CORRELATION OF REVELATORY SPIRITUAL GIFTS
AND NT CANONICITY

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Paul uses portions of three of his epistles to develop the role of spiritual gifts in building the body of Christ. Among the eighteen gifts he lists are four that provide for the impartation of special revelation necessary for the body's growth: the gifts of apostleship, prophecy, the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge. In discussions of NT canonicity, apostleship has been prominent, but a study of relevant passages shows that prophecy also played an important part in furnishing the early church with special revelation. Several NT examples, particularly the Apocalypse, reinforce this observation. In their efforts to single out books for inclusion in the NT canon, early Christian leaders looked for the works that were inspired, narrowing their search by concentrating on works by men whose spiritual gifts capacities included apostleship and prophecy. A number of early Christian writings verify their interest, not just in apostolicity, but also in the propheticity of a writing. After narrowing down their possibilities to works authored by apostles and prophets, they applied tests of antiquity, orthodoxy, catholicity, and traditional usage to finalize their list of NT books.

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In three of his epistles—Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians—the apostle Paul speaks of God's building of the body of Christ through spiritual gifts He bestows on individual believers. Among the eighteen gifts that Paul mentions, are several that provided for special revelation to the church, revelation that would complement the inspired data available to early Christians in the OT. The following discussion will explore how those revelatory gifts related to books of the NT canon that the church eventually identified.

First will come a brief explanation to identify the NT revelatory gifts of the Spirit, particularly those in addition to apostleship. A follow-up section will discuss several NT examples of revelatory gifts in action in the NT. After this will come a listing and discussion of tests of canonicity applied by the early church in their recognition of the NT canon. The second and third of the above sections will focus in particular on the
importance of the gift of prophecy.

**REVELATORY SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

The obvious starting point in correlating revelatory spiritual gifts and NT canonicity is the NT gift of apostleship. Apostolic authorship is the most widely cited test of canonicity, with some scholars going to the point of asserting that it is the only criterion. Harris has stated, "... The test of canonicity applied by the early church was apostolic authorship."¹ He concludes,

The view of the determining principle of the canon expressed previously may be summarized by saying that the canonicity of a book of the Bible depends upon its authorship. If the book was in the Old Testament, the people of the day accepted it because it was written by a prophet. If it was part of the New Testament, it was recognized as inspired if it had been written by an apostle—either by himself or with the help of an understudy or amanuensis."²

He cites extensive evidence from the NT itself to demonstrate the authoritative role of apostles.³ He concludes his discussion with these statements: "The Lord Jesus did not, in prophecy, give us a list of the twenty-seven New Testament books. He did, however, give us a list of the inspired authors [i.e., the apostles]."⁴ One can hardly debate the major role of the apostles in penning books of the NT and the recognition of the early church regarding the importance of that role in pinpointing books to take their places alongside the OT canon as authoritative Scripture.

Yet to limit the determination of canonicity to apostolic authorship alone is precarious. In speaking about Eph 4:11 and 1 Cor 12:28, Harris notes the first rank of apostles and the second ranking of prophets, and says, "The gift of prophecy was one which all Christians were to desire; the apostolate came directly from God."⁵ He observes later in comparing NT prophecy with OT prophecy that NT prophets held a lower status in the area of divine authority, indicating that tests of fulfilled predictions and miracles did not apply to them.⁶

This representation of the gift of prophecy is seriously misleading, however. For one thing, though the NT prophet did not have to pass tests of fulfilled predictions and miracles, he did have to pass the test of discern-

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²Ibid., 285.
³Ibid., 234-47.
⁴Ibid., 247.
⁵Ibid., 241.
⁶Ibid., 245.
ings of spirits in the presence of his fellow prophets (1 Cor 12:10; 14:29). Also, the context of 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 shows quite clearly that God sovereignly bestows all gifts of the Spirit according to His will and not according to human quests and desires. First Corinthians 12:11 describes the source of gifts this way: "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to every single person just as He wills." And 1 Cor 12:18 confirms, "But now God on His part has placed the members, each one of them, in the body just as He desired." Prophecy was not "up for grabs" among the members of Christ's body. Harris apparently has mistakenly understood 1 Cor 12:31 to convey that sense, but the command to be zealous for the greater gifts was a command for the corporate local body to seek the greater gifts for itself, not for each individual Christian to do so for himself or herself. First Corinthians 14:29-31 clarifies that only a limited number had that gift in the Corinthian church. The last passage also shows that whatever authority the prophetic gift possessed was subject to the authority of Paul, who as an apostle had the authority to direct its usage.

Apostleship was not the only revelatory gift among those named in Pauline epistles. Prophecy was another, along with two others that seemed to have overlapped or to have been somewhat interchangeable with apostleship and prophecy. Those were the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8). The replacement of wisdom and knowledge by apostleship and prophecy at the head of the lists of 1 Cor 12:28-29 furnishes strong implications regarding close relationships between the two pairs of gifts. Several lines of reasoning affirm the revelational character of these three nonapostolic gifts: prophecy, the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge.

(1) Prophecy's close association with apostleship requires its inclusion in the revelational category. Twice in 1 Cor 12:28-29 the gift follows immediately after the apostolic gift as being the second-most profitable in edifying the church. In Eph 4:11 it again takes second place after apostles in a listing of gifted persons who contributed to building up

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10Ibid., 245-46.
the body of Christ. Perhaps most interesting of all, however, is the inclusion of prophets with apostles in Eph 2:20-21 as having a significant role in laying the foundation of the spiritual "holy temple" of the church.11 Contextually, the foundational role includes the reception and transmission of previously undisclosed "revelation" (Eph 3:3, 5) regarding the fellow heirship and joint membership of Gentiles and Jews in the body of Christ (Eph 3:6). Regarding that new revelation, Paul speaks of information "which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to the saints through His apostles and prophets through the Spirit" (Eph 3:5, emphasis added). The prophets along with the apostles were recipients of special divine revelation, according to the apostle.

In the context of Eph 2:19–3:10, another characteristic emerges. That is the appearance of a certain technical vocabulary pertaining to divine revelatory activity. The terms include poklycin (apokalupsin, "revelation") in 3:3, mystrión (mystrión, "mystery") in 3:3 and mystri in 3:4, pekalfuh (apekalymphth, "has been revealed") in 3:5, mystriou in 3:9, and pokekrymmnou (apokekrymmenou, "hidden") in 3:9. All are words that frequently assume a technical revelatory significance. When used together, they portray God's activity in making known to His special servants hitherto unrevealed information relating to the outworking of His program in the world. The clustering of such words in a given context is indicative of direct revelatory activity such as provides for divine inspiration through His spokespersons and, in the case of the NT, writers. In this type of setting gnvrzv (gnriz, "I make known,"), also used in that Ephesian context (3:3, 5, 10), takes on a special meaning of an immediate proclamation of the divine will.12 Added to the technical terms is, of course, the noun p-stolow (apistolos, "apostle") in 2:20 and 3:5, a designation applied by almost everyone to special authoritative appointees of Christ who received direct revelation for the church.

The appearance of prophets alongside the apostles in such a strongly revelatory context, and their role in conveying previously unrevealed data (Eph 3:5), supplies a pointed indication that prophecy too was a revelatory gift. Nor should it escape notice that another gift-related term, sofá (sophia, "wisdom," 3:10), appears here with the rest of the revelatory terms. It

designates new information received through apostles and prophets. This appearance of “wisdom” directs attention to another passage where it is prominent.

(2) Paul wrote much about wisdom in his first epistle to Corinth, especially in 1 Corinthians 2. Another context where revelatory terms are frequent, that passage provides readers with what is probably the best NT picture of regular Christian revelatory activity. Technical words there include mystriōn in vv. 1, 7, apokrypē in v. 7, apokalypē in v. 10, and sophia in vv. 1, 4, 5, 6 (twice), 7, 13. In addition, Paul graphically describes the hiddenness of what God has revealed in a conflation of quotations from Isa. 64:4 and 52:15 (v. 9) and uses a technical expression for secrets of God, ἡ ἱππότη (ta bath, “the deep things,” v. 10), that the Spirit has revealed to Paul and other special divine messengers.

Amid this strongly revelatory context, the apostle emphatically designates the Holy Spirit as the immediate agent of revelation and climaxes his description of the process thus: “which things we also speak, not with words taught by human wisdom, but with [those] taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual [thoughts] with spiritual [words]” (1 Cor 2:13). Charles Hodge renders the last three Greek words of that verse, "clothing the truths of the Spirit in the words of the Spirit," and continues,

There is neither in the Bible nor in the writings of men, a simpler or clearer statement of the doctrines of revelation and inspiration. Revelation is the act of communicating divine knowledge by the Spirit to the mind. Inspiration is the act of the same Spirit, controlling those who make the truth known to others. The thoughts, the truths made known, and the words in which they are recorded, are declared to be equally from the Spirit.

The way special agents of divine revelation operated was to receive input from the Spirit in their inner consciousness and through the Spirit to

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13 Of course, the Apocalypse is full of information about how God communicated revelation to John on the island of Patmos, but that apocalyptic revelatory activity was somewhat exceptional.

14 Vaticanus and Beza are among an impressive list of sources that support martirion instead of mystriōn in 1 Cor 2:1. The latter receives strong support from p6, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and other witnesses.

15 F. W. Grosheide says “the deep things of God” are God Himself in His infinitude, including particularly His plan of salvation as referred to in Rom 11:33 (Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, NIC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953] 68). C. Brown refers the term to God’s "secret wisdom" ("ὅ ὑθή," NIDNTT 2:75). J. Blunck says it is "the paradox of unveiling and veiling which is Christian," in other words, revelation ("ὕ ὑθή," NIDNTT 2:198).

transform that input into inspired words that they communicated to others. They may have delivered those words orally as in a prophet's communication to a local congregation in Corinth, or they may have done so in writing as in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians. The purpose of the former type was to meet needs of that particular congregation for a time. The ultimate purpose of the latter, after meeting the doctrinal and practical needs of the Corinthian congregation, was to minister in the same way to the body of Christ throughout the present age. Divine revelation had divine inspiration as its necessary sequel.

Sophia is prominent throughout Paul's discussion of the process of revelation and inspiration, a factor that attaches to the term a technical revelatory significance. It may in some contexts refer in general to wisdom available to all believers, but in this kind of setting it has its more restricted sense of referring to "the deep things of God" communicated to agents of special revelation. The latter is its connotation when Paul speaks of "the word of wisdom" in 1 Cor 12:8. That was a gift to a limited number that enabled them as apostles and prophets to receive, assimilate, and communicate "mysteries" to others.

(3) The gift of "the word of knowledge" takes on a revelatory connotation because of its use alongside prophecy in 1 Cor 13:2: "And if I have [the gift of] prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing." If knowledge results from prophetic revelations as do mysteries, it too must be revelatory in nature. As the word of wisdom pertained to newly revealed data, the word of knowledge apparently pertained to an inspired application of that data to new situations, as illustrated in 2 Pet 3:1-3 and Jude 17-18.17

If the NT names more than one revelatory gift—as it apparently does—that opens the possibility that writings by nonapostles could be inspired.

EVIDENCE OF REVELATORY GIFT ACTIVITY IN THE NT

The NT itself illustrates the use of revelatory gifts to produce inspired utterances and writings.

(1) The spoken ministry of Agabus is an example. As one of the prophets from Jerusalem who came to the church of Antioch, he predicted a widespread famine that would happen during the reign of Claudius (Acts 11:27-28). The famine occurred as predicted and became the occasion

17Cf. Thomas, Understanding Spiritual Gifts 37.
of the "famine visit" by Barnabas and Saul of Tarsus to Jerusalem with an offering to relieve the church in Judea (Acts 11:29-30).

How was Agabus able to foretell the future? God revealed to him, as a possessor of the gift of prophecy, an event soon to occur, which revelation he transformed into spoken words so as to communicate it to fellow Christians. That inspired message provided the basis for the Antiochian church to act by way of providing for their fellow believers in Judea.

Scripture never calls Agabus an apostle, but it does call him a prophet. The gift of prophecy was a sufficient credential to receive special revelation to convert into an inspired message.

Acts records another prophecy and fulfillment of Agabus in Acts 21:10-11:

And while we remained many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea, and after he came to us and took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, he said, "The Holy Spirit says these things: 'The man whose belt this is, the Jews will bind thus in Jerusalem and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'"

Acts later records the literal fulfillment of this prophecy too (21:33). Here is another instance of revelation to a nonapostle who possessed the gift of prophecy and of the inspired utterance resulting from that revelation.

(2) Acts records a prophetic message by Paul and its fulfillment just as it does for Agabus. Acts 27:22 gives Paul's prediction that no loss of life would come to those on the storm-tossed ship. This resulted from a message given him by an angel of God, one which he believed (27:23-25). The prediction even included the grounding of the ship on an island (27:26). Each detail of Paul's prophecy came to fulfillment (27:41-44).

Notable are the parallels of this prophecy and fulfillment with those of Agabus. Yes, Paul was an apostle who would be the expected recipient of revelation to transmit to others as an inspired message. But so was Agabus, a nonapostle.

Probably all the apostles received the gift of prophecy, but not all the prophets were apostles, of course.

(3) Harris has written, "No New Testament book claims authorship by a prophet," but with his documentation offers a qualified correction to

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18See Thomas, "Prophecy Rediscovered?" 90-91, for a defense of the inerrancy of this prophecy.
19Harris, Inspiration and Canonicity 245.
that statement when he acknowledges Revelation to be such a book.\textsuperscript{20} Bruce has more correctly noted a NT writer who bases his work solely on prophetic inspiration:

The Apocalypse is called `the book of this prophecy' (e.g., Rev. 22:19); the author implies that his words are inspired by the same Spirit of prophecy as spoke through the prophets of earlier days: it is in their succession that he stands (Rev. 22:9). . . . Whether the seer of Patmos was the son of Zebedee or not, his appeal throughout the Apocalypse is not to apostolic authority but to prophetic inspiration.\textsuperscript{21}

The last book of the Bible conspicuously demonstrates the revelatory nature of the NT gift of prophecy. The book's author bases the book's authority on his prophetic role, not on his apostolic gift. Harris is correct in observing the importance of apostolic authorship in the early church's recognition of the book's canonicity, but within the book itself, John sees the work's prophetic character as furnishing its determinative stature.

He uses prophets or its cognates eighteen times in the twenty-two chapters.\textsuperscript{22} In a number of ways, John puts himself into the category of the OT prophets.\textsuperscript{23} He experienced an inaugural vision that gave him a divine endorsement (1:9-20). He used symbolic acts such as devouring the little scroll (10:10). He employed oracular formulas in the messages of chapters two and three (2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14). The primary if not exclusive focus in 10:7 is on OT prophets, but just a few verses later, he refers to his own NT prophetic gift (10:11). The first three references to prophecy in chapter 11 are probably to OT prophecy (11:3, 6, 10), if Moses and Elijah are those witnesses.

In 11:18, however, tow proftaiw (tois prophets, "the prophets") probably includes both OT and NT prophets. The linking of the prophets with the apostles in the similar passage of 18:20 and the angel's reference to the prophets as John's brothers in 22:9 require inclusion of a reference to NT prophets.\textsuperscript{24} On the other hand the writer's reference to prophets in 10:7

\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., 324.
\textsuperscript{21}F. F. Bruce, \textit{The Canon of Scripture} (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1988) 264-65.
\textsuperscript{22}Profheta\textsuperscript{a} occurs seven times (1:3; 11:6; 19:10; 22:7, 10, 18, 19), proftwi\textsuperscript{c} once (2:20), profhtev\textsuperscript{e} twice (10:11; 11:3), and profthw\textsuperscript{w} eight times (10:7; 11:10, 18; 16:6; 18:20, 24; 22:6, 9).
\textsuperscript{24}D. E. Aune, \textit{Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 196.
Revelatory Spiritual Gifts and NT Canonicity

quite definitely referred to OT prophets. So this must be a book where John regularly groups NT prophets with the prestigious company of OT prophets. Several have suggested a reason for such an elevation of NT prophets: by the time John wrote Revelation, deaths of all the apostles but John had thrust prophecy into the limelight. That such an authority shift occurred toward the close of the first century is quite conceivable in light of John's focus on prophecy in his epistles and in Revelation. Jezebel's claim to the prophetic gift (2:20) is further recognition of the elevation of this gift.

The entity known as Babylon is apparently responsible for the deaths of "saints and prophets" in Rev 16:6, because 17:6 speaks of that harlot as being drunk "from the blood of the saints and from the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." From the link between the two passages, one would judge that the prophets of 16:6 are Christian prophets. Otherwise, they and their companion "saints" could hardly be martyrs of Jesus. The same observation applies to 18:20, 24. Use of prophetai alongside apostoloi in v. 20 necessitates a reference to Christian prophets, as does the fact that they suffered persecution for Jesus' sake. In 19:10 once again, exclusively NT prophecy is in view. Though the preincarnate Christ was the channel of revelation to the highly regarded OT prophets (1 Pet 1:11), their testimony did not center on the testimony of Jesus. Only NT prophets by virtue of being vehicles of Jesus' words could qualify for the definition, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (19:10). Of interest in 19:10 is the elevation of the NT prophet's revelation to the level of angelic revelation. In response to John's attempt to worship him, the angel identified himself as a fellow-slave of John and other Christian prophets, an indication of prophetic inspiration's authority. According to that statement, the prophets had the same part as angels in bearing the witness of Jesus.

The last six references to prophecy are in Revelation 22 (vv. 6, 7, 9, 10, 18, 19) and relate to John's prophetic ministry in writing the prophecy of Revelation. Of special relevance to the present survey is the inclusion of other Christian prophets as "fellow-slaves" with the revealing angel (22:9). The verse shows that the prestigious role of the prophet John in 19:10 was not limited to him. It belonged to his contemporaries who also possessed

The gift of prophecy.

Of course, as I have suggested elsewhere, 22:18-19 announces the termination of NT prophecy.29 In practice, the church of the second century did not respond immediately to that warning. The decline of prophecy during the second century was gradual, but by their times, Hippolytus30 and Chrysostom31 recognized the gift of prophecy in the church to be a thing of the past.

The discussion above shows the NT to speak of four revelatory gifts, apostleship, prophecy, the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge. The last two overlap with the first two and are not as prominent. None disputes the revelatory character of apostleship, so this discussion's main attention has gone to developing the revelational nature of NT prophecy.

TESTS OF CANONICITY

If that is true of NT prophecy and if revelation resulted in inspired utterances and inspired writings, it is appropriate to investigate tests applied in the early church to ascertain which books belonged in the canon.

Test of Inspiration

In light of 2 Tim 3:16, the test to prove a book's canonicity would be its inspiration: "All Scripture is inspired by God." If inclusion in Scripture involves being "God-breathed" (uepneystow, theopneustos), canonization entailed that same qualification, because books of the NT canon constitute NT Scripture just as books of the OT canon constitute OT Scripture. Some recent scholars have suggested that canon does not equal Scripture, that human elements—the doubts, the debates, and the delays—of the canonical process are a part of the definition of canon.32 Canon, they say, is a theological construct that belongs to the postapostolic period, but

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31Chrysostom, Homilies in First Corinthians, Homilies 29, 36; cf. F. David Farnell, "When Will the Gift of Prophecy Cease?" BSac 150 (April-June 1993):195-96 n. 79.
Scripture speaks of the intrinsic quality of inspiration and is devoid of the ideas of delimitation and selection that canon entails.

That definition of canon falters, however, in not conceding that NT writers who were conscious they were penning Scripture were also conscious of a closed OT canon which their works supplemented, a new canon that would eventually close if Christ did not return before such a body of literature was complete. If the idea of canon existed this early, it is not legitimate to view canon as a "theological construct" arising in the post-apostolic period. It seems better to follow Harris and Warfield in concluding that the test of canonicity is inspiration.

The early church did not apply this test directly and exclusively, however. Gamble notes, "... In the deliberations of the ancient church about the authority of its writings, we nowhere find an instance of inspiration being used as a criterion of discrimination." Early second-century Christians lived in an environment of many inspired utterances, some of them a spill-over from the apostolic period and some of them allegedly originating in the second century and onward. They apparently applied 2 Tim 3:16 terminology freely, using words related to "inspiration" to refer postapostolic writings. Use of "inspiration" to apply to writings from the second century and later is attributable to a lack of discernment among the early fathers.

But to view "spill-over" sayings from the apostolic period as inspired is most probably valid in many cases. It is likely that early Christians possessed sayings of Jesus not found in the canonical gospels. Such was the case of Paul's citation of Jesus' words in Acts 20:35. In addition, some whose lives spanned from the apostolic period into the postapostolic

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33 Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity* 235-45.
34 Ibid., 293-94.
37 Clement of Alexandria quotes from an epistle of Clement of Rome as though it were Scripture (Clement, *Stromata*, iv.17, in ANF 2:428-29).
38 Bruce M. Metzger calls attention to the use of *uepneystow* by early Christians to refer to such writings as Basil's commentary on the first six days of creation, a synodical epistle from the Council of Ephesus, and an epitaph on the grave of Bishop Abercius (The *Canon of the New Testament, Its Origin, Development, and Significance* [New York: Oxford, Clarendon, 1988] 256). He also notes that Augustine said Jerome wrote under the dictation of the Holy Spirit (ibid., 255) and that Clement of Alexandria quoted "inspired" passages from the epistles of Clement of Rome and of Barnabas, the *Shepherd* of Hermas, and the Apocalypse of Peter, as well as ascribing to Jesus sayings not found in the four canonical gospels (ibid., 134).
period probably remembered prophecies of local and temporary application delivered to various congregations. Such were not necessary for the long-term health of the larger body of Christ, however, and were lost to later generations.

So the task of the second-century church was that of sifting through mounds of inspired sayings and writings—some legitimate and others counterfeit—to come up with those that would benefit the ongoing growth of the church until the Lord Jesus' return. The method they used was not to rule out as noninspired all noncanonical writings, but rather to decide on those whose inspiration was unique in that they exhibited special authority with long-lasting and universal value, value that matched the authority of the OT canon. What were their criteria for doing so? It appears that they had a sort of "grid" that writings had to pass through in order to gain that recognition, a grid composed of the following tests.

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Test of Apostolicity

The first criterion was that of apostolicity or apostolic authorship. Since Jesus Christ left no writings of His own, the special representatives whom He appointed held the highest authority for His followers. Harris presents a thorough case to demonstrate the importance of apostolic authorship to second-century Christian writers. Even in cases where an author was not an apostle, patristic tendencies were toward arguing for an apostolic influence. The fathers claimed Peter's apostolic authority for Mark and Paul's apostolic authority for Luke and Hebrews. It is indisputable that a book's relationship to an apostle was an important factor as early Christians sorted among many allegedly inspired writings.

But was apostolicity ultimately determinative? Bruce concluded, "The patristic idea that his [Luke's] Gospel owes something to the apostolic authority of Paul is quite unfounded." Did the early church make a mistake? Was, then, the church's selection based on erroneous criteria? Stonehouse says no, the church did not receive Mark and Luke because of their apostolicity, but because of their inspiration.

Harris attempts to defend apostolic authorship as the only criterion, claiming that Mark and Luke followed the teachings of their masters, Peter and Paul, and that Paul wrote Hebrews using a secondary author. He is undecided on the authorship of James and Jude. He holds them to be apostolic either because they were written by the James and Jude, who were among the twelve; or because they were written by James and Jude, the half-brothers of the Lord, who as witnesses of His resurrection became apostles in a special sense.

In defending apostolicity as the sole test, Harris writes, "But rather remarkably, there is no hard evidence for lost writings of the apostles." Later he adds, "Efforts to prove that there were some books that have been lost have not been successful." Yet statements of Paul in his extant epistles provide substantial indication that he wrote letters that have not survived. The most conclusive evidence of a lost epistle lies in 1 Cor 5:9-11 where it is evident to most that Paul refers to a letter to the Corinthians earlier than 1 Corinthians. Philippians 3:1 also offers a strong implication.

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40 Harris, Inspiration and Canonicity 248-59.
41 Bruce, Canon of Scripture 257-58.
42 Ibid., 265-66.
44 Harris, Inspiration and Canonicity 255, 281-82.
46 Ibid., 283.
47 Ibid., 295.
to that effect. About the latter, Lightfoot wrote, "...In the epistles of our Canon we have only a part—perhaps not a very large part—of the whole correspondence of the Apostle [Paul], either with Churches or with individuals." Perhaps 2 Cor 3:1 in referring to "epistles of recommendation" implies that much correspondence of the nature of 3 John circulated among early churches to provide personal letters of introduction. If apostles wrote some of those, they too are now lost.

The assumption that apostolicity was the sole criterion of canonicity falters also in its position that Christ's authoritative apostles were inerrant in all their utterances and writings. Peter's behavior at Antioch in refusing to have table fellowship with Gentiles should suppress any thought that they were (Gal 2:11-14). The confrontation between Paul and him over that issue proves that apostles made mistakes even after being commissioned by Christ to serve as His authoritative representatives. So apostolicity as the only test of canonicity is insufficient in another regard.

The NT books not written by one of the twelve or Paul are Mark, Luke, Acts, Hebrews, James, and Jude. If one grants that James and Jude became apostles by Christ's appointment—Gal 1:19 indicates James was such and 1 Cor 15:7 strongly implies it—that leaves four books without apostolic authorship. That the apostolic circle was wider than just the twelve and Paul seems likely in light of 2 Cor 11:13. Paul's opponents at Corinth could hardly have disguised themselves as apostles if that group consisted of only thirteen people who were well-known.

That leaves the apostolic authorship of four books unaccounted for. The defenders of a one-test criterion argue for the apostolicity of these four, if not the apostolic authorship. As noted above, Harris contends that an understudy or an amanuensis of an apostle wrote them, thereby giving the books apostolic authority. That theory is insubstantial, however, because apostleship was a nontransferable spiritual gift. An apostle had no authority to bestow the gift or its revelational ability on another. For a book to possess apostolic authority, it must have an apostle as its author, not someone he designates. God alone could bestow apostolicity (1 Cor 12:11, 18)—or any other spiritual gift for that matter—and that only on those who had witnessed Christ's resurrection. Mark may have been a

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49 This essay assumes the traditional authorship of all the NT books. In the case of the Epistle to the Hebrews, along with many individuals in the early church, it assumes an unknown authorship.

50 Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity* 285.

So apostolicity cannot account for the inspiration of all the books that the church eventually recognized as part of the NT canon. Gamble agrees: "Widespread and important as this criterion [i.e., apostolicity] was, it must still be said that no NT writing secured canonical standing on the basis of apostolicity alone."51 Some books did not come from an apostle, so some other gift must explain the inspiration of the remaining four.

Test of Propheticity

The other speaking gift that provided a basis for inspired communication was the gift of prophecy. The discussion above has shown conclusively how John claimed nothing more than prophetic authorship for his Apocalypse. It has also disclosed that he freely intermingled NT prophets and their prophecies with OT prophets. With that setting of the stage for the second-century church, how did early Christians respond to the possibility of prophetic origin as a proof for inspiration?

The Muratorian Canon values prophetic origin quite highly in that regard.52 This list of canonical works approves the Apocalypse very strongly and even uses that book's authority to verify the catholicity of Paul's epistles.53

... The blessed apostle Paul himself, following the example of his predecessor John, writes by name to only seven churches... It is clearly recognizable that there is one Church spread throughout the whole extent of the earth. For John also in the Apocalypse, though he writes to seven churches, nevertheless speaks to all.

By making Paul dependent on John in this way, the list's compiler shows his preference for prophetic inspiration even over apostolic authorship. Bruce has written,

This making Paul follow the precedent of John is chronologically preposterous; it probably indicates, however, that for the compiler the primary criterion

of inclusion in the list was prophetic inspiration. In the early church as a whole the predominant criterion appears to have been apostolic authority, if not apostolic authorship; for this writer, however, even apostolic authorship evidently takes second place to prophetic inspiration.\footnote{54}{Bruce, \textit{Canon of Scripture} 164.}

Paul's patterning of his seven epistles after John's seven messages in Revelation 2–3 demonstrates the intention that those epistles reach the church in every place. The precedence granted the Apocalypse in that statement reflects the compiler's high ranking of the book among the rest of the books he lists. Bruce is correct in recognizing the Muratorian author's high esteem for prophetic inspiration, which is also the basis of the Apocalypse's self-claim of authority.

The author's view of prophecy's importance should affect the interpretation of a later statement in his Canon:

\begin{quote}
But the \textit{Shepherd} was written by Hermas in the city of Rome quite recently, in our own times, when his brother Pius occupied the bishop's chair in the church of the city of Rome; and therefore it may be read indeed, but cannot be given out to the people in church either among the prophets, since their number is complete, or among the apostles for it is after (their) time.
\end{quote}

Both Bruce and Metzger refer this statement to the OT prophets\footnote{55}{Bruce, \textit{Canon of Scripture} 166; Metzger, \textit{Canon of the New Testament} 307 n. 8.}, but plenty of contextual merit favors the interpretation that the number of NT prophets is complete.\footnote{56}{See Heine, "Gospel of John in the Montanist Controversy" 13; contra Gary Steven Shogren, "Christian Prophecy and Canon in the Second Century: A Response to B. B. Warfield" (paper read at the 47th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Philadelphia, November 18, 1995) 19.}

First, the compiler's preferential ranking of John's Apocalypse among the recognized books makes at least a partial reference to NT prophets probable. Second, he makes no mention of the OT elsewhere in the extant portion of the list.\footnote{57}{The only possible allusion to the OT is indirect, when the compiler refers to "Wisdom also, written by Solomon's friends in his honour." The Wisdom of Solomon is a book of the OT Apocrypha, making its mention in this list surprising. Metzger calls this "a puzzle that has never been satisfactorily solved" (Metzger, \textit{Canon of the New Testament} 198). As a reason for its inclusion here, Bruce suggests its writing came closer to NT times than to the period of the OT (Bruce, \textit{Canon of Scripture} 165). William Horbury has suggested the compiler did not intend to include Wisdom among the canonical books, but his discussion of it toward the close of his list indicates it was among disputed books from both testaments ("The Wisdom of Solomon in the Muratorian..."), but perhaps the compiler intended to include it when he mentioned it.}

It devotes exclusive attention to books...
eventually recognized as the NT canon, so why at this point should the list abruptly inject a reference to OT prophets? Third, the compiler could hardly suggest that the Shepherd might have been read among the OT prophets, because that work is a distinctly Christian writing. In his discussion of the NT-related writings, he would hardly have negated the possibility of reading a Christian work among writings of OT prophets.

Fourth, the relatively recent date of the Shepherd's composition furnishes the compiler of the list a reason for excluding it from books to be read in church. This factor may well imply that the period of normative NT revelation had passed not too long before its writing. It would hardly be suitable if the relatively recent date was a ground for exclusion from the OT prophets who had completed their work over four centuries earlier.

If the writer does in fact state that the number of NT prophets is complete and that is his reason for not recommending the reading of the Shepherd in church, it furnishes another strong indication of his recognition of prophetic inspiration as a foundation for inclusion in the NT canon.

A number of other early fathers and writings manifest a high respect for prophetic inspiration in relation to canonical recognition. The Didache blends together NT prophets with apostles and OT prophets and emphasizes the need to distinguish between true and false prophets or apostles:

Let every apostle that cometh to you be received as the Lord. But he shall not remain except one day; but if there be need also the next; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goeth away, let him take nothing but bread until he lodgeth; but if he ask money, he is a false prophet. And every prophet that speaketh in the Spirit ye shall neither try nor judge; for every sin shall be forgiven, but this sin shall not be forgiven. But not every one that speaketh in the Spirit is a prophet; but only if he hold the ways of the Lord. Therefore from their ways shall the false prophet and the prophet be known.... And every prophet, proved true, working unto the mystery of the Church in the world, yet not teaching others to do what he himself doeth, shall not be judged among you, for with God he hath his judgment; for so did also the ancient prophets (Did. 11. 4-8, 11).

Note the free interchange of apostles with prophets as spokespersons of inspired utterances.

Ignatius also lifts up the gift of prophecy when he instructs his

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59 Cf. Dunbar, "The Biblical Canon" 327.
The Master's Seminary Journal

readers to hear Christian prophets because the prophets had "lived according to Jesus Christ" and were "inspired by His grace" (Magn. 8.2; cf. 9.2). He adds that Christians should love not only the gospel and the apostles but also the prophets because they had announced the advent of Christ and had become his disciples (Phld. 5.2). Clement of Alexandria cites "the prophetic spirit" as the source of a number of NT as well as OT portions of Scripture (The Instructor 1:5). Since he included nonpredictive parts of the NT in this designation, he most probably had in mind the prophetic inspiration that lay behind all books of the Bible. Justin Martyr wrote about Abraham: "For as he believed the voice of God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, in like manner we, having believed God's voice spoken by the apostles of Christ, and promulgated to us by the prophets, have renounced even to death all the things of the world." He defended the existence of prophetic power in the Christian church.

In the third century Dionysius of Alexandria, a pupil of Origen, wrongly thought that John the Apostle did not write Revelation, but nevertheless accepted the book's inspiration. Though arguing vigorously against apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse, he said, "But for my part I should not dare to reject the book" (Eusebius The Ecclesiastical History 7.25). Dionysius' willingness to embrace the authority of the Apocalypse without apostolic authorship indicates his recognition of a nonapostolic source of inspiration which was most probably the gift of prophecy.

At least three other early fathers echo from the Muratorian Canon a relationship between Paul's epistles to seven churches and John's seven messages in Revelation 2–3. They are Cyprian, Victorinus of Pettau, and Jerome. The two former leaders point out the relationship between Paul's churches and those of John, indicating an ongoing tradition of Paul's dependence on John's prophecy as a pattern.

Granted, these early voices do not speak as loudly or as frequently about prophetic inspiration as they and others do about apostolic

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60Cf. ibid., 325.
61Dialogue with Trypho, chap. 119, in ANF 1:259; cf. Brooke Foss Westcott, A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament, 6th ed. (Cambridge and London: Macmillan, 1889) 173. That Tertullian included the author of the Apocalypse among the prophets is evident from his words in Dial. chap. 100.81: "Moreover also among us a man named John one of the Apostles of Christ, prophesied in a revelation made to him that those who have believed on our Christ shall spend a thousand years in Jerusalem" (Westcott, General Survey 121).
62Westcott, General Survey 168.
63Harris, Inspiration and Canon 268.
64Cyprian Exhortation for Martyrdom 11; Victorinus On the Apocalypse 1.7, on Rev. 1:20; Jerome Epistle 53:9.
Revelatory Spiritual Gifts and NT Canonicity

authority, but they do speak. In light of such early words, Gaussen's reasoning based on NT revelation has merit:

And since St Luke and St Mark were, amid so many other prophets, the fellow-workers chosen by St Paul and St Peter, is it not clear enough that these two apostolic men must have bestowed upon such associates the gifts which they dispensed to so many besides who had believed? Do we not see Peter and John first go down to Samaria to confer these gifts on the believers of that city; this followed by Peter coming to Cesarea, there to shed them on all the Gentiles who had heard the word in the house of the centurion Cornelius (Acts viii. 14, 17)? Do we not see St Paul bestow them abundantly on the believers of Corinth, on those of Ephesus, on those of Rome (Acts xix. 6, 7; 1 Cor xii. 28, xiv; Rom i. 11, xv. 19, 29)? Do we not see him, before employing his dear son Timothy as his fellow-labourer, causing spiritual powers to descend on him (1 Tim iv. 14; 2 Tim i. 6)? And is it not evident that St Peter must have done as much for his dear son Mark (1 Pet. v. 13), as St Paul did for his companion Luke (Acts xiii. 1, xvi. 10, xxvii. 1; Rom xvi. 21; Col iv. 14; 2 Tim iv. 11; Philem 24; 2 Cor viii. 18)? Silas, whom St Paul had taken to accompany him (as he took Luke and John, whose surname was Mark), Silas was a prophet at Jerusalem (Acts xv. 32). Prophets abounded in all the primitive churches. Many were seen to come down from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts xi. 27); a great many were to be found in Corinth (1 Cor xii. 19,20, xiv. 31, 39); Judas and Silas were prophets in Jerusalem. Agabus was such in Judaea; farther, four daughters, still in their youth, of Philip the evangelist, were prophetesses in Cesarea (Acts xi. 28, xxi. 9, 10); and in the Church of Antioch, there were to be seen many believers who were prophets and doctors (Acts xiii. 1, 2); among others Barnabas (St Paul’s first companion), Simeon, Manaen, Saul of Tarsus himself; and, finally, that Lucius of Cyrene, who is thought to be the Lucius whom Paul (in his Epistle to the Romans) calls his kinsman (Rom xvi. 21), and whom (in his Epistle to the Colossians) he calls Luke the physician (Col iv. 14); in a word, the St Luke whom the ancient fathers call indifferently Lucas, Lucius, and Lucanus.

From these facts, then it becomes sufficiently evident that St Luke and St Mark ranked at least among the prophets whom the Lord had raised up in such numbers in all the Churches of the Jews and the Gentiles, and that from among all the rest they were chosen by the Holy Ghost to be conjoined with the apostles in writing the sacred books of the New Testament.65

Gaussen erred in believing that apostles had the authority to bestow gifts on men, but was correct in the sense that apostles did have the discernment

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to recognize what gifts others had received from God. He correctly reads
the NT in allowing for an abundance of people with the prophetic gift in
the first-century church and in acknowledging that Mark and Luke
composed their gospels by virtue of revelation received through their gifts
of prophecy. In essence, Paul verified Luke's prophetic gift in 1 Tim 5:18
when he calls Luke 10:7 "Scripture." Though the NT never applies the term
"prophet" to either Luke or Mark, no other satisfactory explanation of
canonical recognition for their works has been forthcoming. The same is
true of the Epistle to the Hebrews. By his own confession, the writer was
neither a personal witness of Christ's life and resurrection nor an apostle
(Heb 2:1-4), so he must have possessed the gift of prophecy in order to
receive special revelation and produce an inspired product.

The test of propheticity was subject to one further qualification.
Application of the test must keep in mind the authority of apostles over
prophets as illustrated in Paul's regulation of the Corinthian prophets (cf. 1
Cor 14:29-32). That explains the pronounced inclination of the early
Christian fathers to connect books written by prophets with apostles. They
related Luke, Acts, and Hebrews with Paul in one way or another, and
Mark with Peter. New Testament prophets did not work independently of
apostolic oversight.

The first test a work had to pass to gain recognition as inspired,
then, was either apostolicity or propheticity. Conceivably, however, early
Christians had in their possession numerous inspired messages that met
one of these two criteria. How did they proceed beyond this point? Bruce
suggests the additional tests of antiquity, orthodoxy, catholicity, and
traditional use.66

Test of Antiquity
A work that originated after the period of the apostles and prophets,
though possibly considered inspired by some, could not be canonical. The
Muratorian Canon compiler had a high regard for the Shepherd of Hermas,
but it came too late to merit being read in church. The Apocalypse of Peter
had merit in some circles, but being written by someone other than Peter at
a later time, neither did it possess the authority to gain universal
acceptance, according to the compiler of the Muratorian list. The test of
antiquity, then, was nothing more than a verification of the tests of
apostolicity and propheticity.

Test of Orthodoxy

Bruce, Canon of Scripture 259-63.
Second-century churchmen applied the criterion of orthodoxy to writings that were inspired or claimed inspiration to determine their worthiness for inclusion among the canonical Scriptures. This test appealed to the doctrines set forth in the undisputed apostolic writings and maintained by churches founded by apostles. These churchmen lived in a climate of developing heresies such as Docetism and Gnosticism, so when imitation gospels and Acts began to appear in the name of apostles, they had to apply criteria that would distinguish their teachings from what the apostles had taught. That teaching had remained consistent through a regular succession of elders in those original churches and was summed up in the churches’ rule of faith or baptismal creed.

That rule of faith answered Marcion in declaring that the Bible included more than one gospel and ten epistles of one apostle. It included four gospels and thirteen epistles of Paul as well as Acts, which gave a background for those epistles. That was the beginning of the definition of the apostolic tradition, so any other books that belonged alongside those writings had to coincide with their teachings. In a sense, apostolic tradition helped to determine what was Scripture, and in turn, the earliest recognized books helped to determine the extent of the NT canon.

Central among those teachings was what a book said about the person and work of Christ. Does it identify Him as the historical Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and raised from the dead, and ascended to the Father’s right hand? Any writing that did not maintain a true picture of Him as its central figure was unacceptable (cf. 1 Cor 12:3). If it questioned His full humanity throughout His life, as did Gnostic writings, it could not be canonical (1 John 4:2-3). The same was true of any that questioned His deity and physical, bodily resurrection.

Yet some works that were quite orthodox in their teaching had to be ruled out because of pseudonymity. These included ones such as the Acts of Peter, the Acts of Paul, and the Apocalypse of Peter, writings that also failed the “Test of Antiquity.”

Some early works remain which could pass the tests of inspiration, apostolicity or propheticity, antiquity, and orthodoxy, works that were “impeccably orthodox,” but which did not gain final canonical

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67 Bruce, Canon of Scripture 260.
68 Ibid., 171-72.
69 Ibid., 151-52.
71 Bruce, Canon of Scripture 260.
72 Ibid., 261.
Two further considerations remained, the tests of catholicity and traditional usage.

**Test of Catholicity**

To become a part of the NT canon, a work had to be beneficial on more than a local scale. The church as a whole had to endorse it. The Western church was slow to accept the Epistle to the Hebrews, but eventually did accept it so as not to be out of step with the rest of the churches.

Though from a modern perspective, some might rule out some of Paul's canonical epistles such as Galatians and the two Corinthian epistles because of their localized emphases, early leaders deemed them useful to all churches because Paul wrote epistles to seven churches just as John sent messages to seven churches in Revelation. Every document started with local recognition, but the acceptance of only the canonical ones spread throughout the early church.

**Test of Traditional Usage**

The criterion of traditional use did not come into play until the third and fourth centuries. Origen and Eusebius in particular tried to discern whether a writing had been in public use from early times in the churches, as did Jerome and Augustine a little later. Unlike the other tests of apostolicity or propheticity, antiquity, orthodoxy, and catholicity which related more to internal characteristics of a writing, traditional usage took particular note of a book's place in the practice of churches.

Traditional use was in no way a major criterion, however. Some documents that occasionally found places in public reading did not eventually find their places in the NT canon, works such as Shepherd of Hermas, 1 Clement, and the Didache. Conversely, other works that lacked longstanding and broad usage—works such as James, 2 Peter, and 2 and 3 John—did gain canonical status, even though it was late in coming. The test simply corroborated conclusions reached on the grounds of other tests.

These tests, then, were the means earliest Christians used to decide...
which books were inspired and therefore deserved places of authority alongside the OT canon: Did the writing come from an apostolic or prophetic source? If so, it was inspired and remained in the running. If not, it could not be inspired. Did the inspired writing come from antiquity, i.e., from the apostolic era? If so, it was still a candidate. Was it orthodox or, in other words, in accord with the doctrines of the apostles? If so, it remained a possibility. Was it catholic in its message so that all the churches would benefit from it? If so, it still could become canonical. Did it have a history of traditional usage in the churches? If so, that sealed the work’s place among the books of the NT canon.

This is not to say that every test applied to every writing, nor is it to say early Christians applied the tests in the suggested sequence. Gamble observes, “It should be clear that the principles of canonicity adduced in the ancient church were numerous, diverse, and broadly defined, that their application was not systematic or thoroughly consistent, and that they were used in a variety of combinations.” Testing for apostolicity or propheticity was indispensable, but ultimately, the providence of God determined how and when the early church applied the rest of the tests.

But it should also be clear that without the avenue of special revelation resulting in direct inspiration, no writing could have attained such an exalted status. That is why the gifts of apostleship and prophecy—along with their attendant gifts of the words of wisdom and knowledge—are indispensable considerations in discussions of NT canonicity. Without inspired utterances and writings originating during the first century, no NT canon could have come into being. Those gifts were the vehicle—apart from the oral teachings of Jesus Christ—that God chose to communicate His new covenant message to the church and future generations. No writing was canonical apart from their use.

**SUMMARY OF THE CASE**

The four revelatory gifts of the Spirit to the body of Christ were apostleship, prophecy, the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge. The last two are varying perspectives on the first two, which have far more prominence in the NT. Nonapostles as well as apostles received the gift of prophecy (as illustrated in the ministry of Agabus) allowing them to receive special revelation and transmit inspired communications.

The early church valued products of apostles most highly in their recognition of authoritative writings to take their places alongside the OT.

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canon, because they had direct appointments from Christ as His authoritative representatives. But apostolic authorship alone could not settle the issue of canonicity, so the early church also had a high regard for NT prophets as producers of inspired writings to be recognized as canonical. In the last decade of the first century, John emphasized a high view of prophecy by claiming prophetic inspiration as the basis of authority for the Apocalypse and by placing the NT prophet on a plane with OT prophets and angels as channels of divine revelation. The Muratorian Canon took its cue from that in its special focus on prophetic revelation. Then followed the Didache, Ignatius, Clement of Alexandria, Justyn Martyr, and others.

From among the inspired writings of apostles and prophets, the consensus of early Christians selected twenty-seven writings worthy of canonical recognition to compose NT Scripture. They did so with divine guidance, selecting from among many inspired writings that survived the first century A.D. by applying tests of antiquity, orthodoxy, catholicity, and traditional usage.
DISPENSATIONALISTS AND SPIRIT BAPTISM

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An area of debate among dispensationalists has involved continuity and discontinuity of Spirit baptism from dispensation to dispensation. Classic Dispensationalism as a whole endorsed the position of discontinuity. Revised Dispensationalism did the same with even more emphasis, a few of its spokesmen doing so by proposing two New Covenants, one for Israel and one for the church. With the abandonment of the two-New Covenants view by revised dispensationalists came the introduction of Progressive Dispensationalism. Progressive dispensationalists have proposed continuity of the doctrine of Spirit baptism from the OT through the church age into the future millennium. They likewise have suggested that the "body" metaphor for the church applies to all New Covenant believers, even those on earth after the church's rapture. An alternative dispensational view defends the continuity of Spirit baptism by allowing that OT prophets foresaw its occurrence as did John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts, Peter connected earliest instances of Spirit baptism with previous predictions too. Yet the alternative proposal does not go so far as to indicate continuity of the body of Christ metaphor, but rather limits it to church believers of this dispensation.

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Dispensationalists debate the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit on at least three fronts. First, they have generally been non-Pentecostal and have dismissed as unbiblical the teaching that Spirit baptism
produces speaking in tongues. Second, they have debated other non-Pentecostal fundamentalists and evangelicals who believe that Spirit baptism was a second experience after conversion which greatly enhanced power for Christian service. Concerning D. L. Moody, R. A. Torrey wrote:

See, for example, John Walvoord, The Holy Spirit (Wheaton, Ill.: Van Kampen, 1954) 180-88. Douglas A. Oss, an Associate Professor of Hermeneutics and New Testament at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, a Pentecostal school, brought a helpful paper to the Dispensational Study Group of ETS in November, 1991. Oss writes that "while a 'Pentecostalized' version of dispensationalism has been part of the Pentecostal framework from the beginning, the rigid dualism of Scofieldism has never been part of mainstream Pentecostal scholarship" (Oss, "The Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism with the Pentecostal Tradition" 3-4). John Wimber writes, "Of all theologies, dispensationalism is probably the most antagonistic toward the charismatic gifts and Pentecostalism" (John Wimber, Power Evangelism [San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986] 143).
Once he had some teachers at Northfield, fine men all of them, but they did not believe in a definite Baptism with the Holy Ghost for the individual. They believed that every child of God was baptized with the Holy Ghost, and they did not believe in any special Baptism with the Holy Ghost for the individual. Mr. Moody came to me and said, "Torrey, will you come up to my house after the meeting tonight and I will get these men to come, and I want you to talk this thing out with them." Of course I readily consented, and Mr. Moody and I talked for a long time, but they did not altogether see eye to eye with us. And when they went, Mr. Moody signaled me to remain for a few minutes. Mr. Moody sat there with his chin on his breast, as he often sat when in deep thought; then he looked up and said, "Oh, why will they split hairs? Why don't they see that this is just the one thing that they themselves need? They are good teachers, they are wonderful teachers, and I am so glad to have them here; but why will they not see that the Baptism with the Holy Ghost is just the one touch that they themselves need?"

Third, dispensationalists have discussed the Scriptural teachings concerning the continuity and discontinuity of Spirit baptism. The discussion is not only between dispensationalists and covenant theologians, but also between the more classic (revised) dispensationalists and progressive dispensationalists. Besides basic definitions, the following questions are typical of the ones raised: (1) Were OT saints baptized in the Spirit? (2) Was there a prediction of the baptism of the Spirit in the OT? (3) Is the body metaphor of Jews and Gentiles in one body predicted in the OT? (4) Was Spirit baptism as known today in the church either predicted or realized in the OT? (5) What is the future of Spirit baptism in the Tribulation or the Millennial Kingdom? The debate over continuity and discontinuity is the focus of this essay.

Some contemporary dispensationalists divide the history of dispensationalism into three broad periods: Classic Dispensationalism (from about 1830 to 1955), Revised Dispensationalism (beginning about 1955), and Progressive Dispensationalism (beginning in the 1980's). Of

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course, representatives of earlier phases of dispensationalism continue to write at the present time. The plan in this article is to explain briefly the typical understanding of Spirit baptism in each era of American dispensational history and then to suggest a possible alternative dispensational view.

**SPIRIT BAPTISM IN CLASSIC AMERICAN DISPENSATIONALISM**

The classic period of dispensationalism extended from about 1830 to about 1955. Most credit John Nelson Darby and the British Brethren for initiating dispensationalism in Britain, but in America, James Brookes and the Niagara Bible Conference (1875-1900), C. I. Scofield and his Reference Bible (1909, 1917), and Lewis Sperry Chafer's Systematic Theology (1948) are key representatives of this era.4

**Niagara Bible Conference and Its Participants**

The Niagara Bible Conference began near Chicago in 1875 with a small Bible study led by James Hall Brookes, pastor of the Washington and Compton Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, Missouri.5 The next year the Bible study took the name of the "Believers' Meeting" and met in Swampscott, Massachusetts. As it became more open to the public, the conference met in the following years at Watkins Cove (Glen), New York (1877); Clifton Springs, New York (1878-80); Old Orchard, Maine (1881); Mackinac Island, Michigan (1882); Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario (1883-97); Point Chautauqua, New York (1898-99); and Asbury Park, New Jersey (1900). The conference offered a sounding board for the proclamation of the "unchanging features" of dispensationalism6 and provided an opportunity for friendship among dispensationalists.

In particular, "two features of the conference especially lent them-

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4Concerning the Niagara conference, Frank Gaebelein suggests that "the Niagara group and their many followers might well be credited with keeping before American Protestantism some of the great evangelical and prophetic teachings of the Bible" (The Story of the Scofield Reference Bible [New York: Oxford University, 1959] 13). Ernest Sandeen has described the Scofield Reference Bible as "perhaps the most influential single publication in Fundamentalist historiography" (The Roots of Fundamentalism [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970] 222). Chafer's theological set is the first major multi-volume systematic theology written by an American dispensationalist.


6Blaising and Bock, Progressive Dispensationalism 13-21.
selves to the development of dispensationalism.”7 One was its emphasis on the Bible, and the other was its view of the church. Concerning the church, the writers of the Niagara Bible Conference Creed (specifically James Brookes) wrote:

We believe that the Church is composed of all who are united by the Holy Spirit to the risen and ascended Son of God, that by the same Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and thus being members one of another we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian prejudices and denominational bigotry, and loving one another with a pure heart fervently. . . .8

Beyond this basic statement, most of the Niagara attenders seemed to agree on the following teachings about Spirit baptism. First, the OT saints did not receive baptism in the Spirit. Brookes insisted,

It is never said of the Old Testament saints that the Holy Spirit abode with them, or that He dwelt in them, or that by one Spirit they were all baptized into one body of which the risen Jesus was the glorified head. He had not then ascended, and consequently there was no man at God’s right hand, to whom believers could be united by the Holy Ghost. . . .9

Second, predictions by the OT prophets of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit were not fulfilled at Pentecost. James Brookes, after quoting the prophecy of the New Covenant outpouring of the Spirit in Jeremiah 31, wrote that “I will admit that this prediction in the fullness of its blessing and meaning remains to be fulfilled. . . .”10 A. C. Gaebelein agreed: “In a future day the Spirit will be poured out upon them, after their great national repentance, when they will mourn for Him (Zechariah xii:9-14; Ezekiel xxxii:29).”11

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7Blaising and Bock, Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church 16-17.
Third, the promises of the outpouring of the Spirit in the OT nevertheless had some relationship to the present day. Speaking at Niagara in 1889, H. M. Parsons of Toronto explained,

In Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, Jehovah speaks to His ancient people concerning the new covenant, and declares two things: (1) "a new Spirit will I put within you;" (2) "I will put my Spirit within you." While this is future and to be witnessed when Israel and Judah have national restoration—and acceptance of their Messiah—it is also repeated in promise to the Church in the New Testament.12

In one place, Brookes also suggested that Isaiah's promise to pour out water on a thirsty land applied "first to Israel," but "is fulfilled in part at least" in the church.13 Since the Niagara Bible Conference did not purpose to be an academic meeting, it is doubtful that such problems as how these OT promises could be partially fulfilled were ever worked out in any detail.14

Fourth, as noted above in the Niagara Creed, the result of the baptism of the Spirit in this age is the formation of the church.

Fifth, each individual experiences only one baptism of the Spirit, the one that occurs at the time of conversion. In his message to the Niagara Conference in 1898, W. J. Erdman said, "One baptism, no matter how many refillings there may be, how many ebbings and flowings, how much intermittence there may be, there must have been given at some time the gift himself that there may be after that refillings through his indwelling in our hearts.15

C. I. Scofield and His Reference Bible

After his conversion in 1879 (Scofield was 36), C. I. Scofield joined the First Congregational Church in St. Louis, a church pastored by C. L. Goodell, a friend of James Brookes. A. C. Gaebelein, in his History of the

13Brookes, "The Promise and Presence" 486.
14Later, during this classic period, W. H. Griffith Thomas did show some insight by speaking of the fulfillment of these OT prophecies in the "Messianic days" (W. H. Griffith Thomas, The Holy Spirit of God [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1913] 14).
15W. J. Erdman, "22nd Annual Bible Conference," Watchword and Truth XX (September 1898):258. A. J. Gordon, who was a mediating figure between the dispensationalists and the Finney/Moody/Torrey type of theology, argued that "the baptism of the Spirit was given once for the whole church, extending from Pentecost to Parousia... As there is one body reaching through the entire dispensation, so there is `one baptism' for that body given on the day of Pentecost" (A. J. Gordon, The Ministry of the Spirit [Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1894]:53).
Scofield Bible, wrote that "the most important event after his conversion was his early acquaintance with the outstanding Bible teacher of that day, Dr. James H. Brookes." 16 Gaebelín continued,

At the feet of this choice servant of Christ, Scofield took his place. Here he learned what he could not have learned in any of the theological seminaries of that time. Being instructed by Dr. Brookes in Bible study, he soon mastered, with his fine analytical mind, the ABC's of the right division of the Word of God. . . . From Dr. Brookes' instruction he became acquainted with the high points of sacred prophecy relating to the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God.17

Scofield began to talk about the Reference Bible at the Sea Cliff Bible Conference in 1901 and published the first edition in 1909.18 Scofield, who had participated in the Niagara Conferences himself, did not alter the doctrine of Spirit baptism taught there. He continued the Niagara teachers' emphasis on the relationship of Spirit baptism to the church. He wrote, "The Spirit forms the church (Mt. 16:18; Heb. 12:23, note) by baptizing all believers into the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:12,13). . . ."19 He also noted, "The mystery 'hid in God' was the divine purpose to make of Jew and Gentile a wholly new thing—'the church, which is his [Christ's] body,' formed by the baptism with the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12,13) and in which the earthly distinctions of Jew and Gentile disappear (Eph. 2:14,15; Col. 3.10,11)."20 In another place, Scofield taught that "there cannot be a church, first of all, without a head; nor, secondly, without the baptism of the Holy Spirit which began at Pentecost; therefore we say that the church began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost."21

If there is anything surprising in Scofield's teaching, it is found in his note on Peter's use of Joel on the Day of Pentecost. Unlike the strong discontinuity position which argues that Peter used Joel only as an analogy to what happened at Pentecost, Scofield taught that Joel actually began to be fulfilled at that time. In his footnote on Joel 2:28, Scofield explained,

Cf. Acts 2.17, which gives a specific interpretation of "afterward" (Heb. acherith="latter," "last"). "Afterward" in Joel 2.28 means "in the last day" (Gr.

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17Ibid., 24.
18Ibid., 47.
20Ibid., 1252.
eschatos), and has a partial and continuous fulfillment during the "last days" which began with the first advent of Christ (Heb. 1:2); but the greater fulfillment awaits the "last days" as applied to Israel. 22

Thus, in at least this area of pneumatology, Scofield accepted continuity between the OT and the church and between the church and the future. What was prophesied in the OT was partially and continuously fulfilled in the church. And what was partially and continuously fulfilled in the church will be ultimately fulfilled in the eschaton with Israel.

Lewis Sperry Chafer

Later representatives of classic dispensationalism, if anything, tended to support even more discontinuity in the doctrine of Spirit baptism. Lewis Sperry Chafer, the first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, summarized his teachings concerning Spirit baptism as follows:

The primary facts that this ministry—unlike the works of regeneration, indwelling, and filling—is not mentioned in the Old Testament, that it was not in operation before the Day of Pentecost, and that there is no anticipation of it in the age to come restrict it to the present age and its benefits are seen to be exclusively the portion of the Church, the New Creation; in fact, that which the Church represents in her exalted heavenly glory is almost wholly due to this specific ministry of the Holy Spirit. 23

SPIRIT BAPTISM IN REVISED DISPENSATIONALISM

Identification of Revised Dispensationalism

In America, the mid-to-late 1950's is the suggested time for the beginning of the period of Revised Dispensationalism—also called Essentialist, Normative, and Sine Qua Non Dispensationalism. The title "revised" stemmed from the revision of the Scofield Reference Bible completed in 1967. According to some students of dispensational history, by this time a number of leading dispensationalists had modified the teachings of original classic dispensationalism enough to signal the beginning of a new era in American dispensationalism. 24 Contributors to Revised Dispensationalism came from several different colleges and

22Scofield, Reference Bible, 932.
24For a discussion of the developments in Revised Dispensationalism, see Blaising and Bock, Progressive Dispensationalism 21-46. Also see Charles Ryrie's discussion of the difference between "development" and "change" ("Update on Dispensationalism," in Issues in Dispensationalism, Wesley R. Willis and John R. Master, eds. [Chicago: Moody, 1994] 15-27).
theological schools. Especially notable were Alva J. McClain, Homer A. Kent, Jr., and others from Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana, and John Walvoord and others—such as Merrill Unger and especially Charles Ryrie—from Dallas Theological Seminary. In 1965, Ryrie published a classic defense of dispensationalism entitled Dispensationalism Today, in which he tried to define the unique essence of dispensationalism, an essence he called the "sine qua non" of dispensationalism.25

The Baptism of the Spirit

As to the baptism of the Spirit, representatives of Revised Dispensationalism have argued, perhaps with more emphasis than their predecessors, that Spirit baptism was restricted to the church. Ryrie insisted,

The baptizing work of the Spirit is the one work of the Spirit which is not found in any other dispensation. This is proved theologically and biblically. Theologically, the proof is based on 1 Cor. 12:13. . . . If it is the baptizing work of the Spirit that places a person in the Body of Christ, and if the Body of Christ—because it depends on the resurrection and ascension of Christ—is distinctive to this age, then so is the baptism. Biblically, the baptizing work is never mentioned as being experienced in the Old Testament or in the days of Christ's earthly ministry. . . . Although the Spirit will be active in the millennial age, no specific mention of His baptizing work then is given in the Bible.26

Because it is church truth, it was impossible for the OT prophets to know anything about Spirit baptism since the church was a mystery to them. Moreover, according to Ryrie, after the rapture of the church, this ministry of the Spirit will cease.

Not only was Spirit baptism not an experience in the OT, but also the OT did not predict it. In Merrill F. Unger's words,

The baptism of the Spirit announced by John is not once in view in the Old Testament. The essential nature of this new work of God's Spirit and its unique place in the divine program are such as to forbid its occurring, or even being predicted there. . . .27


But some dispensationalists began to wonder about such strict discontinuity in the doctrine of the baptism of the Spirit. What about those New Covenant prophecies in the OT that predicted an outpouring of the Spirit (Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 37:14; 39:29; Joel 2:28-29, et. al.)? Even more problematic is the fact that John the Baptist, who predicted the outpouring by Christ that seemed to eventuate in the church, was an Old Covenant prophet. Also Christ, as He was about to ascend into heaven, instructed His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and "wait for what the Father had promised" and promised they would "be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:4-5). A few days later, the fulfillment of His prophecy came and the church began. How did the church fulfill "what the Father had promised"? Is it defensible to teach that there is total discontinuity between the outpouring of the Spirit as predicted in the OT and as seemingly initiated on the Day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:16)?

In working through the continuity/discontinuity matters surrounding the prediction of New Covenant pneumatology in the Old Covenant prophets, a few (certainly not most) revised dispensationalists, following Lewis Sperry Chafer, opted for two New Covenants: one for Israel and one for the church. The pneumatological implication was that the benefits of an outpouring of the Spirit (regeneration, indwelling, teaching) that the church experienced were similar to those promised to Israel, but not the same. Israel's new covenant spawned pneumatological benefits to Israel; the church's new covenant spawned pneumatological benefits to the church. Thus discontinuity reigned supreme. But when they encountered exegetical difficulty in proving the two-New Covenant view, most of that view's adherents abandoned the view, and dispensationalism and its pneumatology were ready for a major

Unger adds, "The baptism of the Spirit announced by John is a unique operation confined to this present age from Pentecost to the rapture" (ibid., 42). But if that is true, every dispensationalist must wonder what John, an Old Testament prophet, knew about church truth.

SPIRIT BAPTISM IN PROGRESSIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

Progressive Dispensationalism is the latest stage in the history of dispensationalism. According to Craig Blaising,

Progressive dispensationalism offers a number of modifications to classical and revised dispensationalism which brings dispensationalism closer to contemporary evangelical biblical interpretation. Although the name is relatively recent, the particular interpretations that make up this form of dispensationalism have been developing over the past fifteen years. Sufficient revisions had taken place by 1991 to introduce the name progressive dispensationalism at the national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society that year.  

This theological movement within dispensationalism has been led by Craig Blaising, now of Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, Darrell L. Bock of Dallas Theological Seminary, Robert Saucy of Talbot School of Theology, and the authors of Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church. The name "progressive" does not imply that its adherents are contemporary and up-to-date, but rather that they stress the progressive relationship from dispensation to dispensation. Progressive Dispensationalism emphasizes the continuity from past dispensations to the present dispensation and from the present dispensation to the future dispensations.

Baptism of the Spirit

Partly as a result of increased emphasis on continuity from dispensation to dispensation, progressive dispensationalists do not consider Spirit baptism to be unique to the present dispensation. In the first place, they hold that the OT predicted Spirit baptism—called "Spirit outpouring" by the OT prophets. Darrell Bock writes,

Continuity in the preaching of the kingdom is found in the promise of the

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30Blaising and Bock, Progressive Dispensationalism 22-23.

31Blaising and Bock, Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church 380 ff.
Spirit as it is tied to repentance. John the Baptist had specifically noted that one of the distinctive features of Jesus' ministry versus his own was the baptism of the Spirit, which the "Coming One" would supply (Luke 3:15-18). Luke 24:49 refers to the "promise of the Father" that Jesus shall send and for which the disciples must wait. This must be an Old Testament promise, given the context of Old Testament fulfillment in Luke 24.32

Thus John's prediction concerning the Messiah's baptizing with the Holy Spirit, later called the "promise of the Father," was "an Old Testament promise."  

Moreover, Bock contends that this OT promise began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost:

[T]he event that is singled out as that which fulfills Joel is the pouring out of the Spirit on all believers. In fact, the idea is mentioned twice in the space of the quotation (vv. 17b, 18b), with the second mention being an addition to the quotation for emphasis. This event must be the "promise of the Father" that was spoken of in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4. . . . [A] careful study of the use of Joel in Acts 2 shows that "this is that" is not "this is all of that" or "this is like that;" the meaning rather, is "this is the beginning of that," since the cosmic signs of Joel 2 are not fulfilled in the first coming of Jesus.33

But not only was the OT promise about the outpouring of the Spirit fulfilled in part in the church (Acts 1:4-5), it was also closely related to a future dispensation. He adds,

In fact "the promise of the Father" alludes not only to Joel but to a key promise of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31, an important eschatological text that promised a bestowal of the Spirit to God's people. . . . The eschaton has begun; the movement toward the culmination of the eschaton has started, as have the benefits associated with the coming of the Day of the Lord.34

The continuity of the baptism of the Spirit extends from the OT into the eschaton in Bock's analysis. That differs significantly from the "unique to this age" view of Classic and Revised Dispensationalism, and Ryrie's


33Ibid., 48 (emphasis original).

34Ibid., 48-49. See also Bruce A. Ware, "The New Covenant and the People(s) of God," 68-97, and Kenneth L. Barker, "The Scope and Center of Old and New Testament Theology and Hope," in Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church, 293-328. Barker says that "another example of progressive fulfillment is Malachi 4:4-5, fulfilled through John the Baptist as well as through Elijah the prophet (or through another who will come in the spirit and power of Elijah) in the eschaton (cf. Rev. 11:6)" (325).
contention that some of the teachings of Progressive Dispensationalism are "changes," not "developments," is well-taken. In the words of Robert Saucy, a progressive dispensationalist, "The baptism with the Spirit is therefore not some unique ministry only for the people of the present church age, from Pentecost to the rapture, but rather is the sharing by members of the church in the Spirit's ministry of the new covenant." The implication for some progressive dispensationalists is that the church, that organism formed by the baptism of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, was at least implied in the Old Covenant prophets, and the church is a "sneak preview" of the kingdom.

Baptism Into the Body

The final debated issue concerning the doctrine of Spirit baptism among dispensationalists is the "body" metaphor (1 Cor 12:13). If Spirit baptism is prophesied in the OT, what about the "body" of Christ? Robert Saucy is one progressive dispensationalist who argues that the "body" metaphor is not unique to the present dispensation. He begins his discussion of the body of Christ metaphor as follows:

Dispensationalists have traditionally tended to interpret the various images as descriptions of the church as a distinct entity rather than as simply figurative language used to describe spiritual truth that may apply to others besides the church. . . . This view of metaphors does not seem appropriate in light of their usage in Scripture.

Saucy proceeds to suggest that just as the "bride" metaphor is used for Israel and the church, so the "body" metaphor is also general enough to apply to "all new covenant believers," and includes the church as well as other future New Covenant believers. Apparently, after the church is raptured from the earth, future believers living in the Tribulation and the Millennium will also baptized into the body. Once again, it is difficult to

36Saucy, Case for Progressive Dispensationalism 183.
37Bock, Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church 50. See also Robert Saucy's chapter, "The Church as the Mystery of God," in Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church, 127-55. Saucy writes, "The unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ is taking place in the church in partial fulfillment of Old Testament promises" (151); also see Saucy's book, The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism, especially his chapter, "The Church and the Revelation of Mysteries," 143-73. There Saucy indicates, "Thus we agree with the non-dispensationalists that Paul's teaching concerning the mystery of the church in the union of Jew and Gentile in Christ is a fulfillment of Old Testament promises" (164).
38Saucy, Case for Progressive Dispensationalism 184.
39Ibid., 186.
call this teaching merely a "development" within dispensationalism. Such continuity is a significant change from Revised Dispensationalism.

To summarize, classic and revised dispensationalists teach that Spirit baptism is unique to the present age. It was not predicted or experienced in the OT, nor will it be experienced in the future age. But progressive dispensationalists teach that the OT predicted Spirit baptism, that its partial fulfillment comes in the present age, and its ultimate fulfillment will come in the future age.

Likewise, classic and revised dispensationalists teach that the body metaphor is unique to the present age. It was a mystery in ages past, and when the rapture takes the church from the world before the Tribulation, this specific ministry of the Holy Spirit baptizing into the body will cease. Some progressive dispensationalists, however, teach that the body metaphor is not unique to the present dispensation, and that the Holy Spirit will continue to baptize into the body in the future age.

AN ALTERNATIVE DISPENSATIONAL VIEW

Applying scriptural tests to positions of various dispensationalists regarding the doctrine of Spirit baptism, one may find more continuity than classic and revised dispensationalists advocate, but more discontinuity than progressive dispensationalists teach.

Continuity of the Baptism of the Spirit

The OT Prophets. First, he may discover more continuity in that doctrine than classic and revised dispensationalists have taught.40 Old Covenant prophets, whom the Lord used to draw the blueprints for the New Covenant program, specifically predicted an age-inaugurating outpouring of the Spirit, even though they did not experience that outpouring themselves. For example, Isaiah wrote, "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field . . ." (32:15); "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessings upon thy offspring" (44:3). Also Joel prophesied, "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; And also, upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit" (2:28-29).

The conclusion to be drawn from these and other OT passages is

that the outpouring of the Spirit was an important part of a series of events that would initiate the eschatological time-period. So when Jesus told his disciples that the Spirit was about to come, they naturally wondered if He was going to inaugurate the kingdom at that time (Acts 1:4-8). Undoubtedly the common understanding among the Jews, as James D. G. Dunn notes, was that “the gift of the Spirit was one of the decisive marks of the new age.”

John the Baptist. The same was certainly John the Baptist’s understanding. John, though 400 years closer to the initiation of the New Covenant than the OT prophets, was himself an Old Covenant prophet. Both John and the other OT prophets taught that Messiah was to perform the outpouring (or baptism) of the Spirit; both taught that judgment would accompany the outpouring (or baptism); both taught that the outpouring would initiate the kingdom. John, who began his ministry by announcing the nearness of the kingdom (Matt 3:1), said, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire” (Matt 3:11; cf. Ezek 7:8; 39:29; Joel 2:28-32). Dispensationalists have often minimized this agreement of John’s message with the message of the Old Covenant prophets.

Of course, the metaphor changed. The OT prophets before John never used the metaphor, “baptism.” Their favorite figure was “outpouring.” But a change in the figure of speech from “outpour” to “baptize” is not surprising. In fact, ample evidence supports the idea that the Spirit and fire “outpouring” of the OT prophets (as Ezek 7:8; 39:29), and the Spirit and fire “baptism” of John, describe the same ministry of the Spirit.

First, the content of the message of OT prophets was the same as that of the message of John (see above). Second, the metaphors are both liquid, that is, watery. Third, John changed his metaphor to baptism because of his dramatic ministry of baptizing people in water. He had a ready-made visual illustration of the coming ministry of the Messiah who would immerse believers in the Spirit. Fourth, the later interchange of the two metaphors by the apostles proves the identification of the “baptism of the Spirit” with the “outpouring of the Spirit.” Metaphors always have to be considered in their context, but Luke records Peter using

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42 Dunn notes that “the fact that ‘liquid’ verbs are one of the standard ways of describing the gift of the Spirit in the last days would make it very easy for John to speak of the messianic gift of the Spirit in a metaphor drawn from the rite which was his own hallmark” (ibid., 12-13).
"outpouring" (Acts 2:17, 33; 10:45), "receiving the Spirit" (Acts 8:15, 17; 10:47), and "baptism" (Acts 11:16) to describe the New Covenant pneumatic ministration in its initial dispensing.

Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ also anticipated an outpouring of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; John 14:17; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8). His expression, the "promise of My Father" (Luke 24:49) no doubt referred to the outpouring promised in such OT passages as Joel 2:28-32. Then the Lord clearly related this promise (and prophecy) and John's prophecy of Spirit baptism to the day of Pentecost:

> And being assembled together with them, [He] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, you have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now (Acts 1:4-5).

Peter. The apostle Peter also taught that the church at Pentecost began reaping benefit from Spirit baptism as prophesied by John and interpreted by Christ's ascension-day prophecy. In his explanation of the Spirit's outpouring on the Gentiles, Peter rehearsed the statement of Christ: "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16).

Moreover, though its interpretation and significance is debatable, Peter, in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, pronounced that the outpouring of the Spirit was the beginning of the fulfillment of OT prophecy: "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). Beyond this, he ties both Joel and Pentecost into the "last days" (Acts 2:17). Bock writes,

> The period of the "last days" is by its very nature a period of fulfillment. In saying this, it is not necessary, or correct, to go on and say the period of consummation is present, for the NT can still speak of the "Age to Come." What is present is an inauguration-transition, not a completion as the nature of the fulfillment of Joel will show. The "last days" point to the presence of the eschaton, but not to the presence of all of it.43

Thus, the church has the great privilege of "tasting of the powers of the age to come" (Heb 6:4) that are available to "whosoever shall call on the name

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43Darrell L. Bock, "The Reign of the Lord Christ" (unpublished paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society, 1987) 8. Interestingly, Bock's view on this point is similar to Scofield's view (see above under discussion of "C. I. Scofield and His Reference Bible"). For a fuller discussion of this point, see Pettegrew, New Covenant Ministry of the Spirit 94-100.
of the Lord" (Acts 2:21), and participating in the pneumatological benefits of the New Covenant. To this degree, continuity exists between the OT and the present and between the present and the future millennium in the doctrine of the baptism or outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
Discontinuity of the Body of Christ Metaphor

On the other hand, the case for continuity of the body of Christ metaphor is not compelling. Though a detailed analysis of this teaching goes beyond the scope of this essay, the argument for its application to non-church believers is based on the general usage of metaphors and other theological presuppositions.\textsuperscript{44} In actuality, the "body" metaphor is not used for Israel in the OT,\textsuperscript{45} or used by the OT prophets for any future group, nor does the NT use it for any group of believers other than the church. The metaphor is a strictly Pauline idea for the organism in which believing Jews and Gentiles who were outside of the covenants and promises, come together into a gracious relationship with Christ and each other (Eph 2:11-22 ).\textsuperscript{46} Without further Biblical evidence, the case for continuity of the "body" metaphor fails. The conclusion therefore is that baptism by the Spirit into the body of Christ is a unique ministry for this dispensation.\textsuperscript{47}

CONCLUSION

Much of the doctrine of Spirit baptism in Classic and Revised Dispensationalism is compatible with the Scriptural data. The baptism of the Holy Spirit could not begin until after the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and OT saints did not experience the baptizing work of the Spirit, even those alive during the earthly ministry of Christ. Discontinuity exists between Israel and the church. Baptism of the Spirit into the body is unique to the church age. The truth of the Jew and Gentile placed together into one body was a mystery that Paul developed for the first time.

Likewise, much of the doctrine of Spirit baptism in Progressive Dispensationalism is compatible with the Scriptural data:

(1) The OT prophets predicted a future Spirit outpouring which would initiate the kingdom (Isa 32:15; 44:3; Ezek 39:25-29; Joel 2:28-29);
(2) John the Baptist prophesied that Christ would baptize with the

\textsuperscript{44}Contra Saucy, Case for Progressive Dispensationalism, 184-86.

\textsuperscript{45}John A. T. Robinson, The Body (London: SCM Press, 1952). Robinson points out that "Hebrew has no word for 'the body' which is in any sense technical or doctrinally significant" (ibid., 11).

\textsuperscript{46}Robinson notes, "For no other New Testament writer has the word σώμα any doctrinal significance" (ibid., 9).

Spirit (Matt. 3:11)—essentially the same prophecy as the OT prophets;
(3) Christ taught that the Spirit would minister to believers in a new way (John 7:37-39; 14-17)—again, essentially the same prophecy as the OT prophets (Ezek 36:27);
(4) Christ notified his disciples of the imminent inauguration of the Father's promise and John's predictions (Acts 1:4-5);
(5) Peter believed that the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost began to fulfill the OT prophets (Acts 2:16) and [in] the promise of the Father (Acts 2:33); and
(6) Peter asserted that the Spirit's outpouring on the Jews and Gentiles related to Christ's prediction about Spirit baptism (Acts 11:15-16), and in turn marked the beginning of the church's involvement in "what the Father had promised" (Acts 1:4-5; cf. Gal 3:14; Eph 1:13).

Therefore, dispensationalists studying the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit should consider both discontinuity and continuity between the OT and the present age and between the present age and the future millennium.
THE CHRISTIAN USE OF JEWISH NUMEROLOGY

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A book called the Zohar emerged during the Middle Ages, giving rise to a Jewish form of mystical speculation known as the "Cabala" and creating strong interest in the system's mystical teachings in both Jewish and Christian circles. During the Renaissance, Pico, Reuchlin, and Ricci led in applying the Zohar's mystical teachings to the OT in defense of Christian doctrines such as that of the Trinity. The Cabalistic doctrine of emanations provided a solution to the tension between the doctrines of God's transcendence and His immanence. Another exegetical method of the Cabalists was gematria, a system for discovering secret truths from the OT through various techniques of assigning numerical value to letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Christians should resist the temptation of using Cabalistic means for discovering truth from the Bible, because it deviates so widely from the grammatical-historical method of exegesis.

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Around A.D. 1300, a Hebrew book entitled the Zohar began circulating in Spain and its adjoining countries. The Zohar, a Hebrew term for "brilliance," was basically a mystical commentary on the Torah attributed to the second-century rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Late research has demonstrated conclusively that the real author was a contemporary Spanish rabbi named Moses de Leon. The philosophical theology of the Zohar constituted a decisive stage in the development of the Jewish form of mystical speculation known as the "Cabala."

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From the emergence of the Zohar to the rise of the "Haskala" (the Jewish Enlightenment) over four hundred years later, the Cabala was the most influential molder of Jewish thought. Although never espoused by all and always opposed by some, this mystical theosophy in attempting to explain the true relationship between God and creation influenced the mind of every Jewish person. It is safe to say that during the period following the Spanish expulsion in 1492, the Zohar ranked next to the Bible and the Talmud in spiritual authority for the Jewish community.

Furthermore, Jewish mystical writings did not escape the notice of non-Jewish thinkers. Many Christian theologians ridiculed the Cabala as occultic and fanciful. At the end of the fifteenth century, however, a movement began to develop in certain Renaissance "Christian" circles that sought to harmonize the doctrines of the Cabala with Christianity. Christian writers attempted to show that the true meaning of Cabalistic mysticism actually promoted the teaching of Christian doctrines!

The twofold purpose of this essay is to explain the main points of Christian interpretations of the Cabala and to examine the Cabala's influence on some modern evangelical thought.

RENAISSANCE CABALISTS

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2i.e., "a medieval and modern system of Jewish theosophy, mysticism, and thaumaturgy marked by belief in creation through emanation and a cipher method of interpreting Scripture" (10th ed., Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 158).
All attempts to discover a Christian interpretation of the Cabala before the late fifteenth century have failed. Everyone agrees that the founder of this approach was the Florentine prodigy Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94). Pico evidently had a portion of Cabalistic literature translated into Latin for him by the convert Samuel ben Nissim Abulfaraj, later known as Flavius Mithridates. The major source for Pico's Cabalistic conclusions was a Bible commentary by Menachem Recanati. Recanati's commentary was basically a watered-down version of the Zohar, which itself was a commentary on the Pentateuch.

In 1486 Pico displayed 900 theses for public debate in Rome. Included among these were 47 propositions taken directly from Cabalistic sources plus 72 more propositions that represented his own conclusions from his Cabalistic research. Pico himself announced that his work was "derived from the fundamental ideas of the Hebrew sages, greatly strengthening the Christian religion." The theses contained the daring claim that "no science can better convince us of the divinity of Jesus Christ than magic and Cabala." Pico, therefore, claimed that he could prove the dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation of Jesus Christ on the basis of Cabalistic axioms. This sudden discovery of a "secret tradition" hitherto unknown caused a sensation in the Christian intellectual world and aroused the fierce opposition of ecclesiastical authorities. To defend himself, Pico composed his Apologia and dedicated it to Lorenzo de Medici. This was not sufficient for the authorities, and he was declared guilty of heresy, but was cleared after a special appeal had gained the pardon of the pope.

Although tradition views Pico as the founder of "Christian Cabala," an examination of his "conclusions" reveals a rather incoherent and unsystematic approach to the subject. He does not discuss the precise schematization of the sefirot, he equates single terms from one system to another (e.g., he makes "night" in the Orphic system the same as En Soph in Cabala), and his suggestions regarding number symbolism are

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3Gershom Scholem, Kaballah (New York: Dorset, 1974) 197.
4Scholem (Kaballah 63) mentions the title of Recanati's work as According to the Path of Truth (Venice, 1523).
6Ibid.
7Scholem defines the sefirot as "spheres, whole realms of divinity, which underlie the world of our sense data and which are present and active in all that exists" (Major Trends 11).
8Literally translated as "The One Without End," En Soph (also spelled En Sof) is the technical Cabalistic title for God.
inconsistent and haphazard. Pico’s successors had to clarify and systematize his original suggestions.

John Reuchlin (1455-1522) is known in Jewish and Christian history for his eloquent defense of Hebrew literature against Pfefforkorn and the Dominicans. To Reuchlin himself, however, those contributions were phases of his interest in the Cabala. Although Reuchlin cited Pico as his inspiration, the Jewish cabalist Joseph Gikatilla (Shaare Orah) was the source for his knowledge of Cabala. Reuchlin’s work De Arte Cabalistica (1517), reveals a well-thought out theoretical approach building on and extending Pico’s scattered ideas. Reuchlin’s main contribution was a series of bold speculations on the names of God which "proved" or illustrated the Incarnation. Human history, Reuchlin argued, divides into three periods.

In the first, a natural period, God revealed Himself to the Patriarchs through the three-lettered name of "Shaddai" (ydv). In the period of the Torah, He revealed Himself to Moses through the four-lettered name of the Tetragrammaton (hwhy). In the period of redemption He revealed Himself through five letters: the Tetragrammaton with the addition of the letter shin, thus spelling "Yehoshuah" (hvwhy) or "Jesus." Thus Reuchlin’s arrangement was able to combine the Jewish belief in three ages (that of the Chaos, that of the Torah, and that of the Messiah) with the tripartite Christian division of a reign of the Father, a reign of the Son, and a reign of the Holy Spirit. Whatever be the merits of Reuchlin’s interpretations, from his time on, no Christian writer who touched on Cabalism did so without using him as a source. "That the Christian Cabala was at all respectable is attributable to the respect in which Reuchlin’s work was held."

During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries a wave of conversions to Christianity induced by the Cabala took place among the Jews. Certainly the most distinguished of these Cabalistic converts was Paul Ricci, who after his conversion became physician to Maximilian I and in 1521 became professor of Greek and Hebrew in the University of Pavia. His main work was the lengthy dialogue De Coelesti Agricultara (1541; Eng., "Concerning the Agriculture of the Heavens") in four books. He also produced a translation of Gikatilla’s Shaare Orah. Ricci unified the scattered dogmas of the Christian Cabala into an internally consistent system. Elaborate exegetical devices, however, as well as number and letter permutations did not appear in his work. Ricci’s system proceeded

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9 Gates of Light, circa 1293, mentioned by Scholem, Kaballah 195.
11 Ibid., 2.
12 Blau, Christian Interpretation of the Cabala 60.
from Adam's original innocence and knowledge of all ten sefirot, through the Fall and its consequence, the loss of knowledge of the three highest sefirot, to the conversion and redemption of man at the second advent of Jesus. The Christian interpretation of Cabala reached its apex of theological sophistication in the writings of Ricci.

Although many other Christians wrote about the Cabala, continuing to the eighteenth century, these three "founders"—Pico, Reuchlin, and Ricci—laid the groundwork for all later Christological speculation on the Cabala.

IDEAS AND METHODS

All Cabalistic discussions about the relationship between God and man revolved around the tensions created by the doctrines of God's transcendence and/ or immanence. Isaiah's conception of Deity combines both truths in a graphic way:

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Isa 57:15, NASB).

Isaiah answers the question of whether God is very distant from man (transcendence) or very close to man (immanence) by stating that the lofty God is close to the meek. Therefore, the OT notion is clearly one of immanence. However, under the influence of Alexandria (Hellenistic Judaism), the notion of transcendence came strongly to the forefront. The contradiction between a transcendent God and an immanent God demanded a resolution. An emanation doctrine seemed to provide a way to escape the horns of that dilemma. Philo was a well-known exponent of one type of an emanation theory. The sefirot of Cabalism provided another. The sefirot reveal God to the earnest seeker through increasingly exalted attributes, but they also are intermediaries by means of which God's intervention in human affairs took place. Therefore, the transcendent conception of deity held by Jewish Cabalists made it easier for them to accept the view of God presented in the NT. It was not difficult to substitute Christ for the sefirot as a means of explaining God's nature.

But how exactly did Christ fit into the sefirot scheme? The ten sefirot fell into two divisions: an upper three and a lower seven. The upper three are those most closely associated with En Sof, the ineffable God. The lower seven are the ones most closely associated with the lower

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14Scholem, Major Trends 55.

The Master's Seminary Journal

creation, i.e., the world of asiah ("creation"). The first sefira, the one at the top of the schematic tree of the sefirot, was Keter, "crown." This was the Father. Ricci also associated the name of God, Ehyeh ("I am"), with this sefira. The second, chochmah ("wisdom"), was associated with the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity. Ricci also associated the divine name Yah (יahu) with this sefira. The masculine sefirot on this side of the schema also served to underscore the identification of chochmah as the Son. The third sefira, binah ("understanding"), corresponded to the Spirit of God. Ricci associated elohim with this sefira and emphasized the feminine characteristics of that side of the schema. Thus, the upper three form a triad answering to the Holy Trinity. This use of the upper triad of the sefirotic tree to teach the Trinity was a common denominator among all Christian interpreters of the Cabala.

Another exegetical method employed by the Christian Cabalists was gematria. Since it was believed that Hebrew was the original language, then the very letters of the language must have contained certain divine messages for the readers. One of the Cabalistic books familiar to Pico, et. al., was the Sefer Yetsirah ("Book of Formation"). At its very beginning Sefer Yetsirah presents a theory of creation in which the letters play an active part:

By means of thirty-two mysterious paths of wisdom (i.e., the twenty two letters plus the ten sefirot) did the Lord of hosts ordain to create His Universe. The twenty two fundamental letters God appointed, established, combined, weighed, and changed, and through them He formed all things existent and destined to exist.

The term gematria was used in the Middle Ages to describe all the practices of numerical equivalencies, transformations, and permutations involving the Hebrew letters. In later times three terms developed to describe three different kinds of numerical methods. Gematria is the process of creating equivalencies from the numerical values of words. It is based on the fact that many ancient languages used the letters of the alphabet to represent numbers. Notarikon is an acrostic system. The initial or final letters of the words in a phrase are joined to form a word which is then given occult significance. Themurah consists of transposing the letters of a word, or replacing them with artificial equivalents obtained from one or another of

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16Ibid., 89.
17"Ricius, Paulus" 165.
18Ibid.; Ginsburg, Kaballah 143.
19Latin translation Liber Iezira, ed. John Rittangelius (Amsterdam, 1642).
20Ibid., 1:1.
In his work On the Art of Cabala, Reuchlin furnishes an example of how gematria was employed to affirm Christian doctrine. The Cabalists constantly experimented with the divine name YHVH (יהוה) to produce all kinds of secret "truths." The numerical value of the name is forty-two: yud (10, 6, 4), y (5), vv (6, 6) h (5). From this flowed the forty-two letter name: Ab Elohim Ben Elohim Ruach Hakadosh Elohim Sheloshah Beachad Achad Beshelosha, that is, "The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; Three in One and One in Three."22

Another of Reuchlin's "evidences" of the Trinity is in the very first verse of the Bible. Taking each of the three letters composing the word "created" (רהב, ברא) as the initial of a separate word results in the expression ב' יער, ב (bn rw h nb), "Son, Spirit, Father." Furthermore, the word "stone" (ב', ב) in Ps 118:22 can be divided into "Father, Son" (b b', b bn).23 Such methodology could prove or "illustrate" almost any doctrine. Those "proofs" for the Messianship of Jesus bring no honor to Christianity and reflect badly against the one who uses them as well as the one convinced by them.

In addition to the parallels from the sefirot and the use of gematria, Christian interpreters of the Cabala have used one other "evangelistic" method—statements in the Zohar that seemingly imply trinitarianism. Although Pico and other founders did not utilize these statements (due to their unfamiliarity with the text of the Zohar), some have taken the following passages as clearly conveying that Jewish Cabalists affirmed the concept of plurality within the Godhead.

In commenting on the repetition of the Divine names YHVH, Eloheenu, and YHVH in Deuteronomy 6:4, the Zoharic author asks,

How can the three Names be one? Only through the perception of faith: in the vision of the Holy Spirit, in the beholding of the hidden eyes alone. The mystery of the audible voice is similar to this, for though it is one yet it consists of three elements—fire, air, and water, which have, however, become one in the mystery of the voice. Even so it is with the mystery of the threefold Divine manifestations designated by YHVH Eloheenu YHVH—three modes which yet form one unity.24

After citing this and other Zoharic passages identifying the suffering servant of Isaiah 53 with the Messiah, Ginsburg comments,

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21Scholem, Major Trends 100.
22Reuchlin, Art of the Kabala 28.
23Johann Reuchlin, De Verbo Mirifico (Basel, 1494).
24Zohar, II, 43b.
That these opinions favor, to a certain extent, the doctrines of the Trinity and the Atonement, though not in the orthodox sense, is not only admitted by many of the Jewish literati who are adverse to the Kabbalah, but by some of its friends. Indeed, the very fact that so large a number of Kabbalists have from time to time embraced the Christian faith would of itself show that there must be some sort of affinity between the tenets of the respective systems.

That an affinity existed between the theosophical beliefs of medieval Cabalists and Christianity cannot be reasonably doubted—that it was the intention of the Cabalists that the affinity justified Trinitarian views is another matter altogether.

CHRISTIAN CABALISTS TODAY?

The Cabala does not command the allegiance of most Jews today, but is confined mainly to the Hasidim. Has a remnant of "Christian Cabalists" likewise survived to the present? One looks in vain for a Christian interpreter who attempts to find evidence of the Trinity in the upper triad of the sefirotic schema, as did Pico and his successors. However, some evangelical writers still employ familiar Cabalistic hermeneutical methodology.

At the turn of the twentieth century an Anglican clergyman named E. W. Bullinger produced some voluminous writings that have influenced many evangelicals at the beginning of the twenty-first century. His book Number in Scripture is a thorough discussion of the spiritual significance of numbers throughout the Bible. Although containing some very useful material about the symbolic character of certain numbers such as 3, 7, and 40, the book lists over fifty numbers that convey hidden spiritual truth to the reader! Bullinger, however, uses numbers to establish authorship of books of the Bible. Consider the following argument for the Pauline authorship of Hebrews:

The New Testament contains 27 separate books (3 x 3 x 3 or 3³). Of these 27 books, 21 (3 x 7) are Epistles. Of the 21 Epistles of the NT, 14 (2 x 7) are by Paul, and seven by other writers. In this lies an argument for the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Without it the Epistles of Paul are only thirteen in number, with it they are 14 (2 x 7).

Furthermore, Bullinger could not comprehend how Paul could write

26E. W. Bullinger, Number in Scripture (reprint; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1969).
27Ibid., 41.
thirteen epistles because that number had evil connotations:

As to the significance of thirteen, all are aware that it has come down to us as a number of ill-omen. Many superstitions cluster around it, and various explanations are current concerning them. Unfortunately, those who go backwards to find a reason seldom go back far enough. The popular explanations do not, so far as we are aware, go further back than the Apostles. But we must go back to the first occurrence of the number thirteen in order to discover the key to its significance. It occurs first in Gen. xiv. 4, where we read ‘Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and the thirteenth year they REBELLED.’ Hence every occurrence of the number thirteen, and likewise of every multiple of it, stamps that with which it stands in connection with rebellion, apostasy, defection, corruption, disintegration, revolution, or some kindred idea.[28]

Another writer on "numerics" popular among some evangelicals is Ivan Panin. Panin's elaborate system of "Bible Numerics" actually attempted to establish the true text of the NT.[29]

The real problem with this and all methods of *gematria* is that one receives from their use just what he puts into them. The possible number of permutations is endless, particularly when dividing numerical totals into factors! For example, consider Panin's treatment of Gen 1:1:

The numeric value of the first word of this verse is 913; of the last 296; of the middle, the fourth word, 401; the numeric value of the first, middle and last words is thus 1610, or 230 sevens (Feature 7); the numeric value of the first, middle, and last letters of the 28 letters of this verse is 133, or 19 sevens (Feature 8). If now the first and last letters of each of the seven words in this verse have their numeric value placed against them, we have for their numeric value 1383, or 199 sevens.[30]

Factoring number totals can prove almost anything. The practice also lends itself to omitting anything that does not fit a particular theory.[31]

After careful consideration of the *gematria* techniques employed by

[28]Ibid., 205.


a number of writers, Davis provides the following excellent evaluation:

The thing that is of special interest, however, is the gross silence in works of the above men concerning the origin of their exegetical systems. No credit is ever given to Pythagoras the Talmudic or Cabalistic literature from which their methodology is derived. In fact, as one reads their works, he is constantly reminded of the fact that what they are proposing is new and unique. No man ever saw it until they brought it to light.32

There is no objective basis for controlling this methodology. The interpreter selects his words, and the combinations of numbers that he wishes. In other words 7 might have several combinations (6 + 1, 5 + 2, 4 + 3). How do we know which of these combinations the author intended to bear symbolic implications? This whole system is based on a false premise. There is no proof that the Hebrews of the Old Testament used their alphabet in this manner (i.e., in Gematria). As was pointed out earlier, the Moabite Stone and the Siloam Inscription have their numbers written out. This is the case in all the Old Testament. If we should grant that the Hebrews did use their alphabet in this manner, it has yet to be proven that these two factors (i.e., Gematria and Number Symbolism) are combined in Scripture.33

In addition to bequeathing to modern heirs the gematria technique, the Renaissance Cabalists also left the example of citing Cabalistic writings to illustrate the teaching of a plurality in the Godhead. The most recent work in this vein is one entitled The Great Mystery, or, How Can Three Be One? by Rabbi Tzvi Nassi (Hirsch Prinz). The title page describes him as Lecturer in Hebrew at Oxford University.34

The volume's preface clearly delineates the volume's purpose:

The humble object of this little book is to prove that our sages of blessed memory, long before the Christian era, held that there was a plurality in the Godhead. Indeed, this teaching was held for yet 100 years after the destruction of the second temple, and, as it was contained and declared in the Holy Scriptures, it was also set forth in our most ancient books, as the reader will see from quotations given in these pages.35

Nassi has written the book as a first-person description of the spiritual search of one "Nathanael" in the volumes of his father's library.

33) Ibid., 148-49.
35) Ibid., ii.
Nathanael's method is to examine the passages in Scripture which seem to him to teach the plurality of persons in the Godhead. The author devotes much of the book, however, to supportive quotations from the Zohar and the Sepher Yetsirah. Nathanael (i.e., Nassi) apparently accepts without questioning the traditional authorship of the Zohar by Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai, a second-century Palestinian sage. Modern Jewish scholars, however, are in full agreement that the Zohar was essentially the creation of Moses de Leon in the late thirteenth century. Most Jewish scholars today would seriously challenge the author's evaluation of the Zohar as the highest authority for Jewish belief when he writes, "[The Zohar] is considered among my nation to be of the highest authority in things pertaining to the knowledge of the nature and essence of God." Although Nassi does not accept the traditional Abrahamic authorship of Sepher Yetsirah, he does say,

The book has great authority in the synagogue. It is probable that it may have been written shortly before or soon after the Babylonian captivity. Though this hypothesis may be disputed, at any rate it existed before the Christian era.

No Jewish scholar would accept that dating today. The general opinion is that Sepher Yetsirah was composed no earlier than the 6th century C.E.

Nassi does cite some very interesting quotations from these Cabalistic works that appear to advocate a plurality in the Godhead. His discussion of the Memra ("zmym") or "Word of the Lord" and the divine attributes associated with it and his explanation of the Metatron ("wrttm"), the exalted being often spoken of in divine terms, raise important subjects that need further exploration in the Jewish-Christian dialogue. His heavy dependence on works of Cabala in an uncritical fashion lessens the force of his arguments, however, even for the modern orthodox Jew to whom the works carry even less authority than other medieval Jewish writings. The force of the Christian argument rises and falls on the exegesis of Scripture, not on finding Jewish writings that appear to support the Christian posi-

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36Ibid., 5.
37Scholem, Major Trends 156-204.
38Nassi, Great Mystery 5.
39Ibid., 6.
40Scholem, Major Trends 75.
CONCLUSION

The Jewish-Christian discussion will continue to be a lively debate in the future. It is the author's firm contention, however, that it should continue apart from any Cabalistic frame of relevance. The Christian should not consider the emanation doctrine of the Cabala in any form as a valid doctrinal view. Neither the OT nor the NT verifies its truthfulness. After all, Scripture is the only reliable means by which to authenticate such a concept. The Cabalistic theory of sefirot has far more similarity to the metaphysical world of Gnosticism than to the biblical worldview. Not only does the Bible never mention the sefirot, but it has passages that clearly contradict the idea that a series of emanations exist between God and man: "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim 2:5, NASB).

Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God (Col 2:18-19, NASB).

Since the NT deals with some strongly metaphysical matters in its discussion of God, it would be strange indeed if the emanation doctrine were entirely absent if that were the worldview of its authors. The sefirot doctrine is unnecessary for the Christian. The incarnate Son responded to Philip's request to be shown the Father in this unequivocal way, leaving no room for competing mediatorial beings or spheres:

Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves (John 14:9-11, NASB).

The attempts by some Renaissance scholars to give a Christian interpretation to the Cabala arose from different motives—some were seeking to establish a true understanding of reality (Pico), while others

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42Further critical evaluation of Cabalistic metaphysics is available in John Warwick Montgomery, Principalities and Powers (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1973) 87-95.
were seeking to convert Jewish people to a Christianity that would have more affinity with their background (Ricci). Although their motives may have been sincere, their hermeneutical methodology was so defective that they did more harm than good in its implementation. Their writings serve to warn Christians today about how not to conduct the Jewish-Christian discussion. Furthermore, their questionable borrowing of such Cabalistic techniques as gematria should serve as a serious warning to modern evangelical teachers to beware of straying from a grammatical-historical hermeneutic.
LITERARY DEPENDENCE AND LUKE'S PROLOGUE

Paul W. Felix

The first four verses of Luke's gospel set that book apart from Matthew, Mark, and John in giving information about the writer's research. Attempts of some to use the information to prove Luke's literary dependence on Mark necessitate a closer look at this prologue. The carefully structured sentence tells the context of the author's writing project (1:1-2) and gives a commentary on the writing project (1:3-4). Others had preceded Luke in attempting to put together accounts of Jesus' life, but for some reason Luke found their efforts unsatisfactory. He decided to write an account himself, basing it ultimately on reports from "eyewitnesses and servants of the word." His credentials for the task were impressive, including careful investigation of all events from the beginning of Jesus' life and putting the results down in chronological order. His purpose in doing this was to furnish Theophilus with exact information. Implications of the prologue preclude Luke's use of another canonical gospel as a source, but allow for his familiarity with other written sources. He depended on many sources, not two or three, but was most heavily dependent on oral reports from "eyewitnesses and servants of the word." He followed chronological order, not an order supplied by Mark. So the prologue does not support any type of literary dependence among the canonical gospels, but points to their independence of each other.

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INTRODUCTION

Each gospel writer begins his gospel differently from the others. Matthew commences his with "the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ" (Matt 1:1) and proceeds to trace the Lord's genealogy from Abraham to Joseph. Mark abruptly begins with the words "the beginning of the gospel

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1Paul Felix is Senior Pastor of the Berean Bible Church of Denver, Colorado, and an alumnus of The Master's Seminary. A forthcoming work entitled The Jesus Crisis: How Much Will Evangelicals Surrender? (Kregel), scheduled for release in the fall of 1997, will incorporate the essence of this article along with other analyses and implications of Historical Criticism.
of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). The apostle John introduces his book with a prologue that unfolds some of the major themes developed through the rest of the book. John's prologue begins with the declaration that Jesus is God: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Luke introduces his gospel with a prologue too, but his introduction differs from John's as it does from the other two gospels. Luke 1:1-4 constitutes his prologue.

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2 "Prologue," "preface," and "introduction" are used interchangeably in the following discussion.

Luke's prologue is unique for several reasons. First, its literary style stands out among the writings of the NT because of its close similarity to contemporary secular writings of the period. The author of the third gospel began his work the same way that other ancient writers did, that is, with a preface that fell into a prescribed format. Luke followed that convention very closely.

A second reason for the uniqueness of Luke's preface lies in the attention that Historical Criticism has focused upon it in an attempt to force the passage to contribute a certain kind of information regarding the origin of the Synoptic Gospels. Among the gospel writers Luke alone partially divulges his method of research and the nature of his research materials. Historical critics have taken alleged information from the prologue and have fashioned it into a standard for judging theories about the origin of the gospels.

A third and final reason for the uniqueness of Luke's prologue relates to the second. That is its role in discussions of the Synoptic Problem. Virtually all dialogues on this issue refer to the preface of Luke in one way or another. The many individuals who hold that Matthew, Mark, and Luke depended on each other in some literary way use Luke's prologue as a basis of proving he used either the gospel of Mark or the

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4Cadbury has noted the importance of the prologue of Luke to biblical studies several years ago. He wrote, "In the study of the earliest Christian history no passage has had more emphasis laid upon it than the brief preface of Luke. It is the only place in the synoptic gospels where the consciousness of authorship is expressed, containing as it does the only reference outside the gospel of John to the origin or purpose of the evangelist record. It has naturally been repeatedly treated in special monographs, as well as in introductions and commentaries, and has been cited in connection with every problem of early Christian literature" (Henry J. Cadbury, "Commentary on the Preface of Luke," The Beginning of Christianity, F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, eds. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979] 2:489).


7For example, Plummer has written, "This prologue contains all that we really know respecting the composition of early narratives of the life of Christ, and it is the test by which theories as to the origin of our Gospels must be judged. No hypothesis is likely to be right which does not harmonize with what is told us here" (Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Luke, ICC [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896] 2).

8A simple definition of the Synoptic Problem is, "The difficulty encountered in devising a scheme of literary dependence to account for the combinations of similarities and dissimilarities has been labelled the Synoptic Problem" (Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry, A Harmony of the Gospels [Chicago: Moody, 1978] 274).
gospel of Matthew as one of his sources for research. On the other hand, the few who hold that the first three gospels did not depend on each other in a literary way confirm literary independence by referring the opening verses of the gospel of Luke.

These last two areas of uniqueness deserve attention when considering the relationship of the first four verses of Luke's gospel to literary dependence and the Synoptic Problem. Since Luke alone tells how his gospel came into existence, the possibility of that impacting discussions of gospel relationships renders it necessary to investigate this passage thoroughly to determine what it contributes to the issue of literary dependence versus independence among the synoptic writers.

The following discussion will undertake this task, first through an exegetical study of Luke 1:1-4 and then through an analysis of the prologue expressly aimed at applying the results of the exegetical process to the specific issue of the Synoptic Problem. It will limit the discussion of those results to what is relevant in the prologue.

THE INTERPRETATION OF LUKE'S PROLOGUE

An English text of Luke 1:1-4 with a Greek text and its English transliteration within brackets following each word or phrase is as follows:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus.

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10E.g., Eta Linnemann, Is There a Synoptic Problem? (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 190; Thomas and Gundry, Harmony 19.

11All Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.
The Greek text of the four verses consists of one long sentence. The extended sentence is called "the period" and reflects the elegant style of the preface. The structure includes a protasis (1:1-2) and an apodosis (1:3-4). Both the protasis and the apodosis contain three parallel phrases. "Many" in verse 1 parallels with "for me" in verse 3, "compile an account" in verse 1 compares with "to write it out for you in consecutive order" in verse 3, and "exact truth" in verse 4 answers to "eyewitnesses" in verse 2. The following table reflects the correspondences more graphically:

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<tr>
<td>Inasmuch as many</td>
<td>It seemed fitting for me as well</td>
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<tr>
<td>have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,</td>
<td>having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;</td>
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just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us.

so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

As noted earlier, the structure of Luke's introduction closely resembles the prefaces used by ancient Greek writers in their works. Yet, one must avoid the mistake of not taking each word and phrase in the prologue seriously. Luke is not just another secular or ancient writer. He wrote under the superintendence of the Holy Spirit in composing this document. Therefore, in keeping with a proper view of inspiration, an adequate exegetical study must regard each word and phrase as important.

An interpretation of Luke's prologue is no simple task. In fact, anyone who seeks to understand this passage faces a number of obstacles and challenges in almost every word and phrase. Among the many interpretive issues, this study's purpose dictates a concentration of attention on matters that have a direct bearing upon the issue of literary dependence/independence among the Synoptic Gospels.

An outline of Luke's preface is as follows:

   A. The activity of his contemporaries (1:1).
   B. The activity of the eyewitnesses (1:2).

II. The commentary on Luke's writing project (1:3-4).
   A. The credentials of the writer (1:3).
   B. The purpose of the work (1:4).


The activity of his contemporaries (1:1). Before Luke comments on the specifics of his writing project (1:3-4), he takes time to discuss the historical

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15Dillon commits this mistake when he writes, "The exegete is inevitably tempted to extract from the concise, somewhat ornamental phraseology of the passage more of a self-portrait than the author meant to give. Just as with ecclesiastical pronouncements which hew strictly to conventional formulas, here too, virtually any viewpoint can be justified by working the language beyond its wonted limits" (Richard J. Dillon, "Previewing Luke's Project from His Prologue [Luke 1:1-4]," Catholic Biblical Quarterly 43 [1981]:205-6).

16A number of writers have expressed this sentiment. An example is John Nolland who has written, "Despite Luke's careful composition, the sense of almost every element of the prologue has been disputed" (Luke 1:1-9:20, vol. 35A of Word Biblical Commentary [Dallas: Word, 1989] 5).
context in which he produced his gospel (1:1-2). Two leading factors led to his creation of the third gospel: first, the literary activity of his contemporaries (1:1) and, second, the communication of eyewitnesses regarding the events about which Luke writes (1:2).

A stately compound conjunction that was frequent in classical Greek and was suitable for issuing a solemn warning begins Luke's preface: εἰπείδαι /ὑπέρ (epeiδαι~eper), "inasmuch as"). As frequent as were its occurrences in classical Greek, it does not occur elsewhere in biblical Greek, neither in the LXX nor in the NT. Further, its position at the beginning of the sentence is unusual. It normally introduces a causal clause following a main clause. Luke's use of the conjunction expresses a reason for some fact or condition already known. The cause for the writing of the gospel of Luke is the literary activity of people living during Luke's time and a generation before him. Their writings were foundational for Luke's task of producing a gospel. Somehow earlier efforts to record the words and works of Jesus had either created a need or left a void that placed on Luke the obligation of writing his gospel.

The preface does not identify the earlier writers by name, but simply describes them as being "many" (πολλοί, polloi). That designation raises two critical questions: "How many individuals is Luke referring to?" and "To whom does the expression refer?" In answering these questions, it is important that the interpreter not allow an assumption of literary dependence and his personal opinion about a solution to the Synoptic Problem influence his answer.

Is it even legitimate to ask how many individuals Luke is referring to when he uses the term "many"? Some would say that it is not. They would dismiss the question because ancient discourses employed the term frequently in a formal manner at beginnings of speeches and documents. In such cases, a literal understanding of the word was unnecessary. The emphasis was not on the number of a writer's predecessors, but on the legitimacy of his claims to be associated with them. Even though this

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19Too many commentators are guilty of discussing the meaning of "many" in light of their solution to the Synoptic Problem. Inevitably—if they think that the gospel writers depended on each other, thereby creating the Synoptic Problem—results of their exegesis matches their conclusion about the nature of literary dependence and colors the identity and number of the "many" they assign. Pate, among others, exemplifies this when he writes "Who the `many' were is not specified, but probably included at the very least Mark's gospel, a collection of the sayings of Jesus (Q), and Luke's own special material" (C. Marvin Pate, Moody Gospel Commentary: Luke [Chicago: Moody, 1995] 43).

20Marshall, Luke 41. Stein adopts the same position. He views "many" functioning as a
may be true in secular writings, the NT uses the "many" elsewhere in
similar book introductions with a clearcut emphasis on specific numbers
(cf. Acts 1:3; Heb. 1:1). Therefore, it is valid to think of a definite number
of individuals.

However, those who agree that the question is legitimate are not
unanimous as to the number indicated by "many." Proposals range from
three to a larger number that no one knows for sure. Surely Arndt is
correct when he says, "How many persons Luke has in mind one cannot
say." Yet, this does not rule out the conclusion that the term implies
plentiful activity in the production of elementary "gospels." This
conclusion harmonizes with the context which gives the impression that
Luke is emphasizing "many" as opposed to a "few."

With regards to the second question ("to whom does the expression
refer?") , a complete answer must await an examination of more of the
preface. In anticipation of that answer, it is possible to eliminate writers of
extant apocryphal gospels, since they wrote their works much later.

1Epexejran (Epeche'resan, "Have undertaken") characterizes the

"topos" (i.e., a commonplace notion or stereotyped expression), thereby eliminating any

21In Acts 1:3, pollo@W indicates the large number of "sure signs" by which Jesus showed
Himself alive repeatedly over a period of forty days following His resurrection (cf. Richard
Gaebelein, gen. ed. [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981] 254). In Heb. 1:1, the prefixing of
the adverbs polymerVw and polytr3opVw with poly- (from the adjective polymerV) indicates
the many parts and the many ways God used to communicate His revelation in the OT (cf.
Marcus Dods, "The Epistle to the Hebrews," in Expositor's Greek Testament, W. Robertson

22Fitzmyer is certain that the term must mean at least three persons, but not necessarily
limited to three. Yet his solution to the Synoptic Problem has obviously influenced his
conclusion. He states, "Luke is dependent on the Markan source, the source 'Q,' and a
source, not necessarily written, which is called 'L.'" (Luke I-IX 66).

23Archibald Thomas Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, 6 vols. (Grand
Rapids: Baker, 1930) 2:3.


25Bruce states, "The term is not an exaggeration, but to be taken strictly as implying
extensive activity in the production of rudimentary 'Gospels'" (Alexander B. Bruce, "The
Synoptic Gospels," The Expositor's Greek Testament, W. Robertson Nicoll, ed. [Grand Rapids:
Eerdmans, 1974] 1:459). Lenski agrees with this when he writes, "How many are included
in polloi we have no means of knowing, but quite a number must be referred to" (R. C. H.

The word literally means "to put the hand to," "take in hand," "attempt." Two elements comprise this compound word: the preposition ἐπι (epi, "upon") and the noun χεῖρ (cheir, "hand"). It occurs frequently in classical Greek literature, but appears only here in the NT. Use of the word has produced a lively discussion concerning whether the term is neutral or pejorative. The issue confronting the interpreter is to determine if Luke views his predecessors in a positive light or as having failed in some way in the task they have put their hands to.

A majority of interpreters favors assigning the term a neutral force. They offer impressive support for their position. First, Luke identifies himself with the literary activities of his contemporaries by saying "for me as well" (καίμοι, kamoi) in verse 3. He undertakes the same task as his predecessors. Second, the term is a natural one to use for composing an account. Third, this word is common in the papyri for undertaking a project, in which usages no hint of failure appears. In addition, if the writer wanted to deprecate those who wrote before him, he would not have used the causal conjunction "inasmuch as" (ἐπείδη ἐπερ), but the concessive "although." The final piece of evidence for this view has to do with the dependence of the accounts written by the "many" upon the witnesses and ministers of the word in verse 2. In Acts Luke regards the witnesses and ministers of the word quite positively (e.g., Acts 1:8, 22; 2:32; 3:15; 26:16). Despite the impressive case that takes "have undertaken" in a neutral sense, some argue that the verb is pejorative. Several evidences support the negative sense. One is that the term occurs only two other times in the NT, each time in Luke's writings (Acts 9:29; 19:13). In both uses it describes unsuccessful attempts. In itself, the word speaks only of

27Ibid., 2.
33Pate, Luke 43.
35C. F. Evans, St. Luke 123.
an attempt, not of a successful attempt. The context must tell whether or not the attempt was successful. The early church historian Eusebius viewed attempts of the "many" as unsuccessful when he wrote, "Luke has himself at the beginning of his treatise prefixed the cause which had led him to its composition: showing that many others had somewhat rashly taken it upon them to compose a narrative of those things of which he had been fully persuaded. ... In other words, "What others have somewhat rashly attempted I will remedy. I will correct what those others have written." Though the word may not be so strongly negative in its reflection on earlier attempts as Eusebius indicates, the preface contains at least a slight allusion to the insufficiency of earlier attempts. Otherwise, Luke would not have undertaken the task. The existence of his gospel is evident testimonial to that.

In addition, Luke's stress on accuracy and research shows that the previous works needed some improvement. Though the church fathers are not always correct in their interpretations, it is significant to note that prominent individuals like Origen and Jerome also took the term in a negative sense. Besides this, if Luke had been entirely satisfied with what his forerunners had written, he would not have found it necessary to write his gospel. Fitzmyer says the following about Luke in this connection:

The contrast of himself with them and his pretensions to accuracy, acquaintance, completeness, and order as well as his claim to offer "assurance" (asphaleia) suggest that he envisages his task as one needed in the church of his day. Their works seemed perhaps mere attempts to record the tradition about the momentous events that had taken place. They were faced with the problem of handing on a tradition; Luke is conscious of this task too and proposes to do it again, in his own better way.

Deciding between the two views of the meaning of epecheiresan is not easy. But in light of the fact that Luke is going to put great emphasis

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36Eusebius H.E. 3.24.15.
40C. F. Evans, St. Luke 123.
41Creed, St. Luke 3.
on his credentials for writing this gospel, it is inescapable that he saw a need to improve upon earlier reports about Jesus. This does not mean that Luke's contemporaries utterly failed at their task. Yet, it is clear that in the mind of Luke there was room for improvements. The nature of the improvements surface in his words of verse 3.

The "many" put their hands "to compile an account" (\'anataxasai di\'ghsin, anataxasthai di\'ge\'esin). The verb that Luke uses for "to compile" (anataxasthai) is a rare one. It has the sense of "to draw up, compile," perhaps to draw up an orderly account in writing in contrast to oral tradition. Yet, the verb implies more than oral tradition or a mere written fixation of oral tradition. It emphasizes the idea of the account being orderly. That would not be applicable to oral recitals of isolated facts. Others had attempted the very thing Luke attempts in writing his gospel.

The term that Luke uses for "an account" (\'d\'i\'ge\'esin) is just as infrequent as anataxasthai is. This is the only time it appears in the NT. Arndt states, "It is derived from \'hegeomai (hege\'omai), 'to lead,' and refers to something that takes a person through (\'dia, \'dia) a series of events." Among ancient historians it was a technical expression for different kinds of recounting. The term is broad enough to refer to oral or written accounts. The context would tip the scales in favor of Luke's having written accounts in mind.

A natural question to ask relates to the identity of the earlier accounts. Do they include canonical Matthew and/or Mark? He could not have referred to Matthew because he distinguishes the "many" of verse 1 from the apostolic eyewitnesses of verse 2. Since Matthew was one of those eyewitnesses, Luke could not have had his gospel in mind. On the other hand, Mark was not an apostle. Yet according to tradition, he was an eyewitness (Mark 14:51-52) and wrote under the auspices of the apostle Peter. It is also highly improbable that Luke would have chosen to use the somewhat derogatory "have undertaken" to refer to a work received by the church as one of the essential documents about the life of Jesus.

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45Arndt, St. Luke 39.


47Godet, St. Luke 1:56.

48Ibid., 1:57.

49Ibid.
Matthew or Mark had been one of his sources, he would more likely have given it the recognition of "Scripture" as Paul did for Luke's gospel just a few years later (cf. 1 Tim 5:18).

According to tradition, Matthew wrote earlier than Luke, but Luke's careful wording makes it clear that he had not seen Matthew's gospel before he wrote his own. He may have seen Aramaic material written by Matthew, material referred to as "the oracles" (**tα λόγια**, **ta logia**) by an early church Father named Papias, but that writing differed from Matthew's gospel in the Greek language.\(^{50}\) In all probability, the three Synoptic Gospel writers wrote without having seen the works of each other. That means that the works to which Luke refers are writings whose incompleteness condemned them to extinction as the three canonical gospels spread throughout the early church.

Luke is not explicit about whether he used those now-nonextant written accounts in writing his own gospel, but he probably used every speck of information he could locate to compare with other sources to be sure he had his information correct. However, his primary dependence would have been on the "eyewitnesses and servants of the word." They were principal sources on whom the "many" depended for their attempts at compiling accounts too.

Luke describes the literary activities of his predecessors as centering on "the things accomplished among us" (**τὰ πεπληρωμένα ἐν ἡμῖν**, **ta peplerophoreména en hemin**). When used in reference to persons, "accomplished" (**πεπληρωμένα**) means "persuade fully, convince." In reference to things, as here, it means "fulfilled, accomplished."\(^{51}\) The idea of "fulfilled" fits nicely since Luke puts emphasis on the fulfillment of God's plan in both Luke and Acts (e.g., Luke 1:20, 57; 2:6, 21-22; 4:21; Acts 9:23; 13:25; 24:27). These fulfilled events and time periods refer to the carrying out of God's plan in the world in connection with the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke declares these events to have been fully accomplished "among us" (**ἐν ἡμῖν**). Whom does Luke have in mind in the pronoun "us"? The answers have ranged from first generation witnesses of God's fulfilled plan all the way to Christendom as a whole. The pronoun undoubtedly

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\(^{50}\)Ibid., 56. Matthew probably wrote his Greek gospel after leaving the Aramaic-speaking territory of the Jews and did so not too long before Luke researched for his gospel. Because of distance and timing and because of slow communications of the time, his work in Greek was unavailable to Luke who sought out sources in the area where Jesus lived and ministered, but not throughout the Mideast. He did not have access to information, for example, from Antioch, Syria, the city where Matthew perhaps composed his Greek gospel.

includes those who witnessed firsthand the events of Jesus' life. But it also must include Luke and his contemporaries in the sense that they experienced the continual results of these events.

The activity of the eyewitnesses (1:2). In verse 2, Luke shifts attention from the activity of fellow compilers to that of the earlier generation of eyewitnesses. Individuals who provided the foundation for Luke and his literary predecessors to build on comprise that first generation. Compilation of the earlier accounts was in harmony with the communicative activity of the eyewitnesses ("just as," κατω, kathos). Was this correlation one of strict exactness or general exactness? Strict exactness is improbable because of the unlikelihood that the "many" intended to transmit a word-for-word reproduction of what had been handed down to them. As Evans has noted, "This would deprive 'compiled' of its force." The agreement of the later written accounts with eyewitness reports lies in the area of "the things accomplished" (1:1). That is what the apostles and others handed down and what became the basis for the writings of the "many." Luke thereby affirms the general reliability and soundness of the previous narratives, even while he strongly implies shortcomings in those accounts through his use of ἐπεχειρεσαν in verse 1 and in his undertaking of a similar project.

Luke calls the individuals responsible for initiating the communication "eyewitnesses" (αὐτοπται, autoptai) and "servants" (ὑπηρεται, hyperetai). These are not two separate groups but one group that has a twofold role. It is best to see these terms as describing one group, not so much because the terms are governed by a single article (οἱ, hoi). With plural nouns, a single article governing two nouns connected by καί may or may not constitute a single entity. But the position of the participle (γενομένοι, genomenoi, "were") after the second noun justifies this interpretation. The participle does not separate the two nouns "eyewitnesses" and

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52 For a detailed discussion on this matter, consult Richard J. Dillon, From Eye-Witness to Ministers of the Word (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978) 271-72. In particular, see his discussion of the perfect tense of πεπληρωμένων with its inclusion of abiding results of completed action.


54 C. F. Evans, St. Luke 125.

55 Ibid., 125.

56 Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar beyond the Basics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) 278. Of the five possibilities when the substantives are plural, the present combination would fall into the category of both groups being identical (cf. ibid., 281-83) because of placement of the participle γενομένοι and of the phrase τὰ πάντα ὧδε. See below.
"servants." Instead, it separates the noun "servants" from the genitive "of the word" (tou λόγου, tou logou). A further factor favoring a reference to one group instead of two is the position of the prepositional phrase "from the beginning" before the first term "eyewitnesses." That has the syntactical effect of viewing the two nouns as a single entity. In light of these considerations, it is best to see the group as those who began as "eyewitnesses" and then became "servants" of the word.

The word "eyewitnesses" (autoptai) occurs only here in the NT. As the source of the English medical term "autopsy," its literal meaning is to see with one's own eyes. Luke uses the word to inform his readers that what he and others have written comes straight from people who were directly in contact with events being reported. These "eyewitnesses" are not recent additions to the Christian movement. Rather, they were "from the beginning" (ap' archēs) observant participants in the life and ministry of Jesus. That beginning was in particular the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist (Luke 3:23; cf. Acts 1:21-22; 10:37).

The second term highlights the ministry of these individuals. They were simply servants, helpers, and assistants. Marshall points out, "The term emphasizes that they were not propagandists for their own views of what happened with Jesus but had unreservedly put their persons and work in the service of Jesus' cause." They were ministers "of the word" (tou logou); that is, they proclaimed a gospel whose substance was the words and works of Jesus Christ.

Who were these "eyewitnesses and servants"? The group included some of the apostles at least. Luke later notes one of the qualifications for apostleship was to have been an eyewitness from the beginning (Acts 1:21-22). It is clear that these were Luke's predecessors. That Luke was not one of their number is evident from his own description of his task in 1:3-4. That the group included others besides apostles is probable, but their identity is unknown. Judging from the content of Luke's first two chapters, one of them may have been the mother of Jesus.

The nature of the activity of the eyewitnesses is described as "have handed them down" (parēdosan, paredosan). The verb that Luke uses is a technical term for passing on official tradition, whether orally or in writing.

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58Fitzmyer's discussion of this issue is helpful (Luke I-IX 294).
as authoritative teaching. Paul used the verb's cognate noun paradosis to refer to Christian tradition that eventually acquired a fixed verbal form. He instructed the Thessalonian church to hold fast to the "traditions" (paradosis) they had been taught (2 Thess 2:14). The eyewitnesses of whom Luke speaks made it their business to pass on what they saw and knew, thereby laying the foundation for a much larger body of tradition. And they passed it on to those whom Luke identifies as "us." This term does not allude to the same "us" as in verse 1. The personal pronoun in verse 2 refers to himself, his literary predecessors, and other unidentifiable Christians. In other words, its scope is narrower in verse 2.

The Commentary on Luke's Writing Project (1:3-4)

The credentials of the writer (1:3). The first two verses of the prologue focus on the writing activities of others (1:1-2). Next Luke describes to the reader his own undertaking (1:3-4). In verse 3 he presents his credentials for launching such a major task as his gospel turned out to be. As pointed out earlier, this verse comprises the main clause and apodosis of the sentence of which "inasmuch as many have undertaken . . ." (vv. 1-2) is the protasis. Verse 4 gives the purpose of his undertaking, which is also the reason that his monumental project is worth the effort.

In light of the literary activity of his predecessors (1:1) and the transmittal activity of the eyewitnesses (1:2), Luke put his hand to a task similar to what others had done, or as he says, "It seemed fitting for me as well" (1:3). He made a personal decision to involve himself in a venture similar to those of the "many." Did this resolve of Luke imply a certain superiority in comparison to the efforts of the "many"? Despite the fact that Luke does not contrast himself with his predecessors, and even honors them, he does claim a certain advantage they did not have. This is evident first of all in the needlessness of adding another collection to the narratives concerning Jesus, unless Luke felt he had nothing new to contribute. He ranks himself with the others as possessing the same

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63Friedrich Büchel, "d³dvmi, dyron, k. t. l.," TDNT 2:171-73.

64"The eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word delivered the gospel matters 'to us,' i.e., to the Christians in general, including the many and also Luke" (Lenski, St. Luke 28).

65Bock, Luke 1:1-9:50 59. Plummer states, "He does not blame the "many"; he desires to imitate and supplement them. It is their attempts that encourage him to write. What they have done he may do, and perhaps he may be able to improve upon their work" (Plummer, Luke 4).

66Godet, St. Luke 1:60.
advantages as they, but implies he is really better positioned than they in some way. Furthermore, his scrupulous description of his credentials argues that he is really better situated than those who wrote before. He did not confine himself simply to collecting bare apostolic traditions, but took the necessary steps to select, supplement, arrange, and check the materials furnished through oral reports. Discussion above has excluded canonical gospels from the earlier materials available to him, removing any possible derogatory implications regarding them.

"Having investigated" (parákolouóthekóti, parekolouthékoti) sums up Luke's qualifications for undertaking such a work. The Greek word means literally "to follow along a thing in mind, to trace carefully, to accompany." These meanings frequent the pages of ancient Greek literature. The author's use of the perfect participle of this verb has drawn much attention. The present discussion will center on the two major views. The first one holds that the word refers to following closely the progress of certain events, so that it means to keep up with a movement. In this sense, Luke depicts himself as somehow keeping in touch with the events as they occurred. This interpretation emphasizes the literal meaning of the word. Also implied in this view is that Luke did not investigate anything; he simply followed along as events unfolded. In other words, Luke was one of the eyewitnesses and servants of the Word. The other view interprets the word as referring to an investigation of past events. The approach takes the word in a figurative sense of mentally following along beside the events.

An inherent weakness of the former view lies in the meaning it must assign "from the beginning" (απ' αυτήν, απ' αυτὸν) in 1:3, because it is clear that Luke was not an eyewitness of Jesus' baptism and other early events of His life. Advocates of the view assign the meaning "a long time" to the phrase, but this is impossible. It is better to give a meaning similar to

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71 Cadbury, "Knowledge Claimed" 401-21.
72 This is the popular view (Bock, "Understanding Luke's Task" 193-94; Robertson, "Implications" 319).
73 Stonehouse points out the weakness of Cadbury's argument that the term means a
"from the beginning" (ἀπ’ αρχῆς) in verse 2, although the starting point for "the beginning" is different in the two cases. Also, the idea of an individual being intimately associated "carefully" (ἀκριβῶς, ἀκριβὴς) does not register a good sense. Furthermore, the author distinguishes himself from the eyewitnesses in the immediate context. Luke clarifies that he is not an eyewitness, but is dependent on them.

The strengths of the latter interpretation further confirm that this term is referring to a following of past events through research. This was the meaning in such ancient writers as Josephus and Nicomachus. The concept also fits Luke's remarks about his investigation in the remainder of verse 3.

He expands upon his qualifications for this task by making four comments about procedures utilized. First, he investigated "everything" (πασίν, πασίν). He was comprehensive and thorough in studying the subject matter. He carefully sought out anything available on the subject and weighed it carefully in preparation for writing. Second, he did his work "carefully" (ἀκριβῶς). This refers not only to his method of writing, but also to the quality of his research. He claims accuracy for his findings. Third, the starting point for his research was "from the beginning" (ἀνωθεν). As stated above, some understand this as a reference to how long Luke worked at his project. But it is better to take the adverb as synonymous with the prepositional phrase "from the beginning" in verse 2. The presence of the birth narratives following the prologue would also argue for this interpretation. Luke's investigation went back to the birth stories as its starting point.

The fourth comment about his research relates to its intended result: "to write it out in consecutive order" (γράψαι καθεξῆς). He wanted his work to be in "consecutive order." What does Luke mean by "consecutive order"? The term καθεξῆς means "in order, one thing after another" (cf. Acts 11:4; 18:23) or "as follows, the following" (Luke 8:1; Acts 3:24). The natural meaning would be chronological order, but Stein, for example, argues a case that Luke's order is literary-logical by pointing out

75Ibid., 297.
77Marshall gives this as a possible meaning (Luke 42-43).
78Acts 26:4-5 is an example that would argue this point (Bock, "Understanding Luke's Task" 194).
sequences of narrative in the gospel that are not chronological. Yet, allowing for details that may not be strictly in temporal order, the gospel does follow a broadly chronological arrangement in treating the life of Christ. The debate on the type of order indicated by the word is widespread, but it is hard to deny compelling evidence provided by a lexical study of this word. Such a study leads to only one conclusion: Luke is referring to some type of chronological and historical order. The use of the word and its cognates by Luke himself is the best evidence of that (Luke 8:1; Acts 11:4; 18:23).

The recipient of this monumental work is "most excellent Theophilus" (κρατιστός Εὐσεβής, kratiste Theophile). The epithet that is translated "most excellent" often applies to individuals of rank in the sequel to this gospel. In Acts, it refers to Felix (23:26; 24:3) and Festus (26:25). Yet, Theophilus is not necessarily a person of rank (cf. Acts 1:1 where his name lacks the adjective). One cannot be dogmatic in concluding that Theophilus held a high position. But Luke clearly held him in high esteem. This was probably due to the recipient's social standing.

Attempts at identifying Theophilus as a symbolic name for "pious Christians" are tenuous. Frequent occurrence of this name for both Jews and Greeks from the third century B.C. onward make such an association highly improbable. Also, the vocative "most excellent" argues that a particular person is in mind. Even though the spiritual status of Theophilus has no bearing on the Synoptic Problem, it is best to view him as either a believer or a person with a serious interest in Christianity.

The purpose of the work (1:4). Assuming the traditional authorship of the third gospel, Luke's credentials for writing his gospel (1:3) are impressive, but his purpose for doing so (1:4) was also worthy. He undertook to compile an account of Jesus' life so that the recipient of the account "might know the exact truth" (ἐπιγνῶν τὴν σάλειαν, epignos ten

85Some question Lukan authorship of the third gospel (cf. Fitzmyer, Luke I-IX 35-59), but the present study accepts it on the basis of strong testimony from the ancient church and the "we" sections in Acts.
asphaleian) concerning the things he had been taught. Thus, this gospel in
the hands of Theophilus demonstrated the truthful quality of the
instruction he had received. To accomplish this, Luke must have done a
thorough job of research and writing.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF LUKE'S PROLOGUE

What relation do the opening verses of Luke's gospel have to the
issue of literary dependence/independence among the gospel writers?
Does Luke acknowledge his dependence in a literary way upon Matthew
or Mark? Neither his prologue nor any other single passage can
completely resolve the issue. Yet a careful interpretation of Luke's
prologue results in important information that must be part of that
discussion. Frequent references to that preface to prove that he used
the gospel of Mark or Matthew as one of his sources of research necessitate
some attention to it. Does an exegesis of Luke 1:1-4 substantiate such a
claim?

The meaning of the prologue of Luke has several ramifications with
regards to the issue of the interrelationship of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.
First, the opening verses of Luke's gospel do not indicate, as many purport,
that its author used any canonical gospel (i.e., Matthew or Mark) as a
source. Of course, it is hard to deny that Luke used sources, but to claim
that these sources included the gospel of either Matthew or Mark is merely
an assumption read into the text of the prologue by an interpreter.
Nothing in the four verses identifies one of the other Synoptic Gospels as a
source. Those who use Luke's prologue to justify a written gospel as a
source read that into the passage without adequate exegetical evidence.86
In fact, some who believe in literary dependence between the first three
gospels readily admit that fact.87

Second, the preface of the third gospel does not state that its author
is directly dependent on two or three sources such as Mark, Q, and L.
Luke 1:1 establishes the existence of "many" literary predecessors.88 The

86Stein is one who does this in his work on the Synoptic Problem (Robert H. Stein, The

87E.g., "Not Luke's statement about his relationship to these preexisting Gospels, but the
patterns of similarity and dissimilarity between the synoptic Gospels as we have them,
have convinced the world of scholarship that there is dependence, almost certainly of a

88Linnemann's position is that the accounts of the "many" were exclusively oral:
"Literally, Luke states that many had undertaken to develop a lengthy narration (description)
of Jesus' life. There is no hint that such narration was extant in written form.
To translate anataxasthai (from anatassomai, which the NIV translates 'draw up') in Luke 1:1
as 'write' or 'compose' is misleading" (Synoptic Problem 190). Her point is the same,
relationship of these writings to Luke's research is ambiguous in the eyes of some.89 Since Luke acknowledges thorough research in his preparation, it a reasonable conclusion that he examined the writings that preceded his. But it is unwarranted to conclude that he relied on these heavily, i.e., with the type of reliance mandated by those who advocate literary dependence on another canonical gospel. Luke had many sources, both oral and written. For him to depend primarily on one or two of them does not harmonize with his methodology of a thorough examination of Christ's life in composing his gospel. The extensive research that Luke claims (cf. 1:3) is not necessary for a person who is simply copying or editing an earlier writing. His self-described meticulous methodology argues against that simple a procedure.90

Third, Luke's prologue argues against his using the gospel of either Matthew or Mark as a source. Several lines of reasoning substantiate this. It is unlikely that Matthew or Mark was one of the "many" who were his literary predecessors. The "many" (1:1) did not include the apostle Matthew because he was among "those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word" (1:2). And even though Mark was not an apostle, Luke probably would have considered him to be an eyewitness. The two were acquaintances (cf. Col 4:10, 14; Phile 24), so Luke knew at least what modern NT scholars know about Mark, i.e., that he was an eyewitness to some events in Jesus' life and that he was closely familiar with the preaching and teaching of Peter.91 Conceivably, Mark could have been among Luke's "eyewitnesses and servants of the word" on whose oral reports he depended.

Additional evidence that supports Luke 1:1-4 in its argument however: neither Matthew nor Mark were among the "many."

89 Some commentators suggest the possibility that the prologue does not say one way or the other whether Luke used the literary works of his contemporaries. Evans comments, "Thus, even if the mention of the "many" who had previously written accounts of the Christian events is more than simply conventional, Luke does not indicate whether he had read or used them" (C. F. Evans, St. Luke 15). Arndt concurs with this statement when he says, "While he speaks of compositions about Christ that had come into existence prior to his own writing, and while he states that these productions were intended to set forth the reports made by the original apostles, there is no express declaration that he availed himself of either one of these possible sources" (Arndt, St. Luke 8).


91 Geldenhuys has written, "It is, moreover, noteworthy that Luke was very intimately associated with Mark. The latter is the author of the second Gospel and had himself very probably been an eyewitness of at least some events in the life of Jesus. In any case he was an intimate follower of Peter, and it is generally recognised that his Gospel is mainly a rendering of Peter's preaching concerning Jesus" (Norval Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954] 24).
against Luke using either Matthew or Mark as a source is the implausibility of his doing a thorough investigation on a document that was written by an apostle or one so close to an apostle. Yet, Luke states this was part of his method of operation in preparing for the writing of his gospel. Remember too that Luke saw some inadequacy in accounts done before his with which he was familiar. Would Luke question the writing of one he knew to be an apostle (cf. Luke 6:13-15)? Would he sense the need to investigate the writing of Mark, whose close acquaintance with Peter he well knew?

Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that Luke would consider either Matthew's or Mark's gospel as unsuitable to give to Theophilus to furnish him with the exact truth concerning the things he had been taught. The authors of both of these gospels considered them sufficient to be given to the church independently, rather than packaged as a trilogy. Likewise, the use of these two gospels in the history of the church has demonstrated their ability individually to stand on their own in declaring the good news about the words and works of Jesus Christ.

A fourth implication of Luke's introduction relates to the author's special attention to writing out "in consecutive order" (1:3) the details of Christ's life and ministry. Though dogmatism is impossible, it is highly probable that this phrase refers to some type of chronological order. One of the arguments used by proponents of literary dependency among the first three Gospels is that Matthew and Luke followed the order of events in Mark. If, for the sake of argument, this is the case, then Luke did not need to highlight this feature of his gospel, since it was also true (even more so) of the gospel of Mark. The implication of "in consecutive order" is that this was not a distinguishing trait of the writings of the "many." But it has to have been if Luke was dependent on Mark for the order of events in the life of Christ.

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92Recall the slight pejorative force of a peëxēρhšan in 1:1 and Luke's improved perspective in 1:3.

93Thomas and Gundry, Harmony 19.

94Caird, who is a staunch supporter of some type of documentary connection between the gospels, has this to say: "Matthew and Luke have abbreviated, polished, corrected; and even so, in the parallel passages, they still reproduce respectively 51 per cent and 53 percent of Mark's actual words, and they follow his order so closely that there is only one small incident which is differently placed in all three Gospels" (G. B. Caird, The Gospel of St. Luke, [Baltimore: Penguin, 1968] 18). Wenham, coming from a different perspective, agrees with Luke's use of the chronology of the gospel of Mark. He comments, "Perhaps Luke's kauεjìfw (1:3) may suggest that he too was aware of Mark's interest in chronological order. If Luke knew Matthew (as I am inclined to believe), it is nonetheless Mark's order that he follows with great fidelity" (John Wenham, Redating Matthew, Mark & Luke [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1992] 107).
A final ramification of the prologue is that it provides the reader with insight into some possible sources that Luke used. His use of written sources is probable. As part of his "investigation," he checked these resources for accuracy. Luke also relied upon the testimonies of eyewitnesses. The form of these testimonies was more than likely "oral" as opposed to written. As a companion of the apostle Paul, Luke had several opportunities to contact those who were eyewitnesses from the beginning and servants of the word. His relationship with Paul also afforded him occasions to discuss matters with Paul.\[95\]

**CONCLUSION**

Luke 1:1-4 is significant in a study of the origins of the canonical gospels, as well as having important input regarding the Synoptic Problem. In order for the verses to have their full say in the discussion, their interpretation must be accurate. Too often, an individual view about literary dependence has dictated or been a part of the meaning assigned to Luke's prologue. The proper approach, and the one that this study has attempted to follow, is to understand first the meaning of the verses grammatically and historically. Then, the interpreter must allow the meaning of the passage to have its impact on the issue of interrelationships of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

The impact of a proper interpretation of Luke's preface has major implications for those who hold to literary dependence among the first three gospels. This is not to suggest that the opening verses of Luke's gospel alone solve the Synoptic Problem. But they do clarify some issues involved. They rule out certain proposed solutions or suggest that no such problem exists because no literary dependence exists. One eliminated theory is that Luke used the gospel of Mark as a source. Another discarded theory is that he used the gospel of Matthew as a source. Exegetically, the use of Luke 1:1-4 to support the idea that a relationship of literary dependence exists among the gospels written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke is quite improbable.

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REDRAWING THE LINE BETWEEN HERMENEUTICS AND APPLICATION

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Bernard Ramm foresaw the hermeneutical problem among evangelicals that would arise through the advent of the New Hermeneutic. Hermeneutical theorists have departed from grammatico-historical principles and embraced the subjectivism of the New Hermeneutic. They are recommending a system that incorporates the step of application into the hermeneutical process, thereby confusing definitions of hermeneutics, exegesis, meaning, and interpretation. Dangers that the confusion brings include those of encouraging a man-centered interpretation, allowing cultural application to change meaning, and advocating a reader-response type of interpretation as well as others. To overcome those dangers, interpreters must be sure of their goal, determine what is normative, develop doctrine, and put into practice the lessons dictated by the meaning of a passage. The only way to achieve this is to redraw the line between hermeneutics and exegesis.

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As a pastor, it is important to me for my flock to be able to understand God's Word and apply it to their lives. Therefore, I am greatly excited over the prospect of teaching a class on hermeneutics to our church members. However, choosing a textbook for the course is a challenge. The difficulty is not the nonavailability of books on the subject, but the discovery that most recent treatments of the subject are promoting new philosophies and methods of interpretation.

My training grounded me in the idea that the disciplines of hermeneutics and application are separate from each other. Hermeneutics is the set of rules for biblical interpretation, and application is the practical implementation of those meanings yielded by interpretation to shape human lives. Application as I learned it has well-defined limits, being controlled by the meanings produced through use of hermeneutical

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principles. However, recent trends in biblical interpretation among evangelicals are obscuring the line between hermeneutics and application, making accurate interpretation and valid application difficult, if not impossible, to achieve.

The purpose of this essay is to isolate one area of change among current trends in order to highlight a significant shift in modern hermeneutics. The discussion will focus on how application relates to hermeneutics. First, attention will focus on how new hermeneutical theories in the past thirty years promote merging contemporary application with hermeneutics and sometimes allowing it to become the controlling factor in interpretation. Second, the following will develop a comparison between these new theories and the traditional role of application in relation to hermeneutics. Third, the essay will survey recent works on hermeneutics to see how they relate to this comparison. Then will come an evaluation of these new proposals. Finally, the essay will close with a proposal for restating the relationship of application to hermeneutics.

**ISOLATING A NEW HERMENEUTICAL THEORY**

Bernard Ramm did not overstate the case in 1970 when he cautioned readers of his *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* that "a student of hermeneutics of the present faces two very cumbersome problems": too many books and the new hermeneutic.

**Too Many Books**

The first problem Ramm addressed was the simple existence of more literature on the subject than any person could possibly read. Add twenty-five years and imagine the magnitude of today's proliferation. In fact, in the last six years at least ten major works on hermeneutics have hit the shelves of bookstores in this country. Add to this two multi-volume

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Redrawing the Line between Hermeneutics and Application

series in process of production currently and one puzzled by this flood of new helps might ask the question, "Has the Church Misread the Bible?" In other words, has earlier interpretation been so bad that Christians need new instructions on how to interpret? A further problem confronts anyone seeking to locate a definitive work on the subject: as books have multiplied, so has the amount of disagreement regarding rules, disciplines, and even definitions.

**The New Hermeneutic**

The second cumbersome problem that Ramm warned about was the introduction of the "New Hermeneutic" based on the theories of Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. The importance of this for hermeneutics is that it reversed the whole concept of interpretation.

Historically, Hermeneutics included various rules for interpreting ancient documents. So biblical hermeneutics listed the special rules for interpreting the Holy Scriptures. Traditionally, those rules have been historical-grammatical principles, but for the advocates of hermeneutic (notice the singular), interpretation "now means how the existent (the Dasein—Heidegger's existential word for person) sees or understands his own world and experience and sets this out in speech." In other words, when one reads the Scriptures, it is not simply a scientific study of what God has revealed, but the word speaks brand new thoughts as a "language-event."

Bultmann believed the Bible to be unscientific and non-historical, and saw its concepts not as divine revelation, but as borrowed from

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5The title of the first volume in the Zondervan series Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation, i.e., Moisés Silva, Has the Church Misread the Bible? (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987).


7Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation 91.


contemporary religion or philosophy. Therefore, he encouraged a
demythologizing of the Bible because of its mythological nature. He used
Form Criticism to recognize the culturally conditioned state of the
Scriptures. Clearly, revelation for Bultmann was an existential encounter,
not the receiving of Scripture. So, Scripture for him was only a record
that such encounters took place. Following Bultmann, those influenced by
the New Hermeneutic have emphasized the role of the interpreter in
understanding the text more deeply and creatively, not to find the
historical-grammatical meaning, but to find an existential application. This
has led theorists such as Fuchs and Ebeling to be more concerned about
gaining an understanding through the medium of the words of the text
than about understanding the language of the text. The text is simply an
aid in this endeavor.

The hazard is that modern-day hermeneutical theoreticians who see
merit in this perspective have combined hermeneutics and hermeneutic to
arrive at a new approach. It is two-sided and involves what they call the
"fusion of horizons." Thiselton describes this "balanced" approach as first
using critical methods (notice not historical-grammatical) and then
critically testing one's understanding of the text, which involves letting
the text interpret the interpreter.

An examination of the writings of many present-day evangelicals
leads to the conclusion that the method has brought somewhat of an
enlightenment. They emphasize the need to understand the interpreter's
horizon, and highlight the view that every interpreter comes to the text
with certain biases and presuppositions as though making a new
discovery.

However, this suggestion deserves three responses. First, the
history of hermeneutics itself makes crystal clear that interpreters of all
time periods have been aware of the problem of preunderstanding. The
tradition of the Reformation has established the principle that the
interpreter must place himself under the Word, and studies on
hermeneutics in the last century contain sections on understanding the

10Bultmann, New Testament and Mythology 2; idem, History of the Synoptic Tradition 231.
14Ibid., xix.
15Ibid., 353.
16Ibid., 355.
errors of historical schools, presuppositions needed in interpretation, and guarding against personal bias. So why credit neo-orthodox thinkers with this supposed novelty?

Second, one can learn little or nothing from interpreters of a New Hermeneutic persuasion. They do not intend to lead the interpreter into a better understanding of the authorial intention of the biblical writer as God revealed Himself to him. They are advocating a new philosophy based on its own theory of knowledge. It is an epistemology they have largely succeeded in establishing as the basis for integrating university liberal arts curricula. Theirs is the school of thought that has set out to find the historical Jesus, believing that the Scriptures are elaborations of faith which include historical and factual errors. Their existential view of language causes radical departures from traditional exegesis.

In light of this, finally, to skim this basic sense of pre-understanding off the top of the New Hermeneutic thought is akin to having one's lunch out of a trash receptacle. It is as difficult to make positive use of "hermeneutic" without embracing the use of its Scripture-destroying theories as it is to eat from putrid garbage without experiencing sickening and possibly fatal results.

Many recent works have incorporated aspects of these developments into their views of hermeneutics. Most dangerous has been the inclusion of the undue emphasis on the role of the interpreter's horizon. Have these recent works by evangelicals come to the rescue to champion Ramm's cause, or have they not failed to heed his caution and fallen prey to the insidious nature of the post-Bultmannian movement?

TRADITIONAL HERMENEUTICS

The benchmark to measure deviations in the relationship of application to hermeneutics is the way they have related to one another traditionally. Bernard Ramm's discussion of hermeneutics itself in Protestant Biblical Interpretation clearly distinguishes application—sometimes called "significance" or "relevance"—from hermeneutics or interpretation when he writes, "Interpretation is one, application is

18Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics 595.
19Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation 91.
20Ibid., 90.
21Ibid., 91.
many." He discusses application after completing his treatment of hermeneutics and offers the following principle: "All practical lessons, all applications of Scripture, all devotional material, must be governed by general Protestant hermeneutics." Application is conspicuously separate from hermeneutics and controlled by that discipline.

An examination of Milton Terry's nineteenth-century Biblical Hermeneutics shows that Ramm's position is not new, but is the traditional perspective on hermeneutics and application. He carefully distinguishes hermeneutics from all other biblical disciplines. Only after implementing hermeneutical principles can an expositor or average Bible reader be sure that an application conforms to proper ideas, doctrines, or moral principles.

After more than four hundred and fifty pages in which he carefully discusses biblical hermeneutics, Terry concludes with two paragraphs on application. The great importance of concepts therein justifies quoting them in their entirety:

In all our private study of the Scriptures for personal edification we do well to remember that the first and great thing is to lay hold of the real spirit and meaning of the sacred writer. There can be no true application, and no profitable taking to ourselves of any lessons of the Bible, unless we first clearly apprehend their original meaning and reference. To build a moral lesson upon an erroneous interpretation of the language of God's Word is a reprehensible procedure. But he who clearly discerns the exact grammatico-historical sense of a passage, is the better qualified to give it any legitimate application which its language and context will allow.

Accordingly, in homiletical discourse, the public teacher is bound to base his applications of the truths and lessons of the divine Word upon a correct apprehension of the primary signification of the language which he assumes to expound and enforce. To misinterpret the sacred writer is to discredit any application one may make of his words. But when, on the other hand, the preacher first shows, by a valid interpretation, that he thoroughly comprehends that which is written, his various allowable accommodations of the writer's words will have the greater force, in whatever practical applications he may give them.

If the distinction between hermeneutics and application has been so crucial to earlier generations, one would expect those who are in the

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22Ramm, Protestant Biblical Hermeneutics 113.
23Ibid., 185 (emphasis in the original).
24Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics 18-22.
25Ibid., 600.
Redrawing the Line between Hermeneutics and Application

Reformed and evangelical tradition to continue insisting on this separation and a proper control of application by undistorted interpretation. Yet an investigation of recent works on hermeneutics, which would expectedly clarify the distinction even more, discloses an increased blurring of distinctions. Therefore, since hermeneutics is the basis of exegetical practice, the whole field of biblical interpretation is in jeopardy.

**RECENT HERMENEUTICAL PUBLICATIONS**

Realizing that the field of biblical interpretation depends on hermeneutical theoreticians, one recent exegetical practitioner warns of danger in recent hermeneutical trends. Thomas points out several areas in which changes have occurred and confusion has resulted, such areas as new definitions that are appearing and new philosophies that are beginning to control interpretation.

In his survey of confusion caused by recent hermeneutical publications, he emphasizes the emergence of new definitions of terms that conflict with traditional definitions and with one another. Using his format, this essay will develop how the current changes are obscuring the definition of application. Rather than being a distinct practice separate from implementing hermeneutical principles, application is merging with other concepts and definitions.

**Application Confused with Hermeneutics**

Some works are confusing application with hermeneutics. Hermeneutics has traditionally meant a set of principles for biblical interpretation. Established principles enable one to perform exegesis of a biblical text. However, Fee and Stuart see hermeneutics as the interpreter's second task, following exegesis. They fallaciously concede that "hermeneutics" normally includes the whole field of interpretation, including exegesis, and then choose to confine it to a "narrower sense of seeking the contemporary relevance of ancient texts." They put application after exegesis in sequence, and define exegesis as "the careful, systematic study of the Scripture to discover the original, intended meaning." Consequently, "hermeneutics" for Fee and Stuart is simply

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27Ibid., 247-48.
28Ibid., 247-48.
29Fee and Stuart, How to Read the Bible 25.
30Ibid.
31Ibid., 19.
present-day application of the biblical text, a definition quite different from traditional parlance.

In this vein they follow Nida and Reyburn who define hermeneutics as "pointing out parallels between the biblical message and present-day events and determining the extent of relevance and the appropriate response for the believer."32 That differs radically from Terry's words about application cited above.

Though Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard (hereafter KBH) do not use hermeneutics synonymously with application, they still confuse the picture further by including application as a part of hermeneutics and making it the goal of hermeneutics: "We would be misguided if we limited hermeneutics to the factors and issues that concern our understanding of the ancient text" without detecting "how the Scriptures can impact readers today."33 Clearly, they view hermeneutics as more than simply the principles for discovering the original meaning of a text through historical-grammatical methods.34 In fact, proving the inadequacy of the grammatico-historical method for producing a thorough understanding of the Bible's message is precisely their intention.35

Osborne is another writer who includes application as a hermeneutical step. He says that hermeneutics includes what the text meant and what it means, and uses the term "contextualizing" to refer to contemporary application.36 Silva continues this trend by speaking of "hermeneutic" (note the singular) as the meaning of Scripture for our day.37 Kaiser agrees by calling application an integral part of the hermeneutical task.38

Another study, this one by McCartney and Clayton, says that hermeneutics "is concerned with ascertaining not just the once-for-all meaning of Scripture, but also the way to apply that once-for-all meaning in one's own life."39 Erickson joins the parade by writing, "A fairly common hermeneutical device in many evangelical circles is to take the biblical teaching and apply it directly to the situation today."40

33Klein et al., Biblical Interpretation 18.
34Ibid., 18.
35Ibid., 18.
36Osborne, Hermeneutical Spiral 5.
37Silva, Biblical Hermeneutics 231.
38Kaiser, Biblical Hermeneutics 272.
39McCartney and Clayton, Let the Reader 78.
40Erickson, Evangelical Interpretation 63.
Redrawing the Line between Hermeneutics and Application

Can hermeneutics be synonymous with application, include application, and have application as its goal? Can application be a hermeneutical device? Such a lack of clarity robs application of its constraints and, for some, makes it the controlling factor in biblical interpretation.

Application Confused with Exegesis

Until recently, exegesis has been the name given to "an implementation of valid interpretive principles," but confusion reigns here too. Osborne says exegesis is inseparable from practical application. KBH teach that "effective exegesis not only perceives what the message meant originally but also determines how best to express that meaning to one's contemporaries." Kaiser and Silva include current relevancy, application, and contemporary significance of a biblical text as parts of exegesis. A work by J. Wilkinson, a historical critic, is one of only a few fairly recent volumes (nearly thirty-five years old) to separate exegesis and application into two mutually exclusive areas.

Application Confused with Meaning

With no differentiation between application on the one hand and hermeneutics or exegesis on the other, it is no wonder that, for many, Bible study amounts to a "what this text means to me" philosophy. In fact, even the idea of "meaning" is uncertain. In discussions of traditional hermeneutics, "meaning" has been the truth intention of the author. But Fee and Stuart not only confuse application with hermeneutics, they also mix it with "meaning." Their stated goal in the use of hermeneutics is "to ask the questions about the Bible's meaning in the 'here and now.'" This follows D. E. Nineham's thinking when he said, "Many statements in ancient texts have no meaning today in any normal sense of the word "meaning." He often used the words "contemporary meaning" to represent the application of biblical passages when framing present-day theology or views of life from the Bible. Osborne's position that herme-
neutics includes what the text meant and what it means also obscures definitions of meaning and application. Erickson continues the mix when he calls application "finding its [i.e., the text's] meaning for today." Even Kaiser includes application in one of his definitions of meaning—meaning as contemporary significance.

Application Confused with Interpretation

After seeing application mixed with hermeneutics, exegesis, and meaning, one might suspect that hermeneutical theorists have intermingled it with interpretation as well. Interpretation has historically meant an understanding of the authorial intention of a text. Today, however, many follow Gadamer in holding that knowing how a text is applied today is integral to understanding that text. He finds this principle illustrated in the hermeneutics jurists use for legal texts. When a jurist interprets a law, he is seeking its validity for a particular case. Only in doing so can he arrive at the proper understanding of the law. That method he advocates for the Bible also. He writes, "The text, whether law or gospel, if it is to be understood properly, i.e. [sic] according to the claim it makes, must be understood at every moment, in every particular situation, in a new and different way. Understanding here is always application." KBH contend that interpretation has to involve what the text might mean today as a prerequisite to understanding what the text originally meant. Osborne too defends an overlap of application and interpretation. Kaiser and Silva also believe that interpretation must decide the current relevancy, application, and contemporary significance of a text.

Cause of Confusion

Some observers may conclude that this muddled display of definitions is a simple lack of precision in language or that through semantics many of the words have become interchangeable. Even though one were willing to grant some carelessness, he would be naive to miss the common threads that tie contemporary trends with the New Hermeneutic,

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50Osborne, Hermeneutical Spiral 5.
51Erickson, Evangelical Interpretation 63.
52Kaiser, Biblical Hermeneutics 41-44.
53Thomas, "Current Trends" 247-49.
55Klein et al., Biblical Interpretation 83.
56Osborne, Hermeneutical Spiral 355.
57Kaiser and Silva, Biblical Hermeneutics 10.
Redrawing the Line between Hermeneutics and Application

Silva, without embracing the New Hermeneutic in its entirety, still speaks positively about "significant impact on subsequent discussions about biblical interpretation." He is quite willing to allow hermeneutics to change when he remarks that "hermeneutic" is the meaning of Scripture for the present day, while "the term hermeneutics had been used in a much narrower sense to refer to a discipline that deals with the principles and methods of interpretation." KBH speak of the positive contributions the New Hermeneutic has made to biblical interpretation. They believe that it has brought interpreters away from simply focusing on techniques to draw out meaning from a text and has instead linked them with the text in a more complex way. They assert also that the previous assumption about interpreter-controlled interpretation has given way to the idea of the text drawing the interpreter into its world and scrutinizing him. Further, they like the New Hermeneutic idea of the speech-event that the Scripture must relate to the contemporary audience.

On the contrary, the dangers of subjectivity in interpretation are far greater than the supposed benefits it brings. Zuck more correctly evaluates the New Hermeneutic: "Like neoorthodoxy, the new hermeneutic denies propositional truth... The biblical text can mean whatever the reader wants it to mean."  

DANGERS OF DEVIATION

A number of serious consequences present themselves in the face of rising hermeneutical trends.

Man-Centered Interpretation

First, failure to isolate application from hermeneutics creates a man-centered rather than a God-centered interpretation of the Bible. It sounds pious and even humble for readers to let the text examine themselves. It appears to parallel the cry of the Reformation that man is to place himself "under" the Word. And the way modern writers have characterized the traditional position of the Scriptures as a passive object to be analyzed sounds as though those of the past did not view Scripture as "living and active."

Yet God has communicated by having men write in language that

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58 Silva, Biblical Hermeneutics 232.
59 Ibid., 231 (emphasis in the original).
60 Klein et al., Biblical Interpretation 51.
61 Zuck, Basic Bible Interpretation 54.
human beings can understand. The natural way for humans to interpret any such communication is through employment of rules of hermeneutics to understand a passage's meaning. That does not place an interpreter over the text; it simply submits to the way God determined He would communicate His Word.

Rather, it is the fusion-of-horizons approach that exalts the role of the interpreter. It de-emphasizes authorial intention by unduly amplifying the importance of application. Kaiser and Silva rightly state that Ramm was concerned mainly with "Is it true?" and "What does the text mean?" Instead they would emphasize finding ways to derive contemporary usefulness from biblical texts. This felt need arises from the trend of the current generation to prize the value of the individual and ask the question "Does it matter?"

Is application important? Yes, but allowing it to be the driving force in hermeneutics is the proverbial tail wagging the dog, when the tail in control needs to be severed. More important, though effects of the new trend may not be fully visible yet, that trend answers to man's selfishness rather than demonstrating a reverence for God's message, whatever the application may be.

Allowing Cultural Application to Change Meaning

A second danger in stressing contemporary significance, cultural application, and modern relevancy is a prodigy to let the way particular cultures apply the Bible affect its meaning. In fact, some would keep the applications and change normal methods of interpretation. Kraft's desire to legitimize various cultural applications of the Bible drives him to attribute to God a communication problem. He first describes the problem humans have in communicating:

We know, of course, that there is often a wide discrepancy between the meanings that the communicator seeks to get across and those meanings that the receptor understands. The process seems to be one in which the communicator has certain meanings in his mind that he encodes in cultural symbols (primarily linguistic symbols) and transmits in the form of a message to one or more receptors. The receptors, for their part, decode the message in their heads and thereby derive the meanings on the basis of which they act. . . . The crucial thing in the transmission of messages via such culturally defined symbols is the extent of agreement between the communicator and the receptor concerning what the cultural symbols signify.

Speaking of the Bible, Kraft says,

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62Kaiser and Silva, Biblical Hermeneutics 10.
The fact that we who live in Euro-American culture attempt to interpret the Bible, none of which was spoken or written in Euro-American culture, raises great difficulty for us. For we are unlikely to share with the original authors many, if any, of the agreements concerning the meanings of the concepts that they use, since our cultural conditioning is so different from theirs.64

Kraft views the problem as so great that "we can state boldly that no receiver of a message ever understands exactly what the communicator intends—even when both communicator and receiver participate in the same culture."65 People compensate for this difficulty by using feedback from their audience and then changing their message based upon the misunderstandings. If this does not fully suffice, humans will settle for approximate understandings of what they seek to communicate.

Therefore, current interpretation of the Scriptures is problematic, since the human writers are not here to receive our feedback, and cannot compensate for their "communicational impreciseness."66 As a result, today's Christians must rely upon "the fact that messages can be interpreted within a range."67 Kraft believes that the Holy Spirit works in terms of such an "allowable range" as He assists in interpreting.

Within this allowable range of meaning fall both the intent of the human author and the intent of God who inspired the writing, but Kraft says the two are not always the same. This range of acceptable meaning allows for multiple legitimate interpretations of a passage and even of concepts of man and God Himself.68 Kraft's solution is that the evangelical exegete must harness the perspectives of the anthropologist and the linguist if he is to interpret adequately.69

Is God subject to those limitations of human communication? Does God settle for approximate understandings of what he seeks to communicate? Does He really allow for a range of understandings of Himself and His principles?

Kraft's belief that He does drives him to dispense with the traditional grammatico-historical method for a new approach to interpretation.70 What underlies Kraft's beliefs is the assumption that "God communicates via culture and language in essentially the same way that

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64Ibid., 359.
65Ibid., 360.
66Ibid.
67Ibid.
68Ibid.
69Ibid., 363.
70Ibid.
human beings do. Though many because of God's use of human language and cultural forms may initially grant this assumption, reflection upon Kraft's explanation of the assumption leads to the opposite conclusion.

God does communicate via culture and language in His Word, but He is not subject to the limitations and deficiencies of human communication. God, being perfect, is wholly competent to communicate His intended meaning perfectly. The Lord often told the prophets that He would place His words in their mouths. Second Peter 1:20-21 clarifies that God is speaking in Scripture: "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

Kraft also overstates the difficulty humans have in understanding. Although the Bible cites instances when men did not understand what God was saying, those were the exception rather than the rule. Difficulty in understanding the Lord usually involves a failure to obey or judicial hardening, rather than a miscommunication. And when people fail to understand, that is sometimes God's intention, as in the case of the parables.

Certainly the fall and further effects of sin have altered the human mind, but when illuminated by the Holy Spirit, it is capable of receiving communication from God without distorting it. This is the assumption of NT authors as they utilize rational lines of argumentation in appealing to their readers to make cognitive choices. Luke's purpose in his gospel was "that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:4). Paul believes his readers can "know with certainty" (Eph 5:5) and be "convinced" of certain truths (2 Tim 1:12).

If God determined to reveal Himself, then He will be effective in doing so and man is capable of receiving that communication. It should not take thousands of years awaiting the advances of linguistics and anthropology (or any other science or philosophy) to arrive at a proper interpretation of God's revelation. The grammatico-historical approach has proven its effectiveness in giving interpretations of Scripture that have achieved a great measure of unanimity in the church throughout history. Those interpretations have also effectively crossed cultural barriers. Therefore, interpreters can approach the Scriptures with a great measure of

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71Ibid., 357.

72Thomas, "Current Hermeneutical Trends" 253.

73Robert L. Thomas, "Some Hermeneutical Ramifications of Contextualization and Feminist Literature" (paper read at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, Georgia, 1986) 5.
confidence even though some texts remain where meanings are not as clear as in others.

**Poststructuralism**

The emphasis on reader response rather than the text itself also lays a foundation for legitimizing the theories of Poststructuralism, creating another danger in intermingling application with hermeneutics. "Structuralism" was a further movement away from the authorial intention of the text. It argued that interests in the historical realm of a passage are actually a barrier to determining its true meaning. The structuralist argued that thoughts are structured by the mind through codes which become universal patterns in the brain. So the interpreter of someone's writing must study the structure of the person’s words to find codes that unveil the deeper meaning behind the author’s surface words. The goal of applying this to the Bible is to find the underlying message for today.

"Poststructuralism" departs ever further from concerns about the original author or his audience. The poststructuralist sees the text as art which has a life of its own apart from its writer. When one reads the text, it becomes his work. Therefore, what is important is not a meaning in the text, but rather a meaning that now resides in the reader.

A category of Poststructuralism is "Reader-Response Criticism." It is the name of a discipline whose definition is "an analysis of the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words [of a given text] as they succeed one another in time." The goal of this type of study is to reproduce the original responses of first-time readers to a text without their being influenced by understandings of other portions of Scripture or prior understandings of that text. The reader's perception of the text is what matters, not the writer's intended meaning.

Deere probably did not intend to advocate this view of interpretation, but his recommendation fits the pattern. In an attempt to debunk the traditional interpretation that miraculous gifts have ceased, he uses the argument that "a new convert, who prior to his conversion knew nothing about the history of Christianity or the New Testament" and who is locked in a room with a Bible for a week would come out as a noncessationist. That is the same subjectivity that Poststructuralism

74 Osborne, *Hermeneutical Spiral* 371.
75 Ibid., 372.
76 Ibid., 377.
supports. What if two such converts were to leave the room with different views? That is no problem for the reader-response approach. It endorses a wide variety of interpretations and prefers interpreters without a knowledge of the Bible. Reading the Bible through inhibits one's ability to interpret in the eyes of Reader-Response Criticism.

**Pervasive Confusion**

Failure to distinguish application from hermeneutics is widespread and endangers Christians by creating an atmosphere of confusion. An illustration of that confusion is a recent work by DeYoung and Hurty entitled *Beyond the Obvious*. One in a recent flood of publications that seeks to correct the traditional "authorial intent" position, the book creates a new paradigm for explaining the NT use of the OT by advocating that the NT writers applied the OT to their own situations and thereby derived new meanings for numerous passages of the OT. The authors recommend that as the goal for modern-day interpretation, i.e., finding out how the Scriptures apply to twentieth-century situations and contextualizing its message to fit modern audiences. That procedure promotes variable meanings for each passage applied and entails the same dangers as the theories above. Pervasive confusion among Christians will be the outcome if Bible readers follow this advice.

**Other Dangers**

The possible dangers are limitless. Failure to draw a clear line between hermeneutics and application will give credibility to the degenerative concepts of contextualization in modern day missiology and the imposing on the text of interpretive centers such as the preferential option for the poor from Liberation Theology and the Galatians 3:28 lens of feminist theology regarding the role of women. The experience of the

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[81] Contextualization is the modus operandi of those who would develop theology by studying how ministry is practiced in various civilizations rather than applying traditional hermeneutical principles to the biblical text (Theological Education Fund, *Ministry in Context: The Third Mandate Programme of the Theological Education Fund (1970-77)* [Bromley, Kent, United Kingdom: New Life Press, 1972]).


[83] E.g., F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 190; cf. also Paul Felix, "The Hermeneutics of Evangelical Feminism,* TMSJ* 5/2 (Fall 1994):159-84.
The interpreter drives those schools of thought, not a passion to understand the message of God as recorded by biblical writers.

The confusion of hermeneutics and application affects the field of Bible translations too. By defining hermeneutics as "pointing out parallels between the biblical message and present-day events and determining the extent of relevance and the appropriate response for the believer," Nida and Reyburn lay a hermeneutical foundation for their functional [or dynamic] equivalence approach to translating Scripture.

A volume edited by Radmacher and Preus furnishes another example of how widespread the confusion of application with hermeneutics is. The work entitled Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible resulted from The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI) Summit II and contains a very helpful collection of articles on hermeneutics. The collection of articles had the purpose of completing "the solution to the problem of biblical authority . . . as far as its interpretation and practical application to our lives are concerned." To maintain the distinction that the present essay is arguing for, that volume should have included "application" in its title—Hermeneutics, Application, Inerrancy, and the Bible—because if limiting its articles to hermeneutical topics, it should not have included topics such as "Normativeness in Scripture" which delves into ways of applying Scripture.

That article, "Problems of Normativeness in Scripture: Cultural Verses Permanent" by J. Robertson McQuilkin, makes a clear distinction between "interpreting the meaning of Scripture" and applying "the teaching for contemporary faith and life." He identifies ways in which he believes hermeneutics controls application. However, George Knight's response to that discussion describes what McQuilkin did as charting "the course for interpreting Scripture in reference to its normativity." Is that what McQuilkin did? Or, did he chart the course for applying Scripture in reference to its normativity?

Though normativity of the Scriptures is certainly a valuable topic, does the normativeness of a text have anything to do with interpreting a passage's meaning? No. An illustration of the frequent neglect of this principle lies in the way today's interpreters of head coverings in 1 Corinthians 11 want that passage to answer the question, "Should women

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84 Nida and Reyburn, Meaning Across Cultures 30.
86 Ibid., 222.
87 Ibid., 230-40.
88 Ibid., 243.
wear head coverings today? This is a good question, but its answer can come only after determining the meaning of the text through an implementation of hermeneutics without regard to what the question's answer may be. In view of recent trends, utmost care is vital in keeping interpretation separate from application.

**RESTATEMENT IN A STRENGTHENED FORM**

Application is certainly indispensable in a believer's relationship to God and His Word, but it must be subject to sensible controls. Understanding God's Word is prerequisite to a legitimate application of it. In light of conflicting meanings produced by an inclusion of the reader's horizon among hermeneutical principles, how can interpreters keep themselves from drowning in the sea of subjectivity? They must redraw the line between hermeneutics and application. The following four steps will help achieve this.

**Be Sure of the Goal**

First, interpreters must clarify the goal of their quest. They must put on hold the needs of interpreter, expositor, and their respective audiences and cultures until they reach a conclusion about the meaning of the text. They cannot allow man's self-centeredness or even his enthusiasm for obedience to influence their use of hermeneutical principles. They must study God's Word objectively to determine the original message that God intended. Only this goal will exalt God's Word to its proper place as the only constant in the equation of interpretation. Variables from a contemporary horizon must not determine this interpretation. Readers as God's creatures must willingly receive His meaning truly and accurately.

To reach this goal, interpreters must choose a method. Since God has seen fit to record His message in a written form, humans must use the faculties He has given them to understand that communication. They have defined as a "science" the practice of using their faculties to discover something by observation, description, and experimentation. The science of interpreting written documents is hermeneutics. Hermeneutics must be the method of receiving God's message from His Word accurately.

However, in light of the modern confusion, one must limit the scope of hermeneutics. It must include only what helps achieve the priority goal of understanding God's Word. If it expands beyond this or includes less than what is necessary, the goal becomes obscure. Its traditional definition of being the science of interpretation has stood the test of time. As a science, it provides rules to be used in interpreting the Scriptures.

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Hermeneutics must be completely distinct from other disciplines, or an interpretive process begins without a foundation. Interpreters must firmly resist letting even closely related disciplines—i.e., exegesis or exposition—become a part of hermeneutics. Most of all, they must staunchly turn back any attempt at introducing application into hermeneutics. Application cannot be the goal of, a part of, or synonymous with hermeneutics. Otherwise, a definitive meaning of hermeneutics disappears.

In fact, one must consciously postpone application till a later stage of study. He must keep in mind that not only are hermeneutics and application separate, but also steps of exegesis must come between them. After establishing rules of hermeneutics, biblical exegesis must put them into practice in the actual interpretation of a text. Only after exegesis can one proceed with intelligent application.

**Determine What Is Normative**

After determining the meaning of a text, one can move on to application. McQuilkin is helpful in emphasizing the need to determine whether a text is applicable "to every people in every culture" or is "intended to function as a mandate for normative behavior." To help in determining this after one has interpreted the text, he proposes the following questions:

A. Does the context limit the recipient or application?
B. Does subsequent revelation limit the recipient or the application?
C. Is this specific teaching in conflict with other biblical teaching?
D. Is the reason for a norm given in Scripture and is that reason treated as normative?
E. Is the specific teaching normative as well as the principle behind it?
F. Does the Bible treat the historic context as normative?
G. Does the Bible treat the cultural context as limited?

These questions illustrate how hermeneutics controls application. In reality, though, answers to all of them depend on the specific meaning of a

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90 McQuilkin, "Problems of Normativeness" 222.
91 Ibid., 230.
92 Ibid., 231.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid., 232.
95 Ibid., 233.
96 Ibid., 234.
97 Ibid., 236.
verse in its context, which results from exegesis. That is what prevents applying a verse to situations it was not intended for. However, caution is essential even here, because question "C" above actually belongs back in exegesis. In connection with this question, McQuilkin says that cultural insight may help in resolving an apparent contradiction. In other words, grammatico-historical hermeneutics should already have included the facts of history (i.e., culture) and "double-checked" the results by applying the analogy of faith. Applying a Scripture whose meaning one does not yet understand is premature.

**Arrive at Doctrine**

In Ramm's section on "The Doctrinal Use of the Bible," he discusses an important area of application—systematizing beliefs about God based upon the results of exegesis.

Yet before his suggestions for doing so, he has a disturbing statement: "Part of the task of hermeneutics is to determine the correct use of the Bible in theology and in personal life." He includes theology as a part of hermeneutics and even divides hermeneutics into two categories, general hermeneutics and doctrinal hermeneutics. Even more disturbing is his opinion that doctrinal interpretation "is advancing beyond the grammatical and the historical sense to the fuller meaning of Scripture." In the first place, the use of the Bible in theology and in personal life is not a part of hermeneutics. Those are part of application. Secondly, doctrinal interpretation should not "go beyond" and thereby differ from the results of the exegetical process? Exegesis should control application.

Despite these shortcomings, Ramm does have some good proposals for building a system of theology:

1. The main burden of doctrinal teaching must rest on the literal interpretation of the Bible.
Redrawing the Line between Hermeneutics and Application

2. Exegesis is prior to any system of theology.  
3. The theologian must not extend his doctrines beyond the Scriptural evidence.  
4. The theologian interpreter strives for a system.  
5. What is not a matter of revelation cannot be made a matter of creed or faith.

Put It into Practice

When an individual studies the Scriptures, if he follows proper hermeneutical principles, he will arrive at its correct meaning. After determining whether the context has limited it to a particular audience or circumstance (normativeness), he can then ask such questions as

1. Is there a truth to believe about God?  
2. Is there a truth to believe about some other doctrine?  
3. Is there a command to obey?  
4. Is there a promise to claim?  
5. Is there an example to follow?  
6. Is there a principle to follow for personal guidance?  
7. Is there wisdom to shape a Christian's thinking?

Danger surrounds any attempt to answer these questions without first applying sound principles of hermeneutics. However, if one follows a proper sequence, he will establish the proper limitations of a passage and guard against misapplications.

CONCLUSION

Some may believe that this paper has reduced the importance of application. On the contrary, in view of deviations from traditional methods and definitions by new hermeneutical theories arising over the last thirty years, the only way to be sure that application of the truth is valid is to redraw boldly a line that has been erased.

The definition of application is simply "the use or practice of God's message in personal life." It is only reasonable then that application must lie outside the disciplines used to determine meaning. Just as reasonable is the conclusion that the message found through the process of interpretation must define, confine, and control application.

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105 Ibid., 168.
106 Ibid., 170.
107 Ibid., 172. This writer prefers to omit "interpreter" at this stage in the process. Also, he would emphasize the word "strives," realizing that no system is perfect and all systems remain under the scrutiny of exegetical conclusions.
108 Ibid., 178.
The meaning arrived at through hermeneutical principles governs application by setting limits or boundaries for possible applications. Many applications of a given text are possible because application is subjective, but its separateness from hermeneutics assures that the meaning of Scripture will remain intact as the objective truth God intended it to be.

Hopefully, this discussion has awakened an awareness that recent works on hermeneutics deviate substantially from traditional hermeneutics and thus confound the task of learning the meaning of Scripture. If hermeneutics is obscure, then valid application becomes impossible. A redrawning of the line between hermeneutics and application is crucial in order to regain the basics of grammatico-historical method.
BOOK REVIEWS


The editor writes that this book is "intended to introduce students to important foundational concepts essential to biblical apologetics." It is a collection of some of Greg Bahnsen's previously published works on "presuppositional" apologetics. His syllabus on apologetics makes up Sections One through Four; a series of articles he wrote on apologetic issues comprises Section Five; and the appendix is his exposition of Acts 17.

In the first section, Bahnsen discusses "The Lordship of Christ in the Area of Knowledge." He reasons that since all knowledge and wisdom are hidden in Christ and known through His revelation, then the Christian should not be neutral regarding that revelation, but rather committed to it. Not only is neutrality foolish, it is immoral since Christ requires allegiance to Himself. Reasoning apart from this revelation results in darkened understanding. God's Word, then, is the final authority in the area of knowledge and, as such, it is self-attesting.

In the second section, Bahnsen writes about "The Conditions Necessary for the Apologetic Task." He refutes several objections to this apologetic, namely, that it is absolutist, that it implies unbelievers have no knowledge whatsoever, and that it means there is no point of contact between believer and unbeliever. He develops the biblical view of the believer's point of contact with the unbeliever as man's universal knowledge of God through creation. He demonstrates that common ground with the unbeliever is the entire universe because God created it and sustains it.

In Section Three, Bahnsen tells "How to Defend the Faith." He writes that the believer must reduce the unbeliever's worldview to absurdity, and show that Christianity is the precondition of intelligibility of human experience. Though Bahnsen advocates this method as the one that will leave the unbeliever with no excuse, he is careful to acknowledge that ultimately conversion of the unbeliever will come by a sovereign work of
God. He demonstrates that the conflict between believer and unbeliever is a clashing of worldviews, the only resolution of which is at the presuppositional level, and that the believer's presupposition is God's self-attesting revelation. He shows all worldviews to be founded on some presupposition, or logically primitive starting point, and that they need to be compared to determine which makes human experience intelligible. Bahnsen proves that Scripture alone accomplishes this.

In Section Four, "The Conditions Necessary for Apologetic Success," Bahnsen examines the Spirit's role in apologetics, explores the relationship of faith to reason, investigates the nature of saving faith, and considers Eve's example.

In Section Five, "Answers to Apologetic Challenges," Bahnsen responds to specific apologetic issues. He discusses the necessity of apologetics, the role of reason, conflicting worldviews, the impossibility of the contrary, and self-deception. He also delineates a method for critiquing the unbelieving worldview, and he applies it in a blistering critique of Bertrand Russell's Why I Am Not a Christian. He offers sound solutions to the problems of evil, knowledge of the supernatural, faith, religious language, and miracles.


One of Bahnsen's most important contributions to apologetics was his making of Cornelius Van Til's presuppositional apologetic accessible to the average student, and Always Ready is a comprehensive introduction to this apologetic that is as easy to understand as it is informative. It explains and applies this method in a way that will benefit any reader. Even those who disagree can profit from it as it answers objections and eliminates misunderstanding. In the book, Bahnsen explains and defends this powerful biblical apologetic. It is the ideal introduction to Christian apologetics, and this reviewer cannot recommend it highly enough.


Recent years have produced a renewed interest in church history, making publishing in that field quite active. Modern practices and "manifestations" within Christendom usually seek to establish a "historical precedent" to lend validity to their cause. The efforts of "Toronto Blessing" advocates to link themselves with Jonathan Edwards and the Great Awakening, perhaps being the most notable effort in recent years. Is the historical connection legitimate? Are historians today serving the church
well or, as Bauman states in his introduction, are they historians who "sell out" (5). When this happens he states,

When religious historians sell out, when they permit sectarian theology to deform their work, we forget. Ecclesiastical amnesia is a serious and crippling disease. A Church without a memory is doomed to invent the churchly and the theological wheels anew. The writing of religious history, in other words, is the necessary prop our naked memory requires in order to draw upon the accumulated wisdom of the ages, enabling us to withdraw at our need the deposit of insight and truth generously stored up for us by our predecessors in the faith" (ibid).

The question naturally arises, What of those who actually wrote the histories in use today; what were their methods, goals, and prejudices? To answer this important question, the editors have assembled a series of essays on outstanding historians of the church. There are twenty-eight essays in all, two of which—R. Paul House's "Old Testament Historians" and Scot McKnight's and Matthew C. Williams' "Luke"—deal with history presented in Scripture. The other twenty-six deal with the historians of the church era. The contributors include some of the outstanding church historians alive today in the wider spectrum of evangelical scholarship. Each chapter contains extensive endnotes and an impressive bibliography for further reading. A lack of indexes hampers slightly the utility of the work, but overall the layout and style are quite readable.

Many of the essay subjects, such as Eusebius, Bede, Philip Schaff, Kenneth Scott Latourette, Jaroslav Pelikan, and Martin Marty, are familiar to most TMSJ readers. However, names such as I. A. Dorner, Thomas Lindsay, and Georges Florovsky may not be. Though all the articles are extremely clear and well-written, worthy of special notice is David L. Russell's essay on John Henry Newman, one of the leaders of the "Oxford Movement" who eventually left the Anglican Church for Roman Catholicism. Newman's work, "Essay on the Development of Doctrine," remains as an important apology for Roman Catholic doctrine, and Russell's discussion of Newman is noteworthy.

Other significant articles are Robert Clouse on Hubert Butterfield; Larry Dixon on Adolf von Harnack; Martin Klauber on Roland Bainton; and Alister McGrath on Augustine of Hippo. Second-guessing of what to include and exclude in such a work as this is easy, but it seems strange that no essay on George Marsden or Justo Gonzalez appears. Considering his importance in historical narrative, an essay on Flavius Josephus would not have been out of place.

These, however, are minor criticisms of a work that is generally outstanding. Any student of church history will benefit from this volume as will anyone who wonders how the church got from "there" to "here" in

Three professors at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, have tried to produce a book that is plain and simple (2), fit for introductory students, covering four areas they felt other books do not—philosophical presuppositions, history of biblical interpretation, the practice of interpretation (actual guidance in doing exegesis), and using the skills in moving from exegesis to sermon (x). To achieve this, they employed twenty-three writers in twenty-two chapters, all committed to Scripture's inspiration and authority (xi, 7-8).

In the assessment of this reviewer, the book is comprehensive and well-informed, stuffed with explanations on history of interpretation, definitions of matters related to exegesis, and surveys of approaches to interpretation. He does not believe, however, that the book is adequate to guide beginning students. It too often lacks the simplicity that was its goal. Its explanations of exegetical and hermeneutical matters would bog students down, and actual steps to interpret a passage are not specific enough. One comes away with much information about the subject, but not much about the practical process. The data given comes largely from what one can learn from the English text, without a grasp of the biblical languages, whereas more help for students who can to some degree use language tools would have been beneficial. The reviewer in his excitement over possibly finding a text suitable for beginning students was disappointed to discover little concrete help in how to use context, word study, grammar, cross-reference, and other definite principles in an integrated and complimentary way.

Corley intends his nineteen-page introduction to prime students to do exegesis. The book also has a glossary of biblical terms (353-84), which is excellent, and a guide to reference works and commentaries (385-416). Both are good features geared to aid students. The guide has only unannotated general comments about the works it cites. Along with good books, it lists critical works opposing a high view of Scripture and has no warning to students with a high view of inspiration. The absence of premillennial dispensational works is unfortunate. Examples of the very helpful works it omits are C. L. Feinberg, Jeremiah, A Commentary, Zondervan, 1982; Leon Wood, A Commentary on Daniel, Zondervan, 1973; Stephen Miller, Daniel (New American Commentary), Broadman, 1994;
Robert Thomas, Revelation 1-7 and Revelation 8-22 (2 vols.), Moody, 1992, 1995. Interestingly, the list has premillennial commentaries of far less detail and exegetical penetration on the Apocalypse, such as by George Ladd and Alan Johnson. A topical index (417-19) is useful.

Corley's introduction offers a good definition of hermeneutics and the distinction between hermeneutics (the principles) and exegesis (the practice, using the principles). He stumbles a bit in defining exposition as "what the text means now for the contemporary reader" (5). Is it not what the text and its principles mean for readers then and now? Corley's seven steps in exegetical study never get specific on the use of original languages, for his focus is on "English grammar" (15). He does mention using Hebrew and Greek earlier (11), but in discussing express steps, he does not integrate this. He also makes no reference to prayer, an urgently important matter in dealing with God's Word; he only says "wait for insight" (16) and approach the text with "expectancy" (18), with the attention focused only on books, paper, and computer (13).

Each chapter ends with a sizeable list of works to facilitate further study. The lists are good, but for a beginning (or advanced) student they give no help as to why or how each listing might be profitable.

Chapter 1 deals with ancient Jewish hermeneutics. In several chapters, scholars who are well aware of definitions and explanations often do not clarify their brief statements to assist students who lag far behind them in that awareness. Frequently, examples to clarify brief discussions are missing, resulting in vagueness that will frustrate some readers. For instance, in the nebulous remarks about a distinction between how hermeneutics was defined a few hundred years ago (learning to use rules for interpreting) and the more recent focus on a philosophical study of language and epistemology (how we know what we think we know), illustrations would have brought clarity. Another case where examples would have helped is in the volume's discussion of complex theories of textuality. These voids can leave a beginner groping, without a clue about how the words relate to interpretation.

The book has a good definition for allegorical exegesis (28-30) with an illustration from Philo. It also says that allegorical interpretation, when rightly applied, can be sound without danger to literal meaning (31), but it gives no explanation or example to remove the haze. Later, a good discussion takes up how Jews of the Greco-Roman era were avid to represent what the text said, and used pesharim (interpretations attempting to explain OT texts, 31-34). Here, examples do appear. Jewish exegesis called midrash (from Heb. darash, "to seek out") is handled well (35-38).

E. Earle Ellis offers light on the NT use of the OT (chap. 2). As in much of the book, however, so much information is present that the book becomes heavy, slow toil for a student to stay with, digest, and put to practical use. In much of the work, contributors do not show students the
relevancy of information to the actual interpretation.

Valuable chapters survey the interpretive methods of early church fathers and of the medieval, Reformation era, and of modern scholars (chaps. 3-7). Chapter 8 on contemporary philosophical, literary, and sociological hermeneutics will reward the plodder who reads and re-reads, but probably much will still be difficult to grasp. Chapter 9 on the inspiration and truthfulness of Scripture surveys five views of inspiration with strengths and weaknesses of each, but students will be uncertain which view the writer (Lemke) favors. The section raises problems for inerrancy but does not suggest plausible solutions, as on the size of the mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32) (157). After all the uncertainty, the writer appears to finish on the side of inerrancy (160-62), but he has not shown why the student needs that view.

Some readers will not escape puzzlement in the chapter (13) on Preunderstanding and the Hermeneutical Spiral. A dense fog prevails here. Yet the writer profitably argues for approaching Scripture with valid assumptions backed by sufficient evidence, such as the unity of OT and NT and the NT as interpreter of the OT. He also has a good stress on the presupposition of faith in approaching Scripture, balanced with the Word itself fostering faith (Rom 10:17) (208). The following claim will produce bewilderment: "[T]he process of hermeneutics does not lead to some objective end to the understanding of Scripture. There can be no closure to the disclosure of meaning in God's written revelation; there can be no absolute knowledge within the techniques of biblical hermeneutics" (208). That suggests that one can never be sure of anything (i.e., have any absolutes) from interpretation, even though humbly submissive to learn from God through good hermeneutical procedure. Given the authors' high view of inspiration, the statement surely means something else, but this is not clear.

Chapter 14 on the Grammatical-Historical Method appropriately stresses grasping words in the meaning the original authors intended in the original languages. But, for seminary students, the discussion makes too much concession to study in English translations, without enough emphasis on working to learn the languages and get at truth through them. It pays brief recognition to distinguishing the literal from figurative language (221-24), but mentions only a few kinds of figures. On some figures, the treatment says only enough to leave a student perplexed and guessing about how to distinguish one device from other devices. The paragraph on typology (224-25) is not very definitive. The chapter mentions symbols without an example. It leaves a reader with some things defined, some treated vaguely, and no method illustrated. Chapter 15 dealing with inductive Bible study methods gives some good pointers as in its suggestions using Phil 4:6-8. Even here, however, it gives no specific help on where to go for information and how to learn distinctions between
the four words for prayer (v. 6) and where one learns that "keep" (guard) was used for a Roman sentry on guard.

One disappointment in the book was the absence of detail on parables, prophecy, and typology, and how specifically to handle them. For an introductory survey text, these are very important.

Though chap. 18 has the title "From Biblical Text to Theological Formulation," it generalizes on how to interpret. One reads a lengthy discussion but never finds a definite method. The recommendation is to go from reader to text for theological formulation and back again in a "hermeneutical spiral." Discussion falls short of showing how to do this and still get a valid meaning. Chapters 20-22 try to escort a student from biblical criticism to a biblical sermon. They define and describe many kinds of biblical criticism (e.g., source, form, redaction), and leave the student somewhat at sea as to their validity. They never exemplify a valid process in actual interpretation—i.e., how to get the central idea, how to use principles to interpret (e.g., word study, grammar, near and far context).

The book is, for a patient reader, generally informative regarding biblical studies, and at times offers helpful practical pointers. It suffers too often from generality, unrelatedness to actual practice, and a lack of simplicity that can lift a student out of the bog and stir him with the joy of biblical study.


Communicate With Power is a book that grew out of articles in Preaching magazine. The magazine interviewed well-known pastors and preachers over a number of years, asking these able communicators insightful and revealing questions about their ministries and preaching. The book contains some of those interviews in which preachers share how they prepare for preaching, their methods, styles, and insights into communicating effectively. Here the reader will find some of the pulpit giants of today revealing their preaching "secrets." Among the twenty-five interviewed were John MacArthur, Chuck Swindoll, John R. W. Stott, Warren Wiersbe, R. C. Sproul, and Calvin Miller.

The book is especially fascinating in its treatment of contemporary preachers and communicators. It also allows the reader to enter the preacher's study and see how he crafts the sermon and delivers it from the pulpit. Here is a volume that both instructs and inspires at the same time. It is a valuable tool for both those learning how to preach and those with
years of preaching experience under their belts.

Michael Duduit is editor of the Preaching magazine and director of the American Academy of Ministry. He also serves as Executive Vice President and Assistant Professor of Communication at Union University in Tennessee.


William Edgar is Professor of Apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He wrote this book, initially titled Winning Words, "to encourage the reader to engage in Christian persuasion, appealing to the heart's reasons" (17). Though the goal of presuppositional apologetics is the vindication of the Christian worldview against rivals, the aim of Edgar's apologetic is to persuade the non-Christian that the Christian worldview is true. He defines apologetics as "developing a persuasive sequence of words to answer the challenges from an unbelieving culture" (41). Persuasion is crucial to Edgar's apologetic and he refers to it several times—subtitle, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17 (3 times), 23, 41, 49, 51, 54, 58, 60, 61; cf. his use of the synonym "convince," 15, 57, 58.

Edgar recounts the time when he told the gospel to a relative: he explained the Bible's claims, the reality of Christ's presence, and the hope of heaven. When the relative responded by asking what difference being a Christian would make in his life, Edgar was, he confesses, at a loss in answering him (11). This is an astonishing admission. He relates that he wanted to tell his relative that his life would have new meaning if he converted, but the relative already led a fulfilled life (11). From this experience he concludes that Christians must make Christianity relevant to the non-Christian (12). In other words, Edgar was discouraged because he did not persuade his relative to believe the gospel. Edgar's perspective is captured in this statement: "Many arguments are perfect demonstrations of something being valid but not really credible to the audience" (62).

Edgar makes three mistakes here. First, reconciliation to God and a new life in Christ make all the difference in the world and are completely relevant. Second, the goal of apologetics is not to persuade, but to prove. And third, Edgar neglects the transcendental challenge: it is not just that the life of Edgar's relative will have new meaning as a Christian; the fact is, without the Christian God, the life of Edgar's relative can have no meaning at all.

This emphasis on persuasion leads the author to a fatal
compromise: if his basic methodology fails, he naively recommends a
direct appeal to evidence as a last resort (76), reasoning that an "honest"
appraisal will conclude in favor of Christianity (76, 78, 82) (though he does
mention that the Holy Spirit is the "final persuader" [60]). He fails to
understand that the unbeliever will reject any evidence that does not fit his
worldview.

Edgar advocates a "Pascalian" apologetic (14, 17) in which two ways
of knowing are distinguished: through reason and through the heart (14).
He affirms Pascal's statement, which many have understood as
voluntarism, that "We know the truth not only through our reason but also
through our heart... The heart has its reasons of which reason knows
nothing." Unfortunately, Edgar does not explain this statement, nor does
he develop this foundational point. It is unclear what he means by these
two ways of knowing, and how they relate to each other. Also, he does not
tell how he knew about this theory of knowledge, through reason or
through the heart. Seemingly he defends a divided epistemology, and this
is incorrect.

He is correct on a couple of points. He affirms the antithesis
between the non-Christian and the Christian, and that the only point of
contact between them is man's knowledge of God through General
Revelation (52-54). Also, he is correct that the Christian apologetic includes
an internal critique of the non-Christian worldview (55-56). He falters,
though, by allowing that skepticism has some credibility, thereby
demonstrating he has not appreciated the Christian transcendental
argument (57). Actually, the Christian apologetic applies reductio ad
absurdum to the non-Christian world-view, exposing its incoherence and
showing that it cannot provide the preconditions of intelligibility of
experience, features that prove it is self-destructive.

In spite the book's valid contributions, this reviewer cannot recom-
mend it because of its wrong understanding of the goal of apologetics and
because of its flawed epistemology.

Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart. How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth.
Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

This volume is readable and helpful for those who want to
understand what the Bible says. The authors provide specific principles
for interpreting each of the basic genres (types of literature) found in the
Bible. It is among the more popular of recent books on biblical
interpretation.

Gordon D. Fee has authored a number of NT commentaries as well
as significant works in the fields of hermeneutics and NT textual criticism. He is Professor of New Testament at Regent College. As an adherent to charismatic theology, he has become one of the movement's most scholarly spokesmen.

Douglas Stuart is Professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He has pastored churches in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and is currently senior pastor of First Church Congregational of Boxford, Massachusetts. Among his contributions are commentaries and a primer for OT exegesis.

The authors purposed to produce a guide for interpretation that would bridge the gap between scholars and laypersons. In order to accomplish their purpose, they teach the reader of the Bible to ask the right questions of the text, questions formulated with due regard to the genre of a Bible passage.

Fee wrote chapters 1-4, 6-8, and 13 concerning NT genres; Stuart produced chapters 5 and 9-12 presenting OT genres. The first chapter defines interpretation, exegesis, and hermeneutics. The second chapter discusses the choosing of a good Bible translation. Eleven more chapters deal with principles for interpreting various genres of the Bible: the NT epistles (two chapters), OT narratives, the Book of Acts, the Gospels (two chapters), the Law, prophetic books, the Psalms, wisdom literature, and the Book of Revelation. An appendix presents both criteria for evaluating commentaries and a list of recommended commentaries.

Bible students will find this book most valuable in its specific suggestions for interpreting each genre. Well-chosen examples reinforce the suggested principles for interpretation. At key points the authors refer the reader to other books that will provide additional help. They handle debatable interpretations with admirable objectivity for the most part. An example of this neutrality is Fee's statement that "Scripture simply does not expressly command that . . . Christians are to be baptized in the Spirit evidenced by tongues as a second work of grace" (109). In spite of his cautious wording, however, Fee's charismatic theology does surface a few times in the book.

Although the contents are mostly commendable, the book has some weaknesses. Fee's definition of the relationship between hermeneutics and exegesis is at odds with traditional scholarship. He defines hermeneutics as "seeking the contemporary relevance of ancient texts" (25). Therefore, he insists that exegesis precedes hermeneutics. In the current debate on the nature of hermeneutics, this volume is closer to the view that treats hermeneutics as the description of understanding rather than as the science of interpretation.

In the discussion of how to choose a translation, Fee neglected to provide the reader with any support for his conclusion that "the best translational theory is dynamic equivalence" (36). His preference is for the
student to use the NIV, GNB, or NAB. Along with these freer translations, he encourages the use of at least one more literal translation from among the NASB, RSV, and NRSV. In addition, Fee advises the student to consult either the NEB or JB.

The soundest sections are the treatments of narratives and historical books in both testaments, OT poetry (the Psalms and wisdom literature), and the NT epistles. Due to some presuppositions regarding prophetic fulfillment, the chapters dealing with OT prophetic books and the Book of Revelation are more problematic. One such presupposition is that biblical prophecy consists mostly of prophecies whose fulfillments are already in the past for the present-day interpreter (see 166, 181-83, 242). Another presupposition concerns *sensus plenior* (fuller meaning). Stuart's acceptance of *sensus plenior* influences the view he takes regarding the NT's use of the OT (183-84).

Although a caution with reference to both authors' treatments of prophetic materials is necessary, there is still much to commend. Stuart's emphasis on covenant forms in prophecy touches on a vital issue. A proper interpretation of the OT prophets must take such forms into account.

In conclusion, the greatest contribution of this volume is its effective employment of genre in interpretation. Fee and Stuart have successfully fulfilled one of their primary goals in bridging the gap between scholars and laypersons in this area of biblical interpretation.

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The Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Escondido, California, contributes a competent, all-around articulation of biblical worship obviously based on immense study. He writes with a refreshing clarity, explains scriptural concepts clearly, and shows good balance. He is also the Associate Pastor of New Life Presbyterian Church in Escondido.

Frame says in his Preface that as a Presbyterian his revised Reformed ideas permit more flexibility than those of the Puritans in applying biblical commands for worship. He achieves this, he believes, while remaining sensitive to the Westminster Confession and Catechisms (xiii). He attempts to state the main biblical principles that govern public worship, and uses Scripture copiously, believing in inerrancy (xiv). He acknowledges that the principles will fit forms of worship not in the Reformed Tradition (xv). He also tries to deal seriously with problems in
Presbyterian forms that turn people off. He strives to be sensitive to Scripture, but allow freedom in possible ways worship can carry out the principles. Biblical details leave many issues of method open, so people can vary and still fulfill true worship (xvi).

Chapter 1 discusses what worship is in acknowledging the great covenant Lord, who sovereignly controls, and in experiencing His presence. The focus is so much on public worship that it will disturb some that Frame speaks of leaving worship (5). Christians never should! Later in the book he corrects that idea. Another problematic statement is to the effect that "...to glorify God is to praise Him" (10). Actually believers are to glorify God in all they do, and direct praise is only one facet of this. Later, Frame shows his agreement on that point: "Worship is not one segment of the Christian life among others. Worship is the entire Christian life, seen as a priestly offering to God" (11).

Chapter 2 presents an excellent, brief survey of worship in the OT, Chapter 3 in the NT. Sometimes the writer distinguishes prayer and praise (17) (actually praise is one of several aspects in prayer); at other times he recognizes that though praise is not the whole of prayer, the two are the same if one refers to praise as a part of prayer. The OT discussion moves to worship in unscheduled meetings with God, sacrifices, sabbaths, feasts, Tabernacle, Temple, worship by priests and Levites, and worship in the synagogues. The NT chapter shows that worship is Christians' sacrifice of themselves to God's will, living all of life as believer priests (30), worshiping in all things of life (34).

"Rules for Worship" is the subject of chap. 4, while chap. 5 takes up "What to Do In Worship." As to rules, Frame shows that God's Word governs worship rightly done. The worshiper must apply it with godly wisdom, based on valid principles that align with scriptural purposes for worship. Freedom exists as to exact order in a public service, since Scripture gives no list (53). It is not apropos to list singing, then teaching, for singing should have a teaching thrust (cf. Col 3:16), prayers include teaching, and songs can contain prayer. The principles and tone of Scripture should create sensitivity for a spirit of true worship aimed at pleasing God (55). Frame believes that prophesying and speaking in tongues was a part of the public worship in the church-founding era only (57). He suggests as parts of such gathering such things as greetings, benedictions, reading Scripture, preaching/teaching, prayer, song, vows, confession of faith, sacraments, church discipline, offerings, expressions of fellowship such as the "love feast" and "holy kiss," and announcements (59-60).

An entire chapter (7) deals with the effect of worship on the emotions, seeing emotions as having a positive value without advocating "emotionalism." Frame reasons for a balance between intellect, will, and emotions, i.e., the whole person (78). He argues with sensible balance for
authenticity in worship, whatever the setting or variation of structure (84-85).

The author advocates infant baptism, giving his reasons (98), and has much to say about the worshipers' response to the Word in prayer. Here he includes praise, requests, confession, and thanks, but has no clear mention of the intercessory aspect, although he includes in prayer anything that is the will of God. Chapters 10-12 relate to church music. Frame's focus is that music should not be rigid but communicative in helping people to worship God. People old and young should be willing to sympathize with one another's feelings and keep in unity, both being sensitive to helping others grow. Words in music should be true to the Bible, reverent, and joyful.

The author includes, after his final chapter, an annotated bibliography of thirty-nine works on worship, then an index of Bible texts.

The book is a quality survey, stimulating in its style and comments on issues, responsibly attentive to Scripture, and flexibly fair where Scripture permits varied practice. The sub-title seems accurate, "A Refreshing Study. . . ." Other fairly recent, provocative books pastoral ministers or serious lay readers can find profitable are: D. A. Carson, ed., Worship: Adoration and Action (Baker, 1993) and David Peterson, Engaging with God: A Biblical Theology of Worship (Eerdmans, 1992).


J. C. L. Gibson is the Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Studies at New College in the University of Edinburgh. It is the same position that Andrew Bruce Davidson filled at the college from 1863 till his death in 1902. Gibson is perhaps best known in the scholarly realm for his three-volume Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971-1982). He has published significant studies on vocalic change in Hebrew and on the linguistic method of the Massoretes. He has also been involved in the OT portion of the Daily Study Bible.

The book's title announces that it is "Davidson's" and the format looks like Davidson's, but the content is significantly different. Gibson has upgraded and incorporated some of the revisions introduced by James Martin in the 27th edition of Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993). The fact that Gibson understates his involvement in this fourth edition does not negate the great service he has rendered to advanced students (his declared target audience) and teachers of biblical Hebrew.

A select bibliography presents forty-three significant works that the
advanced student should consult. All but three (Driver's A Treatise on the Use of Tenses in Hebrew, Ewald's Syntax, and König's "Syntactische Excurs zu Alten Testament") have appeared since the third edition of Davidson's Syntax in 1901.

Nothing makes a good book better than useful indexes. Two such indexes make up the end matter. The "Index of Passages Referred to" has 6,480 entries as compared to 4,536 in the third edition. Such an increase is indicative of Gibson's expansions. The work also has an "Index of Subjects" that organizes topics under 168 headings (37 more than the same index in the third edition). The headings exhibit the revisions in terminology that modernizes the volume's vocabulary. One example of this revision in vocabulary is the adoption of QATAL and YIQTOL in place of "perfect" and "imperfect" (60). Another example would be the replacement of casus pendens by "extraposition" (180).

The volume's contents include: Syntax of the Pronoun, Syntax of the Noun and Nominal Clause, Syntax of the Verb and Its Object, Syntax of the Infinitive and Participle, Syntax of the Adverb and Adverbial Phrases and Clauses, and Syntax of the Sentence. It divides each of these areas into more detailed headings.

In "A Note on Case" (24-25) Gibson explains the abandoning of traditional case terminology used in the third edition. He mentions that Ugaritic studies contributed to a better understanding of the so-called locative ending and includes a remark on enclitic mem.

Gibson's explanation of the revised presentation of verb conjugations gives a smooth transition from the third edition (60). He greatly expands the treatment of the conjugations and provides the advanced student with a wealth of material. Some of the notable discussions here include the description of prose narrative (64-67, 70-71) and the improved treatment of the so-called precative perfect (69-70). Of special interest is the classification of YIQTOL by short and long forms (70-79). Twenty-five pages of carefully reworked grammatical description of the VAV with the verb (83-107) supplants the third edition's sixteen-page presentation.

A disappointment is the continuing lack of adequate discussion of the so-called futur instans (immediate future) and the periphrastic participle (the use of hyh with the participle) (cf. 137-38).

Other welcome improvements over the third edition include the treatment of syntax of the adverb and adverbial clauses (139-61) and the valuable section entitled "The Syntactic Role of Sentence Word-Order and of VAV " (164-66). The increased attention to stylistic elements in biblical Hebrew stands out in the treatment of chiastic sentences (171-72) and of asyndeton (179-80).

This volume has so much value that advanced students and teachers should be willing to bear the expense to possess it. Referring to it frequently will heighten the joy of biblical Hebrew studies.

Aubrey Malphurs has written in the area of church growth and church planting, and is no stranger to those involved in those disciplines.  He serves as president of Vision Ministries International and is chairman of the Field Education Department at Dallas Seminary.

Professor Malphurs has followed the church growth philosophies taught at Fuller Seminary and made popular in the Willow Creek and Saddleback Community Church models.  In Strategy 2000, he seeks to stress the need for churches to see the necessity of developing a strategy to do ministry if they intend to survive in a changing society.  Strategy 2000 is a book that lays out the steps whereby a church can develop a workable plan to accomplish church growth.

There is no question that churches need a strategy to do ministry, but it must be a biblical strategy if it is to have a biblical ministry.  Unfortunately, Malphurs is not always clear on what the biblical model for ministry is, and more often than not, ends up suggesting the Willow Creek model as the strategy for the next millennium.

The book is thought-provoking and does stress the importance of a strategy to do ministry.  It also becomes a good text in giving one an idea on how to develop a working strategy.


The author, the respected Professor of Old Testament at Knox Theological Seminary, has produced a popular book on Bible geography.  But his aspirations are higher than just a treatment of the geographic features.  He has sought to offer "an introductory overview of the geographical features of the land of the Bible, noting how those diverse elements affected Biblical history.  In addition, it points out the role certain features of the land have played in God's purposes in redemptive history" (3).

The book divides into well-conceived chapters covering the land
from "south to north" and from "west to east" as it gives specific physical features of the land and brief discussions on most of the major cities in various stages of Biblical history. In addition John D. Currid has added a small section on "Climate and Vegetation."

In terms of his first goal of providing an "introductory overview," the author has presented a very clear, non-technical set of descriptions that should help the novice. The work has a brief but helpful bibliography, as well as "place" and Scripture indexes. The most distressing feature to this reviewer, which spoils the volume almost beyond redemption, is the maps. It has nine maps (12, 17, 26, 43, 56, 65, 81, 912, 112), all of which suffer from poor graphic design and several of which contain outright errors. All the maps are poor greyscale renditions that make discerning the geographic features quite difficult. Only the map on p. 56 has any kind of legend to indicate what various symbols represent, and because of the greyscale printing, even those are difficult to discern. But beyond the artistic quality are several egregious errors. For example, the map on p. 17 locates Jericho differently from the one on p. 43; on p. 91, the inset map of Jerusalem has the Mount of Olives west of the Temple with the Old City of David misplaced as well; on p. 43, Mt. Nebo and the town of Heshbon are in improper relation, with the Heshbon site identified as more likely being Medeba.

In terms of providing a "biblical-theological guide," several other items are worthy of note. The author in several places identifies Solomon as the "messiah" in the sense that he totally fulfilled the land promises of God to Abraham (Gen 15:18; Exod 23:31) by the advancement of his kingdom (9, 19). Yet that assertion is unsupportable. Numbers 34:1-12 details the geographic extent of the Promised Land, which encompasses the region of Phoenicia, including Tyre, but during Solomon's reign Tyre was an independent nation (1 Kgs 5:1-12). Though Solomon's "economic" control may have stretched north to the Euphrates River, "economic" control is not the same as possession of the land.

The author, in keeping with his covenantal perspective, rejects a future millennial kingdom in which Christ personally rules in the land (140-43). That perspective forces him to see the Battle of Armageddon (Rev 16:16) as spiritual in nature and to conclude that "excessive literalness not suitable to the pattern of Scripture's own self-interpretation" (34, 104) mitigates against viewing this as a literal and future event.

In the final chapter, Robertson lists five perspectives on the land: The Crusader Perspective, The Pilgrim Perspective, The Zionist Perspective, The Millennial Perspective, and the Renewal Perspective. However, his categories are arbitrary and ill-defined, the comments for three of the five being less than a page, hardly enough space to present a "perspective." He reserves the more lengthy descriptions for the Zionist and Millennial perspectives, ones that he seeks to discredit.
In spite of several good points in this book, the items noted above preclude recommending it. Readers would be better served to obtain a standard Bible atlas with notes, such as The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands by Barry J. Beitzel (Moody Press, 1985).


Tryon's book argues for neighborhood witness that asks non-Christians what they need prayer for, checks back with them often, and remains available to them with caring sensitivity. The writer, a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary in 1985, has the back cover endorsement of former Dallas president Donald C. Campbell.

The author has tried his method extensively with fine success in leading people to Christ. He reasons that something is wrong with an evangelical process of witness that confronts the unsaved in a way that they interpret as hostile or a put-down, or feel uneasy about. It also causes those witnessing to see little positive response, makes them feel ill at ease and not useful, and discourages further effort. As an example, he cites an all-out blitz on a local area in personal presence or by phone that has stirred resentment and shown no continuing Christian follow-up that proves sincerity.

A catalyst for Tryon is 1 Tim 2:1-8 (10) which points to prayer. A Christian shows interest by offering to pray, then comes back and says, "I have been praying for your dad. How's he doing?" Tryon calls this "Praying For You Evangelism" (11). Only a few of hundreds refused an offer to pray. He feels his method is better than much witnessing that starts with an interest such as sports, cars, or gardening, and delays reference to spiritual things. The focus, too, is not on a reasoning technique that causes some Christians to go into a freeze of fear, but on prayer that any believer can implement with care.

Chapters 5-8 conclude by showing how to put Praying for You (PFY) into action. They give specific examples of what to say and focus on looking for areas of stress and crisis in the lives of the unsaved. This produces a sensitive approach that is helpful. Examples of these are marriage, a baby, and a new opportunity, such as a job promotion. Tryon emphasizes careful listening in order to spot concerns or problems. He advises praying every day for the people, keeping a prayer diary (72, 125-28), going to the people for updates repeatedly, and looking for ways to show kindness, to talk about common interests, or to witness directly.

Chapter 6 offers strategy for introducing PFY into a local church by
training leaders and developing prayer fellowships. Chapter 7 delves into practicing the method as a family and getting it into parachurch groups to promote witness there.

The book is stimulating in offering a plan to be used in love to establish rapport and win people. It is also helpful in pointing out problems with assumptions that discourage some Christians, such as advocating an approach that works for one but not for another or using a complicated, lengthy system of argumentation.

Other points of the book will sound arbitrary to some. One example is Tryon’s criticism of Friendship Evangelism whenever the agenda is friendship only to get a decision, i.e., to "use" people (30). But this problem can also beset PFY if one’s motive is askew; good or bad motives can accompany any method. He also reasons that PFY is caring, implying that other methods are not, but Friendship Evangelism or other kinds of witness can be caring too. He leaves the impression that PFY is open and above-board in getting right to a spiritual show of care, whereas some witness begins with a common topic such as gardening. But even PFY has an ultimate agenda, just as other methods do, and winsome witnesses often move quite quickly from sports to analogies in the spiritual realm and can be above board too. Tryon reasons that any Christian can pray, yet why cannot the same logic apply to using other methods of initial contact? Every believer ought to be obedient to tell what God has done for him, to explain the simple gospel, to find answers to most questions asked and get back to a person, and to seize occasions to show love.

Pros and cons considered, the book is a simple, readily usable stimulation for more faithful witness. Scholars, pastoral staff, and lay people alike can benefit from interacting with it.


Into the dark days of confusion about modern translations, a light of clarification has shone. James R. White has produced a balanced, thorough, clear, and uplifting book. *The King James Only Controversy* will serve many useful purposes. It will build confidence in modern Greek texts for those who suspect the plethora of twentieth-century translations. Those who are unfamiliar with issues of textual criticism will find a friendly presentation of crucial issues. Anyone confused by the King James Version Only (hereafter KJV Only) position will find a fair
representation of the position, along with a persuasive refutation of its arguments. If any voice can pierce the high decibel noise of rhetoric, ad hominem arguments, and fomenting hatred that pervade the dialogue over this issue, James R. White's plea stands the best chance.

White simplifies the issue in chap. 1 by classifying KJV Only advocates: those who simply prefer the KJV as their translation, those who believe that the original language texts used by the KJV translators were the most accurate, those who insist that the Textus Receptus has been supernaturally preserved or inspired, those who believe the KJV itself, as an English translation, is inspired, and those who believe that the KJV is new, inerrant revelation. It is crucial to know where someone falls on this spectrum before pursuing further discussion with that person.

In chap. 2, White humorously shows how the arguments used against modern translations by KJV Only proponents are the same as the ones used against Jerome because of his Latin Vulgate translation and Erasmus because of his Greek NT, the one that became essentially the Textus Receptus. His argument shows how the real issue is man's resistance to changing his tradition rather than the accuracy of a Bible translation.

Chapter 3 takes a scholar's knowledge of ancient manuscripts, text-types, and textual variants, condenses it, and leads the reader by the hand through a very understandable discussion of crucial issues. He answers such questions as: "What were the original languages of the Scriptures?", "What are the disputed textual issues?", "What are the differences in the translations?", "What is textual criticism?", "How did we get our Bible?", "Why do some manuscripts differ from others?", and "How do we tell which text is the best?" After building this foundation, chap. 4 uses this information to show that the KJV is simply a translation into English, and thus not infallible or inerrant in itself. KJV Only defenders usually oppose the use of textual criticism, yet the genesis and development of the Textus Receptus came about as Erasmus used a form of textual criticism to arrive at his Greek text. They also oppose marginal notations, yet the translators of the KJV attested to their uncertainties through substantial textual notes and alternate readings that most editions of the 1611 KJV do not retain. Most striking are White's discussion of the rules that governed the translation of the KJV and quotes from the translators themselves which put them directly at odds with present-day KJV Only advocates.

In order for the reader to understand the controversy more fully, White exposes him to the leading adherents of the KJV Only position in chap. 5, thus setting the stage for a comparison of the KJV with modern translations. Then chaps. 6 and 7 can present translational and textual differences between the basic texts behind the two types of renderings and prove that no one has changed, deleted from, added to, or altered the Word of God. No grand conspiracies involving an "Alexandrian cult" exist. Instead, modern translators have gone to great lengths to preserve
and pass on God's Word accurately for future generations. The two chapters deal convincingly with many of the disputed passages.

Rounding out his argument, White uses chapter eight to dispel those worst-of-all attacks, that modern translations diminish the deity of Christ. He shows that an examination of the facts reveal that modern versions often translate valuable passages proclaiming the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ more clearly than the KJV. Having no desire to bash the KJV, however, White cautiously ends his discussion in chap. 9 by pointing out indisputable errors in the KJV, a point that is an insurmountable obstacle for the KJV Only camp.

All that is left is to answer a few questions and provide an appendix for those who desire to probe more deeply into the issue. White does both well.

One of the greatest strengths of the book is White's clear history and presentation of textual criticism and related issues. His resource of more than a hundred key texts connected with the debate—many with a thorough discussion—is indispensable. At least equal to those, however, is White's gracious tone even toward those who have called him a heretic. Nevertheless, most satisfying to this reviewer was White's apt exposé and correction of Gail Riplinger's *New Age Bible Versions*.

As valuable as *The King James Only Controversy* is, some cautions are needed. One may get the impression that all modern translations are equal in their representation of original manuscripts. Since White is primarily interested in defending the modern Greek manuscripts against the attacks of KJV Onlyism, he often places the NIV, NASB, NKJV, RSV, etc., on an equal footing, making no distinction between possible theological biases or methods of translation. He does discuss the difference between formal and dynamic equivalence in translation, but does not warn the reader of the dangers inherent in dynamic equivalence. Translators' hermeneutics very heavily influence renderings in that type of translation, making them more susceptible to error.

In short, though providing much vital information about the controversy, White never answers the question posed on the back cover, "Is your Bible translation reliable?" Perhaps a chapter discussing the various translations and what is important in a translation would have given a more complete answer.

*The King James Only Controversy* will long serve as a trusted companion for scholar, pastor, and layman alike. White has accomplished a work that is refreshingly easy to read, yet complete in its persuasive answers to KJV Only arguments. Christians owe this servant of God a great debt of gratitude.