

History of Hermeneutics

Class Notes

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The History of Hermeneutics

A study of the history of hermeneutics is necessary to see the results of both correct and incorrect methods of interpretation. Development of the rules of hermeneutics has been a slow process and the science itself did not really come into its own until the reformation. For over 1,000 years the church was hindered and corrupted by false methods of interpretation.

1 Old Testament and Jewish Views

1.1 Biblical (Gen 1:1; 2:15-17; 6:12-14; 12:1-3)

The method of interpretation seen in the Old Testament is the literal method.

Deut. 4:2 - Scripture was not to be added to or taken from. This can only be true if words are given their literal or normal meaning.

Deut. 28:1-6

The commandments were obviously understood and applied as literal. Ex. 20:1-7

Prophecy was likewise interpreted literally

Jer. 25:11-13, Dan. 9:2, Ezekiel 12:21-28

A literal method was also used in the first recorded translation.

Neh. 8:4-8 - translated from Hebrew to Chaldean

The development of hermeneutics is usually thought to have started here with Ezra.

Isa. 49:2-7; 53:1-12

1.2 Extra-Biblical

Following the completion of the Old Testament, several systems of hermeneutics were used by the Rabbis. The literal method was used but tradition was added to tradition and interpretation to interpretation until the true meaning of Scripture was buried under the writings of the Rabbis. Jewish interpretation was often prefaced with statements such as: Rabbi Juda says that Rabbi Aqiba says that Rabbi Hillel says that this word etc.

This false method of interpretation brought strong rebuke from Christ.

Matt. 12:1-8, Matt. 15:1-9, Matt. 23:1-33

The traditions and writings of the Rabbis were written in books which actually took the place of Scripture.

They are the:

Targum

The translation of the Old Testament into Aramaic

Talmud

The discussions and decisions of the rabbis on the law

Mishna

Biblical subjects arranged topically

Midrash

Expositions by the rabbis on books of the Old Testament.

In the inter-testament period the Jews were also attracted to the allegorical method.

“The allegorizing method of interpretation had its origin with the Alexandrian Jews of about two centuries before Christ, although it is claimed that the Greeks applied the method to their own religious poets at a still earlier date. At least, the Alexandrian Jews were the first to apply the principle to the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole. It is generally conceded that Aristobulus (160 B.C.) was the first of the Alexandrian school. It was his conviction that Greek philosophy was borrowed from the Old Testament, and that, by reading between the lines, all the tenets of the Greek philosophers (especially Aristotle) are to be found in Moses and the prophets.”

Gerald B. Stanton, Kept From The Hour, pp. 145-146

2 The Development of the Jewish Canon

The first written Jewish canon that we have extensive evidence of today was established by Ezra, the prophet, in the period 450-400 B.C. This is not the canon that we have today. Ezra's canon developed until A.D. 90 when, following the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the disciples of Rabbi Johanan ben Zacchai established the canon that we know today as The Old Testament or TaNaK. This development is outlined in the following topics:

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2.1 Structure of the Jewish Canon

The Jewish Canon is a collection of books. It is not an authored document. The books can be arranged in different orders in different versions of the collection.

For example, the standard or Rabbinic collection ends with I & II Chronicles. But, the Septuagint translation ends with Malachi. Christian Bibles follow the Septuagint and also end with Malachi. The ordering of the canon depends on subtle points of interpretation.

The books of Rabbinic canon are arranged according to three broad classifications:

The Torah (Law)

God's plan for Creation expressed in commandments

The Nevi'im (Prophets)

The most significant guide to Torah interpretation

The K'tuvim (Writings)

The secondary guide to Torah interpretation.

The Hebrew spellings of these classifications produce the acronym: TaNaK which serves as the title of the entire collection for Jewish people.

2.2 What is the Law As Defined by Rabbinic Interpretation?

The Hebrew word Torah refers to three interrelated realities:

1. God's plan for Creation revealed to men through Moses at Sinai
2. The Five Books of Moses--Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy--which record the Plan for men to study
3. The individual laws to be studied and put into practice.

Central to each of these is the understanding that Israel is a people who have entered into a Covenant (Testament) or Contract with God at Sinai. To live according to the Contract, which is also God's Plan for Creation, is to be made holy for God commanded: "You shall be holy; for I Yahweh your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2).

2.3 The Function of the Torah Historically

The Jewish Canon began as a legal canon used as Jewish law under Persian law. Ezra, a Persian lawyer, appealed to the king to allow Jerusalem to have its own Jewish law under the broad umbrella of Persian law. The petition was granted. Ezra then took a document from Babylon to Jerusalem which Nehemiah the prophet and governor of the city calls "The Book of The Law of Moses" (Nehemiah 8:1)--a term still used by Luke in his gospel (24:44) when he refers to the Old Testament as "The Law of Moses, The Prophets, and The Psalms." Nehemiah describes the ceremony in which the new legal canon was presented to the people of Jerusalem (Neh 7:73b-8:18).

Each head of a household was obligated now, under Persian law, to learn the Torah and to instruct the members of his household in it. This gave rise to the synagogue as a gathering of heads of household to study the Law and discussion its proper application to daily, household life.

Under the Persians, the Torah defined both religious and civic duty. The Law of Moses was now the law of the land as well. Religious practice and civic responsibility were now unified. Obedience to the civic law could never be taken lightly. Obedience to the city was a ritual through which one worshipped God. Religion and the city could not be in conflict.

This arrangement survived the Persian Empire. The Greeks and then the Roman Empires ratified it in turn. Only in A.D. 66 was it finally revoked by the Romans when they invaded Palestine and destroyed the Second Temple. This was an epoch making event which forced Judaism to re-interpret its canon. From this event, Judaism the world religion was born.

2.4 The Earliest Principles of Torah Interpretation (Hermeneutics)

With Ezra's Law of Moses, there came the problem of legal interpretation or hermeneutics.

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First, the Law was written in Hebrew and the people of Jerusalem in 450 B.C. only understood Aramaic, a dialect of Syriac, the international language of commerce. The problem of interpretation arose even as Ezra presented the book. We are told that Levites, temple officials, translated for the people as Ezra read (Neh 8:7). This began the practice of making very loose translations from Hebrew to Aramaic known as Targum, an ancient equivalent of Good News for Modern Man. Only the legal scholars could read the Law of Moses in the ancient Hebrew.

The problem of translation existed from the very first moment when the Bible was presented to Israel as their Torah.

Second, the Law had to be applied in every household both to satisfy the Covenant with God and to satisfy the Persian Empire. It was the Law of the land. Translating laws from their ancient cultural settings into the cultural context of the Persian Empire was a difficult and demanding task giving rise to a new tradition of legal-religious discussion which eventually constituted an Oral Torah called simply The Tradition or the Sayings of the Fathers which some took to be a binding canon beyond the canon. You can see this process reflected clearly in the Gospels in the New Testament (See Matthew 15, for example).

Jewish life was patriarchal from its origins, but the function of the Law as the law of the land strengthened this. Only heads of households, males, were responsible to the government--a practice you see reflected in modern tax forms. They were obligated to teach the law of the land to their household and to secure compliance. Consequently, as the synagogue developed, it was a gathering of 10 or more heads of households to discuss the proper interpretation and application of the Law.

Schools of legal interpretation developed around the Sages. The schools of Hillel and Shammai dominated the New Testament period. Each had its own hermeneutic. Hillel, the Elder (60 B.C.-A.D. 20) developed the principles by which the oral tradition was derived from the scripture and applied to daily life. Shammai opposed Hillel's new principles, considering himself a strict traditional. Following the fall of the Temple, the principles of Shammai were repudiated. The School of Hillel was to shape Judaism as a world religion. The nature of worship changed within Israel in response to two epoch making events: the Exile into Babylon (B.C. 587) and the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans (70 A.D.).

Under the Davidic Empire, worship centered on sacrifices made in the Temple atop Mt. Zion for the life of the kingdom. The Sadducee Party of the first century tended the Temple and was the guardian of Israel's national heritage.

After the establishment of the Torah as the canon for civil and religious law under Ezra (B.C. 400), the Temple services increasingly became secondary to the study and living of the Law as a form of worship. The Pharisee Party of the first century presided over the Synagogue.

The power of this new religious practice becomes most obvious when the Second Temple is destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. It was never rebuilt. The holy life lived according to the Torah--God's Plan for Creation--has served as the heart of Jewish life from then until today.

2.5 The Maccabean Revolt -An Epoch Making Event

The Maccabean Revolt changed the Jewish view of life in the world. The Pharisee Party is born in this conflict as a movement of the "separated ones." Religious hope came to focus on the End of the World and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The Greek Empire sought to impose Greek culture on the world it conquered. The gymnasium was a temple where Zeus Hercules was worshipped through body culture. It functioned as a community cultural center and a school where one could study Greek literature and philosophy. The Greeks sought to build a gymnasium in every major city, including Jerusalem.

Greek scholars attempted to demonstrate that the gods and goddesses of local religion were merely forms of the Greek gods and goddesses. The idea was to establish a universal religion which would unify the Empire in a single worldview.

This program was pursued most energetically by Antiochus IV who called himself "God manifest among men" or

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"Epiphanes." The special dispensation given to Jewish people which allowed the Law of Moses to function under the broad umbrella of Greek law had to be revoked if Greek culture was to be imposed successfully upon Palestine. Antiochus negotiated with savvy political leaders in Jerusalem for the construction of a gymnasium (I Maccabees 1:11-15). The "ordinances of the Gentiles" and "Gentile custom" replaced "the holy covenant." Soon the Temple was seized and dedicated to Zeus. A proclamation went out through Palestine holding up the Jews of Jerusalem as a model of good citizenship to be imitated (I Macc 1:41).

The imposition of Greek culture was blocked by a priest who lived in the rural area, Mattathias. He refused to follow the model of Jerusalem and rallied all who were willing to die rather than to depart from "the religion of his fathers," the religious tradition (I Macc 2:19-20). These men and women refused to "desert the law and the ordinances" of the "covenant of our fathers."

The Maccabean Revolt began (167 B.C.). It ended in an briefly independent Jewish state and the re-dedication of the Temple, Hanukkah. Jewish people would be allowed to live under Jewish law as their civil law for another two centuries. In A.D. 66 the Romans would revoke the Torah as they invaded Palestine.

The Maccabean Revolt succeeded because of those "zealous for the law" (I Macc 2:27) and the "covenant." These were known as the Hasideans--one's set apart by their life according to the law. Following the Revolt, they developed into the Pharisee Party and initiated a fruitful period of legal debate which prepared the way for Jewish religious survival following the Roman Invasion.

In confrontation with the epoch making program of Antiochus IV, the Maccabean Revolt produced a new Jewish literary vision to supplement the vision of Moses on Sinai. It was Apocalyptic--the mystic revelation of what God planned for the End of the World.

The book of Daniel is the product of the Revolt, written in the period (167- 164). Daniel, like apocalyptic in general, envisions a succession of oppressive political regimes degenerating into a final crisis when God himself will come and bring the successor to David, the Messiah or Christ, to create the final kingdom of the world. For the next two centuries, the appeal of apocalyptic would grow. The Revolt proved temporary. It did not lead to a final kingdom.

People began to live in hope of a new and final revolution. The Hasidim provided a model. These saints had ignored worldly political realities, had trusted God and defended the Tradition. God had miraculously given them victory. If one would act like this and rebel against Rome, God would send a new miracle.

This model produced a very volatile political climate in Palestine. The Romans were constantly having to suppress revolutionary fervor and action. Finally, they had enough. They invaded Palestine. Even this did not end the matter. A final Jewish revolt was staged under Simon bar Kochba (Kosebah) in 132-135 A.D. This resulted in the expulsion of Jews from Palestine. Jerusalem became a Roman city. Jewish people entered upon a worldwide exodus, living without a state until 1948 and the establishment of the modern state of Israel.

2.6 Rabbi Johanan ben Zacchai

Most Jews viewed the Roman invasion of 66 as the beginning of the final war. Zeal for the Law would once again bring victory and with it the Messiah. Hence, the people of Jerusalem were determined to die in defense of the city. For those who weakened, the Sicarri, a terrorist arm of the Zealot party, had a remedy: death. No one would defect to the Romans!

Johanan ben Zacchai did. He compromised with the Romans. He agreed to accept Roman political rule if Rome allowed him to preserve Jewish Tradition as a form of religious life. As a result, Jewish religion could be practiced even as Roman law was obeyed. Jewish religion was severed from Jewish political identity for the first time ever. This allowed Judaism to become a world religion. #JE, maccabees6 #W,U #EF #T #AR,1,3 Johanan ben Zacchai founded Judaism by severing Jewish national identity from Jewish religious identity.

Ben Zacchai went to Jamnia, on the Syrian border, and began to rebuild a shattered religion. The temple had previously announced the times for religious observance. Ben Zacchai now made these announcements. He and his disciples traveled through Palestine and eventually to Jewish communities around the world rallying a defeated Jewish population. Jamnia and its rabbis became the new center for a revitalized Judaism, a new world religion.

Ben Zacchai ended his career as a rejected leader. Survivors of the siege of Jerusalem deeply resented his

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willingness to compromise. They ousted him as the leader of the council of Rabbis, and he ended his life as a wandering teacher. Till this day, Jewish historians largely ignore this man who is the founding father of modern rabbinical Judaism.

2.7 Rabbi Akiva ben Joseph (50 CE - 135 CE)

A poor, semi-literate shepherd, Akiva became one of Judaism's greatest scholars. He developed the exegetical method of the Mishnah, linking each traditional practice to a basis in the biblical text, and systematized the material that later became the Mishnah.

Rabbi Akiva was active in the Bar Kokhba rebellion against Rome, 132 - 135 CE. He believed that Bar Kokhba was the Moshiach (messiah), though some other rabbis openly ridiculed him for that belief (the Talmud records another rabbi as saying, "Akiba, grass will grow in your cheeks and still the son of David will not have come.") When the Bar Kokhba rebellion failed, Rabbi Akiva was taken by the Roman authorities and tortured to death.

2.8 Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai

Rabbi Shimon, known as Rashbi, was a student of Rabbi Akiva. In addition to his Talmudic greatness he was also a great mystic and the author of the Holy Zohar. We celebrate his Yartzeit on Lag B'Omer.

2.9 Judah Ha-Nasi (Judah the Prince) (135-219 CE)

The Patriarch of the Jewish community, Judah Ha-Nasi was well-educated in Greek thought as well as Jewish thought. He organized and compiled the Mishnah, building upon Rabbi Akiba's work.

2.10 Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki) (1040 - 1105 CE)

A grape grower living in Northern France, Rashi wrote the definitive commentaries on the Babylonian Talmud and the Bible. Rashi pulled together materials from a wide variety of sources, wrote them down in the order of the Talmud and the Bible for easy reference, and wrote them in such clear, concise and plain language that it can be appreciated by beginners and experts alike. Almost every edition of the Talmud printed since the invention of the printing press has included the text of Rashi's commentary side-by-side with the Talmudic text. Many traditional Jews will not study the Bible without a Rashi commentary beside it.

2.11 Maimonides (Rambam; Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon) (1135-1204 CE)

A physician born in Moorish Cordoba, Maimonides lived in a variety of places throughout the Moorish lands of Spain, the Middle East and North Africa, often fleeing persecution. He was a leader of the Jewish community in Cairo.

Maimonides was the author of the Mishneh Torah, one of the greatest codes of Jewish law, compiling every conceivable topic of Jewish law in subject matter order and providing a simple statement of the prevailing view in plain language. In his own time, he was widely condemned because he claimed that the Mishneh Torah was a substitute for studying the Talmud.

Maimonides is also responsible for several important theological works. He developed the 13 Principles of Faith, the most widely accepted list of Jewish beliefs. He also wrote the Guide for the Perplexed, a discussion of difficult theological concepts written from the perspective of a philosopher.

2.12 Baal Shem Tov (the Besht, Yisrael ben Eliezer) (1698 - 1760 CE)

The founder of Chasidic Judaism. He wrote no books, perhaps because his teachings emphasized the fact that even a simple, uneducated peasant could approach G-d (a radical idea in its time, when Judaism emphasized that the way to approach G-d was through study). He emphasized prayer, the observance of commandments, and ecstatic, personal mystical experiences.

"Baal Shem Tov" means the "Master of a good name". Rabbi Israel gained a good name through his travels to encourage and awaken Jews, especially the simple people, to the service of G-d. The following are two important teachings of the Baal Shem Tov.

Divine Providence is a basic tenet of Judaism. The Baal Shem Tov taught that, not only the major events in the world, but every detail is governed by Divine Providence. Even a leaf that is carried by the wind from one place to

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the other, is determined by Divine Providence how many times it will turn over and exactly where it will land!

He also taught that the simple, honest and sincere person is just as valued to Hashem as the most learned and educated Rabbi. In fact, the Baal Shem Tov said that sometimes a simple person in his sincerity can accomplish more than the scholar.

2.13 Maggid of Mezritch (lit., "the preacher of Mezritch"): R. Dov Ber (d. 1772)

Disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, and mentor of the Alter Rebbe.

2.14 Rabbinic Interpretation

The crisis of the Roman invasion required a creative response, such as that of Johanan ben Zacchai. It also required a reconsideration of the canon. The Law of Moses was no longer a legal canon. Citizenship in Heaven was now divorced from citizenship on Earth. The Jews were once more a people of the Exodus. In their wandering with God, they would become a holy people, holy as their God is holy.

The rabbis at Jamnia defined the present Jewish Canon (A.D. 90-92). New principles of interpretation had to be developed. The older principles for the interpretation of the Torah as civil law were now largely invalid.

The cardinal principle of all rabbinic interpretation comes from the story of the Exodus. At Mount Sinai God appeared historically to all the people as a community and revealed all His plan for Creation, Torah, to Moses completely.

This principle places personal experience in a secondary position and thus minimizes the importance of the prophetic experience which is a private, individual experience. The prophet receives unique, individual visions of revelation and conveys them to the people as God's messenger.

The Rabbinic Principle confers the highest value on God's historical revelation made in the presence of the people of Israel. The community receives the revelation from God. This is how the community is formed and sustained. Interpretation is a matter of community consensus.

The Bible now becomes an eternal text. Historical interpretation is largely abandoned. This was necessary. The text as a history refers to Israel as a political entity. The text must now be interpreted spiritually. Hence, the important stipulation of the Rabbinic Principle that God revealed everything to Moses on Mt. Sinai, at least by implication.

Practically speaking, this means that every text may be used, without regard for time, to help explain any other text.

It means that new interpretations are accepted only if they can be shown to have been implied in what God revealed to Moses at Sinai.

Since God hid himself from the people and Moses in a cloud, it is made clear that God himself cannot be known directly. His Glory is to be seen reflected by all Creation. Men stand as if they had their backs to God. They see the Light of the Divine Countenance reflected from the eyes of other men and from the other creatures made by God.

Since God cannot be known directly all knowledge of God relative and thus not wholly true. Man has no access to absolute Truth, which is God Himself. The Torah leads men to Wisdom. This reveals what can be known of God to men. All speech about God ultimately fails. There is no image of God which can be articulated. Hence, one tells stories. Story is about the events in history and their significance, and yet in story telling we admit that what we are telling is not an absolute Truth. Mystery is ultimately impenetrable. At the end of all understanding, man is called to obedience and commitment; hence, the Shema (Creed), "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is One."

The Rabbinic Principle clearly implied that God spoke the Torah and is thus the author of the Torah. God spoke in Hebrew to Moses, therefore the Torah exists purely only in Hebrew. Any translation would be a human interpretation of what God had spoken.

The Rabbis refused to accept the Greek language writings which were a part of the Septuagint translation as scripture. Only the Hebrew (Aramaic) books were retained.

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The Rabbinic Principle established the wilderness wandering with God as the key Jewish experience. Life is an Exodus. This new image guaranteed that Apocalyptic can never again lead the way. Private visions are made subservient to community experience of revelation. Only what God reveals in the presence of the community on an historical occasion, like Mt. Sinai, can be used as a canonical standard.

2.15 The Talmud

The Tanak was closed as the canon, but events intervened and the canonical process continued. Following the expulsion of the Jews from Palestine in 135 A.D., it was imperative that the oral teaching be committed to writing or be lost. Rabbi Judah the Prince compiled this as the Mishnah, the teaching of the early sages. In 325--375 the teaching of the Rabbis of Palestine and of Babylon were committed to writing as the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmuds respectively. This later interpretation was called both Talmud and Gemarah.

The principle is important. The Talmud is composed of the Torah and two levels of interpretation: the early sages or Mishnah and the later sages or Gemarah. The pattern of the TaNaK is carried over to the Talmud.

The Talmud is the collection of Torah, Mishnah, and Gemarah into a single work of many volumes. It is, at least theoretically, a new and open-ended canon for Judaism. It functions as if it were a Jewish "new testament" in so far as its guidance takes practical precedence over the Prophets and the Writings.

The Talmud serves to open a closed canon. The Torah is fixed at Sinai. Interpretation goes on until the end of time itself. Not even God knows all the valid interpretations yet.

2.16 The Septuagint Translation Of The TaNaK (Torah [Law], Nevi'im [Prophets], K'tuvim [Prophets])

During the period of the Greek Empire, Jews began to migrate to the urban centers of the world. As new generations grew up, they spoke the Greek of the Empire. (Remember: Jews in Palestine spoke a dialect of Syriac because it was the language of the larger culture. Only scholars spoke Hebrew.) There arose a great need for the Hebrew TaNaK to be accessible to this Greek speaking Jewish community.

Alexandria in Egypt--named for Alexander the Great--attracted a highly educated and influential Jewish community. This community produced the first translation of the TaNaK, the Septuagint.

The Septuagint Greek translation spread throughout the Hellenistic (Greek) world, supplanting several rival Greek translations.

It is of great interest to scholars because:

1. It contains books later excluded from the canon by the Council of Jamnia
2. It is the basis for the traditional or Catholic Christian canon.

According to legend, The Septuagint or LXX was translated around 250 B.C. by a group of 72 Jewish translators who produced the translation in 72 days for Ptolemy II Philadelphus whose librarian requested a copy of the Jewish laws. Hence, the name Septuagint or LXX (the 70).

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2.17 Canon Lists**2.17.1 The Jewish Canon list****Torah** (Pentateuch)

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

Nevi'im (Prohets)

Early

Joshua
Judges
I-II Samuel
I-II Kings

Later

Large or major sized books

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Ezekiel

Small or minor sized books

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obidiah
Jonah
Micah

Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

K^etuvim (Writings)

Psalms
Job
Proverbs
Ruth
Song of Songs
Ecclesiastes

Lamentations
Ester
Daniel
Ezra-Nehemiah
I & II Chronicles

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2.17.2 The Septuagint Canon List

Pentateuch –

Genesis

Exodus

Leviticus

Numbers

Deuteronomy

Joshua

Judges

Ruth

I-II Regnorum (I-II Samuel)

III-IV Regnorum, (I-II Kings)

I-II Paralipomenon (I-II Chronicles)

I-II ESDRAS (Ezra-Nehemiah)

Ester

JUDITH

TOBIT

I-IV MACCABEES

Psalms

ODES

Proverbs

Ecclesiastes

Song of Songs

Job

WISDOM OF SOLOMON

SIRACH (ECCLESIASTICUS)

PSALMS OF SOLOMON

Hosea

Amos

Micah

Joel

Obidiah

Jonah

Isaiah

Jeremiah

I BARUCH

Lamentations

EPISTLE OF JEREMIAH

Ezekiel

SUSANNA

Daniel

BELL AND THE DRAGON

Nahum

Habakkuk

Zephaniah

Haggai

Zechariah

Malachi.

The works in CAPITALS were excluded at Jamnia. They were also excluded by Protestants who follow the Jewish canon. Protestants call these works: *Apocrypha* and regard them as edifying but not Scripture.

Through a decision of printers about cost, it has become customary not to print them in Protestant Bibles.

2.18 The Jewish interpreters were**2.18.1 Hillel (70 B.C. - 110 A.D.) (Schaff, vol. I, pp 160-162)**

Hillel classified the 613 Mosaic laws into ‘six orders’ and “drew up the seven exegetic rules...which were the basis of all later developments of the Oral Law.” His followers became allegorical in their interpretation.

2.18.2 Shammai (c.50 B.C – c.30 A.D.) (*ha-Zaken*, "the Elder")

“Shammai interpreted every legal maxim with the extremist rigidity.” He abused the literal method.

A Jewish proverb concerning Hillel and Shammai says “shammai bound and Hillel loosed.”

“shammai was responsible for much of the ritual and ceremony that Christ condemned.”

Shammai adopted a rigorous style of interpretation of Halakah that opposed the teachings of Hillel.

Shammai was one of the leading Jewish sages of Palestine in his time. With the sage Hillel, he was the last of the *zugot* ("pairs"), the scholars that headed the Great Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court and executive body.

Little is known about Shammai's life. He became *av-bet-din* ("presiding justice") of the Great Sanhedrin during the time that Hillel was nasi (president). Like Hillel, he was a member of the pharisees, a scholarly religious party with popular backing (as opposed to the Sadducees, a group of priestly aristocrats).

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Shammai is best remembered for the school, Bet Shammai ("House of Shammai"), that he founded. His school, which advocated a strict, literal interpretation of Jewish law, competed with that of Hillel (Bet Hillel), which advocated more flexible interpretations. Shammai is cited in the Talmud and its commentaries in such a way as to emphasize his austere views. Bet Shammai opposed the Bet Hillel "principle of intention," which holds that the legal consequences of a man's act must be partly based on his intention.

The two schools lasted until the second century AD. Bet Shammai encouraged the zealots, a Jewish sect that fought Roman rule. For a time, the strict interpretations of Bet Shammai found more favour within the Jewish community than did those of Bet Hillel. In AD 90, however, an assembly that met in Jabneh (an ancient biblical city near the site of the Israeli settlement of Yibna) ruled that the views of Bet Hillel were authoritative.

A famous Jewish scribe who together with Hillel made up the last of "the pairs" (*zúgóth*), or, as they are sometimes erroneously named, "presidents and vice-presidents" of the Sanhedrin. The schools of Shammai and Hillel held rival sway, according to Talmudic tradition (Shabbath 15a), from about a hundred years before the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). Comparatively little is known about either of the great scribes. The Mishna, the only trustworthy authority in this matter, mentions Shammai in only eight passages (Maaser sheni, II, 4, 9; Orla, II, 5; Eduyoth I, 1-4, 10, II; Aboth, I, 12, 15, V, 17; Kelim, XXII, 4; Nidda, I, 1). He was the very opposite of Hillel in character and teaching. Stern and severe in living the law to the letter, he was strict to an extreme in legal interpretation. The tale tells that, on the feast of the Tabernacles, his daughter-in-law gave birth to a child; straightway Shammai had the roof broken through and the bed covered over with boughs, so that the child might celebrate the feast in an improvised *sukka* (tent or booth) and might not fail of keeping the law of Leviticus (xxiii, 42).

The strictness of the master characterizes the school of Shammai as opposed to that of Hillel. The difference between the two schools had regard chiefly to the interpretation of the first, second, third and fifth parts of the "Mishna" i.e. to religious dues, the keeping of the Sabbath and of holy days, the laws in regard to marriage and purification. The law, for example, to prepare no food on the Sabbath had to be observed by not allowing even the beast to toil; hence it was argued that an egg laid on the Sabbath might not be eaten (Eduyoth, iv, 1). Another debate was whether, on a holy day, a ladder might be borne from one dove-cote to another or should only be glided from hole to hole. The need of fringes to a linen night-dress was likewise made a matter of difference between the two schools (Eduyoth, iv, 10). In these and many other discussions we find much straining out of gnats and swallowing of camels (Matt., xxiii, 24), much pain taken to push the Mosaic law to an unbearable extreme, and no heed given to the practical reform which was really needed in Jewish morals. It was the method of the school of Shammai rather than that of Hillel which Christ condemned. On this account non-Catholic scholars generally make Him out to have belonged to the school of Hillel. This opinion has been shared in by a few Catholics (Gigot, "General Introduction to the Study of the Holy Scripture", New York, 1900, p. 422). Most Catholic exegetes, however, refuse to admit that Christ belonged to any of the fallible Jewish schools of interpretation. He established His own school to wit, the infallible teaching body to which He gave the Old Testament to have and to keep and to interpret to all nations without error.

2.18.3 Hillel & Shammai

These two great scholars born a generation or two before the beginning of the Common Era are usually discussed together, and contrasted with each other, because they were contemporaries and the leaders of two opposing schools of thought (known as "houses"). The Talmud records over 300 differences of opinion between Beit Hillel (the House of Hillel) and Beit Shammai (the House of Shammai). In every one of these disputes, Hillel's view prevailed.

Rabbi Hillel was born to a wealthy family in Babylonia, but came to Jerusalem without the financial support of his family and supported himself as a woodcutter. It is said that he lived in such great poverty that he was sometimes unable to pay the admission fee to study Torah, and because of him that fee was abolished. He was known for his kindness, his gentleness, and his concern for humanity. One of his most famous sayings, recorded in Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers, a tractate of the Mishnah), is "If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?"

Rabbi Shammai was an engineer. He was known for his more stringent nature and demanded high standards from himself and others. For example, the Talmud tells that a gentile came to Shammai saying that he would convert to Judaism if Shammai could teach him the whole Torah in the time that he could stand on one foot. Shammai drove him away with a builder's measuring stick. Hillel, on the other hand, converted the gentile by

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telling him, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary. Go and study it."

2.18.4 Philo (20 B.C.- 54 A.D.)

The best known of the Alexandrian Jewish allegorizers.

A Jew living in Alexandria about the time of Christ, Philo, was attracted to the ancient Greek philosophers. In continuing to make the Old Testament and Greek philosophy harmonize, he used the Greek method of allegory. The Greeks used this method to harmonize their pagan religious heritage (Homer) with their philosophical tradition (Plato etc.). By rejecting the literal meaning of words, Philo could make Moses and Plato say the same things. He could thus "unite philosophy with revelation, and thus could use the borrowed jewels of Egypt to adorn the sanctuary of God." Farrar, pp.182-183

Allegorical exegesis is based on the concept that under a literal meaning of Scripture, one can find the true meaning.

In terms of history, allegorism came about to end the conflict between Greek philosophy and religion, tradition and myth. Because so much of Greek religion and philosophy contained immoral thoughts and deeds, the stories that were not to be interpreted as literal, but allegorized, i.e. stories that had deeper meaning only to the initiated.

Philo believed that the literal meaning of Scripture represented the immature level of understanding.

Rules for allegorical method

1. Unworthy of God
2. Contradictory statements
3. Claims to be allegory
4. Superfluous words are used
5. Repetition
6. Varied expression
7. Synonyms used
8. Play on words
9. Abnormal number or verb tense
10. Symbols

Although we know that Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, the Bible indicates that many of them desired to return. By the fifth century B. C. there was a colony of Jews living at Elephantine in Egypt. Even though these Jews built a temple, it "has been argued by some scholars that the Jerusalem priests regarded the Jews in Egypt as semi-heretical, and therefore did not encourage them in their apostasy." (The Bible and Archaeology, by J. A. Thompson, 1962, page 226)

In any case, we know that by the time of Jesus there was a large Jewish population in Egypt, which was at that time a Roman province. Jesus, himself, was brought to Egypt by his father and mother to escape the rage of Herod. On page 62 of his book, "Jesus The Magician", Morton Smith says that "There was a long standing legend that the god of the Jews was a donkey, or donkey-headed.... The Jews were among the largest groups of foreigners in Egypt, so their god, Iao, was identified with Seth."

F.F. Bruce says that "Philo of Alexandria estimated about A.D. 38 that there were at least a million Jews in Egypt and the neighboring territories. We may subject this figure to a substantial discount, but the Jewish population of Egypt was certainly very great. In Alexandria itself at that time one out of the five wards of the city was entirely Jewish and a second was very largely so." (New Testament History, 1980, page 136) Bruce felt that "Christianity had found its way to Alexandria by A.D. 41." (Ibid., p. 294)

Though about the time of Christ the name Jesus appears to have been fairly common (Jos., "Ant.", XV, ix, 2; XVII, xiii, 1; XX, ix, 1; "Bel. Jud.", III, ix, 7; IV, iii, 9; VI, v, 5; "Vit.", 22) it was imposed on our Lord by God's express order (Luke, i, 31; Matt., i, 21), to foreshow that the Child was destined to "save his people from their sins." Philo ("De Mutt. Nom.", 21) is therefore, right when he explains Iesous as meaning soteria kyrion;

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Eusebius (Dem., Ev., IV, ad fin.; P. G., XXII, 333) gives the meaning Theou soterion; while St. Cyril of Jerusalem interprets the word as equivalent to soter (Cat., x, 13; P.G., XXXIII, 677). This last writer, however, appears to agree with Clement of Alexandria in considering the word Iesous as of Greek origin (Paedag., III, xii; P. G., VIII, 677); St. Chrysostom emphasizes again the Hebrew derivation of the word and its meaning soter (Hom., ii, 2), thus agreeing with the exegesis of the angel speaking to St. Joseph (Matt., i, 21).

2.18.5 Ezra (Esdras)

Esdras is a famous priest and scribe connected with Israel's restoration after the Exile. The chief sources of information touching his life are the canonical books of Esdras and Nehemias. A group of apocryphal writings is also much concerned with him, but they can hardly be relied upon, as they relate rather the legendary tales of a later age. Esdras was of priestly descent and belonged to the line of Sardoc (I Esdras, vii, 1-5). He styles himself "son of Saraïas" (vii, 1), an expression which is by many understood in a broad sense, as purporting that Saraïas, the chief priest, spoken of in IV Kings, xxv, 18-21, was one of Esdras's ancestors. Nevertheless he is known rather as "the scribe" than as "priest": he was "a ready scribe [a scribe skilled] in the law of Moses", and therefore especially qualified for the task to which he was destined among his people.

The chronological relation of Esdras's work with that of Nehemias is, among the questions connected with the history of the Jewish Restoration, one of the most mooted. Many Biblical scholars still cling to the view suggested by the traditional order of the sacred text (due allowance being made for the break in the narrative -- I Esdras, iv, 6-23), and place the mission of Esdras before that of Nehemias. Others, among whom we may mention Professor Van Hoonacker of Louvain, Dr. T.K. Cheyne in England, and Professor C.F. Kent in America, to do away with the numberless difficulties arising from the interpretation of the main sources of this history, maintain that Nehemias's mission preceded that of Esdras. The former view holds that Esdras came to Jerusalem about 458 B.C., and Nehemias first in 444 and the second time about 430 B.C.; whereas, according to the opposite opinion, Esdras's mission might have taken place as late as 397 B.C. However this may be, since we are here only concerned with Esdras, we will limit ourselves to summarizing the principal features of his life and work, without regard to the problems involved, which it suffices to have mentioned.

Many years had elapsed after permission had been given to the Jews to return to Palestine; amidst difficulties and obstacles the restored community had settled down again in their ancient home and built a new temple; but their condition, both from the political and the religious point of view, was most precarious: they chafed under the oppression of the Persian satraps and had grown indifferent and unobservant of the Law. From Babylon, where this state of affairs was well known, Esdras longed to go to Jerusalem and use his authority as a priest and interpreter of the Law to restore things to a better condition. He was in favour at the court of the Persian king; he not only obtained permission to visit Judea, but a royal edict clothing him with ample authority to carry out his purpose, and ample support from the royal treasury.

The rescript, moreover, ordered the satraps "beyond the river" to assist Esdras liberally and enacted that all Jewish temple officials should be exempt from toll, tribute, or custom. "And thou, Esdras, appoint judges and magistrates, that they may judge all the people, that is beyond the river" (I Esdras, vii, 25). Finally, the Law of God and the law of the king were alike to be enforced by severe penalties. The edict left all Jews who felt so inclined free to go back to their own country. Some 1800 men, including a certain number of priests, Levites, and Nathinites, started with Esdras from Babylon, and after five months the company safely reached Jerusalem. Long-neglected abuses had taken root in the sacred city. These Esdras set himself vigorously to correct, after the silver and gold he had carried from Babylon were brought into the Temple and sacrifices offered. The first task which confronted him was that of dealing with mixed marriages.

Regardless of the Law of Moses, many, even the leading Jews and priests, had intermarried with the idolatrous inhabitants of the country. Horror-stricken by the discovery of this abuse -- the extent of which was very likely unknown heretofore to Esdras -- he gave utterance to his feelings in a prayer which made such an impression upon the people that Sechenias, in their names, proposed that the Israelites should put away their foreign wives and the children born of them. Esdras seized his opportunity, and exacted from the congregation an oath that they would comply with this proposition. A general assembly of the people was called by the princes and the ancients; but the business could not be transacted easily at such a meeting and a special commission, with Esdras at its head, was appointed to take the matter in hand. For three full months this commission held its sessions; at the end of that time the "strange wives" were dismissed.

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What was the outcome of this drastic measure we are not told; Esdras's memoirs are interrupted here. Nor do we know whether, his task accomplished, he returned to Babylon or remained in Jerusalem. At any rate we find him again in the latter city at the reading of the Law which took place after the rebuilding of the walls. No doubt this event had rekindled the enthusiasm of the people; and to comply with the popular demand, Esdras brought the Book of the Law. On the first day of the seventh month (Tishri), a great meeting was held "in the street that was before the watergate", for the purpose of reading the Law. Standing on a platform, Esdras read the book aloud "from the morning until midday". At hearing the words of the Law, which they had so much transgressed, the congregation broke forth into lamentations unsuited to the holiness of the day; Nehemias therefore adjourned the assembly. The reading was resumed on the next day by Esdras, and they found in the Law the directions concerning the feast of the Tabernacles. Thereupon steps were at once taken for the due celebration of this feast, which was to last seven days, from the fifteenth to the twenty-second day of Tishri. Esdras continued the public reading of the Law every day of the feast; and two days after its close a strict fast was held, and "they stood, and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers" (II Esdras, ix, 2). There was a good opportunity to renew solemnly the covenant between the people and God. This covenant pledged the community to the observance of the Law, the abstention from intermarriage with heathens, the careful keeping of the Sabbath and of the feasts, and to various regulations agreed to for the care of the Temple, its services, and the payment of the tithes. It was formally recited by the princes, the Levites, and the priests, and signed by Nehemias and chosen representatives of the priests, the Levites, and the people (strange as it may appear, Esdras's name is not to be found in the list of the subscribers -- II Esdras, x, 1-27). Henceforth no mention whatever is made of Esdras in the canonical literature. He is not spoken of in connection with the second mission of Nehemias to Jerusalem, and this has led many to suppose that he was dead at the time. In fact both the time and place of his death are unknown, although there is on the banks of the Tigris, near the place where this river joins the Euphrates, a monument purporting to be Esdras's tomb, and which, for centuries, has been a place of pilgrimage for the Jews.

Esdras's role in the restoration of the Jews after the exile left a lasting impression upon the minds of the people. This is due mostly to the fact that henceforth Jewish life was shaped on the lines laid down by him, and in a way from which, in the main, it never departed. There is probably a great deal of truth in the tradition which attributes to him the organization of the synagogues and the determination of the books hallowed as canonical among the Jews. Esdras's activity seems to have extended still further. He is credited by the Talmud with having compiled "his own book" (that is to say Esd.-Nehem.), "and the genealogies of the book of Chronicles as far as himself" (Treat. "Baba bathra", 15a). Modern scholars, however, differ widely as to the extent of his literary work: some regard him as the last editor of the Hexateuch, whereas, on the other hand, his part in the composition of Esdras-Nehemias and Paralipomenon is doubted. At any rate, it is certain that he had nothing to do with the composition of the so-called Third and Fourth books of Esdras. As is the case with many men who played an important part at momentous epochs in history, in the course of time Esdras's personality and activity assumed, in the minds of the people, gigantic proportions; legend blended with history and supplied the scantiness of information concerning his life; he was looked upon as a second Moses to whom were attributed all institutions which could not possibly be ascribed to the former. According to Jewish traditions, he restored from memory -- an achievement little short of miraculous -- all the books of the Old Testament, which were believed to have perished during the Exile; he likewise replaced, in the copying of Holy Writ, the old Phoenician writing by the alphabet still in use. Until the Middle Ages, and even the Renaissance, the crop of legendary achievements attributed to him grew up; it was then that Esdras was hailed as the organizer of the famous Great Synagogue -- the very existence of which seems to be a myth -- and the inventor of the Hebrew vocal signs.

2.18.6 Aristobulus of Paneas (160 B.C.)

Jewish Hellenistic philosopher who, like his successor, Philo, attempted to fuse ideas in the Hebrew Scriptures with those in Greek thought.

Aristobulus lived at Alexandria in Egypt, under the Ptolemies. According to some Christian church fathers, he was a Peripatetic, but he also used Platonic and Pythagorean concepts. The Stoic technique of allegorizing the Greek myth served as a model for Aristobulus' writings, and for him the Old Testament God became an allegorical figure. In like manner, the Mosaic laws in the Scriptures were translated into allegorical symbols in his system. He believed that part of his mission in life was to prove that Greek culture was overshadowed and heavily influenced by Judaism.

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He represents one of the first major figures in the tradition of Jewish Hellenistic exegetes.

The fragments of Aristobulus delineate an apologetic, didactic work that sought to demonstrate to both conservative Jewish intellectuals and the Hellenised world the Greek dependence and derivation of Peripatetic philosophy on the Law. Written in the form of a dialogue, the work was originally addressed to king Ptolemy VI Philometer and has been dated from 175-170 BCE.

There are five existing fragments of the work of Aristobulus, which are preserved in the works of Clement, Anatolius, and Eusebius. The preface to a letter from Palestinian Jews to Egyptian Jews in 2 Macc 1.10 is the earliest biblical reference to a Jewish figure named Aristobulus. The preface identifies him as a member of a priestly family, a teacher of Ptolemy (unspecified) the king, and links him to the Jews in Egypt. Although the Ptolemy to which the preface refers is unnamed, readers are expected to identify Philometer (181-145) from the context of the letter and the text of 2 Maccabees. The testimony of 2 Maccabees/ Clement/ Eusebius can be seen to represent one independent tradition. The account of Anatolius, bishop of Laodicea, represents a second independent tradition. Like his counterparts, Anatolius identifies Aristobulus as the eminent Jewish author of 'commentaries on the Law of Moses' which were dedicated to a king Ptolemy.

However, his testimony diverges from the first in the following ways:

1. Anatolius dates Aristobulus earlier than Philo and Josephus.
2. He links him with the translation of the LXX under the auspices of Ptolemy I Soter and Ptolemy II Philadelphus. By doing so he indicates that the work is dedicated to these kings rather than to Philometer, as both Clement and Eusebius claim.
3. Aristobulus is designated the role of LXX translator rather than Peripatetic philosopher.
4. Anatolius fails to mention his priestly status.
5. He fails to mention Aristobulus' allegorical approach to scripture, focusing instead on his astronomical observations relating to Passover.

The scholars Hody and Simon began a tradition of scepticism, beginning in the 17th century, which sought to disprove the authenticity of the work of Aristobulus. They claimed that the account of the origins of the LXX as presented by The Epistle of Aristeas was unreliable. The reliability of this assumption rested on the belief that an independent tradition had been previously cited by Aristobulus. Hody and his followers attempted to prove that Aristobulus was later than Aristeas and that his account only perpetuated the fantastic story of the LXX origins. Against this claim stands Walter, whose work represents the most decisive case for authenticity. He argues, among other points, that Aristobulus stands at the beginning of a long line of tradition of Jewish Alexandrian exegesis.

Cleodemus Malchus was a Hellenistic historian who flourished around the second century BCE. There exists only one fragment of his work, and it exists in two separate forms. This fragment is cited by Eusebius, who cites from Josephus, who in turn cites from Alexander Polyhistor. Cleodemus is given the title of prophet and is reported to have written a work on the history of the Jews. Scholarly debate has focused on the following:

- 1) Cleodemus' identity: what are the ethnic origins and meaning of his surname, Malchus?
 - 2) The meaning of the appellation 'prophet.'
 - 3) The blending of pagan mythological traditions with biblical traditions as reflected in the fragment.
- The text of Cleodemus consists of an elaboration on the genealogical description of Abraham's descendants. The work represents an attempt to link the history and people of Africa and Assyria to Abraham.

3 New Testament and Christian Views

3.1 Christ

"Christ has nowhere given a system of interpretation. However, the interpretative principles which He employed may be discovered from His teaching. A study of some of the actual interpretations which He made reveals the literal method which He used. He always interpreted the Scripture with an understanding of the whole, of particular books and of parts of books. His interpretation was always in accord with grammatical and historical meaning. He understood and appreciated the meaning intended by the writers according to the laws of grammar and rhetoric. The Savior never perverted, distorted or misused any portion of the Word as His followers have so often done." Lightner, The Savior, p.30

Class Notes

Matt. 4:3-10; 12:40; 22:41-46; 22:23-32; Luke 4:16-21, Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; John 5:30-47

Authoritative, accurate, we will answer to it.

Christ expected those who read the Scriptures to understand it.

3.2 Apostles

They too used a literal method of interpretation

Acts 2:25-31, Acts 24:14 - Paul's statement, Romans 11:26-27, Galatians 3:16

3.3 Post-Apostolic Fathers (Early & Late Church Fathers)

3.3.1 100-200 A.D.

Allegory was already coming in.

"...so the Apostolic Fathers...were driven to it in order to make the Old Testament an immediate witness for Christian truth." Farrar, p.167

Song of Solomon

3.3.2 200-450 A.D.

Several schools of thought arose:

3.3.2.1 Alexandrian School

Clement was the first teacher of importance. He taught that the literal sense is the milk of the word but the allegorical is the strong meat. He taught Origen who is the most famous teacher from this school. This school followed the method of Philo.

Origen "appealed to the subjective impression effected by the Bible."

"The Bible, he argued, is meant for the salvation of man, but man, as Plato tells us, consists of three parts - body, soul, and spirit. Scripture therefore must have a three-fold sense of corresponding to this trichotomy. It has a literal, a moral, and a mystic meaning..." Farrar, p. 196

The last method is allegory and was widely used.

3.3.2.2 Antiochian School

This was not actually a school as such but a school of thought. Those associated with it taught a literal, grammatical, historical method instead of the allegorical method. Some distinguished between normal literal and figurative literal.

Lucian, Diodorus, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and John Chrysostom were some of those who used this method. Sadly, the church rejected the method of Antioch and by using the allegorical method led the world into the Dark Ages.

3.3.2.3 Western School

It emphasized the authority of tradition.

3.3.2.3.1 Jerome, literal (more or less)

3.3.2.3.2 Augustine, allegorical

3.3.2.4 Constantine (306-337 a.d.)

When Constantine became emperor of the Roman Empire he changed the attitude of the Roman government concerning religion, allowing a tolerance of various religions, and personally favoring Christianity. Christianity became the preferred religion. While a segment of Christians rejected such an arrangement with the state, the majority view of "orthodox" Christianity saw this rise to favor as a great triumph. There was one serious problem; where in prophecy is such a state-church victory foretold? The Alexandrian school had long practiced the solution - the allegorical method of interpretation. By literal interpretation only Israel of the future had any such promises. Coupling allegorical interpretation with the anti Semitism that characterized much of Christianity, the answer was found. Augustine (4th -5th century) championed this answer by teaching that the church was The Kingdom of God on earth and Physical Israel had been replaced by spiritual Israel, the church.

Class Notes

Jerome's cannon of interpretation was applied- "what things the Jews, and our people, yea, not our people, Judaizing carnally (literal interpretation) maintain as events still future, let us (orthodox) teach, spiritually, as already past." Many in Christianity today 'still play the Alexandrian music, with the 4th century accompaniment." (Nathaniel West) Under Constantine's son Constantius, "hosts now came over to Christianity, though, of course, for the most part with the lips only, not with the heart." (Schaff)

The twin heresies of amillennialism and post-millennialism accounted for the Christian state. One emphasizing The Church and the millennium - "Ahhhmillennialism" while the other emphasized the return of Christ and the millennium, post-millennialism-Christ will return to the earth after the Christian state has "Christianized" the times of the Gentiles.

It is only to be expected that since The Kingdom of God was present on earth and physical Israel had been replaced by The Church, a king was needed now for The Kingdom. This king was found in the Vicar of Christ - the pope in the sixth century.

The Christian state is a misconception. The Kingdom of Daniel 2 will continue until the "Cloud-Comer" returns, the "Rock Hammer" who crushes Gentile rule and sets up His Kingdom as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Amen!

Hosea 3:4-5; Ezekiel 21:26-27; Daniel 2:44-45, 7:13-14, 27; Zechariah 14:1-9; Matthew 25:31-34; Luke 19:11-13; Roman 1 1:25-29; 1 1st Timothy 4: 1; Revelation 19-11, 20-6;

3.3.3 Famous Fathers

The course of theology throughout church history has been guided by the often unseen hand of hermeneutics. The Church Fathers are used to support or oppose various doctrinal issues. Like it or not, Protestantism has been and still is greatly influenced by tradition and the 'succession of theologians". The Reformers and certain Church Fathers are often relied upon far too much to be consistent with our claim, "the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice." No Reformers or Fathers had a corner on the truth and a Christianity that backtracks to these men to get the final word on faith or practice will be to varying degrees misled.

The Fathers and the Reformers were men of their times and were all guilty of twisting Scripture to fit their times. The hermeneutics they used determined their theology.

3.3.3.1 Origen (158-ca253)

He was "strictly asectic".

Schaff says of him:

"His mode of life durin the whole period was strictly ascetic. He made it a mater of principle to renounce every earthly thing not indispensably necessary. He refused the gifts of his pupils, and in literal obedience to the Saviour's injunction he had but one coat, no shoes and took no thought of the morrow. He rarely ate flesh, never drank wine, devoted the greater part of the night to prayer and study, and slept on the bare floor. Nay, in his youthful zeal for ascetic holiness, he even committed the act of self-emasculation partly to fulfill literally the words of Christ, in Matthew 19:12, for the sake of the kingdom of God, partly to secure himself agagainstll temptation and calumny which might arise from his contacts with many female catechumens."

He became the head of the Alexandrian School at age 18.

"His knowledge embraced alll deprtments of the philology, philosophy, and theology of his day. With this he united profound and fertile thought, keen penetration, and glowing imagination. As a true divine, he consecrated all his studies by prayer, and turned them, according to his best convictions, to the service of truth and piety."

"His leaning to idealism, his bias for Plato, and his noble effort to reconcile Christianity with reason, and to commend it even to educated heathens and Gnostic, led him into many grand and fascinating errors.

Class Notes

Among these are his extremely ascetic and almost docetistic conception of corporeity, his denial of a material resurrection, his doctrine of the pre-existence and the pre-temporal fall of souls (including the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ), of the eternal creation, of the extension of the work of redemption to the inhabitants of the stars and to all rational creatures, and the final restoration of all men and fallen angels. Also in regard to the dogma of the divinity of Christ, though he powerfully supported it, and was the first to teach expressly the eternal generation of the Son, yet he may be almost as justly considered a forerunner of the Arian heteroousion, or at least of the semi-Arian homoiousion, as of the Athanasian homoousion.”

“Origen remained the exegetical oracle until Chrysostom far surpassed him, not indeed in originality and vigor of mind and extent of learning, but in sound, sober tact, in simple, natural analysis, and in practical application of the text. His great defect is the neglect of the grammatical and historical sense and his constant desire to find a hidden mystic meaning. He even goes further in this direction than the Gnostic, who everywhere saw transcendental, unfathomable mysteries. His hermeneutical principle assumes a threefold sense - somatic, psychic, and pneumatic; or literal, moral, and spiritual. His allegorical interpretation is ingenious, but often runs far away from the text and degenerates into the merest caprice; while at times it gives way to the opposite extreme of a carnal literalism, by which he justifies his ascetic extravagance.”

A false method of hermeneutics produced amillennialism and postmillennialism as well as Arianism (generation of son - Schaff, vol.III).

3.3.3.2 Ambrose (340-397)

He was a very Godly man and defender of the faith. He was Bishop of Milan and greatly admired. Only Jerome and Augustine equalled or surpassed him. “In exegesis he adopts the allegorical method entirely, and yields little substantial information.” Schaff, Vol.III, p.965

He was a strong advocate for celibacy and monastic piety and was the “teacher and forerunner of Augustine.”

Of Ambrose, Nanthaniel West said:

“Ambrose of Milan, a good, great bold, and eloquent, and who moulded Augustine’s view, and cherished the spirit that formed the new canon of interpretation, was a zealot against the Jews, encouraging the conflagration of their synagogues, and rebuking Theodosius for insisting on restitution by the incendiaries.”

“He wrote to the Emperor, saying: ‘I declare that I would burn a Synagogue myself, lest a place should exist where Christ was denied,’ and avowed that he would have ‘set fire’ to the Synagogue at Milan, if God had not already applied the torch with His own hand!”

“In the heat of such hatred, the Church-Teachers of the 4th century, zealous for Christ, and believing the Millennial Age was born, and the Devil was bound, rejected the Chiliasm of the Anti-Nicene fathers and the first apologists of Christianity, and formulating the new canon concerning ‘Israel,’ applied to themselves the Old Testament prophecies, and voted Israel nationally dead forever! It was the doctrine of the Middle-Age, and is Rome’s doctrine to-day. The Church is the ‘Kingdom,’ and the ‘Church’ is ‘Israel.’ In such times as these, Post-Millennialism came to the throne. The temporal splendor of the Church was the climate of the ‘First Resurrection,’ and the dining hall of Constantine yet unbaptized, was deemed by Eusebius possible to be the fulfilment of John’s Apocalypse concerning the ‘Holy Oblation!’”

“The 1000 years had come! The Dry Bones in the Valley had stood up, an exceeding great Christian army, the adult population of the Roman Empire! A ‘feast of fat things’ smoked on the Emperor’s table, and Christian Bishops and Post-Nicene Fathers were experts to tell what was meant ‘by wines on the lees well refined!’ It was a part of pre-Advent Millennialism! All the Apocalypses of both Testaments clearly foreshadowed, as Eusebius said, ‘The Splendor of our Affairs!’”

Class Notes

West, The Thousand Years in both Testaments. P 421-423

3.3.3.3 Jerome (340-419)

Schaff says of him:

“Jerome had the natural talent and the acquired knowledge, to make him the father of grammatico-historical interpretation, upon which all sound study of the Scriptures must proceed. He very rightly felt that the expositor must not put his own fancies into the Word of God, but draw out the meaning of that word, and he sometimes finds fault with Origen and the allegorical method for roaming in the wide fields of imagination, and giving out the writer’s own thought and fancy for the hidden wisdom of the Scriptures and the church. In this healthful exegetical spirit he excelled all the fathers, except Chrysostom and Theodoret. In the Latin church no others, except the heretical Pelagius (whose short exposition of the Epistles of Paul is incorporated in the works of Jerome), and the unknown Ambrosiaster (whose commentary has found its way among the works of Ambrose), thought like him. But he was far from being consistent; he committed the very fault he censures in Eusebius, who in the superscription of his Commentary on Isaiah promised a historical exposition, but, forgetting the promise, fell into the fashion of Origen. He could not resist the impulse to indulge, after giving the historical sense, in fantastic allegorizing, or, as he expresses himself, “to spread the sails of spiritual understanding”.”

“He distinguishes in most cases a double sense of the Scriptures: the literal and the spiritual, or the historical and the allegorical; sometimes, with Origen and the Alexandrians, a triple sense: the historical, the topological (moral), and the pneumatological (mystical).”

“The word of God does unquestionably carry in its letter a living and life-giving spirit, and is capable of endless application to all times and circumstances; and here lies the truth in the allegorical method of the ancient church. But the spiritual sense must be derived with tender conscientiousness and self-command from the natural, literal meaning, not brought from without, as another sense besides, or above, or against the literal.”

“Jerome goes sometimes as far as Origen in the unscrupulous twisting of the letter and the history, and adopts his mischievous principle of entirely rejecting the literal sense whenever it may seem ludicrous or unworthy. For instance: By the Shunamite damsel, the concubine of the aged King David, he understands (Imitating Origen’s allegorical obliteration of the double crime against Uriah and Bathsheba) the ever-virgin Wisdom of God, so extolled by Solomon; and the earnest controversy between Paul and Peter he alters into a sham fight for the instruction of the Antiochian Christians who were present; thus making out of it a deceitful accommodation, over which Augustine (who took just offence at such patrocinium mendacii) drew him into an epistolary controversy characteristic of the two men.”

“In the exposition of the Prophets, Jerome sees too many allusions to the heretics of his time (as Luther everywhere allusions to the Papists, fanatics, and sectarians); and, on the other hand, with the zeal he inherited from Origen against all chiliasm, he finds far too little reference to the end of all things in the second coming of our Lord. He limits, for example, even the eschatological discourse of Christ in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and Paul’s prophecy of the man of sin in the second Epistle to the Thessalonians, to the destruction of Jerusalem.”

West says of Jerome:

“Jerome’s canon of interpretation, - ‘what things the Jews, and our people, - yea, not our people, - Judaizing carnally, maintain, as such events still further, let us (orthodox) teach, spiritually, as already past,’ - has been remanded to the age that gave it birth, save by some who still play the Alexandrian music, with the 4th century accompaniment, telling us that we are living in the millennium ‘now,’ when the Devil is bound, and war is no more!”

“With the change of the Church’s condition came a change of interpretation” it was a total revelation and signal departure of the whole church, from the early faith as to prophecy, led by men who partook of the ‘spirit of the age,’ fixing the canon of interpretation for Israel in Old Testament prediction, and in Apocalypse of John. No sooner was the martyr-flame extinguished by the first imperial law of toleration, and the Church protected by the State, than laws most cruel were enacted against Pagans,

Class Notes

Heretics and Jews. By the Church, which assumed to 'take Israel's place in the kingdom of God,' the Jews were consigned to an irreversible curse; ostracised, hated, persecuted, their synagogues burned to the ground." West, *The Thousand Years in both Testaments*. P 420-421

3.3.3.4 John Chrysostom (347-407)

Schaff says of him:

"John, to whom an admiring posterity since the seventh century has given the name CHRYSOSTOMUS, THE GOLDEN MOUTHED, is the greatest expositor and preacher of the Greek church, and still enjoys the highest honor in the whole Christian world. No one of the Oriental fathers has left a more spotless reputation; no one is so much read and so often quoted by modern commentators."

"...he belonged to the same Antiochian school with his teacher Diodorus of Tarsus, his fellow-student Theodore of Mopsuestia, and his successor Nestorius. From this school, whose doctrinal development was not then complete, he derived a taste for the simple, sober, grammatico-historical interpretation, in opposition to the arbitrary allegorizing of the Alexandrians, while he remained entirely free from the rationalizing tendency which that school soon afterwards discovered. He is thus the soundest and worthiest representative of the antiochian theology."

"Valuable as the contributions of Chrysostom to didactic theology may be, his chief importance and merit lie not in this department, but in homiletical exegesis, pulpit eloquence, and pastoral care. Here he is unsurpassed among the ancient fathers, whether Greek or Latin."

"In the pulpit Chrysostom was a monarch of unlimited power over his hearers. His sermons were frequently interrupted by noisy theatrical demonstrations of applause, which he indignantly rebuked as unworthy of the house of God."

"He took up whole books and explained them in order, instead of confining himself to particular texts, as was the custom after the introduction of the periscopes. His language is noble, solemn, vigorous, fiery, and often overpowering. Yet he was by no means wholly free from the untruthful exaggerations and artificial antitheses, which were regarded at that time as the greatest ornament and highest triumph of eloquence, but which appear to a healthy and cultivated taste as defects and degeneracies."

3.3.3.5 Augustine (354-430)

Augustine is without question the most influential man in church history. Schaff's estimation of him is not uncommon. "As a theologian he is facile princeps, at least surpassed by no church father, scholastic, or reformer." p. 997, Vol III.

Luther and Calvin were both indebted to Augustinian theology. The following extensive quotations give us understanding of the man and his methods of interpretation.

Schaff, Vol. 3. pp.1001-1002, 1020-1021,1022,1024-102

"But his knowledge of Greek literature was mostly derived from Latin translations. With the Greek language, as he himself frankly and modestly confesses, he had, in comparison with Jerome, but a superficial acquaintance. Hebrew he did not understand at all. Hence, with all his extraordinary familiarity with the Latin Bible, he made many mistakes in exposition. He was rather a thinker than a scholar, and depended mainly on his own resources which were always abundant.

"In the doctrine of baptism he is entirely Catholic, though in logical contradiction with his dogma of predestination; but in the doctrine of the holy communion he stands, like his predecessors, Tertullian and Cyprian, nearer to the Calvinistic theory of a spiritual presence and fruition of Christ's body and blood. He also contributed to promote, at least in his later writings, the Catholic faith of miracles, and the worship of Mary; though he exempts the Virgin only from actual sin, not from original, and, with all his reverence for her, never calls her mother of God."

Class Notes

“At first an advocate of religious liberty and of purely spiritual methods of opposing error, he afterwards asserted the fatal principle of the coge intrare, and lent the great weight of his authority to the system of civil persecution, at the bloody fruits of which in the middle ages he himself would have shuddered.”

“Thus even truly great and good men have unintentionally, through mistaken zeal, become the authors of much mischief.”

The Reformers were led by his writings into a deeper understanding of Paul, and so prepared for their great vocation. No church teacher did so much to mould Luther and Calvin; none furnished them so powerful weapons against the dominant Pelagianism and formalism, none is so often quoted by them with esteem and love.”

“Luther says of him, ‘Augustine often erred; he cannot be trusted. Though he is good and holy, yet he, as well as other fathers, was wanting in the true faith.’”

“The doctrine of universal baptismal regeneration, in particular, which presupposes a universal call (at least within the church), can on principles of logic hardly be united with the doctrine of an absolute predestination, which limits the decree of redemption to a portion of the baptized. Augustine supposes, on the one hand, that every baptized person, through the inward operation of the Holy Ghost, which accompanies the outward act of the sacrament, receives the forgiveness of sins, and is translated from the state of nature into the state of grace, and thus, qua baptizatus, is also a child of God and an heir of eternal life...”

“Augustine assumes that many are actually born into the kingdom of grace only to perish again; Calvin holds that in the case of the non-elect baptism is an unmeaning ceremony, the one putting the delusion in the inward effect, the other in the outward form.”

Augustine’s most famous works are his “Confessions”, “The City of God”, and “On Christian Doctrine”.

Confessions, pp. 34-36

“For first, these things also had now begun to appear to me capable of defense; and the Catholic faith, for which I had thought nothing could be said against the Manichees’ objections, I now thought might be maintained without shamelessness; especially after I had heard one or two places of the Old Testament resolved, and oft-times ‘in a figure’, which when I understood literally, I was ‘slain’ spiritually. Very many places then of those books having been explained, I now blamed my despair in believing that no answer could be given to such as hated and scoffed at the Law and the Prophets.”

“I joyed also that the old Scriptures of the Law and the Prophets were laid before me, not now to be perused with that eye to which before they seemed absurd, when I reviled Thy holy ones for so thinking, whereas indeed they thought not so: and with joy I heard Ambrose in his sermons to the people oftentimes most diligently recommend this text for a rule, “The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life”, whilst he drew aside the mystic veil, laying open spiritually what according to the ‘letter’ seemed to teach something unsound; teaching herein nothing that offended me, though he taught what I knew not as yet whether it were true.” (cf. 2nd Corinthians 3:6)

His Conversion pp. 60-61

“so was I speaking, and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo! I heard from a neighboring house a voice, as of a boy or girl, I know not, chanting, and oft repeating, ‘Take up and read, take up and read.’ Instantly, my countenance altered, I began to think most intently whether children were wont in any kind of play to sing such words; nor could I remember ever to have heard the like....Eagerly I returned to the place where Alypius was sitting; for there had I laid the volume of the Apostle, when I arose thence. I seized, opened, and in silence read that section, on which my eyes first fell: ‘Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh’, in concupiscence. No further would I read; nor needed I: for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away.” (cf. Romans 13:14)

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“For thou convertedst me unto Thyself, so that I sought neither wife, nor any hope of this world, standing in that rule of faith where Thou hadst shewed me unto her in a vision, so many years before. And Thou didst convert her mourning into joy, much more plentiful than she had desired, and in a much more precious and purer way than she erst required, by having grandchildren of my body.”

Visions p.65

“Then didst Thou by a vision discover to Thy forenamed Bishop where the bodies of Gervasius and Protasius the martyrs lay hid (whom Thou hadst in Thy secret treasury stored uncorrupted so many years), whence Thou mightest seasonably produce them to repress the fury of a woman, but an Empress. For when they were discovered and dug up, and with due honour translated to the Ambrosian Basilica, not only they who were vexed with unclean spirits (the devils confessing themselves) were cured, but a certain man who had for many years been blind, a citizen and well known to the city, asking and hearing the reason of the people’s confused joy, sprang forth, desiring his guide to lead him thither. Led thither, he begged to be allowed to touch with his handkerchief the bier of Thy saints, whose death is precious in Thy sight.”

Mass for his mother p. 71

“These things she enjoined us not; but desired only to have her name commemorated at Thy Altar, which she had served without intermission for one day; whence she knew that holy sacrifice to be dispensed by which the hand-writing that was against us is blotted out; through which the enemy was triumphed over, who, summing up our offenses and seeking what to lay to our charge, found nothing in Him in Whom we conquer. Who shall restore to Him the innocent blood? Who repay Him the price wherewith He bought us, and so take us from Him? Unto the Sacrament of which our ransom, Thy handmaid bound her soul by the bond of faith. Let none sever her from Thy protection; let neither the ‘lion’ nor the ‘dragon’ interpose himself by force or fraud. For she will not answer that she owes nothing, lest she be convicted and seized by the crafty accuser; but she will answer that her ‘sins are forgiven’ her by Him, to Whom none can repay that price, which He Who owed nothing paid for us.”

Books 11-13 of the Confessions are based on Genesis 1. His exposition is almost all allegory.

“If therefore we conceive of the natures of the things themselves, not allegorically, but properly, then does the phrase ‘increase and multiply’ agree unto all things that come of seed. But if we treat of the words as figuratively spoken (which I rather suppose to be the purpose of Scripture, which doth not, surely, superfluously ascribe this benediction to the offspring of aquatic animals and man only), then do we find ‘multitude’ to belong to creatures spiritual as well as corporeal, as in heaven and earth, and to souls both righteous and unrighteous, as in light and darkness; and to holy authors who have been the ministers of the Law unto us, as in the firmament which is settled betwixt the waters and the waters; and to the society of people yet in the bitterness of infidelity, as in the sea; and to the zeal of holy souls, as in the dry land; and to works of mercy belonging to this present life, as in the herbs bearing seed, and in trees bearing fruit; and to spiritual gifts set forth for edification, as in the lights of heaven, and to affections formed into temperance, as in the living soul. In all these instances we meet with multitudes, abundance, and increase; but what shall in such wise ‘increase and multiply’ that one thing may be expressed many ways, and one expression understood many ways, we find not, except in signs corporeally expressed, and things mentally conceived. By signs corporeally pronounced we understand the generations of the waters, necessarily occasioned by the depth of the flesh; by things mentally conceived, human generations, on account of the fruitfulness of reason. And for this end do we believe Thee, Lord, to have said to these kinds, “Increase and multiply.” For in this blessing I conceive Thee to have granted us a power and a faculty, both to express several ways what we understand but one, and to understand several ways what we read to be obscurely delivered but in one. Thus are the waters of the sea replenished, which are not moved but by several significations; thus with human increase is the earth also replenished, whose dryness appeareth in its longing, and reason ruleth over it.”

On Christian Doctrine, note these statements:

“There are two things on which all interpretation of Scripture depends; the mode of ascertaining the proper meaning and the mode of making known the meaning when it is ascertained.”

Class Notes

“For if he takes up rashly a meaning which the author whom he is reading did not intend, he often falls in with other statements which he cannot harmonize with this meaning. And if he admits that these statements are true and certain, then it follows that the meaning he had put upon the former passage cannot be the true one: and so it comes to pass, one can hardly tell how, that, out of love for his own opinion, he begins to feel more angry with Scripture than he is with himself. And if he should once permit that evil to creep in, it will utterly destroy him. ‘For we walk by faith, not by sight.’ Now faith will totter if the authority of Scripture begins to shake. And then, if faith totter, love itself will grow cold.”

Song of Solomon 4:2

“...how is it, I say that if a man says this, he does not please his hearer so much as when he draws the same meaning from the passage in Canticles, where it is said of the Church, when it is being praised under the figure of a beautiful woman, ‘Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are shorn, which came up from the washing, whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren among them’? Does the hearer learn anything more than when he listens to the same thought expressed in the plainest language, without the help of this figure? And yet, I don’t know why, I feel greater pleasure in contemplating holy men, when I view them as the teeth of the Church, tearing men away from their errors, and bringing them into the Church’s body, with all their harshness softened down, just as if they had been torn off and masticated by the teeth. It is with the greatest pleasure too, that I recognize them under the figure of sheep that have been shorn, laying down the burdens of the world like fleeces, and coming up from the washing, i.e., from baptism, and all bearing twins, i.e., the twin commandments of love, and none among them barren in that holy fruit.”

“Ignorance of numbers, too, prevents us from understanding things that are set down in Scripture in a figurative and mystical way. A candid mind, if I may so speak, cannot be anxious, for example, to ascertain what is meant by the fact that Moses and Elijah, and our Lord Himself, all fasted for forty days. And except by knowledge of and reflection upon the number, the difficulty of explaining the figure involved in this action cannot be got over. For the number contains ten four times, indicating the knowledge of all things, and that knowledge interwoven with time. For both the diurnal and the annual revolutions are accomplished in periods numbering four each; the diurnal in the hours of the morning, the noontide, the evening, and the night; the annual in the spring, summer, autumn, and winter months. Now while we live in time, for the sake of that eternity in which we wish to live; although by the passage of time we are taught this very lesson of despising time and seeking eternity. Further, the number ten signifies the knowledge of the Creator and the creature, for there is a trinity in the Creator; and the number seven indicates the creature, because of the life and the body. For the life consists of three parts, whence also God is to be loved with the whole heart, the whole soul, and the whole mind; and it is very clear that in the body there are four elements of which it is made up. In this number ten, therefore, when it is placed before us in connexion with time, that is, when it is taken four times, we are admonished to live unstained by, and not partaking of, any delight in time, that is, to fast for forty days. Of this we are admonished by the law personified in Moses, by prophecy personified in Elijah, and by our Lord Himself, Who, as if receiving the witness both of the law and the prophets, appeared on the mount between the other two, while His three disciples looked on in amazement. Next, we have to inquire in the same way, how out of the number forty springs the number fifty, which in our religion has no ordinary sacredness attached to it on account of the Pentecost, and who this number taken thrice on account of the three divisions of time, before the law, under the law, and under grace, or perhaps on account of the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Trinity itself being added over and above, has reference to the mystery of the most Holy Church, and reaches to the number of the one hundred and fifty-three fishes which were taken after the resurrection of our Lord, when the nets were cast out on the right hand side of the boat. And in the same way many other numbers and combinations of numbers are used in the sacred writings, to convey instruction under a figurative guise, and ignorance of numbers often shuts out the reader from this instruction.”

“Not a few things, too, are closed against us and obscured by ignorance of music. One man, for example, has not skillfully explained some metaphors from the difference between the psalter and the harp. And it is a question which is not out of place for learned men to discuss, whether there is any musical law that compels the psalter of ten chords to have just so many strings; or whether, if there be

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no such law, the number itself is not on that very account the more to be considered as of sacred significance, either with reference to the ten commandments of the law (and if again any question is raised about that number, we can only refer it to the Creator and the creature), or with reference to the number ten itself as interpreted above. And the number of years the temple was in building, which is mentioned in the Gospel - viz., forty-six - has a certain undefinable musical sound, and when referred to the structure of our Lord's body, in relation to which the temple was mentioned, compels many heretics to confess that our Lord put on, not a false, but a true and human body. And in several places in the Holy Scriptures we find both numbers and music mentioned with honor."

"It is a wretched slavery which takes the figurative expressions of Scripture in a literal sense.

"But the ambiguities of metaphorical words, about which I am next to speak, demand no ordinary care and diligence. In the first place, we must be aware of taking a figurative expression literally. For the saying of the apostle applies in this case too: 'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.' For when what is said figuratively is taken as if it were said literally, it is understood in a carnal manner. And nothing is more fittingly called the death of the soul than when that in it which raises it above the brutes, the intelligence, namely, is put in subjection to the flesh by a blind adherence to the letter. For he who follows the letter takes figurative words as if they were proper, and does not carry out what is indicated by a proper word into its secondary signification; but, if he hears of the Sabbath, for example, thinks of nothing but the one day out of seven which recurs in constant succession; and when he hears of a sacrifice, does not carry his thoughts beyond the customary offerings of victims from the flock, and of the fruits of the earth. Now it is surely a miserable slavery of the soul to take signs for things, and to be unable to lift the eye of the mind above what is corporeal and created, that it may drink in eternal light."

"Whatever there is in the Word of God that cannot, when taken literally, be referred either to purity of life or soundness of doctrine, you may set down as figurative."

"Rule regarding passages of Scripture in which approval is expressed of actions which are now condemned by good men."

"Therefore, although all, or nearly all, the transactions recorded in the Old Testament are to be taken not literally only, but figuratively as well, nevertheless even in the case of those which the reader has taken literally, and which, though the authors of them are praised, are repugnant to the habits of the good men who since our Lord's advent are the custodians of the divine commands, let him refer the figure to its interpretation, but let him not transfer the act to his habits of life. For many things which were done as duties at that time cannot now be done except through lust."

"One passage susceptible of various interpretations."

"When, again, not some one interpretation, but two or more interpretations are put upon the same words of Scripture, even though the meaning of the writer intended remain undiscovered, there is no danger if it can be shown from other passages of Scripture that any of the interpretations put on the words is in harmony with the truth. And if a man in searching the Scriptures endeavors to get at the intention of the author through whom the Holy Spirit spake, whether he succeeds in this endeavor, or whether he draws a different meaning from the words, but one that is not opposed to sound doctrine, he is free from blame so long as he is supported by the testimony of some other passage of Scripture. For the author perhaps saw that this very meaning lay in the words which we are trying to interpret; and assuredly the Holy Spirit who through him spake these words, foresaw that this interpretation would occur to him, seeing that it too is founded on truth. For what more liberal and more fruitful provision could God have made in regard to the Sacred Scriptures than that the same words might be understood in several senses, all of which are sanctioned by the concurring testimony of other passages equally divine?"

"That spiritual Israel, therefore, is distinguished from the carnal Israel which is of one nation, by newness of grace, not by nobility of descent, in feeling, not in race; but the prophet, in his depth of meaning, while speaking of the carnal Israel, passes on, without indicating the transition, to speak of the spiritual, and although now speaking of the latter, seems to be still speaking of the former; not that he grudges us the clear apprehension of Scripture, as if we were enemies, but that he deals with us as a physician, giving us a wholesome exercise for our spirit. And therefore we ought to take this saying,

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‘And I will bring you unto your own land’, and what he says shortly afterwards, as if repeating himself, “And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers”, not literally, as if they referred to Israel after the flesh, but spiritually, as referring to the spiritual Israel. For the Church, without spot or wrinkle, gathered out of all nations, and destined to reign for ever with Christ, is itself the land of the blessed, the land of the living, and we are to understand that this was given to the fathers when it was promised to them in the sure and immutable purpose of God...”

Augustine is widely hailed in amillennial circles as the champion who wiped millennial teachings (Chiliasm) from the Church. Even if I was an amillennialist (2nd class condition), I hope I could support my arguments without having to go to Augustine! Note his hermeneutics in the City Of God, pp. 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541.

West says this concerning Ezk 40-48: “How to interpretet these chapters, do they belong to the thousand years of John, are these also a millenial picture, we answer yes, they cannot be literalized into the times of the reformation under Zurrubbael, or spiritualized by the times of the New Testament Church, nor celestialized into the heavenly state, or allegorized into the new final heaven and earth, or idealized into an oriental phantasmagorail abstraction.”

West quotes “a professor Orelli who said ‘The national element in prophecy was more and more ignored and everything received the Christain coloring , Israel is always now to be spiritually interpreted, after the age of persecution was past, the attitude of the Church toward prophecy was remarkably changed, its fulfillment being no longer anxiously looked for. Old Testament prophecy was regarded as finally fulfilled and done with and where the words of prophecy were not responded to by the actual history, all was spiritualized, this spiritualistic intepretation did not scruple to refer the promises pertaining to Israel’s future to the Christian Church, as the spiritual prosterity of Abraham according to Gal 3:7.”

“‘One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.’ There should follow on the completion of six thousand years, as of six days, a kind of seventh-day Sabbath in the succeeding thousand years; and that it is for this purpose the saints rise, viz., to celebrate this Sabbath. And this opinion would not be objectionable, if it were believed that the joys of the saints in that Sabbath shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God; for I myself, too, once held this opinion. But, as they assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy the leisure of immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of meat and drink such as not only to shock the feeling of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal. They who do believe them are called by the spiritual Chiliasts, which we may literally reproduce by the name Millenarians. It were a tedious process to refute these opinions point by point: we prefer proceeding to show how that passage of Scripture should be understood.”

“The Lord Jesus Christ Himself says, ‘No man can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man’ - meaning by the strong man the devil because he had power to take captive the human race; and meaning by his goods which he was to take, those who had been held by the devil in diverse sins and iniquities, but were to become believers in Himself. It was then for the binding of this strong one that the apostle saw in the Apocalypse ‘an angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the abyss, and a chain in his hand. And he laid hold,’ he says, ‘on the dragon, that old serpent, which is called the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years’ - that is, bridled and restrained his power so that he could not seduce and gain possession of those who were to be freed. Now the thousand years may be understood in two ways, so far as occurs to me; either because these things happen in the sixth thousand of years or sixth millennium (the latter part of which is now passing), as if during the sixth day, which is to be followed by a Sabbath which has no evening, the endless rest of the saints, so that, speaking of a part under the name of the whole, he calls the last part of the millennium - the part, that is, which had yet to expire before the end of the world - a thousand years; or he used the thousand years as an equivalent for the whole duration of this world, employing the number of perfection to mark the fullness of time. For a thousand is the cube of ten. For ten times ten makes a hundred, that is, the square on a plane superficies. But to give this superficies height, and make it a cube, the hundred is again multiplied by ten, which gives a thousand. Besides, if a hundred is sometimes used for totality, as when the Lord said by way of promise to him

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that left all and followed him, 'He shall receive in the world an hundredfold', of which the apostle gives, as it were an explanation when he says, 'As having nothing, yet possessing all things' - for even of old it had been said, 'The whole world is the wealth of a believer' - with how much greater reason is a thousand put for totality since it is the cube, while the other is only the square? And for the same reason we cannot better interpret the words of the Psalm, 'He hath been mindful of His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations,' than by understanding it to mean 'to all generations.'"

"And he cast him into the abyss' i.e., cast the devil into the abyss. By the abyss is meant the countless multitude of the wicked whose hearts are unfathomably deep in malignity against the Church of God; not that the devil was not there before, but he is said to be cast in thither, because, when prevented from harming believers, he takes more complete possession of the ungodly. For that man is more abundantly possessed by the devil who is not only alienated from God, but also gratuitously hates those who serve God. 'And shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled.' 'shut him up' - i.e., prohibited him from going out, from doing what was forbidden. And the addition of 'set a seal upon him' seems to me to mean that it was designed to keep it a secret who belonged to the devil's party and who did not. For in this world this is a secret, for we cannot tell whether even the man who seems to stand shall fall, or whether he who seems to lie shall rise again. But by the chain and prisonhouse of this interdict the devil is prohibited and restrained from seducing those nations which belong to Christ, but which he formerly seduced or held in subjection. For before the foundation of the world God chose to rescue these from the power of darkness, and to translate them into the kingdom of the Son of His love, as the apostle says. For what Christian is not aware that he seduces nations even now, and draws them with himself to eternal punishment, but not those predestined to eternal life? And let no one be dismayed by the circumstance that the devil often seduces even those who have been regenerated in Christ, and begun to walk in God's way. For "the Lord knoweth them that are His", and of these the devil seduces none to eternal damnation. For it is as God, from Whom nothing is hid even of things future, that the Lord knows them; not as a man, who sees a man at the present time (if he can be said to see one whose heart he does not see), but does not see even himself so far as to be able to know what kind of person he is to be. The devil, then, is bound and shut up in the abyss that he may not seduce the nations from which the Church is gathered, and which he formerly seduced before the Church existed. For it is not said 'that he should not seduce any man' - meaning, no doubt, those among which the Church exists - 'till the thousand years should be fulfilled' - i.e., either what remains of the sixth day which consists of a thousand years, or all the years which are to elapse till the end of the world. The words, 'that he should not seduce the nations till the thousand years should be fulfilled', are not to be understood as indicating that afterwards he is to seduce only those nations from which the predestined Church is composed, and from seducing whom he is restrained by that chain and imprisonment; but they are used in conformity with that usage frequently employed in Scripture and exemplified in the psalm, 'so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us' - not as if the eyes of His servants would no longer wait upon the Lord their God when He had mercy upon them. Or the order of the words is unquestionably this, 'And he shut him up and set a seal upon him, till the thousand years should be fulfilled', and the interposed clause, 'that he should seduce the nations no more', is not to be understood in the connexion in which it stands, but separately, and as if added afterwards, so that the whole sentence might be read, 'And He shut him up and set a seal upon him till the thousand years should be fulfilled, that he should seduce the nations no more' - i.e., he is shut up till the thousand years be fulfilled, on this account, that he may no more deceive the nations."

Of binding and loosing the devil....

"After that", says John, 'he must be loosed a little season.' If the binding and shutting up of the devil means his being made unable to seduce the Church, must his loosing be the recovery of this ability? By no means. For the Church is predestined and elected before the foundation of the world, the Church of which it is said, 'The Lord knoweth them that are His,' shall never be seduced by him. And yet there shall be a Church in this world even when the devil shall be loosed, as there has been since the beginning, and shall be always, the places of the dying being filled by new believers. For a little after John says that the devil, being loosed, shall draw the nations whom he has seduced in the whole world to make war against the Church, and that the number of these enemies shall be as the sand of the sea. 'And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and

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the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. And the devil who seduced them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.' This relates to the last judgment, but I have thought fit to mention it now, lest any one might suppose that in that short time during which the devil shall be loosed there shall be no Church upon earth, whether because the devil finds no Church, or destroys it by manifold persecutions. The devil, then, is not bound during the whole time which this book embraces - that is, from the first coming of Christ, to the end of the world, when he shall come the second time - not bound in this sense, that during this interval, which goes by the name of a thousand years, he shall not seduce the Church, for not even when loosed shall he seduce it. For certainly if his being bound means that he is not able or not permitted to seduce the Church, what can the loosing of him mean but his being able or permitted to do so? But God forbid that such should be the case! But the binding of the devil is his being prevented from the exercise of his whole power to seduce men, either by violently forcing or fraudulently deceiving them into taking part with him. If he were during so long a period permitted to assail the weakness of men, very many persons, such as God would not wish to expose to such temptation, would have their faith overthrown, or would be prevented from believing; and that this might not happen, he is bound."

"But when the short time comes he shall be loosed. For he shall rage with the whole force of himself and his angels for three years and six months; and those with whom he makes war shall have power to withstand all his violence and stratagems. And if he were never loosed, his malicious power would be less patent, and less proof would be given of the steadfast fortitude of the holy city: it would, in short, be less manifest what good use the Almighty makes of his great evil. For the Almighty does not absolutely seclude the saints from his temptation, but shelters only their inner man, where faith resides, that by outward temptation they may grow in grace. And He binds him that he may not, in the free and eager exercise of his malice, hinder or destroy the faith of those countless weak persons, already believing or yet to believe, from whom the Church must be increased and completed; and he will in the end loose him, that the city of God may see how mighty an adversary it has conquered, to the great glory of its Redeemer, Helper, Deliverer. And what are we in comparison with those believers and saints who shall then exist, seeing that they shall be tested by the loosing of an enemy with whom we make war at the greatest peril even when he is bound? Although it is also certain that even in this intervening period there have been and are some soldiers of Christ so wise and strong, that if they were to be alive in this mortal condition at the time of his loosing, they would both most wisely guard against and most patiently endure, all his snares and assaults. Now the devil was thus bound not only when the Church began to be more and more widely extended among the nations beyond Judea, but is now and shall be bound till the end of the world, when he is to be loosed. Because even now, men are, and doubtless to the end of the world shall be, converted to the faith from the unbelief in which he held them. And this strong one is bound in each instance in which he is spoiled of one of his goods; and the abyss in which he is shut up is not at an end when those die who were alive when first he was shut up in it, but these have been succeeded, and shall to the end of the world be succeeded, by others born after them with a like hate of the Christians, and in the dept of whose blind hearts he is continually shut up as in an abyss. But it is a question whether, during these three years and six months when he shall be loose, and raging with all his force, any one who has not previously believed shall attach himself to the faith. For how in that case would the words hold good, 'Who entereth into the house of a strong one to spoil his goods unless first he shall have bound the strong one?' Consequently this verse seems to compel us to believe that during that time, short as it is, no one will be added to the Christian community, but that the devil will make war with those who have previously become Christians, and that, though some of these may be conquered and desert the devil, these do not belong to the predestinated number of the sons of God. For it is not without reason that John, the same apostle as wrote this Apocalypse, says in his epistle regarding certain persons, 'They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have remained with us.' But what shall become of the little ones? For it is beyond all belief that in these days there shall not be found some Christian children born, but not yet baptized, and that there shall not also be some born during that very period; and if there be such, we cannot believe that their parents shall not find some way of bringing them to the laver of regeneration."

"Therefore the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now His saints reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter; and yet,

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though the tares grow in the Church along with the wheat, they do not reign with Him. For they reign with Him who do what the apostle says, 'If ye be risen with Christ, mind the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Seek those things which are above, not the things which are on the earth.' Of such persons he also says that their conversation is in heaven. In fine, they reign with Him who are so in His kingdom that they themselves are His kingdom. But in what sense are those the kingdom of Christ, who, to say no more, though they are in it until all offenses are gathered out of it at the end of the world, yet seek their own things in it and not the things that are Christs?"

"It is then of this kingdom militant, in which conflict with the enemy is still maintained, and war carried on with warring lusts, or government laid upon them as they yield, until we come to that most peaceful kingdom in which we shall reign without any enemy, and it is of this first resurrection in the present life that the Apocalypse speaks in the words just quoted. For, after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to give a sketch of what the Church does or of what is done in the Church in those days, in the words, 'And I saw seats and the them that are within?' 'And the souls,' says John, 'of those who were slain for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God' - understanding what he afterwards says - 'reigned with Christ a thousand years' - that is, the souls of the martyrs not yet restored to their bodies. For the souls of the pious dead are not separated from the Church, which even now is the kingdom of Christ; otherwise there would be no remembrance made of them at the altar of God in the partaking of the body of Christ, nor would it do any good in danger to run to His baptism, that we might not pass from this life without it; nor to reconciliation, if by penitence or a bad conscience any one may be severed from His body. For why are these things practiced, if not because the faithful, even though dead, are His members? Therefore, while these thousand years run on, their souls reign with Him, though not as yet in conjunction with their bodies."

"The rest of them,' he says, 'did not live.' For now is the hour when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live; and the rest of them shall not live. The words added, 'until the thousand years are finished', mean that they did not live in the time in which they ought to have lived by passing from death to life. And therefore, when the day of the bodily resurrection arrives, they shall come out of their graves, not to life, but to judgment, namely, to damnation, which is called the second death. For whosoever has not lived until the thousand years be finished, i.e., during this whole time in which the first resurrection is going on - whosoever has not heard the voice of the Son of God, and passed from death to life, that man shall certainly in the second resurrection, the resurrection of the flesh, pass with his flesh into the second death."

Of Gog and Magog, who are to be roused by the devil to persecute the Church when he is loosed in the end of the world.

"The meaning of these names we find to be Gog, - a roof, Magog, - from a roof, a house, as it were, and he who comes out of the house. They are therefore the nations in which we found that the devil was shut up as in an abyss, and the devil himself coming out from them and going forth, so that they are the roof, he from the roof. Or if we refer both words to the nations, not one to them and one to the devil, then they are both the roof, because in them the old enemy is at present shut up, and as it were roofed in; and they shall be from the roof when they break forth from concealed to open hatred. The words, 'And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints and the beloved city,' do not mean that they have come, or shall come, to one place, as if the camp of the saints and the beloved city should be in some one place; for this camp is nothing else than the Church of Christ extending over the whole world. And consequently wherever the Church shall be - and it shall be in all nations, as is signified by 'the breadth of the earth' - there also shall be the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and there it shall be encompassed by the savage persecution of all its enemies; for they too shall exist along with it in all nations - that is, shall be straitened, and hard pressed, and shut up in the straits of tribulation, but shall not desert its military duty, which is signified by the word camp."

"This last persecution by Antichrist shall last for three years and six months, as we have already said, and as is affirmed both in the Book of Revelation and by Daniel the prophet."

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A. T. Robertson wrote the following statements in Regnum Dei, pp. 124-125, 131, 134-135, 169, 176, 222.

“Briefly, it may be said the Realistic Eschatology prevailed in the Church generally for two centuries and a half, and in the Western Church for four centuries - that is until the time of Augustine, who shared it himself, until, as he expressly tells us, reflexion led him to a different mind on the subject. His vast influence coupled with other more general causes, carried the Church’s mind in a new direction; Millenarianism quickly lost ground and ceased to be even a tolerated doctrine.”

“There was then before A.D. 200 no widespread influence in Christian thought to counteract the realism of early Christian Eschatology.”

“When persecution no longer kept it alive, - when the active hostility of the State no longer counteracted the natural Christian instinct of good citizenship, exemplified in St. Paul, - the old Realistic Eschatology silently melted away.”

“Once more, a cycle of belief which centered round the imminent return of Christ was essentially out of sympathy with a Church order and organization calculated for a lasting and permanent state of things. Finally, whatever causes tended towards the identification of the Kingdom of GOD with the visible Church, for that reason tended to render Chiliasm superfluous by satisfying in another way the fundamental instinct upon which it was founded, - the desire for the realization of earth of the Kingdom of GOD.”

“The history of the conception of the Kingdom of GOD relates mainly to these more variable elements. Its history in the early Church is the history of the prevalence and decline of Milleniarism. It ends with St. Augustine. The history of the medieval idea of the Kingdom of God and of its more modern interpretations is, mainly, the history of the theology and constitution of the Church. It begins with St. Augustine. Augustine, as a Western Churchman, inherited a refined and spiritualized Milleniarism, which later reflexion led him deliberately to abandon.”

“It was schism, then, rather than heresy, that first presented to the mind of Churchmen the issues that are involved in the analysis of the idea of the Church, and it was mainly in Africa, the province of Augustine, that the first formal answer was given by Christian theology to the challenge of pure and simple schism, disengaged from any doctrinal issues. Cyprian, and a century later Optatus, deal with this question...but their interest is practical, not theological; they have not gone back to the essential conception, not laid the foundations of a systematized theology of the Church. This was reserved for Augustine. Although therefore we cannot say, in the face of the strong drift of converging tendencies of thought, and of the notorious risks of an argument from silence, that no one before Augustine, in writing or in speech, spoke of the Catholic Church as the Kingdom of GOD, the fact remains that extant literature records no instance of such language, and this fact becomes intelligible when we notice that Augustine grounds the identification upon a revision of received exegesis, and that it is with him part of a new theological analysis - the analysis of the conception of the Church.”

“Hence the visible hierarchically organized Church acquires in his thought and language much of the ideal character of the Kingdom of GOD. It was only required to slightly change the significance of the latter idea, to substitute for the Reign of the saints with Christ, for the Reign of Christ in the soul, the familiar thought of a kingdom in the sense of an organized government, to make Augustine’s doctrine of the Church the foundation for the ecclesiastical superstructure, raised by Gregory VII. and Innocent III., of an omnipotent hierarchy set over nations and kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy, and to overthrow and to build and to plant.”

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In summary of patristic times, Milton S. Terry wrote in his Biblical Hermeneutics, p. 666,

“As we review the history of patristic exegesis we notice the progress of two opposite tendencies operative from the beginning of the Christian era. The one was a speculative spirit, a habit of allegorizing, begotten of associated Judaism and Platonism; it received a mighty impulse in the Alexandrian school, and has maintained more or less influence even to the present day. The other tendency was of a more practical character. It originated with our Lord and His apostles, who condemned the fanciful speculations and Hagadic traditions of their time, and set the example of a sober and rational interpretation of the Scriptures. It was the distinguishing feather of the school of Antioch, and exhibits some of its best results in the exegetical works of Chrysostom and Theodoret. But this more grammatical and logical method of interpretation attained no complete development among the ancient fathers. The prevalence of superstitions, the blind credulity of the masses, the strong tendencies to asceticism and mysticism, and the defective knowledge of the original languages of the Bible, gave, in the main, an advantage to the allegorists, and rendered a thorough grammatico-historical interpretation impossible. Hence, we are not to look to the ancient fathers for models of exegesis. Their writings contain numerous imperishable gems of thought, and exhibit great intellectual acumen and logical subtlety, but as interpreters of the sacred volume they have been far surpassed by the moderns. Notwithstanding his extravagant allegorizing, Origen will ever be prized for his great learning and remarkable service in biblical criticism, and the works of Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Jerome, despite their frequent errors, will ever hold high rank in biblical literature; but the time is passed when an appeal to the opinions of the early fathers has any considerable weight with men of learning.”

3.3.4 Early Church Fathers**3.3.4.1 Clement of Rome (92 – 101)**

St. Clement of Rome is believed to have been the third or fourth bishop of Rome (after the apostles) and served during the last decade of the first century. Around 96, he sent a letter from the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth, a major city in northeastern Greece and the site of St. Paul's evangelization. This letter, known as Clement's First Epistle to the Corinthians [DOC], is most likely directed against immoral practices of prostitution connected with the Temple of Aphrodite. In the letter, Clement expresses his dissatisfaction with events taking place in the Corinthian Church and asks the people to repent for their unchristian ways. The letter is important because it indicates that the author was acting as the head of the Christian Church and that it was centered in Rome. Clement was allegedly put to death under Emperor Domitian.

The early apostolic fathers interpreted Scripture according to a "functional hermeneutic," meaning that they applied the text to their own situation, often without regard for its original context. For example, Clement included 166 quotations or allusions to the Old Testament in his *Epistle to the Corinthians*, seeking not so much to discover the Old Testament's message on its own or even with regard to the work of Christ, but more so to offer types and other pictures of Christ as a basis for moral obedience.

His predecessors are Linus and Cletus (or Anacletus, or Anencletus), about whom almost nothing is known. They are simply names on a list. Clement is a little more than this, chiefly because he wrote a letter to the Corinthians, which was highly valued by the early church, and has been preserved to the present day. The letter itself does not carry his name, but is merely addressed from the congregation at Rome to the congregation at Corinth. However, a letter from Corinth to Rome a few decades later refers to "the letter we received from your bishop Clement, which we still read regularly." Other early writers are unanimous in attributing the letter to Clement. Perhaps because this letter made his name familiar, he has had an early anonymous sermon (commonly called *II Clement*) attributed to him, and is a character in some early religious romances (e.g. the *Clementine Recognitions*).

One story about Clement is that he was put to death by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the sea. Accordingly, he is often depicted with an anchor, and many churches in port towns intended to minister chiefly to mariners are named for him.

The Epistle of Clement to The Corinthians (also called *I Clement*) can be found in collections of the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, such as the Penguin Paperback *Early Christian Writings*, translated by

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Maxwell Staniforth. The letter is commonly dated around 96 AD, but an earlier date is suggested by John Robinson in his *Redating the New Testament*.

The letter is occasioned by the fact that a group of Christians at Corinth had banded together against their leaders and had deposed them from office. Clement writes to tell them that they have behaved badly, and to remind them of the importance of Christian unity and love. He speaks at length of the way in which each kind of official in the church has his own function for the good of the whole. The letter is an important witness to the early Christian understanding of Church government, but an ambiguous witness in that we are never told precisely why the Corinthians had deposed their leaders, and therefore the letter can be read as saying that presbyters ought not to be deposed without reasonable grounds, or as saying that they cannot be deposed on any grounds at all.

The letter refers only to the presbyters of Corinth, and makes no reference to the bishop of Corinth. Moreover, there is no mention of a bishop at Rome--the letter is sent as from the Church at Rome collectively, and Clement's name does not appear. From this, some have inferred that the office of bishop had not yet developed at either Rome or Corinth, and that in both congregations the office of presbyter was the highest office known. A probable alternate explanation, however, is that the troubles in Corinth had arisen when the bishop of that congregation had died, and the congregation had split into factions, none containing both a majority of the presbyters and a majority of the congregation.

The letter makes no apology for intervening in what might be thought an internal affair of the congregation at Corinth. On the contrary, the writer apologizes for the delay in commenting, as if an earlier intervention might have been expected. From this, some have inferred that, even at this early date (96 AD or, some think, earlier), when the Apostle John was perhaps still alive, the authority and jurisdiction of the Roman congregation over every other congregation of the Christian Church was already universally conceded. However, a perfectly reasonable alternative explanation is that the congregation at Corinth, torn by division, had agreed to settle their disputes by inviting another congregation, or the head of another congregation, to act as arbitrator. This would be a reasonable thing to do, and the choice of Rome as that congregation was natural, partly because of the prestige of the city, and the prestige of one of the largest congregations in the Church, and because the Corinth of Clement's day had been built as a Roman colony, with a special dependence directly on the city of Rome (a civil relation that might affect the habits of thought of the Corinthians on matters ecclesiastical as well), but also because Rome was far enough away so that it could be assumed to be impartial and not affected by local personalities. From Clement's Letter to the Corinthians:

Let the one truly possessed by the love of Christ keep his commandments. Who can express the binding power of divine love? Who can find words for the splendor of its beauty? Beyond all description are the heights to which it lifts us. Love unites us to God; "it cancels innumerable sins," has no limits to its endurance, bears everything patiently. Love is neither servile nor arrogant. It does not provoke schisms or form cliques, but always acts in harmony with others. By it all God's chosen ones have been sanctified; without it, it is impossible to please him. Out of love the Lord took us to himself; because he loved us and it was God's will, our Lord Jesus Christ gave his life's blood for us -- he gave his body for our body, his soul for our soul.

See then, beloved, what a great and wonderful thing love is, and how inexpressible its perfection. Who are worthy to possess it unless God makes them so? To him therefore we must turn, begging of his mercy that there may be found in us a love free from human partiality and beyond reproach. Every generation from Adam's time to ours has passed away; but those who by God's grace were made perfect in love and have a dwelling now among the saints, and when at last the kingdom of Christ appears, they will be revealed. "Take shelter in your rooms for a little while," says Scripture, "until my wrath subsides. Then I will remember the good days, and will raise you from your graves."

Happy are we, beloved, if love enables us to live in harmony and in the observance of God's commandments, for then it will also gain for us the remission of our sins. Scripture pronounces "happy those whose transgressions are pardoned, whose sins are forgiven. Happy the one," it says, "to whom the Lord imputes no fault, on whose lips there is no guile." This is the blessing given those whom God has chosen through Jesus Christ our Lord. To him be glory for ever and ever.

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Let us fix our attention on the blood of Christ and recognize how precious it is to God his Father, since it was shed for our salvation and brought the grace of repentance to all the world.

If we review the various ages of history, we will see that in every generation the Lord has "offered the opportunity of repentance" to any who were willing to turn to him. When Noah preached God's message of repentance, all who listened to him were saved. Jonah told the Ninevites they were going to be destroyed, but when they repented, their prayers gained God's forgiveness for their sins, and they were saved, even though they were not of God's people.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the ministers of God's grace have spoken of repentance; indeed, the Master of the whole universe himself spoke of repentance with an oath: "As I live," says the Lord, "I do not wish the death of the sinner but the sinner's repentance." He added this evidence of his goodness: "House of Israel, repent of your wickedness. Tell my people: If their sins should reach from earth to heaven, if they are brighter than scarlet and blacker than sackcloth, you need only turn to me with your whole heart and say, 'Father,' and I will listen to you as to a holy people."

In other words, God wanted all his beloved ones to have the opportunity to repent and he confirmed this desire by his own almighty will. That is why we should obey his sovereign and glorious will and prayerfully entreat his mercy and kindness. We should be suppliant before him and turn to his compassion, rejecting empty works and quarreling and jealousy which only lead to death.

We should be humble in mind, putting aside all arrogance, pride, and foolish anger. Rather, we should act in accordance with the Scriptures, as the Holy Spirit says: "The wise must not glory in wisdom nor the strong in strength nor the rich in riches. Rather, let the one who glories glory in the Lord, by seeking him and doing what is right and just." Recall especially what the Lord Jesus said when he taught gentleness and forbearance. "Be merciful," he said, "so that you may have mercy shown to you. Forgive, so that you may be forgiven. As you treat others, so you will be treated. As you give, so you will receive. As you judge, so you will be judged. As you are kind to others, so you will be treated kindly. The measure of your giving will be the measure of your receiving."

Let these commandments and precepts strengthen us to live in humble obedience to his sacred words. As Scripture asks: "Whom shall I look upon with favor except the humble, peaceful one who trembles at my words?"

Sharing then in the heritage of so many vast and glorious achievements, let us hasten toward the goal of peace, set before us from the beginning. Let us keep our eyes firmly fixed on the Father and Creator of the whole universe, and hold fast to his splendid and transcendent gifts of peace and all his blessings.

Prayer (traditional language)

Almighty God, who didst choose thy servant Clement of Rome to recall the Church in Corinth to obedience and stability: Grant that thy Church may be grounded and settled in thy truth by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and may evermore be kept blameless in thy service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Prayer (contemporary language)

Almighty God, who chose your servant Clement of Rome to recall the Church in Corinth to obedience and stability: Grant that your Church may be grounded and settled in your truth by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and may evermore be kept blameless in your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 78:3-7 or 85:8-13

2 Timothy 2:1-7

Luke 6:37-45 (St2)

In the late first century, a letter was drafted in the name of the Roman church to deal with what it saw as a serious breach in Corinthian ecclesiastical order. The author was Clement who may have been mentioned in Phil. 4:3, was probably noted in Hermas's Shepherd, and is often identified or connected with Favius

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Clement, a consul in 95, who perished, possibly for his Christian faith, near the end of Domitian's reign (81-96). More likely a spokesman for and leader of the Roman presbyter-bishops than the third sole bishop of Rome after Peter and Paul as he was later declared to be by Irenaeus, Clement is distressed by incidents in the church at Corinth in which blameless and properly appointed presbyters have been unlawfully deposed. He responds by stressing God's goodness, omnipotence, and judgment, God's imposition of proper order and harmony on creation which thus requires discipline, concord, and obedience among all God's creatures, Christ's salvific life and death which models to and works in believers humility, righteousness, forgiveness, and love, and Christ's calling of the disciples who then obediently initiated an inviolate order of apostolic succession in the church (imaged, in part, by the Roman army), which means that since Christ granted to the laity no power to install presbyters, he certainly gave it no authority to depose them. Other works, such as an early homily that became known as "Second Clement" or "The Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians," have been attributed to Clement, but he wrote none of them.

Writings

I Clement or *Letter to the Corinthians* (c. 96): earliest piece of literature outside the NT historically attested; addressed disputes in the Church at Corinth;

II Clement (a sermon)(c. 140): Clementine authorship disputed

3.3.4.2 Ignatius of Antioch**Personal**

Martyr for the faith

Disciple of John the Evangelist

Condemned to die by wild beasts in Rome

Brought from Antioch to Rome and wrote seven letters to churches and individuals along the way

Place and dates

d. 110

Writings

Letter to Ephesians

Letter to Magnesians

Letter to Tralles

Letter to Philadelphians

Letter to Smyrnans

Letter to Polycarp of Smyrna

Letter to Romans

These contain warnings against heretical doctrines; contain detailed summaries of doctrines; and a picture of Church organization with bishops, presbyters (elders) and deacons

First to stress Virgin Birth and to use the term "catholic church"

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3.3.4.3 The Epistle of Barnabas**3.3.4.4 Justin Martyr****3.3.4.5 Irenaeus of Smyrna****3.3.4.6 Tertullian of Carthage****3.3.4.7 Alexandrian Fathers****3.3.4.7.1 Pantaeus of Alexandria****3.3.4.7.2 Clement of Alexandria****3.3.4.7.3 Origen (ca. 185-254)****3.3.4.8 Antiochian Fathers of Syria****3.3.4.8.1 Dorotheus****3.3.4.8.2 Lucian****3.3.4.8.3 Diodorus****3.3.4.8.4 Theodore of Mopsuestia****3.3.4.8.5 John Chrysostom of Constantinople (ca. 354-407)****3.3.4.8.6 Theodoret (386-458)****3.3.5 Late Church Fathers****3.3.5.1 Jerome (ca. 347-419)****3.3.5.2 Augustine (354-430)****3.3.5.3 John Cassian (ca. 360-435)****3.3.5.4 Eucherius of Lyons (ca. - 450)****3.3.5.5 Adrian of Antioch (a.d. 435)****3.3.5.6 Junilius (a.d 550)****3.4 Middle Ages**

“During the period extending from Gregory the Great to the time of Luther (A.D.600 to A.D. 1500), the true exegetical spirit could scarcely be expected to maintain itself, or produce works of great merit. The monasteries became the principle seats of learning, and the treasures of theological literature gradually found their way to them as to so many asylums. The Scriptures were everywhere regarded as a holy treasure, and many were wont to consult them for oracular responses. If one was about to embark in some dangerous enterprise, he would open the Bible and regard the first words which met his eye as a special revelation to himself.” Terry, p. 661

About the only men of the middle ages who were of any exegetical value were Oecumenius (a tenth century compiler of the writings of the Fathers) who followed Chrysostom’s works and hermeneutical method and Theophylact, an eleventh century follower of Chrysostom.

Although Thomas Aquinas (13 century) and Bonaventura are recognized by some as distinguished theologians, “exegesis made no real advance” with them. “Far fetched and worthless speculations” ruled interpretation. Thomas attempted to combine faith and reason (based on the logic of Aristotle) in his famous work, *Summa Theologiae*. He stated, “The literal sense of Scripture is manifold, its spiritual sense, threefold, viz., allegorical, moral and analogical.’ The literal sense teaches the things which have happened, the allegorical what we are to believe, the moral what we are to do and the analogical directs to things to be awaited.” Schaff, vol. 1, p.717

Bonaventura sometimes used a seven-fold sense, “The historical, the allegorical, the mystical, the moral, the symbolical, the synecdochical, and the hyperbolical.”!!! “The whole seven correspond with the seals of the

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Apocalypse.” Terry, pp. 666,667

Light finally began to dawn with Nicholas de Lyra, John Wycliffe, John Huss and John Wessel. These 14-15 century reformation forerunners gave the literal method a more important place. John Wycliffe said, “It shall greatly help ye to understand Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances considering what goeth before and what followeth.”

The reformation was not the bolt of lightening some think but was the result of a general revival of learning and a serious study of the Word. The invention of printing hastened the spread of knowledge and the Scriptures. In the 16th century John Reuchlin revived the study and grammatical interpretation of Hebrew and Erasmus published a Greek New Testament, which provided fuel for the reformers.

Some of the men who played an important part during this period of time were

3.4.1 Gregory the Great (540-604)

3.4.2 Venerable Bede (637-734)

3.4.3 Alcuin of York, England (735-804)

3.4.4 Rabanus Maurus

3.4.5 Rashi Shlomo son of Isaac (1049-1105)

3.4.6 Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

3.4.7 Joachim of Flora (1132-1202)

3.4.8 Steven Langton (ca. 1155-1228)

3.4.9 Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

3.4.10 Nicholas of Lyra (1279-1340)

3.4.11 John Wycliff (ca. 1330-1384)

“It shall greatly help ye to understand Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances considering what goeth before and what followeth.”

3.5 Reformation 1517-1600

The Bible so long chained by Satanic Popery, was released and the literal method of interpretation became the standard of the reformation. Hermeneutics finally received new life and began to develop as a science.

3.5.1 Martin Luther (1483-1546)

“The literal sense of Scripture alone is the whole essence of faith and of Christian theology.”

“I ask for Scripture and Eck offers me the Fathers. I ask for the sun, and he shows me his lantern. I ask, ‘Where is your Scripture proof?’ and he adduces Ambrose and Cyril. With all due respect to the Fathers, I prefer the authority of Scripture.”

“I have observed this, that all heresies and errors have originated, not from the simple words of Scripture...but from neglecting the simple words of Scripture, and from the affection of purely subjective tropes and inferences.”

“Each passage has one clear, definite, and true sense of its own. All others are but doubtful and uncertain opinions.”

“The Bible is a river in which the lamb may ford and the elephant must swim.” Quotes by Farrar of Luther, p. 327

Luther said of allegory, “An interpreter must as much as possible avoid allegory, that he may not wander in idle dreams.”

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“Origen’s allegories are not worth so much dirt.”

“Allegories are empty speculations, and as it were the scum of Holy Scripture.”

“Allegory is a sort of beautiful harlot, who proves herself specially seductive to idle men.”

“He (Luther) is least true to his own principle in the comments on Job, Psalms, and Canticles, and is by no means always consistent.” Farrar, p. 328

As a general rule, the reformers and those who were directly connected to them used the literal method of interpretation.

“Luther also prepared notes on Genesis, the Psalms, the Sermon on the Mount, the Gospel of John, and other portions of the New Testament. His knowledge of Hebrew and Greek was limited, and he sometimes mistook the meaning of the sacred writer, but his religious intuitions and deep devotional spirit enabled him generally to apprehend the true sense of Scripture.” Terry, p.674

3.5.2 Calvin (1509-1564)

“One of the greatest interpreters that ever lived.” Wrote on all but ten books of the Bible in complete commentary form. “He will not tamper with allegory.” Farrar, p. 345

Calvin said, “It is better to confess ignorance than to play with frivolous guesses.” He was more consistent than Luther.

“It is the first business of an interpreter to let his author say what he does say instead of attributing to him what we think he ought to say.”

“We may most truly declare that we have brought more light to bear on the understanding of Scripture than all the authors who have sprung up amongst Christians since the rise of the Papacy; nor do they themselves venture to rob us of this praise.” Farrar, pp. 347,353

“Yes! to the Reformers was fulfilled once more the old promise, “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

“Of all the exegetes of the period of the Reformation the first place must unquestionably be given to John Calvin,... In textual and philological criticism he was not equal to Erasmus, Melancthon, Ceolampadius, or his intimate friend, Beza, and he occasionally falls into notably incorrect interpretations of words and phrases; but as a whole, his commentaries are justly celebrated for clearness, good sense, and masterly apprehension of the meaning and spirit of the sacred writers. In his Preface To The Epistle To The Romans he maintains that the chief excellence of an interpreter is a perspicuous brevity which does not divert the reader’s thoughts by long and prolix discussions, but directly lays open the mind of the sacred writer. His commentaries, accordingly, while not altogether free from blemishes, exhibit a happy exegetical tact, a ready grasp of the more obvious meaning of words, and an admirable regard to the context, scope, and plan of the author. He seldom quotes from other commentators, and is conspicuously free from mystical, allegorical, and forced methods of exposition.” Terry, pp. 676,677

For more information on the reformers see Farrar, History of Interpretation, pp. 308-354, and Chaff, History of the Christian Church, Vol. 7 & 8. One should also study commentaries by both Luther and Calvin.

The philosophy of the times consciously or unconsciously influences all. Men are products of their times, acting and reacting. God help the person who looks back in order to regulate his doctrine and deportment. No one in church history had “arrived”.

“I am persuaded that the Lord hath more truths yet to come for us out of His Holy Word. Neither Luther nor Calvin have penetrated into the whole Council of God.” John Robinson, Farewell Address To The Pilgrim Fathers

“Living variety is better than dead uniformity.” Farrar

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“Lord help us to learn how to better balance ourselves by the knowledge of church history but lead us to your Word to learn what to believe.”

3.5.3 John Reuchlin**3.5.4 Desiderius Erasmus (1560)****3.5.5 Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560)**

Melanchthon said: “save us from the ‘fury of theologians’”.

3.5.6 Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)**3.5.7 William Tyndale (ca. 1494-1536)****3.5.8 Anabaptist movement (1525)****3.5.8.1 Conrad Grebel****3.5.8.2 Felix Manz****3.5.8.3 Georg Balurock****3.5.8.4 Balthazar Hubmaier****3.5.8.5 Michel Sattler****3.5.8.6 Pilgram Marpeck****3.5.8.7 Menno Simons****3.5.8.8 Council of Trent (1545-1563)****3.6 Post-reformation 1600-1750**

This era was marked more by a hermeneutics controlled by theology than a theology controlled by hermeneutics. Thus a mixture of literal and allegorical is seen. There were various systems that developed.

3.6.1 Socinian school

Human reason is judge of interpretation.

3.6.2 Pietist

Desire to keep the literal, grammatical, historical interpretation from becoming spiritually cold. Emphasis on application of scripture to Godly living. It influenced many men and movements- Moravians, Puritans, Wesley, Edwards.

3.6.3 Men

Farrar traces the progress of interpretation in pages 357-437. Protestantism became a “scholastic” type of religion. “Petrified dogmas”, “creed-bondage”, “dogmatic traditionalism”, “dead orthodoxy”, and “proof-text” are all descriptive of the state of Christianity.

“Their dogmas were based not upon secure evidence, but on dominant authority...enforce them by anathema and banishment, yes even by axe and stake.” Farrar, p. 360

Many today are guilty of “interpreting Scripture solely from our creeds” and using the proof-text method or even the absurd mystical magic of looking at the first words seen after a random selection of Scripture as God’s immediate message!

A survey of key men in the post-reformation period is also to be found in Terry, pp. 604-738. A brief survey of that era follows.

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Lightfoot

.... “pre-eminent for his attainments in Hebrew and rabbinical literature...his principle works are a Chronological Arrangement of the Books of the Old And New Testaments, Gleanings in Exodus, Erubhim, or Miscellaneous Tracts on Sunday Biblical Themes, A Harmony of the Four Gospels, a Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, Description of the Temple at Jerusalem in the Time of Our Savior, and Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae, on the Gospels, Acts, Romans, and First Corinthians.”

Some of the Englishmen of this time period were:**William Pemble**

“...an eminent Calvinistic preacher and scholar...”

Henry Ainsworth

“an early leader of the Independents, and author...on several books of the Bible..”

Thomas Gataker

“one of the ablest divines of the Westminster Assembly and one of the principal authors of the Annotations upon all the Books of the Old and New Testaments...”

Joseph Caryl

“known chiefly from his immense work on the Book of Job..”

Richard Baxter

“distinguished for his modifications of Calvinism, and pre-eminent as theologian, preacher, and pastor, was author of a paraphrase of the New Testament.”

Thomas Godwin

“composed a useful treatise on the Civil and Ecclesiastical Rites of the Ancient Hebrews...”

John Goodwin

“famous English Arminian, wrote...and exposition of Romans ix...”

Thomas Goodwin

“contemporary Calvinistic divine, wrote on Ephesians and Revelation.”

James Usher

“accomplished biblical scholar, whose Annals of the Old and New Testaments established a chronology of the Bible which has been quite generally adopted until the present time.”

John Owen

“acknowledged leader of the Congregationalists during the time of Cromwell...”

James Arminius

“professor of theology in 1603.fell into controversy with.Francis Gomar, a strenuous Calvinist.continued with increased bitterness after the death of Arminius (1609) and led to the holding of the Synod of Dort (1618) at which (the Calvinists being largely in the majority) the opinions of the Arminian Remonstrants were condemned, their ministers were deposed, and many of them banished from the country: and all who embraced Arminian doctrines were excluded from the fellowship of the Church, and their religious assemblies were suppressed by law. The Arminian theology was, however, too deeply grounded in a comprehensive and rational exegesis of the Scriptures to be thus put down.”

“Neander calls him (Arminius) the “pattern of a conscientious and zealously investigating theologian, who endeavoured to guard himself against all partiality”.”

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Hugo Grotius

"Dutch divine of the Arminian school. a most remarkable man of the seventeenth century, and eminent alike in theology, civil jurisprudence, apologetics, and dogmatic theology, he wrote annotations on the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha. good sense and good taste displayed. Often noticeably fails to grasp the plan and scope of the sacred writers. He lacked the profound religious intuition of Luther and Calvin, and leaned to a rationalistic treatment of Scripture."

Heinsius

"acted as secretary to the Synod of Dort and is known as the editor of many of the Greek and Roman classics..."

Voetius

"Dutch Reformed Church. aimed rather to support and defend a theological system than to ascertain by valid reason the exact meaning of the sacred writers. assumed to adhere strictly to the literal sense, but, at the same time, regarded all biblical criticism as highly dangerous to the orthodox faith. The Voetians would fain have made the dogmas of the Synod of Dort the authoritative guide to the sense of Scripture, and were restless before an appeal to the original texts of the Bible and independent methods of interpretation."

John Cocceius (Developed Covenant Theology)

"devoted himself chiefly to biblical expositions. Although his labours revived and encouraged allegorical and mystical methods of interpretation, it must be conceded that he exhibited many of the very best qualities of a biblical exegete and did as much as any man of his time to hold up the Holy Scriptures as the living fountain of all revealed theology, and the only authoritative rule and standard of faith."

ROBINSON'S FAREWELL COUNSEL

"Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the King a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, 'The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him.'" Ezra 8:21-22

"The arrangements for the departure of the emigrants being completed, the whole congregation met for humiliation and prayer on the 21st of July, 1620, when Mr. Robinson preached with deep emotion, from Ezra 8:21-22. The close of his discourse is thus given by Mr. Winslow: "We are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether ever he should live to see our faces again. But whether the Lord had appointed it or not, he charged us before God and his blessed angels, to follow him no further than he followed Christ; and if God should reveal any thing to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth by his ministry; for he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his holy word. He took occasion also miserably to bewail the state and condition of the Reformed churches who were come to a period in religion, and would go no further than the instruments of their reformation. As for example, the Lutherans, they could not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; for whatever part of God's will he had further imparted and revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it. And so also, saith he, you see the Calvinists, they stick where he left them, a misery much to be lamented; for though they were precious shining lights in their times, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them; and were they now living, saith he, they would be as ready and willing to embrace further light, as that they had received. Here also he put us in mind of our church covenant, at least that part of it whereby we promise and covenant with God and one another to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to us from his written Word; but withal exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth, and well to examine and compare it and weigh it with other Scriptures of truth before we received it. For, saith he, it is not possible the Christian world would come so lately out of such thick antichristian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once"

Class Notes

3.6.4 Confirming and Spread of Calvinism**3.6.4.1 Westminster Confession (1647)****3.6.4.2 Francis Turretin (1623-1687)****3.6.4.3 Jean-Alphonse Turretin (1648-1737)****3.6.4.4 Johann Ernesti (1707-1781)****3.6.5 Reactions to Calvinism****3.6.5.1 Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609)****3.6.5.2 Jakob Boehme (1635-1705)****3.6.5.3 Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705)****3.6.5.4 August H. Francke (1663-1727)****3.6.5.5 John Wesley (1703-1791)****3.6.6 Textual and Linguistic Studies****3.6.6.1 Louis Cappell****3.6.6.2 Johann A. Bengel (1687-1752)****3.6.6.3 Johann J. Wettstein (1693-1754)****3.6.7 Rationalism****3.6.7.1 Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)****3.6.7.2 Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677)****3.7 Modern Era 1750-1973**

During the modern era there have been a number of excellent works dealing with hermeneutics.

Bengel was a great scholar and Godly saint. Noble intellect, pure spirit, blameless life. “ He wrote Gnomon, a “mine of priceless gems.”

“His principles of interpretation are in the main essentially sound, and his methods of exposition have not been greatly improved upon by any later writers. In his attempt to expound prophecy, however, especially the book of Revelation, he showed defective judgment, and indulged in vain speculations.” Terry, p. 699

John Ernesti, William Gesenius, Horne, all contributed to the science of hermeneutics.

John Ernesti

“He is regarded,” says Hagenback, “as founder of a new exegetical school, whose principle simply was that the Bible must be rigidly explained according to its own language, and, in this explanation, it must neither be bribed by any external authority of the Church, nor by our own feelings, nor by a sportive and allegorizing fancy...”
“...he was orthodox...defended the Lutheran view...further distinguished...by a certain freedom and mildness of judgment which men had not been accustomed to find in theologians.” Terry, pp. 707,708

Matthew Henry

Probably no English commentary has had a wider circulation or is better known than that of Matthew Henry.”
“...not a critical work, and not strictly exegetical,...but full of practical good sense...”

John Gill

“eminent English Baptist, ...sometimes runs into the spiritualizing processes...”

Class Notes

Immanuel Kant

“contributed little directly to biblical exegesis, but his philosophical principles have influenced three generations of biblical critics.”

“The development of speculative philosophy through Jacobi, Herbart, Fichte, Schelling and Hegel exerted a profound influence upon the critical minds of Germany, and affected the exegetical style and methods of many of the great biblical scholars of the nineteenth century. The influence of this philosophy has tended to make the German mind intensely subjective, and has led many theologians to view both history and doctrines in their relations to some preconceived principle rather than in their practical bearings on human life.” Terry, p. 712

Terry says of the following men:**William M.I. DeWitte**

“In critical tact and exegetical ability, DeWitte probably stands unsurpassed by any biblical scholar of modern times.”

Hengstenberg

“was recognized for almost half a century as one of the staunchest defenders of orthodoxy. He was a man of decided ability and great learning, but often needlessly dogmatic and supercilious in setting forth his views.”

Herman Olshausen

“mystical in tone, ...but profound and comprehensive in his treatment of scripture. Accepting the Bible as God’s Word, he aimed to penetrate to the innermost sense, and gather up the divine thoughts of the Spirit. His mystical tendency led him at times too far from the path of sound criticism, but his expositions as a whole are well worthy of the hearty reception and extensive use they have obtained. His great work is a commentary on the New Testament, which he did not live to finish.”

Karl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch

“a most excellent and convenient series of commentaries on the Old Testament...eminently critical and exegetical, and deals fully and fairly with all the great questions which the modern higher criticism has raised.”

J.P.Lange

“series of commentaries still more comprehensive in its plan is the immense Bible work...aims to be a complete critical, exegetical, and homiletical commentary on the Old and New Testaments. Lange himself contributed to this great work more than any other writer...the most learned and comprehensive commentary on the whole Bible which has appeared in modern times.”

Many others could be cited, but in a brief history it is more needful to see the rise of differing schools of thought that have given rise to the varying theological groups all classified as “Christian”.

Arising with the reformation was the renaissance. A logical result was the emphasis upon human reason. By the middle of the 18th century, rationalism had begun its criticism of the Bible. Throughout the 19th century numerous “scholars” directed their efforts to explain the Bible by purely rationalistic methods. Hobbs, Spinoza, Hegel, Wellhausen were among this group.

Farrar says on pages 429 and 430 of History of Interpretation, “The reformers had struck the Apocrypha out of the Canon, and gone too far to place some books of the Bible - as had been done centuries earlier by some of the Rabbis, and by some of the Fathers - in the ranks of deuterocanonicity. In 1753 the French physician, Astruc, discovered the double stratum of Elohistic and Jehovistic elements in the Book of Genesis. Since his day criticism, both historic and philological, has been applied to every narrative and every section of Scripture. Many of its results have taken their place among valued truths...many of its assertions have been triumphantly refuted.

But the notion of verbal infallibility could not possibly survive the birth of historic inquiry, which showed in Scripture as elsewhere an organic growth, and therefore a necessary period of immature development...we are compelled to make the extravagant admission that the Pastoral Epistles were pseudonymous, and the Fourth Gospel was not written by St. John. Where the Spirit of God is there is liberty.”

Class Notes

Results of rationalistic methods of hermeneutics and confusing applications have left their marks in the numerous theological groups of the present. Lightner in Neo-Evangelicalism lists 13 terms and their definitions that help explain the present religious confusion. (see pp. 16-19)

3.7.1 Roman Catholic

"If the Catholic Church cannot decide, none can." II Peter 1:20

"A sentence of Holy Writ always means more than the actual words of which it is composed; over and above the concrete, literal meaning it awakens echoes, hints at secret truths and reveals figuratively what human language cannot express." Henry Daniel-Rops, p.98

"Jesus himself surely legitimized the procedure when he spoke of 'the miracle of Jonas'...the Church is adopting exactly the same point of view when she exalts Mary, the Mother of God made man...it is possible to carry this interpretation still further..." Daniel-Rops, p. 99

"...the Bible has three sense: a literal, an allegorical or spiritual and an accommodated sense." *ibid.* p. 99

"inner meaning" Daniel-Rops p. 100

"First duty is to know and thoroughly understand the literal sense...but it is also clear that to rest content with this sense is to condemn oneself to stripping the Bible of its richest harmonies...away with the 'watery breasts of the literal sense', the spiritual interpretation furnishes richer milk." *ibid.* 100-101

Catholics believe:

- 1) Latin Vulgate is inspired Word of God. Greek and Hebrew are of secondary importance.
- 2) The church is above the Bible and determines the meaning of the Bible in light of tradition, church Fathers and church infallibility. "The Church produced the Bible, not the Bible the Church." Noll, Father Smith, p.34

"However, it was never intended that the nations should be taught and saved by it (the Bible) alone." *ibid.* p.34

"Yes, and 'searching the scriptures' independently of a divinely protected Church, to which difficult passages should be referred for correct interpretation, has produced the hundreds of contradictory sects which make Christianity ridiculed by the infidel." *ibid.* p. 39

"Infallible Book...could have no weight unless an infallible authority had declared it to be inspired, and then protected readers from misunderstanding or misinterpreting it." *Ibid.* p.74

3.7.2 Liberalism - The Bible contains the word of God

This is the result of rationalistic views. What seems contrary to the unsaved, atheistic reason of men, educated in an anti-bible, anti-supernatural atmosphere, is to be rejected. Loudly proclaiming their own scholarship and thus ability to critically investigate Scripture, they have substituted their presuppositions for hermeneutical principles.

3.7.2.1 Human reason

To use human reason as the final appeal is to them being scientific and educated.

3.7.2.2 Supernatural

The supernatural is rejected and thus miracles and prophecy cannot be true. Philosophy is more important than theology.

3.7.2.3 Naturalistic

Evolution is accepted and applied to the Bible. Archaeology is destructive to liberalism.

Class Notes

3.7.2.4 Accommodation

The writers of the Bible spoke on the level of the people, including myths, superstitions, etc.

3.7.2.5 Inspiration

They reject any kind of verbal inspiration.

“What is permanent in Christianity is not mental frameworks, but abiding experiences...” Fosdick, Ramm p.65

3.7.3 Nineteenth Century**3.7.3.1 Subjectivism**

3.7.3.1.1 Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

3.7.3.1.2 Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

3.7.3.2 Historical Criticism

3.7.3.2.1 Benjamin Jowett (1817-1893)

3.7.3.2.2 Ferdinand C. Baur (1792-1860)

3.7.3.2.3 David F. Strauss (1808-1874)

3.7.3.2.4 Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918)

3.7.3.2.5 Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930)

3.7.3.3 Exegetical Works

3.7.3.3.1 E.W. Hengstenberg

3.7.3.3.2 Carl F. Keil

3.7.3.3.3 Franz Delitzch

3.7.3.3.4 H.A.W. Meyer

3.7.3.3.5 J.P. Lange

3.7.3.3.6 Frederic Godet

3.7.3.3.7 Henry Alford

3.7.3.3.8 Charles J. Ellicot

3.7.3.3.9 J.B. Lightfoot

3.7.3.3.10 B.F. Westcott

3.7.3.3.11 F.J.A. Hort

3.7.3.3.12 Charles Hodge

3.7.3.3.13 John Albert Broadus

3.7.3.3.14 Theodor Zahn

3.7.3.3.15 J.A. Alexander

3.7.3.3.16 Albert W. Barnes

3.7.3.3.17 John Eadie

3.7.3.3.18 Robert Jameison

3.7.3.3.19 Richard C. Trench

Class Notes

3.7.4 Twentieth Century**3.7.4.1 Liberalism****3.7.4.1.1 Nels Ferre****3.7.4.1.2 Harry Emerson Fosdick****3.7.4.1.3 W.H. Norton****3.7.4.1.4 L. Harold DeWolf****3.7.4.2 Neo Orthodox****3.7.4.2.1 Karl Barth (1886-1968)****3.7.4.2.2 Emil Brunner (1889-1966)****3.7.4.2.3 Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)****3.7.4.2.4 Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976)****3.7.4.3 The New Hermeneutic****3.7.4.3.1 Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)****3.7.4.3.2 Ernest Fuchs****3.7.4.3.3 Gerhard Ebeling****3.7.4.3.4 Hans-Georg Gadamer****3.7.5 Neo-orthodoxy - The Bible becomes the word of God**

Spiritually, neo-orthodoxy is little or no more Biblical than liberalism, but it is much more dangerous because it uses Biblical terminology. It is a twentieth century reaction that attempted to position itself between liberalism and orthodoxy. It is built on liberalism's view of the Bible, using orthodox terms. Orthodox terms but unorthodox definitions.

"It is characterized by an emphasis upon the subjective experience of man as a criterion of truth." Lightner, Savior And Scriptures, p. 107 Now borrowed by many evangelicals.

Sometimes called: "crisis theology, Barthianism, Theology of feeling and Neo-Supernaturalism."

Barth, Brunner, Niebuhr, Tillich, Bultman.

The hermeneutics of Neo-orthodoxy is based upon certain presuppositions. Their view of history is the key. There is regular history and then there is a history behind history, a salvation history. One is visible by sight, the other by faith. Thus they can talk of creation or of resurrection but not mean what the orthodox understand those words to mean.

"Adam has no existence on the plane of history and of psychological analysis." Barth, Lightner, Savior, p. 109

Adamic sin "is in no strict sense an historical or psychological happening...the sin which entered the world through Adam is like the righteousness manifested to the world in Christ, timeless and transcendental." Barth, *ibid.* p. 109

3.7.5.1 Subjective

"Revelation is something that happened..." Brunner

Kierkegaard - Modern father of feeling. Existential- subjective, feeling, experience. "The Bible becomes the Word of God."

"There is no such thing as revealed truth." Temple, p. 114

Class Notes

3.7.5.2 Fallibility of Bible

The Bible is fallible - contains errors and contradictions.

3.7.5.3 Inspiration of Bible

Reject verbal inspiration

"Holy scripture is a token of revelation." Barth

"What is revealed is not a body of information or of doctrine. God...gives us Himself in communion."
Baillie

"I myself am an adherent of a rather radical school of biblical criticism which, for example, does not accept the Gospel of John as a historical source and which finds legends in many parts of the synoptic gospels."
Brunner, Lightner, p. 119

"Only through a serious misunderstanding will genuine faith find satisfaction in the theory of verbal inspiration of the Bible." Brunner, *ibid*, p. 121

3.7.5.4 Christological

Christ is the main thing - "His person in its concrete reality." Barth

Talk like Christ is center of their belief but they do not accept all that the bible says concerning Him.

They seek an infallible Christ in a fallible Bible!

3.7.5.5 Mythological

"The myth is a form of theological communication. It presents a truth about man's religious existence in historical dress." Ramm p. 74 The true meaning is hidden behind the words of historical events.

Creation, the fall, the second coming, the incarnation, the cross are not to be taken literally, truths are hidden in these errors.

3.7.5.6 Dialectic

Many truths will appear paradoxical to man. Man must be content with being unable to comprehend doctrine fully and thus remain satisfied with inconsistent views.

3.7.6 Neo-evangelicalism - Allow room for error

"All of these factors helped to produce a reaction to these tendencies within fundamentalism - a reaction that has come to be known as "The New Evangelicalism"." Nash p. 29

Although hermeneutics does play a part, Neo-evangelicalism is more application than interpretation.

Many of the trends argued about in the last decade are now plain teachings. Neo-evan. is an attempt on the part of ex-fundamentalists to bridge the gap between Neo-orthodoxy and fundamentalism. A distinction between evangelical and fundamental is now made.

The trends that separated the two are: "a friendly attitude toward science: a willingness to re-examine beliefs concerning the work of the Holy Spirit; a more tolerant attitude toward varying views on eschatology; a shift away from so-called dispensationalism; an increased emphasis on scholarship; a reopening of the subject of biblical inspiration; and a growing willingness on the part of evangelicals to converse with liberal and dialectical theologians." Nash p. 31

Many thought and still think that evangelicalism or for that matter Biblical Christianity, can be made acceptable to apostate Christianity and the unsaved world. This is contrary to the words of Christ in John 17.

Class Notes

In his book on the New Evangelicalism, Charles Woodbridge gives 7 reasons why this is a “deadly”, ‘subtle menace’.

1. It is from within, not outside evangelical circles.
2. Some leaders in it were long known as Bible-believing evangelicals.
3. It is not a clearly defined system of alien theology.
4. It emphasizes love at the expense of doctrine.
5. It “courts and caters to the theological intelligentsia of the liberal camp...”
6. Many Christians are deceived by its false but appealing views.
7. The “camel’s nose of New Evangelicalism is already in the Christian tent.

The hermeneutics of the Neo-evangelicals are difficult to pin down because of the differences of those involved. Men like Ockenga, Nash, Henry, Carnell, Graham., Linsell, Fuller Seminary men, etc..

Their rules tend to be based on their position which is anti-dispensational, a covenant theology. As a result:

3.7.7 The New Testament always interprets the Old.

Thus O.T. prophecy concerning Israel must come through the N.T. and in Covenant Theology the church replaces Israel. So most Neo-evangelicals are flexible in major areas of eschatology.

With keen insight Lightner says, “The essential eschatological interpretations are not merely speculations to fascinate the human intellect; they are rooted in hermeneutical principles. They lie at the basis of either a literal or allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Eschatological interpretations have a definite bearing upon many other doctrines which one holds. One’s entire system of theology, view of history, interpretation of Scripture, view of the Church as an organism and as an organization in relation to other organizations, and view of Biblical theology is determined to a great extent by his view of eschatology.” Lightner, Neo-Evan. p. 80

3.7.8 Dispensationalism is the result of hermeneutics.

3.7.9 Covenant Theology makes its own hermeneutics.

3.7.10 The Allegorical Method

3.7.10.1 History

This method was used by many 2nd & 3rd century church fathers. It was established as the preferred method of interpretation by Augustine and was dominant in Catholicism throughout the Middle Ages. It is also used by amillenialists in interpreting unfulfilled prophecy.

3.7.10.2 Definition

The literal meaning of the text is either not the true meaning or only one of many meanings. The elements of each passage have a corresponding spiritual reality which is the “real” or ultimate meaning of the passage.

Origen interpreted Noah's Ark to have 3 meanings (literal, moral, and spiritual) to correspond to man's body, soul and spirit: salvation from the Flood, salvation of the believer from a specific sin and salvation of the church through Christ.

Popes used this method to uphold papal supremacy. Innocent III taught that the two great lights in Gen. 1 refer to the order of authority on earth. Thus, the sun symbolized spiritual authority (i.e., the pope) and the moon symbolized civil authority (the emperor). Boniface VIII referring to Luke 22:38, taught that the two swords held by the disciples meant that the apostles were authoritative in both the secular and spiritual kingdoms.

Why This Method Is Unacceptable

Since there is no objective standard to which the interpreter must bow, the final authority ceases to be the scripture and becomes the interpreter. Whose allegorical symbols are right? This question leads to the establishment of a church hierarchical authority which effectively replaces Scripture as the true locus of authority.

Class Notes

Allegorical interpretation is only rarely seen in scripture (Gal. 4:21-31; I Cor. 10:1-4). Parables are usually not allegories. When would allegorical interpretation be allowable?

An even more extreme example of this kind of over-interpretation is numerology. In numerology, numbers in the Bible (whether actual numbers, or the number of letters in names and passages) are seen to hold secret symbolic message. There is no warrant in the Bible for this kind of interpretation. It should be avoided at all times.

Interpreters distinguish between types and allegories. Types are restricted in several ways that allegories are not. See "Elements of Biblical Typology" by the present authors for a description of types.

3.8 The Literalistic Method

3.8.1 History

This method was used by the Jews after the Babylonian Exile. It is also used by extreme fundamentalists and many cults (Children of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, etc.).

3.8.2 Definition

Every word is taken absolutely literally including figures of speech and symbolism. Historical background is considered unnecessary and ignored. Any deviation from this rule is regarded as sacrilegious.

Mormonism teaches that God has a body because of references to God's "eye," "hand," etc. However, see Ps. 91:1-4. Does this mean He also has feathers and wings?

Roman Catholic interpretation of Lk. 22:19 leads to the doctrine of transubstantiation. However, does this also mean that Christ is a door (Jn. 7)?

Jehovah's Witnesses use Col. 1:15 to prove that Christ was a created being. But "first-born" was also used to refer to the inheritor of the family estate (Num. 21:15-17).

Why This Method Is Unacceptable

Subscribers always use it selectively (see the above examples).

It makes scripture unintelligible, contradictory, and unlivable (i.e., Lk. 14:26).

3.9 The Naturalistic Method

3.9.1 History

This system arose during the Enlightenment (18th century). It is used by old-line liberal theology as their basic hermeneutic.

3.9.2 Definition

The naturalistic world-view (i.e. the universe is a closed system of cause and effect) is the standard by which scripture must be interpreted. Scripture becomes intelligible only as ancient man's attempt to explain nature. It also assumes that religion has evolved through several stages which can be used to date the material in the Bible.

Miracles are rejected as primitive explanations or myths.

The goal is to rediscover the "true record" (i.e., the "historical" Jesus, or the "strata" in the Pentateuch) within the legendary accounts of the Bible.

Why This Method Is Unacceptable

It makes an unproved world-view the final authority.

The attempt to separate the historical from the "legendary" has been proven to be impossible.

Class Notes

3.10 Neo-Orthodox Interpretation**3.10.1 History**

Neo Orthodox theology arose after World War I which shattered the optimism of liberal theologians. Its founders, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth, began a movement which dominates both Catholic and Protestant theology today.

3.10.2 Definition

Neo-orthodoxy takes an approach to theology that places the religious experience of the interpreter in the center. The Bible is important for stimulating such an experience. When it does so, it "becomes the word of God" for that reader, at that time. Neo- orthodox theologians are generally willing to accept the conclusions of the naturalistic theologians regarding errors in the Bible, but feel that these do not affect the reader's ability to encounter God through it.

Through seeing the wonder and rapture of the disciples as they behold the "miracles" of Christ, we can enter into the same sense of rapture. Thus, as we see the amazement of the disciples when they behold the resurrected Christ, we too are amazed to find that He has risen in our hearts. Of course, whether Christ actually did rise from the dead is not important. Thus the Neo-orthodox theologian can declare, "He is risen!"

Neo orthodox theologians routinely refer to miraculous events as though they were history, when they actually believe that the experience of the authors rather than the events themselves that are historical.

Why this method is unacceptable

The separation of "truth" or "encounter with Jesus" from the factual content of scripture lowers the Bible to the same level as any other book about religion.

Unless Christ was physically raised from the dead, our experience of his "resurrection" is superfluous (I Cor. 15:12-19).

The criticisms of the naturalistic school also apply.

3.11 Devotional Interpretation**3.11.1 History**

This method grew out of the post-Reformation as a reaction against sterile creedalism. This is the system unconsciously used by most Christians today.

3.11.2 Definition

The devotional method focuses almost exclusively on what is personally applicable and edifying. It tends to ignore context, historical background, and other important interpretive principles.

Watchman Nee uses Mk. 14:3, Jn. 12:3, Jn. 3:30 & Mk. 8:6 to support the necessity of "brokenness" in the Christian life.

Extremists use Col. 3:15 to support being led by the Holy Spirit on the basis of feelings.

Why This Method Is Unacceptable

Devotional interpretation can easily lead to uncontrolled allegorizing and inaccurate interpretation through eisegesis.

While the goals of this approach to Scripture are commendable, a critical analysis of the text has to precede the devotional question.

3.12 Ideological Interpretation**3.12.1 History**

The "New Criticism" advanced in the 1940's began to focus on text and reader rather than on the author. The author has no more authority over the meaning of the text than anyone else because: 1) He didn't realize his own bias at the time he wrote, and 2) We have no way to read his mind and thus know his intentions.

Class Notes

3.12.2 Definition

Ideological interpreters approach the Bible looking for material relevant to their ideology. They usually are open about the fact that they have an agenda, and usually claim they are correcting oversights from earlier years by focusing on their area of interest. Most ideological readers also entertain a reader-centered hermeneutic. They are skeptical about ever knowing what the author intended to say, and focus instead on how the text affects the modern reader.

3.12.3 Feminist Theology

Seeks to study women in the Bible, and to demonstrate that the more enlightened speakers in Scripture were anti-patriarchy. In general, their studies are intended to explode the myth of patriarchy and to uncover cruelty to women. Some advance gender-neutral language in translation, including God as "she," sometimes based on lady wisdom Prov. 1:20ff.

3.12.4 Marxist or Liberation Theology

Seeks to show that the true intent of God in the Bible is to teach that poor and oppressed classes should be liberated from their oppression by the love of God. Tends to interpret redemptive language in terms of economics and political power. They see class struggle in much of the conflict in the Bible.

3.12.5 Deconstruction

Postmodern readers see the Bible, not as teaching liberation, but as a tool used for exploitation. The Bible is propaganda intended to show why patriarchy is appropriate. The authors of Scripture sought to legitimize the status quo of society by teaching people to obey their authorities. They also sought to justify aggrandizement of the state of Israel and the subjugation of neighboring peoples.

Why this method is unacceptable

Most systems seek to decrease reader bias through the application of rules. These rules introduce objectivity to the interpretive process, according to traditional methods. Ideological and reader-centered methods hold that objectivity is never possible, because the text was never objective in the first place. The first act of interpretation was the author's decision about what to include and what to exclude in his text. Also, the uncertainty of language means modern readers might as well supply their own interpretation, because we will never know what the "true" interpretation should be. To hold to such a thing as a "true" or "real" interpretation is naive, because such faith fails to take into account the arbitrary nature of language and the social forces which distort people's (both readers and author's) view of the world.

Consequently, reader-centered theories are openly biased, but they hold that in this they are no different than other approaches except that they are more honest and less naive.

The reader is not under the authority of Scripture. Scripture is pressed into the ideological mold of the reader, leaving the reader in authority.

3.13 Inspiration

This is a key area and again depends upon the man being read. Some Neo-evangelicals maintain verbal inspiration but many do not. They speak of "inspiration" but not verbal, plenary inspiration. Or "propositional revelation" which leaves the door open for allowing all kinds of errors in the text but the truths are unaffected. This idea can lead to Neo-orthodoxy.

"Many of us admit that the Bible unquestionably contains factual errors, but we still maintain that it is inerrant in divine purpose." Bass, Woodbridge, p. 50

Revelational part vs. non-revelational parts
Infallible rule of faith and practice

See how this weakened view relates to other areas:**3.13.1 Science**

Many Neo-evangelicals have been far too concessive to "science" [evolution] Ramm believes "progressive creationism."

Class Notes

“Almighty God is Creator, World Ground. In His mind the entire plan of creation was formed with man as the climax. Over the millions of years of geological history the earth is prepared for man’s dwelling. The vast forests grew and decayed for his coal. The millions of sea life were born and perished for his oil. The surface of the earth weathered for his forests and valleys. From time to time the great creative acts, *de novo*, took place. Then he whom all creation anticipated is made, MAN, in whom alone is the breath of God.” Ramm, *Christian View*, p. 155

This view, rejected by Neo-evangelicals like Henry, is very close to theistic evolution.

“The changeableness of science and the stability of the Bible must be pondered deeply before concessions are made to ‘science’.” Lightner, *Neo-Evan.* p. 83

3.13.2 Separation and Evangelism

“Evangelicals are more conscious than fundamentalists of the need to carry on an exchange of ideas with liberal and neo-orthodox theologians. Vernon Grounds has stated that an “evangelical can be organizationally separated from all Christ-denying fellowship and yet profitably engage in an exchange of ideas with men who are not evangelicals.” Indeed, unless the conservative does this he is not fulfilling Christ’s injunction to carry the Gospel to all men.” Nash, p. 102

“The evangelical attitude toward ecumenicity is not an easy thing to define. This is largely due to its being a mediating position that attempts to transcend the perspectives of both independency and church unionism.” Nash, pp. 105, 106

“...capitalize on the opportunities afforded by cooperative evangelism without sacrificing the purity of his message.” Nash p. 108

(Methods unbiblical, but message - Biblical?)

“Difficult situations and demanding responsibilities call for desperate action. And so the evangelical admits (or ought to admit) that perhaps cooperative evangelism is not the normal thing. But when faced with a choice between an evangelism that reaches the masses and one that will not do it as effectively, the evangelical chooses cooperative evangelism.” Nash, p. 109

On page 110, Nash implies that Neo-evangelicals are guilty of theological heresy but fundamentalists are guilty of “practical heresy” in denouncing others of theological heresy!!!

Can the Gospel be divorced from the rest of the Word? One’s view of the Scriptures and rules of hermeneutics will determine his way of life.

“While we must be solicitous about doctrine, Scripture says that our primary business is love. While doctrine illuminates the plan of salvation, the mark of a true disciple is love, not doctrine. Scripture teaches this with such clarity and force that only a highly developed sense of religious pride could miss it.” Carnell, Lightner, *Neo-Evangelism*, p. 121

Two questions...Does God’s love overrule His Holiness? Will He relax revelation about hell?

Class Notes

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