

THE HISTORY OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING

James F. Stitzinger
Associate Professor of Historical Theology
The Master's Seminary

The history of expository preaching begins with an understanding of the revelatory and explanatory preaching recorded in Scripture. Legitimate preaching in the Church Age continues the expository preaching begun in the Bible. History unveils a limited but rich ongoing legacy of biblical expositors up to the present day. These men who poured their lives into expounding God's Word command careful attention from today's biblical expositors.

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The rich heritage of expository preaching in church history stems from a relatively small number of men who have committed themselves to this type of preaching.¹ These men, devoted to expounding the Scriptures, are an encouragement and a challenge because of the profound results of their ministries. Dargan notes that "preaching is an essential part and a distinguishing feature of

¹No work in the English language is devoted specifically to the history of expository preaching. This includes dissertations, definitive monographs, and surveys. The reader is referred to the works of Edwin Charles Dargan, *A History of Preaching* (2 vols., reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968); Ralph G. Turnbull, *A History of Preaching, Volume III* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974); and Frederick Roth Webber, *A History of Preaching in Britain and America* (3 vols.; Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1957), for their indexed references to expository preaching. Warren W. Wiersbe and Lloyd M. Perry, *The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching and Preachers* (Chicago: Moody, 1984) have a limited treatment of the history of expository preaching. See also Willaim Toohey and William D. Thompson, *Recent Homiletical Thought, A Bibliography, 1935-1965* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1967) and A. Duane Litfin and Haddon W. Robinson, *Recent Homiletical Thought, An Annotated Bibliography, Volume 2, 1966-1979* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).

Christianity, and accordingly the larger history of general religious movements includes that of preaching."² He further observes that "a reciprocal influence must be reckoned with: the movement has sometimes produced the preaching, the preaching sometimes the movement, but most commonly they have each helped the other."³ This profound influence of preaching in general applies especially to expository preaching. It has been a significant factor in the history of the church, earning a role as a worthy topic of study.

The apostle Paul spoke of his preaching as "not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4). In establishing the pattern for the church, he instructed Timothy to "preach the Word" (2 Tim 4:2). God has used the faithful efforts of expository preachers of His Word to bring honor to His name and to increase the faith of His saints (1 Cor 2:5) throughout history.

²Dargan, *History* 1:12. See also Edwin Charles Dargan, *The Art of Preaching in the Light of Its History* (Nashville: Southern Baptist Convention, 1922) 14-15.

³Ibid.

The *history* of expository preaching is a principal division of the overall science and art of homiletics.⁴ In emphasizing the importance of such a study, Garvie wrote the following over seventy years ago:

The best approach to any subject is by its history; if a science, we must learn all we can about previous discoveries; if an art, about previous methods. The Christian preacher will be better equipped for his task today, if he has some knowledge of how men have preached in former days. . . . While in preaching even, as in human activities of less moment, there are fashions of the hour which it would be folly to reproduce when they have fallen out of date, yet there are abiding aims and rules of preaching, which must be taken account of in each age, and which can be learned by the study of the preaching of the past. Admiration of the great and the good, even without imitation, makes a man wiser and better; the Christian preacher will enrich his own manhood by intimacy with those in whose worthy succession he stands. . . . He will be least in bondage to the past, who is least ignorant of it, and he will be most master of the present whose knowledge is least confined to it.⁵

Indeed great value results from understanding those who have given themselves to a life of biblical exposition. The current generation whose history has yet to be written can learn much from those whose history is now complete. Time yet remains to change, refocus, improve, and be moved to greater accomplishment. An exposure to the history of expository preaching furnishes a context, a reference point, and a basis for distinguishing the transient from the eternal. It will motivate a person toward and increase his confidence in faithful Bible exposition. In the words of Stott, he will glimpse "the glory of preaching through the eyes of its champions in every century."⁶ The history of expository preaching has an abundance of principles and lessons to teach those who study it.

THE BIBLICAL PERIOD

⁴R. W. Dale, *Nine Lectures on Preaching* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890) 93-94.

⁵Alfred Ernest Garvie, *The Christian Preacher* (London: T. & T. Clark, 1920) 22.

⁶John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 47.

Historical study of expository preaching must begin with a proper understanding of the record of preaching in Scripture. Preaching in the Bible is in two basic forms: revelatory preaching and explanatory preaching. All post-biblical preaching has the backdrop of the preaching recorded in Scripture and must trace its roots to this source.

Those originally charged with the task of proclaiming God's Word revealed God to man as they spoke. This Word from God came through different instruments, including the prophet who spoke a divine word from the Lord, the priest who spoke the law, and the sage who offered wise counsel (Jer 18:18). The OT is replete with the utterances of these revelatory preachers who accurately conveyed God's message to men.

One of the earliest examples of revelatory preaching is the final charge of Moses to Israel (Deuteronomy 31-33). This address was delivered with tremendous ability and clarity by one who once described himself as "slow of speech and slow of tongue" (Exod 4:10). In his two farewell addresses Joshua offered profound words of revelation and explanation to his people (Josh 23:2-16; 24:2-27). Broadus points to the "finely rhetorical use of historical narrative, animated dialogue, and imaginative and passionate appeal"⁷ in these messages from the Lord.

David and Solomon gave profound examples of revelatory and explanatory preaching of the Word in poetic form. David devoted many psalms to revealing the nature and character of God (Psalms 8, 9, 16, 22, 24, 34, 68, 75, 89, 93, 105, 110, 119, 136, 145). An equal number explained God to the people (Psalms 1, 23, 32, 37, 40, 46, 50, 66, 78, 92, 100, 104, 106, 118, 128, 150; see esp. 32:8). The Psalms provide an extraordinary wealth of instruction about the nature and content of preaching.⁸

Solomon used proverbs to provide instruction (Prov 1:2-3) and

⁷John A Broadus, *Lectures on the History of Preaching* (New York: Sheldon, 1886) 7.

⁸See Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David* (3 vols., reprint; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966). Note his "hints to preachers" under each Psalm.

taught through an address at the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 6:1-42). "The Preacher" of Eccl 12:9-10 also gave an explanatory discourse on the philosophy of life in which he sought by wisdom (Eccl 1:12-13) to deliver "words of truth correctly" (12:10) and was eminently successful.

Perhaps the greatest examples of OT preaching are found among the prophets. An examination of their messages reveals both revelation and explanation. Broadus points to this fact and its relevance for today's preachers:

Alas! that the great majority of the Christian world so early lost sight of the fact, and that many are still so slow, even among Protestants, to perceive it clearly. The NT minister is not a priest, a *cleric* except in so far as all Christians are a priesthood he is a *teacher* in God's name, even as the OT prophet was a teacher, with the peculiar advantage of being inspired. You also know that it was by no means the main business of the prophets to predict the future . . . but that they spoke of the past and the present, often much more than of the future.⁹

Prophetic messages were not only predictions of the future (e.g., Isaiah 9, 53), but often called the people to repentance and obedience (Isa 1:2-31) or offered the people an explanation of the Word of the Lord (Isaiah 6). "The prophets were preachers."¹⁰ A number of passages in which explanation was the focus and purpose of the messages include Josiah's command to repair and reform the house of the Lord (2 Kings 22-23); Ezra's study and teaching of the law (Ezra 7:10); Nehemiah's comments about the law (Neh 8:1-8); and Daniel's explanation of his vision of seventy weeks (Daniel 9). Prophets who spoke of their work as instruction are Samuel (1 Sam 12:23), Isaiah (Isa 30:9), Jeremiah (Jer 32:33), and Malachi (Mal 2:9). John the Baptist has a special place because he blends fearless determination with deep humility (John 1; 3:22-30) as he "bore witness" to Christ and called men to repentance and faith (Mark 1:4; John 1:15, 29).

What is clear in the OT is that after a body of revelation had

⁹Broadus, *Lectures* 11.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 12. See also Leon J. Wood, *The Prophets of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979) 94.

been given, the people would return to it with a need to have it expounded or explained. This was particularly true of the hard-to-understand portions. OT preaching provided necessary clarification.

A history of Bible expositors must include Christ, who is both the model of preaching and the message preached. Jesus came preaching (Mark 1:14) and teaching (Matt 9:35). He was quite young when He began to display his understanding of Scripture (Luke 2:46-50). As with earlier spokesmen, His preaching included both revelation and explanation. The sermons of Christ, such as in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and the one at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30), are models of explanation and exposition for all time. In Matthew 5 Jesus said, "You have heard that it hath been said . . . but I say to you. . . ." In so doing He instructed and enlightened His listeners and amplified the text, much to the people's amazement. He stands head and shoulders above all who share the title "preacher" with him.¹¹ Many qualities of Christ's teaching and preaching can be quickly identified. Among them are the following: (1) He spoke with authority (Matt 7:29); (2) He made careful use of other Scriptures in His explanations; (3) He lived out what he taught; (4) He taught simply to adapt to the common man (Mark 12:37); and (5) His teaching was often controversial (Matt 10:35-37). To be understood properly, Christ must be seen "not as a scientific lecturer but as a *preacher*, a preacher for the most part to the common people, an open-air preacher, addressing restless and mainly unsympathizing crowds."¹² He taught His listeners the truth and explained it to them in simple but profound words. Some were confounded (Luke 4:28) while others rejoiced (Matt 15:15). Today's expository preacher should model his ministry after the expositional work of Christ. He should study His method carefully, "not as an example to be slavishly imitated, but as an ideal to

¹¹Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Lord of Glory* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974) 8-9. See also H. E. W. Turner, *Jesus Master and Lord* (London: Mowbray, 1954) 129-55.; Robert A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount, a Foundation for Understanding* (Waco: Word, 1982) 43-46.

¹²*Ibid.*, 33-34.

be freely realized."¹³ The teaching of Christ shows that exposition can take various forms, as long as it is faithful to the distinct purpose of explication of Scripture.

The preaching of the apostles and other early church leaders contributes significantly to the history of expository preaching. The messages of Peter (Acts 2:14-36), Stephen (Acts 7:2-53), Paul (Acts 17:16-31), and James (Acts 15:14-21) have elements of both revelatory and explanatory preaching. The epistles are, for the most part, written expositions designed to teach various lessons. As Barclay points out,

Paul's letters are sermons far more than they are theological treatises. It is with immediate situations that they deal. They are sermons even in the sense that they were spoken rather than written. They were not carefully written out by someone sitting at a desk; they were poured out by someone striding up and down a room as he dictated, seeing all the time in his mind's eye the people to whom they were to be sent. Their torrential style, their cataract of thought, their involved sentences all bear the mark of the spoken rather than of the written word.¹⁴

Paul in particular gave his life to preaching Christ (1 Cor 1:23; 2:2; 2 Cor 4:5) to reveal who He was (Rom 1:18; 1 Cor 2:10; Eph 3:5) and to explain Him to people (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11, 17; 1 Thess 4:1; 2 Thess 3:14; 1 Tim 1:5). A careful study of this apostle as a teacher and expository preacher of Christ yields deep insights regarding that preaching.¹⁵ As Broadus said of Paul, "Thousands have unconsciously learned from him how to preach. And how much richer and more complete the lesson may be if we will apply ourselves to it consciously and thoughtfully."¹⁶

¹³Garvie, *Christian Preacher* 43.

¹⁴William Barclay, "A Comparison of Paul's Missionary Preaching and Preaching to the Church," *Apostolic History and the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) 170.

¹⁵See Benjamin B. Warfield, "The Christ that Paul Preached," *The Person and Work of Christ* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1970) 73-90; R. H. Mounce, *The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960); Ralph Martin, *Worship in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 66-71.

¹⁶Broadus, *History* 40.

Paul told Timothy to "preach the Word" (2 Tim 4:2), to "teach and preach these principles" (1 Tim 6:2), and to "instruct" (1 Tim 6:17; cf. also 1 Thess 5:15). Revelatory preaching was not involved here. While earlier preachers of Scripture gave both revelatory and explanatory messages, the "Timothys" sent out by them were to concentrate on explanations, expositing the Word to people who needed to understand the truth (1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 2:15; 4:2-5). As the NT era drew to a close, the work of biblical preachers became that of explanation only rather than of revelation and explanation.

The preaching in the Bible mandates *only one biblical response* for the post-biblical age: continue to explain and exposit the message now fully revealed (Heb 1:1-13). *All preaching must be expository preaching* if it is to conform to the pattern of Scripture. It is an extension of the explanatory or expositional dimension of preaching by OT and NT preachers.

Since exposition is rooted in Scripture, a study of its history in the church is against this background. A commitment to expository preaching as well as the quest to identify the thread of expositors throughout church history is possible only in light of preaching as seen in the Bible.

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 100-476

The rapid deterioration of primitive Christianity has been well documented.¹⁷ A lack of expository preaching in the post-apostolic period is an evidence of this, but it is not the only problem. The ordinance of believer's baptism rapidly turned to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The Lord's Supper shifted from being a

¹⁷William R. Estep, "A Believing People: Historical Background," *The Concept of the Believers' Church* (Scottsdale: Herald 1969) 35-58; Franklin Hamlin Littell, *The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism* (New York: Macmillan, 1964); Earl D. Radmacher, *The Nature of the Church* (Portland: Western Baptist, 1972); Johannes Warns, *Original Christian Baptism* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1962); E. C. Whitaker, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy* (London: SPCK, 1970); Kurt Aland, *Did the Early Church Baptize Infants?* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963); Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster: Dacre, 1945); J. B. Lightfoot, *The Christian Ministry* (New York: Whittaker, 1879).

memorial for believers to being viewed widely as a sacrament conveying saving grace. Christian leadership rapidly changed from the offices of elder and deacon to sacerdotalism with the rise of the "bishop" along with his "apostolic succession." One of the major causes of deterioration was the importation of Greek philosophy into Christian thinking by the Church Fathers. This attempted "integration" resulted in a complete erosion of biblical theology in the perspectives of many of the Fathers. Concerning this shift, Hatch writes,

It is impossible for any one, whether he be a student of history or no, to fail to notice a difference of both form and content between the Sermon on the Mount and the Nicene Creed. The Sermon on the Mount is the promulgation of a new law of conduct; it assumes beliefs rather than formulates them; the theological conceptions which underlie it belong to the ethical rather than the speculative side of theology; metaphysics are wholly absent. The Nicene Creed is a statement partly of historical facts and partly of dogmatic inferences; the metaphysical terms which it contains would probably have been unintelligible to the first disciples; ethics have no place in it. The one belongs to a world of Syrian peasants, the other to a world of Greek philosophers.¹⁸

The three products of the Greek mind were abstract metaphysics (philosophy), logic (the principles of reasoning), and rhetoric (the study of literature and literary expression). The addition of Greek rhetoric into Christianity brought great emphasis on the cultivation of literary expression and quasi-forensic argument.¹⁹ "Its preachers preached not because they were bursting with truths which could not help finding expression, but because they were masters of fine phrases and lived in an age in which fine phrases had a value."²⁰

A significant indication of this adaptation is the turning away from preaching, teaching, and the ministry of the Word. Into its place moved the "art of the sermon" that was more involved with rhetoric

¹⁸Edwin Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1914) 1.

¹⁹Ibid., 30.

²⁰Ibid., 113-14.

than with truth.²¹ The Greek "sermon" concept fast became a significant tradition. In his well written article, Craig concludes that the "sermon" was the result of Syncretism`the fusion of the biblical necessity of teaching with the unbiblical Greek notion of rhetoric."²² He continues,

These sermons were not just a setting forth of Greek-influenced theology. They were in fact external copies of the rhetorical manner of the most popular Greek philosophers of the day. *It is not just what was said in the sermon, it is that the entire presentation and format was carried over from paganism.*²³

The same secularization of Christian preaching has dominated the church until the present day. The committed biblical expositor has often been the exception rather than the rule. Thus expositors mentioned here deserve special attention as representatives of a rare and noble group.

The first four hundred years of the church produced many preachers but few true expositors. The Apostolic Fathers (ca. 96-125) followed a typological method of interpretation in their works. Second-century Fathers (ca. 125-190) such as Justin Martyr and Tertullian composed apologies in defense of Christianity. Third-century Fathers (ca. 190-250) such as Cyprian and Origen were polemicists, arguing against false doctrine. Origen's utilization of an allegorical method of interpretation stimulated an increased interest in exposition of the text. Unfortunately, his allegorizing was detrimental to true biblical exegesis and reduced interest in exposition among his followers in the Alexandrian School.

In the fourth century (ca. 325-460), a significant group engaged in serious Bible study. Six notable preachers in this period were Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, John Chrysostom, and Ambrose. In addition to his theological writings Augustine (354-430) produced over six hundred sermons. Among his works

²¹ Kevin Craig, "Is the 'Sermon' Concept Biblical?" *Searching Together* 15 (Spring/Summer 1968) 25.

²²Ibid., 28. See also Lawrence Wills, "The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity," *HTR* 77 (1984) 296-99.

²³Ibid., 24.

were expositions of the Psalms, 1 John, and the Gospels and homilies on John's Gospel. Some of his sermons could be described as exegetical,²⁴ but his interpretations were usually allegorical and imaginative, as was true of others of his day.

The most significant exception in the early period was John Chrysostom (347-407). Along with Theodore of Mopsuestia, he headed the Antiochene school of interpretation, which rejected the allegorical approach. In sharp contrast to his contemporaries, Chrysostom preached verse-by-verse and word-by-word expositions on many books of the Bible. Included were homilies on Genesis, Psalms, Matthew, John, Acts, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and the other Pauline epistles.²⁵ He has been called "golden-mouthed" because of his great ability to attract an audience and hold them spellbound throughout a sermon. Schaff remarks, "He is generally and justly regarded as the greatest pulpit orator of the Greek church. Nor has he any superior or equal among the Latin Fathers. He remains to this day a model for the preacher."²⁶

Chrysostom's preaching was characterized by simple Bible exposition,²⁷ fearless proclamation of morality rather than dogma, deep earnestness, and application directed to the common man. This powerful expositor once said, "You praise what I have said, and receive my exhortation with tumults of applause; but show your approbation by obedience; that is the only praise I seek."²⁸

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD, 476-1500

This period was perhaps the sparsest for expository preaching. Philip describes it as follows:

²⁴G. Wright Doyle, "Augustine's Sermonic Method," *WTJ* 39 (Spring 1977) 215, 234-35.

²⁵Some have concluded that he wrote commentaries on the entire Bible. E.g., Philip Schaff, *A Selected Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (reprint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983) 9:17.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 22.

²⁷He emphasized grammar and history rather than the allegory of the school of Alexandria.

²⁸Schaff, *Selected Library* 9:22.

The influence of the scholastic theology of the universities, which from the beginning were clerical institutions, took over, and the combination of theology and philosophy, and the application of Aristotelian logic to the interpretation of Scripture, with its speculation, analysis and ratiocination imposed an intolerable incubus upon preaching which virtually destroyed it as an effective means for communicating the gospel. It is not surprising, therefore, that hardly any counterparts to the comprehensive patristic expositions of complete books of the Bible are to be found in medieval ecclesiastical literature.²⁹

Late medieval sermons were characterized by allegorical interpretation with its faulty exegetical method just as employed by the interpreters of Homer and introduced into the church by the second and third century fathers.³⁰ While the period produced some famous preachers such as Peter the Hermit, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Thomas Aquinas, none handled the text in an expository fashion. Faint hints of Bible exposition have been detected among independent groups such as the Paulicians, Waldenses, and Albigenses, despite the fact that these groups are commonly dismissed as "heretics."³¹

As the medieval period drew to a close, several pre-Reformation leaders rekindled the fire of expository preaching. Among these was John Wyclif (1330-1384) who was deeply concerned about proclaiming the Word. He denounced the preaching of his day, stating that all sermons that did not treat the Scripture should be rejected.³² William Tyndale (1494-1536) held a similar opinion. A glimpse his preaching is reflected in this comment on methods of interpretation in his day:

They divide scripture into four senses, the literal, typological, allegorical, and

²⁹James Philip, "Preaching in History," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 8 (1984) 300.

³⁰Erwin R. Gane, "Late-Medieval Sermons in England: an Analysis of Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Preaching," *AUSS* 20 (1982) 201, see also 202-3.

³¹Dargan, *History* 218; Garvie, *Christian Preacher* 108; Peter Allix, *Some Remarks upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of Piedmont* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1821); Peter Allix, *Remarks upon the Ecclesiastical History of the Ancient Churches of the Albigenses* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1821); F. C. Conybeare, *The Key of Truth, a Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1898).

³²John Stacey, "John Wyclif and the Ministry of the Word," *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review* 190 (1965) 53.

analogical. The literal sense is become nothing at all: for the pope hath taken it clean away, and hath made it his possession. He hath partly locked it up with the false and counterfeited keys of his traditions, ceremonies, and feigned lies; and driveth men from it with violence of sword: for no man dare abide by the literal sense of the text, but under a protestation, 'If it shall please the pope.' . . . Thou shalt understand, therefore, that the scriptures hath but one sense, which is the literal sense. And that literal sense is the root and ground of all, and the anchor that never faileth, whereunto if thou cleave, thou canst never err or go out of the way.³³

Others including John Huss (1373-1415) and Girolamo Savonarola (1452-98) became students and preachers of Scripture.³⁴ Unwittingly, humanists like Erasmus (1469-1536) and John Colet (1466-1519) helped lay the groundwork for expositional preaching to come.³⁵ Their emphasis upon the publishing and study of original documents such as the Greek NT had this effect. Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum* (1516) and *Novum Testamentum* (1518) led to an intense study of Scripture. Despite their contributions, however, none of the humanists became faithful expositors. Instead, they provided a basis for the revival of expository preaching during the Reformation.

THE REFORMATION PERIOD, 1500-1648

The Reformation was built on the foundation of the centrality of the Bible. Principles such as *Sola Deo Gloria* ("glory to God alone"), *Sola Gratia* ("by grace alone"), and especially *Sola Scriptura* ("the Scriptures alone") resulted from the study and teaching of the Word. *Sola Scriptura* meant "the freedom of Scripture to rule as God's word in the church, disentangled from papal and ecclesiastical magisterium and tradition."³⁶ It viewed the Word as supreme over tradition and the

³³William Tyndale, "The Obedience of a Christian Man," *Doctrinal Treatises* (Cambridge, 1848) 303-4. See also J. W. Blech, *Preaching in England in the Late Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1964) 1-48.

³⁴James M. Hoppin, *Homiletics* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883) 123-24.

³⁵Frederick Roth Webber, *A History of Preaching in Britain and America* (3 vols; Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1957) 1:150.

³⁶David F. Wright, "Protestantism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (ed. by

sacraments. Several important Reformation leaders are noteworthy.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) spoke of the supreme importance of the Word when he wrote, "The Word comes first, and with the Word the Spirit breathes upon my heart so that I believe."³⁷ He also noted,

Let us then consider it certain and conclusively established that the soul can do without all things except the Word of God, and that where this is not there is no help for the soul in anything else whatever. But if it has the Word it is rich and lacks nothing, since this Word is the Word of life, of truth, of light, of peace, of righteousness, of salvation, of joy, of liberty, of wisdom, of power, of grace, of glory, and of every blessing beyond our power to estimate.³⁸

Luther became a believer through his efforts to learn and expound the Scriptures.³⁹ His words were, "I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but one expression, 'the justice of God.'" After his conversion he added, "The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the 'Justice of God' had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love."⁴⁰

Luther proved himself an expositor by producing commentaries in Genesis, Psalms, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, and 2 Peter and Jude as well as sermons on the Gospels and Epistles. Luther stressed the importance of preaching to the simple, not the learned,⁴¹ the importance of humility in the study of the Bible,⁴² and that preaching should be simple, not erudite.⁴³ He also spoke of "How to Preach in Three Brief Steps": "First, you must learn to go up to the pulpit. Second, you must know that you should stay there for a time. Third, you must learn to get down again."⁴⁴ In his famous reply before the

Walter A. Elwell; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 889.

³⁷Martin Luther, *Table Talk* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967) 63.

³⁸Martin Luther, "A Treatise on Christian Liberty," *Three Treatises* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1947) 23.

³⁹Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950) 60-67.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 65.

⁴¹Luther, *Table Talk* 235.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 378-79.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 382-84.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 393.

Diet of Worms, he said, "My conscience is captive to the Word of God."⁴⁵ He later said, "I simply taught, preached, wrote God's Word: otherwise I did nothing. . . . The Word did it all."⁴⁶

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) also studied the Bible carefully in its original languages and applied to the text his "considerable linguistic and exegetical abilities."⁴⁷ He set about to preach,

simple didactic Bible lessons, moving to more difficult subjects only after his hearers . . . had adequate instruction. His chief objective in preaching was to repeat the Word of God unabbreviated and unadulterated, clearly setting out the Law and the Prophets, vehemently calling his hearers to repentance and, with the gentleness of a shepherd, guiding the community to salvation. The actions of the preacher should correspond to his words, and he must be prepared, if necessary, to accept a martyr's fate.⁴⁸

Influenced by Zwingli was the Anabaptist, Balthasar Hubmaier (1485-1528), who despite heavy persecution produced writings filled with the exposition of Scripture.⁴⁹

The most significant expositor of the Reformation era was John Calvin (1509-1564). In the first edition of his *Institutes*, concerning ministers Calvin wrote, "Their whole task is limited to the ministry of God's Word, their whole wisdom to the knowledge of his Word: their whole eloquence, to its proclamation."⁵⁰ In 1559 he added other relevant comments: "Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard . . . there it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists, cf Eph 2:20," "the pure ministry of the Word," and words about the importance of "the ministry of the Word and sacraments, and how far our reverence for it should go, that it may be to us a perpetual token

⁴⁵R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1985) 111-12.

⁴⁶As quoted by Ernest Gordon Rupp, *Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms 1521* (London: SCM, 1951) 99.

⁴⁷G. R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1976) 92.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁹H. Wayne Pitkin and John H. Yoder, trans. and ed., *Balthasar Hubmaier, Theologian of Anabaptism* (Scottsdale: Herald, 1989).

⁵⁰John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (trans. and annotated by Ford Lewis Battles, reprint of 1536 ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 195.

by which to distinguish the church."⁵¹

In the preface to his Romans Commentary Calvin stated "that lucid brevity constituted the particular virtue of an interpreter."⁵² Parker summarizes Calvin's method as follows: "The important thing is that the Scripture should be understood and explained, how it is explained is secondary."⁵³ Calvin was most concerned with clarity and brevity in declaring, "The chief virtue of the interpreter lies in clear brevity."⁵⁴ He described the paramount duty of the expositor: "Since it is almost his only task to unfold the mind of the writer whom he has undertaken to expound, he misses his mark, or at least strays outside his limits, by the extent to which he leads his readers away from the meaning of his author."⁵⁵ He delineates the preacher's task of speaking for God in his comment on Isa 55:11: "The Word goeth out of the mouth of God in such a manner that it likewise 'goeth out of the mouth' of men; for God does not speak openly from heaven, but employs men as his instruments, that by their agency he may make known his will."⁵⁶

The evidence of his sincerity was a life spent expounding God's Word. As senior minister of Geneva, Calvin preached twice each Sunday and every weekday on alternating weeks from 1549 until his death in 1564. He preached over two thousand sermons from the OT alone. He spent a year expositing Job and three years in Isaiah.⁵⁷ In addition to his preaching were lectures on the Bible that led to his

⁵¹John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (*The Library of Christian Classics*, 2 vols., ed. by John T. McNeill, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960) 4:1:9 (2, 1023); 4:1:12 (2, 1025); 4:2:1 (2, 1041).

⁵²John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians* (ed. by David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) 1.

⁵³T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971) 50.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 51.

⁵⁵Calvin, *Romans* 1.

⁵⁶John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah* (22 vols., reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981) 8, 2, 172. See also Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957) 82-95.

⁵⁷Marvin Anderson, "John Calvin: Biblical Preacher (1539-1564)," *SJT* 42 (1989) 173.

biblical commentaries.⁵⁸ Said Calvin, "Let us not take it into our heads either to seek out God anywhere else than in his Sacred Word, or to think anything about him that is not prompted by his Word, or to speak anything that is not taken from that Word."⁵⁹

Calvin influenced many of his contemporaries, including Henry Bullinger (1504-1575)⁶⁰ and John Knox (1513-1572).⁶¹ Knox argued that he was called to "instruct . . . by tongue and lively voice in these most corrupt days [rather] than compose books for the age to come."⁶² Several Anglican preachers, including John Jewel (1522-1571)⁶³, Hugh Latimer (1485-1555)⁶⁴, and Thomas Cartwright (1535-1603) also practiced expositional preaching.⁶⁵

THE MODERN PERIOD, 1649-PRESENT

The post-Reformation era produced a number of important expositors, a number of them being Puritans. More than anything else, the Puritans were preachers. Preaching was so central that many of the Puritans emphasized it by moving their pulpit to the center of the church so as to focus attention on the pulpit's open Bible instead of on an altar.⁶⁶ To the Puritans, "true preaching is the exposition of the Word of God. It is not a mere exposition of the dogma or the teaching of the church. . . . Preaching, they said, is the exposition of the Word of

⁵⁸Ibid., 176.

⁵⁹Calvin, *Institutes in Christian Classics*, 1:13:21 (1, 146).

⁶⁰Heiko A. Oberman, "Preaching and the Word in the Reformation" *TToday* 18 (1961) 26.

⁶¹John Knox, *The Works of John Knox* (6 vols.; Edinburg: Thin, 1845), also Dargan, *History* 1:513-14.

⁶²Clyde E. Fant and William M. Pinson, *Luther to Massillon 1483-1742 (20 Centuries of Great Preaching*, 13 vols.; Waco: Word, 1971) 2:189.

⁶³Erwin R. Gane, "The Exegetical Methods of Some Sixteenth-Century Anglican Preachers: Latimer, Jewel, Hooker, and Andrewes," *AUSS* 17 (1979) 33.

⁶⁴Ibid., 32.

⁶⁵Erwin Gane, "Exegetical Methods of some Sixteenth-century Puritan Preachers: Hooper, Cathwright, and Perkins," *AUSS* 19 (1981) 32-33.

⁶⁶D. M. Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987) 375, 378.

God; and therefore it must control everything."⁶⁷ Lloyd-Jones also suggests that the Puritans saw preaching as the distinguishing mark of true Christianity as compared with Religion. While Religion (Islam, etc.) puts its emphasis on what man does in his attempt to please and placate his God, Christianity is primarily a listening to God as "God is Speaking": "Religion is man searching for God: Christianity is God seeking man, manifesting Himself to him, drawing Himself unto him. This, I believe is at the back of the Puritan idea of placing in the central position the exposition on the Word in preaching."⁶⁸

William Perkins (1558-1602), an early Puritan expositor, had a profound influence on the entire Puritan movement.⁶⁹ He viewed preaching of the Word as the giving of the testimony of God Himself, thoughts developed in *The Art of Prophesying*, the first manual of its kind for preachers in the Church of England. Perkins identified four principles to guide the preacher:

1. To read the text distinctly out of the canonical Scriptures.
2. To give the sense and understanding of it, being read, by the Scripture itself.
3. To collect a few and profitable points of doctrine out of the natural sense.
4. To apply the doctrines, rightly collected, to the life and manner of men in a simple and plain speech.⁷⁰

Perkins also taught that the insight to expound Scripture belongs only to Christ. Man receives the capacity of interpreting one Scripture passage by another, but only as a gift from Christ.⁷¹

Many followed this humble but noble tradition. They sometimes preached for several hours at a time believing that "no great

⁶⁷Ibid., 379.

⁶⁸Ibid., 380.

⁶⁹Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution 1603-1714* (New York: Norton, 1980) 68. See also Gane, "Puritan Preachers" 27, and Ian Breward, ed., *The Work of William Perkins* (Berkshire, England: Sutton Courtenay, 1969) 331-49.

⁷⁰M. William Perkins, *The Works of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the Universitie of Cambridge, M. William Perkins* (3 vols.; Cambridge: 1608-9) 2:762.

⁷¹Gane, "Puritan Preachers" 34.

Scriptural truth can be presented in less than an hour or two."⁷² Concerning the Puritans Webber observes,

Some of the preachers of those days derived their divisions and subdivisions from the text, but more often than not, the divisions and subdivisions were based partly upon the thoughts of the text and partly upon ideas suggested by the general nature of the subject. This rage for minute analysis was often at the expense of literary style and clearness.⁷³

Nevertheless, the Puritans as a whole were dominated by a sense of the presence of God. They sought to be faithful to the Word and to the plain practical preaching of the Word.⁷⁴ Some major Puritan preachers who demonstrated great ability as expositors were Joseph Hall (1574-1656),⁷⁵ Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680),⁷⁶ Richard Baxter, (1615-1691),⁷⁷ and John Owen (1616-1683).⁷⁸ Speaking of Goodwin, Brown comments,

Comparing him with eminent contemporaries like John Owen and Richard Baxter, it has been said that Owen preached earnestly to the understanding, reasoning from his critical and devout knowledge of Scripture; Baxter preached forcibly to the conscience, reasoning from the fitness of things; while Goodwin appealed to the spiritual affections, reasoning from his own religious experience and interpreting Scripture by the insight of a renewed heart.⁷⁹

The diversity of style among the Puritans is remarkable in light of the thread of commitment to a faithful explanation of the text common to them all. Each had his own emphasis as exemplified in the famous

⁷²Webber, *History* 1:204.

⁷³Ibid., 1:202-3.

⁷⁴Lloyd-Jones, *Puritans* 388.

⁷⁵Joseph Hall, *Works of Joseph Hall* (12 vols.; Oxford, 1837-39).

⁷⁶Thomas Goodwin, *Works of Thomas Goodwin* (12 vols.; Edinburgh, 1861-66).

⁷⁷Richard Baxter, *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter* (23 vols.; London, 1830).

⁷⁸John Owen, *The Works of John Owen* (16 vols.; ed. by William Goold; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1965[rpt.]); cf. also John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (4 vols.; Wilmington: Sovereign Grace, 1969[rpt.]).

⁷⁹John Brown, *Puritan Preaching in England* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1901) 101.

phrase of Baxter who said, "I preach as never like to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men."⁸⁰

Other significant Puritan expositors were Thomas Manton (1620-1677),⁸¹ John Bunyan (1628-1688),⁸² and Stephen Charnock (1628-1680).⁸³ Also William Greenhill (1581-1677), a Puritan expositor, preached a major series of lectures on Ezekiel.⁸⁴ All these were diligent students of the Word, seeking to explain the truths of Scripture clearly to others.

As the Puritan era gave way to the preaching of the Evangelical Awakening, preaching that was generally topical, such as that of Wesley and Whitfield, replaced exposition. Nevertheless, several nonconform-ists during this period were Bible expositors. The most notable were John Gill (1697-1771),⁸⁵ who published 9 volumes of biblical exposition between 1746 and 1763, and Matthew Henry (1662-1714).⁸⁶ Both were heavily influenced by the Puritans. In the next fifty years other notable exceptions to topical preachers were Andrew Fuller (1754-1815),⁸⁷ Robert Hall (1764-1831),⁸⁸ John Brown (1784-1858),⁸⁹ John Eadie (1810-1876), and Alexander Carson (1776-1844). Eadie is well known for his commentaries that resulted from his remarkable preaching ministry. Carson was often regarded as

⁸⁰Cited in

Fant, *Luther to Massillon* 238-39.

⁸¹Thomas Manton, *The complete Works of Thomas Manton* (22 vols.; London: Nisbet, 1870-75).

⁸²John Bunyan, *Complete Works* (3 vols., ed. by George Offer; London, 1853).

⁸³Stephen Charnock, *The Works of the Late Reverend Stephen Charnock* (9 vols.; Leeds: Robinson, 1815).

⁸⁴William Greenhill, *An Exposition of the Prophet Ezekiel* (Edinburgh, 1863).

⁸⁵John Gill, *An Exposition of the Old Testament* (4 vols.; London, 1852) and *An Exposition of the New Testament* (2 vols.; London, 1852).

⁸⁶Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible* (6 vols.; New York: Revell, n.d.).

⁸⁷Andrew Fuller, *Works of Andrew Fuller* (London, 1838).

⁸⁸Robert Hall, *The Works of Robert Hall* (6 vols.; London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1832).

⁸⁹John Brown, *Analytical Expositions of Saint Paul to the Romans* (1857), *Expository Discourses on First Peter* (3 vols.; 1848), *Expository Discourses on Galatians* (1853), and *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (1862).

a master of expository preaching on a level with Alexander Maclaren.⁹⁰

The later nineteenth century produced several important biblical expositors in Britain and America, including James H. Thornwell (1812-1862)⁹¹ and John A. Broadus (1827-1895). Broadus has been termed "The Prince of Expositors."⁹² He described his principles of expository preaching in *On The Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* in 1870. Subsequent revisions of this book have reduced its original thrust and value.⁹³ Broadus's view of preaching was to preach "the definite doctrines of the Bible, and . . . [an] abundant exposition of the Bible text."⁹⁴

Others in this period were John C. Ryle (1816-1900),⁹⁵ Charles J. Vaughan (1816-1897), Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910), Joseph Parker (1830-1902),⁹⁶ and Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892). The period ends with the founding of the *Expository Times* in 1889 by James Hastings.⁹⁷ Hastings was the editor of several dictionaries, encyclo-pedias, and commentary sets that along with the *Times* promoted expository preaching. William Robertson Nicoll (1851-1923) was a biblical expositor and also edited a journal called *The Expositor*. Published from 1886-1923, it also promoted the exposition of Scripture.

Several expositors of this period are notable. Alexander Maclaren achieved international fame as an expositor. After 1869 he preached to over two thousand each week at Manchester. Beginning in obscurity, he preached for sixty-three years. He read one chapter of

⁹⁰Webber, *History* 2:631.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 3:350.

⁹²Nolan Howington, "Expository Preaching," *RevExp* 56 (1959) 60.

⁹³John A. Broadus, *A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (1870), cf. John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (rev. ed. by Jesse Burton Weatherspoon; New York: Harper, 1943).

⁹⁴Broadus, *History* 232. See also Turnbull, *History* 108-9,

⁹⁵John C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels* (7 vols.; 1856-1873), often available in reprint editions.

⁹⁶Joseph Parker, *Preaching Through the Bible* (28 vols., reprint of 1896-1907 ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1956-61).

⁹⁷L. E. Elliott-Binns, *Religion in the Victorian Era* (London: Lutterworth, 1946) 336-37.

the Hebrew Bible and one of the Greek each day throughout his life.⁹⁸ In 1896 he penned these words:

I believe that the secret of success for all our ministries lies very largely in the simple charm of concentrating their intellectual force on the one work of preaching. I have tried to make my ministry a ministry of exposition of Scripture. I know that it has failed in many respects, but I will say that I have endeavored from the beginning to the end to make that the characteristic of all my public work. I have tried to preach Jesus Christ, and the Jesus Christ not of the Gospels only, but the Christ of the Gospels and Epistles: He is the same Christ.⁹⁹

Maclaren's thirty-two volumes of sermons as well as his contributions to *The Expositor's Bible* are highly regarded even to this day.¹⁰⁰

Charles Haddon Spurgeon is highly respected as a preacher and expositor.¹⁰¹ He preached over 3560 sermons which comprise the sixty-three volumes of the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* published between 1855 and 1917. Though insisting he was a faithful expositor of the text,¹⁰² his exegesis is at times difficult. Webber makes the following comparison:

In his preaching, he differed from F. W. Robertson. Robertson made a painstaking study of his text, probing it, and drawing out of it the truths that were in it. Spurgeon reversed the process. He selected his text, and then strove to group about the text closely related Bible truths . . . [at times stressing teachings] even though his text made no mention of [them].¹⁰³

⁹⁸Webber, *History* 1:575.

⁹⁹E. T. Maclaren, *Dr. Maclaren of Manchester, a Sketch* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911) 151.

¹⁰⁰Alexander Maclaren, *Expositions of Holy Scripture* (32 vols. in 16; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1932[rpt.]); William Robertson Nicoll, ed., *The Expositor's Bible* (25 vols. in 6, reprint; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965). Maclaren contributed Psalms and Colossians in the latter work.

¹⁰¹Horton Davies, "Expository Preaching: Charles Haddon Spurgeon," *Foundations* 6 (1963) 15.

¹⁰²C. H. Spurgeon, *Autobiography, Volume 2: The Full Harvest 1860-92* (reprint; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976) 50, 346-47.

¹⁰³Webber, *History* 1:602. Also note the careful analysis in Davies, "Expository Preaching" 18-25.

Spurgeon viewed Whitfield as a hero and a preaching model,¹⁰⁴ though the latter was more topical and theological than expositional. Spurgeon's genuinely expositional work was his *Treasury of David*,¹⁰⁵ in which he provides a careful verse-by-verse exposition along with "hints to preachers."

The twentieth century has produced a few significant biblical expositors, some of whom have been outstanding: Harry Allan Ironside (1876-1951),¹⁰⁶ Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895-1960), James M. Gray (1881-1935), William Bell Riley (1861-1947), Wallie Amos Criswell (1909-), James Denny (1856-1917), George Campbell Morgan (1863-1945), William Graham Scroggie (1877-1958), D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981), John Robert Walmsley Stott (1921-), and James Montgomery Boice (1938-).

G. Campbell Morgan was a powerful expositor of the Word whose works are rich in explanation and textual illustration. Morgan read and studied the entire Bible and his exposition was based on a careful exegesis viewed in light of the whole Bible.¹⁰⁷ Morgan expressed this thought:

It will be granted that preachers are to preach the Word. You say that means the Bible. Does it? Yes. Is that all? No. Yes, it is all there. But you want more than that, more than all. The Word is truth as expressed or revealed. The Word is not something that I have found out by the activity of my own intellectual life. The Word is something which my intellectual life apprehends, because it has been expressed. . . . And that is what we have to preach. God's revelation, the truth, as it has been expressed. We must enter upon the Christian ministry on the assumption that God has expressed Himself in His Son, and the

¹⁰⁴Davies, "Expository Preaching" 17-18.

¹⁰⁵C. H. Spurgeon, *Treasury of David* (7 vols. in 3, reprint; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966).

¹⁰⁶For a brief description of the following preachers see Turnbull, *History*; Horton Davies, *Varieties of English Preaching 1900-1960* (London: SCM, 1963); Wiersbe and Perry, *Preaching and Preachers*; and William Preston Ellis, "A Study of the Nature of the Expository Sermon in the United States from 1940-1968" (ThD dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1971).

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 435.

Bible is the literature of that self-expression. The minute we lose our Bible in that regard, we have lost Christ as the final revelation. . . . Every sermon that fails to have some interpretation of that holy truth is a failure. . . . Preaching is not the proclamation of a theory, or the discussion of a doubt. . . . Speculation is not preaching. Neither is the declaration of negations preaching. Preaching is the proclamation of the Word, the truth as the truth has been revealed.¹⁰⁸

Morgan believed that the Bible was absolutely true¹⁰⁹ and spent his life in careful exposition, as evidenced in his numerous published expositions.¹¹⁰

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was a gifted expositor who saw preaching not as "preaching a sermon for each service, but simply [as] continuing where he was in the ongoing exposition of a book of the Bible."¹¹¹ His preaching stemmed from careful exegesis and featured a careful setting forth of the meaning and application of his texts. This continued the rich tradition of Joseph Parker and Alexander Maclaren.¹¹² Lloyd-Jones produced a significant book on expository preaching in which he wrote the following in the chapter entitled "The Primacy of Preaching":

To me, the work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called. If you want something in addition to that I would say without any hesitation that the most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching, it is obviously the greatest need of the

¹⁰⁸G. Campbell Morgan, *Preaching* (New York: Revell, 1937) 17-21. See also G. Campbell Morgan, *The Study and Teaching of the English Bible* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910) esp. 72-95.

¹⁰⁹Jill Morgan, *A Man of the Word, Life of G. Campbell Morgan* (New York: Revell, 1951) 39-40.

¹¹⁰G. Campbell Morgan, *The Westminster Pulpit* (10 vols.; New York: Revell, 1954). See *idem*, *Studies in the Four Gospels* (4 vols.; Old Tappan: Revell, 1929), along with his various other biblical expositions. Note also Don M. Wagner, *Expository Method of G. C. Morgan* (Westwood: Revell, 1957).

¹¹¹Turnbull, *History* 442-43.

¹¹²James Melvin Keith, "The Concept of Expository Preaching as Represented by Alexander Maclaren, George Campbell Morgan, and David Martyn Lloyd-Jones" (ThD dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1975).

world also.¹¹³

Lloyd-Jones knew of no substitute for the task of expounding the Word in the church.¹¹⁴ He identified three types of preaching (evangelistic, instructional teaching, and purely instructional), but he held that all preaching must be expository, both in its preparation and in its presentation to the people.¹¹⁵ For his life the highest priority was biblical exposition, an evident fact to anyone investigating his life.¹¹⁶

Greatest caution is necessary in a survey of this nature when it arrives at the point of commenting on contemporary expositors. The history book on them cannot be closed because additional ministry remains for them to fulfill. A historical survey would not be complete without a tentative word regarding the apparent contribution of several representative preachers of the present era to expository preaching, with due recognition that much may yet transpire before the "history book" on their ministries is closed.

John R. W. Stott, one such example,¹¹⁷ has followed in the same expository tradition as Lloyd-Jones. Concerning preaching he said:

True Christian preaching (by which I mean `biblical' or `expository' preaching, as I shall argue later) is extremely rare in today's Church. Thoughtful young people in many countries are asking for it, but cannot find it. Why is this? The

¹¹³D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971) 9.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 26-44.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, 63, 75-76. See also Robert L. Penny, "An Examination of the Principles of Expository Preaching of David Martyn Lloyd-Jones" (DMin dissertation, Harding Graduate School of Religion, 1980).

¹¹⁶Iain H. Murray, *David Martyn Lloyd-Jones* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1990) 697-713. This book along with Iain H. Murray, *David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, The First Forty Years, 1899-1939* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982) is worthy of special attention.

¹¹⁷Stott's recently declared rejection of an orthodox doctrine of eternal punishment for the lost (David L. Edwards and John Stott, *Evangelical Essentials* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988] 319-20) illustrates the need for caution in endorsing contemporary expositors. Hopefully he will repudiate his approval of annihilationism and turn back to the orthodox view he seems to have espoused earlier.

major reason must be a lack of conviction about its importance.¹¹⁸

Stott dwelt on the importance of expository preaching as follows:

I cannot myself acquiesce in this relegation (sometimes even grudging) of expository preaching to one alternative among many. It is my contention that all true Christian preaching is expository preaching. Of course, if by an 'expository' sermon is meant a verse-by-verse exposition of a lengthy passage of Scripture, then indeed it is only one possible way of preaching, but this would be a misuse of the word. Properly speaking, 'exposition' has a much broader meaning. It refers to the content of the sermon (biblical truth) rather than its style (a running commentary). To expound Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view. The expositor prys open what appears to be closed, makes plain what is obscure, unravels what is knotted and unfolds what is tightly packed. The opposite of exposition is 'imposition,' which is to impose on the text what is not there. But the 'text' in question could be a verse, or a sentence, or even a single word. It could be a verse, or a paragraph, or a chapter, or a whole book. The size of the text is immaterial, so long as it is biblical. What matters is what we do with it.¹¹⁹

Stott offers the contemporary student of expository preaching a cogent argument as to the nature and content of true biblical preaching. He is worthy of careful attention.

Another current example of Bible expositors is John MacArthur, Jr. For some he has emerged as a notable American expositor at the end of the twentieth century, continuing in the heritage of Lloyd-Jones. He is currently publishing a commentary of expositions on the entire NT.¹²⁰ He has described this commentary in the following way:

My goal is always to have deep fellowship with the Lord in the understanding of His Word, and out of that experience to explain to His people what a passage means. . . . The dominant thrust of my ministry, therefore, is to help make God's living Word alive to His people. It is a refreshing adventure. This NT commentary series reflects the objective of explaining and applying Scripture.

¹¹⁸Stott, *Two Worlds* 92.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 125-26.

¹²⁰John F. MacArthur, Jr. *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody, 1983-).

Some commentaries are primarily linguistic, others are mostly theological, and some are mainly homiletical. This one is basically explanatory, or expository. It is not linguistically technical, but deals with linguistics when this seems helpful to proper interpretation. It is not theologically expansive, but focuses on the major doctrines in each text and on how they relate to the whole of Scripture. It is not primarily homiletical, though each unit of thought is generally treated as one chapter, with a clear outline and logical flow of thought.¹²¹

MacArthur sees expository preaching as concerned primarily with the content of the Bible.¹²² He notes,

The Bible is the Word of God. It emanates from the holiness of God. It reflects the mind and the heart and the will of God, and as such, it must be treated with a tremendous amount of respect. The Bible is not to be dealt with flippantly, it is not to be approached with lack of diligence, it is not to be dealt with in a cursory manner, it is to be dealt with tremendous commitment.¹²³

This emphasis upon precision in handling the Scriptures has characterized MacArthur's ministry.¹²⁴

Other contemporary preachers could be identified by name as expositors, but enough characteristics of Bible exposition have been mentioned in this survey and are elaborated upon in other parts of *Recovering Expository Preaching* to facilitate recognition of who they are. It is hoped the number of such individuals will increase dramatically.

AN INESCAPABLE CONCLUSION

¹²¹*Ibid.*, *Matthew 1-7* vii.

¹²²Ben E. Awbrey, "A Critical Examination of the Theory and Practice of John F. MacArthur's Expository Preaching" (ThD dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1990) 17; cf. R. Keith Willhite, "Audience Relevance and Rhetorical Argumentation in Expository Preaching: A Historical-Critical Comparative Analysis of Selected Sermons of John F. MacArthur, Jr., and Charles R. Swindoll, 1970-1990" (PhD dissertation, Purdue University, 1990).

¹²³John F. MacArthur, "Principles of Expository Preaching" (Audio Tape GC 2001; Panorama City: Word of Grace, 1980) 1.

¹²⁴John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Our Sufficiency in Christ* (Waco: Word, 1991) 129-37.

A study of the history of expository preaching makes it clear that such preaching is deeply rooted in the soil of Scripture. Thus it is the only kind that perpetuates biblical preaching in the church. Throughout history, a few well known men in each generation representative of a larger body of faithful expositors have committed themselves to this ministry of biblical exposition.

Their voices from the past should both encourage the contemporary expositor and challenge him to align his preaching with the biblical standard. Scripture demands nothing less than God-enabled exposition as demonstrated by those worthy saints who have dedicated their lives to this noble task.

"DELIVER THIS MAN TO SATAN" (1 COR 5:5):
A CASE STUDY IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Simon J. Kistemaker¹
Professor of New Testament
Reformed Theological Seminary
Jackson, Mississippi

Part of understanding the difficult passage in 1 Cor 5:1-5 is the interpretation of the words "deliver this man to Satan" in 5:5. To explain this statement correctly, one must establish what the sin is that caused Paul to deliver the declaration. Then he should realize the responsibility of the local church in Corinth to deal with such a situation. The nature of the authority behind the directive needs also to be appreciated. Then details of the disciplinary action itself need clarification. The whole set of circumstances emphasizes how important it is for local churches to implement church-disciplinary actions in dealing with sinning members and to use sound principles in doing so.

* * * * *

In his second epistle, the apostle Peter remarks that some things in Paul's letters are hard to understand (2 Pet 3:16). This is surely an understatement. Anyone who has studied Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians knows that a few passages are not only difficult to interpret, they are enigmatic. Among others these include Paul's

¹This article has been adapted and enlarged from a segment of Dr. Kistemaker's forthcoming commentary on First Corinthians, with permission from Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI. Dr. Kistemaker is in the final year of almost twenty years of service as Secretary-Treasurer of the Evangelical Theological Society, a responsibility he has fulfilled with distinction to the great enrichment of the community of evangelical scholarship.

command to deliver to Satan the man who committed incest (5:5), the sign of authority on the head of a woman because of the angels (11:10), and the reference to the ones baptized for the dead (15:29). We have the text of these verses, but could wish that Paul had incorporated explanatory footnotes along with them.

In this article, we will investigate the context,² the significance, and the message of 1 Cor 5:5. By studying the text carefully in the setting of the preceding verses, we will gain a better understanding of it and, at the same time, glean some principles for local churches to follow in exercising church discipline. A personal translation of the paragraph of vv. 1-5 is in order as a start:

¹It is actually reported that there is immorality among you and of such a kind that does not even happen among the Gentiles, namely, that a man has the wife of his father. ²And you are arrogant! Should you not rather be grieved? Put the man who practiced this deed out of your midst. ³For even though I am absent in the body but present in spirit, I have already judged the man who has so committed this as if I were present. ⁴When you come together and I am with you in spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵in the name of our Lord Jesus deliver this man to Satan for destruction of the flesh that his spirit may be saved in the day of our Lord.

THE CAUSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE: INCEST

Paul had been told that someone in the church had committed incest but that the members of the Corinthian church had not censured this person. In an earlier letter (cf. 5:9) Paul had warned the Corinthians not to associate with immoral people. Apparently, they had paid little if any attention to his instruction because when a man had committed incest, the church failed to act. Now Paul instructs the church to remove this man and his heinous sin from their midst. Indeed both the man, because of incest, and the church, because of failure to impose discipline, are guilty of sin before God.

"There is immorality among you" (v. 1). The information Paul gives is scant. He has received a report on immorality that pertains to

²Some issues of textual and exegetical significance in the larger context do not directly impinge on an understanding of v. 5, and so will not be treated. The focus is upon obtaining a grasp of the explicit directive, "deliver this man to Satan."

a male member of the church and the wife of the man's father. We do not know whether the woman is a Christian or the father is still living. We know only that the case of incest concerns a man and his stepmother and that this immoral conduct is of a kind that even the Gentiles condemn.

According to Paul, the members of the church in Corinth were acquainted with this case of incest. The first word in the Greek sentence, *ἅπασαν* (*hols*), is an adverb that means either "actually," "generally," or "altogether." It conveys more the concept of thoroughness than of universality³ and signifies that the whole story has been reported. Because it stands first in the sentence, the adverb is emphatic and modifies the impersonal verb *it is reported*. Paul is not interested in revealing who the reporter is or how he has received the news. He only states the fact and does not provide details, except to say that in an earlier letter he had warned the Corinthians not to associate with immoral people (cf. v. 9).

"A man has the wife of his father" (v. 1). In Jewish circles, the wording *wife of his father* meant "stepmother." Although not physically related to the son, yet because of her marriage vows to his father, she would plunge the son into sin by having sexual relations with him. God repeatedly told the Israelites, "Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father" (Lev 18:8; 20:11; Deut 22:30; 27:20). If a son purposely had sexual relations with his stepmother, the community would have to put him to death by stoning. Would a son be free to marry her if his father had passed away? In the first two centuries of the Christian era, some Jewish rabbis condemned a marriage of a proselyte son and his pagan stepmother while others tolerated it.⁴ Is it possible that this tolerance was known among the Jewish people and proselytes in Corinth? Perhaps, but we do not know. In any case, Paul condemns the deed and calls attention to the conduct of the Gentiles in this matter.

³The Simple English Bible has, "It is being told everywhere." By contrast, the JB reads, "I have been told as an undoubted fact."

⁴Str-B, 3:358.

Paul fails to point out whether the father of this church member has passed away. He does not describe the stepmother as a widow, but gives the impression that the father is still alive (cf. Gen 35:22; Amos 2:7). He writes that this sin is "of such a kind that does not even happen among the Gentiles" (v. 1).⁵

The mention of the name *Gentiles* is a means to emphasize the severity of the sin that the church member had committed. The writer alluded to the Gentiles to prod the Christian community to action. He did not want them to let one member put the entire congregation to shame. As one rotten apple in a box of apples can spoil the whole box, one reckless sinner was on the verge of rendering the entire Corinthian church ineffective in its witness to the Gentile community.

Why were the Corinthians negligent in chastising this immoral person and expelling him? Paul's words are biting: "You are arrogant" (v. 2). In the preceding chapter he had stated that some of the Corinthians were arrogant in their talking (cf. 4:6, 18, 19). He here addresses all the believers in Corinth, because he knows that the leaders have led the others astray. They have been haughty for some time already and continue to be proud. They think that they are free to decide not to do anything about this wickedness (6:12; 10:23), and they claim to possess superior knowledge (3:18; 8:1-2). In reality, Paul faces the difficulty of trying to reason with people who lack both humility and constraint.

With a rhetorical question that expects an affirmative answer Paul queries, "Should you not rather be grieved?" (v. 2). Having alerted them to a blame that covers the body of the church, he is asking them to begin a period of mourning. The Greek verb *penuev* (*penthe*, "I grieve") refers to a sorrow for sin that has been committed either by oneself or by others. The OT provides the example of Ezra, who mourned over the unfaithfulness of the exiles. These exiles had returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple. But they had married foreign women belonging to the people around them (Ezra 10:1-6).⁶

⁵Cicero condemns the crime of incest: *Pro Cluent* 5.11-14.

⁶BAGD, 642.

Ezra expressed grief and sorrow for the laxity these Jewish exiles displayed with regard to marriage.

In a similar manner, Paul tells the Corinthians to enter a period of grieving and thus exhibit repentance with godly sorrow. He desires that they humble themselves repentantly before God and then experience God's forgiveness and love.

THE INITIATIVE IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The Corinthians must turn from their pride, show renewed obedience to God's law, and expel the evil man from the church. Hence Paul says, "Put the man who practiced this deed out of your midst" (v. 2; cf. vv. 7, 13). The Greek indicates that the man has committed an act of immorality, not necessarily that he continues to practice it.

The time for church discipline has arrived. This painful process must take place just the same as a surgeon must use a scalpel to remove a malignant tumor from a patient's body. If the Corinthians do not dismiss the immoral man from the church, the Christian community itself will be placed under divine condemnation as outsiders are (v. 13). The church of Jesus Christ is characterized by holiness and must remove the blatant and unrepentant sinner by excommunicating him. Further, removal accompanied by the church's repentance cleanses the body of Christ.

In vv. 2 and 3 Paul gives his outspoken judgment on the matter of immorality. For emphasis he contrasts the pronoun *you* in v. 2 with the pronoun *I* in v. 3. "Should *you* not rather be grieved?" (v. 2), and "For even though *I* am absent in body but present in spirit" (v. 3). He realizes that the Corinthians will read his epistle but will not see the physical presence of Paul. He admits that a geographical distance separates him from the recipients of his letter. Paul is in Ephesus in the western part of Asia Minor and the recipients of the epistle are in Corinth in the southern part of Greece. Distance does not mean that Paul's written words can be taken lightly. On the contrary, he is with

the church in spirit and in that sense gives personal leadership. In spirit he takes the gavel in hand, so to speak, and chairs the meeting of the local church. Even though he is unable to have access to all the details, he knows that he and the Corinthians have to remove this blemish from the congregation. He does so through prayer on behalf of the Corinthians and through his written epistle.

Paul tells the congregation that he has taken action with respect to the immoral man. He says, "I have already judged the man who has so committed this as if I were present" (v. 3). He does not list a detailed procedure for church discipline, yet we are confident that the practice of confirming the truth by two or three witnesses had to be followed (cf. Matt 18:15-17).

Notice that Paul has already judged this man. In effect, he needs no additional information because he knows that this affront to God's holiness must be removed. He writes in the perfect tense, "I have already judged," to indicate that he had already made a decision as soon as he heard about the offense. "Because Paul does not speak of an action but of a judgment there is no question here of divine judgment as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira."⁷ Paul says, "as if I were present" (v. 3). This clause should be taken with the verb "I have judged," and in Greek precedes the wording "the man who has so committed this" (v. 3). Let no one think that Paul is far removed from the scene and therefore powerless. Paul is not impotent; he wants the church to take action guided by his judgment. In proper assembly, the church must remove the man who has committed the crime.

The wording is quite emphatic in the clause: "the man who has *so* committed this." For the sake of style some translators delete the word *so*. A few translations, however, dutifully transmit it to show Paul's intended emphasis.⁸ Paul writes a sequence of three concepts that serve as demonstratives (the man, so, and this deed). In the

⁷F. W. Grosheide, *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953) 121.

⁸KJV, NKJV, NASB, *God's New Covenant: A New Testament Translation* by Heinz W. Cassirer. BAGD translates the combination *so* and *this* as "so basely" (597).

Greek, he points out that the act of sinning happened in the past and has lasting effects for the church.

The intent of Paul's words is that the members of the Corinthian church must take immediate action to eliminate this evil from their midst. He instructs them to meet in assembly and to do so as if he himself were present. While they are gathered, they should call on Jesus' name, who Himself had promised that where two or three people gather in His name, He will be present (Matt 18:20). In addition, they should know that Paul himself will be with them in spirit. They ought not to minimize his presence in spirit as if his physical presence would be real and his spiritual presence illusory. No, not so for several reasons.

First, Paul assures them twice that he is with them (v. 3); he is their spiritual father, watches over them, and constantly prays for them. Second, in the Greek he uses the emphatic personal adjective *μου* (*emou*, "my") with the noun *πνεύματος* (*pneumatōs*, "spirit"). In English idiom, this adjective is deleted. Third, the phrase *in spirit* is synonymous with the phrase *the power of the Lord*. Paul speaks with the apostolic authority Jesus delegated to him; as a rightfully appointed apostle he wields divine power.

In vv. 3, 4, and 5 Paul writes a lengthy sentence that lacks fluency and so reveals his inner tension and agitation. The difficulty we face is the punctuation of this passage. The Greek original indicates that these verses can be construed as one loosely connected sentence: "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (KJV). This single sentence becomes unwieldy and fails to communicate Paul's intention clearly. We need fitting punctuation to separate the many clauses so as to relate them meaningfully to the individual phrases.

THE AUTHORITY FOR CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Modern translators shorten such sentences and introduce appropriate punctuation. But even then, numerous questions remain, as is evident from the illustrations taken from several versions. How should the phrase "in the name of our Lord Jesus" be construed?⁹ In short, this phrase could modify the four¹⁰ clauses italicized in the following excerpts:

1. *I have already pronounced judgment* in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled . . . you are to hand this man over to Satan (RSV).
2. *When you are assembled* in the name of our Lord Jesus . . . hand this man over to Satan (NIV).
3. I as one who is present have already judged *the one who has done this thing* in the name of the Lord Jesus. When you are assembled . . . such a person should be handed over to Satan.¹¹
4. When you and my spirit are gathered together . . . you should, in the name of the Lord Jesus, *hand over to Satan such a man* as this (*Cassirer*).

Many translators favor the first possibility because Paul, although absent from Corinth in body but present in spirit, speaks

⁹In my translation, I have made the phrase "in the name of our Lord Jesus" a part of v. 5.

¹⁰Hans Conzelmann lists six choices and Leon Morris seven. Consult Conzelmann's *1 Corinthians* (Hermeneia, trans James W. Leitch; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 97; Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians* (rev. ed., Tyndale; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 84-85.

¹¹Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "I Corinthians V, 3-5," *RB* 84 (1977) 245; S. D. MacArthur, "'Spirit' in Pauline Usage: 1 Corinthians 5,5," in *Studia Biblica 1978, III. Papers on Paul and Other New Testament Authors* (ed. E. A. Livingstone; Sheffield: JSOT, 1980) 249-56; Gerald Harris, "The Beginnings of Church Discipline: 1 Corinthians 5," *NTS* 37 (1991) 1-21.

with apostolic authority in Jesus' name. His verdict, then, is not a personal opinion, but is pronounced on Jesus' behalf and with His approval.¹²

Conversely, there is wisdom in looking at a phrase closer in the context of the Greek text and linking it to the nearest phrase as a modifier. When church officials would read this epistle in Greek to the congregation, the hearers would have had to link the phrase in question to either the preceding or the succeeding words. As a result, the immediate context could point to either the second or the third of the versions cited above.

Many scholars endorse the second reading: "When you come together in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus."¹³ They profess that believers who gather in the name of Jesus know that he is the head and they are the body (Eph 1:22-23). The objection to this reading is the repetitive phrase "of our Lord Jesus." This phrase occurs with both the nouns *name* and *power*, and therefore makes them indistinguishable.

The third translation conveys the sense that the man committed sexual sin with his stepmother in the name of the Lord Jesus. But this reading meets serious objections. First, because of textual variants it is difficult to decide whether the reading should be "our Lord Jesus" or "the Lord Jesus." Paul almost always speaks of "the Lord" without the addition of "Jesus." Furthermore, he utilizes the designation "our Lord Jesus" throughout this epistle. In light of these observations scholars prefer the reading with the personal pronoun "our."¹⁴ Next, there appears to be an incongruity in the conduct of a Christian son who had illicit intercourse with his Gentile stepmother and invoked the name of Jesus to justify his sin. I suspect that the last name this sinner possibly

¹²See Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 207-8.

¹³E.g., John Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Calvin's Commentaries series, trans. John W. Fraser; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976 [rpt.]) 107.

¹⁴E.g., G. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles: A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London: Oxford, 1953) 235-36.

invoked would be that "of our Lord Jesus." Last, if the third translation were accurate, we would have expected Paul to note the misuse of Jesus' name with scathing rebuke.

The fourth reading seems best. If we take the prepositional phrase "in the name of our Lord Jesus" with the clause "deliver this man to Satan," the sentence conveys Paul's command to the Corinthian congregation to expel the man. Except for the phrase "in the name of our Lord Jesus," v. 4 should be understood as a parenthetical statement. The emphasis, then, falls on Paul's command and the church's execution. The Corinthians must obey Paul and act on the basis of Jesus' authority. Paul says, "[I have already judged], in the name of our Lord Jesus, deliver this man to Satan." He tells the members that when they come together they must take action, for both Paul's spirit and Jesus' power are present.¹⁵ The words *spirit* and *power* are juxtaposed and synonymous so that when the Corinthians act, they are aided by Paul's spiritual presence and Jesus' power.

THE RESULT OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE: EXCOMMUNICATION

"Deliver this man to Satan" (v. 5). I have translated the Greek aorist infinitive *paradounai* (*paradounai*, "to deliver") as an imperative. Handing someone over to Satan is akin to the prescription Jesus gave His disciples: treat an unrepentant sinner as a pagan or a tax collector (Matt 18:17). The command to deliver someone to Satan has a parallel in another epistle where Paul writes about some people shipwrecking their faith. "Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme" (1 Tim 1:20, NIV).

Paul's command to hand over a person to Satan is the act of excommunication and is equivalent to purging the evil from the church (cf. v. 13). Believers are safe in the hand of God from which no one, not even Satan, can snatch them (John 10:28-29). But if a sinner is

¹⁵Cf. G. A. Cole, "1 Cor 5:4 . . . with My Spirit," *ExpT* 98 (1987) 205.

delivered to the prince of this world, he faces destruction. He no longer enjoys the protection that a caring Christian community provides. John C. Hurd puts it graphically: "The Church [is] an island of life in Christ surrounded by a sea of death ruled by Satan."¹⁶

When adrift and deprived of spiritual support, the possibility is not remote that the outcast will come to his senses and subsequently repent. Here are two examples from the OT and the NT, respectively, of individuals who repented and returned to fellowship. Gomer, who as Hosea's sexually immoral wife personifies Israel, exclaims, "I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now" (Hos 2:7, NIV). And the prodigal son repented by confessing that he had sinned against God and against his father. Of his own volition, the son went to his parental home. This Jewish son came to his senses when he worked seven days a week herding pigs for a Gentile and was physically starving. He had broken God's commands, but confessed his sin before God. In the words of the father, the wayward son was dead; but when he returned home, he was alive again (Luke 15:24, 32).

What does Paul mean with the word *flesh* in the clause "for destruction of the flesh" (v. 5)? We understand the term to signify not part of a human body but "the whole person from the material point of view."¹⁷ The translation "sinful nature" (NIV) or "sinful self" (NCV) fails to correspond as the counterpart of spirit in the text and, therefore, is less than satisfactory. Moreover, the text does not warrant the interpretation that destruction of the flesh results in immediate death because, in a subsequent verse, Paul forbids the Corinthians to have table fellowship with such a man (v. 11). Because of the brevity of the clause "for destruction of the flesh," the question of mode or manner remains unanswered. For lack of pertinent detail, we are forced to resort to either of two hypotheses: first, Satan is permitted to destroy a person's sensuality; or second, he weakens man's physical

¹⁶John Coolidge Hurd, Jr., *The Origin of I Corinthians* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer, 1983) 285.

¹⁷Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Function of 'Excommunication' in Paul," *HTR* 73 (1980) 257; cf. also Eduard Schweizer, "srj, sarkikw, srkinow," *TDNT* 7:125.

body.

Those scholars who resort to the first hypothesis explain that the term *flesh* pertains to the baser part of man's physical life that causes him to sin.¹⁸ In the hands of Satan, they say, this part of a person's being perishes while his spirit is being saved. Consequently, they do not see Satan in an adversarial role to the cause of Christ, but as a helper. We demur. Satan is permitted to destroy only that which God allows,¹⁹ but he never leads a sinner to repentance and a saving knowledge of Christ. By contrast, he is set on leading a sinner further away from God for Satan restrains rather than promotes the cause of Christ. Therefore this explanation fails to merit favor.

The second hypothesis is preferred. It holds that in addition to the act of excommunication, God permits Satan to attack and gradually weaken man's physical body (cf. Job 2:5; 2 Cor 12:7).²⁰ Paul is not referring to a sudden demise (as e.g., in Acts 5:1-10), but to a slow process of physical decline. During this process the sinner receives ample time to reflect on his condition and repent (cf. 1 Cor 11:28-30).²¹

The clause on the destruction of the flesh is grammatically subordinate to the main purpose clause, "that his spirit may be saved" (v. 5). Even though the Greek word *pnema* (*pneuma*, "spirit") in translation can be capitalized as "Spirit" or refer to man's "spirit," translators understand the term to refer not to the divine, but the human spirit. Nevertheless, one scholar has suggested the

¹⁸N. G. Joy, "Is the Body Really to Be Destroyed? (1 Corinthians 5:5)," *BibTr* 39 (1988) 429-36; A. C. Thiselton, "The Meaning of *Sarx* in 1 Corinthians 5:5: A Fresh Approach in the Light of Logical and Semantic Factors," *SJT* 26 (1973) 204-28; J. Cambier, "La Chair et l'Esprit en 1 Cor. v.5," *NTS* 15 (1969) 221-32.

¹⁹Cf., however, T. C. G. Thornton, "Satan`God's Agent for Punishing," *ExpT* 83 (1972) 151-52.

²⁰Colin Brown, among others, states that "physical destruction is not envisaged" ("leurow," *NIDNTT* 1:466). Morris notes that Paul sees the man's expulsion "resulting in physical consequences" (*1 Corinthians* 86).

²¹Frederic Louis Godet, *Commentary on First Corinthians* (1889; reprint, Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977) 257; Morris, *1 Corinthians* 86.

interpretation that the Christian community had to expel the incestuous man "to avoid offense to the presence of the Holy Spirit."²² Certainly Scripture teaches not to grieve or stifle the Holy Spirit of God (cf. Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19). But that is not the point of the current passage. We reject the scholarly interpretation for at least three reasons: first, v. 5 contrasts man's flesh and spirit, not human flesh and the Holy Spirit. Next, Paul states that man's spirit may be saved, not that the presence of the Holy Spirit may be kept. And last, in the preceding verses (vv. 3, 4) the word *pneuma* occurs twice and refers to man's spirit, not to the Holy Spirit.

The destruction of the flesh serves the purpose of making possible the restoring of the sinner's soul before he dies. The gift of salvation depends on repentance, which takes place during a person's earthly life, not after his death. Scripture clearly teaches us that repentance must take place on earth, not in hell where the rich man implored father Abraham for help. Physical death irrevocably closes the door to a second opportunity for repentance and salvation (Luke 16:19-31).

Yet Paul writes that the man's spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord, which seems to point to the judgment day.²³ He does not imply that the man will have to wait until the end of time to be saved. Rather, Paul means that in this life the forgiven sinner receives salvation and in the day of the Lord is counted among those who are glorified. "Salvation is primarily an eschatological reality, experienced in the present to be sure, but to be realized fully at the Day of the Lord."²⁴ Also, the interpretation of the phrase *day of the Lord* is broader than a reference to the end of time when the judgment will take place. It can also mean a unique period during which God's people rejoice in the Lord. The OT prophets understood the phrase to mean a time in

²²Yarbro Collins, "Function" 263.

²³The variants that read "the day of the Lord Jesus" and "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" do not substantially alter the results of this study. The point is that the reference of the expression is to something eschatological.

²⁴Fee, *First Corinthians* 213.

which God claims victory over the world and His people triumph with Him (Isa 2:11, 17-20; Zech 14:7).

In His infinite wisdom, God brings a sinner to repentance through various means and methods (cf. 11:32; 1 Pet 4:6). He is interested in the salvation of man's soul and earnestly desires that all people come to repentance (2 Pet 3:9).

With respect to the man who committed incest, Paul hopes that even though Satan may destroy the physical body, the man's spirit may be saved "in the day of the Lord" (v. 5). From Paul's epistles, however, we have no positive proof that the man was restored physically or spiritually.²⁵

CONCLUSION

When the Israelites entered Canaan and conquered Jericho, Achan transgressed God's command by taking items devoted to God. The people stoned him and thus removed God's wrath against sin (Josh 7:25-26). God calls His people to be a holy people.

In the Jerusalem church, Ananias and Sapphira purposely tried to deceive the Holy Spirit. Peter uncovered their deception, and God removed them from the Christian community by taking their lives (Acts 5:1-10). God wanted the followers of Jesus to honor the truth.

Paul confronted the Corinthians with the incestuous behavior of one of their members. With a direct command he instructed them to expel the man from the church in the name of the Lord. The man's excommunication consisted of being delivered into the hands of Satan. Paul charged the church to purge itself of wickedness and evil and to embrace the virtues of sincerity and truth (v. 8).

If Paul had not acted forcefully to exclude this man from the church, the man's sin would have continued to infect the entire congregation. Indeed, the man's immoral conduct posed a direct

²⁵Cf. E. Fascher, "Zu Tertullians Auslegung von 1 Kor 5, 1-5 (De Pudicitia c. 13-16)," *ThLZ* 99 (1974) 9-12. Whether 2 Cor 3:6-8 is referring to this same individual is uncertain.

threat to the existence of the church itself. The church dwells figuratively in a glass house, and the world is free to observe the people within this house. When the church fails to check a sin that the world condemns, the church has become ineffective because of disobedience and spiritual defilement.

The church must deal decisively with sin. It must attempt to bring the offender to repentance and salvation or else resort to excommunication as Paul instructed the Corinthians. In word and deed, the church must exhibit an intense hatred for sin and a genuine desire for holiness. Such holiness demands ardent love for Jesus Christ and total obedience to His commands.

PRAYER RELATING TO PROPHECY IN DANIEL 9

James E. Rosscup
Professor of Bible Exposition
The Master's Seminary

Daniel's prayer for Israel in Daniel 9 precedes the famous prophecy of the "seventy sevens" in the same chapter. The prayer models submission to God's will both in heartfelt confession of Israelite sin and passionate intercession for deliverance from exile and the blessing of restoration. Daniel adeptly uses OT books such as Deuteronomy, Psalms, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Chapter 9 is one of many OT examples of how God uses human prayer to accomplish His predetermined sovereign plan.

* * * * *

The prayer of Daniel 9 ranks high among OT texts that demonstrate a unity between prayer for God to work out His will and prophecy that He will fulfill His sovereign purposes. Coming from the man most noted for prayer among OT prophets, the passage is all the more significant. As he does in Daniel 2, 6, and 10, Daniel exemplifies a servant sensitive to God's concerns and expends himself in prayer for the fulfilling of the divine program.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF DANIEL'S PRAYER

Before an examination of the text, attention must be directed to efforts that impugn the prayer as an artificial patchwork interpolated by a second century writer borrowing from others of post-exilic days.¹

¹E.g., Werner Kessler, *Zwischen Gott und Weltmacht: Der Prophet Daniel* (3rd ed.; Stuttgart: Botschaft Alttestament, 1961) 130-31. James Montgomery suggested a second century author, but felt that he could have used such a prayer as fits this

There is no valid cause to fault the prayer, as though it mixes together phrases from prayers in Ezra 6:6-15; Neh 9:5-38; 2 Baruch 1-3. Charles urged seven reasons against the prayer's authenticity,² but Leupold answered these in some detail.³

context, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927) 362.

²R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Oxford: The Clarendon House, 1929) 226-27.

³H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Columbus: Wartburg, 1949) 395-99.

Jones, though erring in holding a second century date, rebuts several arguments to show how the prayer blends appropriately with its context.⁴ First, he notes that it is mere arbitrary opinion to conjecture that the prayer was composed in Palestine, not Babylon. Second, he sees it as unconvincing to deny the value of the prayer because of "unnecessary" repetitions. It is natural to repeat prayers, sermons, or personal conversations.⁵ Third, he calls it a mistake to think that 9:20-27 pays no attention to Daniel's substance in the prayer for pardon and restoration. Jones points out that the angel *does* answer his prayer for forgiveness and deliverance (v. 24). Fourth, he sees as arbitrary the requirement that 9:1-4 is for a prayer for illumination, not pardon and restoration. No adequate proof exists to restrict the type of prayer needed to elicit a revelatory response. Besides, Daniel combines concern for illumination (v. 22, reflecting back on the prayer) with a prayer for restoration (v. 24, relating back to vv. 15-19).⁶

Jones misconstrues Daniel 9 in other regards, however. First, he states that the prayer's use of the reward/retribution motif (blessings and curses) (Deuteronomy 28`29) stems from Daniel's mistaken notion and is irrelevant to 9:24-27. Arbitrarily assuming a second century dating, he contends that the retribution view in 9:4b-19 would be inappropriate as a comfort to Israel because they were still suffering after already being restored to their land. Jones sees the author being swayed to accept Gabriel's determinism (9:20 ff.) as a better answer to Israel's need than his own theory of retribution.

Jones has missed the thrust of Daniel 9. Though Israel suffers because of sin, in both his prayer and his prophecy Daniel bases deliverance on God's covenant grace. He confesses Israel's sin, but does not imagine that Israel needs merited favor. Merited favor contradicts a hope in God's gracious covenant.⁷ Furthermore, Daniel 9 nowhere suggests inconsistency between a plan God is certain to fulfill finally and His interim blessing or judgment in moral harmony with obedience.

⁴Bruce W. Jones, "The Prayer in Daniel IX," *VT* 18 (1968) 488-93.

⁵Repetition is a characteristic of Hebrew and other Semitic poetry and narrative. In prayer, heartfelt reiteration similar to these can be expected. Repetition can be a mark of human spontaneity before God. This is one way people voice all-important concerns. In an onerous burden of prayer, concentration is on perils and fears, not polish and finesse, though these are necessarily excluded.

⁶Even Jones reasons that linguistic ties connect the prayer with God's response. Daniel prays for Israel to have "insight" (v. 13) (cf. **לְהַאֲרִיב** [*sa kal*], BDB, 968; John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* [vol. 30 of *Biblical Commentary*, eds. David A. Hubbard et al.; Waco, TX: Word, 1989] 249; the word means "consider, have insight, pay attention" in an understanding way based on wise reflection [cf. Job 32:29; Ps 41:2; 64:10; 106:7; 119:99; Dan 1:4, 17; 9:25]), which Gabriel in turn supplies. In 9:25, "turning" and "have insight into" are used together. Then in v. 25 new verbs represent these concepts (Jones, "The Prayer" 489-91), though not with the same precise connotation. This is consistent with the prayer's focus toward Israel's eventual deliverance.

⁷Rogers shows that God's covenant with Abram was gracious and unconditional (C. Rogers, Jr., "The Covenant with Abraham and its Historical Setting," *BSac* 127 [1970] 241-56). Rogers explains how apparently conditional texts (e.g., Gen 12:1; 17:1; 17:9-14) harmonize with this (25).

disobedience.⁸ Inconsistency originates only in the mind of an interpreter and is not found in the biblical accounts seen in their integrity.

Second, Jones wrongly reasons that since God's word went forth "at the beginning of" Daniel's "supplications" (9:23), his prayer "made little difference to God."⁹ He sees the prophecy (vv. 24-27) as taking no account of the subject of the prayer, but ignoring it to make the point that God had previously determined His plan. It is better, however, to recognize that God's response does not ignore the prayer, but implements it in fulfilling His will. Jones has himself noted the difference between the prayer and the prophecy, but does not follow through with it. Daniel's earnest cries for city, sanctuary, and people are needs about which the prophecy offers reassurance (v. 24).¹⁰

To say that prayer makes little difference to God mishandles Scripture not only here, but in scores of passages. God has a sure decree of what He will do (Dan 4:35), but has already correlated with this an opportunity for surrendering to people to be involved in its implementation through prayer. Prayer should be a submission to and involvement in God's carrying out His will. God's plan is certain from beginning to end (Isa 46:9-10) and need not be decided piecemeal along the way or at the dictates of men. Yet He Himself challenges man to pray (Jer 33:3) for His own concerns, including the restoration of Israel (Jer 33:6 ff.). As events advance toward His appointed fulfillment, He appeals to mankind to be prayerfully involved in His work, and these prayers do make a difference to God. He does not choose to work, as Jones reasons, "quite apart from prayers and independent of previous ideas of retribution."¹¹ Harris differs with him: "How small a prayer of confession and petition to God could 'make little difference to God beyond imagination."¹² The prayer's answer in Dan 9:24-27 is not an interpretation of *change* from the truth Daniel expresses in 9:4b-19, but correlates well with it.

The notion that Daniel borrowed from Ezra, Nehemiah, and other prophets is unnecessary, because Daniel was a man rich in the Word of God. In fact, it is impossible with a sixth century dating of the book. Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah were all beneficiaries of the same scriptural treasure. A person saturated with the books as Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel could

⁸Ibid. Psalm 89:30-37 sees the impossibility of the abrogation of the Davidic covenant through human disobedience and its consequent divine chastening. The covenant will finally be fulfilled through divine action. God even inclines men, that they might be restored (Jer 31:18; Jer 30:3, 7, 19 [Heb. text: 30:4, 8, 20]). Men must obey in the right spirit, but must do so as enabled by God (Ps 119:32, 33-40; Phil 2:12, 13). God's blessing does not produce human merit because human merit no reward. Their rewards are simply a result of what God has graciously given.

⁹Jones, "The Prayer" 493.

¹⁰Cf. discussion of 9:20-27 later in this essay.

¹¹Jones, "The Prayer" 493.

¹²Patrick Harris, "A Biblical Model for Penitential Prayer, Daniel 9:3-19" (M.Div. thesis, Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Ind., 1986) 51.

spontaneously incorporate words or phrases from these sources into his prayer. God's word is spiritual food for His people (Job 23:12; Jer 15:16). Strong reliance on earlier biblical books is natural in a prayer featuring a guilt and history of the people. Then too, while prayers in Ezra and Nehemiah, or even Baruch's prayer similar to Daniel's, they also show marked differences.¹³ Nehemiah, for example, praised God for His mercies, saw Him as righteous, confessed, and repented. He voiced none of the intercession for Israel's restoration as is found in Daniel because in Nehemiah's day, many had already returned. Each of the prayers relates to its own context: Daniel's in 539 B.C., Ezra's in 457 B.C. and after Nehemiah's around 445/444 B.C.

Because of no convincing evidence to the contrary, this study assumes a sixth century B.C. setting and a perspective of unparalleled blessing for Israel and their Messiah's second coming.¹⁴ The Messiah will do His work as a catastrophe, "stone" (2:44) and as "one like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven" (14:14).¹⁵ He will dramatically defeat all enemies of His covenant people and restore His people to blessing.

Daniel's prayer is one of praise, confession, petition, and intercession in circumstances that are for his people the very reverse of unprecedented blessing. That God's people deserve exile from their land (9:4b-14) is clear. The prayer pleads for God to restore the people (9:15-19). The following discussion develops the aspects of the prayer and the way it fits its historical and literary context.

DANIEL'S READINESS TO PRAY (9:1-4a)

Daniel's prayer is appropriate in this context, e.g., Daniel's situation of prayer at the visit by Gabriel (vv. 20-23), and the answer of Gabriel (vv. 24-27). Daniel is sensitive to his people's need, saturated with Scripture, sympathetic with his people in their need, and surrendered to God.

Sensitive to the Need

The timing of this prayer is strategic in God's plan. It is relevant both to Israel and to Babylon, her captor in exile. The first year of Darius is significant for Daniel. His peril with the lions in chapter 6 and this prayer probably came in the same year, 539/538 B.C. By faith he "shut the mouths of lions" (Heb 11:33) because God shut those mouths in answer to his prayer (Dan 6:22). Daniel's God sent an angel to protect him in peril as He miraculously answered him in chapter 9.

¹³Cf. Leupold, *Exposition* 395-99.

¹⁴In support of a sixth century dating, see R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 1110-27; also his "Book of Daniel," *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (ed. M. C. Tenney; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) 2:12-21; Gleason Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (rev. ed.; Chicago: Moody, 1974) 379-403. For a premillennial case, cf. L. C. Culver, *Daniel and the Latter Days* (New York: Revell, 1954); introduction and Daniel 2, 7, 12 in Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973).

¹⁵E. J. Young, *The Prophecy of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949) 154-56.

The situation is relevant also as to timing in God's prophetic plan. Daniel's first year was his first year of reign over Babylon after Persia's conquest of that nation. God sovereignly accomplished this, for He "removes kings and establishes kings" (Dan 2:21). This is a new era. Daniel, sensitive to the momentous change and its effect on his people, mentions the "first year" twice for emphasis (9:1-2). After years of neo-Babylonian lordship, Daniel's people are at a point that provoked inquiry regarding God's next move on their behalf.

Saturated with Scripture

The man who prays meditates first on prophecy that affirms God's plan for the initial year of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Jeremiah had predicted Israel's subjection to Babylon for seventy years (Jer 25:9-11). He foresaw that God would punish the king of Babylon and his nation at the end of that time (vv. 12-17). It is relevant in Daniel 9 that the demise of Babylon's king and Cyrus's designation of Darius¹⁶ as his sub-ruler over Babylon was of extreme interest as a sign that the seventy years were near their end. It was high time to seek God's plan for His people, whose exile was expiring.

Jeremiah's later words in Jeremiah 29 were of further help to Daniel. In 597 B.C., when Babylon deported Judah's King Jehoiachin with 50,000 subjects, Jeremiah wrote to the exiles. He advised them to build houses, plant crops, marry, and pray for the welfare of Babylon to which their own welfare was related (v. 7). Settling into exilic life was sensible, because God would not bring them back to their land until "seventy years have been completed in Babylon" (v. 10). God's plans for Israel are reassuring in Jer 29:11: "For I know the plans that I have for you . . . plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

Within the seventy years, near or at their end, the Lord tells the Israelites

Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. When you will seek Me and find Me, when you shall search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you . . . and I will restore your fortunes and will gather you from the nations . . . and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile. (vv. 12-14).

In harmony with God's plan, prayer strategically fits with prophecy affirming restoration in Jeremiah 29.

Daniel, being full of knowledge (1:17; 2:17-30; 4:8, 9; 5:10-16), is steeped in God's promises in chapter 9. He submits himself to God and becomes a representative of his people. As Jeremiah 29 directed, he commits himself to "come," "pray," "seek," and "search" for God with all his heart. God articulates His will in Jer 29:12-14, putting His own authority on prayer as a means in restoring Israel. Daniel is part of a program that God foreordained. He prays, pro-

¹⁶That Darius was "made king" (cf. the hophal form of the verb in Dan 9:1) could be by God permitting it (cf. Ps 75:6-7; Dan 4:35; 5:25-28), or by a human superior. Cf. evidence to distinguish Cyrus from Darius, who was his appointee over the Babylonian part of the Persian Empire in Whitcomb, Jr., *Darius the Mede* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959).

kneeling,¹⁷ calling on God to act and forward His purposes. In this he joins a group of others who prayed in agreement with God's purposes to restore Israel.¹⁸ Another thing is clear about Daniel, his sympathy for his people.

Sympathetic with His People

The first person "we" (v. 5, etc.) shows Daniel's deep involvement with Israel for the sake of his people. In so doing, he fills the role of earlier leaders on behalf of Israel. Moses prayed for Israel's benefit at a crucial time when the people had worshiped a golden calf (Exod 32:11-14). Jeremiah also prayed with many tears, seeking the correction of his people (13:17; 14:17).¹⁹ The psalmists are often moved to prayer.²⁰ In such a chain of prayer warriors, Daniel longs to see God lift Israel to a bright future (vv. 15-19). He is painfully aware that God's "people" continue to erect a road block against the moral direction God wants. They are unrepentant and do not appropriate the way to blessing (v. 13).²¹ For seventy years plus many more years before, they had needed repentance. Israel had "bemoaned its sad lot."²² They regretted their sentence, but failed to attain a significant repentance.

Daniel rushes to the crux of concerns, acknowledging sin (vv. 4b-14). He deals thoroughly with sin before he intercedes for restoration from sin and its consequences (vv. 15-19).

Surrendered to God

"So," i.e. consequentially (וַ [wa], v. 3), when Daniel prayed, he was sensitive to his time, steeped in God's plan, and sympathetic with the need for help. Those three characteristics also reflect His surrender to God. His surrender is also visible in his flint-like concentration in v. 3. He says literally, "I set my face toward the Lord. . . ." He resolutely applied his attention, fixed his focus.²³ The verb וָאָ (natan, "to give, set") appears with the accusative "my face," followed by the infinitive "to seek." In surrender, Daniel stations himself to seek "the Lord,

¹⁷Daniel consistently knelt (Dan 6:10).

¹⁸Ps 80:3, 7, 19 [in Heb. text, 80:4, 8, 20] (prayer); Jer 29:12 (prayer) with vv. 12-14 (restoration); Jer 30:3-11, 18-24; 31:7-40 (restoration); 32:17-25 (prayer) and 32:26-44 (restoration). The anticipation of the "everlasting covenant" (32:40) appears to be the "eternal covenant" of Heb 13:20.

¹⁹Jeremiah did pray, but some passages have God telling him not to pray for Israel because of their hardened rejection (7:16; 11:14; 14:11, 12).

²⁰Cf. references in n. 18 above and also Psalms 74 and 79.

²¹God calls on people to repent (e.g., 2 Kgs 17:13; Isa 55:6-7; Jer 25:5; Ezek 14:6; 18:30). He enables grace He helps men repent (Ps 80:3, 7, 19 [in Heb. text, 80:4, 8, 20]; Jer 31:18). Men confess their sin. He draws them (cf. John 6:44).

²²H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* 395-99.

²³BDB, 680; cf. examples in 2 Chr 20:3; Eccl 1:13, 17; 8:9, 16; Dan 10:12.

Od] (*@adonay*), a word that has in view His almighty authority or Lordship. This is the "Lord" Daniel often addresses in this prayer (vv. 4, 7, 8, 16, 17, 19). This word combines it here with **<yhOl'** (*@ eq \O(+,e)l eq \O(~,o)h eq \O(=,i)m*, "God" or "Lord" word used for God the creator in Gen 1:1²⁴:4a. That Daniel approaches God in humility of "fasting, sackcloth and ashes"²⁵ with a sincere heart also suggests the seriousness of surrender. Daniel is not just going through the motions. His act expresses inward earnestness, in harmony with his genuine walk with God throughout the book.

The surrender of the man emerges in the form of "prayer and supplication" (9:3). The former word **h eq \O(A,L) eq \O(I,f) eq \O([,?)** (*\O(+,e)pill eq \O(~,a)h*) does not in itself necessarily mean "intercede" as we might assume.²⁶ Sawyer more definitively notes that the noun or its verbal form refer to prayer in general. This could sometimes narrow to distinct aspects such as praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition, and intercession, but not here.²⁷

The latter word "supplications" (**<y eq \O(I,n)un eq \O(,i)** (*\O(a,/) eq \O([,w) [w eq \O(+,e)ta eq \O(>,h) eq \O(+,a)n eq \O(=,u) \O(=,i)m]*) occurs often in this prayer (9:3, 17, 18, 20, 23). It is one of several words denoting the idea found in **w eq \O(a,n) eq \O(A,i) (eq \O(>,l) \O(~,a)nan**), "he is gracious." It is a prayer for favor.²⁸ Jeremiah employs it in

²⁴In Dan 1:2, for example, **yaOd]** is in control even when Babylon's king conquers Judah because He gave Judah's king into Nebuchadnezzar's hand. And in 9:4, **yaOd]** is "the great and awesome God."

²⁵Hypocrites can simulate these outward practices, as Jezebel in her fast (1 Kgs 21:9), or the wrongly motivated actions of others (Isa 58:3-7). On the other hand, in the lives of pious ones these are signs of God-honoring devotion and true submission (fasting, Dan 10:2, 3; sackcloth, 2 Kgs 19:2; ashes in mourning, Job 2:8; Jer 6:26).

²⁶J. F. A. Sawyer, "Types of Prayer in the Old Testament. Some Semantic Observations on *Hitpallel*, *Hithannen*, etc.," *Semitics* 7 (1980) 131-43.

²⁷Sawyer, "Types of Prayer" 131-43. The idea of intercession is specified by a preposition **daB** (*be#ad*, "pray on behalf of") (e.g., Gen 20:7; Num 21:7; Jer 7:16). Used alone as in Dan 9:3, the word usually refers to liturgical prayer in general (cf. 2 Sam 7:27; 1 Kgs 8:54; Ps 35:3; 80:5; Isa 65:1; Dan 9:3, 21 [noun] and 9:4 [verb]). Another indication of the word's general meaning is in Isa 66:17 where the temple is twice the "house of prayer" (*tepillah*). Prayer in God's temple could denote a variety of particular facets. Jonah, while intensely alarmed inside the great fish, illustrates a more restricted meaning: "My prayer (*tepillah*) came to Thee, into Thy holy temple" (Jonah 2:3 [Heb.text, 2:8]). In such a predicament, the term for prayer must denote the specific aspect of petition. The general meaning of *tepillah* is similar to *proseuchō* (*proseuches*) in the NT (Col 3:18; 6:18; Phil 4:6) where other words specify requests (e.g. *dehsevw* [*deeseos*], Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6; *aithmata* [*aitemata*], Phil 4:6) (cf. J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* [1953 rpt.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.] 160). In the LXX **lalē** (*palal* is usually rendered by *proseuchomai*) (R. B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* [1976 rpt.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.] 219).

²⁸Johannes Hermann, "e'yxomai, e'yxh, etc.," *TDNT*, 2:785.

and 31:9 as a parallel with "weepings," the outpourings of a soul in trouble desperate for grace. Such a term is apt when a person approaches God "particularly urgent prayer, loud or tearful supplication. . . ." ²⁹

Probably remembering King Solomon, Daniel does the same thing as he did in the prayer of temple dedication. "Listen," Solomon had pled before God, "the supplications of Thy servants and Thy people Israel, when they pray toward Thy holy house . . ." (2 Chr 6:21). ³⁰

DANIEL'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF BLAME (9:4b-14)

Daniel's prayer acknowledges Israel's blame, first giving prominence to God's glory (vv. 4b, 7a, 9a) and then confessing their guilt in comparison to God's glory.

Daniel "prayed" using the same umbrella word for prayer as in v. 3. He uses a specific word for prayer ($\text{h } \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\text{a}, \text{d}) \text{ eq } \backslash \text{O}(\text{A}, \text{y}) \backslash \text{O}(\sim, \text{a}) \text{dah}$) in confessing the sins of his people (cf. v. 20 also). Confession is an implicit acknowledgment of worthiness in God and in His standards and admitting guilt because of factors that violate His character and values.

God's Glory First (9:4b)

Daniel first saw the guilt in the light of God's glory, similar to what he was taught in His model prayer which begins with God as heavenly and hallowed (Matt 6:9; Luke 11:2). To Daniel, one title for God is $\text{y } \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\text{A}, \text{n}) \text{O}(\text{I}, \text{'})$ ($@ \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(+, \text{a}) \text{d } \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\sim, \text{o}) \text{n } \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\sim, \text{a}) \text{y}$) as articulated twice in v. 4. He also "the great and awesome $\text{l } \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\text{E}, \text{'})$ ($@ \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\sim, \text{e}) \text{l}$)." It is appropriate for Daniel to conceive of God this way, not because of borrowing from post-exilic Judaism through his meditation on Deuteronomy, which was written centuries before his day. ³¹ Deuteronomy 10:17 says, "For the Lord your God is the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God . . ." (cf. also Deut 10:21). Daniel knew such a God whom he has already described as the "Prince of princes" (8:25). ³² As $@ \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(+, \text{a}) \text{d } \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\sim, \text{o}) \text{n } \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\sim, \text{a}) \text{y}$, the mighty

²⁹Hermann, "e γ xomai" 2:785. Cf. Pss 28:2, 6; 31:22; 116:1; 130:2; 140:6 for other examples. Zechariah 12:10 refers to a spirit (or Spirit) of grace ($\text{wE,he } \text{n}$) and of supplications, i.e. a receptive and repentant attitude, sensitive to the need for grace. God "gives grace to the afflicted" (Isa 54:13; 61:1; 66:2; cf. 3:34b). Among others, He gave grace to Noah (Gen 6:8), Abraham (18:3; cf. vv. 17-19), Lot (Gen 19:16), Moses (Exod 33:12, 13; 34:9), Gideon (Judg 6:17), and David (2 Sam 15:25).

³⁰Solomon has *tahanunim* often in prayer for Israel (2 Chronicles 6 = 1 Kings 8). This exemplifies an adeptness in Scripture that fosters naturalness and spontaneity in incorporating biblical wording and concepts in prayer.

³¹For evidence of a Mosaic dating of Deuteronomy, see R. K. Harrison, *Introduction* 637-62.

³²Some refer this to the high priest Onias III, murdered in 171 B.C. However, the reference is more reasonably to God (Goldingay, *Daniel* 210-11; Wood, *A Commentary* 228; Young, *The Prophecy* 172, 181). In favor of this, God is the "Prince of the host" (8:11), since the place Antiochus Epiphanes opposes is "His sanctuary," i.e. more probably God's. God instituted the sacrifice (Exodus 29)

nothing was too hard for Him as proven by His deeds in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and at the Jordan. He was awe-inspiring, incredible, and not to be taken lightly but greatly feared.

He is a God of glory also as "one who keeps" His covenant. He is different from the Israelites who had broken their covenant. He made a covenant with Abraham and his people in Gen 12:1-3, 7. As the covenant God He kept His covenant wherever he went (Gen 28:15, 20) and keeps those who love Him (Ps 145:20). His blessing and preservation of Israel is invoked (Num 6:24). He is asked to preserve Israel as a precious pupil of an eye (Ps 17:8). He can be trusted to enliven His servant to keep His word (Ps 119:17, 44). By the authority of Scripture as borne out in personal experience, Daniel knew that God keeps His covenant.

God also keeps His covenant loving-kindness`His \bar{d} $eq \ \bar{O}(e, s)$ $\bar{O}(e, i)$ ($eq \ \bar{O}(>, h)esed$). Daniel knew this from a vast number of passages. The covenant God is a God of kindness (Ps 59:18; 130:7). He delights in it and, because of it, assures Israel that He will stand true to His covenant even when they are in exile (Mic 7:18). He is kind in His deliverance from enemies and other troubles (Ps 21:8; 143:8, 12). So men rejoice in His kindness and hope in it (Ps 33:18). He is faithful in keeping His covenant with David (2 Sam 7:15 = 1 Chr 17:13 = 2 Sam 22:51) and in quickening with spiritual life (Ps 109:26; 119:41, 76, 88, 124, 149, 159). He is the God who gives what Daniel and his people need`forgiveness, hope, covenant fulfillment.

It is fitting for Daniel to accent these positives before spelling out the sin which God's lovingkindness is a remedy.

Still, God is not an impersonal machine that automatically cranks out forgiveness. He is what He is for Israel and does what He does for Israel to the goal of what He wants Israel to be toward Him. He is such a God to "those who love Him and keep His commandments." Loving Him and obeying His commandments entwine with one another in Scriptures familiar to Daniel (Deut 5:10; 7:9). They would eventually combine in the teaching of Daniel's "anointed one" the Messiah (cf. Dan 9:25; John 14:21-23). A psalmist, long before Daniel, knew the people whom God keeps are those who love Him (Ps 145:20b). "But all the wicked He will destroy" (Ps 145:20b).

Daniel learned from the Word that Israel was to keep (\bar{r} $eq \ \bar{O}(a, m)$ $\bar{O}(A, v)$ [$eq \ \bar{O}(+, s)$ $eq \ \bar{O}(\sim, a)mar$]) God's covenant (Exod 19:5) and His commandments (Exod 20:6; Deut 4:2; 5:29). Some did, though not sinlessly, and found God's blessing in a life of intimacy (Ps 103:18; 106:3; 119:63, 67). This would happen later in NT times (John 14:21-23; 1 John 2:5; 3:24). The OT had many ways to articulate this obedience, besides through $eq \ \bar{O}(+, s)$ $eq \ \bar{O}(\sim, a)$. Some people walked blamelessly in the law of God, seeking Him (Ps 119:1, 2) and lighting in His law, and bearing fruit (Ps 1:1-3). Daniel was this kind of person (Daniel 1, 6). God has His remnant (Isa 6:13) and can restore by turning Israel to Himself (Jer 31:18; cf. Ps 80:3, 7, 19 [Heb. text, 80:4, 8, 20]).³³

in 8:25 it is God that the "horn" (leader) stands against, for the "horn" is broken without human agency, i.e. by the One he opposes, God (cf. Dan 2:45).

³³Cf. nn. 8 and 21 regarding God's bringing men to repentance.

The prophecy later in Daniel 9 tells how the covenant God will term Israel's sin. He will bring in "everlasting righteousness" (9:24).

Israel's Guilt in Light of God's Glory (9:5-14)

Using different terminology, the prayer acknowledges Israel's sin at nineteen times. In v. 5 Daniel reels off four finite verbs for sin followed by a verb-an infinitive absolute. He also has other expressions for sin or repeats some of these words for emphasis.

The enormity of sin. Heaping up terms, he candidly acknowledges severe guilt before God. Solomon's prayer, which had used three verbs to acknowledge sin (1 Kgs 8:47 = 2 Chr 6:37), resembles v. 5. But here two more words are added to Solomon's list.

Daniel includes himself with his people by using "we." Whatever the degree and nature of his sin, he confesses it along with theirs.

Israel has "sinned," $\text{eq } \backslash O(A, t) \text{ eq } \backslash O(A, i) \text{ (eq } \backslash O(>, h) \text{ eq } \backslash O(., t) \text{ eq } \backslash O(\sim, a) @)$, i.e., "missed the mark" of God's will. Daniel uses this word often (vv. 5, 8, 11, 15). His competency in the Scriptures provides him numerous examples of the word. Often these name Israel's sin (Num 14:40; Josh 7:11; 12:10; Ps 78:32). As Jerusalem is in wreckage, Jeremiah says, "we have sinned" (Lam 5:16). Cases of an individual who sinned, such as a priest (Lev 4:3), Balaam (Num 22:34), Saul (1 Sam 15:24, 30), David (2 Sam 24:10), are frequent.

Not only did they "miss the mark," they also "committed iniquity" ($\backslash O(A, r) \text{ eq } \backslash O(A, ;) \text{ [# eq } \backslash O(\sim, a)r \text{ eq } \backslash O(\sim, a)h]$), another word used frequently in the prayer (Dan 9:5, 13, 16). God promises an eventual solution to iniquity (Dan 9:24). The term speaks of doing wrong. Its noun form is exemplified in the iniquity of the Amorites (Gen 15:16) with Leviticus 18 specifying hideous perversities, Cain's murder of Abel (Gen 4:13), the ten spies' belittling of God as inadequate to conquer walled villages and giants (Num 14:34), and David's ugly escapade at Bathsheba (Ps 51:2a).

Daniel strengthens his description of the enormity of the sin even more. "We acted wickedly," $; \text{eq } \backslash O(a, v) \text{ eq } \backslash O(A, r) \text{ (r eq } \backslash O(\sim, a) \text{ eq } \backslash O(+, a))$ (vv. 5, 15). The word sometimes contrasts with righteousness (Ps 45:7; Eccl 3:1). Daniel describes the misdeed when King Jehoshaphat "acted wickedly" in tolerating an alliance with wicked King Ahaziah, causing God to destroy his ships as a sign of His displeasure (2 Chr 20:35). The word also describes resistance to God's ordinance and departing from His statutes (2 Sam 22:22 f. = Ps 18:22 f.; cf. also Ps 106:6; 9:33).

Daniel continues: "and rebelled" (cf. also v. 9). Joshua and Caleb urged Israel to act on their scouting report and not rebel ($\text{d eq } \backslash O(a, r) \text{ eq } \backslash O(a, r) \text{ [m eq } \backslash O(\sim, a)rad]$) against the Lord (Num 14:9). Their sin of rebellion was so enormous to God that He would shut them out of Canaan. In context, the essence of that rebellion was a shrinking back in unbelief. They preferred their own notions of what was reasonable over the specific direction of God.

Daniel incorporates a fifth word: "and turned aside" ($\text{rus [s eq } \backslash O(=, a)]$ vv. 5, 11). The idea is that they apostatized, or veered off course from the path

God. This resembles a woman who turns aside (*s eq \O(=,ur)*) into a share of impurity (Prov 11:22). Israel turned aside (*s eq \O(=,ur)*) to make a molten image in revolt, in essence from fidelity to God's commandments (Deut 9:12). A generation after Joshua turned aside (*s eq \O(=,ur)*) quickly from obeying God's commandments (Judg 2:17). The word occurs with another word, *\O(a,z) eq \O(A,;)* (*# eq \O(~,a)zab*, "forsake"), in Jer 17:13: "Those who have turned away from the Lord the hope of Israel . . . have forsaken the fountain of living waters."

Daniel includes still more phrases to show the enormity of sin that warranted a great judgment.

The embarrassment of sin. Literally, "shame of faces" belongs to Israel (Dan 9:8). Theirs is an "open shame," a humiliation. The same expression describes the fall of Sennacherib of Assyria (2 Chr 32:21). He saw the overwhelming destruction of his military personnel in a single night's visitation by God's angel and retreated in shame of face to his own country.

In Ps 69:20 (Eng. text, 69:19), David prays for deliverance from shame. The context links the shame with sinking in the mire, being caught in deep waters of distress, reproach, and dishonor. Shame is the humiliation a broken heart can feel; it is a sick feeling, pain, and a wiped-out feeling producing weeping. In another case, Jer 2:26 likens Israel's shame in its ruin to the ignominy of a thief who is exposed a downcast, hopeless sensation. Jeremiah himself is ashamed before the rejecting people. He feels it in the whisperings, the ridicule, and the torture of stocks (20:18).

In the context of Dan 9:7, the shame is the same. It is the emptiness produced when God has left some in Judah to behold a shattered existence and driven others to distant countries to taste bitterness without their land, temple, and other blessings.

Daniel knew from the Scriptures about God's promise of replacing shame with blessing in the Messianic day (Isa 61:7). Only God could do this, because righteousness [not shame] belongs to Him (Dan 9:14, 16). God loves righteousness (Ps 11:7), and His right hand is full of it (Ps 48:10). It was because of God's nature and not for Israel's righteousness that God has blessed the nation (Deut 10:12). And it was because of His nature that He judged. Yet hope is in Him, in spite of the judgment. From the Scriptures Daniel knew that God pledges to establish Israel's righteousness eventually (Isa 54:14). The prophecy corresponding to the prayer in Daniel 9 will show that God guarantees everlasting righteousness in place of the earlier shame (v. 24).

The result of sin. The consequence for Israel's sin was the "curse and oath" (v. 11). Daniel refers to the judgment God had warned He would bring on the people disobeyed. By His servant Moses He had promised blessings in the case of obedience (Lev 26:1-13; Deut 28:1-14), but curses as a penalty for disobedience (Lev 26:14-39; Deut 28:15-68).

The two nouns "curse" and "oath" are linked by a conjunction, which brings us some to see a hendiadys. If so, the idea is "the curse of the oath" or "the

(pronounced) under oath."³⁴ It makes no sense to take the oath as a promise to bring judgment and the curse as the punishment itself, i.e., the content of the oath.

The judgment about which God warned Israel was the calamity that Daniel says "has been poured out" (* $eq \setminus O(a, /) eq \setminus O(A, n) [n eq \setminus O(\sim, a)tak]$). The word can picture a downpour of rain (Exod 9:33), but it usually pertains to pouring out God's wrath on Jerusalem.³⁵ It is forecast (Jer 7:20), then carried out (Jer 49:1).

Sin's end was a "great calamity," so utter that Daniel says no city had been destroyed by judgment as great as Jerusalem's (v. 12). The great ($l\text{od } eq \setminus O(A, G) \setminus O(\sim, a)d eq \setminus O(=, o)l$) God of v. 4 brought the great ($g eq \setminus O(\sim, a)d eq \setminus O(=, o)l$) judgment of verse 12.³⁶ God in carrying out this devastation "caused His wrath to stand." The hiphil form registers a causative thrust of $\lt uq (g eq \setminus O(=, u)nd eq \setminus O(=, o)l$ "stand, rise up," v. 12).³⁷ He promised His *wrath* against Israel would be great (Jer 29:24, 28) and their *calamity* at His hand would be great (Jer 30:14-15).

A man schooled in Scripture could see that as God was absolutely faithful to fulfill His judgment, He will be absolutely faithful to fulfill the promised blessing. He knew that the same word for "great," $g eq \setminus O(\sim, a)d eq \setminus O(=, o)l$, attaches not only to calamity but also to God's great compassion (1 Kgs 3:6; Ps 57:10). Joining Daniel in prayer for Israel's future, Jeremiah assures that God will hear those who cry out upon Him and show them "great ($g eq \setminus O(\sim, a)d eq \setminus O(=, o)l$) and mighty things" (Jer 33:3). In that very context he defines these as a restoration of Israel to her land (33:6-22).

Lamentations depicts Jerusalem's awesome destruction, misery, desperation, even to the point of parents eating their own children, and bankruptcy of all temporal comforts.³⁸ Jeremiah 16:1-9 portrays rampant death, lack of burial, and regular mourning (vv. 4, 7), and emptiness of peace or joy (vv. 5, 9).

True, terrible doom overtook other cities such as Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim, which are used as later examples.³⁹ But Jerusalem was in a class all its own. Its destruction was greater because it was distinctive as the city in which God had promised to dwell (v. 19; cf. Ps 9:11).⁴⁰ The greater fullness of light given Israel, light she chose to reject (e.g., Dan 9:5, 6, 10), matches the greater

³⁴André Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1979) 176.

³⁵E.g., a pouring out of wrath on Jerusalem yet to come (2 Chr 34:25; Jer 7:20) and later repented as recently accomplished (Jer 42:18; 44:6); cf. BDB, 677.

³⁶However, the "great" in "great compassion" (Dan 9:18) is a different word, $ba (rab)$, "many, great."

³⁷Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax* (2nd ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978) BDB, 879.

³⁸Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *A Biblical Approach to Suffering* (Chicago: Moody, 1982), has a detailed description of the horror in Lamentations.

³⁹E.g., Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut 29:23); Admah and Zeboim (Deut 29:23; Hos 11:8).

⁴⁰Joyce C. Baldwin, *Daniel* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1978) 166.

degree of judgment.

DANIEL'S REQUEST FOR BLESSING (9:15-19)

Pointing to the Past Deliverance (9:15)

Daniel selects two great acts of God's power in Israel's history. One was at the beginning of the nation: the deliverance from Egypt (v. 15). The other came at the end of her past kingdom: the doom of Jerusalem (v. 12). He appeals to the exodus as a backdrop for future restoration.⁴¹

Both main sections of the prayer (9:4b-14 and 9:15-19) begin with a declaration of God's greatness (vv. 4b, 15). Both times Daniel contrasts God's glory with Israel's guilt. In each he links God with His people, and the source of God's action and blessing His people is what He is. In the first section Daniel prays in view of God's perpetual action in keeping His covenant and loving-kindness. In the second section he cites the one case in the past when God restored Israel to the promised land. This has direct relevance. Restoration is the specific need Israel has in Daniel 9.

Pleading for the Prospective Deliverance (9:16-19)

The man of prayer, alert in vv. 1-2 to a turning point in God's dealings, intercedes by asking God to restore Israel. He bases this on God's concern for them—they are His people (v. 16)—and also on His compassion for them. Daniel's zeal for the Lord to act to uphold *His* interests.

The basis of His concern for them. Noting the relationship in which God acted, the initiative in making a covenant and has maintained His plans for Israel, the supplicant makes his plea.

What God did in judgment He did in fulfillment of His word and because of His own integrity, His own interests, and His own purposes. As he prays, Daniel is sensitive to God's anger and wrath (v. 16). He sees things from God's standpoint with a zeal for matters that He is concerned about. His perspective speaks of *God's* city, *God's* holy mountain, *God's* people, *God's* servant, *God's* sake, and *God's* sanctuary (vv. 16-17). The intercession begins and ends on the note of *God's* mercy (vv. 15, 19).

"Our desolations" are Israel's heartaches (v. 18), but the intercessor's focus is on God's heartbeat. And so Daniel prays aggressively for God's accomplishments. All, he can be scripturally confident, are God's will by His promises.⁴² God's yes answer to them is certain in honor of His plan. In essence, Daniel implores, "Bring back your city" (v 16), "Bring back your temple" (v 17) "Bring back your people" (vv. 16, 19).

⁴¹Isaiah 11:16 compares a future restoration of Israel with the past one from Egypt. It is difficult to identify details of Isaiah's description with a historical period before that relating to the second advent of the Messiah.

⁴²Cf., for example, n. 5.

The basis of His compassion for them. Daniel approaches the God who "prayer" (Ps 65:2)⁴³ on the ground of His righteousnesses (v. 16), not that of (v. 18). His approach rests also on His great compassion (v. 18). Already D has enumerated Israel's demerits, enough to sink her into depths of hopelessness. He now flees to the steadfast refuge. God in the past has been compassionate, working good for His people and exalting His name. Daniel believes that, being what He is, will perform other comparable acts to glorify His name because He has not yet done for Israel all He promised.

Earlier in the book, God uses Daniel to describe His gracious design for Israel (cf. Jer 29:11). After four empires conquer Israel, the God of heaven will establish His kingdom on earth (Dan 2:35, 44). It will never pass to another power (Dan 2:44). He will bless His people in ruling as king over them and the nations (7:15-28).

Later in the book, God pledges further assurance. God's people will be rescued at a time when resurrection and reward combine (Dan 12:1-3).

When praying in chapter 9, Daniel already knew God's intent as expressed in chapters 2 and 7. It was natural for him to plead in light of God's plan for the future. His request for help is plain, primary help being asked for the city's sanctuary.

(1) If God does let His anger and wrath "turn away" (v. 16), this in effect will result in the restoration of the city. This is a direct reversal of the problem at that moment. It also is plain in prophecies prior to Daniel's time.⁴⁴

(2) If God resolves the "reproach" before other peoples (v. 16), it will enable Israel to return to the land from which Daniel and others had been taken (Dan 1:1-2). Ezekiel observed that nations brought insults not only on Israel (36:1-15) but also on her Lord, defaming His reputation and profaning His holy name (Ezek 36:16-19). Restoration to the land would "vindicate the holiness" of His great name, causing the nations to know that He is the Lord (Ezek 36:23). God established His reputation when He restored Israel from Egypt (Dan 9:15). Now He will be glorified again by a restoration. The stakes are high, with His honor on the line. Moses had prayed, pleading God's honor (Exod 32:11-13). Daniel does the same with great passion. Note phrases such as "Thy sake" (v. 17), "Thy name" (v. 18), "called by Thy name" (v. 19).

(3) The prayer grasps for a solution for the problem of seventy years of desolation from the land. Daniel knew the same passage that pre-dicted the seventy-year duration of desolation of the city assured Israelite re-entry into her land (Jer 29:10, 14). He also was aware of other prophecies to bring them back and comfort them, which equates with a reversal of the current desolations (Dan 9:18). The restoration presumably would be just as literal as the desolations, so Daniel naturally prays for a reversal.

⁴³In Ps 65:2 (Heb. text 65:3) "prayer," **hāp̄** (*tepillah*), is the general noun for prayer as in Ps 65:2, 9:3, 17, 21 (cf. verbal forms in vv. 4, 20). Also in the same verse, a form of the same word for "hear" **ʾāh** (*shomea*#, "you who hear") appears in Dan 9:17 (**ʾāh** [*sema*#, "hear"]) and 9:19 (**ʾāh** [*sema*##, "hear"]).

⁴⁴Cf. n. 18.

for this.

(4) Daniel sees the best solution for a return as based on God's compassion, not human merits. God initiated the covenant (Gen 12:1-3, 7). He often reaffirmed His pledge, even when His people had failed (e.g., Genesis 13, 20-21). He renewed the covenant by walking alone between the sacrifices while Abram slept (Gen 15). By this God pledged by His very being that He would graciously bring the covenant to fulfillment.⁴⁵ Later He made a covenant with David (2 Sam 23) verifying that even though His people failed and had to be disciplined, He would not break His promise (Ps 89:30-37).⁴⁶

(5) Daniel's passion that God "listen" ($\text{; } \text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(\mathbf{a}, \mathbf{m}) \text{ eq } \backslash \text{O}(\mathbf{A}, \mathbf{v}) \backslash \text{O}(+, \mathbf{s}) \text{ eq } \backslash \text{O}(\sim, \mathbf{a}) \text{ ma\#}$) to his prayer (v. 17) agrees with God's avowal in Jer 26:40-45 to remember His covenant even when Israel was in exile by destroying them. It also accords with what Solomon prayed would be the response of God's people in exile (2 Chr 6:36-39) and with God's direct promise to "listen" to the prayer by the exiles (Jer 29:12, also $\text{eq } \backslash \text{O}(+, \mathbf{s}) \text{ eq } \backslash \text{O}(\sim, \mathbf{a}) \text{ ma\#}$) and reinstate them in her land.

His concern also extended to the temple in the city:

(1) God's face shining on the temple (v. 17) implied a restoration of it, and such a connection is confirmed by Ps 80:3, 7, 19 (Heb. text, 80:4, 8, 20).

(2) It is in the interests of the Lord Himself, i.e., for His sake (v. 17), that the temple be restored. God needed to restore it to uphold His very honor (Ezekiel 36).

GOD'S PROVISION FOR BLESSING (9:20-27)

God uses an angel with a prophecy of His future plan to answer the prayer of Daniel. This assures Daniel and his people that God has determined to provide a future of blessing for them.

The Angelic Messenger (9:20-23)

The accord with God (v. 20). God's provision for Israel's needs was revealed while Daniel was praying about them.⁴⁷ He was speaking to God,⁴⁸ in part confessing the sin of his people Israel and presenting⁴⁹ supplication, i.e., intercessions for favor in a situation of need.⁵⁰ He was zealous for God's interests, too, praying on behalf of "the holy mountain" of his God.

⁴⁵Cf. Rogers, "The Covenant" 248, 255-56.

⁴⁶Cf. nn. 7, 8.

⁴⁷Isaiah 65:24 refers to God's determination before man's prayer occurs (cf. Isa 46:9-10).

⁴⁸General words for prayer as found in Dan 9:3 (noun) and 9:4 (verb).

⁴⁹Lit., transitive idea, "falling (a tree)" or "causing to fall,"

lypā (*mappā*) as in Dan 9:17.

⁵⁰As also in Dan 9:3, 17, 18.

The arrival of Gabriel (9:21). When Gabriel arrives, Daniel is "wearied weariness,"⁵¹ or, as some prefer, Gabriel comes, "being caused to fly swiftly in rapid transit since the beginning of the prayer (cf. v. 23).⁵² The evening-afternoon time was at the important moment of Israel's evening sacrifice (cf. Exodus 29:39) and away from the temple, they could not offer a sacrifice, but they could pray toward the temple (Dan 6:10). Daniel and other godly Israelites aspired that their prayer would ascend as fragrant incense to God (Ps 141:1-2).

The assurances of Gabriel (9:22-23). The angel explains that his visit purposed to give Daniel "insight and understanding," for which Daniel obviously longed (1, 2). Gabriel quickly responds with the assurances by coming while the prayer was in progress. He encourages Daniel by observing the esteem in which he is held by God, calling him "a precious treasure."⁵³ The intensive plural of the Hebrew noun here and in Dan 10:11, 19 could be rendered "you are one of precious qualities."⁵⁴ Daniel abounds in traits pleasing to God: He is pure (Dan 10:2), humble (2:9), righteous (4:27), selfless (5:17), depends on God (2:17, 18), and maintains integrity (6:4) and consistency (6:10, 11). He is persistent (10:2, 3), sincere (chaps. 2, 4, 5, 7-12), earnest (9:3), saturated with Scripture (9:4b-19), and involves himself for the sake of others (chaps. 2, 4, 5, 7-12). God's high regard assures His willingness to answer Daniel's prayer.

The admonition of Gabriel (9:23). Gabriel exhorts Daniel to pay attention to the message and gain insight. He wants Daniel to *grasp* the truth communicated through him by God (v. 22).

The Answer Expressing God's Aim (9:24-27)

God covers the same subjects about which Daniel had prayed. He summarizes in v. 24 the good status to which He will restore Israel in a prophecy

⁵¹C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, n.d.) 33. Keil suggests that the cause of Daniel's weariness in his spiritual quest for God's will. This fits with the larger context in which Daniel is weary and in need of angelic strengthening (8:17-18, 27; cf. 10:8, 16-19). It is difficult to conceive of a celestial being as wearied, even when opposed by another celestial creature (10:13). The view also suits the words used: **FAm** (*mu#ap*, "wearied") and **FAYB** (*ba#ap*, "with weariness") (BDB, 419), not **Fu;** (*#ap*, "he flies,") (BDB, 733).

⁵²So Wood, *A Commentary* 245; John F. Walvoord, *Daniel, The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody, 1971) 215; Young, *The Prophecy* 190. These prefer a reference to Gabriel as "being caused to fly rapidly," based on the word meaning "to fly" (see n. 51) rather than the meaning chosen by BDB (419), "weary from winged flight." It is problematic to assume that this angel has wings, like other celestial beings (e.g., cherubim, seraphim) (see Goldingay, *Daniel*, 228 n. 21).

⁵³Cf. BDB, 326, on **hAumI** (*hamudah*, "treasure") and the word as used in Dan 11:38, 43:8:27.

⁵⁴Intensification rather than numerical plurality is the force of the plural form.

corresponds to the precise concerns of the prayer: "your people," "your holy and the temple, "the most holy place" (v. 24).

God's blessing on Daniel's people is enumerated in six parts.⁵⁵ They involve the resolution of sin and the provision of righteousness. Through "the anointed one," i.e., the Messiah (v. 25), God will implement these. According to v. 26, the Messiah will be "cut off," presumably in death. Other parts of the book provide more details about what the Messiah will be and do. From our twentieth-century perspective we see how these details connect with a second coming of this Messiah in that as a "stone," He will catastrophically and abruptly pulverize Gentile kingdoms who control Israel into fine dust (2:35, 44; Luke 20:18). This natural means conquest of a military and political nature that is as literal as empires subjecting other empires in the context of Daniel 2. It is not just spiritual conquest. The Messiah also is portrayed as "one like a son of man coming on the clouds of heaven" (7:13-14; cf. Mark 14:62; Rev 1:14; 14:14), as one linked with humanity on earth also heavenly and doing what God does in other OT passages.⁵⁶

God's answer to Daniel's prayer provides encouragement by speaking of restoration and rebuilding. The temple would be rebuilt as during His earthly ministry⁵⁷ and later, in a final sense, in the Messianic Kingdom after the second

⁵⁵To relate the six aspects in 9:24 with the complex of realities God will consummate at the second advent is reasonable. Based on the death of the Messiah at His first advent (cf. Isaiah 53), Israel will see these benefits realized fully at Messiah's second advent (Jer 31:33-34; Ezek 37:23; Rom 11:25). Wood's perspective is helpful (*A Commentary*, 247-51): God will restrain the transgression of Israel without denying extension of the same restraint to Gentile sin. He will bring it under His sovereign control and end the enmity of centuries. Not only will He stop transgression, but He will "make an end of sins" through a lasting solution. He tells us how He will do it too: by expiation "to atone for iniquity." "Atone," the usual OT word for atonement, was often used in the sacrifices that pointed to the Messiah's future death for sin, referred to here as His being "cut off" (v. 25). The basis for atonement has been laid, but as Romans 11 explains, Israel's national benefits await the second advent. This agrees with much OT prophecy in which the final resolution of Israel's trouble is in a second advent context (cf. n. 15). Fourth, God will "cause righteousness of ages to come in" through a permanent cure. Previously, Israel always fell back into transgression and needed the more permanent solution anticipated in OT prophecies of the second advent. "To seal up vision and prophecy" relates to fulfilling prophetic revelation. Anticipated conditions will become realities for Israel. This larger perspective provides for Gentile blessing at the second advent, too (cf. Dan 7:27). "To consecrate a holy of holies," as Wood shows, refers to God's restoration of temple operation during the future millennial era.

⁵⁶Cloud imagery linked with a person is a mark of divine presence and authority (E. J. Youngblood, *Daniel's Vision of the Son of Man* [London: Tyndale, 1959] 11). God makes the clouds His chariot (Isa 66:15; Job 38:9) and comes in a cloud (Exod 34:5; Num 10:34; Isa 19:1). At least 70 times God is associated with a cloud (e.g., Exod 13:21; 2 Sam 22:12; Job 22:14; Ps 68:34). His glory cloud appears over the temple (1 Kgs 8:10-11; Ezek 10:3), and He is connected with clouds in Ezek 1:4, 28. The NT also associates the Son of Man with deity, as a figure from heaven (e.g., Matt 24:30; 26:64; Mark 14:62; Rev 1:7). A. J. Ferch, though favoring the view that the son of man in Daniel 7:13-14 is an angel, admits that before the 19th century, "The majority of interpreting commentators considered Daniel 7:13 to be a prophecy of Christ's second advent" (*The Apocalyptic Son of Man in Daniel 7* [Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1979] 36).

⁵⁷The rebuilding of the *temple* in 520-515 B. C. is the focus in the Book of Ezra: 1:2-5; 2:68; 3:1-2; 4:1, 3, 24; 5:2-3, 8-9, 11, 13, 15-17; 6:3, 5, 7-8, 12, 14-16 (temple finally completed), 17, 22.

advent (Ezekiel 40`47).⁵⁸ The city also would be rebuilt as in Nehemiah's case. Time has revealed that the perspective of Dan 9:24-27 covers many centuries and extends to the final restoration of the city when "everlasting righteousness" will be in complete control.

The scope of this essay does not include detailed interpretive issues of Dan 9:24-27. This has been done elsewhere.⁶⁰ Primary attention here is toward how prayer relates to prophecy, but the compatibility of this prophecy can be shown to harmonize in general with other prophecies in Daniel and the OT.

The perspective of Daniel. Some of Daniel's prophecies span many centuries, stretching to Israel's complete deliverance from other nations and possession of spiritual blessings (Dan 2:44; 7:15-28; 12:1-3, 13). The promised kingdom of Israel's blessing will fill the entire earth (2:35) and embrace peoples of all nations with the Lord ruling over all (7:27). The perspective also includes resurrection and final redemption (12:2-3, 13), integrating with the second advent of the Messiah and beyond.

The perspective of other prophecies. Daniel's prophecies (9:24-27) correlate with OT prophecies outside of Daniel too. They constitute a comprehensive summary of several ways in which God will answer the prayers of other prophets (cf. Jer 29:12; 33:3). The process will result in the welfare for Israel (Jer 29:10; 33:6 ff.) Details from Daniel 9 integrate meaningfully with details of other prophecies and predictions.

The first sixty-nine "sevens" (Dan 9:25), "sevens" being composed of years, are the early part of the process that will issue in Israel's good. The time period covered spans the interval until the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and His death.⁶² A suggested placement of the seventieth "seven" of years has been at the first advent of Jesus Christ and shortly after,⁶³ but it fits better after a hiatus of

⁵⁸Cf. n. 55 and Ralph Alexander, *Ezekiel* (Chicago: Moody, 1976) 129-36; Paul Enns, *Ezekiel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986) 179-81; Charles H. Dyer, "Ezekiel," *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (ed. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck; Wheaton: Victor, 1983-85) 1:1303-4.

⁵⁹Rebuilding the *city* and its *wall* is emphasized in Nehemiah: 1:2-33; 2:3, 5, 8, 12-13, 15, 17; 3:1, 6, 8, 13-15; 4:1, 6, 15, 17, 19; 5:16; 6:1, 6, 15 (city finally completed).

⁶⁰To supplement the prophetic viewpoint of this essay, see Paul D. Feinberg, "An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27," *Tradition & Testament, Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg* (eds. John S. and Paul D. Feinberg; Chicago: Moody, 1981) 189-220; Harold H. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977) 115-39.

⁶¹Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects* 117-19. That the "sevens" are composed of years is a major conclusion based on Daniel's attention to years in 9:1-2, on the phrase "sevens of days" (Dan 9:2) where "sevens" have to be clarified as referring to days and not years, and the computation that shows which sevens of years works out as Hoehner shows, with the end of the sixty-two plus six (sixty-nine) sevens at the first advent of Jesus Christ.

⁶²Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects* 119-31.

⁶³E. G. Young, *The Prophecy* 208-19.

between His first and second advents.⁶⁴

It is difficult to place the covenant in the last seven years (v. 27) at the advent. The new covenant Jesus inaugurated (Jer 32:40; Luke 22:20; Heb. 13: eternal, and the "he" of Dan. 9:27 is more likely the "prince" of v. 26, the antecedent of the pronoun. He is a prince (ruler) rising from the fourth empire Roman (Daniel 2, 7), that will bring desolation to Israel immediately before the second advent. Further, the panorama of Dan 9:24-27 more probably agrees with Daniel's other prophecies (chaps. 2, 7 and 12) that reach to the second advent.

This harmonizes with other OT prophecies that speak of the installation of God's king over Israel and the world (Jer 23:5-6; Ezek 34:11-31; Zech 14:1-3, 9). The NT also supports this anticipation as it looks beyond the Messiah's crucifixion to His second appearance (Mark 14:62; Rev 1:7; 14:14; 19:11 ff.).

So Dan 9:24 sums up in a comprehensive unit the facets of reassurance concerning God's full restoration of Israel. These bring comfort to Daniel's people while other parts of Daniel show the inclusion of Gentiles in the provisions (7:1-27). This coincides with much OT and NT prophecy, too.⁶⁵

Verses 25-27 spell out the broad steps by which God will make v. 24 a reality. These extend from the rebuilding of Jerusalem (v. 25), to the cross of the Messiah (v. 26), and then to the end of desolations (v. 27). The last of these was the future from Jesus' vantage point at His first advent (Matt 23:37-39). God desires the welfare described in Dan 9:24 as the final solution, not an intermediate one that leaves Israel still in difficulty. God's unalterable word is a pledge of "everlasting righteousness."

CONCLUSION

Daniel's prayer for Israel concerns matters of sin that have been roadblocks to blessing. He confesses the sin, but recognizes that Israel's blessing and reversal of its desolation will come from the God who is faithful to His covenant and His compassions. He depends on God's righteous acts, not the non-existent ones of Israel. He pleads for restoration of the people, the city, and the sanctuary. God answers with reassurances that He will restore all three. The answer does not correct Daniel, but correlates with his prayer formulated in light of earlier Scripture. Submissive to God, he prays for the fulfillment of blessings God has promised. So he makes himself available to participate in what God wants to do. God has a plan from beginning to end (Isa 46:9-10) and affirms His good desire for Israel (Jer 29:12-14). He allows men the privilege of laboring together with Him by yearning and praying for the same wonderful ends (Jer 29:12).

Christians of the present generation can learn many important lessons from the prayer in Daniel 9 as they engage themselves in the vital ministry of prayer.

⁶⁴Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects* 131-33.

⁶⁵E.g., Gen 12:1-3; Isa 49:6; 51:4; 56:6-7; Zech 14:9, 16.

WHO IS WRONG?
A REVIEW OF JOHN GERSTNER'S
WRONGLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH¹

Richard L. Mayhue
Vice-President and Dean
Professor of Pastoral Ministries
The Master's Seminary

Dr. John H. Gerstner, a recognized scholar with impressive credentials, has issued a call for dispensationalists to admit the glaring gaps between their system and orthodox Christianity. However, his presentation of dispensationalism contains shortcomings that necessitate this special review article to point out some of these and to challenge dispensationalists to publicize a greater clarification of their position. Many of the assumptions that undergird Dr. Gerstner's case against dispensationalism are in error. These faults are magnified by a number of major weaknesses in his argument. A review of the book shows how the author's treatment of his subject deteriorates even more through ten representative theological misstatements. The work is of such a misleading nature that a retraction of some kind seems to be in order.

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General Anthony C. McAuliffe, commanding officer of the 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne, found his troops surrounded by the Germans early in the famous World War II Battle of the Bulge

¹John H. Gerstner, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth and Hyatt, Publishers, Inc., 1991). This volume greatly expands on Dr. Gerstner's previous brief presentation of these issues in his booklet *A Primer on Dispensationalism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1982).

(December, 1944). The opposing Nazi general, sensing quick victory, sent word to surrender immediately. McAuliffe replied with what is now one of the most famous one-word responses in military history, "Nuts!" In love, that also is our response to Dr. Gerstner's call for the surrender of "dispensationalism."

This strong retort, borrowed from WW II, answers R. C. Sproul's (President of Ligonier Ministries and a disciple of Dr. Gerstner) initial comments in the Foreword (p. ix).

This bomb`unlike missiles that suffer from dubious guidance systems and are liable to land on civilian populations wreaking havoc indiscriminately`is delivered with pinpoint accuracy into the laps of dispensational scholars.

According to Sproul, Gerstner

would prefer torture or death to intentionally distorting or misrepresenting anyone's position. . . . If Gerstner is inaccurate`if he has failed to understand dispensational theology correctly`then he owes many a profound apology. But first he must be shown where and how he is in error. This is the challenge of the book. If Gerstner is accurate, then Dispensationalism should be discarded as being a serious deviation from Biblical Christianity (p. xi).

Dr. Gerstner delivers his "Surrender!" demand in the Introduction and elsewhere in the book:

Dispensationalism today, as yesterday, is spurious Calvinism and dubious evangelicalism. If it does not refute my charges and the charges of many others, it cannot long continue to be considered an essentially Christian movement (p. 2).

Dispensationalism . . . is in constant deviation from essential historical Christianity . . . (p. 68).

Since Gerstner believes so strongly that soteriology determines eschatology, one could expect that the President of The Master's Seminary, John F. MacArthur, Jr., would be the first to wave a white flag. Gerstner affirmingly quotes him (without documentation or obvious connection to his point) as saying, "There is no salvation

except Lordship Salvation" (p. 2). Gerstner finds this strongly reformed view of salvation incompatible with his understanding of dispensationalism. This convincingly illustrates the most obvious *non sequitur* in the book, i.e., Dr. Gerstner's assertion throughout his book that Reformed soteriology necessarily eliminates dispensational ecclesiology and eschatology. He labors for more than half the book's chapters 7-13 to prove that dispensationalism should surrender because it is unbiblical (pp. 105-263).

He seems to debate from the following basic syllogism, though he never states it so succinctly as this:

Premise 1: Calvinism is central to all true theology.

Premise 2: Dispensationalism does not embrace Calvinism.

Conclusion: Dispensationalism is a "spurious" and "dubious" expression of true theology (p. 2).

Thus, he strongly calls for dispensationalism's quick surrender.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND HIS WORK

Dr. Gerstner, Professor Emeritus of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, is Associate Pastor of Trinity (PCA) Church in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and currently serves as theologian-at-large at Ligonier Ministries. He also lectures on the Bible at Geneva College. Gerstner has been a Visiting Professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School since 1966 and is Adjunct Professor of Theology at both Reformed Theological Seminary and Knox Theological Seminary. He holds a B.A. from Westminster College, an M.Div. and Th.M. from Westminster Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Religion from Harvard University.

Dr. Gerstner has published many books, audio and video tapes, plus numerous articles in theological journals and magazines. He was a pastor for ten years and a professor of church history at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary for thirty years (1950-80). He still preaches and

lectures around the world. He is best known for his lectures and writings on Jonathan Edwards.

In describing the author, R. C. Sproul writes glowingly about his mentor (p. ix):

As a world-class historian, Gerstner has done his homework. The book is a result of years of careful and painstaking research. Gerstner has examined in the minutest detail the works of the most important historic dispensational theologians. He has canvassed scholarly journals and Ph.D. dissertations. He has been in repeated dialogue and debate with contemporary dispensational scholars. The current publication is the crystalized essence of over one thousand typescript pages of Gerstner's research and conclusions.

J. I. Packer declares that this volume clarifies "the issues more precisely than any previous book has done."² The publisher suggests that "Dr. Gerstner . . . presents the most extensive and systematic study of Dispensational theology ever published."³

SYNOPSIS OF DR. GERSTNER'S THINKING

Dr. Gerstner divides his volume into three sections:

1. Historical Sketch of Dispensationalism (pp. 7-72).
2. Philosophy and Hermeneutics of Dispensationalism (pp. 73-101).
3. Theology of Dispensationalism (pp. 103-263).

Dispensationalism Historically

The author's sketch of history looks back to the early church, the middle ages, the Reformation, and post-Reformation periods (pp. 7-20). The dispensationalism of 19th century England receives attention (pp. 21-36) with special mention of John Nelson Darby (pp.

²Endorsement on the outside back of the dust cover.

³Inside front of the dust cover.

23-27). Next, he reviews American dispensationalism ranging from C. I. Scofield to E. W. Bullinger (pp. 37-56). Finally, he looks at dispensationalism in relation to American Reformed churches of the late 19th and early-to-middle 20th centuries (pp. 57-72).

He notes in his brief historical survey of twenty centuries (66 pages) that dispensationalism "has a new theology, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, eschatology, and a new systematic arrangement of all of these as well" (p. 18).

Dispensationalism is a theology of persons holding to a deviation from the Christian religion. Just as truly as a proper premillennialist would resent being called a Jehovah's Witness because Jehovah's Witnesses also are premillennialists, or a Mormon because Mormons also are premillennialists, so also, a premillennialist should resent being called a dispensationalist because dispensationalists also are "premillennialists" (though I do not infer for a moment that Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons are orthodox trinitarians at the heart as are *all* dispensationalists) (p. 69)

Dispensationalism Philosophically and Hermeneutically

Gerstner first looks at the philosophy, epistemology, and apologetical method of dispensationalism (pp. 75-81). Then he turns to dispensational hermeneutics (pp. 83-101). He concludes that dispensationalism is essentially anti-philosophical and without a proper philosophy (p. 75), devoid of an articulated epistemology (p. 78), but generally adhering to Gerstner's own "classical" approach to apologetics associated with the theology of Old Princeton. However, he asserts that dispensationalists hold a "weakened form" of this method (p. 79).

Regarding hermeneutics, Gerstner writes that ". . . almost all dispensationalists maintain that their mode of Biblical interpretation is more fundamental than their theology" (p. 83). Yet he concludes that ". . . far from determining dispensational theology, the dispensational literal hermeneutic (with all its inconsistencies), is in fact the direct result of that theology" (p. 101).

Dispensationalism Theologically

Gerstner first states and then attempts to prove that dispensationalism significantly deviates from all five points relating to the nature of man, sin, and salvation as articulated by the Synod of Dort (1619). These are commonly called the five points of Calvinism (pp. 105-147, esp. p. 105). Next, he accuses dispensationalists of teaching more than one way of salvation (pp. 149-169, esp. p. 149). "If Dispensationalism has actually departed from the only way of salvation which the Christian religion teaches, then we must say it has departed from Christianity" (p. 150).

Gerstner discusses the issue of Christ's kingdom preaching (171-179). He variously calls the dispensational position "appalling" and "novel" (p. 172). The dispensational view on Christ making a bona fide kingdom offer to the Jews, according to the author, ". . . is a direct affront to the righteousness of God, involving as it does the implication that God can and did lie" (p. 179).

Only one chapter discusses eschatology proper (chap. 10, pp. 181-208). Gerstner approaches the issue of Israel's relationship to the church with the view that "from the earliest period of Christian theology onward, the essential continuity of Israel and the church has been maintained" (p. 186). "Nevertheless, this scriptural unity of Israel and the church is directly challenged by Dispensationalism, wrongly dividing asunder what God's Word has joined together" (p. 187). He concludes, "The dispensational distinction between Israel and the church implicitly repudiates the Christian way of salvation" (p. 206):

The root of the problem is the Israel/church distinction which assumes that Israel is an entirely temporal matter and the church an entirely spiritual affair. As a result, dispensationalists retreat into a hyper-spiritual Gnosticism which spurns the structures of the visible church which God has graciously given to His people (p. 208).

Returning to the issue of soteriology, Gerstner then discusses sanctification (chaps. 11-12, pp. 209-250). He attempts to ". . . show that all traditional dispensationalists teach that converted Christian persons

can (not may) live in sin throughout their post-conversion lives with no thought to their eternal destiny" (p. 209). "To depart from it (antinomianism) is to depart from dispensationalism" (p. 231). He perceives in the conclusion to this discussion that "there is no question that dispensationalism has been relatively indifferent to strict morality and usually indifferent to reform activities" (p. 250).

A brief discussion of the Lordship Salvation issue concludes Gerstner's case against dispensationalism (pp. 251-59). "We have shown throughout this volume that Dispensationalism teaches another gospel" (p. 251). ". . . Dispensationalism is another gospel" (p. 259).

He draws his argument to an ultimate conclusion (pp. 261-63) by stating first,

We have now examined the Dispensationalism of yesterday and today. We have found that Dispensationalism is virtually the same today as yesterday. There have been some variations, of course, but none are essential. There are many varieties (to use an expression from natural science), but no new species (p. 261).

He then abstracts the allegations enumerated in chapters 7-13 (pp. 261-62). Finally, Dr. Gerstner issues the following appeal:

My plea to all dispensationalists is this`show me the fundamental error in what I teach or admit your own fundamental error. We cannot both be right. One of us is wrong`seriously wrong. If you are wrong (in your doctrine, as I here charge), you are preaching nothing less than a false gospel. This calls for genuine repentance and fruits worthy of it before the Lord Jesus Christ whom we both profess to love and serve (p. 263).

An appendix summarizing and evaluating Charles Lincoln's 1943 article on covenants from a dispensational perspective caps off the book (pp. 265-72).⁴ Because Gerstner believes that he successfully

⁴Charles Fred Lincoln, "The Development of the Covenant Theory," *BSac* 100/397 (Jan-Mar 1943) 134-63. Gerstner remarks, "His work on the covenants is the best dispensational presentation of the subject I have seen" (p. 266). This reviewer

refutes all sixteen of Lincoln's points, he reasons, ". . . Covenant theology ought, . . . to be vindicated in the minds of dispensationalists" (p. 266).

WHY A REVIEW ARTICLE?

When someone with Dr. Gerstner's credentials, with such extensive teaching and writing experience, addresses a subject so significant as "dispensationalism," he cannot go unnoticed or unread. Out of respect for the author's reputation and in response to his invitation for interaction (p. 263), this review is undertaken.

To ignore this work, which has been heralded by some as possibly providing an epochal contribution to the theological debate between covenantalists and dispensationalists, would be an insult to the author and the position he represents. Furthermore, silence would imply that his facts are correct, his logic impeccable, his conclusions formidable, and his call to "surrender" as unavoidable to one who truly has a passion to be biblical in all areas of theology.

If one assumes that Dr. Gerstner has his facts straight, always represents dispensationalism accurately, has studied both the older classic dispensational works and is familiar with the current dialogue among dispensationalists, correctly understands the theological issues, and is exegetically valid in his approach to the subject, then he will tend to conclude that dispensationalism must indeed surrender. At face value and upon first reading, the majority of people (especially those who have not studied the issues for themselves) will be convinced that Gerstner is right in his conclusions.

This review is not an unabridged analysis of Gerstner's arguments and conclusions. Nor would this reviewer suggest that, if Gerstner can be shown to be mistaken theologically, dispensationalism

suggests that Dr. Gerstner consider Renald E. Showers, *There Really Is a Difference: A Comparison of Covenant and Dispensational Theology* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1990) 1-111, as more current and representative material to evaluate.

is vindicated. Rather, the purpose of this review is twofold. First, it intends to demonstrate that what Dr. Gerstner delivers in the book falls well short of what he repeatedly claims to have accomplished throughout the book and what the testimonials of his friends and publishers urge the readers to believe are his contributions to this debate.

Second, it hopefully challenges in a small way the dispensational community to publish decisive clarification of the significant issues of dispensationalism in terms of its history, its essential identifying elements, the features that most or all dispensationalists currently embrace, the textual interpretations and theological conclusions of older dispensationalists that the current generation has questioned, the current debate over the exegesis of particular biblical texts, the current articulation of dispensational conclusions, and the decisive issues that distinctly set dispensationalists apart from covenantalists. Dispensationalists must seize the present opportunity to state what is and what is not essential to dispensationalism, upon whom current dispensational theology is dependent, and how dispensationalism of the 1990's differs from that of past decades.

EXAMINING THE AUTHOR'S ASSUMPTIONS

Presuppositions and assumptions undergird all reasoned thought. At times they are enumerated explicitly in the introduction to a subject while in other cases, such as this book, assumptions make their appearance somewhat randomly throughout the discussion, either in implicit or explicit fashion. This review suggests that at least ten of Dr. Gerstner's major assumptions are in error and thus seriously damage the validity of his conclusions.

1. Dr. Gerstner is perceived to assume that he is right and thus speaks on this subject *ex cathedra*.⁵ One only needs to ponder

⁵John Witmer will note this tendency in his soon-to-be-published "A Review of

the book's title, *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth* to sense the author's confidence. Implicitly, one gains the idea throughout the book that the author believes he stands in the theological gap at the eleventh hour as the champion of covenantalism and thus the destroyer of dispensationalism.

2. Dr. Gerstner seems to assume that he is factually, logically, and theologically decisive. Both R. C. Sproul's mild acknowledgment that Dr. Gerstner could be wrong (p. xi) and the author's own challenge to be corrected (p. 263) are more like a challenge than a humble invitation to other brothers in Christ "to come let us reason together" (cf. Isa 1:18).
3. When Dr. Gerstner writes, ". . . that Calvinism is just another name for Christianity" (p. 107), one senses that he presumes to be the spokesman for all Calvinists. His own discussion of the atonement, which highlights varying approaches to the subject in the Reformed community, evidences that this is not altogether true (pp. 127-28).
4. One gets the distinct impression that Dr. Gerstner's view on soteriology, as expressed by the Synod of Dort (1619), serves as the canon by which other people's doctrine is judged as true or heretical (p. 105). Yet, much later in the book he writes, "The standard of judgment is fidelity to God's inerrant Word" (p. 262). A noticeable lack of biblical discussion throughout the book, plus the obvious appeal to a "dogmatic" approach in his own theology, leads the reviewer to suggest that the author frequently seems to espouse the latter (Scripture) but employ the former (Dortian doctrine) to authenticate truth.
5. Dr. Gerstner further narrows the field of those who understand and hold to Scripture correctly regarding the atonement by limiting this group to the Protestant Reformed Church (p. 128). This reviewer challenges this assumption and so do some of his covenantal brethren. In a letter dated September 12, 1991, the Elders of Trinity Baptist Church in Montville, NJ, pastored by

Al Martin, himself a staunch proclaimer of Reformed doctrine, disavow Dr. Gerstner's teaching on the atonement beginning on p. 118 and continuing through p. 131. They write that, "Dr. Gerstner strays from the mainstream of historic calvinistic teaching regarding the free offer of the Gospel." This disclaimer letter comes with every copy of Dr. Gerstner's book that they distribute. A review of Dr. Gerstner's work by *Reformation Today* seriously questions his discussion of total depravity, election, and irresistible grace as it relates to his analysis of dispensational thought.⁶

6. Throughout the volume one receives the strong impression that Dr. Gerstner believes that Dallas Theological Seminary speaks representatively for all dispensationalists. He refers to "Dallas Dispensationalism" (p. 47). While this reviewer would not want to take away from DTS's contributions to furthering dispensational thought, dispensational thinking extends significantly beyond Dallas, especially in its theological formation. While Grace Theological Seminary, Capital Bible Seminary, and Western Conservative Baptist Seminary are mentioned (p. 52), numerous other schools such as Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, The Master's Seminary, Talbot School of Theology, and a host of Christian colleges, not to mention scholars and pastors who do not teach at dispensationally oriented schools, swell the ranks of institutions and individuals who claim to be "dispensational" in their ecclesiology and eschatology.
7. Dr. Gerstner identifies dispensationalism with a certain view of soteriology. ". . . Dispensationalism is another gospel" (p. 259). "When Dispensationalism does truly give up mere nominalistic faith for a working faith, Dispensationalism will be Dispensationalism no more" (p. 272 n. 9). R. C. Sproul says of the author's view, "For Gerstner, when a dispensationalist eschews Antinomianism, he is, in effect, eschewing Dispensationalism"

⁶Tom Wells, "Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth: A Critique of Dispensationalism: A Review," *Reformation Today* (Jan-Feb 1992) 25-32.

(p. x). Nothing could be further from reality or better illustrate the meaning of *non-sequitur*. Both Zane Hodges and John MacArthur consider themselves dispensationally oriented in their ecclesiology and eschatology, and yet see a great gulf fixed between their views on soteriology.⁷ One could be both "a five-point Calvinist" and dispensational without being biblically inconsistent. D. G. Hart has recently written about the Westminster Seminary faculty of Machen's day being explicitly Reformed, yet having dispensationalist Allan A. MacRae as Professor of Old Testament.⁸

8. Dr. Gerstner assumes that dispensationalism is in a theological rut and has brought no essential change to its thinking: "A pressing question today is whether Dispensationalism has changed in any significant ways in recent years. I think not" (p. 72). "In spite of numerous contemporary fringe changes, Dispensationalism in America is still essentially Scofieldian . . ." (pp. 252-53). He does not acknowledge the Dispensational Study Group that has been meeting since 1985 just prior to the Evangelical Theological Society's Annual Meeting.⁹ Nor does he interact with several recent, major works such as *Continuity*

⁷Dr. Gerstner takes great issue with Zane C. Hodges, *Absolutely Free* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), but so does John F. MacArthur, Jr., *The Gospel According To Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988). Yet Hodges and MacArthur both remain dispensationalists. Why? Because one's soteriology does not necessarily dictate the essence of his ecclesiology and eschatology.

⁸D. G. Hart, "The Legacy of J. Gresham Machen and the Identity of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church," *WTJ* 53 (1991) 213

⁹Craig Blaising, who teaches theology at Dallas Theological Seminary, presented a major paper to the 1986 meeting of the Dispensational Study Group (DSG), which was subsequently published as two articles. "Doctrinal Development in Orthodoxy," *BSac* 145/578 (Apr-June 1988) 133-40 and "Development of Dispensationalism by Contemporary Dispensationalists," *BSac* 145/579 (July-Sept 1988) 254-80. Dr. Gerstner acknowledged this latter article on p. 159 (n. 19). For a short history of the DSG see Ronald T. Clutter, "Dispensational Study Group: An Introduction," *GTJ* 10/2 (Fall 1989) 123-24. This same issue of *GTJ* also contains the papers presented at the 1989 DSG by Vern S. Poythress, Paul S. Karleen, and Robert L. Saucy.

and *Discontinuity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1988) where John Feinberg, the editor, brings together both sides of the debate on key issues.¹⁰ Robert Saucy has recently contributed several important articles: "The Crucial Issue Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Systems," *Criswell Theological Review* 1/1 (Fall 1986) 149-65, "Contemporary Dispensational Thought," *TSF Bulletin* (Mar-Apr 1984) 10-11, "The Presence of the Kingdom and the Life of the Church," *BSac* 145/577 (Jan-Mar 1988) 30-46. Dr. Saucy is now completing a full-length volume tentatively entitled *The Interface Between Dispensational and Covenantal Theology* to be published by Zondervan in 1992.¹¹

In all these, dispensational spokesmen have moved rapidly and significantly beyond Scofield, Chafer, and Ryrie.¹²

9. Dr. Gerstner assumes that dispensationalism is a theological system much like the Calvinistic system. He refers to the "dispensational theological system" (pp. 105, 158). Then he erroneously tries to equate dispensational thinking with the Arminian system of theology (p. 103). Earl D. Radmacher makes the point that dispensational thought comes more from a hermeneutical approach to Scripture than from any theological system.¹³

¹⁰Gerstner hardly acknowledges this significant work, *Continuity and Discontinuity*, including only a two-sentence reference to it on p. 151 n. 4.

¹¹Also expected in 1992 are Craig Blaising and Darrell Bock, eds., *Israel and the Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) and D. Campbell and J. Townsend, eds., *Premillennialism* (Chicago: Moody, 1992). The recent publishing of Larry V. Crutchfield, *The Origins of Dispensationalism: The Darby Factor* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1992) is also significant. In this he strongly refutes Dr. Gerstner's charge that Darby is ". . . to this day the chief influence" (p. 24).

¹²Covenantalist Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987) 12, agrees that "many dispensational scholars have now modified considerably the classic form of D-theology. . . ."

¹³Earl D. Radmacher, "The Current State of Dispensationalism and Its Eschatology," in *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 163-76. Compare Paul D. Feinberg in "Hermeneutics of Discontinuity," *Continuity and Discontinuity* 109-28. See also Darrell L. Bock, "Evangelicals and the Use of the Old

10. Dr. Gerstner continually assumes that because he thinks he has proven dispensationalism wrong, therefore covenantalism is demonstrated to be a correct expression of truth. Nowhere does the author adequately demonstrate the biblical correctness of his own beliefs. Until he does so, his brand of covenantalism is just as suspect as the dispensationalism he sets out to discredit. And, let this reviewer and all his dispensational friends be alert to remember the need to do the same in the debate with covenantalists.

NOTING MAJOR WEAKNESSES

In addition to unwarranted assumptions, Dr. Gerstner's book contains a number of flaws that greatly lessen its credibility as a significant critique of dispensationalism. The following list briefly discusses some of the more serious deficiencies:

1. Dr. Gerstner's volume does not generally reflect the writings of dispensationalists since 1980, as illustrated above. Therefore, it could not possibly represent or interact with current dispensational thinking as it purports to do (p. 72).¹⁴
2. Dr. Gerstner frequently cites certain men as representative of dispensational thought. To current dispensationalists, most of these men represent anachronistic referencing and/or a giant caricature of dispensational spokesmen. Examples include Jim Bakker (p. 54), Harold Barker (p. 223), M. R. DeHaan (pp. 54, 88), Jerry Falwell (p. 54), Norm Geisler (p. 75), Billy Graham (pp. 54, 137, 174), Zane Hodges (pp. 225-230), W. W. Howard (p. 224), Rex Humbard (p. 54), Hal Lindsey (pp. 175, 221), James

Testament in the New, Part 1," *BSac* 142/567 (July-Sept 1985) 209-23 and "Part 2," *BSac* 142/568 (Oct-Dec 1985) 306-19.

¹⁴In addition to the literature cited above, Dr. Gerstner does not acknowledge such notable pieces as Kenneth L. Barker, "False Dichotomies Between the Testaments," *JETS* 25/1 (Mar 1982) 3-16 or David L. Turner, "The Continuity of Scripture and Eschatology: Key Hermeneutical Issues," *GTJ* 6/2 (Fall 1985) 275-87.

Robison (p. 54), Jimmy Swaggart (p. 54), R. B. Thieme (p. 225), and A. W. Tozer (p. 139). Throughout this volume Dr. Gerstner has presented "strawman" arguments, among which this is his masterpiece.

3. Dr. Gerstner resorts in places to a "guilt by association" form of argumentation. R. C. Sproul (p. x) in the Foreword associates dispensationalists with Joseph Fletcher, father of modern "situational ethics." Gerstner puts dispensationalists alongside cults like Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses (p. 69). Dispensational thought is equated with Arminian theology (p. 103). Gerstner calls John Nelson Darby the "major theologian" of dispensationalists (p. 84). Trivialization and dispensationalism are equated (pp. 69-70). He even implies that dispensationalism is more deceptive than liberalism and the occult (p. 2).
4. Dr. Gerstner frequently resorts, out of character with a carefully reasoned scholastic exchange, to pejorative language and sarcasm.¹⁵ One wonders why one needs inflammatory rhetoric`e.g., cult (p. 150), pantheism (pp. 136, 143), and "departed from Christianity" (p. 150)`to disprove such a supposedly lame theological opponent as "dispensationalism."
5. Dr. Gerstner shows familiarity with the writings of Darby, Scofield, Chafer, and Ryrie, citing them frequently. However, the author shows little or no familiarity with other older dispensational works that are classics. These include Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Chicago: Moody, 1968) and George N. H. Peters, *The Theocratic Kingdom* (3 vols., 1978 rpt.; Grand Rapids: Kregel, n.d.). Besides a brief quote from German dispensationalist Eric Sauer (p. 183 n. 8), Gerstner

¹⁵This charge has more than adequately been documented by both John Witmer, "A Review of *Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth*, Part 1," *BSac* 149/594 (Apr-June 1992) 132-33, and Thomas Ice, "How Trinitarian Thinking Supports A Dispensational Rationale," *Dispensational Distinctives* 1/5 (Sept-Oct 1991) 1. Therefore, I will not duplicate their observations.

attributes no significance to his classic trilogy which includes *The Dawn of World Redemption: A Survey of the History of Salvation in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), *The Triumph of the Crucified: A Survey of the History of Salvation in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951), and *From Eternity to Eternity* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1954). A volume making the promise of being "the most extensive and systematic study of Dispensational theology ever published" would surely interact with these indispensable works. Yet Dr. Gerstner has in essence ignored them. This reviewer does not affirm all that is taught in these classics. However, a comprehensive critique of dispensationalism should certainly recognize and comment on them.

6. Dr. Gerstner has not paid the kind of attention to historical, factual, and bibliographic details that one would expect. Examples of such discrepancies have been catalogued by Dr. John A. Witmer, archivist at Dallas Theological Seminary.¹⁶
7. Dr. Gerstner would have served his readers far better in his discussion of sanctification (pp. 209-50) by quoting from John F. Walvoord, "The Augustinian-Dispensational Perspective," in *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987) 197-226. Here is a recent and focused expression on sanctification by a noted Dallas dispensationalist. While this reviewer does not agree with all that Dr. Walvoord writes there,¹⁷ the doctrine that he articulates is far different in many respects than the dismal picture painted by Gerstner (esp. pp. 231-39). It should be noted that one's view with regard to sanctification does not necessarily identify a person as dispensational or non-dispensational, contrary to the author's conclusion.

¹⁶Witmer, "A Review, Part 1" 133-36.

¹⁷This reviewer found Reformed theologian Anthony A. Hoekema to be fair but forthright in his critique of Walvoord in *Five Views* (230-32), in contrast to the "worst-case scenario" approach of Dr. Gerstner.

8. Dispensationalists would generally say that their consistently applied, normal hermeneutic leads them to their views on the church and its relationship to national Israel. These conclusions would then set them distinctly apart from covenantalists.¹⁸ Dr. Gerstner has chosen to major on the *non sequitur* that one's soteriology determines his ecclesiology and eschatology by devoting at least six full chapters to its discussion (chaps. 7-9, 11-13). In contrast, he minors (only chap. 10) on what dispensationalists would consider to be one of their major distinctive's eschatology. Thus his discussion of dispensationalism is notably out of proportion with the real issues distinguishing dispensationalism from covenantalism.
9. Nowhere does Gerstner distort the facts more than with his stereotypical chart on p. 147. The right-hand column, inaccurately labeled "dispensationalism," should be more accurately titled "modified Arminianism." In so doing, he has led his readers to equate dispensationalism with Arminianism. This reviewer does not deny that some dispensationalists subscribe to an Arminian soteriology, but asserts rather that an Arminian soteriology is not synonymous with dispensationalism.

Sadly, Dr. Gerstner's volume does not live up to its advanced billing and hints of irrefutable argumentation. Numerous books and booklets have been written in the recent past with the purpose of analyzing dispensational thinking.¹⁹ Of them all, Dr. Gerstner's most

¹⁸Consult Parts 1 and 2 of Willem A. Van Gemeren, "Israel as the Hermeneutical Crux in the Interpretation of Prophecy," *WTJ* 45 (1983) 132-44 and *WTJ* 46 (1984) 254-97, for a thorough survey of Reformed thinking about Israel, beginning with Calvin who had "no clearly defined position on Israel" and extending to the publication dates of these articles.

¹⁹For example, Oswald T. Allis, *Prophecy and The Church* (1977 rpt.; Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, n.d.); Greg L. Bahnsen and Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *House Divided: The Breakup of Dispensational Theology* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1989); Clarence B. Bass, *Backgrounds To Dispensationalism* (Grand Rapids:

resembles the maiden voyage of the Titanic. This supposedly "unsinkable" book seems to have sustained severe damage below the water line at the hands of its own self-imposed icebergs of specious reasoning, fallacious assumptions, incomplete and outdated research, inaccurate data, distorted characterizations, and a seemingly premature celebration of victory.

ASSESSING THEOLOGICAL VALIDITY

In this reviewer's opinion, dispensational thought entered a new era somewhere in the late 70s or early 80s. Because no one person or single institution speaks for all dispensationalists and because it is not a theological system like Calvinism (but rather tends to result from a consistent hermeneutic applied with exegetical skill to particular texts whose individual conclusions comprise a macro-summation of a biblical truth), no designated person speaks for the movement. Scores of individual scholars and schools are involved in formulating dispensational thought.

Unfortunately, Dr. Gerstner has not accurately identified the current makeup or movement of dispensationalism. Thus, the almost unrecognizable image he paints of current dispensationalism results from several errors of fact and/or omission. First, he looks at the Darby/Scofield era and then the Chafer/Walvoord/Ryrie era as the bases for his conclusions, rather than being current with the new era of dispensational thought in the 80s`90s whose leading spokesmen might well include Robert L. Saucy and John F. MacArthur, Jr. The former deals more with eschatology and the latter soteriology/ecclesiology. The author limits his research primarily to earlier Dallas Theological Seminary expressions of dispensationalism that do not comprehensively reflect the whole of dispensational thought, past or

Baker, 1977); William E. Cox, *An Examination of Dispensationalism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980); Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*; Jon Zens, *Dispensationalism: A Reformed Inquiry Into Its Leading Figures and Features* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980).

present.

The Master's Seminary could agree with much of what Dr. Gerstner affirms as biblical truth about salvation and sanctification.²⁰ However, it strongly opposes the wrong equation of a soteriological position with the distinctive feature of dispensationalism. Further, it disavows what Dr. Gerstner pictures as the current consensus of dispensational thinking. The Master's Seminary, in opposing easy believism for salvation,²¹ does not deny its dispensational roots, but rather works hard to sink them deeper into the good soil of solid biblical exegesis with the result of proper theological conclusions.

"Covenantalism" and opposition to easy believism are not synonymous. Conversely, dispensationalism and antinomianism are not necessarily synonymous either. One may be a five-point Calvinist and still be a consistent dispensationalist with regard to one's view of Israel in relationship to the NT church and one's expectation regarding events on God's prophetic calendar. The achilles heel in Dr. Gerstner's entire argument is the assumption that Calvinism, or Reformed theology, stands as the antithesis of dispensationalism, thus making one's soteriology determine whether he is a dispensationalist or not.²²

²⁰As evidenced by MacArthur, *Gospel According to Jesus*. Note also the affirming review by dispensationalist Homer A. Kent, Jr., "The Gospel According to Jesus: A Review Article," *GTJ* 10/1 (Spring 1989) 67-77. Darrell Bock of Dallas Theological Seminary does not fully commend all of Dr. MacArthur's book, but he gives it affirmation beyond what one would expect based on Gerstner's discussions (p. 253) ("A Review of *The Gospel According to Jesus*," *BSac* 146/581 [Jan-Mar, 1989] 21-40).

²¹"Opposition to easy believism" more accurately defines the issue under discussion than the expression "lordship salvation," because the latter implies a false addition to faith as the sole condition for salvation (cf. MacArthur, *Gospel According to Jesus* xiii-xiv, 28-29 n. 20).

²²Gerstner writes "The Bible teaches Dispensationalism or Calvinism. It cannot teach both and be the infallibly true Word of God" (2 n. 1). This statement, as it stands, is erroneous and/or potentially very misleading. First, it could be true that the Bible teaches something other than these two schools of thought. The burden rests with him to prove his point biblically. Second, his reasoning would make dispensationalism the antithesis to Calvinism. If by Calvinism, Dr. Gerstner means Calvinistic soteriology, then he errs because dispensational thought does not

On the other hand, this reviewer affirms that dispensationalism does stand in notable contrast to covenantalism.

Now, in order to limit this review article to a reasonable length, brief note will be taken of a series of selected theological misstatements by Dr. Gerstner in his discussions of philosophy, hermeneutics, apologetics, and theology.²³

1. In his brief discourse on dispensationalists and philosophy, Dr. Gerstner charges, ". . . It [dispensationalism] is almost impatient in its desire to get to Holy Scripture" (p. 75). Dispensationalists consider this a great compliment consistent with their high view of Scripture's sufficiency as outlined in such classic passages as Psalm 19, Psalm 119, and 2 Tim 3:14-17.²⁴ Therefore, to dispensationalists logic and philosophy are secondary to Scripture and serve as a means to an end, not the end itself.
2. Dr. Gerstner, an avowed advocate of the "classical" approach to apologetics, states, "Dispensationalists are not disposed to conscious fideism" (p. 79). This reviewer is amazed that Dr. Gerstner personally finds the "classical" approach in common with most dispensationalists (p. 79). Gerstner is surprised that

essentially involve soteriology and is not formulated from a certain creedal soteriology. If by dispensationalism he means to include ecclesiology and eschatology, then he errs because the antithesis would be with "covenantalism" rather than "Calvinism." For a reasonable clarification of terms to allow a comparison of "apples with apples," see Michael Harbin, "The Hermeneutics of Covenant Theology," *BSac* 143/571 (July-Sept 1986) 246-59, from a dispensationalist's perspective, and Morton H. Smith, "The Church and Covenant Theology," *JETS* 21/1 (March 1978) 47-65, for a covenantalist's view.

²³In a soon-to-appear article John A. Witmer, "A Review, Part 2" 149/595 *BSac* (July-Sept, 1992) will biblically challenge and attempt to correct Dr. Gerstner's attack on varying aspects of dispensationalism as taught in the past or as currently being taught by some at Dallas Theological Seminary.

²⁴McClain, *Greatness of the Kingdom* 527-31, lets some air out of Dr. Gerstner's over-inflated charge that dispensationalism is "almost anti-philosophical" (p. 75) with his chap. 28, "A Premillennial Philosophy of History."

more dispensationalists do not embrace the presuppositional approach to apologetics, since it is in the vanguard of contemporary, conservative thinking (p. 81). This reviewer is even more surprised since the author asserts, ". . . All presuppositionalists are thoroughgoing Calvinists and they do not think that Dispensationalism is an authentic form of Calvinism" (p. 81). Those dispensationalists who are presuppositionalists are so because they believe it is taught in Scripture, not because they believe it is Calvinistic.²⁵ There is no necessary connection, other than consistent biblical thought and conclusion, between dispensational theology and presuppositional apologetics.

3. The discussion of hermeneutics deserves at least a whole volume rather than just a chapter (pp. 83-101). However, given the reality of limitations in a review article and in Dr. Gerstner's book, in kindness it is proposed that his discussion contributes more heat than light as it relates to understanding dispensationalism. His eclectic discussion of older and/or "pop" dispensationalists such as Darby, M. R. DeHaan, Feinberg, Scofield, and Lindsey is, at best, inadequate. His discussion of "spooof-texting" or throwing "massive citations" at an issue (p. 99-100) is certainly an unfair caricature of dispensationalists who have a legitimate desire to allow Scripture to interpret Scripture. Many dispensationalists hold in high regard the Reformed approach of interpreting the Bible by the Bible with the principle of *analogia Scriptura*.²⁶

²⁵Dr. Gerstner does recognize John C. Whitcomb as a dispensationalist who is also a presuppositionalist (80 n. 14). However, he fails to mention The Master's Seminary which embraces presuppositionalism. See TMS Professor of Theology, George J. Zemek, "Review Article: *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense*" GTJ 7/1 (Spring 1986) 111-23, where he evaluates the discussion of apologetical method by R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsey.

²⁶Dispensationalist Elliott E. Johnson has recently provided a comprehensive discussion of hermeneutics in general in *Expository Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990). In contrast to Gerstner, Vern Poythress,

4. Dr. Gerstner has strong words against anyone who tampers with the Reformed view of "the eternal sonship of Christ" (pp. 33-34). In discussing this issue, he attempts to discredit dispensationalists historically by associating them with F. E. Raven, a Brethren figure of the late 19th century, who, according to Gerstner, denied full humanity to Christ. One's view of Christ's eternal sonship, so long as it does not deny or diminish His eternality, deity, and full humanity in his incarnation, does not affect whether one is a dispensationalist or a covenantalist. As such, it serves no logical purpose in Dr. Gerstner's discussion, other than trying to portray dispensationalists as guilty of the same heresy.²⁷
5. Concerning unconditional election, Dr. Gerstner writes, "A predestination of some corpses to life and foreordination of some corpses to remain dead is what is meant by the Bible doctrine but dispensationalists refuse to accept that" (p. 113). Dr. Gerstner's assertion is generally true of dispensationalists with regard to the reprobative corollary of unconditional election, but it is not a defining distinctive of dispensationalism. One can believe in the doctrine of double predestination as articulated by sane Calvinists and still be a dispensationalist.²⁸
6. Dr. Gerstner questions the orthodoxy of dispensationalists concerning the full humanity of Jesus Christ. He asserts that, regardless of whether it comes more from a lack of theological care than heterodoxy, dispensationalists have an unusual conception of Christ's full humanity (pp. 116-17). The author's discussion is altogether too brief for such a major charge, being

Understanding Dispensationalists 78-96, presents a covenantalist's perspective on this issue in a more informative and irenic fashion.

²⁷See John MacArthur, *The Sonship of Christ* (Grandville, MI: IFCA Press, 1991), for a discussion of the incarnational approach to Christ's sonship.

²⁸Cp. dispensationalist Emery H. Bancroft, *Christian Theology* (2nd rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976) 241, whose discussion of reprobation in its conclusion is essentially indistinguishable from that of R. C. Sproul, "Double Predestination," in *Soli Deo Gloria* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976) 63-72.

limited to Darby, Chafer, and C. H. Mackintosh. Regarding Christ's humanity, covenantalists and dispensationalists agree that it remained without sin throughout His earthly life (2 Cor 5:21). The theological discussion still goes on as to whether the impeccability of Christ's human nature meant that He was susceptible to temptation like humanity, yet without sin, or whether He could not be tempted at all. After everything is said and written, the issue at hand is not really germane to the discussion of dispensationalism.

7. Dr. Gerstner's own view that one must be regenerated before becoming an object of God's call to salvation is stated but never defended biblically (p. 119). How then can he accuse dispensationalists of being unorthodox until he proves the point scripturally? Furthermore, his own view is seriously questioned by others who, like Gerstner, are strong Calvinists.²⁹
8. Throughout the book, but especially in chapter eight, "Dubious Evangelism: The Dispensational Understanding of 'Dispensation' Denies The Gospel" (pp. 149-69), Dr. Gerstner repeatedly charges that Dispensationalists teach multiple ways of salvation. Since the author acknowledges the existence of the book *Continuity and Discontinuity* (p. 151 n. 4), this reviewer cannot understand why Dr. Gerstner does not inform his readers of and then interact with one of its contributors, Allen P. Ross, "The Biblical Method of Salvation: A Case for Discontinuity" 161-78. To do so would have pushed the debate from the 1960's almost to the 1990's. Dr. Gerstner's charge that current dispensation-alists teach multiple ways of salvation is defenseless.³⁰

²⁹E.g., the elders of Trinity Baptist Church in Montville, NJ, mentioned above (p. 81). Why, then, attempt to hold dispensationalists responsible for error in this point when even fellow Calvinists do not agree?

³⁰For another excellent refutation of Dr. Gerstner's charge, see John S. Feinberg, "Salvation in the Old Testament," in *Tradition and Testament* (John S. and Paul D. Feinberg, eds.; Chicago: Moody, 1981) 39-77.

9. In chapter 11 (p. 209), the author writes, ". . . I will show that all traditional dispensationalists teach that converted Christian persons *can* (not may) live in sin throughout their post-conversion lives with no threat to their eternal destiny." Then he points out a contradictory exception on p. 216: "Harry Ironside is especially interesting, for surely no classical dispensationalist has tried more strenuously to avoid Antinomianism (unless it be John MacArthur [sic], who succeeded)." It seems to have escaped Dr. Gerstner's attention that not only has John MacArthur succeeded, but also every dispensationalist who believes as MacArthur does. Therefore, Gerstner subsequently disproves what he originally set out to prove.
10. "There is no question that Dispensationalism has been relatively indifferent to strict morality and usually indifferent to reform activities" (p. 250). Here Dr. Gerstner libels dispensationalists by making a universal statement about them without any documentation or real substance (documented or otherwise). The statement is false and damaging to dispensationalism's reputation. This defamatory caricature alone brings Dr. Gerstner's objectivity in his critique of dispensational teaching into serious question.

A CLOSING WORD³¹

This review article did not set out to prove Dr. Gerstner altogether theologically wrong or to affirm dispensationalism as theologically correct. But in response to the book's invitation to be evaluated, this reviewer has attempted to comply with that wish. Here are the conclusions.

Dr. John Gerstner has sincerely attempted to the best of his

³¹It is beyond the scope of this review, but a subsequent article is needed to interact with and evaluate Dr. Gerstner's exegesis of key passages that dispensationalists use to show a distinction between Israel and the church (cf. pp. 187-200).

scholastic skills, intellect, theological prowess, and debate technique to critique dispensationalism. The work appears to be a culmination of his life-long study of dispensationalism. This review concludes, however, that (1) Dr. Gerstner's claim to comprehensive research falls seriously short of its boast, (2) his penchant for factuality and accurate representation of dispensationalism has failed, (3) he demonstrates his apparent unwillingness to discuss major theological issues without uncalled-for and repeated diatribe, and (4) his *non-sequitur* argumentation disqualifies much of this book as a positive or helpful contribution to the growing rapprochement between covenantalists and dispensationalists. If anything, it has attitudinally and informationally hurt the dialogue.

This review might not satisfy Dr. Gerstner's challenge to ". . . show me the fundamental error in what I teach" (p. 263). However, it should be more than enough to respond to R. C. Sproul's conditional offer of Dr. Gerstner's apology when substantial reason can be shown: "If Gerstner is inaccurate`if he has failed to understand dispensational theology correctly`then he owes many a profound apology" (p. xi). At best, one could hope that this title would be withdrawn from circulation as unworthy of the author's reputation for accuracy and fairness. But at the very least, R. C. Sproul's promise on the author's behalf should be kept.

Dr. Gerstner, the contemporary dispensational community awaits your "profound apology"!

BOOK REVIEWS

Leith Anderson. *Dying For Change*. Minneapolis: Bethany, 1990. 208 pp. \$12.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

"Change," according to Dr. Leith Anderson, "is not the choice. How we handle it is" (p. 11). With that as his premise, the senior pastor of the Wooddale Church located in the Minneapolis suburb of Eden Prairie endeavors to expose the changes in society that currently shape our world, analyze the spiritual and sociological changes that the church will face, and chart specific plans to expedite these changes, including the type of leadership required. Within that framework, he proceeds to "examine recent changes in our world and country and use them as a basis for looking to the future" (p. 19).

And examine he does! For more than 100 pages, the author interestingly, accurately, and, at times, redundantly records the numerous changes that have occurred during the last half century. His research leaves little doubt that the world is experiencing rapid and far-reaching change. Beginning essentially with the decade of the 1940's and the "baby-boomers," he traces such notable changes as globalization, urbanization, resurgence of fundamentalism worldwide, mobility, ethnic diversity, and the proliferating emphasis on self-fulfillment (pp. 21-41).

Government, he adds, is having an expanding influence in the affairs of the church. Malpractice suits against churches, sexual and financial improprieties by church leaders, and limitations enacted by municipalities against churches have dragged the church into the jurisdiction of secular courts, establishing a procedure for governmental involvement and infiltration (pp. 43 ff.).

Consequently, Anderson contends that a church's continuing virility requires that "changes in the community and culture must be identified and addressed. . . . A problem arises when leadership

becomes entrenched in yesterday's social structures and practices" (p. 130). To diagnose the issues that confront a church and to chart a course of action designed to generate renewed health and vigor (pp. 139 ff.), the author suggests a series of questions to ask, including, "Why do we exist?" "Who's in charge?" or "Which way do we look? In or Out?" (p. 156). Borrowing insights from management experts, he urges churches to look for "early warning signs" such as excess personnel, tolerance of incompetence, bureaucracy, replacement of substance with form, and loss of effective communication (pp. 158-59). He concludes with excellent thoughts on effective leadership, including the observation that power is often delegated, handed from the top down, while authority is earned from the bottom up through confidence and trust (pp. 190 ff.).

Although one may not agree with the author on all his perspectives, the book offers many excellent insights and helpful suggestions to churches and pastors who wish to be effective leaders amidst rapid change.

Myron Augsburger, Calvin Ratz, and Frank Tillapaugh.¹ *Mastering Outreach and Evangelism*. Portland, Oregon: Multnomah, 1990. 168 pp. \$12.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Alex D. Montoya, Associate Professor of Pastoral Ministries.

The third volume in the delightful "Mastering" series spearheaded by *Leadership* and *Christianity Today*, this book offers a fresh approach and suggestive insights into the Great Commission of the church. Its purpose is to provide ways for getting the congregation focused outwardly and committed to making a difference.

The three authors, though distinct in personalities and ministries, have one thing in common: they are committed to evangelism. Myron Augsburger is pastor of Washington Community Fellowship in the inner city of the nation's capital. Calvin Ratz pastors

¹Editor's Note: The volume by Augsburger, Ratz, and Tillapaugh has valuable discussions and suggestions, especially from the first two contributors. Inclusion of this review is not intended to minimize the seriousness of Frank Tillapaugh's recent moral disqualification from ministry.

Abbotsford Pentecostal Assembly in Vancouver, British Columbia. His interest and gifts in evangelism have earned him the privilege of also serving in the Billy Graham School of Evangelism. The third author, Frank Tillapaugh, took the Bear Valley Baptist Church of Denver, Colorado in 1972 and built it from 70 to twelve hundred. The strength of the book lies not so much with the methodologies proposed as with the heart and passion of the authors. This reinforces the old adage that the desire to evangelize is "more caught than taught."

Though primarily evangelistically oriented, this volume contains a great deal of teaching. The authors take turns contributing to the three major divisions of the book. The first division, "Preparing the Way" has a chapter by Augsburg on "Overcoming the Obstacles of Evangelism." This is followed by one on "The Pastor's Role" by Ratz. The latter emphasizes the pastor's role as a model for evangelism. Ratz states, "My people will not become what I say they should be; they'll become what they see is important in my life. And that's true with evangelism" (p. 26). This reminds us of what our Lord said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt 4:19).

The second section discusses structures for evangelism, including chapters on preparing the church for evangelism. Although each author is an evangelist in his own right, the treatment centers on getting the corporate church involved in outreach and evangelism. This section is particularly helpful since every pastor knows that mobilizing people for outreach is one of his most difficult tasks.

The third and final section suggests practical strategies in the areas of outreach, preaching evangelistically, and assimilating newcomers into local assemblies. The pragmatism and uniqueness of the ministries discussed make it unlikely that everyone will be able to use these as a blueprint for outreach. The suggestions, however, serve as useful in stimulating our minds to seek our own strategies to reach the lost and the unchurched.

With the Great Commission being such a great commission, we welcome this useful volume to the arsenal of resources for helping Christian leaders to help their churches to reach out and evangelize.

Joseph Blenkinsopp. *Ezra`Nehemiah: A Commentary*. Old Testament

Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988. \$29.95 (cloth). 366 pp.
 Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Joseph Blenkinsopp, John A. O'Brien Professor of Biblical Studies at the University of Notre Dame, is perhaps best known for his work on prophecy. He now provides a stimulating commentary on Ezra`Nehemiah.

No lack of commentaries exists on this dyad, but few give as focused attention to the history of Israel during the period of Persian domination as this one. This uniqueness is surprising because to understand the issues within Judaism, the ministry of Jesus, and the early church, these subjects "must be traced back to a formative period of the two centuries of Persian rule . . ." (p. 38).

Even though authorship of the two books is disputed, Blenkinsopp stresses "how essential it is to maintain the structural unity of Chronicles and Ezra`Nehemiah" (p. 37). In terms of its function, the overarching message purposes "to sustain the life and energy of the community . . ." (p. 37). Yet maintaining the structural unity does not necessarily require a single author for Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. "Author," the writer suggests may "stand for a plurality or school rather than an individual . . ." (p. 48). Thus Blenkinsopp supports his case for structural unity by tracing common foci and subject matter throughout the two works without linking these to a common hand.

The commentary weds theology and the early history of post-exilic Israel. Those with such interests will find this volume helpful for filling gaps in this little-understood but important period.

F. F. Bruce. *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. NICNT, rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990. xxii + 426 pp. \$27.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

Prior to his death, F. F. Bruce revised his 1964 commentary on Hebrews, replacing the American Standard Version (1901) text with his own *ad hoc* translation and incorporating 25 years of additional relevant research. He summarizes the essence of the epistle this way:

Hebrews "has this to say: that true religion or the worship of God is not tied to externalities of any kind" (p. xi). Later he adds: "This is the book which establishes the finality of the gospel by asserting the supremacy of Christ his supremacy as God's perfect word to man and man's perfect representative with God. More than any other New Testament book it deals with the ministry which our Lord is accomplishing on his people's behalf now" (p. xii). With broad strokes Bruce then traces the theme of the book, giving the reader a clear picture of the whole before commencing with a detailed commentary of its individual parts.

The author devotes close attention to the identity of the addressees (pp. 3-9), including a well-documented discussion of the various views. He concludes that they appear "to have been a group of Jewish Christians who had never seen or heard Jesus in person, but learned of him from some who had themselves listened to him. . . . Yet their Christian development had been arrested; instead of pressing ahead they were inclined to come to a full stop in their spiritual progress, if not to slip back to a stage which they had left. . . . He encourages them with the assurance that they have everything to lose if they fall back, but everything to gain if they press on" (p. 9).

He gives equal attention to the book's destination, authorship, and date. He cautiously suggests Rome as the destination (p. 14). He vigorously disputes the notion that Paul authored the book and demonstrates the unlikelihood that Aquila and Priscilla penned it. He is willing only to venture a broadly worded conclusion that "the author was a second-generation Christian" (p. 20). His discussion of the date is just as ambiguous, but he sees use of the epistle by Clement of Rome (c. A.D. 96) as proving a first-century date, the period immediately preceding A.D. 70 being a possibility (pp. 20-22). He concludes his introductory chapter with an excellent survey of the epistle's use of the OT Scripture (pp. 25-29) and a recognition of its magnificent harmony with the accounts of Jesus' life and ministry as portrayed in the gospels (pp. 29-34).

The introductory section alone is worth the price of the volume, but its explicit and thorough exegetical commentary on the text elevates its value even more. It investigates difficult passages with depth and precision. Discussions of Hebrews 6 and 10, for example, are lucid and non-evasive. He concludes that the "author emphasizes that continuance is the test of reality. . . . He is insisting that those who

persevere are the true saints" (p. 144). Commenting specifically on Hebrews 6:4, Bruce suggests that "enlightened" be understood in the sense of baptism and that "tasted the heavenly gift" connotes the Eucharist (pp. 145-46). The phrase "partakers of the Holy Spirit," he contends, is to be compared to the situation of Simon Magus in Acts 8:9 ff. (pp. 146 ff.; 260 ff.). "Whether it is possible for one who has been in any real sense a partaker of the Holy Spirit to commit apostasy has been questioned, but our author has no doubt that it is possible in this way to 'outrage the Spirit of grace' (10:29)" (p. 146). He provides excellent thoughts on the great faith chapter Hebrews 11 especially those about the faith of Abraham.

The commentary represents the quality of work commonly associated with F. F. Bruce. Shortcomings are hard to find. Though revised, it still bears the marks of the 1964 commentary, however, with many references to works dated prior to 1960. Basically it is the same commentary, with updated footnotes. The bibliography (pp. 34-43) has been updated from the earlier edition as well. Footnotes located at the bottom of the page, with actual Greek terms and phrases included, are very helpful to the serious student. Yet the lay person will not be disappointed. This volume is an excellent blending of a technical with a practical, and sometimes hortatory, exposition of the text. It should become part of the library of pastors, students, and laymen.

Lyle W. Dorsett. *E. M. Bounds, Man of Prayer: His Life and Selected Writings*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991. \$7.95 (paper).

Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This is the first sketch of Bounds aside from shorter accounts in dictionaries of biography, pamphlets, and entries in some of Bounds' eight books on prayer. Dorsett is Professor of Ministries and Evangelism and also Director of Urban Ministries, the Institute of Evangelism, Wheaton College, Illinois. Bounds (1835-1913) is today one of the most widely-read men on prayer, especially his *Power Through Prayer*, also sometimes titled *Preacher and Prayer*.

Readers until now knew little of this unusual man of prayer. Dorsett searched for every scrap of paper about Bounds he could find and pored over the family's correspondence. He also talked with descendants. Pages 12-66 cover the life of Bounds. After footnotes, pp. 71-254 assemble Bounds' writings on twenty-six topics, including subjects like the Bible, heaven, Christ and prayer, being crazy for God,

devotions, the Holy Spirit and prayer, hymns, materialism as a hindrance, revival, and Satan. Some entries have been unavailable since appearing in *The Christian Advocate* of Nashville, which Bounds edited (1890-1894).

Dorsett traces the Bounds' forefathers from Maryland to Kentucky, then to Missouri. Bounds was 5-feet, 5-inches tall, slender, and with piercing hazel eyes accentuated by bushy brows (pp. 7, 26) and black hair (p. 28). Dorsett only found three pictures of Bounds, taken when he was old with gray or white hair [cited from personal letter to this reviewer, January 18, 1991]. In the book's only picture, a very small one on the cover, Bounds appears very old and austere.

What Dorsett learned about this paragon of prayer, though brief, challenges readers to deepen and lengthen their prayers. Bounds was a chaplain for the Confederacy, then a pastor in Tennessee, Missouri, and Alabama, and lived his last nineteen years in Georgia. People remembered him for his gripping public prayers, stirring messages, courage, childlike faith, holiness, and revivalism. Stirred at twenty-four by a serious encounter with God, he took down his law shingle to devote his life to preaching. For many years he prayed daily from 4 to 7 a.m., and at seventy-six lengthened this to 3-7 a.m. He added fragrance to the rest of his daily schedule with seasons of prayer. A pastor friend, Homer Hodge, through zealous effort was instrumental in the publication of most of Bounds' books (cf. a list of eleven, p. 254) after his death.

Dorsett has included many details that should stir Bounds' band of readers that is still growing so long after his departure. It is a pity that he could not include pictures of a younger or even middle-aged man. And many of the more serious readers will regret that of the 254 pages, fewer than sixty describe the subject's life and ministry. It is puzzling why very lengthy sections reprint much that is already available in such books as *Power Through Prayer*. A few outstanding personal incidents *are* sprinkled through the biography. Could not more pages have been allotted to telling about Bounds and giving anecdotes? After all, many have long wondered about the personal life of this writer who, though gone, speaks and helps encourage people to pray.

Still, all in all, readers can be grateful for Dorsett's portrait of a man God has used so greatly. They will echo Dorsett's sentiments. Bounds' summons to prayer, Dorsett says, "drove me to my knees with

renewed vigor, vision, and expectation" and "revitalized by faith in a living and powerful Christ" (p. 7). It is not too much to say that every Christian will grow more in prayer through a willing response to Bounds' summons.

Roger S. Greenway and Timothy M. Monsma. *Cities: Mission's New Frontier*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. \$18.95 (paper). 321 pp.
Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

This book is a stirring challenge to give due consideration to urban missions, both the need for them and their uniqueness. It also addresses numerous issues related to missions in general. The following are several notable examples of many correctives the authors propose.

Missiologists plan how best to reach specific sectors of society. This necessitates setting strategies and programs based on empirical statistical data resulting from research and development. Contrary to what urbanologists once conjectured, family ties do not necessarily disintegrate in the city with the home playing a significantly smaller role in the lives and attitudes of city dwellers (p. 19). In fact, quite often it is the very opposite. Homes may well provide the primary matrix for social networking, etc.

Another significant corrective focuses on the role evangelization plays in social reform. Based on the research of Emilo Willems, a sociologist but not an evangelical, Greenway says, "*Conversion to the evangelical faith is the most important single factor in the reorientation of individual and family lives and in general upward mobility in the urban setting*" (p. 20). Still the authors argue for the church's additional involvement in meeting physical needs. In other words, the gospel will ultimately affect the social climate of the families who receive it, but the church should provide biblically prescribed help for family needs before salvation, expecting nothing (even conversions) in return.

A third corrective addresses the manner in which modern churches tend to view missions as a task force of professionals. Greenway says that "conversion was enlistment, and missions meant

everybody" in the early church (p. 24). He bemoans the fact that "whatever strengths the Western churches possess, they are weak in the area of practical discipleship and lay witnessing" (p. 24). Professionalism that often characterizes American churches runs the risk of suppressing all kinds of "lay ministry."

The chapter entitled "Pastoring in the City" supplies sage advice regarding the unique opportunities and problems in shepherding a city flock. Regarding preaching in the city, Greenway debunks the age-old myth that "urban ministry . . . is for activists, and not for students of the Scriptures, because most of a city pastor's time is spent dealing directly with people's problems and city congregations do not expect a great sermon on Sunday" (pp. 255-56). The discussion of "The Pastor and the Prisoner" is helpful in illustrating the kinds of outreach an urban church can have.

This reviewer would like to have seen a separate chapter specifying other unique missions options in the city. For example, two excellent missions opportunities within the pale of urban missions are international students and the disabled. International students are a foreign field that is present in the United States. This can be a call to mobilize American churches for missions. About 4,000 international students reside at the University of Southern California alone. The disabled, perhaps one of the last frontiers in missions, is a virtually unreached people-group. Because the disabled are often concentrated in cities and because nonurban disabled persons often move to cities for help and greater accessibility, urban missions cannot afford to neglect them.

A second suggestion is the addition of a Scripture index, particularly for the chapter dealing with a biblical framework for urban missions. One is needed for the three subsequent chapters, too. This would help those who investigate the biblical basis for and principles of application to urban missions.

The book has an articulate and powerful challenge and is well researched. Its extensive documentation and generous bibliography supply direction for those interested in further study. Pastors, particularly those in city churches, will be encouraged and gain insight from this long-overdue treatment of urban missions.

R. K. Harrison. *Numbers*. Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary, Kenneth Barker, gen. ed.; Chicago: Moody, 1990. xvi + 452 pp. \$25.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary series, of which this volume is a part, stresses "the development of the argument of a given book and its central theme(s). An attempt has been made to show how each section of the book fits together with the preceding and following sections" (p. xii).

R. K. Harrison, professor of the Old Testament at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto, has in general achieved this stated goal. Even in the brief preface, the author begins to set forth succinctly the role of Numbers within the OT canon (pp. xiii-xiv, 1-5) and to establish its pivotal importance. He contends, "Numbers must be examined against the background of inclusion in a literary corpus [i.e., the Pentateuch] before it can be studied in its own right" (p. 1).

Harrison gives a rather detailed overview of the debate about the authorship, date, and compilation of the book. His conclusion is that a significant number of literary sources and documents were used in writing the book. For example, he argues that the oracles of Balaam (Numbers 22-24) were of non-Israelite origin, existing "as a separate literary entity, extraneous to the Israelite narratives but incorporated into Numbers because of its importance for the historical and theological dimensions it exhibited" (p. 13). These conclusions have led Harrison to go to considerable lengths to demonstrate the record-keeping role of the *soferim* ["scribes," Num 1:16-18; Josh 1:10], priests (Num 5:23; 17:3), and even Moses himself (Exod 17:14; 24:4, 12; 34:27; Deut 29:27) in Israel.

While his frequent references to a "compiler" (pp. 14-21) could suggest to a casual reader an openness to a more recent non-Mosaic theory of authorship, Harrison argues clearly that "under these conditions of literary activity over a comparatively short historical period, it is not improper to regard Numbers as a product of the great Hebrew leader, containing accurately recorded historical, legal, religious, and other matters that came from credible eye-witnesses" (pp. 22-23). Later he concludes, "During the wilderness period, therefore, Numbers took substantially the form with which the modern reader is familiar. Moses can be regarded as the supervising

author, giving oversight to the assembling of relevant sources by the various literate officials and priests, adding his own written contributions, and probably acting as the final drafting editor" (p. 23).

As to date, Harrison is less precise, opting to place the work of Moses within the Late Bronze Age (1550-1220 B.C.) (p. 24). Unfortunately, he yields to archaeological evidence alone without allowing for biblical evidence. Omission of any effect of 1 Kgs 6:1 on dating is both glaring and puzzling, leaving the reader to wonder why.

Following the lead of early commentators, Harrison views the book of Numbers as "a study in the contrast between God's faithfulness and human disobedience" (p. 25). In contrast to her seminomadic background and lack of a central law, he notes that when God implemented the covenant, Israel underwent "a cultural change of vast significance. . . . Henceforth they were required to obey God's will implicitly, regardless of their personal feelings, because that will represented God's side of the covenantal agreement" (p. 27).

The volume contains helpful explanations and historical insights. For example, it points out that as early as Hammurabi, patriarchs in their last will and testament enjoyed the right to name grandsons as sons, as Jacob did with Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen 48:13-20) (p. 44). Also, an occasional excursus treats a topic of special significance. The separate treatment of "redemption" (pp. 76 ff.), though brief, adds technical understanding as well as devotional help. Though these are not exhaustive, they succinctly provide a good understanding of various issues and alternate solutions.

An excellent treatment clarifies the validity of the census numbers in the book (pp. 45 ff.). After discussing different views, he concludes that "there are difficulties with the large numbers both here and elsewhere in the OT that cannot be resolved without further information. . . . The conclusion at which Gispén arrived will probably be shared by many—namely, that the numbers in the MT are correct, whatever the accompanying difficulties" (p. 47).

The author discusses Balaam's oracles at length (Numbers 22-24), elaborating on the historicity of Balaam (which he firmly embraces), the nature of Mesopotamian divination, and the speaking donkey (pp. 291 ff.). While agreement on the historicity of Balaam is not difficult to embrace, this reviewer has difficulty with his explication of the phenomenon of a speaking animal. For instance, he

asserts that "in describing an event there is sometimes a difference between the narrating of the happening, whether oral or written, and the event itself. . . . As the donkey brayed, she conveyed a message of anger and resentment that the seer understood in his mind in a verbal form and to which he quite properly responded verbally. Through her opened mouth the braying animal retaliated against her undeserved treatment by uttering sounds that were unintelligible to the other onlookers but that Balaam was able to comprehend through processes of mental apperception that are not well understood. This situation may be paralleled to some extent in charismatic religious utterances . . ." (p. 300).

The commentary concludes with an excellent epilogue (pp. 431 ff.). It discounts once again the untenable nature of the evolutionary origin of Israel's religion and reiterates the historicity of the book, a relatively early date of writing, and a divinely ordained, propositionally given culture`religious, social, and legal.

The commentary is technical, but the transliterated and defined Hebrew and Greek terms help make it user-friendly for all. The devotional aspect, though not prominent, is skillfully interwoven into the fabric of the commentary, providing another rich dimension. With the present shortage of good commentaries on many OT books, the educator, the pastor, and the layman, will find in this text a welcome resource.

Norman C. Habel. *The Book of Job: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985. \$39.95 (cloth). 586 pp.
Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

The author has written another work entitled *The Book of Job* (Cambridge University Press, 1975). His approach is professedly selective: he pays careful attention to the legal metaphor in Job and the book's literary dimension within the larger exegetical task. This leads him to conclude, "The meaning of the book of Job is found in the interplay of literary design and theological idea" (p. 9). Without denying the possibility of editing, the author examines the book as a "literary totality" (p. 9). He has previously discussed literary

applications to Job in "The Narrative Art of Job: Applying the Principles of Robert Alter" (*JSOT* 27 [1983] 101-11). Without limiting himself to the discovery and reconstruction of literary forms in the book, he focuses on "the unique way in which forms, poetic patterns, structures, and language are transformed and made subservient to the governing design or focus of a particular unit" (pp. 23-24).

An example of his sensitivity to literary creativity is seen in his treatment of Elihu, the fourth and somewhat unexpected among Job's comforters. For Habel, the seemingly intrusive and redundant Elihu is the foreshadowed arbiter whom Job summoned to conduct his hearing (31:35). Actually, however, Elihu is neither intrusive nor redundant if he responds to Job's request for an arbiter. Allegations of redundancy may well come from emphasizing the similarities of his message to those of the others and not its uniqueness enhanced by the literary craft. The author explains, "This objection fades once we recognize that the 'answer' of Elihu is not, first and foremost, thematic and theological but forensic and dramatic, . . . the answer of orthodoxy given in a trial situation" (p. 36).

The present work is a splendid contribution to the previous literature on Job. In viewing the pericopes of the book as parts of a literary whole, he highlights the book's overarching theological message rather than numerous smaller and seemingly irresolvable issues that often control related discussions. For preachers and teachers of Job frustrated by the latter, the shift is a boon.

Gerhard F. Hasel. *Understanding the Book of Amos*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991. \$10.95 (paper). 171 pp. Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

The author, Professor of Old Testament at Andrews University, summarizes for the serious Bible student the unusually rich thoughts about and research into the book of Amos. His book, not a commentary per se, focuses primarily upon major issues in the already extensive research on this formative OT book.

Hasel feels that the significance of understanding Amos can hardly be overstated. Because the book is the first of the writing prophets (dating "probably somewhere between 780 and 760 B.C." [p.

12)), it serves as a "paradigm if not a microcosm for the study of all of the prophetic writings of the Old Testament" (p. 11). In short, "To understand Amos means to understand and to have a key to Old Testament prophecy" (p. 12).

The author shows great reserve when pointing out the tentative nature of many issues involved in past studies of Amos. No universally satisfactory solution to many intensely studied problems, particularly those of an introductory nature, has emerged. One difficult passage and "the most notorious *crux interpretum* of the book of Amos" (p. 45), Amos 7:14, continues to elude scholarly consensus. In fact, the issue of Amos' role as a prophet remains largely unresolved (p. 45). Even Amos' place of origin is problematic. Disputing with Stanly Rosen-baum, who argued that Amos' home of Tekoa was in the north, the author defends the southern Tekoa solution and concludes, "It appears that the northern Tekoa hypothesis calls for complex linguistic exercises that go beyond the readings of the Hebrew text" (p. 55).

Because Amos was the first of the writing prophets, continuity with earlier Scripture is a major focus in the book's analysis. To what extent does Amos introduce new or build upon old elements in Israel's religion? An answer to this question highlights the importance of the prophet's use of earlier Scripture. He explains the continuity of themes in Amos neither as "linked singularly to cultic, wisdom or other traditions" (p. 75) nor to the covenant alone. He uses internal evidence to conclude, "The thought and connections of Amos are too rich to restrict him to one or another major tradition" (p. 75), and again, "The current trend is to steer away from the unilinear backgrounds and connections and to see Amos as drawing on a rich reservoir of Israelite thought that he creatively adapts and transforms to his proclamation" (p. 81).

Hasel has provided a current survey of the enormous accumulation of scholarly research on Amos. The issues with which he deals are necessarily selective, but they supply a basis for Hasel's interpretation of Amos. His extensive work on the remnant theme furnishes a most important support for the unified interpretation of the book and a defense of the book's unity. Those preaching and teaching the book of Amos will find this to be one of the most concise, best-organized, and amazingly readable treatments of Amos (a good companion to Shalom Paul's new commentary on Amos).

J. Gerald Janzen. *Job. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*; Atlanta: John Knox, 1985. \$18.95 (cloth), 273 pp. Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

The focused objectives of this commentary series are noteworthy. The purpose of the Interpretation series is not only to present "the integrated result of historical and theological work with the biblical text" (p. v), but also to be "faithful to the text and useful to the church" (ibid). Unlike detailed exegetical commentaries, its format deals "with passages as a whole, rather than proceeding word by word, or verse by verse" (ibid). In the parlance of E. D. Hirsch, it produces "an interpretation which deals with both the meaning and significance [i.e., terms roughly equivalent to the traditional categories of interpretation and application] of biblical texts" (p. vi).

Janzen builds on other studies of Job. For example, he incorporates the works of Marvin Pope and Robert Gordis so heavily that "where no page number is given, it is to be assumed that reference is to their [i.e., Pope's or Gordis'] discussion of the passage in question" (p. viii).

In challenging some interpretations by proponents of the history-of-religions school, he frames one of the organizational features of his volume. In his introduction he summarizes and critiques Frank Cross and Thorkild Jacobsen in their works *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* and *The Treasure of Darkness*, respectively. He finds much that is commendable in both, but concludes, "Their assessment of the Joban resolution . . . is off the mark" (p. 9).

Specifically Janzen is referring to the overall message of the book. For him, Job addresses two universal questions, Job's and God's. Job's question is, "Why do the righteous suffer?" It follows chronologically and thematically God's question, "Why are the righteous pious?" (p. 2) this is a question of the adversaries, too. Jacobsen, like many others, "focuses entirely on questions which Job addresses to God" and "ignores completely the question raised in heaven concerning Job, in the prologue" (p. 9).

F. Cross argues that Genesis 2 Kings provide an inadequate

interpretation of Israel's religious experience and that "Job brought the *ancient* religion of Israel to an end" (cited by Janzen, italics added by Janzen). Janzen argues, "Where Cross reads disjunction from the 'ancient religion' we read critique, deepening and even transformation, but in any case fundamental continuity" (p. 10). Janzen then lists seven points of continuity in defense of his interpretation. The significance of this discussion is great. Cross, in essence, argues that much of the OT is off the mark in its message about God and man and, in short, about reality itself.

Readers may disagree with Janzen, for example, in his view that Job was written in the exile in response to the tension between the historical upheaval of that period and Israel's religious traditions (p. 5). Yet the author's attempt to account for the questions asked by both God and Job as well as his desire to draw the line with Cross and Jacobsen (the Canaanite and Mesopotamian history-of-religions paradigms, respectively) are typical of unique contributions that make his commentary helpful to those wanting to get a grasp of this difficult yet cherished book.

Thomas Edward McComiskey. *Reading Scripture in Public: A Guide for Preachers and Lay Readers*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991. \$9.95 (paper). 196 pp. Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

"All too often . . . we hear the Scriptures read in a manner that fails to reflect their authority" (p. 15). "If we want our hearers to develop a deeper sense of the Bible's authority, we must not read it in the same way we read the weekly announcements" (p. 15). To meet this need, Thomas McComiskey, Professor of Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, has "set forth principles of oral interpretation as they relate to the public reading of Scripture" (p. 9).

With the intensive and time-consuming challenge of learning exegetical skills often comes an unfortunate neglect. It is wrongly assumed that students will learn how to read the Scriptures publicly on their own. The present work both exposes the error of and prescribes a corrective for this assumption: "That effective public reading is *interpretation* and effective use of vocal emphasis is

exposition" (p. 9, emphasis added). A glaring implication of this principle is that the reader must first understand the passage before he reads it. Interpretation and exposition are essential elements in an appropriate reading of Scripture. Only after the listener has heard the reading *pre-interpreted* will he catch the sense of the passage (p. 10).

To read Scripture interpretively so as to communicate the sense of the passage requires first an understanding of the basic kinds of biblical literature. The overlapping categories of narrative and poetry are "literary styles" (p. 27) with differing characteristics. Biblical narrative is a "literary framework composed of recounted events" (p. 27). By contrast, biblical poetry has a more "exalted literary style" (p. 52) or "beauty of literary expression" (p. 53). It has "appeal to the emotions" (p. 53), "expression of high thought in appropriate language" (p. 54), and "*symmetry of expression*" (p. 54) that create structural beauty. The distinctions between narrative and poetry require different reading techniques.

The author feels that the sermon is a handmaid of the Scriptural reading and not, as some suggest, the other way around:

The Bible has meaning and relevance for those who hear it in faith. It does not need the sermon to give it force (actually the converse is true). The Holy Spirit brings insights to the mind whether we are reading the Bible alone or hearing its words in a congregation (p. 15).

In essence, this volume is a study of the oral interpretation of Scripture. To facilitate improvement, McComiskey prescribes exercises with a tape recorder. He supplies abundant practical advice such as "you should read sentences, not verses" (p. 22) and at the end of a paragraph "drop the pitch of the voice and slow the speed of . . . reading" (p. 42). Warnings against reading abuses are also helpful. He cautions against overdramatizing by recommending three words to remember: "*appropriate, natural, and controlled*" (p. 62). The volume facilitates an improved understanding of hermeneutics as well as an improved reading of Scripture.

John Piper. *Love Your Enemies*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991. 273 pp. \$9.95 (paper). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

In *Love Your Enemies* John Piper, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, has revised and updated his doctoral dissertation at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitat, Munchen, originally published by Cambridge University Press in 1979. Noting that the authenticity of "love your enemies" is one of the few unquestioned sayings of Jesus, he seeks "to analyse the history of the tradition of Jesus' command of enemy love and to interpret the way it was understood in the various stages of early Christian tradition within the New Testament" (p. 1).

One senses quickly that this book is not like the others for which the writer is known. Because it was originally a doctoral dissertation, Piper pursues the topic in a technical and critical fashion (his endnotes, bibliography, and indexes occupy ninety-eight pages). Though formatted in a more scholarly style, however, it does have some practical emphases, provided the reader is willing to wade through a mass of material to find them. Piper is eager to take the reader beyond the preponderantly intellectual, contending that "if a book about this command does not ultimately lead beyond mere thinking to an active realization of what the command intends, then that thing itself, in all its possible technical accuracy, becomes worthless" (p. 3). This is his stated objective, but the primary burden to achieve it falls on the reader.

Piper begins with references to the three principal passages about enemy-love in the NT epistles: Rom 12:14, 17-20, 1 Thess 5:15, and 1 Pet 3:9. He observes, "The negative command to renounce retaliation is never found in the New Testament paraenesis without a positive command of some sort. The command to bless was a certain constituent of the tradition" (p. 17). Though the concept of enemy-love was present in OT and Hellenistic sources (pp. 19-48), it varies from Jesus' command in that the former were given with specific qualifications or exceptions. In contrast, the command of enemy-love in early Christian tradition [i.e., the epistles] establishes without equivocation or qualification the requirement not to repay evil with evil, but to do good, to bless, etc. (pp. 49-65).

Piper discusses at considerable length the enemy-love command of Jesus in relation to His teachings on the Kingdom of God (pp. 69-88) and the law (pp. 89 ff.), including such topics as non-resistance *vs.* the *Lex Talionis* and abolition *vs.* continuation of the law.

He explores the use of Jesus' love command in the letters of Paul (pp. 102-19) and Peter (pp. 119-28) and follows this with a discussion of the content of the command (pp. 128-33). Though the section is brief, the author provides good observations about the command's essence, concluding that "the gospel tradition [as recorded in the synoptics] intends to witness to the sayings of Jesus as . . . a summons to repentance in view of the coming kingdom; the paraenetic tradition [as recorded in the epistles] passes the sayings on from the exalted Lord to his community as helpful examples for behavior" (p. 134).

His discussion of the Sermon on the Mount provides some noteworthy insights, especially his comparison of the enemy-love passage with the instruction in the disciples' prayer of Mt 6:9-13 (pp. 142-45). In concluding his treatment of this command, Piper observes that enemy-love requires "a renewed mind which can prove the perfect will of God. *Jesus* called for a transformation so radical that it left nothing in a man untouched. The *paraenesis* summons the Christian to realize the newness which he has been given 'through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1 Pt 1:3)" (p. 174).

In conclusion, the book makes worthy observations and generates helpful insights on this very significant statement by our Lord. Most of them, however, are mired in the formalities of a dissertation format that focuses more on explaining research methodology than findings. This will discourage all but the most persistent. Consequently, the value of the book is mostly critical, not exegetical, pastoral, or devotional. The reader should beware of occasional references to form criticism, the Q document (pp. 163-165), and redaction criticism (p. 151). The extensive documentation is noteworthy, but its relegation to the end of the book makes it more difficult to use. The bibliography is extensive too, but no works later than 1975 are in it.

Jerry K. Robbins, ed. *The Essential Luther: A Reader on Scripture, Redemption, and Society*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991. 93 pp. \$6.95 (paper). Reviewed by Irvin A. Busenitz, Professor of Bible and Old Testament.

Noting the passion of Martin Luther for the education of

Christians "Of all the Christian educators in history, Luther certainly ranks among the foremost" (p. 7) Robbins has designed this handbook as a "brief introduction to some of the major religious ideas of the Reformer" (p. 7), primarily as an introductory reader for college and seminary students (back dust cover).

Following Luther's three fundamental principles of justification by faith, the Bible as the sole authority for faith, and the priesthood of all believers, Jerry Robbins, campus minister for the Lutheran Campus Center at West Virginia University, excerpts central themes from the essays, letters, and sermons of Martin Luther. In addition, each concept is augmented with an editor's summary.

The chapters are brief and the treatises succinct, allowing the reader to travel quickly and easily through the foundational principles of the former priest's life. The editor clearly presents Luther's rejection of the allegorical hermeneutic (though Luther himself occasionally lapses into allegory), his unbending commitment to the literalness of Scripture, and the subordination of tradition to Scripture.

Most of the book presents the Reformer's convictions on redemption, a feature not difficult to understand. "For Luther, the central certainty, the central illumination holding all his thought together and giving sense to his vast writings is the Reformation battle cry, 'Justification by faith'" (p. 30). Whether in his *Lectures on Romans*, *Heidelberg Disputation*, or *On Christian Liberty* (also known as *The Freedom of a Christian*), the theme of justification by faith is obviously the central passion of his heart. It pervades all his writings, either explicitly or implicitly.

Through a final window into the life of Luther come glimpses of the impact of his theology on everyday life. Life and theology were inseparably intertwined. Says Robbins, "The overall effect of Luther's writing was to elevate secular life to a new position of dignity and sacred importance. . . . All life is the arena of God's goodness and all noble effort makes that divine goodness active and available" (p. 62). As a result, Luther delivered sermons and treatises on a believer's duty toward religious leaders and government, including the limitations of their power.

The brevity of the book limits its usefulness. Nevertheless, it provides a good overview of the foundation stones of this great Reformation figure. One need stop for only a few moments to catch a glimpse of his passion and feel his theological heartbeat.

DeAnn Sampley. *A Guide to Deaf Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. \$12.95 (paper). 155 pp. Reviewed by David C. Deuel, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

With nearly twenty years of involvement in deaf ministry, the author—a hearing person—writes to help others "begin communicating with thousands of loving, stimulating deaf people who live in every neighborhood and community" (p. 13). The title sounds like a call for committed long-term workers, but it is rather a resounding charge to a community of friends who will *notice* and *love* unconditionally.

In her friendly and personal writing style the author says, "My goal is to whet your appetite for American Sign Language, stimulate your awareness about deaf culture, inform you on the various methods of communication available to deaf people, and prepare you for more effective ministry to deaf people" (p. 13).

Understanding deafness and the deaf community—sections one and two, respectively—take the reader into "a unique culture that has its own traditions, interests, and tastes and—most important—its own language" (p. 9, forward by Joni Eareckson Tada). Understanding is essential to either starting or joining a deaf ministry in a local church, which is the subject of section two.

The final section focuses on communication (broadly defined), the major hurdle to effective ministry among the deaf. Here Samuel Marsh, a deaf pastor, shares his philosophy of ministry and personal desires for ministering to the deaf as he addresses the age-old missiological question of cultural groups and the need for indigenous local churches. Can a hearing church evangelize and disciple the deaf? Pastor Marsh's response is essentially "yes" it can, but only up to a point. He suggests that the hearing community make the most of every opportunity to minister to the deaf, but the deaf community needs its own spiritual leadership, both to direct the ministry and proclaim God's Word. In other words, the deaf community must receive teaching in the clearest and most effective way—through American Sign Language with no interpreter—and practice its own giftedness.

The effectiveness of hearing Christians in ministry to the deaf will be proportional to their willingness first to understand this cultural group and in this light answer the questions, "How will the

deaf community hear without a (signing) preacher?" and "What must the church do to present every (deaf) person complete in Christ?"

Richard Chenevix Trench. *Synonyms of the New Testament*. Robert G. Hoerber, ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. 425 pp. \$24.95 (cloth).
Reviewed by Donald G. McDougall, Associate Professor of New Testament.

Robert Hoerber has provided an inestimable service to students of the New Testament with his revision of Trench's classic work on synonyms. Trench, who was then the professor of divinity at King's College, London, first published this valuable work in 1876. It has seen many printings, but its usefulness to a broader Christian community has been limited by (1) its extensive use of NT and extra-biblical Greek, of Latin, and of Hebrew quotations and (2) the somewhat congested format of the book. These problems are resolved in this recently completed revision.

For starters, the book is far easier to read since "the entire book has been completely rewritten . . . to modernize and simplify the English style, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure." In addition, all foreign language quotes have been translated into English and the "foreign language titles to works by classical and ecclesiastical authors have been spelled out." Greek, Hebrew, and Latin words have been transliterated, thus increasing the book's value not only to those without an extensive background in languages, but also to those who struggle with words and structures unfamiliar to them from their study of the NT.

An additional value to this reviewer is the arrangement of the material. The old volume was congested and the various sections treated as so many paragraphs in one long work. This revision has rearranged the material from paragraphs into chapters and given the impression of airing the book out. This is evident as early as the table of contents where the addition of English titles and space between the chapter headings makes it far more comfortable to follow.

Another valuable feature is that the biblical Greek and Hebrew words have been coded to match the *New Strong's Exhaustive*

Concordance of the Bible. The meanings of the other Greek words are taken from Liddell Scott's lexicon with its relevant pagination.

The revision of this classic work is a welcome addition to the library of any serious student of the NT. Even those who own the original work would do well to consult this volume in their local bookstores. It is also highly recommended that Trench's preface be studied carefully before plunging into the book's contents. This reviewer could only have wished that the Greek and Hebrew script had been retained alongside of the transliteration in the work.