of mind (which he will if he has uniform experience), he will always disbelieve any report that a miracle has occurred.[77]

Responses to Hume, Revisited. If I have successfully exonerated Hume in light of these criticisms commonly made against his arguments, what then can we say about his skepticism toward miracles? Has Hume shown that it is never reasonable to believe a report that a miracle has occurred? I do not think so. It

seems to me that Hume's theory of knowledge suffers from two problems. First, his accounting of his theory leads to something deeply incoherent. Second, it is simply false. One can see this deep incoherence when he examines what Hume understands to believe something to mean. For Hume, to believe something is *only* to have a feeling of a particular kind.

> It follows, therefore, that the difference between *fiction* and *belief* lies in some sentiment or feeling, which is annexed to the latter, not to the former, and which depends not on the will, nor can be commanded at pleasure. It must be excited by nature, like all other sentiment; and must arise from the particular situation, in which the mind is placed at any particular juncture. Whenever any object is presented to the memory or senses, it immediately, by the force of custom, carries the imagination to conceive that object, which is usually conjoined to it; and this conception is attended with a feeling or sentiment, different from the loose reveries of the fancy. In this consists the whole nature of belief.[78]

Lest one wonders if Hume could possibly be talking about beliefs that have to do with (what someone might refer to as) objective reality, he gives an unambiguous illustration.

> For as there is no matter of fact which we believe so firmly that we cannot conceive the contrary, there would be no difference between the conception assented to and that which is rejected, were it not for some sentiment which distinguishes the one from the other. If I see a billiard-ball moving towards another, on a smooth table, I can easily conceive it to stop upon contact. This conception implies no contradiction; but still it feels very differently from that conception by which I represent to myself the impulse and the communication of motion from one ball to another.[79]

For Hume, the *only* reason I say that I believe that the one ball will move when it is hit by the other is because, what it means to believe, is just a feeling that differs from another feeling to which Hume would attach the label 'fiction' (i.e., that one disbelieves it). But then, why should Hume's reader take Hume's theory of knowledge as a whole (including this accounting of what it is to believe) to be *true*? Why should anyone think that even Hume thought that it was true? By Hume's own account, for Hume to believe what Hume is saying is just for Hume to have a particular feeling. If it is *only* a feeling, then it has nothing necessarily to do with what the rest of us would mean when we say that

we believe a particular view because we think it is true.[80] Since Hume's theory disallows the theory itself from being believed to be true (since to believe something is to *only* have a particular feeling) then it undercuts itself. If it is really true, it would not be *believed* to be true on the basis of it actually *being* true. It is incoherent for there to be a theory of knowledge such that its being true has nothing (and could have nothing) to do with anyone actually believing it to be true.

Second, my contention is that Hume's theory of knowledge is simply false. I deny that all we have to work with when thinking about reality are the barest of perceptions. I affirm that the human senses can give us knowledge, not only of real sensible objects, but also of the real metaphysical constituents, characteristics, and principles of those objects.[81] As William A. Wallace says,

> The human mind, contrary to the teaching of the skeptics of Aristotle's day, is capable of transcending the limitations of sense and of grasping the natures of things. To succeed in this quest it is endowed with a special capability, namely, that of reasoning from the more known to the less known, from the clearly perceived appearances of things to their hidden but intelligible underlying causes.[82]

One begins to appreciate why Hume developed his theory when one sees how his thinking fits into a flow of philosophical views since Descartes, but especially how philosophy was shaped by John Locke and Bishop George Berkeley (his immediate empiricist predecessors). Again, space will not allow me but the barest account of the relevant issues. The empiricist thinking of Locke finds commitment to certain cherished philosophical doctrines that some subsequent philosophers regarded as entirely unwarranted. I do not mean necessarily that subsequent philosophers rejected these cherished doctrines as false (though many did so reject them). Instead, I mean that, at the very least, these doctrines could not be accounted for by what was passing as empiricist epistemology of the day. I am thinking here of such doctrines as substance, the reality of extra-mental world, natural theology, miracles, the existence of God, and others.

These (and other) philosophical notions reach far back into the history of philosophy flourishing among those philosophers who themselves can rightly be called empiricists. But the empiricism of the classical variety (in the tradition of Aristotle) was a very different theory of knowledge than the modern empiricism

of Locke. The reasons for the changes in empiricism from its classical version to its modern version are interesting to examine but outside the purpose of this chapter. Let it suffice to say that those concerns that Hume raises as he realizes the inadequacy of modern empiricism (or what Hume would have known simply as philosophy) were virtually not to be found among empiricist thinkers from Aristotle to Aquinas. For all my criticisms of Hume's philosophy, Hume is to be commended for exposing the bankruptcy of modern empiricism to adequately account for these cherished philosophical doctrines. What Berkeley did for (and to) Locke's thinking (in winnowing out what Berkeley regarded as unwarranted elements while insisting on maintaining certain of these cherished doctrines) Hume did for Berkeley's by finishing the purge. The end result was a system of empiricist philosophy that tried to reduce all thinking to its bare ingredients of perception itself, and which, in many ways, became an anti-philosophy. It was no wonder that, with such radical surgery, Hume's way of thinking revealed that very few (if any) traditional philosophical truths can survive philosophy's penetrating gaze. Hume did not receive the label of skeptic without warrant. But as I have said elsewhere (see note 66) I take Hume's point not to be that philosophy has proven so many things to be false, but, rather, that if one tries to use philosophy to establish certain philosophical truths, he will be completely disabused of these truths (if that was psychologically possible). Hume sums it up thus:

> By all that has been said the reader will easily perceive that the philosophy contain'd in this book is very sceptical, and tends to give us a notion of the imperfections and narrow limits of human understanding. Almost all reasoning is there reduced to experience; and the belief, which attends experience, is explained to be nothing but a peculiar sentiment, or lively conception produced by habit. Nor is this all, when we believe any thing of *external* existence, or suppose an object to exist a moment after it is no longer perceived, this belief is nothing but a sentiment of the same kind. Our author insists upon several other sceptical topics; and upon the whole concludes, that we assent to our faculties, and employ our reason only because we cannot help it. Philosophy wou'd render us entirely *Pyrrhonian*, were not nature too strong for it.[83]

For Hume, were it not for the way nature has disposed our thinking capacities, philosophy (i.e., his version of modern empiricism) would make us all absolute skeptics.

With all this, what can we say to Hume and his skepticism? In one respect, no one should have ever thought that certain of these cherished beliefs should arise from a rigorous philosophy. As I tell my students, you do not need to take a philosophy course to discover that there is a material world that exists external to your mind. Children know that this is the case, even if they never consciously reflect upon that truth.[84] What is worse, for those who think that such knowledge can rightfully be called knowledge only after (and because of) it has been philosophically demonstrated, it is a guarantee that such thinking will eventuate (if he follow his thinking far enough and consistently enough) into skepticism. This was Descartes' illusive dream. The impossibility of this dream was demonstrated in subsequent philosophical thinking and climaxed in David Hume. The philosophical realism that all but faded from sight in Hume's time and place realized that the starting point of human knowledge is not to suspend what we actually do know by virtue of being a human with the faculties to know the world that God created. Instead, it is to take these observations about the sensible world and begin to reflect upon what can be discovered about it at a deeper, metaphysical level. We must begin with reality, not with philosophizing.

Defending Miracles from the Challenges of Other Religions

There are two ways that the New Testament miracles are challenged by other religions. First, some have alleged that the miracles of Jesus and His apostles are paralleled by pagan miracle workers before and after the time of Christ. The argument here is an attempt to evacuate the New Testament miracles of their unique place in history.[85] Second, David Hume argued that the presence of purported miracles in other contemporary religions renders useless the apologetic value of miracles for the Christian religion. I should like to take a look at each of these.

Ancient Miracle Workers

A search on the Internet will reveal quite a number of writers who attempt to cast the credibility of the New Testament as being on par with other ancient sources that are themselves characterized as incredible. Richard Carrier comments,

> We all have read the tales told of Jesus in the Gospels, but few people

> really have a good idea of their context. Yet it is quite enlightening to examine them against the background of the time and place in which they were written, and my goal here is to help you do just that. . .There is abundant evidence that these were times replete with kooks and quacks of all varieties. . .Placed in this context, the gospels no longer seem to be so remarkable, and this leads us to an important fact: when the Gospels were written, skeptics and informed or critical minds were a small minority. Although the gullible, the credulous, and those ready to believe or exaggerate stories of the supernatural are still abundant today, they were much more common in antiquity, and taken far more seriously.[86]

It is not uncommon to find web sites touting the "miracles" of Apollonius of Tyana, Vespasian, and others, attempting to draw parallels to the miracles of Jesus. Often, they draw these parallels to try to show that, just as no one today believes these stories of Apollonius or Vespasian, neither should we believe the stories of Jesus. But if we allow the historicity of the Jesus story, we cannot consistently (so the argument goes) disallow these other stories. If we allow these other stories (the critic continues), then the conclusions many have come to about Jesus as the unique Son of God are no longer warranted.

By far, the most thorough examination to my knowledge of a range of issues relating to miracles is the work by Asbury New Testament professor Craig S. Keener.[87] Among other things, it is an extensive examination of the sources from ancient times regarding purported miracle workers. Keener marshals the evidence from the ancient sources in his analysis of the comparisons and contrasts to the New Testament. I should like to briefly summarize some of his points most relevant to my purposes here, bringing in certain other relevant sources to see if such associations are warranted.

Apollonius. Perhaps the most significant purported parallel to Jesus from antiquity is Apollonius of Tyana. "Of all ancient stories about miracle workers, those about Apollonius come closest to the stories about Jesus in the Gospels. Only these two figures stand out as immanent bearers of numinous power of whom multiple healing narratives are reported."[88] He was purportedly an itinerant sage and wonder worker (particularly healings) roughly a contemporary of Jesus or right after. It is primarily this feature of pagan miracle workers, viz., "divine activity that could be mediated through human agents"[89] that commends the parallel. But, as Keener notes, this feature was "more common than not among human societies in general."[90]

Our knowledge about Apollonius comes primarily from a writer names Philostratus who lived towards the end of the second century and beginning of the third.[91] By Philostratus's own account, he gathered his information about Apollonius at the behest of the empress Julia Domma, wife of the emperor Septimius Severus. This information supposedly came from documents written by a man named Damis who had "resorted to Apollonius in order to study wisdom, and having shared, by his own account, his wanderings abroad, wrote an account of them."[92] Philostratus describes Julia as a "devoted admirer of all rhetorical exercizes" who had "commanded me to recast and edit these essays, at the same time paying more attention to the style and diction of them; for the man of Nineveh had told his story clearly enough, yet somewhat awkwardly."[93] Philostratus says he also read other sources, including Maximus of Aegae who "comprised all the life of Apollonius in Aegae"[94] who Philostratus characterized as "a writer whose reputation won him a position in the emperor's Secretariat"[95] and Apollonius's will "from which we can learn how rapturous and inspired a sage he really was."[96]

Can the stories of Apollonius match the stories of Jesus in terms of historical credibility? There are several problems. First, the sources for Apollonius are later than the sources for Jesus. Keener observes that "the only extant literary account of Apollonius of Tyana, first appear in third-century literature, after Christian miracles stories had become widely known, and Christian and pagan expectations influenced each other more generally."[97] Keener goes on,

> If we ask which stories circulated first, however, it is clear that miracle stories circulated about Jesus before Apollonius flourished, and Mark wrote about Jesus's miracles well over a century before Philostratus wrote about Apollonius's. The period between Jesus's crucifixion and Mark's Gospel, usually estimated at roughly forty years, may be less than a third of the period between Apollonius's death or disappearance and Philostratus's story about him.[98]

Geisler, in an article on Apollonius in his *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* gives a list of reasons to discount the stories of Apollonius in terms of both their historicity and supposed parallels with Jesus.[99] Regarding the contrasts between the story of Apollonius and the story of Jesus, the writing of Philostratus is the only extant literary source for information about Apollonius's life.[100] But Philostratus was not an eyewitness, "but was commissioned to compose his book by Julia Domna, wife of the Roman emperor Septimus 120

years after Apollonius's death."[101] It would seem that Philostratus was commissioned to write what he did to counter earlier criticisms of Apollonius as a magician and charlatan.[102] According to Keener, "the magical character of some of Apollonius's deeds still frequently surfaces in Philostratus, although he is trying to clear Apollonius of the charge."[103] The supposed accounts of Apollonius's miracles are actually stories that Philostratus records. In other words, it is not Philosostratus's own eyewitness account that is claiming any purported wonders at the hands of Apollonius. Instead they are stories about Apollonius coming possibly from a (likely fictional) figure named Damis. Because of this thin connection between Philostratus as the writer back to Apollonius as the subject, Geisler concludes that "the authenticity of this account is unconfirmed."[104] In contrast, the story of Jesus has "many multiple contemporary accounts of his life, death, and resurrection."[105] These multiple accounts are preserved in a vast assortment of manuscripts, lectionaries, early translations, and early quotations.

Philostratus's work contains a number of historical errors. Damis is supposedly from Nineveh[106] even though Nineveh did not exist during his lifetime. In addition Philostratus has certain geographical and dating errors in his work. "Nineveh and Babylon were destroyed 300 years earlier [thus, Damis, a contemporary of Apollonius, according to Philostratus, could not have hailed from there]. The Caucasus Mountains are described as a dividing point between India and Babylon, which is inaccurate. Philostratus's speeches are anachronistically put into Apollonius's mouth."[107] In contrast, the story of Jesus and the New Testament has been meticulously confirmed as to its historical and geographical accuracy. Numerous people, places, and events are identified in the New Testament that we know are accurate and no person, place, or thing identified in the New Testament has ever been shown to be other than the New Testament says. Other differences are that the story of Apollonius ends with his death whereas the story of Jesus ends with His resurrection. Also, Apollonius was purported to have *become* a deity whereas Jesus was both God and man throughout. These contrasts show that, as a whole, Philostratus's story of Apollonius does nothing to bolster the critics' case against Jesus and His miracles.

Specifically, however, what are we to make of these claims of miracles? Depending on how one reads Philostratus here, one could argue that the miracle stories do not parallel (in their essence) the miracles of Jesus. For example, Philostratus tells us that Apollonius raised a girl from the dead. But, according to

the account, Apollonius did so by "merely touching her and whispering in secret some spell over her."[108] This comports completely with the milieu of the times of Apollonius where certain men allegedly could wield the powers of magic.[109] There is even the presence of magic, witchcraft and sorcery in the Bible.

> And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of everyone; and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver (Acts 19:19).
>
> He [Manasseh] practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger" (2 Chron 33:6).
>
> Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, 'This man is what is called the Great Power of God.' And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts" (Acts 8:9-11).

It is not counterexample to the miracles of the New Testament for there to be wonder working by others who were not Christians. Indeed, the Scriptures warn about such dangers (2 Thess 2:9).

However, Jesus did not raise (for example) Jairus's daughter with a magic spell.[110] Since Apollonius used a spell, then this act is not, strictly speaking, a miracle. As I have argued, a miracle is an act whereby God suspends the natural, physical laws that He created for the purpose of vindicating a messenger and confirming a message. Since God is the Creator of the universe, He is not part of some overall matrix of causes and effects. He is transcendent to all creation. Miracles, then, as acts of a transcendent God (either directly or through His agents) are contrasted with occult events like those that would be precipitated by something like Apollonius's spell. In the occult, a spell is a spoken word or words that activate immaterial forces to bring about a spiritual or physical effect.[111] It could be thought of as analogous to the mechanistic relationships that obtain between physical objects. Just as one can (for example) add a chemical to another chemical to achieve a desired effect (like adding sugar to your tea to make it sweet), the occultist believes that the immaterial realm operates according to its own set of mechanistic laws (albeit immaterial) that can have

both immaterial and material effects. The practice of the occult is the mastering of these laws.[112] This is not at all the working of a miracle.

Some may respond that perhaps Philostratus is speaking in phenomenological language. Perhaps to the original witness (be that Damis or whomever) Apollonius was not actually whispering a spell, but that was only how the witness understood the situation. It seems plausible that Apollonius could have said something not intending it to be a spell, but it would appear to someone watching that there was seemingly a causal connection (in an occult way) between Apollonius speaking and the little girl rising. Even granting this, the account of the event still poses problems for anyone who would use it as a parallel to the miracles of Jesus or His apostles. Note carefully that Philostratus's words when he says that Apollonius, by "merely touching her and whispering in secret some spell over her, at once woke up the maiden from her *seeming* death,"[113] allow for the possibility that the little girl was not really dead in the first place. In fact, Philostratus goes on:

> Now whether he detected some spark of life in her, which those who were nursing her had not noticed—for it is said that although it was raining at the time, a vapor went up from her face—or whether her life was really extinct, and he restored it by the warmth of his touch, is a mysterious problem which neither I myself nor those who were present could decide.[114]

The vapor that was observer may very well have been an indication that she was breathing. It seems to me, then, that the critic who tries to use this story against Jesus and the New Testament is being disingenuous. According to Philostratus, not even the ones there could tell whether Apollonius actually raised the girl from the dead. Much less so could anyone today do so.

Another problem the story poses for the critic is Philostratus's commentary. He says that when Apollonius whispered and touch the little girl he "at once woke up the maiden from her seeming death; and the girl spoke out loud, and returned to her father's house, *just as Alcestis did when she was brought back to life by Heracles*."[115] The problem is that Heracles is a figure in Greek mythology. To be sure, it is entirely plausible for a writer to liken a real person or thing to a fictional person or thing. I can understand what someone might mean if they said "That Olympic runner was faster than Superman!" The difference, however, is that the audience would already know of the reality of the Olympic runner and would not be in danger of attributing the fictional nature of the Superman

character to the Olympic runner, concluding that the Olympic runner did not exist after all. Only if we knew that Philostratus was confident that his readers would not make that same mistake, can we be confident that something else not was going on besides an actual event of raising the little girl from death. It does not seem to bode well for anyone who is desirous to marshal such a story as if it is real, only to have the narrative liken the event in question to a mythical event. Further, who is to say that Philostratus did not regard Heracles as real as well? In this case, one could regard the entire story as a literary device (perhaps to paint a portrait of the character of Apollonius) never intended to be taken as literally true. This then would have implications for how confident we can be in taking the story of Apollonius as real.

It would seem, therefore, that this story of Apollonius does nothing to cast doubt on the veracity of the stories in the New Testament of Jesus and His apostles working miracles. The differences, together with the internal problems with Philostratus's account, are just too much to sustain any meaningful parallels. Keener sums up the situation: "Philostratus's portrait suits a late second-or third-century setting (i.e., the author's own) much better than a mostly late firstcentury setting (i.e., Apollonius's); his accounts of Apollonius even resemble reports from Christian gospels, though especially of the 'apocryphal' variety."[116]

Vespasian.

Another supposed miracle story focuses on Roman Emperor Vespasian and is found in Tacitus' *Histories*, 4.81. It talks about a blind commoner who threw himself at the Emperor's knees and "implored him with groans to heal his infirmity."[117] Tacitus goes on:

> This he did by the advice of the God Serapis, whom this nation, devoted as it is to many superstitions, worships more than any other divinity. He begged Vespasian that he would deign to moisten his cheeks and eye-balls with his spittle. Another with a diseased hand, at the counsel of the same God, prayed that the limb might feet the print of a Caesar's foot.[118]

One, perhaps, is immediately reminded of Jesus healing the blind man in Mark 8:22-26 (where spittle was also used) and Jesus' healing of the man with the withered hand in Matthew 12:10-13. Critics use this story of Vespasian to cast doubt upon the miracles of Jesus. What are we to make of this account by

Tacitus? There are a number of ways in which this story differs markedly from miracle accounts in the New Testament.

First, note that the encounter is at the behest of Serapis.[119] Serapis is not the Creator God but is, instead, an amalgam of certain Greek attributes with a previously existing Egyptian deity. The understanding of the deity arose as a result of the mixing of certain Greeks with the Egyptians in northern Africa. Thus, the event is precipitated by a deity that is not the Creator God. Lest someone misunderstand, my argument is not circular. I am not arguing: (1) Christianity is true (based on, among other things, my argument from miracles); (2) Serapis is not the God of Christianity, therefore (3) Serapis is a false God; (4) Serapis facilitated the situation by sending the commoners to Vespasian for Vespasian to perform his miracle, therefore (5) this miracle is false. I have no difficulty believing that someone actually spoke to the commoners to instruct him to go to Vespasian. The question is how the commoners could discern whether this was the true God (or one of His emissaries) or some malevolent entity or something else. My challenge is to the entire philosophical context within which this event takes place.

Second, someone might suggest that this part of the story only serves as a literary device to explain how it is that commoners could gain an audience with the Emperor and, thus, is neither literally nor figuratively true.[120] My question then is: if this part of the story is fiction, what might that say about the balance of the story? If Tacitus (or his sources) feels at liberty to employ (what some might regard as) a literary device (with no obligation that it have a referent in reality) then why should we think that the actual miracle event itself is not also a literary device?

Third, Vespasian's actions and reactions are very different from those of the New Testament figures. "At first Vespasian *ridiculed and repulsed* them. They persisted; and he, though on the one hand *he feared the scandal of a fruitless attempt*, yet, on the other, was *induced* by the entreaties of the men and *by the language of his flatterers* to hope for success."[121] God through Jesus used the apostles primarily as instruments of getting His revelation confirmed to mankind and secondarily as instruments of his grace and mercy (especially in case of the healings). But we see here that Vespasian "ridiculed and repulsed those who came to him for healing." Notice also that Vespasian "feared the scandal of a fruitless attempt." In other words, he worried that he might not succeed in effecting the healing. Neither Jesus nor the apostles doubted how God would use

them regarding the working of miracles. Also, Vespasian was moved to action partially because of the "language of his flatterers." He overcame his fear of failing because of being moved by those who were hopeful that he could do it. There was no motivation here to be used by God for His glory and to be used as an instrument to advance His message.

The episode departs even further from the biblical norm regarding miracles. "At last he ordered that the opinion of physicians should be taken, as to whether such blindness and infirmity were within the reach of human skill. They discussed the matter from different points of view."[122] Note that his first resort was to see if the physicians could do the healing without Vespasian having to chance failure by giving it a try himself. The physicians instructed Vespasian that if the commoner's sight "was not wholly destroyed" that it "might return, if the obstacles were removed" and that diseased hand "might be restored, if a healing influence were applied; such, perhaps, might be the pleasure of the gods, and the Emperor might be chosen to be the minister of the divine will."[123] We see here, in the opinions of Vespasian's physicians, it remained to be seen whether the gods would use Vespasian to effect the healing.

Last, Tacitus's commentary was that "persons actually present attest both facts, even now when nothing is to be gained by falsehood."[124] Two things should be noted here. First, it is clear that Tacitus himself was not an eyewitness to the event since he uses the third person in referring to those who were "actually present." Not being an eyewitness, we are left with the task of having to weigh the substance of Tacitus's sources. Aside from the parallel account by Suetonius (also not an eyewitness), I am not aware of the story being corroborated by anyone else, including any of the eyewitnesses. Second, for Tacitus to say that there was nothing *now* to be gained by falsehood is to tacitly imply that, at the time of the origin of the report, there was something to be gained. This, then, calls into question the veracity of the original account (from wherever it comes). If there is reason to think that a person might benefit from fabricating a story, then the credibility of the person is called into question. To be sure, standing to gain from saying something does not automatically say that what was said was false. But, given that we are dealing with a purported historical account, the source of which cannot be evaluated by other means, this issue of motive becomes relevant.[125]

The episode takes place outside of a sound philosophical theology that understands the existence and nature of the true, transcendent, creator God. The

account is also mixed with Greek mythology, calling to question what else might be fictional. Vespasian's actions stand in stark contrast to the workers of God's miracles in the New Testament. Last, Tacitus's commentary shows that his account is not his own eyewitness account, and that there might have been something to gain for the original source or sources of the story. It is clear that the supposed miracle of Vespasian bears almost no parallel to the actual miracles of Jesus and His apostles.

Miracles in Other Religions. We have seen how the philosopher David Hume weighed in on the believability of miracles. He also has something to say about the use of miracles to provide a foundation for accepting a religion. Specifically, he challenged,

> In matters of religion, whatever is different is contrary; and that it is impossible the religions of Ancient Rome, of Turkey, of Siam, and of China should, all of them, be established on any solid foundation. Every miracle, therefore, pretended to have been wrought in any of these religions (and all of them abound in miracles), as its direct scope is to establish the particular system to which it is attributed; so has it the same force, though more indirectly, to overthrow every other system.[126]

For Hume, the world's religions have conflicting claims such that they cannot all be true.[127] Hume should be commended for understanding this. It is only because Christian apologists realize that certain claims of other religions are incompatible with the claims of Christ that we bother to engage in apologetics in the first place to help people see who is correct. Unfortunately, in our growing pluralistic and relativistic society people seem to have less and less a tendency (or ability) to recognize the deep incompatibility of the world's religions not only with each other, but also with Christianity. It is not uncommon to hear people say that all religions are basically the same at the core and that they merely differ in the peripherals. I contend that it is the inverse. Religions are basically the same in the peripherals and incompatible at the core.[128] By 'core' here I mean their essential, defining doctrines. One finds that many if not most of the world's religions and philosophies share common concerns such as respect for other's property, honor for parents and elders, the responsibility to nurture children, fidelity in marriage, honest in business dealings, respect for neighbors. To be sure, what constitutes who is one's neighbor might differ such that the prohibition against murder might not extend beyond one's own peoples group, language, skin color, or tribe. But the principle is there. C. S. Lewis summarized

it well,

> I know that some people say the idea of a Law of Nature or decent behavior known to all men is unsound, because different civilisations and different ages have had quite different moralities. But this is not true. . . . Men have differed as regards what people you ought to be unselfish to—whether it was only your own family, or your fellow countrymen, or everyone. But they have always agreed that you ought not to put yourself first. . . . Men have differed as to whether you should have one wife or four. But they have always agreed that you must not simply have any woman you liked.[129]

One will notice that much of these commonalities are moral issues. It should be no surprise in as much as Romans 2:14-15 tell us "For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them."

However, while such moral principles show up across religious boundaries, I would contend that these moral concerns do not constitute the core of these religions. Instead, they are (either consistently or inconsistently) an implication (and sometimes an application) of the core. This is also true of Christianity. In a conversation with someone who suggested to me that all religions were basically the same at the core, I asked what this core was. This person responded something to the effect that principles like "love your neighbor" represented that core. I responded that Christianity did not teach this. I did not mean that Christianity did not teach us to love our neighbors. Instead, I was arguing that "love your neighbor" was not the *core* of Christianity but was, instead, an implication and application of the core. The core dealt with issues like "Is there a God?" and "What is God like?" and "Who is Jesus?" and "How does one obtain eternal life?" and so on. A look at the world's religions will show that no two world religions are the same on these crucial questions. No two give the same answers. Thus, no two world religions are the same at the core. Some religions deny that there is a God (Theravada Buddhism and Anton LaVey's version of Satanism[130]), some are polytheistic (Vedic Hinduism, Bhakti Hinduism, Wicca, animistic religions), some are pantheistic (Upanishadic Hinduism), and some are occult (Jainism, Tibetan Buddhism, Wicca). For those religions that are theistic in some sense, only Judaism and Islam have a notion of a transcendent creator

God. No world religion holds the view of Jesus that historic, orthodox Christianity does, viz., that He is the Son of God, God in the flesh the eternal second Person of the Trinity. Only Christianity has a doctrine that the human race has morally affronted an infinitely holy God, that we are in need of salvation for eternal life, and that this salvation was bought by the sacrifice of Christ and is only available as a gift to those who do not work for it, but believe the gospel to receive it (Rom 4:4-5). With this, I am happy to agree with David Hume that "whatever is different is contrary; and that it is impossible the religions of Ancient Rome, of Turkey, of Siam, and of China should, all of them, be established on any solid foundation." In other words, they cannot all be true.

What is the Christian apologist to make of Hume's challenge that miracles in other religions render our appeal to miracles useless? Is it a standoff? In critiquing the plausibility of these miracle claims one need to consider three things about the miracle claims: the philosophical plausibility, the historical plausibility, and the theological plausibility. First, one needs to examine the philosophical plausibility of the miracle claims in the various religions given their views on the nature of reality. I argued earlier that, by definition, a miracle can only be worked by the power of a transcendent God. Wonders worked by other entities within creation cannot, strictly speaking, be miracles (except in as much as these other entities are the agents of the transcendent Creator, as in the case of Jesus' apostles). Thus, in any given world religion, if that religion is not theistic (in the sense of having a transcendent Creator) then it is not possible for that religion to make miracles claims that are consistent with its own worldview. If there is no transcendent God, by definition there cannot be miracles. With this, we can philosophically dismiss purported miracle claims in all the atheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic, and occult religions since none of them maintain the real God. None of these religions claims that there is a transcendent Creator God who stands in metaphysical contrast to the world. But, since it can be demonstrated that such a God exists, then these various religions are already shown to be false from the very start. Since, as I have argued, the miracles themselves are not part of the arguments for God's existence, then, the argument is not circular. This allows for the apologetic role that miracles can play only within a theistic context. By and large, if we confine ourselves to this criterion, we are left with examining Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as the three great monotheistic religions. As Geisler and Turek point out, "Since this is a theistic universe, Judaism and Islam are the only other major world religions that possibly could be true. Miracles confirming the Old Testament of Judaism also confirm Christianity. So we are left with Islam as the only possible alternative to

‘cancel’ the miracles of Christianity. “[131]

Second, one needs to examine the historical plausibility of the miracle claims. How do the specifics of the accounts stack up under historical scrutiny? Are the documents attesting to the miracles substantial? This question is especially interesting when one compares the manuscript evidence of the sacred texts of other religions with those of the New Testament. I have discussed the evidence regarding the New Testament in my chapter “The Reliability of the New Testament Writers” in this volume. Let it suffice to say that none of these other texts with these other religions comes close to the New Testament regarding its manuscript integrity as these texts have come down through history to us today. Without confidence in the very documents that relay the accounts and without any corroborating evidence of the miracles (combined with the worldview of almost all of these religions which preclude miracles in the first place), it is hard to build too much of an apologetic case for them as compared to the apologetic case that exists for Jesus and His apostles. If it was the case that the miracle claims of other religions were on philosophical and historical par with Christianity, then there might have been some strength to Hume’s argument. The fact is they are not.

What is more, Hume is wrong to say that they are all full of miracles. As we saw from the Lockyer comment, even the Bible is not “full” of miracles. They are rare when considered in the biblical time line. Miracles in the world’s religions are even rarer in the timeline of these other religions. Directing our attention to Islam as the only option that rivals the claims of Christianity given its philosophical worldview, we see that, when compared to Christianity, miracles in Islam are almost nonexistent. It is controversial among Muslims whether Muhammad even performed any miracles. Mark A. Gabriel, a Muslim convert to Christianity who earned a doctorate in Islamic studies and taught at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, observes, “Whether Muhammad performed healings and miracles is a controversial topic among Muslims. Muslims accept that *Jesus* performed miracles (as supported by the Quran), but not everyone agrees on whether Muhammad performed miracles. This is because of contradictions between the Quran and the hadith (the record of Muhammad’s teachings and actions).[132] Gabriel goes on, “Some say his miracles were a sign of Muhammad’s prophet-hood, but the Quran declared that the revelations to Muhammad were the only sign that would be given. It is an issue of debate.”[133]

To be sure, one can produce critics (even those professing to be Christians)

who will challenge, and sometime outright deny, that Jesus worked miracles. They may say this because, against the evidence, they believe that Jesus never existed in the first place or they may say this because of their antisupernaturalism. But what they cannot deny is that, *as far as the New Testament is concerned*, Jesus undoubtedly was purported to have worked miracles. In other words, no one denies that the account has Jesus (and His apostles) performing miracles. If the critic denies that Jesus and His apostles did not do any miracles, the critic would need to marshal arguments to support why he believes against the historical record. In contrast, the dispute among those who examine the historical evidence of Muhammad is precisely over whether that historical evidence even purports to attribute miracles to Muhammad.

What is more, certain sections of the Quran seem to explicitly teach that Muhammad did not perform miracles. Sura 29:50 says, "They ask: 'Why has not sign [miracle] been given him [Muhammad] by his Lord?' Say: 'Signs are in the hands of Allah. My mission is only to give plain warning. Is it not enough for them that We [i.e., Allah] have revealed to you the Book for their instruction?"[134] Gabriel comments, "In other words, Muhammad was to say, 'I'm the prophet. Don't ask me for signs. Signs are for Allah to do.' The revelation concluded, 'The Quran is sign enough for you!'" Indeed, some have suggested that to attribute miracles to Muhammad detracts from the real miracle in Islam, the Quran itself.

Another reference in the Quran that seems to teach that Muhammad was not supposed to perform miracles is Sura 13:7 which says, "The unbelievers ask: 'Why has not sign been given him by his Lord?' But your mission is only to give warning."[135] A writer for the web site *Answering Islam* Sam Shamoun observes, "The foregoing text presupposes that Muhammad's only function was to warn people, not to perform miracles. After all, the statement 'Thou art *only* a warner' would make no sense if a warner could in fact perform wonders. In other words, being a warner wouldn't preclude Muhammad from doing any signs unless, of course, the point being made by the Quran is that such individuals who assumed this role were not empowered to do miracles."[136]

Despite what some may regard as the clear teaching of the Quran regarding Muhammad and miracles, some Muslims nevertheless appeal to some events as examples of miracles wrought by him. Before I take a look at them, it bears repeating that it is telling that there can be a dispute whether these events are indeed miracles wrought by Muhammad. While someone may deny that Jesus

really did miracles, it is inconceivable that there could be any dispute that the New Testament accounts *say* that Jesus worked miracles. No one denies that this is the testimony of the New Testament about Jesus even if they, after all is said and done, reject the truthfulness of these accounts. It is different with these purported miracle accounts in the Quran. The controversy is not so much whether the event took place (though that can be one criticism) but whether the event was even a miracle in the first place, and, if it was a miracle, whether it was wrought by Muhammad or just an act of Allah without any reference to him.

One example of a purported miracle by Muhammad is the splitting of the moon. Sura 54:1-2 says, "The Hour of Doom is drawing near, and the moon is cleft in two. Yet when they see a sign the unbelievers turn their backs and say: 'Ingenious magic!'"[137] Some Muslims take this to be an account where the moon split into two pieces before unbelievers as a sign of his working miracles by the power of Allah. In this regard, the Muslim is employing the same apologetics strategy as the Christian when appealing to the miracles of Jesus and His apostles. They are arguing that, since it is beyond human power to do such a feat, it can only be explained by the power of God working through the human, thus, vindicating him as God's messenger and confirming his message. Several things can be said about this event. First, in the context of the passage, there is no mention of Muhammad at all. There is nothing to indicate in the context that this event had anything to do with him. The only place where Muhammad is introduced into the story is in the hadith (stories told later on about Muhammad).

Second, if this was a miracle wrought by Muhammad, it is curious why Muhammad never appealed to this event when he was later challenged as to why he did not give any signs.[138] The best explanation is that this was not a miracle wrought by him.

Third, Shamoun comments, "The Quranic text doesn't give us any data whereby to connect this with the story found in the hadith that the moon was split during Muhammad's time. It is vague and can refer to any incident, whether before, during or after Muhammad's time. After all even Muslims admit that the text may in fact be referring to a future incident, a sign to occur during the Day of Judgment."[139] Thus, it is entirely possible that this event is not (yet) an accomplished event and, as such, cannot serve as an apologetic for Islam regarding Muhammad's ability to work miracles.

A second example that is sometimes brought up is the incident of

Muhammad's "night journey." Sura 17:1 says, "Glory be to Him who made His servants go by night from the Sacred Temple to the farther Temple whose surroundings We [Allah] have blessed, that We might show him some of Our signs. He alone hears all and observes all."[140] The account is supposedly about a trip Muhammad took from Mecca (Sacred Temple) to Jerusalem and then possibly on to heaven (farther Temple). The hadith adds certain details, including that it was the angel Gabriel who transported Muhammad on a heavenly steed where he was able to meet several of the other prophets.[141] Is this a miracle wrought by Muhammad? In response, it should be noted that some Muslims regard this, not as a literal journey, but rather as a vision. Dawood comments, "Some Muslim commentators give a literal interpretation to this passage, others regard it as a vision."[142] Geisler and Saleeb point out, "Even according to one of the earliest Islamic traditions, Muhammad's wife, A'isha, reported that 'the apostle's body remained where it was but God removed his spirit by night."[143] What is more, this apparently was not an event that was witnessed by anyone. We are merely told that it happened. As such, it has no apologetic value in pointing to Muhammad as a miracle worker.

Last, one needs to examine the theological plausibility of the miracle claims. Here I would like to suggest some penetrating questions surrounding the miracles in other religions. First, specifically regarding Islam, since the Quran itself acknowledges the previous revelation of the Bible, then Islam is falsified in as much as its teaching contradicts this previous revelation. Sura 10:37 says, "This Koran could not have been composed by any but Allah. It confirms what was revealed before it and fully explains the Scriptures."[144] It is not uncommon for the Muslim to allege that the Bible has been so corrupted as to be unreliable as a guide to truth. Such a corruption could only have occurred before the time of Muhammad. However, the Quran regards the Bible as reliable at the time of Muhammad. Sura 4:136 says, "Believers, have faith in Allah and His apostle, in the Book He has revealed to His apostle, and in the Scriptures He formerly revealed."[145] Lest there be any doubt as to what these "Scriptures formerly revealed" are, Sura 5:46-47 explains, "After these prophets We sent forth Jesus, the son of Mary, confirming the Torah already revealed, and gave him the Gospel, in which there is guidance and light, corroborating that which was revealed before it in the Torah, a guide and an admonition to the righteous. Therefore let the followers of the Gospel judge in accordance with what Allah has revealed therein."[146] The readers of the Quran at the time could not be told to have faith in the Scripture and to judge in accordance with them if they had been corrupted. Thus, to the degree that the Quran departs from and conflicts with the

teachings of the Bible, it has (by its own teaching) falsified itself.[147]

Second, think about how a given world religion regards itself vis-à-vis Christianity. I can think of four ways they might do so. First, the religion could say that it is true and Christianity is false. Second, the religion could say that it is compatible with Christianity (i.e., that they are both true). Third, it could say that it alone is the true Christianity. Fourth, it could say that it is a fulfillment of Christianity (i.e., Christianity is incomplete). A quick response to each is in order.

The first one has already been answered in as much as I have shown that no other religion can refute the evidence that Christianity is true nor marshal the evidence supporting its own claims. The second point is refuted in as much as we can show that, at their core (i.e., in their essential doctrines) no other world religion makes the claims that Christianity makes. The third point is the view of many of the new religious movements like Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses. Their claims can be refuted by showing that what they teach is incompatible with the teachings of the Bible. Certain of these groups (particularly Mormonism) can only maintain that their unique doctrines are biblical by asserting that the Bible has been corrupted beyond being able to be a source of theology. This can be refuted by showing that the Bible has not been corrupted. The fourth point is claimed by Islam. It can be refuted by showing that the Bible has not been corrupted and then by showing that, not only is Muhammad not a prophet of God, but that the teachings of Islam are false in as much as they conflict with (what they admit is) revelation from God.

Conclusion

My defense of the supernatural was an attempt to prove two broad points. The first was that there exists a God who possesses attributes that allow for the possibility that miracles are possible. Only in the context of knowing that God exists can the evidence for miracles perform the apologetic work that Christians need. To that end, I marshaled two arguments for God's existence. The first argued that God is the cause of the universe's coming into existence. The second argued that God is the cause of the universe's current existing.

My second broad point was that miracles, as acts of God, vindicate the messenger of God and confirm his message. To this end, I showed *what* miracles are, *why* miracles occur, and *whether* miracles occur. I also responded to the

significant challenges leveled against miracles, primarily stemming from the philosophy of David Hume and from other religions, including the ancient miracles workers and other world religions. It is my contention that the miracles of God prove that Jesus Christ is He only Son and that the Bible is true.

[1] Moreover, I would contend that the activities of angels and demons are not manifestations of some kind of spiritual "law" or "regularity" either. Understanding the spiritual realm this way is the *sine qua non* of occult philosophy. Occultism is a worldview of naturalism (though not materialism) in as much as it denies the existence of a transcendent God in the manner in which I will be discussing here. For more on this see Richard G. Howe, "Modern Witchcraft: It May Not Be What You Think," *Christian Research Journal* 25, no. 1 (2005): 12-21, available at http://www.richardghowe.com/ModernWitchcraft.pdf (accessed 07/12/13) and http://www.equip.org/articles/modern-witchcraft/ (accessed 07/12/13).

[2] That is why I prefer the term "paranormal" when referring to demonic activity. Since I would hold that any angelic activity is at the behest of God, perhaps the term "supernatural" would be fitting for angelic activity such as John 5

with the understanding that the angel is only an agent of the supernatural activity of God. For a defense of the authenticity of John 5:4, both textually as well as theologically, see Zane C. Hodges, "The Angel at Bethesda—John 5:4" *Bibliotheca Sacra* (January-March 1979): 25-39.

[3] If a skeptic takes my use of the expression "His creation" to be tendentious (since, by definition, there can only be a creation if there is a Creator) then he should take me to say that God is transcendent to the universe (taking the universe to mean all that exists other than God).

[4] See my chapter "The Reliability of the New Testament Writers" in this volume for a brief sketch of the relationship of philosophical foundations, the existence of God, and the truth of Christianity vis-à-vis the question of miracles. What I briefly sketch in that chapter I shall unpack in this one.

[5] That is why, in the apologetic system (or method) known as Classical Apologetics, the existence of God must be established first before the specific truths of the Christian faith can be marshaled. Some of the evidences for the

truth of Christianity (specifically miracles) only take on their meaning within the context of theism. But it should be noted that this point is one of principle. I do not deny that one could come to believe in the existence of God when confronted with the evidence of a miraculous occurrence (This is what the apologetic system or method of Evidentialism would hold). I only contend that, humanly speaking, one could only do so by reasoning inconsistently. For a discussion about the differences between apologetics systems (although the point I make here about Classical Apologetics is not emphasized in the book) see Steve B. Cowan, gen. ed., *Five View on Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000). For a very thorough exploration of a number of apologetic systems and their respective proponents see Kenneth D. Boa and Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012). It is available as a free download at http://www.kenboa.org/text_resources/free_articles (accessed 07/19/13).

[6] Works by Paula Fredriksen include *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Christ,* 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews: A Jewish Life and the Emergence of Christianity* (New York: Vintage, 2000); *Augustine and the Jews: A Christian Defense of Jews and Judaism* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

[7] Works by Jeffrey L. Sheler include *Is the Bible True? How Modern Debates and Discoveries Affirm the Essence of the Scriptures*, reprint (New York: HarperOne, 2000) and *Prophet of Purpose: The Life of Rick Warren* (New York: Doubleday, 2009).

[8] Some may argue that Fredriksen may only be employing a weaker assumption, viz., that the Jewish Scriptures are irrelevant to the understanding of who Jesus is, irrespective of whether those Scriptures are inspired. But this cannot be, given the parallel she employs. For surely she is not merely assuming (for the sake of the parallel) that Shakespeare's "King Lear" just, in fact, has nothing to do with John F. Kennedy. Instead, she must be assuming that Shakespeare's "King Lear" *cannot possibly* have anything to do with John F. Kennedy since it was written more than three hundred and fifty years before Kennedy lived. In other words, Fredriksen is assuming (or explicitly claiming) that the Jewish Scriptures are not inspired of God and thus, cannot be prophetic writings (i.e., miracles).

[9] To deny God's existence methodologically is to utilize a particular research

or critical thinking method which excludes the possibility (or likelihood) of God's causal activity in accounting for particular events. Thus, one could affirm the existence of God (which Fredriksen may very well do) and yet proceed with a method of research or analysis as if He did not. To be sure, there are many events where no one would try to factor in any causal activity of God. I know of no one who seeks to argue that economic trends somehow involve God's direct intervention (even if he argued that it was providentially superintended). But no one would call this a methodological naturalism. Such a characterization is reserved for those events about which one would find a legitimate debate regarding God's causal relationship to the event. Far from begging the question by insisting that Fredriksen *must* grant God's causal activity, I am suggesting that her method (even if unconscious) begs the question by *excluding the possibility* of God's causal activity. She clearly does not even consider this as an explanatory option.

[10] The reader should note that this issue is itself a philosophical one. In other words, in the process of making a philosophical point about method, I am making a further philosophical point about the nature of the object to which the method is applied. That there are different aspects to reality and that these different aspects require appropriate tools and methods of inquiry and analysis is a question that philosophy is uniquely qualified to address. We can see here, then, how critical these philosophical issues can be regarding this otherwise concrete question of historical reliability vis-à-vis miracles. For a treatment and remedy (to which I am indebted, in principle, for my analysis here) of how particular philosophical tools and methods have been erroneously employed by ignoring the nature of the aspect of reality under examination (giving rise to a flawed philosophical method), see Étienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience: The Medieval Experience, The Cartesian Experience, the Modern Experience* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999).

[11] Admittedly my characterization here is not without philosophical controversy. For the time being, I will have to ask the reader's indulgence in granting to me that we can think (logic) and talk (language) about these aspects of reality.

[12] Again, this is not without philosophical controversy. For an attempt to reduce ethics to science, see Sam Harris, *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values* (New York: Free Press, 2011). For a classical realist account of the nature of good and evil and of ethics (both theoretical and

practical), particularly in light of the traditional view of the existence and nature of God, see J. Budziszewski, *Written on the Heart: The Case for Natural Law* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1997); *What We Can't Not Know: A Guide* (Dallas: Spence Publishing, 2003); Brian Davies, *The Reality of God and the Problem of Evil* (London: Continuum, 2006); *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Austin Fagothey, *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice Based on the Teachings of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas,* 2nd ed. (Charlotte: Tan Books, 1959); Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010); *If God, Why Evil?* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2011); Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, *Legislating Morality: Is It Wise? Is It Legal? Is It Possible?* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998); Herbert McCabe, *God and Evil in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (London: Continuum, 2010).

[13]In his commentary on Isaiah, Geoffrey W. Grogan comments "This great passage, with its two explicit references to Cyrus, has attracted much scholarly discussion. For many modern scholars it represents the strongest argument for 'DeuteroIsaiah,' for they cannot conceive of supernatural predictive prophecy of such detail." (Frank E. Gæbelein, ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 6 (Grand Rapids: Regency Reference Library, 1986), 269). Grogan specifically mentions the works of Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Second Isaiah: A New Interpretation* (New York: Scribner, 1928) and C. R. North, *The Suffering Servant in DeuteroIsaiah: An Historical and Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948); *The Second Isaiah* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964) and others. For a short discussion defending the unity of Isaiah see Oswald T. Allis, *The Unity of Isaiah: A Study in Prophecy* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1980). See also his *The Old Testament: Its Claims and Critics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972). For a broader discussion of historical criticism and evangelicalism see Eta Linnemann, *Biblical Criticism on Trial: How Scientific is "Scientific Theology"?* Trans. by Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001); *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology? Reflections of a Bultmannian Turned Evangelical*, trans. by Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990); *Is There a Synoptic Problem? Rethinking the Literary Dependence on the First Three Gospels,* trans. by Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House,1992); and Robert L. Thomas and F. David Farnell, *The Jesus Crisis: The Inroads of Historical Criticism into Evangelical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998).

[14] I am reminded of C. S. Lewis's discussion of two authors of a school textbook who highlight a story of Coleridge at a waterfall. Coleridge overheard two tourists, one who commented that the waterfall is sublime and the other that it is pretty. Coleridge endorsed the former and rejected the latter. Lewis observes something about the authors' analysis of the statement about the waterfall's sublimity. The authors claim that when someone says "This waterfall is sublime" he only means that he has sublime feelings. Then the authors comment "This confusion is continually present in language as we use it. We appear to be saying something very important about something: and actually we are only saying something about our own feelings." Lewis points out the deleterious effect such a subtle statement can have on a student reading the book. "No schoolboy will be able to resist the suggestion brought to bear upon him by that word *only.* I do not mean, of course, that he will make any conscious inference from what he reads to a general philosophical theory that all values are subjective and trivial. The very power [of the two authors] depends on the fact that they are dealing with a boy: a boy who thinks he is 'doing' his 'English prep' and has no notion that ethics, theology, and politics are all at stake. It is not a theory they put into his mind, but an assumption, which ten years hence, its origin forgotten and its presence unconscious, will condition him to take one side in a controversy which he has never recognized as a controversy at all." (C. S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man: How Education Develops Man's Sense of Morality* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 13-17)

[15] Zane Hodges' observation regarding the skepticism about the authenticity of the angel at Bethesda in John 5 is welcome. "It must be said that the miraculous intervention of angels in human life is so well established in the Bible, and so variegated, that only those who are uncomfortable with supernaturalism itself are likely to be genuinely troubled by the content of these verses under consideration." Hodges, "The Angel at Bethesda—John 5:4": 38.

[16] For a bibliography on the existence and attributes of God see http://www.richardghowe.com/BibGod.html (accessed 07/12/13)

[17] These are called cosmological arguments (from the Greek for *cosmos*). There are also the teleological arguments (from the Greek for *end, purpose, or g*oal) which show either (i) that God is the cause of the intricate design in the universe, or (ii) that God is the ultimate end toward which all things in the universe (particularly human beings) find their completion or *telos*, and the moral arguments which show that God is necessary to ultimately account for

morality. For discussions on these arguments see the bibliography referenced in note 16.

[18] The definitive work on this argument is William Lane Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (New York: Macmillan, 1979), reprinted (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2000). For a more succinct treatment of the argument see J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 18-33.

[19] The upshot of the arguments involves the counter-intuitive and contradictory things entailed by allowing either the existence of an actual infinite or the possibility of the traversing of an actual infinite (as defined within mathematics). For a treatment of some objections raised after Craig published his work, see Richard G. Howe, *An Analysis of William Lane Craig's Kalam Cosmological Argument*, unpublished Master's Thesis (University, MS: University of Mississippi, 1990).

[20] I realize that appealing to such scientific evidence is met with resistance among some Christians, especially young Earth creationists. Specifically, young Earth creationists have objected to the Big Bang Theory since they believe that it entails things that are inconsistent with a young Earth model. As a young Earth creationist myself, I sympathize with the concern. However, I take a cue from the Arizona State University Theoretical Physicist Paul Davies who said "Whether one accepts all the details or not [about the Big Bang Theory], the essential hypothesis—that there was some sort of creation—seems, from the scientific point of view, compelling." (Paul Davies, *God and the New Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 10.)

[21] Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and the General Theory* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1961), 134.

[22] Steven W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1988), 33-34.

[23] Rudolf Clausius, "The Second Law of Thermodynamics," in *The World of Physics: A Small Library of the Literature of Physics from Antiquity to the Present*, 3. vols. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 1:734.

[24] Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978), 111.

[25] Robert Jastrow, "Message from Professor Robert Jastrow" available at http://www.leaderu.com/truth/1truth18b.html (accessed 07/12/13)

[26] C. J. Isham, "Creation of the Universe as a Quantum Process," in R. J. Russell, W. R. Stoeger, and G. V. Coyne, eds., *Physics, Philosophy, and Theology* (Vatican City State: Vatican Observatory, 1988), 378, quoted in David Berlinski, *The Devils Delusion: Atheism and Its Scientific Pretensions* (New York: Crown Forum, 2008), 81.

[27] Victor F. Weisskopf, "The Origin of the Universe," *American Scientist,* 71 (Sep.-Oct. 1983): 473-480 in *The World of Physics*: 3:300, 317.

[28] For philosophical treatments (primary and secondary) of the notion of being (existence) in Aquinas, see Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, trans. Armand Maurer, 2nd rev. ed. (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983); *Commentary on Aristotle's* Metaphysics, trans. John P. Rowan (Notre Dame: Dumb Ox Books, 1961); Dominic Báñez, *The Primacy of Existence in Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Benjamin S. Llamzon (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1966); Étienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952) and Joseph Owens, *An Interpretation of Existence* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1968). For an analytic philosophical perspective on existence which stands in contrast to Aquinas's view see William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 187-193. For a broader exploration of the notion of existence in ancient and medieval philosophy see Parviz Morewedge, ed. *Philosophies of Existence: Ancient and Medieval* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982).

[29] The substance of this argument can be found in Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, 4, §7, pp. 56-57 and is to be distinguished from his famous arguments known as his "five ways" found in his *Summa Theologiae,* I, Q2. Interpreters of Aquinas differ whether the argument in *On Being and Essence*, strictly speaking, constitutes a proof of God's existence. (All agree that it is (both here and again in the *Summa Theologiae* I, Q3) an argument for God's simplicity.) You find formidable Thomists on both sides, including Joseph Owens (affirmative) and Étienne Gilson (negative). For specifics about the differences see Maurer's comments in the Introduction, p. 20, footnote 33.

[30] There is, of course, much more to the matter. A thing not only possesses its

essence (by virtue of which it is what it is) but it also has accidents (such as being in a certain place or having a certain color) and can bear relationships with other beings (such as being to the left of). What is more, it is possible for there to be an essence that does not have existence (except only as a being of reason, also known as a concept), such as a unicorn. For my purposes here, I am primarily interested in what can be shown regarding the relationship in things of essence and existence. For a defense of essence see David S. Oderberg, *Real Essentialism* (New York: Taylor and Francis Group, Routledge, 2007).

[31] Thomas Aquinas, *St. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologica: Complete English Edition in Five Volumes*, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1981), I, Q2. All my English quotations of his *Summa* are from this translation. It should be noted that more often the title is spelled *Summa Theologiae* as I do for the balance of my citations.

[32] Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 77.

[33] In my research for my doctoral dissertation, about half of the philosophical sources I consulted on this matter mistakenly took Aquinas to be making a Kalam type argument in his theistic arguments where he denies the possibility of going on to infinity. For a treatment of the differences see Richard G. Howe, "Two Notions of the Infinite in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae I, Questions 2 and 46*" *Christian Apologetics Journal* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 71-86.

[34] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, Q46, ii, ad. 6.

[35] I am indebted to philosopher Max Herrera for this balloon illustration.

[36] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, 13, 5.

[37] Herbert Lockyer, *All the Miracles of the Bible: The Supernatural in Scripture-Its Scope and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1961), 17-18.

[38] A number of sources have shaped, to some degree or another, my understanding of miracles. Several such sources bear mentioning here. They include: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, Q178; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), III, ii, 101-106; *On the Power of God* (quæstiones disputatæ de potential

dei), trans. English Dominican Fathers (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004), II, vi, pp. 151-227; R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas, *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997); Norman L. Geisler, *Miracles and Modern Thoughts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) revised as *Miracles and the Modern Mind: A Biblical Defense of Biblical Miracles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992); *Signs and Wonders* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1988); Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, Baker Academic, 2011); B. B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust, 1972).

[39] Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin Books, 1984), XXI:8, p. 980, emphasis in the translation.

[40] Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, II, vi, 2, pp. 164-165.

[41] Lewis, *Miracles*, 5. His footnote reflecting on his own definition is interesting. "This definition is not that which would be given by many theologians. I am adopting it not because I think it an improvement upon theirs but precisely because, being crude and 'popular,' it enables me most easily to treat those questions which 'the common reader' probably has in mind when he takes up a book on Miracles."

[42] Geisler, *Miracles and the Modern Mind*, 14.

[43] Richard L. Purtill "Defining Miracles" in R. Douglas Geivett and Gary R. Habermas *In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 62-63.

[44] Purtill, 61-72. I am indebted to Purtill for this template for this discussion but I am mixing some of this thinking with some of my own.

[45] Purtill, 63.

[46] Someone might object that, indeed, Jesus' raising Lazarus from the dead does retool our understanding in as much as it is part of the reason why we believe in the final resurrection. This point is well taken. The context of the event involves a discussion about the final resurrection (John 11:23-26). Without a doubt, Jesus' raising of Lazarus was intended to demonstrate who Jesus was as the One who would someday raise everyone from the dead (John 5:28-29). But it

should be pointed out that, strictly speaking, Lazarus was resuscitated rather than resurrected, since he certainly went on to die again. (Purtill, 61) The final resurrection involves a transformation of our bodies in a way that did not seem true of Lazarus.

[47] Purtill, 61.

[48] For an insightful discussion about the philosophical shortcomings of modern science in as much as it ignores the role that a metaphysical notion of "nature" must play in one's understanding of physical laws (and, consequently gives rise to an unwarranted atheism seemingly based on "scientific" reasoning), see Edward Feser, *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2008). For a more extended and indepth analysis of the relationship of science and metaphysics, see William A. Wallace, *The Modeling of Nature: Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Nature in Synthesis* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996).

[49] These causes may be extrinsic to the thing, as when a wind blows a billboard over to the ground, or they may be intrinsic to the thing (due to its nature), as when a child grows to become an adult. The latter here actually involves two sides of a causal "coin" viz., the efficient cause (that *by* which something is produced) and the final cause (that *for* or *towards* which something is produced). It is intrinsic to a human being (for example) to grow and change toward being an adult. This is (at least one aspect of) the human's *telos* in a way in which falling on the ground was not so for the billboard blown over by the wind.

[50] Augustine, *City of God*, XXII:8, p. 1033.

[51] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, 178, i.

[52] John Calvin, "Prefatory Address by John Calvin to Francis I., King of France" in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols., trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1975), I, I, pp. 8-9.

[53] James Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius*, 3 vols., trans. James Nichols and W. R. Bagnall (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), I, 129-130.

[54] A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology for Students and Laymen* (Grand Rapids:

Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), 275.

[55] Robert Lewis Dabney, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), 283.

[56] Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, 8 vols. (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), I, 256-257.

[57] Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, V, 172.

[58] Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical & Historical* (Geanies House, Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, Mentor, 2005), 206. For the sake of convenience I have left out of the quotation Culver's transliterations of certain Old Testament Hebrew words.

[59] John 9:3. All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1977).

[60] I am inclined to say that Jesus performed His miracles, not so much by virtue of Him being God, but by virtue of His relationship with the Father. If we argue that Jesus could only perform miracles because He is God, then we would be hard pressed to show why Peter's and Paul's performing miracles do not indicate that they are God. However, if we argue that miracles vindicate the messenger and confirm the message, then we can be consistent. Peter's and Paul's message was (among other things) that Jesus was God. Jesus' message was (among other things) that He Himself was God. Thus, the miracles perform the same purpose in each case. This, to me, explains, in the story of the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34), how it was that Jesus perceived that "the power proceeding from Him had gone forth" as if He did not consciously send out the power. I take this to be that God the Father healed the woman before Jesus (in His human nature) realized what was going on. John Calvin, however, disagrees with me here. "How clearly and transparently does this appear in [Christ's] miracles? I admit that similar and equal miracles were performed by the prophets and apostles; but there is this very essential difference, that they dispensed the gifts of God as his ministers, whereas he exerted his own inherent might." (*Institutes*, I, XIII, pp. 120-121)

[61] Geisler, *Signs and Wonders*¸ 134-135.

[62] Walter J. Chantry, *Signs of the Apostles: Observations on Pentecostalism*

Old and New (Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust, 1973), 17.

[63] In a discussion about miracles, the question invariably comes up (which I am not addressing in this chapter) whether miracles occur today. Christians differ on the answer. It seems to me that either answer can be compatible with what I have argued here as to their purpose, bearing in mind that there is a difference between the theology of miracles (that, biblically speaking, miracles serve as a vindication of the messenger and confirmation of the message of God in the communicating of His revelation to mankind) and whether God can perform a miracle (e.g., a healing) as an act of mercy (which also has a biblical base, albeit, in my estimation, a secondary purpose). The former is associated with the ministry of a messenger of God. It serves us today in the task of apologetics. The latter is not associated with any particular person who performs the miracle. It is a matter of systematic theology and is disputed among Bible-believing Christians. In my estimation, no matter how one comes down on whether God still performs miracles today it is important that one's theology of miracles preserves the role of the miraculous in vindicating the messenger and confirming the message of God throughout God's revelation of Himself through His prophets, apostles, and His Son.

[64] Antony Flew, "Neo-Humean Arguments About the Miraculous," in Geivett and Habermas, *In Defense of Miracles*, p. 49.

[65] David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. L. A.

Selby-Bigge, 3rd ed. revised by P. H Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975). The chapter is reprinted in Geivett and Habermas *In Defense of Miracles*, pp. 29-44. My citations are to the Selby-Bigge edition.

[66] Hume, *Enquiry*, §X, Pt. 2, Selby-Bigge, 127. While most commenters on Hume with whom I am familiar conclude that he was an unbeliever regarding the Christian religion (because of, among other things, his seeming skepticism on miracles (as in his *Enquiry*), his critique of the design argument for the existence of God, and his formidable marshaling of the problem of evil (both of which are in his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1989)), a few who read Hume have a different take. J. C. A. Gaskin notes the difficulty of interpretation Hume has thrust upon us. "The problem with Hume's interpretation is that, although his actual arguments and the facts he

adduces are regularly highly critical of religion and damaging to any belief in the divine, his affirmations (and sometimes the conclusions which he seems to draw) do not always look like the real outcomes of his criticisms" (J. C. A. Gaskin, "Hume on Religion," in David Fate Norton, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 319). Every interpreter has to do something with statements from Hume such as this one: "Our most holy religion is founded on *Faith*, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is, by no means, fitted to endure." (*Enquiry*, §X, Pt. 2, Selby-Bigge, 130, italics in original) and this one: "The order of the universe proves an omnipotent mind; that is, a mind whose will is *constantly attended* with the obedience of every creature and being. Nothing more is requisite to give a foundation to all the articles of religion" (David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature,* ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge, 2nd ed., rev. by P. H Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), Appendix, 633, note 1, italics in original). While some take such statements as proof that Hume was an unbelieving dissembler, I take Hume to be a Christian fideist of the most radical sort. Thus, my interpretation of much of Hume's polemic is not that Hume was trying to use philosophy to disprove the philosophical doctrines such as causality, the existence of the external world, the existence of an enduring ego as a thing that has experiences, miracles, or God. Instead, he was trying to show that, if one tried to use philosophy to establish the truth of these doctrines, he will be completely disabused of them (if that was psychologically possible).

[67] Hume, *Enquiry*, §X, Pt. 1, Selby-Bigge, 114.

[68] Ibid., 115.

[69] Ibid., 114.

[70] C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: How God Intervenes in Nature and Human Affairs* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1947), 102.

[71] The reasoning also goes the other direction. If a certain physical event happens today only under certain conditions, one concludes that the same event happened in the past only because of the same conditions.

[72] Lewis, *Miracles*, 102.

[73] Hume, *Enquiry*, §V, Pt. 1, Selby-Bigge, 42-43.

[74] Ibid., 43.

[75] Ibid., 46-47.

[76] Ibid., 108.

[77] This is why I disagree with those apologists who tout Hume's comment (below) as if he was conceding the viability of the philosophical notion of cause after all. Hume wrote, "But allow me to tell you that I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that anything might arise without a cause: I only maintained that our certainty of the falsehood of that proposition proceeded neither from intuition nor demonstration; but from another source" (David Hume to John Stewart, Feb. 1754, in *The Letters of David Hume*, 2 vols., ed. by J. Y. T. Greig (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), I: 187). When countering the skeptics who challenge our use of the notion of causality when claiming that the universe could not have come into existence out of nothing completely uncaused, these apologists respond "Even David Hume never believed such a thing!" But Hume's statement is completely consistent with his skeptical stance toward any philosophical notion of causality. The key phrase to pick up here is 'from another source'. The reason why Hume argues that we are certain that it is false that something could arise without a cause is not because our certainty is grounded in intuition (contra Rationalism) or demonstration (Empiricism) but from habit. The mind is so constituted that we could never believe otherwise. But that it is this way is a psychological not philosophical fact.

[78] Hume, *Enquiry*, §V, 2, Selby-Bigge, 48.

[79] Ibid., 48.

[80] Most apologists with whom I am familiar hold (as do I) to the correspondence theory of truth in terms of which a proposition is said to be true just in case it corresponds to reality. Admittedly the nature, theories, and tests of truth are large issues in philosophy. There have been many controversies over the nature of truth and over exactly what it is about a proposition that renders it true. Space constraints do not allow me to explore these views here to any great extent. The Classical definition of truth that has come to be known as the Correspondence Theory is cited by Aristotle: "This is clear, in the first place, if we define what the true and the false are. To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not

that it is not, is true; so that he who says of anything that it is, or that it is not, will say either what is true or what is false" (*Metaphysics* 4.7.1011^{b}26-29. The translation is Richard McKeon, *The Basic Works of Aristotle* (New York: Random House, 1941). Other philosophers holding a correspondence theory of truth would be Plato (*Sophist*, 240d; 263b); Augustine (*Soliloquia* I, 28); Thomas Aquinas (*Truth*, Question 1, Article 1); René Descartes (*Meditations on First Philosophy: Third Meditation*; *Objections and Replies: Fifth Set of Objections* (see John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, Dugald Murdoch, trans. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984): 26, 196)); John Locke (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* II, XXXII, §2-§5); Immanuel Kant (*Critique of Pure Reason*, I, Second Part, First Div., Bk. II, Chap. II, §3, 3 (see, Norman Kemp Smith's trans. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965: 220)); Bertrand Russell ("On the Nature of Truth," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1906-1907), 28-49 as cited in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards, ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, Co., Inc. & The Free Press, 1967), s.v. "Correspondence Theory of Truth," p. 232); and the early Ludwig Wittgenstein (*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 2.0211-2.0212, 2.21, 3.01). Those philosophers who hold the correspondence theory of truth differ as to exactly where the "correspondence" obtains. Positions include that it obtains between the proposition and external reality (naïve realism), between the proposition and the internal reality of the form of the thing in the intellect as well as the same form of the thing in external reality (moderate realism), or only between the idea of reality in the mind and the thing in reality outside the mind (representationalism). Other theories of truth include coherence theory, pragmatic theory, disquotational, and performative theory. Clearly, debates about the nature of the truth of certain proposition will vary according to how one defines 'truth.'

[81] Thomas Aquinas says, "Our knowledge, taking its start from things, proceeds in this order. First, it begins in sense; second, it is completed in the intellect" (Aquinas, *Truth*, 3 vols., vol. 1 trans. Robert W. Mulligan (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952); vol. 2 trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953); vol. 3. trans. Robert W. Schmidt (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1954). The three volumes were reprinted as *Truth* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), I, 11) He goes on to say, "For according to its [the human intellect's] manner of knowing in the present life, the intellect depends on the sense for the origin of knowledge; and so those things that do not fall under the senses cannot be grasped by the human intellect except in so far as the knowledge of them is

gathered from sensible things" (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 5 vols., I, 3, §3, trans. Anton Pegis (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1975), 64). For a succinct treatment of how we can know the real (particularly in light of the challenges from Locke onward culminating with Kant) see Étienne Gilson, *Methodical Realism*, trans. Philip Trower (Front Royal: Christendom Press, 1990), reprinted *Methodical Realism: A Handbook for Beginning Realists*, trans. Philip Trower (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011). For a more indepth account and defense of classical (or, if you will, scholastic) empiricism see Frederick D. Wilhelmsen, *Man's Knowledge of Reality: An Introduction to Thomistic Epistemology* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1956). For the application of this (what some may fear is an archaic) theory of knowledge see the Wallace text cited in note 48.

[82] Wallace, *Modeling*, xi.

[83] Hume, *Treatise*, Abstract, Selby-Bigge, 657.

[84] As a philosophy professor, I certainly do not want to dissuade anyone from thinking philosophically. It is where philosophy comes is that I am trying to point out. A child can know that a flower is not a puppy dog and that mommy is not daddy. This takes no training in philosophy to know. It is known directly by the normal sensory faculties. But suppose someone wanted to delve deeply into the nature of a flower or a puppy dog. In this case, one would need specialized training in botany or zoology. To go even deeper might require biology, or biochemistry, or physics. Similarly, there are metaphysical depths to sensible objects that require the tools and methods of philosophy. Understanding thing like natures, substance, causality, existence, and even understanding understanding itself (e.g., meaning, significance, semiotics) are issues that philosophy is designed to explore.

[85] For a discussion of certain other ways in which ancient pagan religions have allegedly influenced the formation of Christian doctrine, see my chapter "The Reliability of the New Testament Writers" in this volume.

[86] Richard Carrier, "Kooks and Quacks of the Roman Empire: A Look into the World of the Gospels." (http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/kooks.html, accessed 07/18/13)

[87] In addition to dealing with purportedly early miracle workers, Keener examines the philosophical issues related to the notion of miracles, proposed explanations, and demons and exorcism in antiquity.

[88] Keener, *Miracles*, I, 53. For the sake of convenience, I have left out of my quotations from Keener his parenthetical citations which reference other sources. In addition, any of my quotations from Keener that includes his (sometimes) extensive footnotes have been left out.

[89] Ibid., I, 45.

[90] Ibid., I, 45.

[91] Philostratus's *The Life of Apollonius* is available on-line at http://www.livius.org/ap-ark/apollonius/life/va_1_01.html#%A71 (accessed 07/18/13)

[92] Philostratus, *Apollonius*, I, §3.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., I, §12.

[96] Ibid., I, §3.

[97] Keener, *Miracles*, I, 46.

[98] Ibid., I, 53.

[99] Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group, Baker Academic, 1999), s.v., "Apollonius of Tyana, 44-45. I am utilizing Geisler's material here together with other sources that weigh in as well as some of my own thoughts.

[100] This is not to say that Apollonius is never mentioned by any other early writer. The Christian historian Eusebius of Caesarea wrote a treatise reacting against a parallel drawn between Apollonius and Christ by a contemporary of Eusebius named Hierocles. "Against the Life of Apollonius of Tyana Written by

Philostratus, Occasions by the Parallel Drawn by Hierocles Between Him and Christ" is available on-line at http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/eusebius_against_hierocles.htm. (accessed 07/18/13) New Testament professor Richard Bauckham observes, "Sossianus Hierocles contrasted the works of Jesus Christ unfavorable with those of Apollonius of Tyana, and drew a response from the Christian theologian and historian Eusebius of Caesarea" (Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 145). For the purposes of comparing the life of Apollonius and Jesus, Philostratus's work is our only significant source.

[101] Geisler, *Encyclopedia*, 45.

[102] Keener, *Miracles*, I 50-51 where he cites the sources.

[103] Ibid., 50-51.

[104] Geisler, *Encyclopedia*, 44.

[105] Ibid. See my chapter "The Reliability of the New Testament Writers" in this volume.

[106] Philostratus, *Apollonius*, I, §3.

[107] Geisler, *Encyclopedia*, 44-45.

[108] Philostratus, *Apollonius*, IV, §45.

[109] I should point out that, by the term 'magic' (and related words) I am not referring to stage magic (prestidigitation) used by illusionists for entertainment.

[110] One internet site desperate to try to make the parallel work tried to associate Jesus' saying "Talitha cumi" (Mark 5:41) with the spell of Apollonius despite the fact that the text in Mark clearly indicates that Jesus was speaking some other language than the Greek of Mark's text. The words are Aramaic (or Syro-Chaldaic) for "Little girl, arise" (just as Mark says).

[111] Occultist Nevil Drury defines it as "an incantation, or invocation, performed by a witch, wizard, or magician, which is believed to have a tangible outcome—for either good or evil." (*Dictionary of Mysticism and the Occult* (San

Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), s.v., “spell,” 243.

[112] As I stated earlier (note 1) the view that there is an immaterial realm that operates according to mechanistic “laws” working on “forces” that humans can manipulated by speaking certain words or engaging in certain mind dynamics is the very essence of occult philosophy. It is my contention that there are manifestations that some may interpret as being of such forces. I maintain that they are really manifestations of demonic activity. Given that demons are not merely forces but are intelligences, they cannot be manipulated or controlled by any magician or occultist. Demons may allow the magician to think this as part of a deception about the nature of reality. For more on this see my article cited in that note.

[113] Philostratus, *Apollonius*, IV, §45, emphasis added.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid., emphasis added.

[116] Keener, *Miracles*, I, 54.

[117] Tacitus, *Histories*, 4.81, available on-line at http://www.sacred-texts.com/cla/tac/h04080.htm. (accessed 07/18/13)

[118] Ibid.

[119] Suetonius’s account of the same event adds a few more details. “Apparently the god Serapis had promised them in a dream that if Vespasian would consent to spit in the blind man’s eyes, and touch the lame man’s leg with his heel, both would be made well” (Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars* trans. Robert Graves (London: Penguin Books, 1957), *Vesp. 7*, p. 284). I do not make too much of the translation ‘apparently’ as if there necessarily was any sense of uncertainty whether Serapis actually did appear in a dream. The Loeb Classical translation translates the Latin more categorically. “A man of the people who was blind, and another who was lame, came to him together as he sat on the tribunal, begging for the help for their disorders which Serapis had promised in a dream.” (See http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Suetonius/12Caesars/Vespa accessed 07/19/13)

[120] Since a statement is true only where the statement corresponds to realty,

then, failing to do so renders the statement false. But a statement may correspond to reality either literally or figuratively. Thus, employing a literary device as such does not necessarily mean that a given statement is one of fiction. When Scripture talks about a great dragon who took his tail and "swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth" (Rev 12:4) one is not necessarily committed to this being literally true (i.e., that it literally corresponds to reality). However, if the Bible is inerrant, then this statement must correspond to reality *in some sense*. The statement can be true even if the dragon and his actions are a figure of speech. But the point is, even if this is figurative language, it is figurative of *something in reality*. To say it another way, the statement has some referent in reality. As such, the statement figuratively corresponds to reality, thus making the statement true. Of course, there are other types of sentences that are not statements and, therefore, do not have a truth value at all. They are neither true nor false. Examples would be questions, commands, and exclamations.

[121] Tacitus, *Histories*, 4.81, emphasis added.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Ibid.

[125] I am indebted to Glenn Miller's comment on the Triablogue web site for this point. (http://triablogue.blogspot.com/2006/06/alleged-miracles-of-vespasian.html, accessed 07/19/13)

[126] Hume, *Enquiry,* §X, Pt. 2, 95, Selby-Bigge, 121.

[127] For a treatment of the origins and doctrines of the world's major religions, see Winfried Corduan, *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, IVP Academic, 2012).

[128] For a treatment of the differences between the world's major religions, see Stephen Prothero, *God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World —and Why Their Difference Matter* (New York: HarperCollins, HarperOne, 2010).

[129] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 19. For

examples of common moral principle among societies, see Lewis, *Abolition of Man*, 95-121; Geisler and Turek, *Legislating Morality*, 247-249. This notion that there is a core morality that can be known by rational creatures is called Natural Law Theory.

[130] For a discussion of the worldview of Satanism, see Richard G. Howe, "Satanism: A Taste for the Dark Side" *Christian Research Journal* 28, no. 5 (2005): 12-23, available at http://www.richardghowe.com/Satanism.pdf (accessed 07/22/13) and http://www.equip.org/articles/satanism-a-taste-for-the-dark-side/ (accessed 07/22/13).

[131] Geisler and Turek, *Legislating Morality*, 323.

[132] Mark A. Gabriel, *Jesus and Muhammad: Profound Differences and Surprising Similarities* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House Book Group, Front Line, 2004), 107, emphasis in original. See his web site at http://www.drmarkgabriel.com/ (accessed 07/21/13). Another resource for a Christian analysis of Islam is Norman L. Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002).

[133] Gabriel, *Jesus and Muhammad*, 119.

[134] *The Koran*, 4th rev. ed., trans. N. J. Dawood (New York: Penguin Books, 1974), 200.

[135] *Koran*, Dawood, 143.

[136] Sam Shamoun, "Muhammad and Miracles: Analyzing Muslim Arguments for Muhammad's Supernatural Feats," at http://www.answering-islam.org/Responses/Azmy/mhd_miracles.htm (accessed 07/21/13), emphasis in original. The translation of the *Koran* Shamoun is commenting on is that of A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted: A Translation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Touchstone, 1996).

[137] *Koran*, Dawood, 112.

[138] Gabriel, *Jesus and Muhammad*, 118; Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 159. It is my understanding that any dating by Muslims as to when this event took place is according to the hadiths not the Quran itself.

[139] Shamoun, “Muhammad and Miracles.”

[140] *Koran*, Dawood, 233. The plural pronoun is a grammatical way in Arabic to indicate the majesty of Allah. (Gabriel, *Jesus and Muhammad*, 108 (footnote) and 247, n. 1)

[141] http://www.islamicity.com/articles/articles.asp?ref=ic0608-3086 (accessed 07/21/13)

[142] *Koran*, Dawood, 233, n. 3.

[143] Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, trans. A. Guillaume as *The Life of Muhammed* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 183, as cited in Geisler and Saleeb, *Answering Islam*, 159-160.

[144] *Koran*, Dawood, 67.

[145] Ibid., 380.

[146] Ibid., 392.

[147] A few critical places where the Quran conflicts with the truths of the Bible are: Jesus did not die on the cross (Sura 4:157-158); Jesus was no more than an apostle (Sura 4:171); Jesus is not God (Sura 5:173); that Christians believe that the Trinity is God, Jesus, and Mary (Sura 5:116); and God is not a Trinity (Sura 5:73).

PART SEVEN

EPILOGUE

Summary and Warnings about the Quest for the "Historical" Jesus.

Suggestions for Future Research on the Topic.



EPILOGUE



The Editors of *The Jesus Quest: The Danger from Within* commend many of the evangelicals referenced in this work who say that they support the doctrine of inerrancy, perhaps even the ICBI documents themselves. What they say, however, often appears to be directly contradicted by what they practice. Their participation in the adoption of these questing efforts, even with their attempts to modify such a practice, undermines not only the ICBI documents but, even more tragically, the historical integrity of the Gospels, the only authentic records of the life of Jesus. Their attempts at modification also reveal tacitly the danger of such a practice for inerrancy ("can the lion lay down with the lamb"). Instead of grammaticohistorical hermeneutics as maintained by the ICBI, these new evangelicals practice historicalcritical approaches that directly caused the last crisis that led to the creation of the ICBI statements themselves. Academic prestige and scholarly fads often rule the day rather than submission to the Lordship of Christ and the divine authority of His Word.

Do these new evangelicals truly think that any rejecters of the doctrine of inerrancy or of the historical trustworthiness of the Gospels would be persuaded to accept the "essential" or "core" historicity of the Gospels? Also, since they affirm only a "core" of the "footsteps" of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, they should inform other evangelicals of which parts of the Gospels that are labeled in this manner and which parts cannot be trusted. The adoption of postmodernistic historiography implies that the writers of the Gospels have existentially "interpreted" the life of Jesus so that criteria of authenticity must be applied to find out what actually happened. If so, then they should inform us where the "truth" of the Gospels and the "spin" of historiography should be distinguished in these documents.

Furthermore, many of these scholars leave the impression that they somehow are wiser, more intelligent, more careful, or even "more skillful exegetes" than other generations of evangelicals who either fought the battle for inerrancy or

perhaps will be better able to surmount the challenges than other evangelicals who eventually compromised the Scriptures with adoption of historicalcritical ideologies. They arrogantly believe that they might succeed where others have failed, but church history stands as a stark testimony against any such claim. As we have said repeatedly in this work, once the doctrine of inerrancy is traded for academic respectability, the loser is always God's Word.

At a minimum, these evangelical scholars need to answer some simple questions that help demonstrate real support for ICBI and the doctrine of inerrancy in order to begin a dialogue:

(1) Do you think ETS was right in asking Gundry to resign because of his views?

(2) How would you vote, if the issue regarding Gundry came up in ETS today?

(3) Do you believe that Mike Licona's view (in The Resurrection of Jesus*) which casts doubt on the historicity of the resurrection of the saints in Matthew 27:52-53 (and other events) is compatible with the ICBI view on inerrancy?*

(4) Do you subscribe to the ICBI statements on inerrancy as meant by the ICBI framers?

(5) Do you subscribe to the ETS view on inerrancy as interpreted by the ICBI statement which they officially adopted as a guide for understanding it?

In view of the claim to support inerrancy and ICBI, there is one more question:

(6) Do you believe that the correct interpretation of the ICBI statement is that of the framers of the statement?

As friends and colleagues, and perhaps above all, as stewards of God's Word, the editors of *The Jesus Quest* and its contributors would appeal to you to make clear your views on this topic. Begin by responding to all the points raised in this book. We believe this is a very important issue and will continue to speak and write on the *Dangers from Within* regardless. An important part of increased understanding that goes on all the time in scholarly circles is a public scholarly dialogue on what we all agree is a crucial matter, namely, the inerrancy of Scripture. Mere protest or summary dismissal of the substance of our work does not suffice to dispel doubt.

Norman L. Geisler

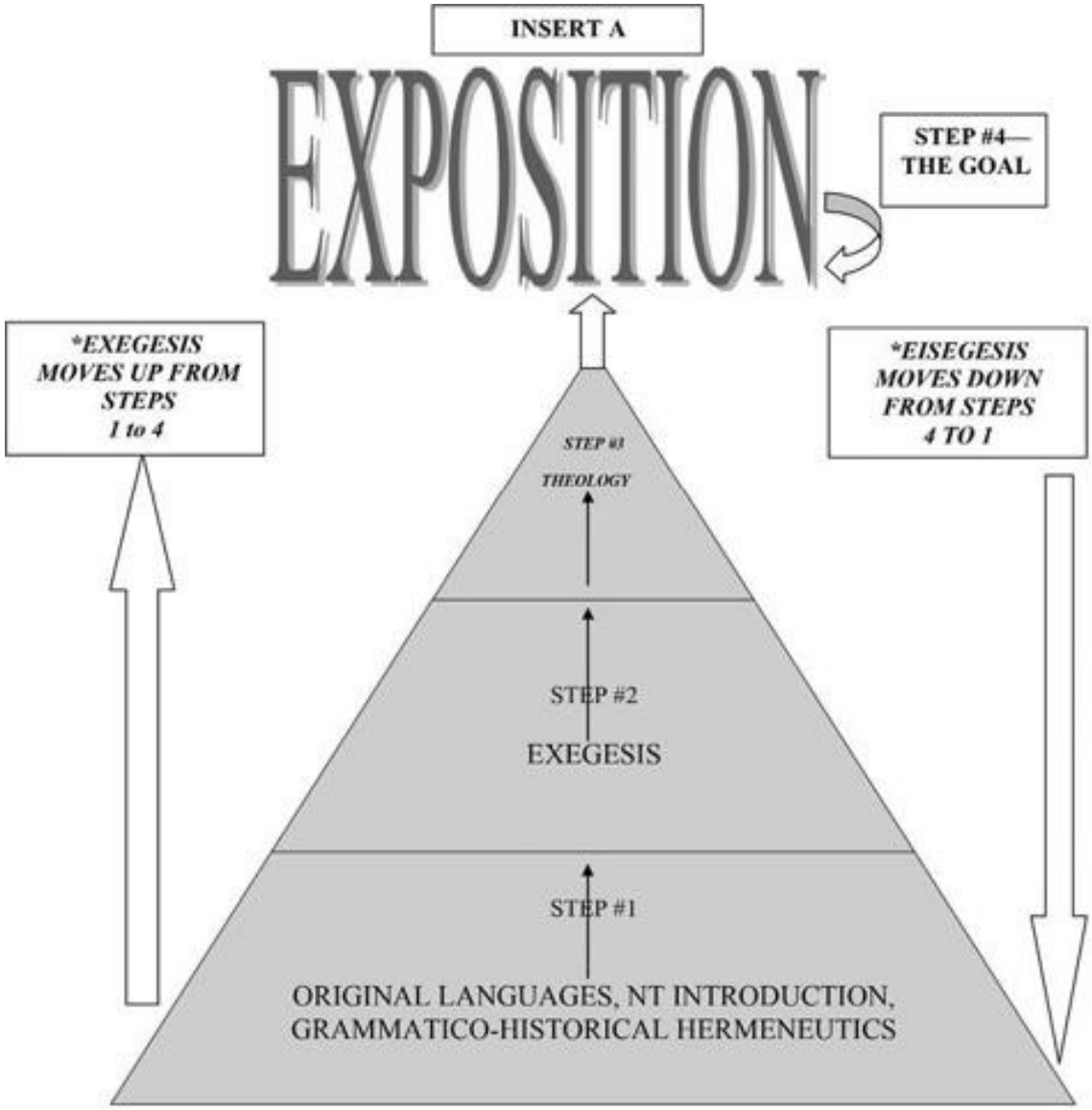
F. David Farnell

APPENDICES

Illustrations

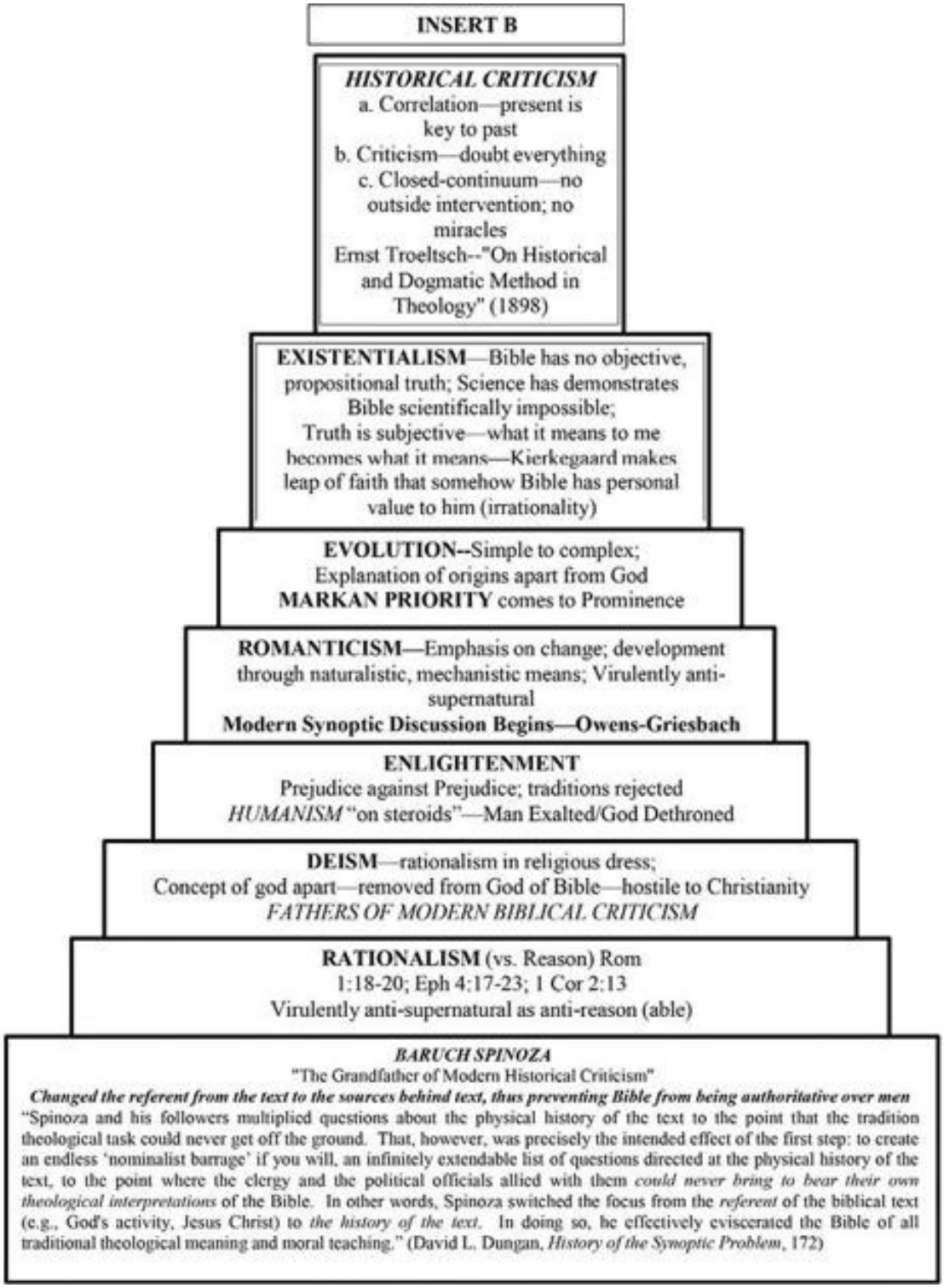
Scripture, Name & Subject References





THE INTERPRETATIONAL PYRAMID

SOUND EXPOSITION RESTS
ON SOUND EXEGESIS



INSERT C—"The Jesus Quest: Dancing on the Edge"

The following outline distinguishes those beliefs deemed safe for practicing

genuine evangelical hermeneutics as well as those unsafe practices employed by some contemporary evangelicals. These notes are taken from Norman L. Geisler's "Evangelicals and Redaction Criticism: Dancing on the Edge," in *Bibliology Notes* DTS 1987.

I. Things Surely to be Believed by Evangelicals

A. The Gospel writers (except possibly Luke) were eyewitnesses of the events.

B. The Gospels were written during the lifetime of these witnesses by the disciples whose names they bear.

C. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would supernaturally activate the apostle's memories on all that He taught (John 14:26; 16:13).

D. The NT documents should be considered authentic until proven otherwise (just as one is presumed innocent until proven guilty in court).

E. What the Gospels say that Jesus said (and did), He actually did say (and do). F. It is the written Gospels (not their alleged sources) that are inspired (2 Tim 3:16), so truth is in the text, not behind it. G. Conclusions:

1. 1. The Gospel records are authentic, biographical, and historical.
2. 2. The records present accurately what Jesus really said and did.
3. 3. In view of IA, IB and IC, the Gospel writers were not dependent on other sources for their teachings.

II. Things Surely not to be Believed by Evangelicals

A. That the Gospels were written by persons who were not contemporaries of Christ.

B. That Redaction Criticism is necessary to discover what Jesus taught.

C. That without the aid of Redaction we cannot understand the message of the Gospels.

D. That the Gospels create, rather than report, what Jesus said and did. E.

Conclusions:

1. 1. Accepting criticism of this kind [or, these kinds] is incompatible with evangelical Christianity.
2. 2. No evangelical institution should keep teachers who teach what is incompatible with evangelical Christianity.

III. Things Apparently Believed by Some Evangelicals

A. The Gospels are a reinterpretation of the life of Christ to fit the needs of the readers of a later generation.

B. Gospel writers redact earlier sources to construct their Gospels.

C. By getting behind the Gospel record, Criticism is helpful (essential?) in interpreting the text.

D. Redaction Criticism should be used to establish the authenticity of the sayings and events recorded in the Gospels.

E. Gospel writers sometimes placed what Jesus said (or did) on one occasion into another occasion where He did not actually say (or do) it.

IV. Things Safely to be Believed by Evangelicals

A. All Redaction Criticism is **unnecessary** in view of number I above.

B. Most of Redaction Criticism [and Historical Criticism] is **incompatible** with evangelical Christianity (namely II above).

C. Even “modified” Redaction Criticism is dangerous (namely IIII above) because:

1. 1. This special use of the term is easily misunderstood (since its original and common meaning is anti-evangelical).
2. 2. It is difficult to divorce totally redaction and other ideologies from their original nonevangelical presuppositions (There is a high fatality rate among those who try—Gundry, Guelich, Licona, *et al*.).

3. 3. To refer to a Gospel as a “reinterpretation” is ambiguous. This may imply misrepresentation or error.
4. 4. The attempt to get *behind* the text, rather than to stay *in* the text, is hermeneutically misdirected.
5. 5. The role of the Gospel writers as eyewitnesses whose memories were supernaturally guided by the Holy Spirit is neglected (John 14:26; 16:13).
6. 6. It undermines confidence in the authenticity and authority of the text by treating it as a literary creation rather than a historical report (Luke 1:1-4).

CONCLUSION: Since number I is necessary to evangelical belief, II is incompatible with it, and III is dangerous, it ***is unnecessary, unwise, and unhealthy for evangelicals to adopt such unorthodox ideologies***.

A CHART ON THE GOSPEL WRITERS' USE OF JESUS' WORDS & DEEDS

EVANGELICAL VIEW	*NONEVANGELICAL VIEW*
REPORTING THEM	*CREATING THEM*
SELECTING THEM	*CONSTRUCTING THEM*
ARRANGING THEM	*MISARRANGING THEM*
PARAPHRASING THEM	*EXPANDING THEM*
CHANGE THEIR FORM (Grammatical Change)	*CHANGE THEIR CONTENT (Theological Change)*
CHANGE THEIR WORDING	*CHANGE THEIR MEANING*
TRANSLATE THEM	*MISTRANSLATE THEM*
INTERPRET THEM	*MISINTERPRET THEM*
EDITING	*REDACTING*

Insert D
OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

THE JESUS SEMINAR (Westar Institute)
vs.
BRITISH-INFLUENCED EVANGELICAL CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIP

IDEOLOGICAL & METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES USED TO DETERME VERACITY OF GOSPELS

Jesus Seminar Westar Institute	British-trained evangelical critical scholars
2/4 Source Hypothesis	2/4 Source Hypothesis
form criticism	form criticism
redaction criticism	redaction criticism
criteria of authenticity	criteria of authenticity
tradition criticism	tradition criticism
postmodernistic historiography	postmodernistic historiography
ATOMISTIC approach (parts): centers on Jesus' sayings what <u>did Jesus really say?</u> *IMPORTANT—Also HOLISTIC: focuses on what Jesus did	HOLISTIC approach (whole): centers on Jesus' deeds & events <u>what did Jesus really do?</u>

Robert Funk: *Acts of Jesus* (1998)

investigates predetermined key events in Jesus' life to see if the event is postmodernistically verifiable

in terms of history
IMPORTANT: considers many events not verifiable historically using postmodernistic historiography

BURDEN OF PROOF:

shifted to The Jesus Seminar scholars to demonstrate reliability:

"The Seminar has accordingly assumed the burden of proof: the Seminar is investigating in minute detail the data preserved by the gospels and is also identifying those that have some claim to historical veracity" (*The Five Gospels*, p. 5)

&

"What do we know about the deeds of Jesus? About the shadowy figure depicted in snapshots in more than twenty gospels and gospel fragments that have survived from antiquity? The short answer is that we

don't know a great deal. But there are some stories that probably preserve distant historical memories, and we can

BURDEN OF PROOF:

shifted to the evangelical-critical scholars historical skills in applying criteria of authenticity

"burden of proof should lie with historian who is making the case, whether for authenticity or against it" (*Key Events*, p. 74)

infer some deeds from his parables and aphorisms." (*What Did Jesus Really Do*?, 527)

"whisper of his voice"

contained in gospels

posits Christ of faith vs.

historical Jesus

Color-coding of Jesus-sayings

in terms of red, black, gray, white that indicates probability of whether the real Jesus actually spoke the saying or performed a deed

RESULT:

15 SAYINGS & A FEW DISTANT HISTORICAL MEMORIES (events) DEEMED "PROBABLY" AUTHENTIC out hundreds of sayings in the Gospels

RESULT: COMPLETELY REJECTS any assertions of "probability" from evangelical critical scholarship!

score = 0

***i.e.* neither convinces the other**

"footprints" of Jesus contained in gospels

posits Christ of faith vs.

historical Jesus

probability scaling of Jesus' events

"probability," "possibility" or historically non-verifiable scale for pericopes as to whether Jesus; deeds or events surrounding Jesus happened or did not happen

RESULT:

12 EVENTS

DEEMED HISTORICALLY "PROBABLE"

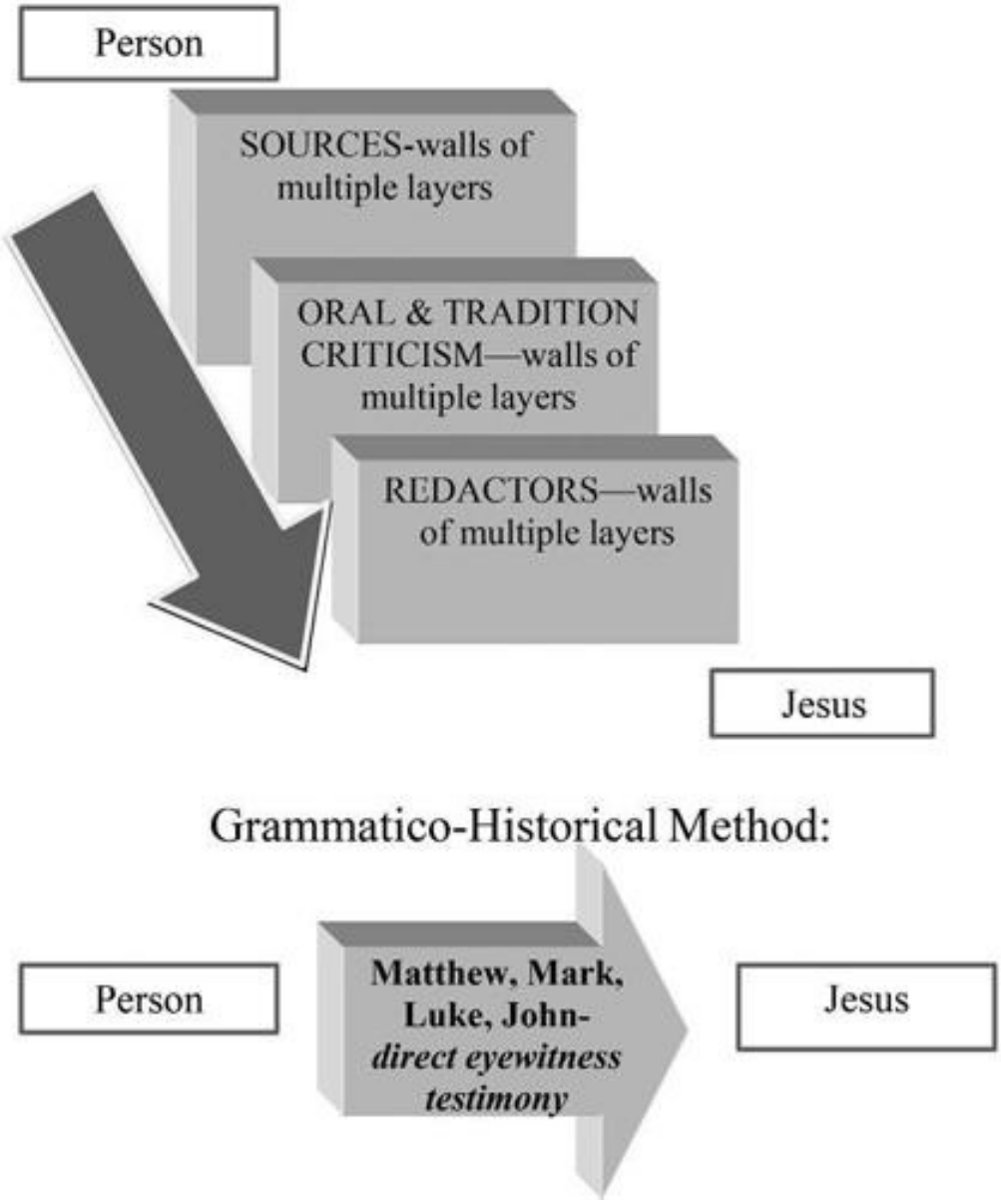
out of hundreds of acts/deeds in the Gospels

RESULT: REJECTS many assertions from The Westar Institute!

score = 0

***i.e.* neither convinces the other**

Insert E
The MULTPLE WALLS of Historical Criticism That STAND BETWEEN a Person and KNOWING Christ



Insert F

The ETS Vote on Robert Gundry at their Annual

Meeting in December 1983

[Introduction:

The following document was composed by Norman L. Geisler and given to all the membership present at the December, 1983 meeting of the Evangelical theological Society in Dallas, Texas. It is retained it in its original form without editing so that the reader can get a feel for exactly what occurred at this historic meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society].

WHY WE MUST VOTE NOW ON GUNDRY'S MEMBERSHIP

- 1. The Robert Gundry issue has been pending now for three years since it was first brought to the attention of the ETS Executive Committee. It is due time for action by the members.
- 2. Last year the president announced the Executive Committee's approval of Gundry's membership without allowing any discussion or a vote from the ETS membership. Yet the ETS Constitution requires that action can be taken on "the continued membership of an individual" only after a vote of the membership (Article IV, Section 4). This is the first opportunity subsequent-to the Committee's pronouncement for the membership to act.
- 3. A petition (Jan., 1983) from representative ETS members across the country was presented to the president of ETS. It included the signatures of several presidents and deans of schools, as well as those of numerous other members. The petition read, "We the undersigned, hereby protest the ETS executive council decision (December, 1982) regarding the views of Dr. Robert Gundry. We call upon the council to rescind its decision." In view of the Executive Committee's choice not to respond to this request and in view of the fact that the Constitution gives authority in such matters to the members, it is imperative that the membership as a whole act at this time.
- 4. By the Executive Committee's favorable decision on Gundry's membership the impression was left of official approval by the Society as a whole, even though the action was taken without consulting the membership. For instance, The Presbyterian Journal (Jan. 12, 1983) headlines on the issue declared, "Evangelical Theological Society Retains Controversial Author." The lead sentence said, "The Evangelical

Theological Society (ETS) has decided not to rescind the membership of a Westmont College Professor over a provocative new commentary on the Gospel of Matthew." Even the secular media reported, "Society clears New Testament Professor" (Los Angeles Times, 12-25-82) (emphasis added in these quotes). So the impression left with the public is that the society as a whole, not just a few individuals, acted in approval of Gundry's membership. Since this is not the case, it is now time for the members to express their will.

- 5. Subsequent to the last annual meeting, an ETS letter entitled "The Executive Committee Report on Dr. Gundry's Position" announced to the membership "that at any time at an annual meeting, there can be a call for a question and vote concerning the membership of any one in the society" (p. 2). This annual meeting is our only opportunity to express these constitutional rights.
- 6. Gundry's views have been plainly stated and thoroughly aired both at the last annual meeting and in eight articles and responses in the March '83 issue of JETS. His views are clear, well known (see Notes [below]),--and there is no further need to discuss them.

In view of the ample time, thorough discussion, and apparent ETS approval of Gundry's status without input, it is now time that the members exercise their constitutional obligation and become involved in this decision.

WHY WE MUST VOTE NO ON GUNDRY'S MEMBERSHIP

1. 1. ETS is not merely a theological debating society. By its very name it is the "Evangelical Theological Society." Besides this unspoken consensus on evangelical theology, the Constitution spells out an explicit, undebatable "doctrinal basis" which confesses "the Bible in its entirety is the Word of God written, and therefore inerrant in the autographs" (emphasis added). The official brochure of "The Evangelical Theological Society" (1978) calls this the "creedal statement" of "conservative scholars." But in spite of this unequivocal creedal affirmation that the entire Bible is without error we find ourselves debating about whether someone can belong who has denied that some of the things reported in the Gospel actually occurred (see Notes [below]). There should be no debate about this issue. Our name and

Constitution are unequivocal on this point.

2. 2. The ETS Ad Hoc Committee on critical methodology has recommended the adoption of the ICBI Statements on Inerrancy and Hermeneutics (reported to ETS members, October 20, 1983, p. 2). Gundry's name was explicitly mentioned in plenary session by the drafters of the ICBI Statement on Hermeneutics as one who propounded a view which is excluded by this document (see Articles XIII & XIV quoted below). The official ICBI commentary on this point (Summit II: Hermeneutics, 1983) also has Gundry's position in view (p. 11), and the ICBI "Executive Council" voted unanimously to inform ETS that "Robert Gundry is inconsistent with the ICBI Summit II statement" (ICBI Council "Minutes," October 21, 1983, p. 3).
3. 3. It has been and remains a firm conviction of evangelicals that no "discourse or saying reported in Scripture was invented by the biblical writers or by the tradition they incorporated" (as noted in ICBI Hermeneutics Statement, 1982, Art. XIV). The Statement adds, "We deny that genre categories which negate historicity may rightly be imposed on biblical narratives which present themselves as factual" (Art. XIII). But despite semantical maneuverings to the contrary, this is precisely what Gundry rejects. For Gundry holds that numerous sayings of Jesus and events recorded on the Gospel of Matthew were invented by the author and did not actually occur. Gundry states very clearly, "Hence 'Jesus said' or 'Jesus did' need not always mean that in history Jesus said or did what follows…" see Notes [below]). This is a de facto denial of inerrancy which excludes him from membership in ETS.
4. 4. Few ETS members agree with Gundry's unorthodox views, and scarcely any New Testament scholar have embraced them. Indeed, most members of ETS flatly disagree with Gundry's interpretation which claims that Matthew invented certain sayings and events in his Gospel. In fact, many are frankly shocked by it. Two of our long-standing, most reputed ETS members expressed their concern as follows: "The kind of interpretation provided by Dr. Robert Gundry appears scandalous!" (Roger Nicole, letter to President Goldberg, 12-22-82). "No more damaging approach to Biblical authority can be found than this. The pall of doubt cast over the recorded sayings of Christ will open the gate wide for all and sundry to apply for membership in the ETS if Gundry's membership is going to be upheld in our Society (Gleason Archer, letter to President Goldberg, 1-11-83). If we do not act decisively on Gundry's membership, it will have a dangerous, precedent-setting influence on ETS. [That was 1983. Clearly, there are many more

today.]

5. 5. Many ETS members agree with what the president of one of our largest seminaries put bluntly in these words: “If Gundry stays in ETS, then I am leaving.” In point of fact many are already discussing the possible need to begin a new theological society which takes seriously its view on inerrancy. If we do not act now, then we are in danger of losing large numbers of our members who want to preserve the strong stand on inerrancy ETS was founded to perpetuate.
6. 6. Good hermeneutics demand that we exclude Gundry from our membership. For the issue boils down to how we are to interpret the ETS constitution and doctrinal basis. 1) Will we interpret them as the authors meant them? 2) Or, will we interpret them for what they mean to us? In short, if we approach the ETS statements the way “evangelical” and “conservative” scholars (which we claim to be) have historically approached the Scriptures, then we must reject Gundry’s view of Scripture as unorthodox. Certainly it is not in accord with the “evangelical” view of inerrancy (as envisioned by the ETS founding fathers) to deny the historicity of sayings or events reported in the Gospel record. And it clearly is not in accord with the ICBI statements which the ETS “Ad Hoc Committee” on critical methodologies recommends to clarify the ETS position.
7. 7. Gundry made it clear in his response in JETS (March ’83, p. 114) that he believed ETS membership should not exclude anyone who sincerely signs the ETS doctrinal statement, including people like Origen, Averroes, Karl Barth, and even May Baker Eddy! But if the ETS statement is made so all-inclusive, then ETS has lost its evangelical identity and its doctrinal integrity. There are other scholarly organizations which take no stand on inerrancy (e.g., SBL). Let those who cannot conscientiously sign the ETS statement in the historic sense identify with these groups which make no pretense to believe in inerrancy. But let ETS and its members make no pretense about their belief in inerrancy. Integrity is the issue.
8. 8. The present ETS Constitution provides that “in the event that the continued membership of an individual be deemed detrimental to the best interests of the Society, his name may be dropped from the membership roll at an annual meeting…” (Art. IV, Sect. 4). We believe that the membership of Dr. Robert Gundry fits clearly into this category. We thereby urge that the membership vote to preserve the integrity of ETS.
9. 9. Organizationally, the choice before us is this: Will ETS as an organization continue to carry the torch for inerrancy as envisioned by its

founders, or will it be necessary to start a new organization to accomplish the original goal of ETS? Wisdom dictates that it would be better to reaffirm than to reorganize. But history is replete with examples of new organizations which have arisen to fulfill the original goals of once evangelical groups which have since drifted from their solid evangelical commitments. Let us pray that history does not repeat itself in the current crises of the Evangelical Theological Society.

In consultation with many concerned ETS members

Norman L. Geisler

NOTES

Quotations from R. Gundry's Matthew Commentary (Eerdmans, 1982).

1. 1. "Clearly, Matthew treats us to history mixed with elements that cannot be called historical in a modern sense. All history writing entails more or less editing of materials. But Matthew's editing often goes beyond the bounds we nowadays want a historian to respect. Matthew's subtractions, additions, and revisions of order and phraseology often show changes in substance; i.e., they represent developments of the dominical tradition that result in different meanings and departures from the actuality of events" (p. 623).
2. 2. "Comparison with the other gospels, especially with Mark and Luke, and examination of Matthew's style and theology show that he materially altered and embellished historical traditions and that he did so deliberately and often" (p. 639).
3. 3. "We have also seen that at numerous points these features exhibit such a high degree of editorial liberty that the adjectives 'midrashic' and 'haggadic' become appropriate" (p. 628).
4. 4. "We are not dealing with a few scattered difficulties. We are dealing with a vast network of tendentious changes" (p. 625).
5. 5. "Hence, 'Jesus said' or 'Jesus did' need not always mean that in history Jesus said or did what follows, but sometimes may mean that in the account at least partly constructed by Matthew himself Jesus said or did what follows" (p. 630).
6. 6. "Semantics aside, it is enough to note that the liberty Matthew takes with his sources is often comparable with the liberty taken with the OT in

Jubilees, the Genesis Apocryphon, the Targums, and the Midrashim and Haggadoth in rabbinic literature" (p. 628).

7. 7. "These patterns attain greatest visibility in, but are by no means limited to, a number of outright discrepancies with the other synoptics. At least they are discrepancies so long as we presume biblical writers were always intending to write history when they used the narrative mode" (p. 624).
8. 8. "Matthew selects them [the Magi] as his substitute for the shepherds in order to lead up to the star, which replaces the angel and heavenly host in the tradition" (p. 27).
9. 9. "That Herod's statement consists almost entirely of Mattheanisms supports our understanding Matthew himself to be forming this episode out of the shepherd's visit, with use of collateral materials. The description of the star derives from v. 2. The shepherds' coming at night lies behind the starry journey of the magi" (p. 31).
10. 10. "He [Matthew] changes the sacrificial slaying of 'a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,' which took place at the presentation of the baby Jesus in the Temple (Luke
11. 11. 2:24; cf. Lev 12:6-8), into Herod's slaughtering the babies in Bethlehem (cf. As. Mos. 6:2-6" (pp. 34, 35).

Editorial Comments on the ETS Gundry Decision in 1983

By Norman L. Geisler

2/1/2014

First, it can be agreed that the process by which Gundry was removed from ETS was not a rush to judgment. Actually, it was a long and patient procedure covering some three years.

Second, the basic issue was the influence of genre criticism on New Testament studies which was centered on the views of Robert Gundry. The legitimacy of his views was apparently supported by many ETS members (since 30% of them voted to retain Gundry in ETS membership).

Third, the vast majority of the membership felt obliged to act since the leadership failed to consult them in the Gundry decision which was contrary to their views.

Fourth, the vote was not a bare majority or even two-third majority. It was a very significant 70% majority in favor of dismissing Gundry from ETS for his views.

Fifth, “the ETS Ad Hoc Committee on critical scholarship” recommended unanimously [10/20/83] the adoption of the ICBI Statements on Inerrancy [1978] and Hermeneutics [1982] and noted that Gundry’s view were inconsistent with these statements. ETS failed to do this.

New Testament/Biblical Criticism

THE JESUS QUEST The Danger from Within

This work examines the historical and philosophical strengths and/or weaknesses of current evangelical approaches espousing some forms of postmodernistic historiography and its resultant search for the “historical Jesus.” It demonstrates the marked undermining impact these efforts have had on the biblical text, especially the Gospels, as well inerrancy issues. It compares the Jesus Seminar’s approach with current evangelical practices of searching in terms of their evidential apologetic impact on the trustworthiness of the Gospels. A number of well-known, contemporary evangelical scholars are involved in the so-called “Third Quest” for the historical Jesus. This book raises serious questions about such an endeavor.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Norman L. Geisler, Ph.D., Chancellor, Veritas Evangelical Seminary; Distinguished Professor of Apologetics and Theology

F. David Farnell, Ph.D., Senior Professor of New Testament, The Master’s Seminary

Richard G. Howe, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy and Apologetics, Southern Evangelical Seminary

Thomas A. Howe, Ph.D., Professor of Bible and Biblical Languages, Southern Evangelical Seminary

William E. Nix, Ph.D., Professor of Historical and Theological Studies, Veritas Evangelical Seminary

William C. Roach, **Ph.D.** candidate, Co-Author of *Defending Inerrancy*

Dennis M. Swanson, **D.Min**., Vice President for Library and Educational Assessment

Norman L. Geisler is a world-renown Christian apologist who has written over 80 books. He is Chancellor of Veritas Evangelical Seminary in Murrieta, California. Dr. Geisler was a key founder of the historic International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (1978) as well as the International Council on Biblical Hermeneutics (1982).

F. David Farnell is Senior Professor of New Testament at The Master's Seminary. He was coeditor of *The Jesus Crisis* (1998) as well as contributor to other books (e.g. *Three Views on Origins of the Synoptic Gospels, 2002*). He specializes in the impact of historicalcritical philosophical ideologies in New Testament Criticism and Interpretation.

SUBJECT AUTHOR INDEX

Abbott, Edwin	168, 404–5
Aberdeen University	438, 510
Adam and Eve	38–39, 41, 79, 90, 188, 198, 244–45, 510–11, 527
Adler, Mortimer J.	325, 550, 561
agnosticism	68–69, 318, 342, 494
Alexander, Archibald	303–4, 307, 635
Allah	654–56
Allis, Oswald Thompson	337–38, 660
Ansberry, Christopher B.	511–14
anthropological Monism	74–75
antisemitism	86, 95, 100, 104, 112, 118, 120–22, 389, 404
anti–supernaturalism	25, 67, 168, 215, 363
Apollonius of Tyana	645–49
Aquinas, Thomas	49, 74, 199, 216, 553, 629–31, 633–34, 643
Aristotle	74, 643, 660
Athanasius	57, 334

Augustine of Hippo 46, 49, 74, 77, 88–89, 144, 271, 320, 323, 576, 633–34

autographs (of the New Testament) 29, 193, 201, 301, 349, 354

Baird, William 130, 147, 149–51, 431

Baptist Union 230–33, 235, 237–42, 245, 287–288, 330, 422

Baptist World Alliance 288, 314, 316–18

Barr, James 71, 427–28, 438

Barth, Karl 36, 59, 71, 300, 350–51, 448, 542, 585

Baur, Ferdinand Christian 70, 93, 98, 100, 103, 109, 115, 122–24, 126, 300, 596

Beale, David O. 319–20, 327

Bebbington, David W. 242, 261, 263–69, 273–74, 278–80

Bible Institute of Los Angeles/BIOLA 318, 326, 328, 331, 422–23

biblical literalism 269, 279–80, 328, 333, 339

bios (see also "genre") 34, 40–41, 75, 182, 189–95, 197, 241, 353–54, 435, 445–46

Bird, Michael 28, 36, 50, 52

Blomberg, Craig L. 76, 182, 190, 192–93, 195, 197–98, 211, 353, 428, 430–34, 440–45, 469, 483, 540, 543

Bock, Darrell L. 223, 407, 429, 434–37, 445–48, 468–69, 473–74, 476, 487–88, 490, 495, 503, 507, 509, 515

Boice, James Montgomery 201

Booth, Samuel Harris 232–33, 236, 238–40, 245

Borg, Marcus 377, 381

Boston Univerity 314, 336, 622

Boyce, James P. 306–8, 311, 313–15

Briggs, Charles Augustus 303, 305, 320–21

British–influenced scholarship 219, 453, 496, 510, 684

Broadus, John A. 310–11, 318

Brown, Archibald 232

Brown, Colin 147–48, 154, 372–73, 381, 388

Brown, Dan (The Da Vinci Code) 604, 607

Brown, Harold O. J. 156, 285

Brown, William Montgomery 336

Bruce, F. F. 107, 117, 593, 596, 598

Bryan, Williams Jennings 332, 335, 339–41

Bube, R. H. 59, 350

Bullinger, E. W. 118, 197

Bultmann, Rudolf 67–68, 71, 93, 109, 115, 122, 124–25, 300, 371–72, 374–82, 384, 387, 400, 403, 440, 542, 576

Burke, Edmund 267–68

Burridge, Richard A. 182, 187, 190, 445

Calvin, John 49, 57, 87, 89–92, 277, 301, 316, 320, 448, 545, 597, 635

Caritat, Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de (Marquis de Condorcet) 264–67

Carson, D. A. 354, 441

Chafer, Lewis Sperry 297, 331, 635–36

Charlesworth, James H. 388, 395–99, 400, 403, 405, 488

Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics 26, 351

Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy/CSBI 25, 28–35, 37–42, 45–46, 48, 50–52, 55, 58, 60, 248, 351, 427, 493

Chief–Epistles/Hauptbriefe 100, 103, 109, 123

Christ of Faith (see also "Jesus of History") 99, 109, 116, 368, 376, 382, 389, 475, 484, 494, 497, 685

Civil War 257–60, 276, 309–11, 324–26, 257

Clark, Gordon 59, 350

Clayton, Charles 541, 544, 553

Clifford, John 240–41, 287–88, 310, 315

Conzelmann, Hans 379–80

Corduan, Winfried 123, 262, 551

Craig, William Lane 451–53, 546

Crossan, John Dominic 365, 385, 399

D'Alembert, Jean le Rond 265–67

Dallas Theological Seminary 331, 423, 451, 597, 635

Darby, John Nelson 279–80, 282–83, 286

Darwin, Charles 69–70, 167, 284, 287, 300, 303–4, 311, 340

Darwinism (see also "evolutionary theory") 39, 69–70, 287, 300, 304, 318, 340

Dawkins, Richard 616, 630–31

Dead Sea Scrolls 388, 397, 399

deism 143–44, 147, 152, 169, 368, 370, 373, 506

Denver Seminary 182, 433

Descartes, René 44, 364, 369, 643–44

Deutero–Isaiah 67, 513, 625–26

Deutero–Pauline letters 220–22

Dixon, Amzi Clarence 317–19, 326, 328, 422

Documentary Hypothesis/JEDP 299–300, 398, 404

Doddridge, Philip 275–78, 280

Dollar, George W. 319, 327–28

Down Grade Controversy (see also "Spurgeon, Charles H.") 229–46, 286–88, 422

Dungan, David Laird 145–48, 154–55, 163, 367–68

Dunn, James D. G. 86, 96, 103–8, 111–12, 114–15, 117, 124, 130, 218, 221, 361, 383–86, 392–95, 400, 403, 405, 488

Ebeling, Gerhard 71, 96, 433

Ehrman, Bart 40, 75, 182, 189–90, 192, 353, 432, 442, 449, 455–57

Eichhorn, J. G. 147, 149, 300

Eliot, Charles William 322–25

Emerson, Ralph Waldo 323–34, 375

empiricism 264, 268, 643–44

English Deists 147, 368, 373

Enlightenment/Aufklärung 117, 143–44, 147–49, 153, 156–57, 161, 167, 255, 263–66, 269, 283, 285, 364, 366–67, 369–70, 382, 393, 401, 424, 440, 445–46, 449, 476, 494, 506

Enns, Peter 28–29, 32, 35–38, 43, 46–47, 49–50, 52, 56, 60, 353

Evangelical Theological Society/ETS 26, 29–30, 34–35, 40–41, 50, 51, 53–55, 59–61, 73, 76, 78, 182–83, 189, 191, 193, 198, 200–3, 223–24, 245, 261, 349–56, 423, 427–29, 436,

446, 432, 436, 440–41, 494–95, 515–16, 676

evolutionary theory (see also "Darwinism") 25, 38–39, 68–70, 167, 230–31, 235, 243, 245, 272, 287, 300, 303, 318, 329, 340, 369, 422, 484–85, 579

Existentialism 71, 93, 95–96, 494

faith alone/Sola Fide 57, 86–88, 90, 94, 108, 130, 334, 450

Farmer, William R. 167–68, 404

Feinberg, Charles L. 328, 423

Feinberg, John 201

feminism 432–34, 540

Fichte, Johann 147, 149–55, 158, 431

Fogel, Robert William 260–61

Form Criticism/Formgeschichte 75, 111, 169, 370–71, 375–79, 384, 398–400, 424, 439–40, 483, 496, 506, 684

foundationalism 44–45, 559, 562

Four-Source Hypothesis (see "Two-/Four-Source/Gospel hypotheses")

Franke, John 28, 31–32, 41, 44–46, 50–52, 56

Fuchs, Ernst 71, 96, 433, 440

Fuller Theological Seminary 53, 74, 80, 181, 423–425, 426, 493

Fuller, Daniel 59, 350

fundamentalism 26, 49, 58, 79, 181–82, 219–20, 269, 279, 316, 319–20, 322, 327, 329, 337–41, 393–94, 421–24, 426–29, 436, 438, 455, 467, 493, 495, 508

Funk, Robert W. 383, 467, 496, 684

Gabriel, Mark A. 654, 656

Gadamer, Hans–Georg 71, 96, 476, 539–40, 541–43

Garrett, Stephen 28

Gaussen, François Samuel Robert Louis 280–83, 287

Gay, Peter 117, 261, 263

General Revelation 38–39, 42, 45–46

genre (see also "bios") 33–35, 40–43, 59, 75–76, 182–84, 188–200, 352, 354, 427–28, 431, 435, 439, 441–43, 445–46, 523–36

Genre Criticism 40–41, 197, 352, 528, 530–31

Geschichte (see also "Historie") 220, 376, 448, 475, 576

Gilson, Etienne 79, 170, 526–28, 548, 659

Glover, Willis B. 230, 233, 237, 239–41

Gnostic Gospels (see also "Gospel of Thomas") 607–8

Gnosticism 68–69, 124–25, 318, 607

Goldingay, John 28, 31–32, 41, 44–46, 49–53, 56

Gospel of Thomas (see also "Gnostic Gospels") 397–98, 467, 607

Grammatico–Historical Method 25–26, 33, 39, 40–42, 70, 74, 92–93, 96, 183, 185–88, 192, 194–98, 196, 202–3, 214–15, 219, 430–32, 434, 494, 503–17, 526–27, 530–31, 535, 675

Grant, Percy Stickney 335–36

Green, Michael 453–54, 485

Griesbach, Johann Jacob 146–65, 169, 302

Guelich, Robert 75, 507, 682

Gundry, Robert H. 40–41, 54–56, 59, 73, 76, 182–83, 198, 201, 213, 351–54, 427–28, 440–41, 446, 454, 676, 682

Guthrie, Donald 219, 223, 486

Hagner, Donald A. 116–17, 122, 211–24, 363, 382, 454, 456, 469, 483–84

harmonization/harmonizing (of the Gospels) 94, 100, 145, 151, 154–55, 169, 191, 211, 213, 283, 446

Harris, Murray 74–75

Harvard University 223, 255, 257, 311, 314, 322–25, 335, 515

Hays, M. Christopher 510, 512, 514

Hegel, George Wilhelm 70, 123, 125, 284, 576

Friedrich

Hegelian dialecticism 261–83, 300, 341, 438

Henry, Carl F. H. 30, 33–34, 423

Hinson, Walter Benwell 317, 331–32

Historical Criticism (see "historicalcritical method")

Historical–Critical method 25–26, 40–41, 67, 68, 71, 73, 75–76, 78–80, 86–87, 93–97, 99, 103, 108, 110, 115–16, 117–18, 122–30, 145, 148, 150–51, 153, 156, 163–64, 166–67, 170, 183, 188, 198, 211–14, 215–16, 219–20, 222–24, 231, 241–44, 248, 283–84, 287, 299–301, 303–6, 310–11, 318, 333, 336, 361–64, 365–72, 375–76, 380–92, 399, 402–3, 407, 422–25, 427–40, 443–48, 451–53, 455–57, 471–72, 476–78, 484–91, 493–97, 503–17, 675, 684–86

Historie (see also "Geschichte") 168, 220, 376, 448, 475, 503, 576

Hodge, A. A. 304–5, 321, 635

Hodge, Charles 37, 70, 181, 303–5, 307, 321, 426, 635

Hubbard, Robert L. 540–41, 543

Hume, David 67–68, 394, 401, 551, 584, 638–44, 651, 653–54, 657

imputation of righteousness 97, 114–15, 242

Independence Approach to the 143–44, 362–63

Gospels

inerrancy 28–31, 37, 40–41, 43, 48–50, 55, 60–61, 76, 165, 182, 188–89, 193, 196, 200–1, 203, 214, 351, 353–54, 427, 430–31, 435, 441, 445–46, 448, 455, 457, 481, 494, 505, 507, 587

inspiration 30, 43, 48–49, 152–55, 164, 170, 182, 186, 212–13, 215–18, 273–74, 278, 321, 330, 422, 426, 437, 477, 492, 506, 513, 681

International Council on Biblical Inerrancy/ICBI 25–26, 28–29, 32, 39–42, 45, 50, 56, 60–61, 76, 181, 183, 186–88, 191–98, 200–3, 214–15, 218, 351, 353–54, 426–29, 436, 439, 442, 446, 457, 493, 505–6, 675–76

ipsissima verba 37, 396, 449

Irving, Edward 269, 278–79, 282

Islam 653–57

Jerome 87, 199, 221

Jesus of History (see also "Christ of Faith") 99, 109, 116, 220–22, 363–407, 437, 475, 484, 494, 504

Jesus of the Gospels 86–110, 116–17, 220, 363, 366, 368–69, 382, 386, 488, 504

Jesus Seminar 26, 109, 365, 372, 383, 385, 390, 399, 406, 437, 469–70, 472, 481, 493, 495–96, 684–85, 687

Jewett, Robert 80, 95

Jewish Midrash 41, 59, 73, 76, 201, 351–52, 427–28, 441, 532–33

John the Baptist 391, 469–70, 602, 606

Josephus 388, 476, 601, 606

Journal/Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society/JETS 55, 59, 73, 202, 213, 245, 350, 429

justification by faith 86, 88–89, 97, 104, 106–8, 113, 242, 334

Kant, Immanuel 68–69, 127, 261–62, 284, 394

Kantzer, Kenneth 55, 59, 350

Käsemann, Ernst 109, 372, 376, 378–79, 485

Keach, Benjamin 276–77, 286

Keener, Craig S. 190, 218, 435, 453, 468–69, 482, 645–46, 649

Kierkegaard, Søren 71, 369, 576

Klein, William W. 540, 543

Köstenberger, Andreas 223, 515

Ladd, George Eldon 75, 112, 424–25, 435–36, 471, 508

Law of Moses 85, 90, 102

law of non–contradiction 44, 75–76, 192, 353–54, 553–54, 560–61

legalism/legalistic 57, 65, 89, 91–93, 97–98, 100–1, 104–7, 111–12, 118, 123, 389, 406

Lewis, C. S. 584, 602, 633, 639–41, 652

Licona, Michael 34, 40–41, 58, 75–76, 182–83, 186, 189–98,

200, 202, 204, 213, 352–54, 445–46, 452, 602

Life of Jesus Research (see "Third Quest/Search for the Historical Jesus")

Lightfoot, R. H. 103, 300, 385

Lindsell, Harold 25, 52, 182, 224, 442–29, 431–32, 434, 438–39, 456–57, 515

Linnemann, Eta 68, 77, 79, 156, 165, 223, 439, 440, 456–57, 515, 660

Literary Dependency Hypothesis (see "Two-/Four-Source/Gospel hypotheses") 144–46, 151, 153, 155–57, 159–60, 163, 165–67, 169–70, 404

Lloyd–Jones, D. Martyn 245

Locke, John 263–65, 324, 553, 643

Lucas, Ernest 531–32

Luther, Martin 49, 57, 86, 88–94, 97, 100–6, 108, 111–12, 114, 118–22, 126, 130, 152, 225, 316, 334, 342, 422, 450

MacArthur, John F. 230–31, 235, 241

Machen, J. Gresham 223, 236, 254, 314, 321, 337–38, 341, 423, 428

Maclaren, Alexander 240–41

Manly, Jr., Basil 306, 311

Manly, Sr., Basil 306

Markan Hypothesis (see "Marcan Priority")

Markan Priority 165–68, 404–5, 483

Marsden, George 319–20, 322, 327–20, 332, 338, 427, 436

Marshall, I. Howard 218, 221, 379, 456, 469, 485–86, 507

Marx, Karl 261–63, 271, 284

McCartney, Dan 541, 544, 553

McKim, Donald K. 50, 181, 426–47, 449, 493

McKnight, Scot 75, 434, 468–69, 472

Mencken, Henry Louis 332, 339–41

Merrick, J. 28–29, 52, 57, 61

Messianic/Messiahship Secret 125, 128, 168–69, 370, 374

Michaelis, Johann David 147, 149–55, 158, 431

Midrash (see "Jewish Midrash")

Miller, Robert 435, 492

Miller, Samuel 303, 307

Miller, Stephen R. 532

miracles 66–69, 76, 99, 148, 153, 212–13, 264, 301, 315, 321–22, 336, 368, 370, 390–91, 394, 401, 428, 441–42, 576–77, 584–86, 590, 594–95, 602,

610, 622–26, 631–57

Mohler, Albert R. 28–31, 60–61, 193, 200, 306, 316

Moody Bible Institute 281, 326, 328, 331, 339, 423, 456

Moody Church 318, 326

Moody, D. L 258, 286, 318, 326, 331, 423

Moore, George Foot 98, 100

Moreland, J. P. 73, 80

Mosaic authorship 79, 512

Muhammad 654–57

naturalism 65–69, 145, 153, 156, 341, 437–38, 369, 381, 437, 584, 590, 602, 623, 638

Neill, Stephen 151, 370–71, 383

neo–evangelicals 26–27, 503–8

Neo–Griesbach Hypothesis (see also "Two-/Four-Source/Gospel hypotheses") 144–57

neologians 148, 303, 431

Neo–Orthdoxy 71, 424

New Hermeneutic 71, 95–98, 115, 194, 433, 440

New Historiographical Approach 183–85, 194–97, 445

New Perspective on Jesus 384, 395

New Perspective on Paul/NPP 86–130, 361, 384, 389, 399

New/Second Quest/Search for the Historical Jesus 109, 371, 374, 377–81, 383–84, 386, 399, 401, 423

Nicole, Roger 41, 55, 59–60, 352

Nietzsche, Friedrich 127, 341, 543

Noll, Mark 276, 309

nominalism/nominalist 73, 145–46, 367, 385

Non-Quest Period 372, 405

Norris, J. Frank 319, 327, 341

Old Quest (see "Quest/Search for the Historical Jesus")

Open Theism 73, 245, 353

Orr, James 70, 329

Osborne, Grant R. 78, 429, 469, 489, 524–25, 541

Owen, Henry 146, 157–66, 169

Owen, John 263, 274–75

Owen–Griesbach Hypothesis (see "Two-/Four-Source/Gospel hypotheses")

Oxford University 98, 108, 158, 257, 263, 278, 325, 438, 453, 510, 603

Packer, J. I. 29, 41, 88

Pastoral Epistles 100, 109, 220–22, 244, 442, 445, 513

Pauline Epistles 117, 125, 300

Perrin, Norman 125, 169, 370, 380, 435–36

phenomenology 71–72

Pictert, Benedict 274–75, 277

Pietism 147–49, 151–53, 255, 319

Pinnock, Clark 29, 32, 60, 73, 182, 186, 194, 243, 349–51, 353, 355–56

Plutarch 190, 687

Pontinus Pilatus 354, 469, 593, 605–6, 611

Porter, Calvin L. 44

Porter, Stanley E. 377, 386, 403

post–modernism 26, 407, 434, 436–37, 477, 481, 490

presupposition/prejudice 31, 33, 67, 69, 71, 75, 81, 86, 93–96, 100–3, 105, 108, 115, 117, 119, 126, 129–30, 143–70, 183, 212–15, 217, 219, 223, 224, 309, 366–67, 369, 371, 374–77, 381, 387, 400, 402–3, 407, 422, 424–25, 429, 431–32, 436–38, 440, 443–44, 447, 449–50, 452, 455–56, 471–72, 474, 477, 485, 488–89, 491, 493–94, 505, 515, 539–41, 543, 548, 552–54, 557, 508, 514–16, 541, 544, 548, 553–54, 557–64, 574, 576, 594, 682

Priest, Gerald L. 319, 327–28

Princeton College 303, 321

Princeton Theological Seminary 236, 303–7, 320–21, 327, 337, 423, 426, 449, 455–56, 493, 635

Princeton University 223, 257, 337, 515

Processism/Process Theology 70, 72–73

Protestantism 88, 91, 254–55, 263, 272, 281, 301, 309, 310, 332, 372, 384, 450

pseudepigraphy 104, 197, 388, 442, 456, 513–15

pseudonymity 220–22, 442, 514

Puritans/Puritanism 230, 234, 255, 257, 273, 320, 322, 324

Q source 167, 387, 398, 404–6, 479, 482–83

Quest/Search for the Historical Jesus 26, 87, 109, 128, 130, 169, 361, 366, 368, 371, 373–78, 380, 383–84, 399, 435, 424, 437, 494–95, 571, 687

Quest/Search for the Post–Historical Jesus 364, 382

Quran 43, 654–56

rationalism 66, 92, 143–45, 147, 149–54, 156, 161–62, 169–70, 181–82, 212, 216, 262, 264, 268, 283, 300–1, 369, 373, 449, 494, 506

Rauschenbusch, Augustus 333

Rauschenbusch, Walter 333–34

Redaction Criticsm/Redaktionsgeschichte 68, 99, 125, 146, 166, 169, 222, 368, 370, 375, 377–78, 387–89, 402, 405, 425, 427, 429, 431, 437, 486, 494, 496, 507, 577, 586, 681–82, 684

Reformation 26, 31, 57, 86–89, 92–93, 95, 97–98, 101–2, 104, 106–7, 111, 113, 115, 118, 120, 122, 126, 129, 151–52, 219, 281, 301, 336, 384, 389, 506, 508

Reformers 49, 57, 87–94, 97–98, 115, 187, 449, 506

Reimarus, Hermann Samuel 109, 128, 369, 373, 387

religious pluralism 43, 310, 432

resurrection of Christ 30, 40, 55, 66, 68, 74–75, 99, 109, 113, 129, 168–69, 182–83, 189, 193–94, 198–201, 203, 216, 235–36, 286, 301, 321–22, 330, 336, 352, 368, 376, 380–82, 392, 394–95, 397, 401–2, 405–6, 422, 445, 447, 451–54, 469, 488–89, 492, 514, 571, 585, 601, 605, 609–10, 634, 647

Reumann, John 371–72

Riley, William B. 319, 327, 329, 331–32, 337

Robertson, A. T. 191, 354, 375

Robinson, James M. 312, 364, 380–81, 471

Rogers, Jack B. 50, 74, 181, 186, 426–27, 449, 493

Roman Catholicism 59–60, 87, 89, 91–92, 94, 97–98, 111–12, 152, 262–72, 264, 309, 318, 352–53

Romanticism 143–45, 147–48, 155–57, 163, 169–70, 263, 268–69, 278, 283–85, 323–24, 369, 385

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 264–66

Sanders, E. P. 86, 94, 96–108, 111, 114–15, 117–18, 124, 129–30, 186, 361, 383–84, 388–92, 395, 400, 403–5, 469, 488, 495

Sanders, John 349–50, 355

Sankey, David 258, 286

Schleiermacher, Friedrich Daniel Ernst 283–84, 300, 304, 314

Schreiner, Thomas R. 107, 218

Schweitzer, Albert 98, 109, 127–30, 300, 371–74, 381, 385, 387, 399, 485

Scopes trail 70, 332, 339–41, 422

Scripture, nature of 34, 36, 204, 230, 330

Second Quest (see "New/Second Quest/Search for the Historical Jesus")

Second Temple Judaism 98, 104, 186, 372, 384, 388, 394, 396–97, 469, 473

Semler, Johann Salamo 147–52, 153, 156, 158, 283, 299, 302, 431

sensus literalis 198, 525

Shindler, Robert 234–35

Sila, Moisés 428, 541

skepticism 68, 73, 109–10, 125–126, 143, 145, 149, 152,

154–55, 159, 169, 242, 342, 361, 377–79, 387, 394, 399, 403, 407, 435, 483, 490, 492–94, 514, 577, 623–24, 626, 631–32, 641–642, 644

Snodgrass, Klyne 469, 484

social gospel movement 260–61, 287, 318, 333–34, 390

socialism 284, 287–88, 329, 334–36

Society of Biblical Literature 383, 435, 467, 492, 495

Source Criticism 143–44, 166–67, 170, 378, 491, 507

Southern Baptist Convention/SBC 58, 257, 306–9, 311–12, 314–17, 319, 327

Southern Evangelical Seminary 40, 58, 75, 189, 353, 636

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary 257, 315, 327

Sparks, Kenton 43, 353, 438

Spener, Phillip Jacob 151–52

Spinoza, Benedict/Baruch 44, 66–68, 80, 145–46, 161, 213, 366–68, 373–74, 381, 388, 445–46, 505–6

Sproul, R. C. 29, 32, 41–42, 186, 201, 354

Spurgeon, Charles H. (see also "Down Grade Controversy") 229–46, 258, 276, 281, 285–88, 310, 317–18, 320, 328, 330–31, 422

Stein, Robert 75

Strauss, David Friedrich 67, 122, 128, 300, 369–70, 373

Streeter, Burnett Hillman 157, 167

substitutionary atonement 235, 242–43, 322, 330, 333

Synoptic Gospels 99, 143, 147, 154, 161–62, 166, 390, 400, 449–50, 478

Talbot Theological Seminary/School of Theology 223, 328, 423, 451, 515

Talmud 119–22, 607

Terry, Milton S. 92–93

textual criticism 148, 299–302, 321, 598

The Fundamentals 326–29, 341, 422–23

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary 193, 257, 306–8, 310–14, 318

Third Quest/Search for the Historical Jesus 361, 364–65, 372, 384–88, 390, 392, 398–99, 403, 405, 435, 468–69

Thomas, Robert L. 26, 75–77, 244, 430

Torrey, Reuben A. 328, 331, 422–23

Toy, Crawford Howell 310–13

Tradition Criticism 111, 115–16, 365, 382, 399–400, 447, 478–79, 491, 496, 504, 684

Traditional Approach/TA (see "Grammatico–Historical Method")

Trinity 31, 48–49, 51, 57, 120, 148, 243, 271–72, 277, 431, 448, 653

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School 55, 74, 636

Troeltsch, Ernst 125, 283, 370, 374, 381, 401, 506, 577, 584–85

Truett, George W. 316–17, 327

Tübingen University/School of Thought 70, 98, 122–24, 147, 300, 596

Turretin, Francis 273–75, 303

Two-/Four-Source/Gospel hypotheses 75, 103, 144–70, 402, 404, 424, 479, 482, 486–87

Union Theological Seminary 98, 305, 321, 635

universalism 232, 255, 286, 311, 318, 323

Vanhoozer, Kevin 28, 32–34, 37–38, 46, 50–52, 56, 60, 186, 353

virgin birth of Christ 99, 168, 200, 202–3, 301, 315, 321–22, 330, 390, 405, 514, 586, 608, 623, 632

von Harnack, Adolf 283, 300

Wallace, Daniel B. 448–51, 544–45, 597–600

Warfield, Benjamin B. 30, 37, 50, 181, 305, 320–21, 329, 337, 426, 436

Webb, Robert 434–35, 437, 447, 469–70, 473–81, 495, 509

Weiss, Johannes 128, 158, 302, 373

Wellhausen, Julius 287, 299–300, 311

Wesley, Charles 255, 276–77

Wesley, John 255–256, 263, 265, 316, 320

Westar Institute 467, 496–97, 684–85

Westminster Confession of Faith 48, 214, 303–4, 321

Westminster Theological Seminary 56, 337–38, 423

Wheaton College & Graduate School 331, 338, 456, 510, 636

Whitefield, George 255, 320

Whitsitt, William Heth 312–14

Wilkins, Michael 469, 484

Wittgenstein, Ludwig 72, 524, 534

Woodbridge, John 50, 74, 427

works of the law 86–87, 89–90, 102, 104–8, 114, 130

World War I 283–84, 310, 319, 328, 341

World War II 120, 259, 328, 377

worldview/Weltanschauung 111, 128, 153, 212, 215, 219, 263, 399, 401, 541, 544, 548, 557, 562, 574–76, 580, 582–83, 588–90, 602, 607–8, 626, 653–54

Wrede, Wilhelm 98, 109, 122, 124–28, 168, 370, 373, 541

Wright, N. T. 86, 96, 108–15, 117, 124, 126, 130, 164, 186, 361, 363, 370–72, 383–86, 388, 399–403, 468, 488

Y.M.C.A. 258, 286

Yarbrough, Robert W. 439–40

SCRIPTURE INDEX

Genesis

1–2	38
1:1	39
1:21	39
1:27	39
2–3	511
2:23	527
4:23–24	197
9:6	47
14	48
15:13–15	48
18:25	48
26:34	47
49:10	271

Exodus

3:14	608
20:1	270
22:2	48
23:19	32, 529

Leviticus

12:1–8 405
18 47
18:25 47
Numbers
11–14 445
Deuteronomy
17:6–7 362
18:22 51
19:15b 362
20 47
32:39 47
Joshua
1:1–9 339
1:4 38
6 32, 38, 46–47
10 32
10:12 38
10:13 38
1 Samuel
14 531
2 Samuel
23:2 43
1 Kings

11:1 47
2 Chronicles
33:6 647
Job
1:21 47
Psalms
1:3 195
16:10 311
18:2 195
19:1 45, 46, 215
93:1 39
95 445
119:160 34
138:2 448
Proverbs
11:2 491, 516
Isaiah
1:18 216
13:17–19 512
24–27 197
26:19 454
28:16 116, 382
29:13 406

37:30 197
42:8 608
48:11 608
53 311, 545
53:5 88
55:11 34
Jeremiah
23:29 34
31:31–33 477
31:33 91
51:11–12 512
Ezekiel
26:1–21 512
36:25–27 477
37:12–14 454
Daniel
1–6 532
7 532
7–12 532
8–12 532
9:25 121
12:2 454
Jonah

3 48
Matthew
1:20–25 608
2 76, 431, 441
2:7–8 427
3:13–17 470
3:16 470
5 47
5:3–12 431
5:17–18 34, 192, 204
5:17–19 405
5:17–20 391
5:17–6:18 391
5:18 31, 36
5:20 406
5:31–32 75
5:39 48
6:9–13 391
7:24–29 608
8:11–12 406
8:27 637
9:9–13 391, 406
9:2–7 608, 637
9:13 449

9:36–38 406
10:17 391
12:8–14 92
12:10–13 649
12:14 406
12:27 482
12:27–28 482
12:38 635
12:40–42 80
13:24 165
13:24–30 165
14:14 406
14:33 636
15:1–6 204, 406
15:1–9 120
15:1–20 92
15:3 406
15:7–9 406
16:13–20 484
16:16 168
16:17–18 168
16:17–19 480
16:18 xvi, 480
16:21 608

17:21–24 441
17:24–27 428
17:27 76
18:15 480
19:5 36
21–23 445
21:12–17 406, 484
21:15 401
22:29 204
23 57, 406
23:1–26 92
23:1–35 120
23:5–7 391
23:23–26 391
23:24 195
23.34 391
24:3 446
24:36 514
25:46 242
26:26–30 276
26:30–50 165
26:38 608
26:63–66 487
27 352, 199, 200, 201, 351

27:34 608
27:40–50 453
27:46 37
27:50–54 198
27:51–52 213
27:51–53 40, 75, 76, 445, 452–53
27:51–54 183
27:52–53 194, 676
27:53 198, 199
27:62–66 451–52
28:2–7 75
28:9 608
28:18–20 48, 78, 80, 430
28:19 429
Mark
1:9–11 470
1:10 470
2:13–17 391, 483
2:17 449, 483
2:26 483
3 482
3:6 406
4 431
4:26–29 165

6:34 406
7:1–8 120
7:1–23 406
7:5–8 406
8:11–13 482
8:22–26 649
8:27–30 484
8:29 221–22
8:29–30 168
9:9 169
11:12–19 484
11:15–18 406
12:30 216
13:32 514
13:4 446
14:12 189, 191
15:25 189
14:22–26 276
14:26–46 165
14:61–64 487
15:42 354
16:5–7 75
16:20 634

Luke

1:1–4	37, 43, 192, 216, 354, 362, 479, 587, 682
1:4	587
2:4–7	608
2:21–22	405, 608
2:41–49	405, 608
2:24	427
2:29–30	406
2:52	405, 608
3:15–22	470
4:2	608
4:39	482
5:27–32	391
5:32	449
7:16–17	637
9:18–21	484
11	482
11:16	482
11:16–20	482
11:20	482
11:39–52	406
11:53–54	406
14:14	406
14:26	608
16:31	487

18:9–14 391
18:10–14 406
18:11–12 91
19:45–47 406
19:45–48 484
21:7 446
22:66–71 487
24:4–7 75
24:13 406
24:39 74
24:52 608
John
1:29–34 470
1:31 470
1:32 470
1:33 470
2:12–22 484
2:13–16 406
2:15–17 57
2:18 635
2:20–22 587
3–4 432, 434
3:12 50, 533
4 433

4:18 434
4:24 195
4:6 477, 608
4:6–7 608
5 621, 658
5:4 658
5:17–18 608
5:21–23 608
5:39–40 405
6:63 218
6:66–69 484
7:1 406
7:49 391
8 605
8:42–47 608
8:55–59 608
8:58 183
9 611, 636
10:30–33 608
10:34–35 36
10:35 31, 34, 204, 448
11:11–14 198
11:35 608
12:38–39 625

14:5–6 40
14:6 608
14:26 43, 213, 362, 437, 477, 488, 681, 682
16:8–11 488
16:13 213, 218, 362, 437, 477, 488
17:5 608
17:17 204, 213, 215, 488
18:4–6 75, 183
18:31–33 596
18:37–38 596
19:14 189, 191
19:31 354
19:34 608
20:11–14 75
20:28 608
20:30–31 362, 638
20:31 407
21:24 37
21:26–31 489

Acts

1:1 587
1:3 216, 394, 489
2 632
2:19 635

2:31 74
2:42 637
4 88
4:24–25 36
5 637
8:9–11 647
9 35, 46
9:4 46
12 88
13:34–35 36
14 45
14:3 635
15 604, 637
15:2 57
17 45
17:2 57
17:21 78, 204
18:1–2 604
18:4 57
19:19 647
19:23–29 611
20:28–31 179
20:35 587
22 35, 46

22:9 46
25:12 400
Romans
1–2 100
1:1–20 45, 215
1:3–4 98
1:18–20 487, 680
1:19–20 45–46
1:22 xv
2 94, 100
2:12–16 94
2:13 113
2:14–15 652
2:16 106
2:17–29 107, 112
3 107
3:20 87, 107
3:20–22 106
3:27–29 107
3:27–30 107, 112
3:27–4:8 92
4:4–5 653
5 510–11
8:3 507

8:4 102
8:14–17 99, 390
9:30–33 116
9:30–10:8 92
9:30–10:13 112
9:32 114
9:33 116, 382
10:1–4 116
10:3 107
10:4 92
10:17 492
11:1–36 116
14:9 101
15:18–19 637

1 Corinthians

1:11–12 123
1:18–2:14 477, 491
1:18–2:14 116, 438
1:21 491
1:22–23 491
1:22–24 487
1:23 116, 438
1:24–28 491–92
1:29 492

1:29–30 491–92
1:30 438
2:1–5 487
2:5 492
2:6–8 488
2:6–16 507
2:8–14 438
2:13 680
2:14 492, 507
4:2 517
7:10 587
7:12 587
8 605
8:1 78
11:3 80
11:24–25 587
13:2 77
13:10–13 218
14 604–5
15 605
15:1–8 489
15:1–14 66
15:6 209
15:12–19 571

15:20 199
15:23 352, 453
2 Corinthians
5:7 393
5:21 43
6:14–18 339
10:3–5 170
10:5 80, 143, 433, 438
11.24 391
12:5 370–71
12:12 637
Galatians
1:6 481
1:8–10 89
1:13 391
1:22 391
2 90, 107
2–4 112
2:1 101
2:10 91
2:11 57
2:16 89, 106, 107, 114
2:20 107–8
3:10 89

3:10–14 106
3:10–16 89
4 195
4:4 405
4:24 41, 195
5:3 90
5.11 391
6:12 391
Ephesians
2:8–9 104
2:8–10 104
2:20 637
4:11–15 433
4:15 54, 56
4:17–23 680
5:11 339
Philippians
2:5–11 99
3 105, 112
3:2–11 92, 112, 114
3:6 102, 105, 391
3:6–9 102
3:8 406
3:9 102

3:9 114
Colossians
2:8 xv, 63, 65, 143, 170, 370–71, 438
2 Thessalonians
2:9 648
1 Timothy
2:5 48
3:6 77–78
4:1 274
6:20 45, 75–76, 354
2 Timothy
1:9 104
2:2 517
2:18 xvi
3:16 36, 144, 213, 215, 681
3:16–17 xix, 448
4:3–4 517
Titus
1:2 30, 36
1:9 57, 109
1:19 xvi
3:5 104
Hebrews

1:5–7 36
2:2–4 637–38
2:4 635
4:12 448
4:15 43, 608
6:18 30, 36
10:16 91
James
1:13–15 510
3:1 514–15
1 Peter
2:8 116, 382
3:15 216
2 Peter
1:16 371
1:16–17 489
1:19 218
1:20–21 36, 43, 114
3:9 48
1 John
2:16 77–78
2:26–27 218, 477
4:1 218
4:2 xv, 74

4:4 362
4:6 218, 477
2 John
7 xv, 74
9–11 339
Jude
3 57, 218, 371
Revelation
1:20 195
6–19 48
20:8 38, 39