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Symposium on the Biblical Text and Literature

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Garry J. Moes, Editor

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The Journal of Christian Reconstruction

This Journal is dedicated to the fulfillment of the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 and 9:1—to subdue the earth to the glory of God. It is published by the Chalcedon Foundation, an independent Christian educational organization (see inside back cover). The perspective of the Journal is that of orthodox Christianity. It affirms the verbal, plenary inspiration of the original manuscripts (autographs) of the Bible and the full divinity and full humanity of Jesus Christ—two natures in union (but without intermixture) in one person.

The editors are convinced that the Christian world is in need of a serious publication that bridges the gap between the newsletter-magazine and the scholarly academic journal. The editors are committed to Christian scholarship, but the Journal is aimed at intelligent laymen, working pastors, and others who are interested in the reconstruction of all spheres of human existence in terms of the standards of the Old and New Testaments. It is not intended to be another outlet for professors to professors, but rather a forum for serious discussion within Christian circles.

The Marxists have been absolutely correct in their claim that theory must be united with practice, and for this reason they have been successful in their attempt to erode the foundations of the noncommunist world. The editors agree with the Marxists on this point, but instead of seeing in revolution the means of fusing theory and practice, we see the fusion in personal regeneration through God's grace in Jesus Christ and in the extension of God's kingdom. Good principles should be followed by good practice; eliminate either, and the movement falters. In the long run, it is the kingdom of God, not Marx's "kingdom of freedom," which shall reign triumphant. Christianity will emerge victorious, for only in Christ and His revelation can men find both the principles of conduct and the means of subduing the earth: the principles of biblical law.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Copyright

Introduction: The Sanctity of Truth

Garry J. Moes 6

1. THE BIBLICAL TEXT

The Problems of the Received Text

R. J. Rushdoony 13

Translation and Subversion

R. J. Rushdoony 16

Romancing the Text

Theodore P. Letis 25

Edward F. Hills' Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text

Theodore P. Letis 27

The Scholastic Approach to Text Critical Problems

Theodore P. Letis 35

B. B. Warfield's Philosophy and New Testament Text Criticism

Theodore P. Letis 84

Edward F. Hills Returns to the Scholastic Approach

Theodore P. Letis 112

2. BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Ugaritic Literature and the Old Testament

Stan F. Vaninger 205

The Function of Matthew 5:17–20 in Matthew's Gospel

J. Daryl Charles 247

The Hagar Story in Galations 4:21–31

Charles D. Provan 300

3. REVIEWS AND RECONSTRUCTION

The Impossible Religion of Leo Tolstoy
Ellen Myers 311

New Age Thought in Russia before World War I
Ellen Myers 342

The Heart of Faërie
Christopher Hodgkins 364

Strategy of Bitterness
Christopher Hodgkins 381

The Three R's Revisited: 'Riting, Rhetoric, Reconstruction
Gary R. Hafer 401

The Loss and Recovery of Truth
Otto Scott 406

The Ministry of Chalcedon

INTRODUCTION: THE SANCTITY OF TRUTH

Garry J. Moes

The symposium contained in this journal is about faithfulness. It is about the preservation of original, infallible truth as handed down through generations in the words and texts of the human language.

The God of the Bible is a communicating God, and He has chosen to express Himself by both oral and written means. Together these means represent the sum total of His revelation. By His *spoken* word, He brought the cosmos—His general revelation—into existence and showed us His mighty Hand. By His *written* word—His special and uniquely authorative revelation—He opened to us His Heart and Mind and showed us His way of salvation and life. Confronted by the implications of His vast revelation, the disciples of Jesus, God's Supreme Expression of Himself, could only say, "To whom else can we go? You have the words of eternal life."

This close identification of God and His Word has been an essential foundation and presupposition of the Body of Christ through the ages. As Joel Nederhood has pointed out, God and His Word are so closely identified with each other that "we may believe that when we have contact with the Word, we have contact with God."[1] Dr. Nederhood has pointed out further that God uses His Word to "actualize" His presence among His people. Citing such passages as Deuteronomy 4:5–8, Deuteronomy 30:16, and Psalm 119:9, Nederhood has demonstrated that {2} "God did not want His people to think of His laws as so many objective statements; He wanted them to think of those laws in terms of God Himself coming to

1. Joel Nederhood, "How to Start a Reformation," *Radio Pulpit* 19, no. 10 (October 1974) (Chicago: Back to God Hour): 45.

them and showing them the way of life."[2]

If this is so about the original forms of God's revelation, and surely it is, it can be certainly presupposed that God is vitally interested in the historical preservation of the Truth about Himself. His *preserved Word* is the Truth about Himself, and through it—and it alone—He personally comes to be present within and among us. This, of course, is accomplished by the Spirit of God, who is said to be both the agent (breather, inspirer) of God's revelation and the Giver of Life.

This means that humanity, as stewards of the received Word, has had an awesome duty throughout history—the preservation of a priceless treasure—the Truth about God. While God recognized that we are "earthen vessels," He has charged us to deal honestly and faithfully with His gift. St. Paul described how he approached this responsibility:

> Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus's sake. For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.
>
> But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Cor. 4:1–7, NIV)

As earthen jars, faithless men sometimes have miscarried that which has been entrusted to us. But we can be assured that God, who has determined to bring the light of His presence into our very lives through His Word and Spirit, has not allowed His own essence to be carelessly leaked into dark oblivion and lost. We have, then, both God's perseverance and man's stewarding respon-

2. Joel Nederhood, "Mr. Smith's Bible," *Radio Pulpit* 31, no. 10 (October 1985) (Palos Heights, IL: Back to God Hour): 11.

sibility at issue when considering the preservation of truth in the text and words of the human language.

We examine the implications of this—for both sacred and secular writings—in the present "Symposium on The Biblical Text and Literature." {3}

In a brief opening article, **Dr. R. J. Rushdoony,** president of Chalcedon, sets forth the basic issue of the symposium's discussion of the sanctity of the biblical text and modern criticism's attempts to produce a scientific scripture: "Consider what happens when the Received Text is set aside and scholars give us their reconstruction of the text. The truth of revelation has thereby passed from the hand of God into the hands of men."

In a second essay, Dr. Rushdoony documents how many revisions, translations, and paraphrases of the historic Scriptures have resulted in actual, though sometimes subtle, subversions of God's Truth. "By such change, often too slight for many readers to detect, new meanings are read into the Scripture, and another bible and other gods appear on the scene," he warns.

Following these warnings, we are pleased to feature a book-length study on textual criticism, completed at Emory University's Chandler School of Theology, by **Theodore P. Letis** (M.T.S., *magna cum laude*), director of the Institute for Reformation Studies. In a very brief introduction to this study, Mr. Letis, who is currently involved in a Ph.D. program at the Univesity of Edinburgh, Scotland, notes that the mad dash for expressing God's words in contemporary idiom has too often given "communication" priority over truth.

In the main feature, "Edward Freer Hills's Contribution to the Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text," Mr. Letis gives us a significant historical analysis of textual criticism from Theodore Beza through Westcott and Hort, Burgon, Warfield, and finally the neglected and often lonely conservative scholar Edward F. Hills.

It was Hills who best articulated a presuppositional foundation to textual studies and therefore to faith in the truth of the historic Christian Scriptures. As Mr. Letis observes, Hills's attempt to restore the canonical shape of the texts of Scripture sanctioned by creedal authority was "a development of catholic dimensions and reflects a sense of loss at the result of a purely academic exercise begun in the nineteenth century in the noble but overly ambitious

attempt to arrive at the original text."

Next in our symposium, **Stan Vaninger** (M.A., Biblical Studies, Covenant Theological Seminary), a teacher of history, Bible, and math at Victory Christian School in St. Louis, offers a fascinating study on the issue of the relative influences of the Old Testament literature on the literature of the ancient civilization of Ugarit. Mr. Vaninger's study {4} destroys prevailing scholarship claims that much of the glorious literature of the Hebrews was merely an adaptation of pagan mythological writings of neighboring Ugarit.

A key contribution of this study also is the idea that the Christian presupposition of biblical inspiration is a logical starting point in determining who borrowed from whom. But Mr. Vaninger does scholarship a further service in showing that the Hebrew Scriptures can be demonstrated scientifically to be the prior and true version of the ideas found in the ancient writings of both peoples. This study shows clearly that nonChristian scholarship has, instead, given us disinformation on the subject and that, true to the satanic tradition, ancient and modern Baals and Baal worshippers have claimed for themselves the power and works of the true God.

We next present two exegetical studies from the New Testament, both of which draw upon Old Testament issues, demonstrating the continuity of the canon. **J. Daryl Charles** of Catonsville, Maryland, offers a detailed examination of the function of Matthew 5:17–20, Christ's troublesome (to some) but stirring defense of the eternal character of biblical law. Author **Charles D. Provan** of Monongahela, Pennsylvania, traces the history of the Covenant with an apologetic probe of St. Paul's allegorical references to Hagar and Ishmael in Galations 4:21–31.

Turning to secular writ, the symposium includes two magnificent studies of Russian literature by **Ellen Myers,** whose insightful examinations of Russian culture and religion have previously graced the pages of this journal.

The first of her new contributions examines the curious but highly significant religion of one of the world's literary giants, Leo Tolstoy. In a passage which parallels one of the key problems with much modern biblical translation, Mrs. Myers notes that Tolstoy "demanded that the arts and literature be comprehensible to everyone and communicate mankind's unity." But, as she points out further, the religion Tolstoy was forced to invent to accomplish

that and other of his one-world, perfectionist, impossibly legalistic requirements, brought him to despair and hypocrisy.

In one telling passage, we find a clear connection between the "sacred" and "secular" sections of this symposium on literature. Mrs. Myers brings to mind a remarkable thread running through both Tolstoy's desperate drive to avoid the truths of biblical doctrine and the attempts of modern higher criticism and biblical "translators" to do the same. {5}

She notes: "Instead of the biblical doctrines he despised, Tolstoy, as always, wanted a set of clear rules to obey. Aided by German higher criticism, he made up his own *Union and Translation of the Four Gospels*, later further condensed as *The Gospel in Brief*, radically excising and rephrasing whatever did not fit his views. He turned for help in translating the original Greek and Hebrew of the Bible to the tutor of his children, who reported that Tolstoy '*would have liked the text to say exactly what he thought it ought to say*,' and was vexed because the young teacher's translations mostly concurred with those of the church" (emphasis added).

In her second study, Mrs. Myers demonstrates chilling parallels between today's "New Age" thought and the dark philosophies of the literati during Russia's "Silver Age." Here again we may see parallels between the occultic subversions of modern literature and those of ancient Ugarit.

From the *Journal*'s unused manuscript files, we have retrieved two papers written by **Christopher Hodgkins** several years ago during literary studies at the University of Chicago. The first raises a warning for the growing number of Christian fans of fantasy novelist J. R. R. Tolkien. Mr. Hodgkins questions the alleged biblical foundations which both author and devotees claim for Tolkien's fairy world. His second paper calls for further caution in the reading of Chaucer and, among other things, raises the question of whether it is safe to accept Chaucer's seeming claim to be an amoral reporter of social actions. It is a very contemporary issue in that it parallels the positions which modern journalists often claim to occupy. As Mr. Hodgkins concludes about Chaucer, modern journalists do us little good service by claiming moral neutrality while wallowing in debasement.

In "The Three R's Revisited: 'Riting, Rhetoric, Reconstruction,' " **Gary Hafer** next takes a new look at the importance of writing in

Christian reconstruction. "If we are to say anything to the world at large, then we must learn how to say it. We must be equipped to disarm the unbeliever at every turn and sufficiently present our position in a clear and concise manner," Mr. Hafer says.

There are few in the world who have taken that thought to greater distances than Chalcedon's staff writer and commentator, **Otto Scott,** who anchors and concludes our symposium with an elegant historical examination of our foundational issue: the preservation of truth. Although his essay is not directed precisely at literature, Mr. Scott, who {6} is Reconstructionism's premier voice on that subject, provides a fitting conclusion with his closing challenge: Truth is best retained or regained by a comprehensive defense of the tenets and glories of the Christian faith.

And that effort must include the intellectual, ecclesiastical, academic, artistic, and literary community—the keepers of the sacred and secular word.

1.
THE BIBLICAL TEXT

The Problems of the Received Text

R. J. Rushdoony

Some years ago, as a student, I began to read the published works of Dean John William Burgon (born 1813), the great champion of the so-called "Received Text." Burgon believed that the God revealed in Scripture not only gave an infallible Word but that He also preserved the text. He thus championed the Received Text which is the basis of the Authorized Version, i.e., the King James translation. For his very learned and able stance, Burgon was subjected to the scorn of lesser men and referred to as a "champion of lost causes and impossible beliefs."

This is still true. Most seminary professors, whether modernist, orthodox, or fundamentalist, refuse to give Burgon serious consideration. Some graduate students who have shown interest in Burgon, Edward F. Hills and others of this school, have found themselves verbally abused and treated as non-scholars.

I myself, on reading Burgon, made the mistake of asking one scholar a question about Burgon's work. Instead of an answer, I received a reply of shocked outrage that such a person as Burgon could be taken seriously. To accept Burgon's premise, I was told, was an "unpardonable sin for a scholar."

Let us consider the implications of such a belief. Burgon held that we have a trustworthy Bible, that the God who gave the Word also {8} preserved it. The Received Text thus gives us the faithful transcription of the original autographs or manuscripts. The contrary view, which came into focus in the work of Westcott and Hort, held that, while the original autographs may have been a faithful rendering of the revelations made by God, scribes over the generations made errors and emendations which must be corrected. As a result, each new translation or paraphrase now makes fresh changes and renderings. Every discarded and defective man-

uscript which is discovered is hailed for its new readings.

Why have scholars, modernist and antimodernist, shown so great a willingness to deny the validity of the Received Text and to heap scorn on its champions? When we understand the religious premise of their hostility, we will be better able to assess their position.

Consider what happens when the Received Text is set aside and scholars give us their reconstruction of the text. The truth of revelation has thereby passed from the hand of God into the hands of men. Scholars then establish the true reading in terms of their presuppositions, and anyone who does not believe that the modern renderings manifest their "translators' " presuppositions is clearly misguided. The denial of the Received Text enables the scholar to play god over God. The determination of the correct word is now a scholar's province and task. The Holy Spirit is no longer the giver and preserver of the biblical text: it is the scholar, the textual scholar. Perhaps when the Council of Jerusalem declared, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us" (Acts 15:28), they should have added, "subject to the correction of textual scholars."

The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1, section 4, reads:

> The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth itself), the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.

This view summed up the Reformation faith, especially that of the Calvinists. For them, the authority of the church depends on the Bible, not vice versa. Rome, on the other had, adapted the view that the authority of the Bible rests upon the church.

The modern view is a development of the position of the Council of Trent, but with an ironic twist. The center of authority is shifted now from the leaders of the church (Catholic or Protestant) to the {9} scholars of the church. Well before the nineteenth century was over, Catholic scholars were questioning the right of Rome to deny them the freedom to pursue their studies to whatever conclusion they deemed necessary. In the second half of the twentieth century, Catholic and Protestant prelates increasingly echo the conclusions of the textual scholars.

The role of the Spirit of God has been transferred to the spirit of some men, i.e., those biblical scholars engaged in textual studies. Not the text of Scripture itself but the word of the scholars determines the reading and dating of the text, i.e., its meaning and validity.

Paul tells us, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Faith and hearing are the work of God in the life of man. It is a direct and personal relationship through Christ and the Holy Spirit. Now we have another mediator, the scholar.

The historic belief of Christians has been that the God who gave the Word preserved the Word. This is the doctrine of the preservation of the Word of God. The Word gives the direct and authentic Word of God. Now preservation has a new meaning. The biblical scholars hold that theirs is a word of restoration, so that preservation requires their restorative word. The triune God is replaced by scholarly men.

Thus, the denial of the Received Text's validity is no small matter. It rests on a religious revolution with far-reaching implications. This means that many men of Reformed or Arminian theologies, who profess the orthodox doctrines of their communions, hold to a position which undermines their faith. It should not surprise us that seminaries and biblical scholars have for generations led their churches into various forms of humanism. By playing god over God, they begin with the essence of original sin and humanism, man as his own god, determining the validity of everything, including the Word of God, for himself (Gen 3:15). In effect, they say, "Yea, hath God said?" (Gen 3:1) of the best of Scripture.

The issue of the Received Text is thus no small matter, nor one of academic concern only. The faith is at stake.

TRANSLATION AND SUBVERSION

R. J. Rushdoony

The publication of a new translation of the Bible should be an occasion for rejoicing. The availability of Scripture in a new language, or a fresh rendering in "modern dress" for people already possessing the Bible, can be of great importance in propagating the faith. *The faith*, this indeed is the central motive in many contemporary versions, but by no means all. At least two other motives are important factors on the contemporary scene: *first*, a financial motive, and, *second*, an anti-Christian religious motive.

The Profit in Bibles

A profit motive is, in its place, a godly aspect of life, by no means to be condemned unless it transgresses the laws of God. Without faith, every aspect of life is under condemnation, all life then is out of focus, and things, in themselves pure, become impure in the hands of the ungodly.

As is well known, the Bible is the consistent best-seller. The annual sale of millions of copies makes it therefore a phenomenal sales item. Its potentiality as a money-maker is thus enormous, almost staggering to the economically minded imagination. But one very serious drawback exists: the Bible, in its most popular English form, the King James Version, is not subject to copyright. Any publisher can print it and enter into a highly competitive field where the margin of profit must {11} be kept very low for competitive reasons. The handicaps thus are very real, although several publishers have regularly counted on their Bible sales for assured profits. Is it any wonder, therefore, that publishers, among others, have come to recognize the tremendous potentialities of a *copyrighted Bible*? A copyrighted Bible is thus a major bonan-

za to publishers, and a financial and prestigious asset to scholars participating as translators and editors. Not every new translation has been a money-making scheme, but many of them have clearly had this motive as among their central ones. It is no wonder that new versions are thus often front-page news; the advertising and promotion behind a major version makes it a financial asset to many media. *Possession* of a copyright is again a major affair, and, in one recent case, was a subject of legal battle. Thus, the Revised Standard Version is copyrighted by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and first published by Thomas Nelson and Sons in New York, Toronto, and Edinburgh. Because many evangelicals regarded this version as "Modernist" in character, in 1962, a "study" edition was put out by the A. J. Holman Company of Philadelphia, with fifty-nine evangelical scholars giving their evangelical "imprimatur" to it by means of brief introductions and articles. The *unstated fact* was that, with every copy and every edition, the profit goes to the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ. The National Council has thus a source of income now entirely apart from any donations by member churches. It has an invested interest in a particular Bible. The use of this Bible is thus promoted in a variety of circles. It is used for responsive readings in hymnals, and in Sunday school lessons. The Holman Study Bible was given away as a subscription premium by *Christianity Today*, ostensibly a voice of evangelical Christianity. "New Bibles" are big money, and their by-products are likewise profitable. They are used in newer commentaries by permission to further their popularity, and concordances suggest their durability. With all the money at stake in new versions, is it any wonder that people are urged, to their confusion, to belief in the necessity for new versions?

Revision, Translation, or Paraphrase?

It might be well to note here a further area of confusion. The Revised Standard Version claims to be a revision of the King James Version, i.e., not a new translation but merely the King James corrected {12} and modernized. Oswald T. Allis, in *Revision or New Translation* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), has called atten-

tion to the fact that it is closer often to a new translation by unconservative scholars. In *Recent Revised Versions*, Dr. Allis extended his critique to the New English Bible.

New translations, moreover, tend to follow radical readings of erroneous or "wastebasket" texts in preference to standard readings. With each new version, the number of departures from the Received Text is steadily increasing. The sales value of these new versions, judging by some promotional material, seems to depend on new and novel readings. There is, in the minds of some buyers at least, a premium on newness and on departures from the "old Bible." With some, there is almost a hopeful note that the newer Bibles might gradually convert "Thou shalt not commit adultery" to "Thou shalt commit adultery"! New versions, of various qualities of good and bad, are purchased by many persons almost as fetish objects and remain unread.

But many of the new versions are not *translations*: they are *paraphrases*. What is the difference? A translation is an exact and literal rendering of the original Greek or Hebrew into English. A paraphrase tries to put the original thought into modern thought forms. One of the most popular liberal paraphrasers today is J. B. Phillips. A paraphrase can be a very valuable help at times, but it can never substitute for a translation. Thus, Edgar J. Goodspeed renders Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," as "Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need." This is brilliant and telling; it gives us a vivid grasp of the meaning, but unfortunately Goodspeed, while giving us a few such gems, also neutralizes many of the basic theological terms of the New Testament with weak paraphrases.

The King James Version is not a paraphrase. It is both a revision of earlier translations in part, and a new translation in its day.

Archaic Language

One of the charges consistently leveled against the King James Version is that its language is archaic and obsolete. The answer is a simple one: it is intended to be. In 1611 the King James Version was as "out of date" as it is today. Compare the writings of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, King James I, and John Lyly with the King James Version and this becomes quickly apparent. The translators *avoided*

the speech {13} of their day for a basic English which would be simple, timeless, and beautiful, and they succeeded. Their version spoke from outside their age and tradition with elemental simplicity. Their wisdom here exceeds that of their successors. Nothing seems more ridiculous than an out-dated "modern" translation. Let us examine William Mace, 1729, as he rendered James 3:5–6:

> The tongue is but a small part of the body, yet how grand are its pretensions! a spark of fire! what quantities of timber will it blow into flame? the tongue is a brand that sets the world into a combustion: it is but one of the numerous organs of the body, yet it can blast whole assemblies. Tipped with infernal sulphur it sets the whole train of life in a blaze.

In 1768, Dr. Edward Harwood's *Liberal Translation of the New Testament*, i.e., a paraphrase, rendered Luke 15:11, "A certain man had two sons," as "A gentleman of splendid family oppulent fortune had two sons." This is clearly an extreme instance, but it does illustrate a point: if we consider our age and its requirements as *normative*, we can involve ourselves in absurdities. And such absurdities are not missing from the various versions. The critic Dwight Macdonald has called attention to some of these in the Revised Standard Version in a *New Yorker* article, "The Bible in Modern Undress" (*New Yorker*, November 14, 1953, 183–208). Macdonald comments on the RSV, by way of conclusion, "Whether it will be any more successful in replacing K. J. V. than the 1885 version was remains to be seen. If it is, what is now simply a blunder—a clerical error, so to speak—will become a catastrophe. Bland, favorless mediocrity will have replaced the pungency of genius" (208).

The issue is not that the Bible should speak our everyday language, for this involves debasement, but that it should be *understandable*, and here, all arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, the King James speaks a language which, while sometimes difficult because the matter itself is so, is more often simple, clear-cut, and beautiful. Some modern versions are very helpful, but none equal the King James in its clarity and memorable beauty. The greatest single demerit of the King James Version is simply this: it is not copyrighted, and hence no organization and no scholar can profit thereby. {14}

A Trustworthy Translation

The question of a *trustworthy* translation is all-important, especially since novelty is increasingly characteristic of many new translations. Which translation is a trustworthy one?

At this point, it needs to be noted that all translations face certain perplexing problems. The meanings of certain Hebrew words are uncertain, and the exact identity of many plants and animals subject to debate. With these details, we are not concerned. The marginal readings of a good edition are helpful in clarifying meanings, or giving alternate translations, at difficult points.

The important question is in another area. What *text* of the Bible is being translated? In answering this question, let it be noted, we are departing from virtually all accepted scholarship. This, however, does not trouble us, for, after all, the major break with "accepted" scholarship comes with acceptance of Christ as Lord and Saviour, and the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God.

Since the days of Westcott and Hort, textual criticism has applied to biblical textual criticism a rigorously alien category of thought and "an essentially naturalistic method."[1] This scholarship assumes man to be autonomous and ultimate rather than God, and it requires all documents to meet the same naturalistic tests with respect to their nature and history. Nothing which is not true or possible of Homer's *Iliad* can be posited thus for the Bible and its books. Moreover, this method is applied to the Bible with a certainty and omniscience lacking in the determination, for example, of composite authorship in Shakespeare's plays, where we often know he had collaborators.

As Hills has pointed out, the doctrine of the sacred origin and preservation of Scripture is a part of the "general doctrine of the Scriptures concerning the controlling providence of God." "He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). This providential preservation of the text, Hills has maintained as an expert in New Testament manuscripts, is to be seen

1. See Edward F. Hills's introduction to John W. Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to St. Mark* (Jenkintown, PA: Sovereign Grace, 1959) 40–41, 66; and Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*: *A Christian View of the New Testament Manuscripts* (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1956).

in the standard text of the New Testament, translated in the King James Version.

It is not our concern here to enter into the intricacies of textual criticism, nor are we qualified to do so. But we are qualified to assert {15} that most current criticism, both "conservative" and "liberal," rests on a *radically nonChristian philosophy* which cannot bear other than implicity or explicity anti-Christian fruit.

Another Religion in New Translations

Are the variations in the new translations simply minor differences in wording, or do they conceal a new religion? To answer this question, let us examine Genesis 1:1–2, first of all in three older translations, the King James (Protestant), the Douay (Roman Catholic), and the Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic Text of the Jewish Publication Society (Old Testament, 1917, 1955, 1961); then let us examine *The Torah*: *The Five Books of Moses* (Jewish Publication Society, 1962), and the Doubleday Anchor translation, prepared by "more than 30 Catholic, Protestant and Jewish scholars" (*Time*, September 27, 1963, 48, 50).

King James: In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Douay: In the beginning God created the heaven and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved over the waters.

Approved Version, *Jewish Publication Society*, *1917*: In the beginning God created the heaven and earth. Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit God hovered over the face of the waters.

Torah, *1962*: When God began to create the heaven and the earth—the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water—God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (v. *3* included)

Anchor: When God set about to create heaven and earth—the world being then a formless waste, with darkness over the seas and only an awesome wind sweeping over the water—God said, "Let

there be light," and there was light. (v. 3 included) {16}

As Edward J. Young has noted, in "The Interpretation of Genesis 1:2" (*Westminster Theological Journal*, May 1961), this passage has been used to try to introduce mythology into Moses's account.

The conservatism of the first three translations, especially the first two, is apparent. These are, of course, older translations. In the King James and Douay, Genesis 1:1 and 2 are three separate sentences, and the first sentence is a separate paragraph. Now paragraphing is a form of interpretation in itself, as is sentence formation. To set "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" in a separate form is to declare in effect that this sentence is either an introduction to the account of creation, or a summary statement of creation, or both. It declares God to be the Creator, and then the *details* of the acts of creation are given to us.

But, in the Torah and Anchor versions, verse 1 is made into a *subordinate* clause, "When God began to create the heaven and the earth," and "When God set about to create heaven and earth." This now ceases to be a completed statement of fact. Instead, we are now told *what the condition of the universe was* "when God began to create," namely, that at least one segment of it was "a formless waste," and, as we learn subsequently, this "unformed and void" earth was *not created* but *developed* by God. As a result, instead of biblical theism, we have the ancient pagan *dualism*, the co-eternity of God and matter. The great void of being, the unformed chaos of matter, always existed, in this philosophy, and God did not create it; He merely acted on it, with varying degrees of success. Thus, in the new "translations" of Genesis 1:1–2, we have substituted for biblical theism an *alien religion*! We have a god very different from and sharply limited in contrast to the God of Scripture. Translation here has become the vehicle of a new religion, the instrument of the proclamation of "other gods," an instrument of idolatry.

The net result of this new "translation" is, to repeat, another god than the God of Scripture. It is a god similar to that of illuminist tradition and of Masonry. The cardinal of Chile, in *The Mystery of Freemasonry Unveiled*, described this god aptly:

> The god creator, or the god of Masonry, is not the God Creator of Christians. The Architect constructs the building with materials which he did not make, but which he finds already made; the

> Creator constructs the edifice of the world, not with foreign or ready made substance but with materials which he himself made from nothing. (72) {17}

It should be noted that the Torah Version gives the older accepted readings as footnotes.

In the Torah Version, "the spirit of God" in v. 2 becomes "a wind from God," and in Anchor, it becomes "an awesome wind." The Holy Spirit is thus eliminated from creation.

In the Torah Version, Genesis 1:26 reads: "And God said, 'I will make man in my image, after my likeness.' " The footnote adds that this is, *literally*, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This change is justified on the grounds that the Hebrew plural forms here are simply "plurals of majesty." But the fact remains that the Hebrew text gives a plural form, and that *Elohim*, a plural noun for God, literally *Gods*, takes, when used for Jehovah, a singular verb. Many Christian scholars have rightly seen in this an evidence of the *plurality* of the godhead and of its *unity*, a definite witness to trinitarianism. Modern translators may disagree; but they have no right to mistranslate the text, which, as admitted, reads, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Such novel and unwarranted renderings of words can be destructive of meaning and of doctrine. Thus, Genesis 3:15 reads, respectively, in King James, in Joseph Bryant Rotherham, and in the Torah Version:

> *King James:* And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

> *Rotherham*, *1897*: And enmity will I put between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed,— He shall crush thy head, But thou shalt crush his heel.

> *Torah*, *1962*: I will put enmity
> Between you and the woman,
> And between your offspring and hers;
> They shall strike at your head,
> And you shall strike at their heel.

In the Torah Version, by changing the number of "seed" or "offspring" from singular to plural, the reference is radically

changed in this prophecy. It can no longer mean Christ, who is singular, but refers to the plural offspring of the woman, to the faithful or to Israel. We are thus pointed to another Savior. {18} By such changes, often too slight for many readers to detect, new meanings are read into the Scripture, and another bible and other gods appear on the scene. And each new version, irrespective of its source, seems bent on surpassing the previous ones in its adoption of novelties.

An important consideration for Christians in evaluating new versions is this: consider the source. Can unbelievers, modernists, men with leftwing records, and men faithless to their ordination vows be expected to produce good fruit? Our Lord stated it clearly:

> Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.
>
> A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (Matt. 7:16–28)

Romancing the Text

Theodore P. Letis

George Marsden made a deft observation while reviewing a reprint of E. Harbison's *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation*, noting, in contrast to the Renaissance/Reformation, that

> rather than benefiting from the expansion in human knowledge, communities [today] are increasingly becoming subject to the leadership of the communicators rather than the thinkers. (*Reformed Journal* 34 [March 1984]: 30)

Perhaps in no area of scholarship is this more the case than in the area of Bible texts and translations. The field is so dense with options that laymen have become desensitized, believing it cannot be that important which translation one uses. No one could be expected personally to evaluate each one to determine its quality. Enter the "communicators."

They are, after all, the real culprits. Each communications technician attempts to improve on the original language texts while translating God's Word into contemporary idiom, no matter how truncated the original message becomes in the process. The chorus of these conflicting options has inspired a cynicism, both in the church as well as in the culture. The result is a loss of confidence in a cognitive approach to religion based on a firm grasp of Redemptive History as found in Scripture. {20}

In the place of the Renaissance/Reformation approach to religion the communicators have also provided us with a variety of gospels, from Robert Schuler's "new reformation" of "self-esteem" to some charismatics who want to repristinate the first century, with, or without, the Holy Spirit's approval or assistance.

We in the West are entering an era not unlike the Middle Ages, when Bible reading and study was replaced with the great visual communication act of the Mass. Furthermore, we are experiencing a revival of classic paganism, both in its New Age expressions

as well as the counter-culture feminism of "Wicca"—ancient goddess worship.

It is the goal of the Institute for Reformation Biblical Studies to revive interest in the very texts that so enlivened Erasmus and other of the Christian Humanists during the Renaissance—that era of re-birth in the West. The texts these scholars had in mind when they cried *ad fontes*—"back to the original sources"—were the Reformation Greek and Hebrew texts that gave birth to Protestantism. Protestantism, in turn, gave us the idea that every man should have the Bible, *faithfully* translated, in the tongue of his nation-state. The theology as well as the texts from this era have been lost on this generation, currently experiencing "the closing of the American mind."

We explain how all this has come about in our multi-media presentation titled "How Did We Get the Bible?" For scheduling such a seminar or more information concerning our organization, please write:

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P.O. Box 5114, Ft. Wayne, IN 46895.

Sola Scriptura

Edward F. Hills's Revival of the Ecclesiastical Text

Theodore P. Letis

Introduction

Edward Freer Hills's story begs to be told. The neglect of its telling has not been for the lack of attempts,[1] rather it reflects the unwillingness of scholars to get at the heart of his concerns and method.

New Testament text critics have all but blithely dismissed him because, though fully in their ranks,[2] he nevertheless transgressed

1. The first major attempt to analyze Hills's views was Richard A. Taylor's "The Modern Debate Concerning the Greek Textus Receptus: A Critical Examination of the Textual Views of Edward F. Hills" (Ph.D. diss., Bob Jones University, 1973). This is sadly marred by the omission of any biographical treatment, even though it was written while Hills was still alive and could have been interviewed.

Many works contain brief treatments of Hills: Harry A. Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 32–49; D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate*: *A Plea for Realism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979) 39–78; Michael W. Holmes, "The 'Majority Text Debate': New Form of an Old Issue," *Themelios* 8, no. 2 (1983): 13–19; Harold P. Scanlin, "The Majority Text Debate: Recent Developments," *Bible Translator* 36, no. 1:138; Brian C. Labosier, "A Study of Selected Foundational Suppositions in New Testament Textual Criticism" (Th.M. thesis, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1982); David Dwayne Shields, "The Recent Attempts to Defend the Byzantine Text of the Greek New Testament" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985); Russell Paul Hills, "A Brief Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism Containing a Defense of the Majority Text" (Ph.D. diss., California Graduate School of Theology, 1985); Jack P. Lewis, "The Text of the New Testament," *Restoration Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1981): 35–74; Dewey M. Beegle, *Scripture*, *Tradition and Infallibility* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973).

2. Hills completed two years of course work under E. C. Colwell at the University of Chicago but was not permitted to write his dissertation on Voroden's K text. He was accepted at Harvard, however, and wrote his dissertation under Henry J. Cadbury, with Kirsopp Lake as one of his readers. His topic was "The Caesarean Family of New Testament Manuscripts" (1946). Subsequently, three essays from his dissertation were published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*:

the "neutrality" of the discipline won during the Enlightenment, whereby the Bible is treated "like any other book" when pursuing text-critical matters. Hills defiantly called for a *theological* approach that would revive the scholastic method of the pre-Enlightenment period, but in a way that would acknowledge post-Enlightenment developments, not ignore them. Worse, he antagonized his colleagues by addressing his method not to the guild, which he felt had given up the notion of reconstructing an "original text," but to the confessing church at large and his own community in particular—old Princeton/Westminster Calvinists. So Hills fits no modern category and is often regarded as an enigma.

His attempt to use theology to interpret modern text-critical data was so provocative to most text critics that *prima facie* in their eyes {22} he lost all right to merit serious consideration. Consequently, some of his critics isolate out of context certain of his controversial arguments and statements in an attempt at *reductio ad absurdum*.[3] Others misunderstood his theological and intellectual framework, and have misinterpreted him as a mere fundamentalist.[4] Others still find his abilities as a text critic above reproach, but

"Harmonization in the Caesarean Text of Mark," *JBL* 66 (1947): 135–52; "The Interrelationship of the Caesarean Manuscripts," *JBL* 68 (1949): 141–59; "A New Approach to the Old Egyptian Text," *JBL* 64 (1950): 354–62.

3. Bruce Metzger, who was a student at the University of Chicago at the same time as Hills, takes note of Hills's work, but mentions only that Hills argues "even for the genuineness of the *comma johanneum* of 1 John 5 v. 7–8." Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*: *Its Transmission*, *Corruption*, *and Restoration*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 136n1. As a matter of fact, Hills never argued for more than the *possibility* of the genuineness of 1 John 5:7–8, something no more extraordinary than the rigorous eclectic method of arguing for a variant with little or no manuscript evidence. See his *The King James Version Defended*: *A Christian View of the New Testament Manuscripts* (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1956), 127.

4. Such as J. K. Elliott: "Because the cause of the Byzantine text-type (and by extension the authorized version [KJV]) has been espoused by Burgon and, more recently, Hills, who argue speciously in favour of an allegedly divine-protection of the majority text, those otherwise sympathetic to the right of the Byzantine text-type occasionally and even alone to preserve the original text have been discouraged from being identified with the arrogant superstition of Bible-Belt fundamentalism." (Review of Harry A. Sturz, *The Byzantine Text-Type and New Testament Textual Criticism* [Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1984]; in *Novum Testamentum* 28; fasc. 3 [1986]: 282.)

As a protégé of J. Gresham Machen, Hills cannot be regarded as a "fundamentalist." Of Machen, Stonehouse writes: "In estimating Machen's place

deem them wasted in a lost cause.[5] Most of his critics, however, go no further than to make trivial objections.[6] To date, no one within text-critical ranks has thoroughly analyzed his position.[7]

Church historians even overlook Hills in all of the flurry of discussions on "inerrancy" and the old Princeton/Westminster view of Scripture.[8] This is because no one has examined the historical

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within the fundamentalistmodernist controversy... he was not a fundamentalist at all. His standards of scholarship, his distaste for brief creeds, his rejection of chiliasm, the absence of pietism from his make-up, and in brief his sense of commitment to the historic Calvinism of the Westminster Confession of Faith disqualified him from being classified precisely as a fundamentalist. And he never spoke of himself as a fundamentalist; indeed he disliked the term." (Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*: *A Biographical Memoir*, 3rd ed. [Westminster Theological Seminary, 1978], 337.)

It was, in fact, Hills's commitment to the Westminster Confession that informed the very foundation of his textual theories; not American fundamentalism.

5. J. Harold Greenlee, a classmate of Hills's at Harvard, wrote in his text criticism handbook: "The appearance... of a recent book supporting the *T.R.* is rather surprising. This book, *The King James Version Defended*, by Edward F. Hills... written by a man whose academic background is above question... states his case well; but his work can hardly become more than a scholarly curiosity." (J. Harold Greenlee, *An Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964], 82n1.)

6. F. F. Bruce: "Dr. E. F. Hills... maintains that 'for an orthodox Christian Burgon's view is the only reasonable one.' It all depends on what is meant by 'orthodox'!" (*The English Bible*, 2nd ed. [New York: Oxford University Press, 1970], 149n1.)

Gordon Fee's only criticism of Hills is that he argues for the providential preservation of the Byzantine text within the Greek Orthodox Church on the grounds that "it spoke Greek!" ("Modern Text Criticism and the Revival of the *Textus Receptus*," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21, no. 1 [1978]: 23.)

D. A. Carson's only substantive criticism is of Hills's argument that writing desks were not employed in the fourth century; *The King James Version Debate*, 57.

7. Those who do go to some lengths to interact with his views do so with an *a priori* bias against either his theology or against the very use of theology in this field, e.g., Taylor, Shield, Sturz, Laboisier, and R. Hills. John Skilton approves of both the use of theology in textual criticism, as well as Hills's orthodox Calvinistic brand of theology. But like Warfield earlier, he allows it no formal role in his praxis. See Skilton's "The Transmission of the Scriptures," in *The Infallible Word*, 3rd ed. (n.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1967), 141–95; and "The New Testament Text Today," in *The New Testament Student and His Field* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1982), 3–26.

8. A few of the more recent works addressing the issue of inerrancy: Jack Bartlett Rogers, *Scripture in the Westminster Confession*: *A Problem of Historical*

influence text criticism had on the formulation of Warfield's view of inerrancy.[9] As Kümmel says, textual criticism proved to be one of "the decisive stimuli" to the scientific, critical study of the Bible in the first place.[10] The Deist Anthony Collins used Mill's collection of 30,000 variants as an argument to replace "revealed" with "natural" religion.[11] On the American scene, Joseph Stevens Buck-

Interpretation for American Presbyterianism (Kampen, Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1966); Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*: *British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1978); Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretatiton of the Bible*: *An Historical Approach* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1979); Donald McKim, ed., *The Authoritative Word*: *Essays on the Nature of Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983); W. Robert Godfrey, "Biblical Authority in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Question of Transition," in D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1983); John D. Woodbridge and Randall H. Balmer, "The Princetonians and Biblical Authority: An Assessment of the Ernest Sandeen Proposal," in Carson and Woodbridge, *Scripture and Truth*; John D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority*: *A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982); Norman L. Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980); John Warwick Montgomery, ed., *God's Inerrant Word*: *An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1974); Norman L. Geisler, ed., *Biblical Inerrancy*: *An Analysis of its Philosophical Roots* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981); *Ronald Youngblood, ed., Evangelicals and Inerrancy* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1984); Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus, eds., *Hermeneutics*, *Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984); Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest, eds., *Challenges to Inerrancy*: *A Theological Response* (Chicago: Moody, 1984); John D. Hannah, ed., *Inerrancy and the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 1984); D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *Hermeneutics*, *Authority, and Canon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986); Randall H. Balmer, "The Princetonians and Scripture: A Reconsideration," *Westminster Theological Journal* 44, no. 2 (1982): 352–65; R. B. Gaffin; Jr., "Old Amsterdam and Inerrancy," *Westminster Theological Journal* 45, no. 2 (1983): 219–72; John C. Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture*: *A Study in Old Princeton and Westminster Theology* (Marlton, NJ: Mack Publishing, 1978); Moisés Silva, "Old Princeton, Westminster, and Inerrancy," lecture delivered by the author upon his inauguration as professor of New Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, February 19, 1985.

9. Of all the above works only Rogers's *Scripture in the Westminster Confession* even hints at the role text criticism played in Warfield's articulation of inerrancy; 397–98.

10. Wernter Georg Kümmel, *The New Testament*: *The History of the Investigation of its Problems*, trans. S. McLean Gilmour and Howard C. Kee (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1972), 40–50.

11. Anthony Collins, *Discourse of Free-Thinking*, *Occasion'd by the Rise and Growth of a Sect Called Free Thinkers* (London, 1713), 87–89.

minster persuaded the officials of Harvard College to publish an American edition of Griesbach's Greek New Testament, because he viewed text criticism as "a most powerful weapon to be used against the supporters of verbal inspiration."[12] "Immediately adopted as a textbook at Harvard," the Griesbach text significantly advanced the critical study of the Bible in America.[13]

Warfield, well aware of this "weapon" in New England, determined that he would champion the orthodox camp by neutralizing it. How he went about his task has everything to do with why he inaugurated a new emphasis on inerrancy at Princeton, as Rogers and McKim have noticed.[14] My paper examines how Warfield responded to text criticism in the nineteenth century—informed by the prevailing common-sense philosophy at Princeton[15]—and how Hills responded to it—from within the same broad theological tradition, but as informed by the Dutch school of Calvinism—sixty-nine years later.[16]

Though Hills died in 1981, he left behind a legacy. Historians will be forced to regard him as the father of what is now regarded as the revived ecclesiastical text.[17] I hope to contribute to a better understanding of his work, first by examining Hill's theological

12. Jerry Wayne Brown, *The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America, 1800–1820: The New England Scholars* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1969), 23.

13. Brown: "The publication of a critical text of the New Testament was an important event in the development of American Biblical studies.... Although the publication of such books seems undramatic in retrospect, their continued appearance indicates the developing serious interest in scholarly Biblical research" (24).

14. Rogers and McKim, *Authority and Interpretation of the Bible*, 323–79. Another approach would be to see Warfield as fully equal with Briggs in the Enlightenment approach to *text criticism*, while scholastic in many other respects. This is a neglected point that we will elucidate further.

15. Benjamin B. Warfield, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1887).

16. Edward Freer Hills, "Text and Time: Textual Criticism from the Reformed Point of View," unpublished manuscript now in this author's possession. This was slightly revised and published as *The King James Version Defended: A Christian View of the New Testament Manuscripts* (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1956).

17. Jay Eldon Epp has referred to "a revival of the almost century-old view of J. W. Burgon" in his "New Testament Textual Criticism in America: Requiem for a Discipline," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979): 94–98.

tradition. Earlier attempts to address his works have provided no analysis of theological and philosophical influences or their historical roots. No {23} historian has yet placed him in perspective. I intend to show that text criticism convinced him the discipline of biblical studies had reached an impasse, leaving the church no certain word as to where her divine authority resided. So he invoked traditional confessional scholasticism for a theological guide to the data of twentieth-century New Testament text criticism.

A study of his scholasticism helps explain why Hills published in 1950 an essay in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* advocating the views of Westcott and Hort—proponents of the Enlightenment approach—and yet ten years later took up the position of John William Burgon, a Westcott and Hort antagonist.

Though Hills's position is rejected by both text critics and most conservative Calvinists, his influence has remained strong. In 1947, Ernest Cadman Colwell could say in his presidential address to the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis: "The debate over Hort versus the *Textus* Receptus was over..." and "no objective method can take us back through successive reconstructions to the original."[18] Yet less than ten years later, his former student would publish a monograph deploring this impasse and proposing a return to the *Textus Receptus* as an alternative. Today, a "critical" printing of this text[19] has just entered its second edition, an ironical development in light of Marvin Vincent's declaration that "the Textus Receptus has been remanded to its proper place as a historical monument and has been summarily rejected as a basis for a correct text."[20]

In chapter 1, I will establish what was the Calvinistic-Scholastic approach to text–critical issues. This will involve an evaluation of the criteria Theodore Beza worked with in reproducing essentially Erasmus's standard. As Jerry H. Bently has argued, modern scholars have gone on too long in evaluating Renaissance scholarship

18. Ernest Cadman Colwell, "Biblical Criticism: Lower and Higher," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 67 (1948): 3, 11.

19. Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, eds., *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985).

20. Marvin R. Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1903), 175.

by post-Enlightenment standards.[21]

I will next go into some detail discussing John Owen's comprehensive exposition of the theological tenet of providential preservation, given creedal expression in the Westminster Confession and the Helvetic Consensus Formula. In order to capture the overall tonality, as well as the particularities of Owen's arguments, large passages of his *Of the Integrity and Purity of the Hebrew and Greek Text of the Scriptures* will be examined.

I will conclude the chapter with a brief treatment of Francis Turretin's view of the texts of Scriptures; and since Turretin's systematic theology {24} was used at Princeton until Charles Hodge replaced it with his own, this will bring us up to the nineteenth century.

In short, we will argue that Beza established the canonical form of the New Testament text based on a theological understanding of its significance.

In chapter 2, I will demonstrate that B. B. Warfield did not continue this scholastic tradition. Warfield rather overthrew the scholastic method of Beza, Owen, and Turretin while introducing the critical methods popularized by the British New Testament scholars, Fenton John Anthony Hort and Brooke Foss Westcott. By comparing Warfield's view of the Westminster Confession with that of two other nineteenth-century Reformed scholars, Robert L. Dabney and Phillip Schaff, I can illustrate Warfield's departure from scholasticism. Warfield did retain a certain scholastic view of verbal inspiration, but he located inerrancy only in the autographa, unlike, for example, John William Burgon, a High Church Anglican, who moved closer to the old Calvinist–Scholastic view by locating authority in the "providentially preserved" Traditional Text.

In chapter 3, I will show that these earlier developments provid-

21. Jerry H. Bently, *Humanists and Holy Writ*: *New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 137–39. I differ, however, with Bently's blanket statement that Renaissance scholars "based their analysis on philological and historical criteria instead of the theological considerations that governed medieval study of the New Testament" (3). Renaissance scholars were not entirely free of the theological influence of the Bible itself, though they may well have rejected medieval theology and practice. Cf. Scott H. Hendrix, Review of Bently, *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook Five* (1985): 84–91.

ed the intellectual context for the work of Edward Freer Hills. He earned the reputation of a New Testament text-critical scholar but rejected Warfield and the twentieth-century canons of criticism because they did not lead him to an "original text." Influenced by the crusading spirit of J. Gresham Machen, Hills boldly returned to the Westminster Confession and the Reformed scholastics. His own Reformed tradition rejected him, not because he failed to make his case but because non-evangelicalism introduced a new spirit within the American Re-formed community along with a heavily-financed public relations campaign to establish the *New International Version* as the standard Bible in the English-speaking world. In rejecting him, they also turned away—to a significant degree—from the scholasticism which his work represented.

The Scholastic Approach to Text Critical Problems

Theodore P. Letis

If Reformed scholasticism began with Theodore Beza's return to Artistotle,[1] then the scholastic method of treating text critical problems was born with Beza as well.

Theodore Beza

Beza as Scholar

Beza trained under the renowned Lutheran humanist Melchior Wolmar, himself a master of Greek and Latin who had also tutored Calvin, teaching him to read the Greek New Testament. This assured Beza of a classical education. He "possessed a thorough and critical knowledge of the classical writers of Greece and Rome."[2] His famous (or infamous) *Juvenilia* "gave him the rank of the first Latin poet of his day,"[3] and "he came to use Latin like his mother tongue."[4] During his training as a humanist he knew many of the intellectual leaders of his day such as Bude, Guillaume du Bellay,

1. Brian G. Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy*: *Protestant Scholasticism and Humanism in Seventeenth-Century France* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 3–42; see also R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 29–38, for further evidence of Beza's departure from Calvin in method, and Jack B. Rogers and Donald K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible*: *An Historical Approach* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1979), 147–89 for a good general survey of the development of Protestant scholasticism.

2. William Cunningham, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1967), 345.

3. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 850.

4. Robert D. Linder, "Calvinism and Humanism: The First Generation," *Church History* 44 (June 1975): 167–81.

Jacques Peletier, Louis des Masures, Pierre Choli, Conrad Gessner, and Jacques Amyot.[5] Michel de Montaigne called him "the greatest French poet of the century."[6] In true humanist fashion, Beza carried on an extensive correspondence, which should fill twenty volumes when completely published.[7]

> He was a renowned Latinist, was distinguished for his knowledge of Greek, and has also mastered both Hebrew and Syriac.... His philological gifts were also demonstrated in his works concerning the Greek and French languages.[8]

He was "undoubtedly the best continental exegete of the closing part of the sixteenth century."[9]

And as a tribute to the enduring quality of his translation work, the American Bible Society still publishes his 1642 edition of the Latin New Testament.[10] Although Beza attracts considerable criticism for the predestinational bias of his Latin translation work,[11] he was a man of considerable ability:

> Beza's formal qualifications for intellectual eminence were, if anything, superior to Calvin's. His reputation as an elegant Latin stylist was deservedly high.... His knowledge of Greek was thorough and constantly useful, in his translations of scripture, his teaching, and his scholarly publications. Linguistic competence of this sort was of prime importance to anyone {29} making his way as a sixteenth-century intellectual. Beza was also thoroughly acquainted with the contents of the writings of antiquity. He saw to it that the new Academy of Geneva had a thoroughly classical

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*, 171.

8. John Stanley Bray, "Theodore Beza's Doctrine of Predestination" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1972), 55. Bray cites some of Beza's philological works: *Alphabetum Graecum* (Geneva, 1554); *De Francicae linguae recta pronuntiatione tractatus* (Geneva, 1584).

9. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 873. Herzog adds: "as an expounder of the N.T. Beza occupied a distinguished place among the commentators of the 16th century." *The Protestant Theological and Ecclesiastical Encyclopedia*, 395.

10. *Scholarly Scripture Resources*: *American Bible Society Catalog of Scholarly Publications for Translators*, *Scholars*, *Ministers and Other Bible Students* (1983), 8.

11. See Cunningham's treatment of this, *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, 352–58.

foundation to its curriculum.[12]

All of this suggests Beza was eminently able to do the work of a text critic.

Calvin's Commentaries on the Greek Text: His Approach to Variants

The Reformed theologians had a hand in the production of the Greek text from the very beginning. Note that

> Erasmus was assisted in the proofreading [of his 1516 edition of the Greek text] by the young scholar Oecolampadius whose Greek learning was to make him the future Reformer of Basle.[13]

In order to understand Beza's text-critical method we must survey Calvin's, which served as a precedent.

T. H. L. Parker has examined Calvin's approach to variants in his exegetical work, noticing that not only did Calvin rely on Erasmus's editions, but he seems also to have an affinity for a renegade edition published by Simon de Colines (1534).[14] This is important, because Colines introduced 150 readings into his edition—readings totally independent of every known edition up to that time,[15] some of which are approved by many modern editors.[16] What makes this especially unusual is that by opting for Colines's text, Calvin was consciously departing from the established tex-

12. Quoted in Robert M. Kingdom, *Geneva and the Consolidation of the French Protestant Movement 1564–1572* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 18. I am indebted to Bray's work for this quote.

13. Basil Hall, "Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 3, ed. S. L. Greenslade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 59.

14. T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), 97–123. Though Parker insists that "there is, alas, only one way to answer these questions [which editions Calvin used] and it is not by guessing, but by the slow, dull, and laborious chore of collating..." (105), he has not followed his own admonition too carefully: he assumes that Calvin used Colines as his "working text," for the "whole of the 1540 commentary," based only on his collation of Romans 1–5 (105)! This, however, gives him "a *safe assumption* that the same should be said for the whole of the 1540 commentary" (109).

15. According to Mill as quoted by Parker, 100n2.

16. Parker: "It is astonishing how often he, alone in that century, anticipates readings generally accepted to twentieth-century critics" (101).

tual tradition of Erasmus and Stephanus, which he would return to in time. Parker cannot explain why Colines eventually fell out of favor with Calvin, especially since Parker feels that Colines had the superior reading on more than one occasion. We will try to explain this shortly.

Calvin probably returned to Stephanus's third edition (1550), an edition with the first *apparatus criticus* of variant readings from fifteen manuscripts.[17] Stephanus outlines his methods in the preface to his first edition, mentioning that after first collecting the available manuscripts,

> we have so composed our edition that we have allowed not even one letter to differ from what the *majority* of the best books approve and witness.[18] [emphasis mine] {30}

This consensus text is what Calvin returned to after abandoning Colines's more eccentric edition.

How do we determine what editions Calvin employed at any given point in his commentaries? Parker observed that "the investigation is made easier by the fact that he favoured a literal translation, even to the extent of preserving the word order where no difference between Greek and Latin syntax forbade."[19] Parker informs us that in interpreting Scripture, Calvin's first task was to determine the text.[20] He says Calvin worked from two criteria: (1) the authority of the texts containing the readings, (2) contextual demands.[21] Basically, these two concerns are subsumed in the modern categories of *external* and *internal* evidence. For both Calvin and Beza, external criteria almost always prevailed.[22]

17. W. Stanford Reid correctly acknowledges Beza's text as being "the first critical edition of the Greek N.T. with a Latin translation." *Encyclopedia of Christianity* (1964), s.v. "Beza, Theodore," by W. Stanford Reid. It should be recalled that while Erasmus had no critical apparatus in his Greek/Latin editions, he had critical comment in his notes. Nor is Reid wholly correct when he maintains that Beza first employed D in his second edition. Although he did not have D before him in his first edition, he did have D readings, as found in Stephanus, though he did not know they were D readings at the time.

18. Parker, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*, 102.

19. *Ibid.*, 104.

20. *Ibid.*, 117.

21. *Ibid.*, 118.

22. *Ibid.*, 117–18.

It is this aspect of sixteenth-century Reformed text criticism that causes modern scholars to become particularly impatient. Because Parker subscribes to the modern, post-Enlightenment methodology which places primacy on *internal criteria*, he is unsympathetic with Calvin's method:

> We shall... not infrequently find his understanding of the passage leading him to the better reading while his faulty critical equipment makes him doubtful or even forces him to adopt the inferior reading.[23]

But Calvin's "critical equipment" was not faulty, it merely followed a different criterion, external evidence of documents, that is, *commonly accepted readings*, or readings attested to in the majority of the sources. For example, at Romans 2:17 Calvin says:

> Some old manuscripts read , and if this reading were generally accepted I should approve of reading it. But since the majority of manuscripts are opposed to this reading; and the meaning is overwise appropriate, I retain the old reading, especially since there is only the small difference of one word which is involved. [24]

He even went so far as to restore another particle after leaving it out in an earlier edition, because the omission did not agree with any "of the many others."[25]

Beza as Text Critic

Beza produced no fewer than nine editions of the Greek New Testament in his lifetime, and one appeared posthumously in 1611. Metzger, however, mentions a 1559 edition which no one else seems aware of;[26] and Edward Hills saw a 1560 edition at the

23. *Ibid.*

24. John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians*, trans. Ross MacKenzie (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 50. Parker draws our attention to this passage but I prefer this translation to his.

25. Note that *secondarily* is he aware that his preferred reading "is *also*" found in certain ancient *codicibus* (and here Parker is forced to admit that this is referring to MSS.); but the latter witnesses are merely supplementary and seen to have value not just because of their age but because they agree with "the many others."

26. Bruce M. Metzger, "Codex Bezae and the Geneva Version of the English Bible (1560)," in Bruce M. Metzger, *Historical and Literary Studies*: *Pagan*, *Jewish*,

University of {31} Chicago,[27] which is merely "the Textus Receptus unchanged, and therefore is not properly Beza's text,"[28] in other words, Stephanus's text with Beza's name attached to it. As for the 1559 edition, E. Reuss informs us that both editions, 1559 and 1560, were piracies by a Basel printer.[29]

Clearly, there is much confusion as to the correct number of editions. That of 1565, supposedly the first, Beza calls his "second" edition. Miller suggests that perhaps he regarded his Latin of 1556 as his first (though it does not contain the Greek).[30] Gregory has a different explanation: maybe Beza means that the annotations are being published for the second time, since they first appeared in his Latin of 1557.[31]

For Beza's first Greek-Latin text (1565) he used Stephanus's third (1550) edition. As we have mentioned, this edition of Stephanus's was the first to list variants, from fifteen different manuscripts, collated by his son, Henry. Stephanus also had the advantage of readings from Codex D before it came into Beza's hands because someone sent them to him while the manuscript was in Rome for a time.[32] Thus, there are more than 350 "D" readings in the apparatus of Stephanus's third edition, which he gives the siglum.[33] But he seems not to have known that these readings are from his own Codex D when he produced his own edition, as Rendel Harris has

and Christian (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 143n2.

27. Edward F. Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, 2nd ed. (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1977), 203.

28. Bruce M. Metzger, correspondence to the author, March 9, 1983.

29. Eduard Wilhelm Eugen Reuss, *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament*, trans. Edward L. Houghton (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1884), 415, 417. The account of the legal action taken against this printer can be found in the appendix to E. Armstrong's *Robert Estienne*: *Royal Printer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954). I am indebted to Mr. Andrew Brown of the Trinitarian Bible Society for assistance on this point.

30. Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 4th ed., ed. Edward Miller, vol. 2 (London: George Bell, 1894), 192-93n2. Miller was relying on the theory of Isaac H. Hall, who provided him with this information.

31. Caspar René Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament* (New York: Scribner's, 1907), 442.

32. Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener, ed., *Bezae Codex Cantabrigiensis* (Pittsburgh, PA: Pickwick Press, 1978), viii.

33. Metzger, "Codex Bezae," 142.

sneeringly pointed out,[34] because "he quotes the Codex Bezae and the of Stephanus as two distinct authorities." Harris also concurs with Hug that Beza did not employ manuscripts in his edition at all (other than his two prize codices Cantabrigiensis and Claromontanus and one more). And Metzger clearly demonstrates that there are variants in Beza's edition not found in Stephanus's edition, indicating Beza's "access to a larger body of manuscript evidence than that contained in the printed form of Stephanus's text."[35]

Obviously, then, Beza not only used Stephanus's text as a working base, but he also employed additional manuscripts, along with D and D2. Nestle acknowledges that Beza

> seems also, in the preparation of his Geneva edition, to have been the first to collate the Oriental versions. For this purpose he employed the Syriac edition of Emmanuel Tremellius (1569) and for Acts, 1 and 2 Corinthians the Arabic version put at his disposal by Franciscus Junius.[36]

Beza also employed patristic evidence in determining his text as well as his interpretation.[37] While he does not refer to this as often as does {32} Erasmus, he does so more than Calvin. (Backus lists the published Fathers that were in the library at Geneva, both Latin and Greek.)[38] He is most critical of the theology of Origen, Jerome, and Ambrose, while naturally favoring that of Augustine. But for text-critical issues he uses them, albeit sparingly. Yet, considering all of this evidence—including two of the oldest manuscripts ever found to date—Beza "states openly that he was very unwilling to amend the basic text and was interested largely in readings which confirm it."[39] Truly he adopted the scholastic method of accepting

34. J. Rendel Harris, Codex Bezae: *A Study of the So-Called Western Text of the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891), 3–6.

35. Metzger, "Codex Bezae," 142–43.

36. Eberhard Nestle, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., trans. William Edie, ed. Allan Menzies (London: Williams and Norgate, 1901), 10.

37. Irena Doruta Backus, *The Reformed Roots of the English New Testament* (Pittsburgh, PA: The Pickwick Press, 1980), 8–13.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*, 6–7.

the consensus of manuscripts, rather than the Enlightenment practice of trying to second-guess the consensus.

Beza's text powerfully influenced the English New Testament, from the 1560 Genevan to the Authorized Version, and so did his Latin translation of it.[40] And his reputation as the leading Reformed theologian in all of Europe "helped to promote and to set the form of the printed Greek text."[41] This text would eventually be called the *textus receptus* (the text *received*), not just as a publisher's blurb, but as a descriptive reality. As Tregelles notes:

> Beza's text was during his life in very general use among Protestants, they seemed to feel that enough had been done to establish it, and they relied on it as giving them a firm basis.... After the appearance of the texts of Stephanus and Beza, many Protestants ceased from all inquiry into the authorities on which the text of the New Testament in their hands was based....[42]

It was commonly believed that just as God had restored the apostolic beliefs of sola gratia, sola fide, and sola scriptura, and had restored the apostolic canon, minus the apocrypha, so had He restored the text of Scripture which was "immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages."[43] In order for sola scriptura to have any meaning for the Protestant cause of withstanding the claims of Rome, they, too, must have a source of infallibility, what Bentley (a child of the Enlightenment rather than of the Reformation) deridingly referred to as "the Protestant Pope Stephens."[44] If the Greek text alone were pitted against the Roman hierarchy, then any variants would embarrass their sola scriptura or at least undermine the

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40. Basil Hall says of Backus's work that "one of the most interesting results of her work is her demonstration of the strong theological influence (though on some important issues he was set aside), which controlled the ultimate choice of readings, which Beza had on the Authorized Version." Backus, *The Reformed Roots of the English New Testament*, xv.

41. Harold J. Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 71.

42. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament with Remarks on its Revision upon Critical Principles* (London: Samuel Bagster, 1854), 33–35.

43. Westminster Confession of Faith, 1:8.

44. Tregelles, *An Account*, 36n.

concept. Such variants did not go unnoticed by Rome. Still, in Beza's day, "the Romanists, with whom they [Protestants] so often engaged in controversy, understood, as yet, no principles of {33} criticism, which could be brought to bear on the position which Protestants had thus taken."[45] The Enlightenment would provide just such an occasion.

Post-Enlightenment View of Beza's Work

Fox relates that Curcellaeus (1586–1659), a professor at the University of Amsterdam, "claimed both as a Unitarian and as an orthodox divine,"[46]

> observes that the great majority of theologians acquiesce in the ordinary editions as though they were perfect. He names Erasmus, Robert Stephens, and Beza as having contributed readings, though Beza has grudgingly withheld some, he knows not why.[47]

Curcellaeus typically reflects the Enlightenment approach to variants, believing

> [i]t is wrong to suppose that variant readings will create a suspicion that the text of the New Testament is corrupt. Better at any rate to have the truth than to be ignorant. Dissimulation is useless, and it is no remedy to fall back on the Vulgate.... In any case, all things that are of any importance in the Christian faith are repeated and inculcated in so many passages of Scripture that the loss of one or two does not endanger the truth.[48]

It is at this juncture that the two approaches can be seen in contrast. As a Unitarian,[49] Curcellaeus was not interested in re-establishing apostolic Christianity in opposition to the harlot of Rome, rather he was interested in establishing reason in opposition to any repressive religion that would employ dogma in resisting "truth." This Baconian attitude—that every variation to

45. *Ibid.*, 34.

46. Adam Fox, *John Mill and Richard Bentley*: *A Study of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, *1675–1729* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), 49.

47. *Ibid.*, 50.

48. *Ibid.*, 50.

49. Scrivener informs us that in his text, Curcellaeus was given to "rash conjectures which betray a Socinian bias." *A Plain Introduction*, vol. 2, 198.

the accepted and established Protestant text should be viewed with the same importance as that established text, in order to fulfill an abstract ideal of truth—was not the motivation of the Reformation communities. (Beza well exemplifies this.) The Age of Reason was generally hostile to how the Reformation determined the text—and soon Rome perceived this apparent weakness in the Protestant armor, as well. In 1689, a Roman Catholic priest named Richard Simon began undermining the Protestant pope with his Critical History of the Text of the New Testament, in which

> [t]he study of the New Testament was divorced for the first time from the study carried on by the ancients. More than that, by extensive employment of the critical observations of the Church Fathers and by the use of all {34} manuscripts available to him, Simon was the first to employ critical methods in a historical study of the origin of the traditional form of the text of the New Testament.[50]

For this work Theodore Zahn dubbed him "the founder of the science of New Testament introduction."[51] Nor was Simon just another Curcellaeus bowing to the goddess of Enlightenment reason—his true allegiance can be found in his own Criticial History. Kümmel tells us:

> To be sure, Simon expressly declared that he wished only to serve the truth, but he also carried on his work in order that it might prove useful to the Catholic Church, and he believed that he would be able to achieve that goal by demonstrating that in opposition to the Protestant doctrine of the Bible as the only source of revelation, this Bible was so unreliably transmitted and so incapable of being clearly understood by itself alone that the tradition of the Catholic Church was needed if the Bible were to yield reliable teaching for faith.[52]

Simon himself said that

> [i]n all my work I have undertaken to side only with the truth and above all not to attach myself to any master. A true Christian who professes to follow the Catholic faith must no more call himself

50. Georg Werner Kümmel, *The New Testament*: *The History of the Investigation of its Problems*, 40–41.

51. *Ibid.*, 41n34.

52. *Ibid.*

a disciple of St. Augustine than of St. Jerome or of any other Church Father, for his faith is founded on the word of Jesus Christ, contained in the writings of the apostles as well as in the firm tradition of the Catholic Church. Would that it had pleased God that all theologians of our century had been of this opinion! We should not then have seen so many useless disputes, which could only cause disorder in the state and in religion. Since I have no special party—the very name "party" is obnoxious to me—I avow that in composing this work I had no other intention than to be useful to the church by establishing what it holds most sacred and most divine.

The great changes that have taken place in the manuscripts of the Bible—as we have shown in the first book of this work—since the first originals were lost, completely destroy the principle of the Protestants and the Socinians, who only consult these same manuscripts of the Bible in the form they are today. If the truth of religion had not lived on in the church, it would not be safe to look for it now in books that have been subjected to so many changes and that in so many matters were dependent on the will of the copyists. It is certain that the Jews who copied these books took the liberty of adding certain letters here, and cutting out certain letters there, according as they judged it suitable, and yet the meaning of the text is often dependent on these letters.... If tradition is not joined to scripture, there is hardly anything in religion that one can confidently affirm.[53] {35}

The Protestant pope was now teetering under such scrutiny,

53. *Ibid.*, 41–42. With such language in sight it is no wonder that the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* had said a few years earlier (1675) that "God, the supreme judge, not only took care to have His Word... committed to writing... but has also watched and cherished it with paternal care ever since it was written up to the present time, so that it could not be corrupted by craft of Satan or fraud of man. Therefore the church justly ascribes it to His singular grace and goodness that she has, and will have to the end of the world, a 'sure word of prophecy' and 'holy scriptures' (2 Tim. 3:15), from which, though heaven and earth perish, 'one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass' (Matt. 5:18)," canon 1. When drafting this confession Heidegger and Turretin, of course, had in mind the *textus receptus* and the Massoretic text, vowel points (or at least "the power of the points") and all. Hence, what we have in this statement is the conscious credal articulation of a theology of the text that informed the method that Calvin, Stephanus, and Beza were laboring from, though they never formally expressed such, not having the occasion to. Furthermore, under the polemics of Simon and the inductivism of others these two texts were held up, blemishes and all, as "the sole and complete rule of our faith and life, and to its standard, as to a Lydian stone, all extant

but it would be the Protestants themselves who would quietly overthrow their own pontiff. Rather than examine the rationale employed by the 16th-century editors in producing their *textus receptus* and attempt to understand the Westminster Confession's theological tenet of providential preservation (of which the *textus receptus* was the tangible reality), they took up Simon's gauntlet and, in true inductivistic fashion, looked upon Beza and Calvin with some embarrassment and proceeded to reconstruct a text by the criteria of the "scientific method." Because Simon had resorted to the Baconian method, Protestants dared not fall behind, but aspired to win this issue on the same terms.

Thus ensued an era of utter fragmentation, right through the Enlightenment up to the present, as the Protestant text consensus collapsed.

Factors Influencing Beza's Method

Erasmus and Valla

One of the criticisms of Beza's method is that he just follows the consensus of Stephanus, who in turn is just following Erasmus. Were they such poor scholars that they had to join in "fictitious worship for the letter of Erasmus's last edition"?[54] Certainly not. Stephanus had over 350 readings from Codex Bezae in his apparatus—and Beza himself had the two oldest uncials known at that time. Nor is the oft-repeated "truism" that Erasmus only had access to a few inferior manuscripts accurate either: his notes refer to readings from "other manuscripts seen by him in his travels,"[55] and "that he had heard of B, appears from Sepulveda's correspondence with him in 1533,"[56] and some of these B readings

versions, oriental and occidental, ought to be applied, and wherever they differ, be conformed."

54. Alexander Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*, revised by C. S. C. Williams (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1954), 88.

55. M. R. Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1899), 53.

56. *Ibid.* In fact, a major part of Erasmus's method involved categorizing the manuscripts into two basic families, one of which he rejected and the other he adopted. After surveying his notes, Nolan records: "With respect to manuscripts, it is indisputable that he was acquainted with every variety which is known to

are found in his notes as well.

Each of these editors was seeking some type of objective criteria, to help identify and reject bogus or forged documents, and the value of concurrent witnesses in a plurality of documents met this need. Sepulveda had informed Erasmus that his Vatican copy, though "most ancient," differed "greatly from ordinary copies."[57] Since it had been found in the Vatican library, all the more suspicion. It must be kept in mind that the Renaissance was lifting the great curtain that concealed medieval superstition and forged documents, and was allowing the light to shine on papal usurpations of power via the "Donation of Constantine" and the "Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals." In pointing out {36} the anachronistic use of the word "satraps" (a word used for the papal crown) Valla uninhibitedly vented his rage at such documentary forgery:

> What have satraps got to do with the case? Numskull, blockhead! Do Caesars speak thus? Are Roman decrees usually drafted thus? Whoever heard of satraps being mentioned in the councils of the Romans?[58]

Furthermore,

> Valla demonstrated that a letter from King Abgar of Edessa to Jesus was apocryphal. He proved that the mystical writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite could not possibly have been written by a contemporary of St. Paul's, as generations of medieval students

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us, having distributed them into two principal classes, one of which corresponds with the Complutenian edition, the other with the Vatican manuscript. And he has specified the positive grounds on which he received the one and rejected the other. The former was in the possession of the Greek church, the latter in that of the Latin, judging from the internal evidence he had as good reason to conclude the Eastern church had not corrupted their received text as he had grounds to suspect the Rhodians from whom the Western church derived their manuscripts, had accommodated them to the Latin Vulgate. One short insinuation which he has thrown out, sufficiently provides that his objections to these manuscripts lay more deep, and they do immortal credit to his sagacity. In the age in which the Vulgate was formed, the church, he was aware, was infested with Origenists and Arians, an affinity between any manuscript and that version, consequently conveyed some suspicion that its text was corrupted." Frederick Nolan, *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate or Received Text of the New Testament* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1815), 413–15.

57. *Ibid.*

58. Harris E. Harbison, *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), 44.

> had believed. He argued that the Apostles' Creed was the work not of the apostles but of the Council of Nicaea. But most important of all, he took in hand three Latin and three Greek codices of the New Testament and demonstrated that the Latin Vulgate was full of grammatical misunderstandings and unhappy translations.[59]

This last discovery showed both Erasmus and Luther the extent the documentary corruption had reached. Since the humanists of the day considered Erasmus, along with Valla and Luther (in his early career) to be the heroes who were freeing the Christian faith from such medieval accretions, it is only natural that Stephanus and Beza would closely follow Erasmus's text, realizing that Erasmus would not cover up corruptions. They probably knew that Erasmus had surveyed an abundance of copies in his many trips across Europe to and from the centers of learning. There would be no reason to go against his consensus in any major way even though they had other options to choose from, as had Erasmus himself. Beza did not hesitate to mention his misgivings about the *pericope de adultera* in his notes, while retaining the passage in his text, as he did in fact with many other variants. Parker reminds us that "there existed even in the sixteenth century an alternative to the *textus receptus*, which already ruled..."[60] but it "was largely disregarded as an eccentricity."[61] Thus the choices between variants made by Erasmus, Stepthanus, Calvin, and Beza were profoundly evaluative, and they consciously rejected eccentric readings that would not be accepted by Enlightenment scholars.

But why did Calvin start with Colines's text, then return to the Erasmian text after 1548? We know from his *Responsio* (1563) that Beza did not like Colines's text:

> You quote the edition of Colinaeus, but I do not give much weight to this unless it is supported by the agreement of other codices. For I have {37} found many things in it emended on sheer conjecture by someone who was in other respects most learned in the Greek tongue.[62]

Once again Beza deliberately rejected readings which even may

59. *Ibid.*, 45.

60. Parker, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*, 101.

61. *Ibid.*

62. *Ibid.*

be appealing from internal criteria but are not found in a plurality of codices. But Beza did not move to Geneva until 1558 after the commentaries were finished, as Parker has pointed out, so his influence on Calvin cannot be measured. The answer, however, may lie in a chapter from the long history of the Council of Trent (1545–1563).

Council of Trent

John James Wettstein was the first scholar to surface Marianus Victorius's account of an ancient Greek uncial brought into the Council of Trent to confirm a Latin Vulgate reading at John 21:22.[63] Wettstein mentioned that only Codex Cantabrigiensis (D) reads like the manuscript brought to Trent (αἐὰν αὐτὸν θὲλω μενειν ουτωζ) of all that have ever been discovered. Scrivener in 1864, however, boldly asserted that D had indeed been moved from Lyons to Italy for this purpose because Stephanus received his readings from it during this time, circa 1546. J. Rendel Harris offered the explanation in 1891, [64]as to why William à Prato, Bishop of Clermont, employed Codex Bezae at Trent. Harris notes that Jerome had argued from this passage in defense of John's perpetual virginity, based on similar language from 1 Corinthians 7:40 (μακαριωτέρα σέ ἐοτιν ἐάν οὔτω μείνῃ), and again D is the only manuscript that contains the word οὔτωζ at John 21:22. Thus this hoary "Greek" manuscript, [65]the most ancient in this day, *supported* both Jerome and the Romish view that celibacy has dominical sanction, which after Trent would be law:

> If anyone says that the married state is to be preferred to the state of virginity or celibacy, and that it is not better or more blessed to remain in virginity or in celibacy than to be joined in marrage, let him be anathema. (sec.11, canon 10)[66]

So the Roman Catholic Church had a formidable witness to their position in an ancient Greek manuscript; now, in Reniassance, humanist fashion, they were emulating the Protestants by citing

63. See Harris, *Codex Bezae*, 36, and Scrivener, *Bezae Codex*, viii.

64. Scrivener, *Bezae Codex*, viii.

65. Harris, *Codex Bezae*, 36–39.

66. Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, pt. 2, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1978), 766.

ancient Greek documents to legitimize their theological stance. Once this affair at Trent became common knowledge—and it cannot be doubted that the Papists would have been gloating over this advance—Protestants would have to realize that not just any Greek document would serve their purpose, not even a very old one! Now they would have to be even more careful in basing their editions on the most objectively {38} compelling evidence. It was the majority of documents concurring with each other that offered such security. And documents that exhibited features of eccentricity would now be all the more suspect. Since this event took place at Trent in 1546, and Calvin returned to Erasmus/Stephanus after 1548, coupled with Beza's adverse sentiments on Colines's edition, a consensus had probably been reached to avoid an edition that had an unhealthy independence.

Corruption of D

One common criticism of Beza is that he simply did not take advantage of one of the oldest uncials extant. But after learning the true character of D, one wonders how anyone could censure Beza for prudently treating it as nothing more than a curious, relic-like object, suitable only as a goodwill gift of diplomacy to be given to the University of Cambridge! Scrivener tells us plainly that "no known manuscript contains so many bold interpolations. Its variations from the sacred text are beyond all other example."[67] He tells us that in the book of Acts,

> We find ourselves confronted with a text, the like to which we have no experience of elsewhere.... It is hardly an exaggeration to assert that codex D reproduces the *textus receptus* much in the same way that one of the best Chaldee Targums does the Hebrew of the Old Testament: so wide are the variations in the diction, so constant and inveterate the practice of expounding the narrative by means of interpolations which seldom recommend themselves as genuine by even a semblance of internal probability.[68]

This from a man who was intimately familiar with D, having published an addition of it in 1864 with a critical introduction. Dean Burgon also studied it, observing:

67. Burgon, *The Revision Revised* (London: John Murray, 1883), 12.

68. Scrivener, *Bezae Codex*, lii-liv.

> Though a large portion of the gospels is missing, in what remains (tested by the same standard [T.R.]) we find 3704 words omitted: no less than 2213 added; and 2121 substituted. The words transposed amount to 3471: and 1722 have been modified: the deflictions from the received text thus amounting in all to 13,281.[69]

Had Beza lived in our time he may have had even greater reason for not using D. Both Harris[70] and Chase[71] have suggest that D has been assimilated to both the Latin in its text and to the Syriac, which may explain why D alone agrees with Jerome on the passage dealing with John's supposed celibacy.

Even though Beza could see that D greatly differed from the Erasmian/Stephanus standard, and therefore was suspect, he did not {39} hesitate to approve of certain of its readings in his annotations, if he had "the support of other witnesses, usually Syriac and Vetus," and they were "clearer in the context." Such choices usually went no further than his notes, however; occasionally they did influence his Latin (Mark 9:16; Acts 2:44) and his Greek (Mark 8:24; Acts 14:17), but *never* if they affected his theology. Sometimes he does not refer to D at all, which is what Curcellaeus means (quoted by Fox) when he says that "Beza... contributed readings though... [he] has grudgingly withheld some, he knows not why." (A case in point is Luke 24:51–52, which we will discuss shortly.)

So his "considerable unwillingness to tamper with the Greek text of Robert Stephanus" was not because he did not have the advantage of modern manuscript finds—the usual implication when deficiencies of Reformation Bibles are discussed (e.g., Luther's, the Authorized Version, the Dutch States-General, etc.)—because he certainly had optional readings in Codex Bezae and Colines's edition. We might well conclude that since the great advance in manuscript evidence has only amplified with greater numerical preponderance the text type deliberately chosen by Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza, they would choose no differently today in

69. Burgon, *Revision Revised*, 13.

70. Harris, *Codex Bezae.*

71. Frederic Henry Chase, *The Old Syriac Element in the Text of Codex Bezae* (London: Macmillan, 1893). Both theses, however, have been called into question by various people. For a good survey of present opinion, consult Eldon J. Epp, *The Theological Tendency of Codex Bezae Cantabrigiensis in Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 1-35.

any major respects, unless their methodology of giving primacy to external evidence were altered.[72] Oddly enough, their judgment regarding D has been vindicated by current scholarship.

Case Study: Codex Bezae, the Western Text, and Current Opinion

We will begin with the epochal work of Westcott and Hort (1881). In their introduction, Hort developed an elaborate theory concerning omissions in D and the Western text in general. He said that since the Western text was so given to interpolation, that when it possessed an omission, it was regarded as an *authentic* non-reading, or what he called a *Western non-interpolation.*[73] These are most evident in the last chapters of Luke's gospel. For example, in the last three chapters of Luke's gospel in D, 354 words have been omitted (T.R. as standard), 250 of which are missing only in D.[74] However, as Burgon pointed out long ago, Hort arbitrarily chose only twenty-five of these 354 for "permanent excision from the sacred text,"[75] because he believed these to be *Western non-interpolations.* One of the verses that they put into double brackets, thus indicating that it is not original, is Luke 24:51, concerning {40} the ascension: [[καὶ ανεφέρετς ειζ τὸν ουρανόν]]. Later, this passage would no longer even appear in the text of

72. In further support for the theory that the Trent incident gave Protestant scholars occasion to distance themselves from MSS that may reflect Papist corruptions, Beza says of D, although he does not know it is from D, concerning one of its many interpolations, at John 6:56: "Certainly the second part I suspect to be added, because I find nothing similar elsewhere... and the exemplar, from whence we have taken these things [Stephanus] was collated in Italy, where it was easy to add something in hatred of the Bohemians (that is of the gospel)." Quoted in Harris's *Codex Bezae*, 5. (I am indebted to Mr. Michael Bell for the translation.) Furthermore, Scrivener informs us that when Beza gave the uncial to the University of Cambridge, he suggested that "to avoid giving offence through its extensive deviations from all other documents, however old, it was more fit to be stored up than published." Scrivener, *Bezae Codex*, x.

73. Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort, The *New Testament in the Original Greek*: *Introduction* (Cambridge, MA: Macmillan, 1882), 175–77.

74. Burgon, *Revision Revised*, 78.

75. *Ibid.*

Nestle's. Some will say that though we lose ascension here,[76] we have it elsewhere—but it is precisely at this point that some might see the superior wisdom of Erasmus and Beza become apparent. Who will guarantee that giving up the ascension at this point will be all that ever takes place? Epp has clearly demonstrated that the entire concept of "a narrative description of the ascension of the risen Christ as 'an observable incident,' that is, as a physical, visible transfer from earth to heaven," can be eradicated from Scripture by aligning a select group of Western witnesses at only three other passages. [77] Furthermore, the *present* wisdom of the day happens to vindicate Beza's choice in his rejecting the D reading at Luke 24:51 (Curcellaeus would call this "grudgingly" withholding a reading). Nestle's text reintroduces the omitted passage in its twenty-sixth edition.[78] Anyway, Westcott's and Hort's theory of the Western non-interpolations (and of the Western text) is now passé. Burgon in 1883 was the first to challenge them on this and concluded that the omissions were secondary.[79] Jeremias (1966) [80] concurs in nearly all the cases (but for Luke 24:36 and 40), as does Aland (1965–66)[81] but in two cases (Luke 24:3 and John 3:31–32). Finally, p,[75] dated around the third century 200 years before D, was found to contain all eight of the Western omissions that have been taken out of the NEB and the RSV in the last chapter of Luke's gospel, including the verse now under discussion. Hence, Aland concludes that as of the finding of the papyri,

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76. See Eberhard Nestle, *Novem Testamentum Graece*, 25th ed. (London: United Bible Societies, 1963), Luke 24:51.

77. Eldon Jay Epp, "The Ascension in the Textual Criticism of Luke-Acts," in *New Testament Criticism*: *Its Significance for Exegesis*, essays in honor of Bruce M. Metzger, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Gordon D. Fee (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 131–45.

78. See Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979), Luke 24:51.

79. Burgon, *Revision Revised*, 12–15, 75–91.

80. Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1966), 145–59, and E. Earle Ellis, *The Gospel of* Luke (London: Nelson, 1966), 253–55; both referred to be Klyne Snodgrass, "Western Non-Interpolations," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91, no. 3 (September 1972): 369–79.

81. Kurt Aland, "Neue Neutestamentliche Papyri II," *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965–66): 193–210; and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Papyrus Bodmer XIV: Some Features of our Oldest Text of Luke," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 24 (1962): 170–79, also referred to in Snodgrass, "Western Non-Interpolations."

> One of the important results... has been... that Westcott-Hort's so-called "Western non-interpolations" have been, so to speak, stripped of their original nimbus and that, although interesting, they are no longer regarded, or should no longer be regarded, as authoritative.[82]

Modernity has just now caught up with Beza and Stephanus, in rejecting D.

John Owen

Paul Christianson well sums up the need for utilizing intellectual history:

> Simple words seem to have clear meanings, but after analysis the deception of simplicity often vanishes. The "ignorance" and "superstitions" of others strike one as more complex when examined in context—what the outsider {41} calls "folly" sometimes contains deep emotional and intellectual meaning for others. One experiences great difficulties when attempting to communicate with someone who inhabits a different perceptual world. Just as the social anthropologist tries to translate his experience of unaccustomed cultural patterns into language understood by those who inhabit a contemporary but vastly dissimilar world of thought, so the historian of ideas must attempt the same task when reconstructing the world views of those who lived in the past.[83]

Christianson's remarks are especially suited to our task of explicating the views not only of John Owen but of virtually all of seventeenth–century Reformed Scholastics in response to Brian Walton's polyglot with its "variantes lectiones" as well as the incipient Enlightenment challenges of the Saumur Academy and the Roman Catholic Church. For an example, notice how scholars of today's Reformed tradition heap scorn on the Helvetic Consensus Formula (1675), showing the unfamiliarity with the seventeenth-century debate. This orthodox response was embodied in the

82. Kurt Aland, "The Significance of the Papyri for Progress in New Testament Research," in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. J. Philip Hyatt (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1965), 334, as noted in Snodgrass, "Western Non-Interpolations."

83. Paul Christianson, *Reformers in Babylon*: *English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1878), 3.

doctrine of the providential preservation of Scripture, a necessary corollary as the seventeenth-century divines understood it, to the belief in the inspiration of Scripture. The following diagram may help to illustrate this aspect of Protestant scholasticism.

1)	**Sixteenth-century Reformers "Sola Scriptura"**	----------> **offensive**	2)	**(forced to define itself) Roman Catholicism—on the defensive (Trent, the result)**
4)	**(forced to define itself) Seventeenth-century theologians—on the defensive (Providential Preservation, the result)**	----------> **offensive**	3)	**Roman Catholicism "variants in your Sola Scriptura"**

This schema truly dramatizes the antithesis between these two positions. Both parties have been forced to their logical conclusions. And neither party can be fully comprehended without seeing both its positive thesis, plus its *defensive* clarification of that thesis. So to truly understand Protestant scholaticism one needs to clarify the *defensive response* thesis, which is organically connected to the original *offensive critique* thesis.

Historic Context of the Debate

The debate between John Owen, the Congregationalist Puritan, and Brian Walton, who was a Laudian, and High Church Anglican {42} and eventual bishop, is often regarded as a case of an obscurantist dogmatist (Owen) ignorantly opposing the progress of critical, biblical studies, and the advancement of comparative philology and responsible scholarship (being furthered by Walton).[84]

84. See F. F. Bruce, *Tradition*: *Old and New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 154–62, for a typical example of just such a treatment. See also Fox, *John Mill and Richard Bentley*, 47–49; Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (London: George Bell, 1883), 443–46; Dean Freiday, *The Bible*: *Its Criticism*, *Interpretation and Use in 16th and 17th Century England* (Pittsburgh, PA: Catholic and Quaker Studies, 1979), 9–11, 89–95; Philip Schaff, *A Companion to the Greek Testament and the English Version*, 4th ed. (New York: Harper, 1894), 242–44; Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 107n1; John Bowman, "A Forgotten Controversy," *Evangelical*

This convenient, simplistic treatment is tempting because of Owen's technical error (one held by many luminaries in his day)[85] of believing the Hebrew vowel points to have been introduced under Ezra.[86] While the mistake cannot be excused, whatever he lacked in *technical* correctness on this point is more than offset by his formal correctness in viewing the points as *authoritative*.[87] So Owen's and Walton's exchange on this particular matter was a side issue, compared to the real question: how to handle the variants in both the Old Testament and the New?

But first we must examine the political context of their debate, which took place against the backdrop of the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the commonwealth.[88] The fierce animosity between the Puritan/Presbyterian/nonconformist factions and the established Anglican church resulted in displays of cruelty on both sides, prior to the Commonwealth and during. One infamous example on the part of the Anglican side was the arrest of William Prynne (1600–1669) under the direction of the father of "Anglo-Catholicism," Bishop William Laud (1573–1644). Prynne was a learned Puritan and wrote a tedious social commentary (*Histriomastix*, 1600 pages in quarto) attacking such contem-

Quarterly 20 (1948): 46–48; Stanley N. Gundry, "John Owen on Authority and Scripture," in John D. Hannah, ed., *Inerrancy and the Church* (Chicago: Moody, 1984), 189–221.

85. See Bowman, "A Forgotten Controversy," for a list.

86. According to Owen this had to be because this was a sanctioned period for Jews, whereas, after the Christian era the Jews could not have been entrusted with such an important task. "What was done of old and in the days of Ezra is ours, who succeed unto the privileges of that church; what hath been done since the destruction of the temple is properly and peculiarly theirs." "The Integrity and Purity of the Hebrew and Greek Text," in William H. Goold, ed., *The Works of John Owen* (1850–53; repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1968), vol. 16, 385.

87. Bowman observes that "while in a few cases with rare words the Massoretes may have vocalized erroneously, or in a few cases deliberately altered the expression to avoid apparent blasphemy, by and large, modern scholars have not found them wanting," in his "A Forgotten Controversy," 67.

88. One of the most apparent examples of this can be seen in the fact that two editions of the London Polyglot were published, one called the *Republican* edition, in which Cromwell does not receive a dedication, but is thanked for allowing the paper used to be imported duty-free, and the other called the *Loyal* edition, dedicated to Charles II, in which Cromwell is referred to as "maximus ille draco." Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 65n2.

porary practices as dancing, stage plays, the wearing of make-up, lewd pictures, long hair, etc.[89] His censure of acting, which entailed an index entry list of women actors, had a direct political repercussion since the queen herself aspired to such a role.[90] He referred to the whole lot as "notorious whores." This cost him dearly because the Star Chamber found him guilty of seditious libel. For his role as social critic/prophet he received a prophet's reward: life imprisonment, expulsion from the law profession, a fine of £5,000, the humiliation of punishment in the pillory, and finally, the cropping of both ears![91]

Thus the Anglo-Catholics defended their status quo. Laud was willing to go tit-for-tat with the Puritans in holding forth his belief in the divine right of kings and apostolic succession. The luckless Prynne affords another example. Like the Apostle Paul, he determine that though he was in prison the Word of God would not be bound, and so he continued to write "seditious" pamphlets (against the Arminianism of the bishops). Again the Star Chamber brought home the wrath of {43} Laud on the wretch Prynne by branding both of his cheeks with the letters SL (seditious libeller).[92] For those Puritans unwilling to endure such persecution, the New World beckoned. Those who stayed, however, were rewarded with one of the most telling displays of poetic justice ever recorded. The very first act of the Long Parliament (the first session met from November 1640 to September 1641) was to release political prisoners including Prynne—and to impeach Laud for treason. Prynne was received in London (November 28, 1640) with great ovation, elected at New Port to a seat in Parliament (1641), and became the solicitor in Bishop Laud's trial![93]

Prynne's sole basis for condemning Laud was some "ambiguous expressions" in his *Diary* and *Private Devotions.* Laud's last words were a public display of loyalty to the Anglican Church:

89. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15th ed. (1943–73), s.v. "Britian and Ireland, History of," by Robert Walter Dudley Edwards.

90. *Ibid.*

91. *Ibid.*

92. *Ibid.*

93. "Prynne, William," in *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowlege* (1883).

> The last particular, for I am not willing to be too long, is myself. I was born and baptized in the Church of England, established by law, and in that I come now to die.[94]

Then he placed his head on the block crying, "Lord, receive my soul."

With the fall of the bishop and soon the king, the pieces on the chess board were certainly changing positions—the dominant powers giving way to those they had recently dominated.

With the coming of the Commonwealth there was a far-reaching embrace of the democratic principles of Puritanism. When Brian Walton, rector of St. Martin's Orgar in London and a devoted Laudian, attempted to exact tithes from his parishioners, he was impeached by Parliament in 1641 and deprived of his "livings" (income).[95] And because Walton moved the communion table from the center of the church to the east window (an explicitly Laudian practice), his congregation petitioned Parliament, which led to his dispossession, and the publishing of

> the articles and charge prov'd in Parliament against Dr. Walton, minister of St. Martin's Orgars in Cannon Street, wherein his subtile tricks and popish innovations are discovered... as also his impudence in defaming the... House of Commons. (1641)[96]

Walter was reduced to a most degrading and humiliating state—as the Puritans had been under his mentor Bishop Laud—being thrown into prison in 1642 as a common delinquent.[97] {44} His library and the rest of his estate and personal property all were sold off. So he fled to the royalist stronghold of Oxford to begin plans for the production of his Biblia Polyglotta.[98]

The politics of polyglots affect not only our understanding of this debate, but of the larger conflict between Rome and the Reformation. Freiday notes that Walton's polyglot was "the only one

94. *Ibid.*, s.v. "Laud, William," by William Lee.

95. *Dictionary of National Biography* (1889), s.v. "Walton Brian," by D. S. Marglouth.

96. *Ibid.*

97. *Ibid.*

98. *Ibid.*

not produced under Roman Catholic auspices."[99] On the surface, this would appear to be a surprising development. Had not Protestants rallied around Laurentius Valla (ca. 1406–57) after Erasmus published Valla's *Annotations* in 1505 (written around 1440) crying *ad fontes*? Why had Roman Catholics exerted a monopoly over the great polyglots until Walton's? Cardinal Ximenes (1436–1517) provides us with the answer via the editors of his polyglot, the *Complutensian* (published in Alacala, 1513–17, 6 vols. folio), who tell us that the Vulgate was placed between the LXX and the Hebrew in the Old Testament in order to "compare... the position of Christ as crucified between two thieves,—the unbelieving synagogue of the Jews, and the schismatical Greek church."[100] More than just a rhetorical device, this illustrates the polemical intent of this polyglot: if there are variants in the versions, as well as in the original languages, the Vulgate will assume the established position of correctness. All challengers will be dismissed as mere deviations from this standard. How better to establish the Vulgate's priority than to compare it with all variant editions, pointing out their corruptions when they differ from "Christ" as crucified between two thieves?[101]

The Antwerp Polyglot (Antwerp, 1569–72, 8 vols. folio) is considered of little value because "it depends a good deal too much upon the Complutensian."[102] Philip II of Spain paid for its publication—hence it is called *Biblia Regia*—but few of the only 500 copies survive, most having been lost at sea on their way to Spain.

The Paris Polyglot (Paris, 1628–45, 10 folios) was edited by Gabriel Sionita and designed by Cardinal Duperron. It was financed by Guy Michel Le Jay, who expended his entire fortune and consequently had to leave has position as parliamentary advocate and became a priest. Though the most outstanding in appearance,

99. Freiday, *The Bible*, 9.

100. *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia*, s.v. "Polyglots," by Samuel M. Jackson.

101. Basil Hall reminds us that "when Erasmus inquired during his controversy with Stunica where the *comma Joanneum* could be found since it was in no Greek manuscript known to himself, Stunica replied with Spanish intransigence that it was well known that the Greek codices were corrupted but that the Vulgate contained the truth itself." "Biblical Scholarship: Editions and Commentaries," 59.

102. *Schaff-Herzog*, s.v. "Polyglots."

again it is of little critical value, "substantially a mere reprint of Antwerp."[103] The price was so prohibitive only a few were ever sold except as waste paper!

Certainly each of these polyglots was intended not just to establish the primacy of the Vulgate over all other editions, but also to serve {45} as a "display" of national pride and superiority in the world of biblical scholarship, recalling the role of the decorative, illuminated Lindisfarne Gospels (ca. 690) of the manuscript period.

Before we discuss Walton's polyglot, we must note that Walton initially aimed not to provide the supreme polyglot, but rather, just to circulate the Paris Polyglot in England. When this failed, then he determined to produce his own.[104] Initially he tried to buy 600 copies from Le Jay of his Paris Polyglot if he would sell them at half price for circulation in England. Le Jay refused. Still, this indicates that Walton was less interested in producing his own polyglot than in circulating a polyglot in England. But why? Perhaps he wanted to strike back at the Puritans, and circulate these tangible witnesses to the variation and uncertainty of the texts. (By contrast the Roman Catholics were certain of their own beloved Vulgate.) Also he might unsettle the Nonconformists in their overconfident view of *sola scriptura*, as well as discourage any Anglicans from taking the views of the Puritans and Nonconformists seriously. When the use of the Paris Polyglot to this end fell through, Walton resolved to produce his own, with the help of the Orientalists at Cambridge and Oxford. It was aimed to outdo all prior polyglots and reflect the most current critical theories. Thus he could establish the Anglican Church, and the British nation to which she belonged, as the true bastion of both apostolic succession as well as advanced learning. And if the Nonconformists railed against it, they would only stand condemned in the eyes of learned Europe. Thus the Puritans/Nonconformists would lose credibility and in the long run—the Church of England would be reestablished in her former glory!

103. *Ibid.*

104. *Ibid.*

Content of the Debate

So an understanding of the respective political, religious, and theological worldview differences of both Owen and Walton greatly helps us correctly to interpret their debate.

Owen was not responding to Walton out of jealousy or as an opponent of learning, as Walton was wont to paint him.[105] Nor was Walton provably a Papist or an indecisive scholar who would leave the texts of Scripture as a permanently unsettled question. Still, he was a Laudian, an Arminian, and after December 2, 1660, an Anglican bishop. His aim was probably to produce a monument of learning to celebrate the supremacy of Anglo-Catholicism over the Puritans, as if {46} the latter were merely an inferior interruption in the grand continuity of Episcopal Anglicanism. Actually Walton's positions do not formally differ from Owen's in most instances. But those of some of his bedfellows do, namely Cappel and Grotius, both of whom were either quoted or whose work was embodied in sections of the polyglot. Extracts from Cappel's *Critica Sacra* (1650) were freely employed, in which, as Owen well knew, Cappel not only rejected the vowel points but suggested that the Hebrew be amended by the translations. Cappel's work, in turn, was based on the works of Catholic scholars in France who had an explicit agenda of wanting to undermine Protestantism by highlighting the existence of both variants in the Protestant "originals," as well as emphasizing the late (and supposedly arbitrary) imposing of the vowel points. Grotius had also suggested certain conjectural emendations. So while Walton himself maintained that as

> for gathering various readings by mere conjectures, the author of the prolegomena is so far from approving that way, that he expressly rejects it and gives reasons against it...,[106]

105. Walton compared himself variously to Origen, Erasmus, and the translators of the King James Version, while viewing Owen in the class of all those who opposed these men. Rev. Henry John Todd, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Right Rev. Brian Walton*, 2 vols. (London: F. C. & J. Rivington, 1821), vol. 2, 3–5.

106. Todd, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 15. Actually, Walton had the best of two worlds: he could present himself as a learned patron of scholarship and maintain an orthodox posture, while using Grotius and Cappel to suggest that the texts of

nonetheless, he endorsed Grotius, and by implication, the host of Roman Catholic authorities underpinning Cappel's research, by employing them both in his polyglot.

Moreover, while Walton used additional language that sounds at first like the established Protestant scholastic position, namely, the doctrine of the providential preservation of the true texts of Scripture, he has an important qualification that Owen lacks. It ultimately places Walton in the Roman Catholic camp:

> The original texts are not corrupted either by Jews, Christians, or others; that they are of supreme authority in all matters, and the rule to try all translations by; that the copies we now have are the true transcripts of the first written by the sacred penmen; that the special providence of God hath watched over these books, to preserve them pure and uncorrupt against all attempts of sectaries, heretics, and others, and will still preserve them to the end of the world for that end which they were at first written; ….[107]

Up to now Walton is a model of the orthodox, Protestant scholastic view of Scripture (following Owen, the Westminster Confession, the Helvetic Consensus Formula, and Turretin). Then he partly negates what he has said before. While innocuous sounding, it is incipient- {47} Enlightenment in nature, consistent with both the aims of Roman Catholic attacks on Scripture as well as with the cynicism and atheism decried by Owen:

> The errors or mistakes, which may befall [sic] by negligence or inadvertency of transcribers or printers, are in matters of no concernment, (from whence various writings have arisen,) and may by collation of other copies and *other means there mentioned be rectified and amended.*[108] [emphasis mine]

Here Walton admits that "other copies" and "other means there mentioned" (in the Prolegomena) may supplant a currently received reading, which he says, however, would always be a

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Scripture were corrupt and needed correction from the versions and from conjecture.

107. *Ibid.*, 14.

108. *Ibid.*, 14–15. Certainly Owen himself allowed that transcriptional error existed; but what he was concerned about was how this would be interpreted and rectified *outside* of Reformed and Protestant circles, either by the hostile groups of Roman Catholics, Socinians, Arminians, Ango-Catholics, or atheists.

matter of "no concernment" (the reading, not the act). But by what criteria would the value of the "other copies" be determined?

For Owen, this final qualification opened up Pandora's box:

> But the mind of man being exceedingly vainglorious, curious, uncertain, after a door to reputation and renown by this kind of learning was opened in the world, it quickly spread itself over all bounds and limits of sobriety. The manifold inconveniences, if not mischiefs, that have ensued on the boldness and curiosity of some in criticising the Scriptures, I shall not now insist upon.[109]

> Among other ways that sundry men have fixed on to exercise their *critical* abilities, one hath been the collecting of various lections both in the Old Testament and New. The first and most honest course fixed on to this purpose was that of consulting various copies and comparing them among themselves; wherein yet there were sundry miscarriages, as I shall show in the second treatise. This was the work of Erasmus, Stephen, Beza, Arias Montanus, and some others. Some that came after them, finding this province possessed, and no other world of the like nature remaining for them to conquer, fixed upon another way, substituting to the service of their design as pernicious as principle as ever, I think, was fixed on by any learned man since the foundation of the church of Christ, excepting only those in Rome. Now this principle is, that, upon many grounds (which some of them are long in recounting), there are sundry corruptions crept into the originals, which by their critical faculty, with the use of sundry engines, those especially of the old translations, are to be discovered and removed. And this also receives countenance from those Prolegomena to the Biblia Polyglotta, as will afterward be shown and discussed. Now, this principle being once fixed, and a liberty of criticising on the Scripture, yea, a necessity of it, thence evinced, it is inconceivable what springs of corrections and amendments rise up under their hands.[110] {48}

109. John Owen, *The Epistle Dedicatory*, in Goold, *The Works*, vol. 16, 289.

110. *Ibid.*, 290. Stanley N. Gundry, who produced a major study of Owen's view of Scripture, "John Owen's Doctrine of the Scriptures: An Original Study of His Approach to the Problem of Authority" (S. T. M. thesis, Union College of British Columbia [now the Vancouver School of Theology], 1967), in his concern to counter Rogers and McKim in their thesis that Owen had scholastic tendencies on this issue, wants to maintain that Owen's treatment of preservation "was seriously deficient," holding statements that were "self-contradictory," hence no scholasticism, only "a confused man." Gundry, "John Owen," 220.

How, then, did Owen plan to hold in check would-be "correctors" of scriptural texts? Walton had almost given expression to the doctrine of providential preservation; Owen stated it outright:

> The sum of what I am pleading for, as the particular head to be vindicated, is, that as the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were immediately and entirely given out by God Himself, His mind being in them represented unto us without the least interveniency of such mediums and ways as were capable; so, by His good and merciful providential dispensation, in His love to His Word and Church, His whole Word, as first given out by Him, is preserved unto us entire in the original languages; where, shining in its own beauty and lustre (as also in all translations, so far as they faithfully represent the originals), it manifests and evidences unto the consciences of men, without other foreign help or assistance, its divine original and authority.[111]

For Owen such providential preservation did not pertain to certain codices that had not yet been rediscovered, nor to variants that would be "scientifically" determined to be original. It pertained instead to the specific texts then in the possession of Protestantism, the standard by which all challengers were to be judged:

Gundry's confusion, however, stems from his inability to understand how Owen could argue for complete preservation while also admitting there were variants. However, Owen saw only the minor variants between the various editions of T.R. as valid areas for discrimination, this being the broad boundaries of providential preservation, i.e., "Erasmus, Stephen, Beza, Arias Montanus, and some others." Within the confines of these editions was "the first and most honest course fixed on" for "consulting various copies and comparing them among themselves." This is both the concrete domain of the providentially preserved text, as well as the only area for legitimate comparisons to ascertain readings among the minutiae of differences. In fact, "God by His Providence preserving the whole entire; suffered this lesser variety [within the providentially preserved editions of the T.R.] to fall out, in or among the copies we have, for the quickening and exercising of our diligence in our search into His Word [for ascertaining the finality of preservation among the minutiae of differences among the T.R. editions]." *The Divine Original, Authority, Self-Evidencing Light, and Power of the Scriptures*, in Goold, *Works*, vol. 16, 301. It is the activity, editions, and variants after this period of stabilization that represent illegitimate activity, or, as Owens says, "another way." This is how Owen maintained an absolute providential preservation while granting variants. An analogy that comes to mind might be the television reception of a broadcast image. The entire signal might be received providing the entire image, but occasionally the signal must be tuned in further, for greater clarity.

111. Owen, *Of the Integrity and Purity of the Hebrew and Greek Text of the Scriptures*, in Goold, *Works*, vol. 16, 349–50.

> Let it be remembered that the vulgar copy we use was the public possession of many generations,—that upon the invention of printing it was in actual authority throughout the world with them that used and understood that language, as far as any thing appears to the contrary; let that, then, pass for the standard, which is confessedly its right and due, and we shall, God assisting, quickly see how little reason there is to pretend such varieties of readings as we are now surprised withal.[112]

What Owen was calling for was a canonical view of the text, or the text as a standard by which the variants would be assessed as just that—variants from the providentially preserved, canonical form of the texts of Scripture. He is concerned to defend

> the purity of the *present original copies* of the Scripture, or rather copies in the original languages, which the church of God doth *now* and hath for many ages enjoyed as her chiefest treasure. [emphasis mine][113]

It was "the whole Scripture, entire as given out from God, without any loss," that was "preserved in the copies of the originals yet remaining";[114] and

> [t]hese copies, we say, are the rule, standard, and touchstone of all translations, ancient or modern, by which they are in all things to be examined, tried, corrected, amended; and themselves only by themselves....[115] {49}

To think that any other source of manuscript authority, be it original language texts, versions, or conjectures, should be placed beside this established standard as a possible rival "is to set up an altar of our own by the altar of God, and to make equal the wisdom, care, skill, and diligence of men, with the wisdom, care, and providence of God Himself."[116] We are to "have full assurance that we enjoy the whole revelation of His will in copies abiding amongst us...."[117] Owen resists all attempts at using various transla-

112. *Ibid.*, 366.
113. *Ibid.*, 353.
114. *Ibid.*, 357.
115. *Ibid.*
116. *Ibid.*
117. *Ibid.*, 367.

tions "as means and helps of correcting the original, and finding out the corruptions that are in our present copies,"[118] maintaining that

> [f]or those of the several translations, we are not at all concerned in them; where any or all of them fail or are corrupted, we have a rule, blessed be God, preserved to rectify them by.[119]

What was the nature of this providence; how did it operate in the nuts-and-bolts of manuscript transmission? Owen lists twelve propositions:

1. The providence of God watching over His Word as "the most glorious product of His wisdom and goodness," because of His "promise and purpose," is the presupposed premise of all the other propositions.
2. The religious care of the church (the "Romish synagogue" excluded) existed among those to whom the oracles of God were committed.
3. The very first transcribers used care in making the first copies from the originals (these were the authors themselves) "unto many," and provided a precedent for other transcribers.
4. By multiplying copies "to such a number that it was impossible any should corrupt them all, wilfully or by negligence."
5. Both the Jewish synagogue as well as the Christian assemblies used "reverence and diligence" in preserving "authentic copies."
6. The frequency of the reading of Scripture by "all sorts of persons" provided a familiarity with the wording of the texts that alterations would have been easily detected.
7. Those who studied, especially Hebrews, were conscious of every letter of the texts.
8. Ezra and his associates took care to assure that the correct Old Testament texts were restored to the people of Israel.
9. The care of the Masoretes. {50}

118. *Ibid.*, 406.

119. *Ibid.*, 421.

10. The unanimity of Old Testament readings in the Mishnah, Gemara, and the Talmud, with the Masoretic Text.
11. Jesus did not once accuse the Jews of corrupting their copies, but, rather, assumed their purity.
12. The checks and balances that the Jews and Christians provided for each other in preventing corruption.[120]

Thus Owen was certain that the "common readings" were correct because of their being found in "thousands of copies";[121] and that *because of providence* the scribal habits of those copying Scripture were hardly comparable with the activity of scribes copying non-biblical literature:

> It can, then, with no colour of probability be asserted (which yet I find some learned men too free in granting), namely, that there hath the same fate attended the Scripture in its transcription as hath done other books. Let me say without offence, this imagination, asserted on deliberation, seems to me to boarder on atheism. Surely the promise of God for the preservation of His Word, with His love and care for His church, of whose faith and obedience that Word of His is the only rule, requires other thoughts at our hands.[122]

Morinus and Cappellus attempted to ridicule this latter idea, by suggesting that this meant that the scribes supposedly were "infallible and divinely inspired." Owen answered them firmly:

> Religious care and diligence in their work, with a due reverence of Him with whom they had to do, is all we ascribe to them.... This care and diligence, we say, in a subserviency to the promise and providence of God, hath produced the effect contended for; nor is any thing further necessary thereunto. On this account to argue, as some do, from the miscarriages and mistakes of men, their oscitancy and negligence in transcribing the old heathen authors, Homer, Aristotle, Tully, we think is not tolerable in a Christian, or any one that hath the least sense of the nature and importance of the Word, or the care of God towards His church....
>
> The Jews have a common saying among them,—that *to alter one letter of the Law is no less sin than to set the whole world on fire*; and

120. *Ibid.*, 358.
121. *Ibid.*, 356.
122. *Ibid.*, 357.

> shall we think that in writing it they took no more care than a man would do in writing out Aristotle or Plato,....[123]

Why was Owen so seemingly guarded? Why does he appear to moderns to be "betraying a nervous sensitiveness, lest an imposing array of various readings should invalidate the authority of the sacred {51} texts?"[124] Only by truly appreciating what Owen and the creedal statements at that time were reacting to, will we understand this. He was resisting a full-scale counterattack, aimed at undermining the very foundations of Protestantism, by the Roman Catholic Church and others who wanted to see the political and religious advantage of classic Protestantism fail (such as the Anglo-Catholicism which Walton reflected, and the incipient-Enlightenment school of Saumur). Owen clearly understood whom he was answering! He felt it was the Roman Catholic strategy to destroy the *single* weapon that had dealt such a death-blow to the medieval church—*sola scriptura*—by demonstrating that no such entity existed independent of the church. Owen believed they wished

> to place themselves in the throne of God, and to make the words of a translation authentic from *their* stamp upon them, and not from their relation unto and agreement with the words spoken by God himself. And yet further, as if all this were not enough to manifest what trustees they have been, they have cast off all subjection to the authority of God in His Word, unless it be resolved into their own, denying that any man in the world can know it to be the Word of God unless they tell him so: it is but ink and paper, skin of parchment, a dead letter, a nose of wax, a lesbian rule,—of no authority unto us at all. O faithful trustees! Holy mother church! Infallible chair! Can wickedness yet make any further progress?[125]

Owen seems very familiar with the many Roman Catholic scholars of his day (unlike some of those who underrate Owen today), particularly Melchior Canus, Gulielmus Lindanus, Bellarminus, Gregorius de Valentia, Leo Castrius, Huntlaeus, Hanstelius—and numerous others.[126] All of these men represented a chorus singing

123. *Ibid.*, 355.

124. *À la* his biographer, *ibid.*, 346.

125. *Ibid.*, 284.

126. *Ibid.*, 285.

one song:

> that the original copies of the Old and New Testament are so corrupted ("ex ore tui, serve nequam") that they are not a certain standard and measure of all doctrines, or the touchstone of all translations.[127]

Owen is certain that

> [o]f all the inventions of Satan to draw off the minds of men from the Word of God, this of *decrying the authority of the originals* seems to me the most pernicious.[128]

He cites the Jesuit, Huntley, who even had an especially unusual view of how God's providence was really working—the Hebrew Bible had been corrupted in "the good providence of God, for the honour of the Vulgar Latin!"[129] {52}

As for the vowel points in particular, Roman Catholics had found a most telling method of vindicating their approach to authority. Bowman reminds us:

> It would be quite erroneous,... to form the opinion that the Protestants and Roman Catholics held opposing views on the points, merely to be consistent in their opposition to one another. The skein is more tangled than that. In claiming the late origin of the vowel-points, the Roman Catholics saw a way of championing the Vulgate translation as more reliable than the present Massoretic Hebrew text, which latter was regarded by Protestants as the very Word of God. Further, if the introduction of the Massoretic points was late, no one could have learned the Scriptures without the oral tradition of the Jewish church. The Protestants were professed anti-traditionalists; they refused to accept the tradition of the Church of Rome, yet accepted the results of the tradition of the Jewish church. In this way the Catholics sought to show Protestant

127. *Ibid.*

128. *Ibid.*

129. *Ibid.* Gregory de Valencia, along with Huntley, believed the Hebrew should be brought into conformity with the Latin Vulgate. De Rossi and John Morinus, a former French Protestant turned Roman Catholic priest, maintained that "God gave the Old Testament without vowels because He desired men to follow the church's interpretation, not their own, for the Hebrew tongue without vowels as it was given is a 'very nose of wax.' " Bowman adds, "In short, it is God's will that men depend on the priest." Bowman, "A Forgotten Controversy," 51n.1, 52.

inconsistency.[130]

Cappellus, the first Protestant to argue for the late introduction of the points, was perhaps sympathetic to this interpretation in light of the fact that his major work *Critica Sacra* was refused publication in the Protestant states, so it was published in Paris in 1650 through the efforts of Morinus and other Roman Catholics.[131] His own son became a zealous convert to Romanism.

And Walton, though not a "Papist," well served his Anglo-Catholicism through the long established Roman Catholic tradition of polyglots. As Owen notes:

> But after all the endeavours hitherto used, in the days wherein we live it breaks out in a greater flame; they now print the original itself and defame it, gathering up translations of all sorts, and setting them up in competition with it. When Ximenes put forth the Complutensian Bible, Vatablus his, and Arias Montanus those of the king of Spain, this cockatrice was not hatched, whose fruit is now growing to a fiery flying serpent.[132]

Owen was aware that Michael Le Jay, the sponsor of the last great polyglot before Walton's, the Parisian, was not trying to advance the science of either comparative philology nor textual criticism *per se*. Instead Le Jay in his preface "denies the Hebrew text, prefers the Vulgar Latin before it, and resolves that we are not left to the Word for our rule, but to the spirit that rules in their church."[133] So Owen concludes that due to the scepticism this process engenders, "there in nothing left unto men but to choose whether they will be Papists or atheists."[134] {53}

Owen was convinced that nothing less than the doctrine of providential preservation would answer this counterattack stage of development in post-Reformation times. So did the framers of both the Westminster Confession and the Helvetic Consensus Formula. Without the explication of what was only hinted at in the

130. Bowman, "A Forgotten Controversy," 47.

131. *Ibid.*, 54. Owen took note of this, commenting that Cappellus had to "once more flee to the Papists by the help of his son, a great zealot amongst them; as he did with his Critica, to get it published." Owen, *Integrity*, 369.

132. Owen, *Epistle*, 286.

133. *Ibid.*

134. *Ibid.*

above mentioned confessions, Owen felt the Reformation experiment would culminate in a calamitous comedy of errors. He never tires of reminding us of this:

> Besides the injury done hereby to the providence of God towards His church, and care of His Word, it will not be found so easy a matter, upon a supposition of such corruption in the originals as is pleaded for, to evince unquestionably that the whole saving doctrine itself, at first given out from God, continues entire and incorrupt....[135]

> And it may be justly feared that where one will relieve himself against the uncertainty of the originals by the consideration of the various translations here exhibited unto us, being such as upon trial they will be found to be, *many* will be ready to question the foundation of all....[136]

> If these hundreds of words were the critical conjectures and amendments of the Jews, what security have we of the mind of God as truly represented unto us, seeing that it is supposed also that some of the words in the margin were sometimes in the line? And if it be supposed, as it is, that there are innumerable places of the like nature standing in need of such amendments, what a door would be opened to curious, pragmatical wits to overturn all the certainty of the truth of the Scripture every one may see. Give once this liberty to the audacious and we shall quickly find what woful state and condition the truth of the Scripture will be brought unto.... But he that pulleth down the hedge, a serpent shall bite him.…[137]

> What sense others may have of this distemper I know not; for my own part, I am solicitious for the ark, or the sacred truth of the original, and that because I am fully persuaded that the remedy and relief of this evil provided in the translations is unfitted to the cure, yea, fitted to increase the disease.…[138]

> If there be this liberty once given, that they may be looked on as corruptions, and amended at the pleasure of men, how we shall be able to stay before we come to the bottom of questioning the whole

135. Owen, *The Divine Original of Scripture*, 302.

136. Owen, *Integrity*, 368.

137. *Ibid.*, 405–6.

138. *Ibid.*, 408.

Scripture I know not.[139]

Certainly we now understand both the problem, and Owen's clearly stated response to it, which is the Protestant doctrine of providential preservation. But to show that he was writing more than just an "essentially practical polemic,"[140] we must ask, where do the variants come from if God is watching over the transmission of the texts of {54} Scripture? Owen begins by assuring us that he is aware that even in the Masoretic Text "there are some diverse readings, or various lections."[141] However,

> Where there is any variety it is always in things of less, indeed of no, importance. God by His providence preserving the whole entire, suffered this lesser variety to fall out, in or among the copies we have, for the quickening and exercising of our diligence in our search into His Word.[142]

Also he acknowledges that among the scribes "it is known, it is granted, that failings have been amongst them, and that various lections are from thence risen."[143] But he is not conceding either Walton's earlier interpretation of these, nor (though it sounds similar) is he saying what moderns say—that corruptions exist but they do not affect any essential doctrine, so all manner of emendation may take place with no repercussions. According to Owen, "the whole Word of God, in every letter and tittle, as given from Him by inspiration, is preserved without corruption."[144] These incidental errors do not give license to attempt a new recension of the text, as Walton's use of Grotius and Cappell would imply. As for the theory that suggested emendations will not change doctrine and therefore should be allowed:

> Nor is the relief Cappellus provides against the charge of bringing things to an uncertainty in the Scripture, (which he found himself obnoxious unto,) less pernicious than the opinion he seeks to paliate thereby;... "The saving doctrine of the Scripture," he tells

139. *Ibid.*, 420.

140. Bowman, "A Forgotten Controversy," 60.

141. Owen, *The Divine Original*, 301.

142. *Ibid.*

143. Owen, *Integrity*, 355.

144. Owen, *The Divine Original*, 301.

> us, "as to the matter and substance of it, in all things of moment, is preserved in the copies of the original and translations that remain."[145]

And he adds:

> To depress the sacred truth of the originals into such a condition as wherein it should stand in need of this apology,... will at length be found a work unbecoming a Christian, Protestant divine.[146]

And then he concludes:

> Nor is it enough to satisfy us, that the doctrines mentioned are preserved entire; every tittle and ἰῶτα in the Word of God must come under our care and consideration, as being, as such, from God.[147]

And with this rebuttal, Owen spelled out clearly how utterly impenetrable is the text, when treated as canon.

Owen had a further complaint with the variants found in Walton's polyglot, and in this, modern research has vindicated him. He was {55} most displeased with the unsystematic and uncritical use of variants. Walton's anti-nonconformist stance along with his incriminating associations with Cappellus and Grotius, whose works were employed in amassing the variants in his polyglot, convinced Owen that it was not scholarship at work here so much as a rhetorical device working toward a polemical end:

> The voluminous bulk of various lections, as nakedly exhibited, seems sufficient to beget scruples and doubts in the minds of men about the truth of what hath been hitherto by many pretended concerning the preservation of the Scripture through the care and providence of God.[148]

In combing over Walton's variants, Owen noted that this "naked exhibition" of variants did not allow for any degree of discrimination between absolute nonsense readings of technical errors, and bonafide variants, thus giving the impression of reaching to make a point. He complains that the appendix has a collection of vari-

145. *Ibid.*, 302.

146. *Ibid.*

147. *Ibid.*, 303.

148. Owen, *Integrity*, 352.

ants that "make up a book bigger than the New Testament itself."[149] He notes that prior to the advent of the polyglot, lists of variants were drawn up by scholars from manuscripts in their possession, or even those "which they judged of importance, or that might make some pretense to be considered whether they were proper or no."[150] But in the polyglot,

> We have all that by any means could be brought to hand, and that whether they are tolerably attested for various lections or no; for as to any contribution unto the better understanding of the Scripture from them, it cannot be pretended.[151]

Owen was vindicated on this point when it was discovered the so-called "Velezian readings," supposedly various readings from sixteen Greek manuscripts, were yet another Roman Catholic attempt at manuscript fabrication and falsification. They were first printed in 1626 by De la Cerda in his *Adversaria Sacra*, who claimed they were found in the margin of a Greek Testament he had received from Mariana, a Spanish historian. Then Mariana said these variants were placed in the Testament by its former owner, Don Pedro Faxardo, Marquis of Velez. Faxardo maintained that eight of the manuscripts employed by him had come from the library of the king of Spain. It was Bishop March, however, who discovered that these readings were taken not from Greek manuscripts—but from the Latin Vulgate as found in Stephens's 1539–40.[152]

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149. *Ibid.*, 362.

150. *Ibid.*, 363.

151. *Ibid.* This procedure broke precedent with sixteenth-century Reformed text criticism, as can be seen in Theodore Beza's work. He clearly rejected Codex D and certain of its readings as even meriting consideration. Owen was aware of how out of step Walton's practice was, noting Beza's judgment: "Beza... hath professedly *stigmatized his own manuscript*, that he sent unto Cambridge, as so corrupt in the Gospel of Luke that he durst not publish the various lections of it, for fear of offence and scandal.... We have here, if I mistake not [in the polyglot] all the corruptions of that copy given us as various readings;...." *Ibid.*, 365.

152. Tregelles, *An Account,* 38–39. Additionally, Vincent informs us of needless redundancy in Walton's employment of the "Wechelian readings," found in "the margin of a Bible printed at Frankfurt, 1597, by the heirs of Andrew Wechel. All of these readings are found in Stephen's margin, or in the early editions." Vincent, *A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 67n2. Oddly enough, rather than offer Owen some degree of credit for calling for restraint in this exercise of amassing uncritically and indiscriminately as many

Owen further underscored what he observed in the appendix: {56}

> Hence it is come to pass... that whatever varying word, syllable, or tittle, could be by any observed, wherein any book, though of yesterday, varieth from the common received copy, though manifestly a mistake, superfluous or deficient, inconsistent with the sense of the place, yea, barbarous, is presently imposed on us as a various lection.[153]

He felt that had there been an honest, scholarly attempt to verify as well as discriminate among this pool of variants, the number could have been greatly reduced, a number "whose consideration might be of some other use that merely to create a temptation to the reader that nothing is left sound and entire in the Word of God."[154]

Here Owen is remarkably ahead of his time; when he says "it is not every variety or difference in a copy that should presently be cried up for a various reading,"[155] he anticipates Eldon Jay Epp over 300 years later. In his essay, "Toward the Clarification of the Term 'Textual Variant,' " in language similar to Owen's, he says that

> [t]he common or surface assumption is that any textual reading that differs in any way from any other reading in the same unit of text is a "textual variant," but this simplistic definition will not suffice. Actually, in New Testament textual criticism the term "textual variant" really means—and must mean—"*significant*" or "*meaningful* textual variant,".... A distinction must be made, therefore, between "reading" and "variant"—where the latter term means "significant variant," and it becomes clear that textual critics must raise the question of when a textual reading is also a textual variant.[156]

This leads us to a third area where, again, Owen is far in advance of his day. F. F. Bruce and others have unfairly character-

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variants as possible, Tragelles informs us that "Walton... is not to be blamed for inserting these readings [Velezian] in his collection. Critical studies were then not sufficiently advanced to authorize the selection of materials." *An Account*, 39.

153. Owen, *Integrity*, 363.

154. *Ibid.*, 364.

155. *Ibid.*

156. Eldon Jay Epp, "Toward the Clarification of the Term 'Textual Variant,'" in J. K. Elliott, ed., *Studies in New Testament Language and Text* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 154–55.

ized Owen as a mere dogmatist in this debate, suffering an undue "sensitiveness on the score of variant readings," while Walton is praised as the man who gave us our first "systematic collection of New Testament variant readings."[157] This simply misrepresents the case since the historic and theological context is ignored by such a presentation, not to mention a sensitivity to the actual details of the affair. Actually, Owen quite frankly acknowledged that it was the Reformed branch of Protestants who first tried to gather and evaluate variants.[158] Owen, so unlike moderns, did not compartmentalize his understanding of the theological significance of the text separate from the critical analysis and study of it. Rather, he believed that from a pastoral point of view it was not proper to allow what in many cases amounted to "the conjectures of men conceited of their own abilities to correct the Word of God"[159] {57} to go on a *public display.* Far from ignoring or shutting out discussion on variants altogether, Owen wanted such theoretical activity to take place in its proper sphere:

> It is known to all men acquainted with things of this nature that in all these there is no *new opinion* coined or maintained by the learned prefacer to these Bibles; the several mentioned have been asserted and maintaned by sundry learned men. Had the opinion about them been kept in the ordinary sphere of men's private conceptions, in their own private writings, running the hazard of men's judgements on their own strength and reputation, I should not from my former discourse have esteemed myself concerned in them. Every one of us must give an account of himself unto God. It will be well for us if we are found holding the foundation. If we build hay and stubble upon it, though out work perish, we shall be saved. Let every man in these things be fully persuaded in his own mind; it shall be to me no offence. It is their being laid as the foundation of the usefulness of these Biblica Polyglotta, with an endeavor to render them catholic, not in their own strength, but in their appendage to the authority that no good grounds is expected to this work, that calls for a due consideration of them. All men who will find them stated in these Prolegomena may not perhaps have had leisure, may not perhaps have the ability, to know what

157. Bruce, *Tradition*, 156.

158. Owen, *Integrity*, 362.

159. *Ibid.*, 359.

> issue the most of these things have been already driven unto in the writings of private men.
>
> As I willingly grant,then, that some of these things may, without any great prejudice to the truth, be candidly debated amongst learned men, so taking them altogether, placed in the advantages they now enjoy. I cannot but look upon them as an engine suited to the destruction of the important truth before pleaded for [providential preservation] and as a fit weapon put into the hand of men of atheistical minds and principles, such as this age abounds withal, to oppose the whole evidence of truth revealed in the Scripture. I fear, with some, either the pretended *infallible judge* [pope] or the *depth of atheism* will be found to lie at the door of these considerations.[160]

To what extent did Owen reflect the consensus of either the sixteenth-century Reformed tradition, or that of his own day? Owen himself says that Theodore Beza rejected the oldest uncial in his day for being "so corrupt in the Gospel of Luke that he durst not publish the various lections of it"—and invokes this precedent for his own stance. As mentioned earlier, the sixteenth century was the era of Protestant attack, and no real confessional statement as such appeared on the doctrine of providential preservation until the Roman Catholic counterattack was mounted. Both the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Helvetic Consensus Formula resulted. Jack P. Rogers has done a good job in discovering just what was meant when the Westminster divines said: {58}

> The Old Testament in Hebrew... and the New Testament in Greek... being immediately inspired by God, *and by his singlar care and providence kept pure in all ages*, are therefore authentical;…[161]

According to Rogers, for the Westminster divines,

> The text of Scripture is the Word of God, and God's Word is not to be sought independently of the text of Scripture. Inspiration does not usually imply any particular theory about how the Scripture came to be the Word of God. Nor does inspiration eliminate the human contribution which the human authors made to the

160. *Ibid.*, 352–53.

161. Westminster Confession (1646), chap. 1, sec. 8, as found in John H. Leith, ed., *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1973), 196.

> written Scripture. And most certainly, for the Westminster divines, inspiration can not be used as an excuse for trying to find God's Word separate from the written text of Scripture.[162]

And J. S. Candlish explicates what they intended by their word, "authentical":

> The eighth section of the chapter treats of the original text and translations of Scripture, and is directed, as to both of these points, against the doctrine of the Church of Rome. In the first place, it is declared that the text in the original tongues alone is authentic, and therefore ultimately to be appealed to in all controversies of religion. This is directed against the assertion of the Council of Truth that the Vulgate Latin version is to be held as authentic, so that none on any pretext should dare to reject it. It is obvious that, as the question here is as to the text of Scripture, the word *authentic* is used, not in the modern sense in which it has been employed by many since Bishop Walton's *Apology for Christianity*, as meaning historically true, but in its more literal sense, attested as a correct copy of the author's work.[163]

William F. Orr further amplifies this point, when he contrasts the position of the Westminster Confession with the later Warfieldian view which, since the nineteenth century, became an overlay through which the Confession is read by many:

> And Dr. Gerstner believes, as I understand it, in the inerrancy and full inspiration only of the original text. This is a position which several Protestant orthodox theologians have adopted after they had to face the results of textual criticism, and is consequently a nineteenth-century doctrine rather than a doctrine of the Confession of Faith. The Confession of Faith makes no statement about "an original text." What it refers to is the Old Testament in Hebrew and New Testament in Greek, which are immediately inspired by God and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all the ages. Now this affirms that the Hebrew text of

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162. Rogers, *Scripture in the Westminster Confession*, 301–2.

163. J. S. Candlish, "The Doctrine of the Westminster Confession on Scripture," *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* 26 (January 1877), as quoted in Rogers, *Scripture*, 495–95. Candlish mentions that all Owen was arguing for was that "the original text is so far uncorrupted as not to need to be corrected from translations;...." "Doctrine of the Westminster Confession," 393n635. The primary reason Owen maintained this, however, was because it was suggested that these certain versions were based on superior *original language* texts.

> the Old Testament and the Greek of the New which was known to the Westminster divines was immediately inspired by God because it was {59} identical with the first text that God had kept pure in all the ages. The idea that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Massoretic texts or in the Textus Receptus of the New Testament was unknown to the authors of the Confession of Faith since none of the manuscripts of ancient times which reveal these mistakes had been discovered.[164]

Except for Orr's last, fallacious statement, we find that his assessment establishes absolute continuity between the Westminster divines and John Owen on the doctrine of providential preservation.

As for the Helvetic Consensus Formula, like the Westminster Confession, it was explicitly directed against attacks from the Roman Catholic Church, as well as against Cappellus and others at Saumur influenced by Roman Catholic studies in France, the very same elements that Owen was addressing. Its statement on providence is even stronger and more extensive than that of the Westminster Confession:

> God, the supreme Judge, not only took care to have His Word, which is the "power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16), committed to writing by Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, but has also watched and cherished it with paternal care ever since it was written up to the present time, so that it could not be corrupted by craft of Satan or fraud of man. Therefore the church justly ascribes it to His singlar grace and goodness that she has, and will have to the end of the world, a "sure word of prophecy" and "holy Scriptures" (2 Tim. 3:15), from which, though heaven and earth perish, "one jot or one tittle shall

164. William F. Orr, "The Authority of the Bible as Reflected in the Proposed Confession of 1967," *Pittsburgh Perspective* 7 (March 1966), as quoted in Rogers, *Scripture*, 397-98. Rogers, in commenting on Orr, offered the following corrective to his concluding remark: "Orr is right in denying that the authors of the Confession of Faith separated the autographs from the working copies of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. Their confidence in the texts which they had of the Old and New Testaments probably arose, however, not from a complete innocence of variant readings in these texts as Orr implies. Rather, the authors of the Confession of Faith were confident that God had inspired and kept pure the message of salvation in Jesus Christ which is the content of Scripture." *Ibid.*, 398. We, however, do not believe the divines would have limited their understanding of providence so narrowly.

in no wise pass" (Matt. 5:18).[165]

The language used makes it explicit that the received texts of the day embodied this providence, and as such they were the standard against which all variants should be judged. Note how Owen's language anticipates that of this confession. First Owen:

> Let it be remembered that the vulgar copy we use was the public possession of many generations,—that upon the invention of printing it was in actual authority throughout the world with them that used and understood that language, as far as any thing appears to the contrary; *let that*, *then*, *pass for the standard*, which is confessedly its right and due.... [emphasis mine][166]

He was charging the Papists with calling into question these texts as the canonical standard; they were arguing

> that the original copies of the Old and New Testaments are so corrupted ("ex ore tuo, serve nequam") that they are not a certain standard and measure of all doctrines, or the touchstone of all translations.[167] {60}

The Helvetic Consensus Formula said so too, first noting the problem of those who

> from their own reason alone;... do not acknowledge any other reading to be genuine except that which can be educed by the critical power of human judgment from the collation of editions with each other and with the various readings of the Hebrew original itself—which, they maintain, has been corrupted in various ways; and... they affirm that besides the Hebrew edition of the present time, they are... other Hebrew originals.... [T]hus they bring the foundation of our faith and its inviolable authority into perilous hazard.[168]

With this in mind they determined that

> [t]he Hebrew original of the Old Testament, which we have received and to this day do retain as handed down by the Jewish church,... not only in its matter, but in its words, inspired of God,

165. Helvetic Consensus Formula (1675), chap. 1, as found in Leith, *Creeds*, 309–10.

166. Owen, *Integrity*, 366.

167. Owen, *Epistle*, 285.

168. H.C.F., chap. 3.

> thus forming, together with the original of the New Testament, the sole and complete rule of faith and life: *and to its standard, as to a Lydian stone, all extant versions, Oriental and Occidental, ought to be applied, and wherever they differ, be conformed.* [emphasis mine][169]

Francis Turretin

What of Francis Turretin, one of the authors of this last confessional statement, who so heavily influenced the establishment of the early Princetonian theology in the nineteenth century? He, too, saw this entire debate as a defense against the Roman Catholic counterattack against the most fundamental of the Reformation tenets, *sola scriptura*. As he says in the chapter "The Purity of the Original Text" in Locus 2 of his *Institutio Theologiae Elencticae*:

> This Question is forced upon us by the Roman Catholics, who raise doubts concerning the purity of the sources in order more readily to establish the authority of their Vulgate and lead us to the tribunal of the church.[170]

Turretin says that by the technical term "original texts" he means

> copies (apographa), which have come in their name [autographa] because they record for us that Word of God in the same words into which the sacred writers committed it under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit.[171]

Like Owen, Turretin admits that some minor technical errors and variants do exist with the established texts. But this hardly justifies reconstructing the text, as Walton and post-Englightenment scholars {61} often called for. Turretin, again using the language of both Owen and the Helvetic Consensus Formula, says that

> [t]he question is whether the original text, in Hebrew or in Greek, has been so corrupted, either by the carelessness of copyists or by the malice of Jews and heretics, that it can no longer be held as the *judge of controversies and the norm by which all versions without*

169. *Ibid.*, chap. 2.

170. Francis Turretin, *The Doctrine of Scripture*, ed. and trans. John W. Beardslee III (1688; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 113.

171. *Ibid.*

> *exception are to be judged.* The Roman Catholics affirm this; we deny it. [emphasis mine]

The explantation (as with the Westminster Confession, John Owen, and the Helvetic Consensus Formula) is, of course, providential preservation:

> That the sources are not corrupt is demonstrated by (1) the providence of God, which would not allow (cui repugnant) that the books which He had willed to be written by inspired men for the salvation of the human race, and which He willed to remain to the end of the world so that the waters of salvation could be drawn from them, should be so falsified that they would be useless for that purpose.[172]

He refers to these accepted text forms as the "canon of faith"—reinforcing that the text and the canon are one.[173] He views these texts as "the norm," because (1) they reflect careful, Christian scribal habits, and (2) their text-standard is found in "the large number of copies."[174] Furthermore, for Turretin,

> Faithful and accurate copies, not less than autographs, are norms for all other copies... and for translations. If any discrepancy is found in these, whether it conflicts with the originals or the true copies, they are not worthy of the name "authentic," and must be rejected as false and corrupted, and there is no other reason for this rejection except the discrepancy.[175]

But how should this be determined? Turretin advises us either to evaluate variants as erroneous from context, or to collate them with "the better manuscripts." But which are these? Turretin gives specific examples:

> The statement that the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New have become defective is false, and the passages which are offered in proof of this by our adversaries cannot demonstrate it. Not the pericope of adultery (John 8) [*pericope de adultera*], which, although it is lacking in the Syriac, is found in all the Greek manuscripts. Not the saying in 1 Jn 5:7, although

172. *Ibid.*

173. *Ibid.*

174. *Ibid.*, 115.

175. *Ibid.*, 128.

> formerly some called it into question, and heretics do so today....[176] Not Mark 16, which was lacking in a {62} number of manuscripts in Jerome's time, as he admits, but now is found in all, and also in the Syriac, and is clearly necessary to complete the account of Christ's resurrection.[177]

For Turretin the Masoretic Old Testament text and the Textus Receptus New Testament were indisputably the "canon of faith."[178]

Now Rogers and McKim see the Westminster Confession as representing a relatively pure Calvinism—and John Owen as a transition figure between the Westminster Confession and the hardened scholasticism of Turretin (and the Helvetic Consensus Formula) and later Warfieldianism.[179] Whereas on one of the most fundamental issues of the Reformation, our analysis shows that the Westminster Confession, John Owen, the Helvetic Consensus Formula, and Turretin all agree on how the texts of Scripture should be viewed. Only with the passing of Turretin in Europe, and Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge at Princeton, would this well-established tenet of Reformed Protestantism—providential preservation—also pass from its dominant position, yielding to the influences of the Enlightenment in the person of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield.

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176. Turretin seems to be laboring under some misinformation in regard to the data on the *Johannine comma.*

177. *Ibid.*, 130–31.

178. The inerrantists have been compelled, by the facts of history, at least to be honest and admit, if only in footnotes, the reality of the view that we have been documenting. Woodbridge and Balmer admit: "It is true that in the seventeenth century a good number of Christians esteemed that the Bibles they had in their hands were infallible." "The Princetonians," 405n106. Woodbridge admits that Whitaker, an admirable combatant against Tridentine Romanism, used the word "originals" interchangeably for both the autographs as well as his present copies. Whitaker: "We must hold, therefore, that we have now those very ancient Scriptures which Moses and the other prophets published, although we have not, perhaps, precisely the same forms and shapes of the letters." Furthermore, Woodbridge quotes John Jewel to the same effect: "[God's Word]... yet continueth still without adding or altering of any one sentence, or word, or letter." Finally, Woodbridge himself is heard to say: "Some Englishmen apparently did think that their Bibles perfectly reflected the originals." Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority*, 81, 187, nn64–65.

179. Rogers and McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible*, xvii-xxiv, 200–379.

B. B. Warfield's Philosophy and New Testament Text Criticism

Theodore P. Letis

The challenge of text criticism caused Benjamin Warfield[1] both to abandon the scholastic approach of Turretin[2] and adopt the nineteenth-century German methods. He accepted the scientific practice of text criticism, but he also retained his orthodox view of Scripture by relegating verbal inspiration and inerrancy to the inscrutable autographs. Contrary to most evaluations, however, he was not a scholastic but an heir of the Enlightenment.[3]

1. For a typical treatment of Warfield's view of Scripture, see Roger R. Nicole, "Analysis of Warfield's View of Scripture: A Bibliography," in Archibald A. Hodge and Benjamin B. Warfield, *Inspiration* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979 [originally published 1881]), 91–92.

2. By scholastic approach, with regard to the issue of text criticism and variants, I mean that approach used from the time of Theodore Beza (1519–1605) to Turretin (1623–1687), whose systematic theology was the primary text at Princeton from 1812 to 1872. This involved fencing in the Masoretic O.T. text and the Textus Receptus N.T. text by creedal statements regarding their respective, providential preservation and sanction, over all rivals. While there was a rational component to the posture—when data was brought forth in its defense—it was fundamentally a theological *a priori* and exceedingly important to the scholatics; as important as Warfield's centering of final authority in the autographic text from 1881 onward.

3. Donald McKim sums up well the position we are countering: "Some scholars have argued that the Princeton doctrine with its emphasis on the 'inerrancy' of scripture, particularly in the original (now lost) autographs, owes its origin to the scholastic theology of the seventeenth-century reformed orthodoxy and especially to the writings of the Swiss theologian Francis Turretin (1623–87)." Donald K. McKim, *What Christians Believe about the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 64. Rather, the real impetus for Warfield's position was both the need to answer the challenge of text criticism to *verbal* inpiration, as well as his personal agenda of wanting to legitimize German text criticism by a

Old Princeton

Archibald Alexander

Prior to Warfield's arrival at Princeton, no Princetonian had attained expert status in the young discipline of New Testament text criticism. Archibald Alexander, founding professor at Princeton Seminary, probably did not think the *autographs* were inerrant.[4] He would have believed, though, that even 60,000 textual variants could not affect the sense or alter the doctrine of the Bible. Like earlier scholastics, Alexander saw this uniformity (in spite of the variants) as explicit evidence of the enduring validity of the Westminster Confession's promise of providential preservation. He acknowledged that though God *could* have miraculously maintained inerrant perfection in the *transmitted* text—always the locus of his attention, not the *autographa*--—he chose not to. Like the scholastics, he attached "more weight to the *number* of attesting manuscripts" (emphasis mine). He preferred "a MS written with care" over "one carelessly written, other things being equal." Like Owen and Turretin, he was disinclined to consider translations over the Greek copies. In short, Alexander had much in common with European scholastics.

Charles Hodge on New Testament Text Criticism

Unlike Alexander, who never encountered German methods, Hodge studied in Germany two years between 1826 and 1828.[5] He

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new interpretation of the Westminster Confession—whereby he would actually be abandoning scholasticism altogether—both nineteenth-century influences.

4. Lefferts A. Loetscher interprets the following as implying as much: "That it is even possible that some of the autographs, if we had them, might not be altogether free from such errors as arise from the slip of the pen, as the apostles and ['had'] amanuensis [-es] who were not inspired." Lefferts A. Leotscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 228. Alexander would allow such a view, we believe, because the primary locus of authority for him and the earlier scholastics was the in-hands texts at their disposal and because they did not believe a radical discontinuity between them and the *autographa* existed. Hence, if the copies we have now display errors, it may well be that they were original with the *autographa.* This is quite different from Warfield's approach.

5. Alexander A. Hodge, *The Life of Charles Hodge* (1881; repr. New York: Arno Press/New York Times, 1969), 100–201.

established a significant relationship with Tholuck and Neander and heard other prominent German theologians such as Schleiermacher. After his return home, he began to read the journals *Zeitschrift*, the *Evangelische Kirchen-Zeitung*, and several others, and Tholuck kept {73} him supplied with the best German works on "language, literature and exegesis of the Old and New Testaments." While Hodge lived in Germany, Alexander warned him:

> I hope while you are separated from your earthly friends, you will take care to keep the communication with heaven open! Remember that you breathe a poisoned atmosphere. If you lose the lively and deep impression of divine truth—if you fall into skepticism or even into coldness, you will lose more than you gain from all the German professors and libraries.[6]

No doubt it never entered Alexander's mind that Hodge might bring fresh air to the Germans.[7]

While Hodge kept his faith, he also became fully aware of the current state of text criticism, as can be seen in his lectures on biblical criticism. Two unpublished sources reveal Charles Hodge's views on text criticism: "Biblical Criticism: Introductory Lecture" (November 1822) and "Laws of Criticism of the New Testament" (August 1834).[8]

In the former lecture he notes the various dangers to which the texts of Scripture have been exposed, including intentional scribal alterations. Since "the Integrity of the Text is the great foundation on which rests all Christian doctrines and all Christian hopes, it is of all points the last to be taken for granted." Those who were "stewards of the mysteries of God" should be able to prove to both friends and enemies that the Bible has come down to us "essentially the same" as "God at first delivered to His Church."

In his lectures on "Laws of Criticism," he acknowledges that the canons he lists are taken from Griesbach's *Prolegomena*. Nowhere

6. *Ibid.*, 160.

7. Tholuck expressed the following sentiments to Hodge in a letter sent while Tholuck was in Rome and Hodge was in Halle: "I cannot express what I feel at the idea of my not seeing you again. You have been sent to me through God's mercy as a messenger of glad tidings, as a comforter in cheerless hours, as an elder brother to show me the simple way to heaven." *Ibid.*, 189.

8. Unpublished lectures found in the Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary.

in the lecture, however, does he ever apply these accepted canons to individual passages.

Like Alexander before him, and his son Caspar Wistar Hodge after him, he regards as a "fixed law" the illegtimacy of practicing *conjectural emendation* on the texts of Scripture, because "it would be exceedingly injurious as every critic would think of himself authorized to make alterations and this certainty and authority of S.S. [sacred Scripture] be destroyed."

Hodge provides a brief history of the published editions of the Greek New Testament, noting that the confidence that can be had in any given edition will be based on "the qualifications of their several editors." This is of great import to him because "these editions differ in some instances very materially from each other," and we must needs determine which is correct. {74} He remarks favorably on the editions and editors in the Complutenians/Erasmus tradition while respecting the critics of that tradition. This became his definitive opinion regarding the state of New Testament textual studies of his day:

> Altho' it must be confessed that subsequent editions have greatly enlarged the stock of materials whence the true reading of the sacred text is to be obtained and may in some instances have pointed out and corrected mistakes in the Elzevir editions yet it may well be doubted from the principles on which they have proceeded [subsequent editions] whether they have formed any edition which taken as a whole is worthy of as much confidence as is justly due to the edition of 1624.—It was the beauty of this edition and the character the Elzevirs had obtained for correctness that brought it into general use, so that it was soon looked upon as the standard and gained an ascendancy it has never lost.[9]

Hence, for Hodge, as with Archibald Alexander, the Textus Receptus was still regarded as the reigning standard at Princeton through the year 1834.

While Hodge never offered a substantive critique of Griesbach, the current "critical" edition, he again assessed the merit of a given edition by evaluating the principles employed to formulate it. Hence after relating Griesbach he adds:

> Of his talents, learning and authority and honesty, there is a general

9. Hodge, "Laws of Criticism," n.p.

> agreement. Of opinion of the correctness of his critical principles there is considerable diversity.—Whatever doubt attaches to the correctness of these principles must attach to the text founded upon them.[10]

He takes the pains to mention that in his first edition Griesbach "published an explicit declaration of his faith in the divinity of our Saviour. This declaration he afterwards withdrew." He then comments that Griesbach's exegetical writings are "very much in accordance with the prevailing sentiments of the continental critics."

At the end of his lecture, while listing for further reading on the subject Michaelis's *Introduction to the New Testament*, the *Prolegomena* of Mill, Wetstein, and Griesbach, he also listed Laurence's *Strictures of Griesbach's System* and Nolan's *On the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate*, the most comprehensive defense of the Textus Receptus published in Hodge's day.

Hodge makes no plea for an inerrant autographic text. In fact, in a letter from his son to B. B. Warfield, A. A. Hodge acknowledged: {75}

> But the question remains was this book [the Bible] with its (1) human (2) oriental & (3) Hebrew characteristics *intended to stand the test of microscopic criticism as to its accuracy in matters of indifferent detail?*
>
> It appears that my father [Charles Hodge] was speaking of the possibility of infinitesimal inaccuracies of no importance relating to the end designed, in *Systematic Theology* Vol. 1, 170. I say so too—very heartily. But the question remains what degree of minute accuracy do the facts prove that God designed to effect? That is for you critics and exegetes to determine.[11]

As it turns out, Warfield decided that he could abide no errors and so posited the inerrant autographa theory.

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10. *Ibid.*

11. Letter from A. A. Hodge to B. B. Warfield, November 14, 1880, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary.

Caspar Wistar Hodge Sr.

Caspar Wistar Hodge Sr., Charles Hodge's son, can be seen as a transitional figure between the scholastic approach and Warfield.

Caspar Wistar Hodge makes no mention of inerrancy in the *autographa* in his lectures of New Testament criticism.[12] "The question is," he said, "what has God done? Not what ought he to have done?"[13]

Furthermore, he saw as the real problem: "What are we to say of verbal inspiration when the Church cannot agree as to the words of the text?" His answer was an assurance that a thorough investigation could only "do away with difficulties," but for a few obstinate points.[14] He acknowledged Scrivener's 120,000 variants but judged that no more than 1,600 to 2,000, some minor, remained in doubt.[15]

He acknowledged also that doctrinal considerations—both orthodox and heretical—had led to alterations in the text.[16] He rejected both 1 John 5:7–8 and Acts 8:37 on the ground that the orthodox interpolated both of them.

Griesbach convinced him that all readings favoring "orthodoxy" are to be regarded with suspicion.[17] Nevertheless, he was willing to dispense with these few accretions because he thought that they failed to affect "the integrity of the book or... doctrine."[18] He believed that "criticism satisfactorily answers the question as to what

12. "Lectures on New Testament Criticism," 1878. MS in the library of Westminster Theological Seminary.

13. *Ibid.*, 1.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*, 3.

16. *Ibid.*, 4. This is a distinctive trait of the German method. It presupposes real development of the text from doctrinally motivated redactors. Later, Westcott and Hort would attempt to escape such implications by denying that doctrine played any role at all in creating readings in the transmission of the text, thus giving their particular application of the German method a less ominous and threatening dimension. Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, vol. 2, 282. No one now accepts this naïve, optimistic stance.

17. Griesbach had as one of his canons: "When there are many variant readings in one place, that reading which more than the others manifestly favors the dogmas of the orthodox is deservedly regarded as suspicious." Johann Jakob Griesbach, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Halle, 1796), 62.

18. C. W. Hodge, "Lectures on New Testament Criticism," 5.

the words of the N.T. are."

Unlike his father, he was less willing to acknowledge the higher critical, theoretical context that gave birth to the German method of text criticism.[19] Johann Salomo Semler, Griesbach's mentor and the father of the higher-critical method, had provided Griesbach with his text critical principles.[20] Semler believed the canon and text to be an {76} accident of history; he saw neither as inspired or authoritative, since both reflected local concerns of their various authors.

Hodge did not employ Griesbach's method uncritically. While regarding Griesbach as "entirely free from prejudice," he doubted his recensional theory that the major families all represent attempts to edit or amend the text at three different times and locales.[21] Furthermore, while he saw the oldest evidence as the best, he granted that late manuscripts could reflect an early form of the text.[22] Ultimately, he thought, the highest value belonged to evidence from "remote independent sources."[23]

When he evaluated examples, he proved himself both independent and inconsistent. He criticized Scrivener for choosing readings in the later manuscripts for subjective or theological reasons.[24] Yet after acknowledging that the best authorities, manuscripts as well as critics, rejected the latter part of John 3:13, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he who came down from heaven *even the Son of Man who is in heaven*," he sided with Scrivener on the grounds that "the verse is genuine and important." He could be as subjective as anyone.

Along with the Germans, he also rejected other passages, in-

19. C. W. Hodge naïvely believed Griesbach to be working "entirely free from prejudice in his labors." *Ibid.*, 25–26.

20. Metzger says of Semler, "Often regarded as the father of German Rationalism, [he] made noteworthy contributions to the science of textual criticism.... Semler was the first to apply the term 'recension' to groups of New Testament witnesses (*Hermeneutische Vorbereitung*, iii (I) [Halle, 1765]). Properly, a recension is the result of deliberate critical work by an editor." Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, 115 and n. 2.

21. C. W. Hodge, "Lectures on New Testament Criticism," 31.

22. *Ibid.*, 6, 13.

23. *Ibid.*, 32.

24. *Ibid.*

cluding Mark 16:9–12, which he accepted, however, as *canonical* and therefore inspired; Matthew 6:13; John 5:3,4; and John 7:53–8:11, which he regarded as non-canonical, though probably a true account. In John 1:18 he accepted the reading "only begotten God" over the traditional reading "only begotten son." He rejected Acts 8:37, even though J. A. Alexander accepted it as genuine in his commentary on Acts.[25] In 1 Timothy 3:16, he rejected the reading "*God* was manifest in the flesh," substituting the relative pronoun "*He*." And finally, of course, he rejected 1 John 5:7–8.

C. W. Hodge saw two "schools" on the horizon, one—consisting of the Germans, Tregelles, Westcott, and Hort—relying on "ancient MSS," and the other—represented by Scrivener—relying on "modern MSS." Nevertheless, "as this is a question of evidence," he felt that the two schools would "agree after a time."[26]

In short, C. W. Hodge knew the state of text criticism, but seemed not to realize the higher-critical context of the German method. If he did recognize that content, he did not want to acknowledge it. Furthermore, when the consensus went against what he considered an important reading, he opted for the traditional reading. He would accept text criticism only as far as his common-sense criteria would {77} let him. His naïve belief that German text criticism had reached an unbiased, scientific state allowed him to conclude that "criticism satisfactorily answers the question as to what the words of the N.T. are."[27] Eventually, even the Germans would give up such a notion.

B. B. Warfield

Warfield was a protégé of Hodge and in 1887 took his seat at Princeton Seminary. Like Hodge, he thought one had to study in Germany to be abreast of critical issues. Like Hodge, he knew that

25. J. A. Alexander, *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (1857; repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1963), 349–50. The scholastic element can be detected in Alexander's final assessment of this verse: "It is therefore one of those cases, in which the external testimony may be looked upon as very nearly balanced, and in which it is the safest course to let the scale of the recevied text and traditional belief preponderate." Warfield would scorn such sentiments.

26. C. W. Hodge, "Lectures on New Testament Criticism," 33.

27. *Ibid.*, 5.

in New England, text criticism, the so-called "lower criticism," was undermining the orthodox view of verbal inspiration; he recognized that Buckminster at Harvard had wanted to demonstrate that "any rational person aware of the history of the New Testament text could not hold to a rigid theory of verbal inspiration."[28] Although the Hodges had attained such a knowledge and still held to verbal inspiration; and text critical studies had also moved from Germany to a more moderate climate in Britain. Warfield felt confident that if the British evangelicals could do text criticism without damage to the faith, so could Princetonians.

On the advice of C. W. Hodge[29] and with a letter of introduction from Philip Schaff, Warfield entered the University of Leipzig in 1876 for a year's study. He returned to the United States, fully abreast of the state of German criticism, and after spending a year as an assistant pastor he became an instructor of New Testament language and literature in Western Theological Seminary (now Pittsburgh Seminary) in 1878. The title of his inaugural address reflected what Warfield saw as his calling—the integration of biblical criticism with the historic view of *verbal inspiration*.

In his address, "Inspiration and Criticism,"[30] he alluded to a "certain looseness of belief" within the church. He quickly assured his audience that his own faith stood firm. He placed himself squarely in line with those who had upheld the Scripture and the symbols of the Presbyterian Church. Warfield intended to defend "verbal inspiration" from German attacks.[31]

Disavowing dictation theory, and affirming the inscrutability of the mode, he neglected to address the questions raised by the textual variants. Rather, he expressed a confident claim that a "careful revision of the text" placed Scripture beyond the threat of doubt.[32]

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28. Brown, *The Rise of Biblical Criticism in America*, 24.

29. Letter from C. W. Hodge to Warfield, June 7, 1876, Warfield papers, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary.

30. "Inspiration and Criticism," in *Discourses Occasioned by the Inauguration of Benjamin B. Warfield to the Chair of New Testament Exegesis and Literature in Western Theological Seminary* (Pittsburgh, PA: n.p., 1880), 1–46; reprinted in Warfield's *Revelation and Inspiration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1927), now titled *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ, 1948).

31. *Ibid.*, 420.

32. *Ibid.*, 423.

With C. W. Hodge, he thought that lower criticism, dealing with concrete {78} "facts," remained immune to the "speculations" of the higher critics. Like Westcott and Hort, he felt that by cutting his losses he could show that "modern negative criticism neither on internal nor on external grounds has been able to throw any doubt on the authenticity of a single book of our New Testament,"[33] even if he had to grant that substantial blocks of material *within* those books were interpolations. He was even willing to grant that one account of the Resurrection and Ascension (Mark 16:9–12) was "no part of the word of God." "We are not then," he said, "to ascribe to these verses the authority due to God's word."[34]

N. M. Wheeler of Lawrence University challenged him, insisting that his view of Mark 16:9–12 implied that "we must ask the critics every morning what is the latest conclusion in order to know what is that scripture inspired of God...."[35] Wheeler senses the inextricable relationship of the higher criticism to the lower. The textual data for this passage consisted of hard "facts," but these "facts" permitted two opposing reconstructions or interpretations. Warfield, along with C. W. Hodge before him (to a lesser extent),[36] adopted the German conclusion, based on the higher critical interpretation, that someone added these passages to provide a supernatural conclusion to the earliest account of the crucifixion and to harmonize Mark with the other later Gospel accounts. Ironically, those who argued such had no such view of either inspiration or inerrancy, as held by Warfield.[37]

33. Hence he can make the claim he is so eager to make, namely, "modern criticism has gone step by step with traditional faith." *Ibid.*, 437.

34. B. B. Warfield, "The Genuineness of Mark 16:9–20," *Sunday School Times* 24 (December 2, 1882): 755–56.

35. N. M. Wheeler, "Uncanonical Inspiration," *Sunday School Times* 25 (January 6, 1883): 4.

36. Recall that while Hodge doubted the Markan authorship of the verses, he nevertheless regarded them as canonical.

37. Conybeare sums up well the German, higher-critical quest for ascertaining the scientific determination of Christian origins: "These facts speak for themselves. Our Greek texts, not only of the gospels, but of the epistles as well, have been revised and interpolated by orthodox copyists. We can trace their perversions of the text in a few cases, with the aid of patristic citations and ancient versions. But there must remain many passages which have been so corrected, but where we cannot today expose the fraud." F. C. Conybeare, *History of New Testament Criticism* (London: Watts and Co., 1910), 77. Mark's ending

Warfield Resists Burgon

A contemporary of Warfield's, who both held to inerrancy and was more versed on the "facts" than Warfield, defended Mark 16:9-20 in an extensive monograph, and was openly opposed by Warfield.[38] This was because J. W. Burgon brought his theological understanding of the canon and textual transmission to bear on his *interpretation* of the facts, a long–standing legacy within Reformed scholasticism up through the career of Charles Hodge. Burgon criticized the view adopted by Warfield as "unscientific" and too influenced by a *speculative* higher critical element. "Men must begin," said Burgon, "by unlearning the *German prejudices* of the last fifty years; and address themselves, instead, to the stern logic of *facts.*"[39] Burgon believed that the evidence pointed in the direction of the text that the church had used since the fourth century and therefore indicated providential preservation.[40] And {79}

was the classic paradigm that allowed the critics to extrapolate further in the quest for origins.

38. See Warfield's reviews of John William Burgon's *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels Vindicated and Established* (1896) and his *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels* as they appeared in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 8 (1897): 779–90; also see his remarks in response to Burgon's *Revision Revised* (1883), in his review of the Westcott and Hort text, in *Presbyterian Review* 3 (1882): 335–56.

39. Burgon, *Revision Revised*, 21n2.

40. The following is a fair specimen of Burgon on both the uniqueness of Scripture (cf. Warfield's earlier statement below to the contrary) as well as the role of Providence in establishing and preserving the text: "Vanquished by *THE WORD Incarnate*, Satan next directed his subtle malice against *the word written.* Hence, as I think,—hence the extraordinary fate which befel certain early transcripts of the Gospel. First, heretical assailants of Christianity,—then, orthodox defenders of the Truth,—lastly and above all, self-constituted Critics, who (like Dr. Hort) imagined themselves at liberty to resort to 'instinctive processes' of Criticism; and who, at first as well as 'at last,' freely made their appeal 'to the individual mind:'—such were the corrupting influences which were actively at work throughout the first hundred and fifty years after the death of S. John the Divine. Profane literature has never known anything approaching to it,—can show nothing at all like it. Satan's arts were defeated indeed through the Church's faithfulness, because, (the good Providence of GOD had so willed it,)—the perpetual multiplication, in every quarter, of copies required for Ecclesiastical use,—not to say the solicitude of faithful men in diverse regions of ancient Christendom to retain for themselves unadulterated specimens of the inspired Text,—proved a sufficient safeguard against the grosser forms of corruption." *Ibid.*, 334.

this, from a High Church Anglican, with no affinity for the symbols of the Presbyterian Church. Burgon's complaint was that

> [i]n this department of sacred science, men have been going on too long inventing their facts, and delivering themselves of oracular decrees, on the sole responsibility of their own inner consciousness. There is great convenience in such a method certainly—a charming simplicity which is in a high degree attractive to flesh and blood. It dispenses with proof. It furnishes no evidence. It asserts when it ought to argue. It reiterates when it is called upon to explain.... This—which I venture to style the *unscientific* method—reached its culminating point when Professors Westcott and Hort recently put forth their recension of the Greek text.[41]

Obviously, there existed a crisis as to what constituted a truly scientific method.

Warfield Embraces Westcott and Hort

C. W. Hodge had already accepted much of the German consensus in interpreting the textual data via Griesbach and had predicted that when Westcott and Hort, who were devoted disciples of Griesbach,[42] produced their text, it would become "a standard." C. W. Hodge and Warfield felt Westcott and Hort represented an advance, that they were exemplary models of conservative, evangelical scholarship, while fully attuned to German methods. For *their* text to become a standard would mean that the English speaking world and conservative scholars would lead the way in New Testament text criticism. They wanted to cut off lower criticism from German higher criticism—the *real* foe.[43]

As soon as Westcott and Hort's text appeared, Warfield gave it a

41. *Ibid.*, xxv-xxvi.

42. Westcott and Hort venerated Griesbach's name "above that of every other textual critic of the New Testament." While they felt they must make a few adjustments to his theories, they make clear it is his approach they adopt, holding that "[n]o valid objection can, we believe, be brought to bear against the greater part of Griesbach's historical view." *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, 185.

43. Burgon viewed Westcott and Hort in a different light. He saw them importing the German method into the British Isles and looked forward to the day when England, as well as continental scholars, would return to the "old logical method," and so England would "maintain her ancient reputation and again occupy the front rank." *Revision Revised*, 365–66.

review that would forever endear it to convervatives in the United States.[44] Philip Schaff, himself an accomplished textual scholar, was so impressed with Warfield's elucidation of their method of "genealogy" that he invited Warfield to explain it in his *Companion to the Greek Testament and English Version.*[45] This was tantamount to elevating Warfield to the first rank in this discipline in America. Warfield intended his review partially as an assault on Burgon[46]—ironically, a fellow inerrantist, by defending the "scientific" methods of Westcott and Hort, neither of whom accepted inerrancy.[47]

In his review, Warfield revealed his command of both the history of text criticism and the methods of Westcott and Hort. With encouragement from readers of the review, he decided to publish the {80} first handbook on New Testament text-critical method authored by an American from the Enlightenment point of view.[48]

Believing that Westcott and Hort had established a scientific method in tune with his own commonsense philosophy, Warfield reproduced their theories and methods in his own handbook.[49] He accepted their claim that they had constructed a "neutral" text—on principles established initially by German critics and so beyond the pale of *their* criticisms—and that it represented "seemingly the pure stock from which all others in existence appear to

44. *Presbyterian Review* 3 (1882): 335–36. Warfield: "We cannot doubt but that the leading principles of method which they have laid down will meet with speedy universal acceptance. They furnish us for the first time with a really scientific method," 355. Southern Baptists adopted Westcott and Hort via Professor A. T. Robertson, who dedicated his handbook, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925), "to the memory of B. B. Warfield."

45. Schaff, *Companion*, 208–24.

46. He responds to Burgon twelve times, more than any other single author.

47. Westcott and Hort, *Introduction*, 280–81.

48. While Schaff's *Companion* was published three years earlier, it had several contributors (one of whom was Warfield), and was too broadly based to be regarded as a primer in text criticism, though sections of it address text criticism. Warfield's "handbook" went through seven editions in England (1886–1907) and two American editions (1887 and 1907).

49. Warfield stated that "[n]o claim on originality is made, obligations to previous works can scarcely be acknowledged," in the preface to his *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament.*

have diverged."[50] And they arrived at such a determination without any reference to theology. This made their arguments all the more compelling. In Enlightenment fashion, therefore, Warfield said that in text criticism, the faithful followed the same method as Enlightenment scholars, treating Scripture like any other piece of literature, without reference to either its inspiration or uniqueness.[51]

One reason Warfield despised Burgon was that he relied on theology when interpreting textual data. This proved to be too close to home for Warfield, whose Calvinistic forefathers, from Turretin to the framers of the Westminster Confession of Faith, had used such arguments to defend the last twelve verses of Mark as well as the other distinctive readings in the Textus Receptus. Warfield lost no opportunity to discredit Burgon's theological arguments in order to distance modern Presbyterians from the suspicion of resisting "scientific" scholarship by an appeal to theology.

> Dean Burgon follows the mass of copies, not merely because of their overwhelming numbers, but because... in the conflict of texts in the Church, it was this text which drove all competitors from the field and established itself as the single text recognized by the Church and (what appears to him an unavoidable corollary from this fact) by the Church's God, who surely may be supposed to have busied Himself in His providence with preserving to His Church in its purity the Word He had bestowed upon it by His inspiration.[52]

This could pass as a fair paraphrase of the Reformed Helvetic Consensus Formula statement on the providential preservation of Scripture.

Warfield Reinterprets the Westminster Confession

What of such creedal statements? How was Warfield, who pledged allegiance to the symbols of the Presbyterian Church, to

50. Warfield's review of Westcott and Hort, 342–43.

51. Westcott and Hort had said: "The principles of criticism explained in the foregoing section hold good for all ancient texts preserved in a plurality of documents. In dealing with the text of the New Testament no new principle whatever is needed or legitimate." *Introduction*, 73. See also 276–77.

52. Warfield's reviews of Burgon's works as they appear reprinted in B. B. Warfield, *Critical Reviews* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 31.

maintain his {81} integrity while also becoming the premier advocate, not just in traditional, conservative circles, but in all of American academia, of an Enlightenment method? For Warfield this presented no problem.

Since his commonsense philosophy allowed him to adopt the "scientific" method of text criticism, he reasoned that this method must be God's means of restoring the true text. He shifted from the notion of providential *preservation* to one of providential *restoration* in the new text of Westcott and Hort:

> Because we believe in God's *continuous* care over the purity of His Word, we are able to look upon the labors of the great critics of the nineteenth century—a Tregelles, a Tischendorf, a Westcott, a Hort—as well as those of a Gregory and a Basil and a Chrysostom, as instruments of Providence in preserving the scriptures pure for the use of God's people.[53]

This was a radical change of interpretation of the Westminster Confession.

Warfield accused Burgon (and Edward Miller, Burgon's coadjutor) of appealing to Providence to legitimize a text that rested on "ecclesiastical authority."[54] In this, Warfield was demythologizing the Westminster Confession. Whereas the Westminster divines fenced in the Protestant editions of the original language texts against the attacks of Roman Catholic and other critics, Warfield gave creedal justification to an Enlightenment methodology that his commonsense philosophy caused him to embrace. He warps the Confession to fit his own needs. Others were not as accom-

53. *Ibid.*, 36.

54. *Ibid.*, 36–37. Warfield even wants to maintain that Burgon's view is Catholic while Westcott and Hort's is truly Protestant. But Burgon's argument for discerning Providence in preserving the text with the actual usage of the church, in this case the Greek Orthodox Church, would be no different from Warfield's own understanding of the role of such Catholic tradition in passing on the orthodox canon of Scripture or the symbols of the early ecumenical councils. Furthermore, the Westminster divines determined that Providence operated within the church on these issues, even if their view of the church was not based on apostolic succession. Warfield neglected to note that Westcott and Hort were also both High Church Anglicans and were interpreted by some as giving support to the Roman Catholic Church in discovering the faulty textual base of the Protestant Church and for employing as their primary authority a MS housed in the Vatican Library since the fifteenth century. On this score, see "The Revision of the New Testament," *Dublin Review* 6 (July-October 1881): 127–44.

plished as Warfield in making the Westminster Confession relevant to the twentieth century on other issues, and so it was revised in 1903; and while it did not affect the language treating Scripture, the issue of revising the Confession along with Scripture is a good litmus test for discovering real discontinuity between Warfield and the northern Presbyterians (who were generally favorable toward Enlightenment biblical criticism), and R. L. Dabney and the southern Presbyterians (who more generally reflected the scholastic, confessional stance).

When Presbyterians revised the Confession in 1903, Warfield had misgivings about the alterations.[55] Eventually, however, he came to see the changes in the best possible light, giving them his Warfieldian endorsement as an expression of "Calvinistic doctrines" and noting that "enlargement is not alteration, development is not revolution, elaboration is not correction."[56] {82}

Warfield's colleague in textual studies, Philip Schaff, delighted in the updating of creedal standards and saw an analogy in the updating of Scripture:

> I take my stand on the side of a revision of the Westminster creed, in accordance with the advanced stage of theology and Christianity; as some years ago I took an active part in the revision of the English version of the Bible. The two movements are parallel, and look to the same end.[57]

For Schaff the two went hand-in-hand because of the advance of knowledge, research, discovery, and progress. An architect of the Mercersburg theology, Schaff had an optimistic view of the influence of such advance on the symbols and texts of the church. Warfield agreed.

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55. Warfield: "These doctrines, our expression of which the committee wishes us to modify and moderate, are true in their unmodified and unmoderated form." "The Final Report of the Committee on Revision of the Confession," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 3 (April 1892): 322–30.

56. B. B. Warfield, "The Confession of Faith as Revised in 1903," *Union Seminary Magazine* 16 (October-November 1904): 1–37.

57. Philip Schaff, *Creed Revision in the Presbyterian Churches* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), vi.

Robert L. Dabney

Confessionalism and Text Criticism

Robert L. Dabney, the outstanding southern Presbyterian of the nineteenth century, saw such accommodation as capitulating to the enemy's ground. He, too, saw the parallel between revising the creed and revising the Bible, but he evaluated such activities differently. He acknowledged that human philosophies were forever changing and that systems built upon them must change accordingly. Yet the Westminster Confession, he said, stood upon the changeless Word of God which "liveth and abideth forever." Therefore the standards

> remain as well adapted to the eighteenth and nineteenth as to the seventeenth century, to America as to Britain, to a popular as well as to a regal commonwealth. It is for this reason that the Confession will need no amendment until the Bible needs to be amended.[58]

And for Dabney, Scripture was certainly as timeless as the Confessions.

Though Dabney, like the northern Presbyterians, accepted commonsense philosophy,[59] he resisted biblical revision and German textual theories, retreating to the old position of the scholastics.

In his essay on "The Influence of the German University System on Theological Literature," Dabney denigrated the need to become proficient in the German methods.[60] He felt that the twin evils of

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58. Robert L. Dabney, "The Doctrinal Contents of the Confession—Its Fundamental and Regulative Ideas, and the Necessity and Value of Creed," in *Memorial Volume of the Westminster Assembly, 1647–1897* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1897), 94–95.

59. E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture 1795–1860* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978), 84–88, 204–5.

60. R. L. Dabney, "The Influence of the German University System on Theological Literature," *Southern Presbyterian Review* 32 (April 1881): 220–48. Archibald Alexander, who like Dabney had never studied in Germany, was of the same stance. Loetscher notes: "Alexander, assured of the correctness of his own view of scripture felt that 'erroneous' views were the result of a wrong methodology.... Alexander favored an approach which he called 'the English ground of faith and common sense instead of the German ground of scepticism and nonsense.' " Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism*, 220.

a state church and a Lutheran doctrine of baptismal regeneration combined to put men in professorships who suffered from "spiritual blindness," toward both the Gospel and their own "unconscious prejudice." {83}

> They dissect the evangelists;, epistles and prophets, just as they do Homer or the Vedas. They have never felt that declaration of our saviour: "The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." The response which is made by the profoundest intuitions of the human heart and conscience, quickened by the Spirit, to these lively oracles, immediately avouching them as the words of the creator of the human soul, is unnoticed by these critics. They propose to settle the authenticity or falsehood of the records by antiquarian processes only, similar to those... proposed to test the legends of early Rome, or... the genuineness of the Homeric epics.[61]

Warfield was vulnerable to the same criticism, with his advocacy that when trying to determine the authentic text of Scripture,

> It matters not whether the writing before us be a letter from a friend, or an inscription from Carchemish, or a copy of a morninag newspaper, or Shakespeare, or Homer, or the Bible, these and only these are the kinds of evidence applicable [i.e. non-theological].[62]

Dabney lamented that Americans studied in Germany and brought German methods home. He explicitly cited Allegheny (Western Theological Seminary, where Warfield taught) as a school that adopted the German practice of demanding that teachers "do new work" in their department.[63] This he considered counterproductive, for he thought that in divine science the "data are given to us in revelation, and are therefore limited and defined in number, and immutable, because infallible in character. There can be but one right system."[64]

In 1871—the year the British committee to revise the Authorized Version convened[65] and the same year John William Burgon

61. Dabney, "The Influence," 229.

62. Warfield, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 10.

63. Dabney, "The Influence," 229.

64. *Ibid.*

65. Unlike the Princetonians, Dabney was not pleased with the Revised Version (N.T., 1881). See Robert L. Dabney, "The Revised Version of the New Testament," *Southern Presbyterian journal* 32 (July 1881): 575–96.

wrote his defense of Mark's last twelve verses—Dabney wrote an essay addressing text critical issues.

He insisted that this discipline was anything but scientific, because "those who watch the art are aware that there is as truly a fashion in it, infecting its votaries, as in ladies' bonnets."[66]

He granted that the Textus Receptus was not the *ipsissima verba*, but he claimed that it contained "all the essential facts and doctrines intended to be set down by the inspired writers."[67] Furthermore, with each new find, Dabney felt the T.R. "more and more" confirmed, "always within a very slight distance... from the infallible autographs."[68]

He felt that most text critics had a "plentiful lack" of sober and convincing common sense. He then illustrated the many vicissitudes {84} of text critical theory in his lively and succinct history of the discipline from Bentley through Alford.[69]

In describing the German school, he noted the "almost contemptuous dismissal of the received text."

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66. Robert L. Dabney, "The Doctrinal Various Readings of the New Testament Greek," *Southern Presbyterian Review* 22 (April, 1871): 192. He broadly addresses the area of biblical criticism, then specifically comments on text critical phenomena, not holding to a rigid differentiation between higher and lower criticism. A. A. Hodge did similarly in comments akin to Dabney's. Again, broadly addressing "historical criticism," he notes, "There is an arrogant phase of the 'higher criticism' that is far more ambitious and attempts to correct, or even to reconstruct, the existing text by wide inductions from the history of the times, from the other writings, and from the known or supposed character, knowledge, style, situation, or subject of the writer.... But it is very plain that this process of 'higher criticism' is liable to be coloured, and even wholly controlled, by the subjective conditions of the critic—by his sympathies, by his historical and philosophical and religious theories, and by his *a priori* judgments as to what the sacred writer ought to say." A. A. Hodge, *Evangelical Theology*: *A Course in Popular Lectures* (1890; repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976), 66–67. Hodge no doubt has in mind "conjectural emendation," a process employed by German text critics and Westcott and Hort along with Warfield, but rejected by Charles Hodge, A. Alexander, and Burgon. Hence, A. A. Hodge sees one aspect of text criticism as "higher criticism," an aspect that Warfield would be the first from Princeton to validate.

67. Dabney, "The Doctrinal Various Readings," 192.

68. *Ibid.*

69. Dabney referred several times to Frederick Nolan's *Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate* (1815), a detailed refutation of Griesbach's text and theories and a defense of the Textus Receptus, and regarded it as "matchless ingenuity and profound learning."

As a result, he warned, "the Church of God will finally have no New Testament at all." In order to establish a new text, lay Christians all over the world would hear that their Bible was untrustworthy.

Worse, the scholars themselves disagreed about what should fill the void. While the old text may be improved, he said, whether by accident or Providence (hinting here at the Westminster Confession)—it now holds the *de facto* position as the *received text*, a position that no "common tribunal of criticism" can hope to fill. Hence whatever corrections the T.R. requires should be appended, not substituted, leaving the standard in place, "not of absolute accuracy, but as a common standard of reference."

While Dabney made no claim of expertise, his good common sense informed him of the folly that would ensue if the text were turned over to modern critics. For Dabney, common sense could criticize the German school, but the scholastic notion of providence delimited the true text.[70]

Dabney felt that facts and usages suffered when the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (the two favorite manuscripts of the German critics) omitted Matthew 6:13 (the doxology of the Lord's Prayer); John 8:1–11 (the woman taken in adultery); Acts 8:37; and finally, the last twelve verses of Mark's gospel, all passages Warfield would dispense with 10 years later.

He saw, unlike everyone else from Bentley to Warfield, *doctrinal* alteration in the omissions of Acts 9:5–6; Acts 20:2–28; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 5:7–8; and Revelation 1:11. To Dabney these alterations were the clear remnants of heretical attempts to corrupt the manuscripts in the early ages of the Church.

In the end, Dabney admitted that even these alterations did not "invalidate" any fact or doctrine of the Christian faith. So far, then, the critics have not been a real threat to the church, because "the interests of orthodoxy are entirely secure from and above the reach

70. True, his reference to Providence is not as adamant as Turretin's or Owen's, but in light of his nineteenth-century context it is remarkable that it has a place at all. Hence, when he refers to Erasmus's standard, he cautiously notes that "since the development of the vast critical *apparatus* of our century, the *Textus Receptus*, whether by good fortune or by the critical sagacity of Erasmus or by a superintendence of a good Providence, *has been found to stand the ordeal amazingly well.*" "The Revised Version," 579–80.

of all movements of modern criticism of the text." He made no such claim for an inerrancy found *only* in the *autographa.* Rather, he was certain that the locus of authority centered in the Textus Receptus was secured by the researches of Nolan and others, who had restored the {85} claims of the "received text, to be a faithful one" and had invalidated "the claims of exclusive accuracy made by our recent critics in favor of the so-called oldest *codices.*"

Dabney would be the last voice within American Presbyterianism to make such claims till the second half of the twentieth century, so thoroughly would Warfield's views prevail.

Warfield's View of Inerrancy

Two years before Warfield would write his review of Westcott and Hort's text, A. A. Hodge invited him to coauthor an essay for the *Presbyterian Review* on the doctrine of inspiration. Hodge complained that for months Briggs had pestered him to put in print such an essay because he was regarded as a representative of "the old orthodoxy." Briggs wanted to initiate an exchange on the subject in the new journal. Hodge began his request to Warfield by acknowledging his own inability to address these critical theories.

> I can after a fashion restate the old orthodoxy *common*place as to inspiration and fence it somewhat on the *a-priori* or metaphysical side, but I can do *nothing* on the side of stating or answering the positions of the hostile criticism, as to origin or genesis or dates of the books of either testament or as to the alleged contradictions of detail.[71]

He invited Warfield to write the essay with him, with Hodge writing the first half dealing with the doctrinal aspects,

> to be followed by a discussion statement illustration [*sic*] proof of the truth as to 1st the effect of the prevalent new criticism....[72]

Hodge begged Warfield to address "the state of actual facts (as to the New Testament) in regard to the asserted inaccuracies—or contradictions."

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71. Letter from A. A. Hodge to B. B. Warfield, October 20, 1880, in the papers of B. B. Warfield, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary.

72. *Ibid.*

Hodge had great confidence in Warfield, who had spent a year at Leipzig just three years earlier mastering "the facts," and so was just the champion to enter into this fray with Briggs. It would indeed be this essay that revealed to the critics of "the old orthodoxy" that they had in Warfield someone who could stand shoulder to shoulder with them defending the Princeton view.

Warfield must have felt a grave responsibility in being asked to come to the rescue of Princeton. His challenge was to address Briggs and other critics, yet to protect his own reputation as an emerging, future authority in text criticism—the one discipline which seemed to {86} undermine the Princeton position more than any other! Warfield had to admit that while in text critical matters, the Bible was like any other kind of literature, it was still the verbally inspired Word of God. A demanding task, but not intellectually beyond Warfield's abilities. As he said in the ensuing essay:

> We do not assert that the common text, but only that the original autographic text was inspired. No "error" can be asserted, therefore, which cannot be proved to have been aboriginal in the text.[73]

This is how Warfield accomplished his weighty task: if the locus of Providence was now *restoration* via Enlightenment textual criticism, rather than *preservation* of the traditional texts, then we need not concern ourselves with the criticisms lodged at the text of Scripture presently used in the church. This stance allowed Warfield actually to join with the critics of the Princeton position as God's agents in the task of restoring the inerrant original. After Warfield endorsed Westcott and Hort in the *Presbyterian Review*, Briggs himself noted that all Robinson Smith, himself, and others were doing was "working in the O.T. as Tischendorf, Westcott and Hort [are doing] in the N.T. and I can see no difference of spirit or methods between your article and that of Professor Smith."[74] Thus

73. A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, "Inspiration," *Presbyterian Review* 2 (1881): 238.

74. Letter from Charles A. Briggs to B. B. Warfield, March 10, 1882, in the papers of B. B. Warfield, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary. William Robertson Smith (1846–94) was a Scottish Old Testament scholar whose articles "Angels" and "Bible," prepared for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, raised a storm of protest and led to a charge of heresy. He was suspended from his position as professor of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis in Aberdeen the same year Hodge and Warfield published their essay.

Warfield was able to engage in "lower criticism" with "higher critics" and thus retain his integrity in that field by positing theoretically an inerrant *autographa*, the final repository of the old Princeton view of verbal inspiration.

Randall H. Balmer, however, disputes the claim that Warfield's view was new,[75] as Ernest Sandeen,[76] Jack Rogers and Donald McKim[77] have claimed. He has culled (with the help of John D. Woodbridge and Mark A. Noll) a mass of quotes from nineteenth-century theological journals, which distinguish between the original and translations, or copies of the original. Further, he maintains that a direct continuity prevailed from Archibald Alexander right through Warfield. But when applied to textual criticism, Balmer's thesis cannot be maintained.

All the Princetonians admitted error in the manuscripts and insisted that inspiration pertained only to the *autographa.* But they acknowledged *no radical discontinuity* between the two, as had Warfield, because none of them had fully accepted the German consensus on the variants, as had Warfield, although C. W. Hodge was on the way. Hence, for the early Princetonians, authority rested in the providentially preserved text. {87}

There was no primer on text critical data published in America until the publication of Westcott and Hort's *Introduction* (1882), Warfield's *Handbook* (1886), and Schaff's *Companion* (1883). Text critical data did not become widespread in America until the publication of the *Revised Version* (1881). Ira V. Brown is just one authority among many who has recognized that

> [t]he way was prepared for acceptance of higher criticism by the appearance of the Revised Version of the Bible in 1881 (N.T.) and 1885 (O.T) This was a high point in lower or textual criticism.... The mere publication of a new translation, founded upon Revised Hebrew and Greek texts, helped to modify the traditional concept of infallibility.[78]

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75. Balmer, "The Princetonians and Scripture."

76. Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism.*

77. Rogers and McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible.*

78. Ira V. Brown, "The Higher Criticism Comes to America, 1880–1900," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 38 (December 1960): 197. N. M. Wheeler, a contemporary of the RV, recognized as much for the layman: "This question [the inauthenticity of Mark's ending], too, will gain increasing emphasis

Hence, the quotes assembled by Balmer are not coming from men who are claiming a great disparity between the common text and the consensus of the German critics. In fact, one quote cited by Balmer illustrates this. He cites a Reformed source which maintained, "We all know that in copying by hand mistakes are liable to creep in, as they do sometimes even in printed books," yet "the translation contained in our common Bible is a far better one, and much more conformable to the meaning of the original, than any that have been intended to supplant it."[79] By the analogy used, we get a notion of what the author had in mind: printing errors—purely technical blunders, no interpolations of large blocks of content based on an orthodox scribe's intention to harmonize the resurrection accounts. The discipline of New Testament text criticism had simply not arrived in America at the time most of these quotations were published.

One of the first things a divinity student learned in his theological training was that God did not give the Bible to us in our native tongue; rather, it was inspired and written in Hebrew and Greek. The next thing one learned was that no two manuscripts agreed. Anyone addressing the issue of Scripture or inspiration would have to make known his theological training by acknowledging he understood these basic facts. Nothing more is to be inferred from the data cited by Balmer.

If Warfield's position was consistent with earlier Princetonian tradition, why did he have to defend his position as being traditional, and not an innovation? In his essay, "The Inerrancy of the Original Autographs" (1893), he is compelled to defend his position against the {88}

> asseveration which we hear about us, that the distinction drawn by the Presbyterian Church between the genuine text of scripture and the current and more or less corrupt texts in general circulation, is

and pertinence as plain Bible-studying people become more familiar with the other similar phenomena in the New Testament, a familiarity which it is one of the functions of the Revised Version to transfer from the limited circle of scholars to the widening circles of intelligent Bible readers," in his "Uncanonical Inspiration."

79. "On the Correctness of the Common Bible," *Utica Christian Repository* 3 (1824), 294, quoted in "The Princetonians," 363.

something new.[80]

Eventually, Warfield persuaded everyone within the old Princeton tradition that his apologetic techniques would place Scripture forever beyond the reach of antagonistic critics, while also allowing Reformed scholars freely to enter into contemporary text critical praxis. But his advance proved to be short-lived. If Briggs could see his own method reflected in Warfield's, so would others. So soon after Warfield's death higher criticism entered Princeton—and the seminary was reorganized in 1929 to accommodate critical thought. And the facile certainty that Westcott and Hort's system seemed to offer Warfield vanished, as later text critics abandoned the notion of being able to reconstruct a "neutral" text based on codes B and x. "Eclecticism" became the standard approach—and it dominates to this hour.[81]

The reorganization of Princeton, and the adoption of German methods, was part of Warfield's legacy. The other part, his position on inerrancy, was continued at Westminster Seminary. And since his reinterpretation of the Westminster Confession saw the "definitive" text criticism of Westcott and Hort as God's means of eventually "restoring" the autographic text, Westminster has been frozen in time. It advocates the consensus of Westcott and Hort[82]—while elsewhere the discipline has moved on to eclecticism, which despairs of discovering an archetypal, autographic text, ostensibly

80. B. B. Warfield, "The Inerrancy of the Original Autographs," *Independent* (March 23, 1893), reprinted in Mark A. Noll, *The Princeton Theology, 1812–1921* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), 272. Warfield was begging the question when he assumed "the Presbyterian Church" held to his view. It would appear that A. A. Hodge himself had trouble with Warfield's method of bifurcating. After reading a draft of Warfield's portion of their coauthored essay regarding "Inspiration," Hodge asked Warfield, "If you think proper—I wish you would *express* one point differently. Instead of putting *authenticity* and *genuineness* as essential prerequisites to inspiration—I would say that any criticism which denies the truth of any testimory of Christ... is inconsistent with inspiration." Letter from A. A. Hodge to B. B. Warfield, ca. January 3–4, 1881, in Warfield's papers, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary. Warfield may well have caused Hodge to change his mind.

81. See Eldon Jay Epp, "The Eclectic Method in New Testament Textual Criticism: Solution of Sympton," *Harvard Theological Review* 69 (July-October 1976): 211–57.

82. See Skilton, "The New Testament Text Today," 19–20.

because no such entity ever existed![83]

A New Interpretation

There are two current interpretations of the Princeton school. One sees Princeton as a further development of Protestant scholasticism, going from Turretin to Warfield and culminating in the doctrine of inerrancy, a decidedly rationalistic and post-Reformation development.[84] The other sees Warfield as reflecting the historic Protestant view of Scripture of the Reformers themselves.[85] But after examining how text criticism helped to develop Warfield's position, I offer a different explanation.

If Reformed scholasticism is both a rational, logical presentation of the faith, *as well as* a formal, serious-minded subscription to the Westminster Confession, then a different picture emerges. Initially, the Westminster Confession's statement about the preservation of Scripture, {89} along with the Helvetic Consensus Formula, were written in response to text criticial problems and challenges. These creeds descriptively appealed to the consensus of history for determining the boundaries of the texts of Scripture, very much as Vincent of Lerins characterized such a stance:

> What is a deposit? It is something that is accredited to thee, not invented by thee; something that thou has received, not that thou has thought out; a result not of genius but of public tradition; a matter brought to thee not produced by thee, with respect to which thou art bound to be not an author but a custodian, not an originator but a bearer, not a leader but a follower.[86]

Of course, such "superstitition" is rejected by the Enlightenment method. And, after Enlightenment critics wore down the orthodox Calvinists, year after year, by pointing out the discrepancies within the textual data, it was Warfield who finally abandoned the

83. Kirsopp Lake's assessment is typical: "In spite of the claims of Westcott and Hort... we do not know the original form of the Gospels, and it is quite likely that we never shall," Kirsopp and Sylvia Lake, *Family 13* (*The Ferrar Group*) (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1941), vii.

84. Sandeen, Rogers, and McKim, et al.

85. Balmer and most who advocate inerrancy.

86. Quoted in Benjamin B. Warfield, *Faith and Life* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1916), 387.

scholastic, creedal approach. He determined that if text criticism—German, Enlightenment text criticism—could be separated from the higher criticism that fathered it, with common sense at the helm it could lead the church safely into the seas of modernity, above the destructive winds of assault. If errors and "corruptions" within our present copies could be acknowledged, then perhaps just around the corner lay the pristine autographa, waiting to be restored, by God's good Providence.

So with the passing of A. Alexander and Charles Hodge, the view of Scripture held by the Reformed scholastics no longer played any role at Princeton. Dabney kept it alive for a time in the south—but in the person of Warfield, the Enlightenment had arrived at Princeton.

Warfield was not a scholastic, though Dabney was; nor was War-field's view of Scripture derived from the scholastics. It resulted instead from attempting to construct an apologetic that offered the kind of certainty that the Westminster Confession actually offered the scholastics in their day. How he actually succeeded is well assessed by George Marsden, who analyzed how Christianity's embrace of science in the commonsense era of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not prove to work to their advantage in the twentieth:

> Rather than challenging modern science's first principles, they came to be among the chief defenders of these principles. They were entirely confident that objective scientific inquiry could only confirm Christian truth.… {90} The Christian community, having thoroughly trusted science and the scientific method, had welcomed them, even parading them as their staunchest friends. So,... this superficial accommodation left them with no defenses when the celebrated ally proved to be a heavily armed foe.…
>
> Biblical criticism turned the fire power of such scientific historical explanation point-blank on the origins of Hebrew religion and the Bible itself. With awesome swiftness the edifice built by the method of addition that had worked so well for Christians in accommodating Christianity to the first scientific revolution had been demolished by the second.[87]

87. George Marsden, "The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia," in Alvin Planting and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality*: *Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 223.

Eventually, it became a commonplace among Reformed academics that it was dishonest and unworkable to construct a wall between lower criticism and higher criticism. As Harry Boer observes: "In view of the history of higher and lower criticism in the past one hundred years there is profound irony in the relationship in which these two disciplines are regarded in the Church. Whereas higher criticism has a bad name in large parts of the Church, lower criticism has an eminently favorable name. Both kinds of criticism are governed by methods that, as we have noted, have an identical basic rational, scientific approach to their specific task.... The two forms of criticism are so interrelated and basic in the study of the Bible that it is impossible to use the one properly without acknowledging the legitmacy and necessity of the other." Harry R. Boer, *The Bible and Higher Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 20, 18.

Edward F. Hills Returns to the Scholastic Approach

Text Criticism Since Warfield

Theodore P. Letis

In spite of Warfield's great confidence in Westcott and Hort's text, it had several critics in Great Britain and elsewhere,[1] and the first substantial criticism in America was an essay that appeared in *Bibliotheca Sacra* in 1921, the year Warfield died.[2]

An earlier work, however, one which for the first time provided a comprehensive scrutiny and comparison of Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, was Herman C. Hoskier's *Codex B and Its Allies*.[3] In his review of Hoskier's massive collation data,[4] Warfield admits to not covering the material in an exhaustive reading—no small

1. George Salmon, *Some Thoughts on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London: John Murray, 1897); Thomas Rawson Birks, *Essay on the Right Estimation of Manuscript Evidence in the Text of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1878); Frederick Charles Cook, *The Revised Version of the First Three Gospels* (London: Murray, 1882); J. Rendel Harris, *Four Lectures on the Western Text* (London, 1894); Burgon, *Revision Revised*; Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction*; Edward Miller, *A Guide to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London: George Bell, 1886); J. P. P. Martin, *Introduction à la Critique textuelle du Nouveau Testament*, *Partie théorique*, Leçons professées à l'Ecole supérieure de theologie de Paris, 1882–83, *Partie pratique*, toms. 1–5 (Paris: 1884–86); J. G. Heisch, *Thoughts on the Principles of Textual Criticism* (London: William Hunt, 1892); P. M. Barnard, "Text of the Gospels," in *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, vol. 2, ed. James Hastings.

2. William Wallace Everts, "The Westcott and Hort Text Under Fire," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 78 (1921): 23–36.

3. Herman C. Hoskier, *Codex B and Its Allies*: *A Study and an Indictment*, 2 vols. (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1914).

4. Benjamin B. Warfield, review of *Codex B and Its Allies*: *A Study and an Indictment*, by Herman C. Hoskier, in *Princeton Theological Review* 13 (1915): 289–92.

task. Hence, rather than respond to Hoskier in an extensive fashion, Warfield opted to refer to an earlier reviewer's opinion[5] that Hoskier should stick to his collations, and not try to interpret them as well. Warfield admits that Hoskier "knows the documents as few living men know them"[6] by "spar[ing] no pains in ascertaining their affinities and history through the medium of minute comparisons." Hence, Warfield both "marvels" at and "admires" the "minuteness and searchingness of his inquisition" and "the diligence with which it [the data] has been collected, the skill with which it has been presented, and the acuteness of the management of the argument." But—since Hoskier is the last living protégé of John William Burgon—Warfield

> still does not think the main lines of Dr. Hort's construction of the history of the text, or the general form of the text as he reconstructed it... will require serious modification as a result of Mr. Hoskier's very instructive investigations into the character of codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.[7]

Warfield never really answered Hoskier's complaint that the poor character of both manuscripts and the over 3,000 real differences between them in the gospels alone undermined Hort's notion of a "neutral" text. Though Warfield's confidence in Westcott and Hort's judgment was not shaken, he did admit that Vaticanus was produced in Egypt, contrary to their opinion,[8] but he dogmatically denied that it had been "constructed" (unlike nearly all critics today, who tend to think all text types are "constructed").[9]

Since Warfield regarded Westcott and Hort as God's instruments providentially employed to restore the text according to

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5. Alexander Souter, review of *Concerning the Genesis of the Versions of the New Testament*, by Herman C. Hoskier, in *Journal for Theological Studies* 13 (1912): 120–22.

6. Including Westcott and Hort, neither of whom personally collated either Vaticanus or Sinaiticus.

7. Warfield, review of *Codex B and Its Allies*, 290. Warfield's response was considerably less than Hoskier's demand for "a categorical answer count by count to my indictment of *B*," Hoskier, *Codex B and Its Allies*, ii.

8. Westcott and Hort felt it came from somewhere in the West, probably Rome.

9. Cf. Leo Vanganay, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, trans. B. V. Miller (London: Sands, 1937), 175.

scientific principles, he logically regarded their standard as the modern "*textus receptus.*" {98} He resisted data that would undermine their standard,[10] just as dogmatically as he felt Burgon and his school did in upholding the "old" Textus Receptus.

As early as 1903 Marvin Vincent warned that "there is some danger of Westcott and Hort's text coming to be regarded as a second *textus receptus.*"[11] He felt this would be regrettable since, already, several aspects of their underlying theory had now been abandoned:

> Their theory of the double recension of the text in the middle of the third century, their genealogical nomenclature, and their too exclusive reliance upon the testimony of [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus] are alike the subjects of incisive criticism.[12]

Burgon had raised all these points in 1883. Even though the Textus Receptus would no longer be followed as a standard, neither could Westcott and Hort's sanguine view that they had restored "the New Testament in the original Greek." The critics were now adrift, rudderless.

An early departure from Westcott and Hort's Neutral Text was the new interest in the Western text.[13] Then B. F. Streeter posited a new "Caesarean text," briefly thought to be older than the Alexandrian.[14]

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10. Hence, Kirsopp Lake warned that "there was a danger of the use of Westcott and Hort becoming a cult," *The Text of the New Testament*, 16th ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1959), 75.

11. Vincent, *History of Textual Criticism*, 175.

12. *Ibid.*, 176.

13. E.g. Harris, *Codex Bezae*; Harris, *Four Lectures*; Adalbert Merx, *Die vier kanonischen Evangelien nach ihrem altesten bekannten Text* (Berlin, 1902, 1905, 1911); Albert C. Clark, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Oxford, 1933); A. F. J. Klijn, *A Survey of the Researches into the Western Text of the Gospel and Acts* (Utrecht, 1949; Leiden, 1969); James Hardy Ropes, "The Text of Acts," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, 5 vols., ed. F. J. Foakes Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, pt. 1, vol. 3 (London, 1926); W. H. P. Hatch, *The "Western" Text of the Gospels* (Evanston, IL: 1937).

14. See B. F. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (London, 1924); Kirsopp Lake, "The Caesarean Text of the Gospel of Mark," *Harvard Theological Review* 21 (1928): 207–404; Kirsopp and Sylvia Lake, *Family 13*; R. V. G. Tasker, "The Readings of the Chester Beatty Papyrus in the Gospel of St. John," *Journal for Theological Studies* 36 (1935): 387–91; Tasker, "The Quotations from the Synoptic Gospels in Origen's Exhortation to Martyrdom," *Journal for*

Soon there was total fragmentation, a loss of consensus such as had existed in Westcott and Hort. This was precipitated partly by the discovery of the third and fourth century papyri,[15] which ironically contained readings that Westcott and Hort said were created in the fourth century and found in the mass of *later* manuscripts. G. Zuntz noted this surprise with some interest, but assured his readers that while "a number of Byzantine readings, most of them genuine, which previously were discarded as 'late,' are anticipated by p^{46}…we are not going to resume the hopeless flight of Dean Burgon."[16] The hope of recovering an original autographic text was abandoned altogether by most; it was felt that the text of the New Testament was probably the result of a "process." Hence, form criticism—redaction criticism—and source criticism— were all now seen as part of text critical concerns:

> More important is the personal discovery of the close connexion between the text and the history of the ancient church in the harmonization of parallel readings, the influence of the Old Testament and liturgical formulae upon the New Testament, and the manner in which devotion and doctrine have reacted upon its form.[17] {99}

Theological Studies 36 (1935): 60–64; Tasker, "The Text of the Fourth Gospel Used by Origin in His Commentary on John," *Journal for Theological Studies* 37 (1936): 146–55; Tasker, "The Chester Beatty Papyrus and the Caesarean Text of Luke," *Harvard Theological Review* 29 (1936): 345–42; Tasker, "The Text of St. Matthew Used by Origen in His Commentary on St. Matthew," *Journal for Theological Studies* 38 (1937): 60–64; Gunther Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*: *A Disquisition upon the Corpus Paulinum* (London, 1953); Hills, "Harmonization"; Hills, "Interrelationship"; Bruce Manning Metzger, "The Caesarean Text of the Gospels," in *Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Leiden, 1963).

15. H. G. Kenyon, *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri* (London, 1933–36); A. F. J. Klijn, "Papyrus Bodmer II (John 1–14) and the Text of Egypt," *New Testament Studies* 3 (1957): 327–34; Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*; Ernest Cadman Colwell, "Method in Evaluating Scribal Habits: A Study of p45, p46, p75," in *Studies in Methodology in Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Leiden, 1965); Aland, "The Significance of the Papyri."

16. Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*, 55. Edward Hills would be the first New Testament text critic in the twentieth century of maintain that such evidence did, in fact, call for a revival of the views of Burgon. See Bruce Manning Metzger, "The Lucianic Recension of the Greek Bible," in *Chapters in the History of New Testament Textual Criticism*, 38n3.

17. Vincent Taylor, *The Text of the New Testament*: *A Short Introduction* (London, 1961), viii.

The question of how doctrine influences the transmission of the text was one more issue Westcott and Hort ducked and has since produced a large, still-growing literature.[18]

So the method that was finally arrived at was "eclecticism," of which there are two schools.[19] Both use primarily internal criteria to determine the text, far removed from the safe, "objective," and factual method Warfield felt was the standard in his day.

Some have interpreted this as an impasse.[20] Others fear that

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18. See Harris, *Codex Bezae*; Kirsopp Lake, *The Influence of Textual Criticism on the Exegesis of the New Testament* (Oxford, 1904); R. B. Tollington, *Clement of Alexandria*, 2 vols. (London, 1914); F. C. Conybeare, *Myth, Magic and Morals: A Study of Christian Origins* (London, 1925); Donald W. Riddle, "Textual Criticism as a Historical Discipline," *Harvard Theological Review* 18 (1936): 220–34; Eric Lane Titus, *The Motivation of Changes Made in the New Testament Text by Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria: A Study in the Origin of New Testament Variation* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1945); C. S. C. Williams, *Alterations to the Text of the Synoptic Gospels and Acts* (Oxford, 1951); E. W. Saunders, "Studies in Doctrinal Influences on the Byzantine Text of the Gospels," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 71 (1952): 85–92; Leon E. Wright, *Alterations of the Words of Jesus as Quoted in the Literature of the Second Century* (Cambridge, MA: 1952); K. W. Clark, "Textual Criticism and Doctrine," in *Studia Paulina in Honorem Johannis de Zwaan* (Haarlem, 1953); K. W. Clark, "The Theological Relevance of Textual Variation in Current Criticism of the Greek New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85 (1966): 1–16; M. R. Pelt, "Textual Variation in Relation to Theological Interpretation in the New Testament" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1966); Epp, *Theological Tendency*; Epp, "The Ascension"; John William Steward, "Doctrinal Influence upon the New Testament Text of Clement of Alexandria" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1966); G. E. Rice, "The Alteration of Luke's Tradition by the Textual Variants in Codex Bezae" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1974); Howard Eshbaugh, "Theological Variants in the Western Text of the Pauline Corpus" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1975); Howard Eshbaugh, "Textual Variants and Theology: A Study of the Galatians Text of Papyrus 46," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 3 (1979): 60–72; Alexander Globe, "Some Doctrinal Variants in Matthew 1 and Luke 2, and the Authority of the Neutral Text," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 42 (1980): 52–72; E. Earle Ellis, "The Silenced Wives of Corinth (1 Cor. 14:34–5)," in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis* (Oxford: Clarion, 1981). For additional sources see Epp, *Theological Tendency*, 2n1.

19. See Gordon D. Fee, "Rigorous or Reasoned Eclecticism—Which?" in *Studies in New Testament Language and Text* (Leiden, 1976), and J. K. Elliott, "Rational Criticism and the Text of the New Testament," *Theology* 75 (1972): 338–43.

20. See Eldon J. Epp, "The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974): 386–414; Epp, "Eclectic Method"; Epp, "New Testament Textual Criticism in America"; Epp, "A Continuing Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism?" *Harvard Theological*

while Westcott and Hort never attained the long-standing status of a new Textus Receptus, the current text used by most today, Nestle-Aland, has certainly achieved this.[21]

M. M. Parvis's Assessment of the Discipline's Limitations

In an engaging essay, "The Goals of New Testament Textual Studies," M. M. Parvis assesses the apparent disarray of the discipline, precipitated in part for some by the lost notion of attaining to an original.[22] Parvis highlighted the fact that as long as men like Burgon truly believed in an inspired "original," they possessed a high degree of assurance that such a text was in their reach. Parvis bluntly admitted, however,

> That belief is no longer one that is generally accepted by most of us. And once we have given up that belief, we are often times hard pressed to explain just why we continue our search for the original text.[23]

He also acknowledged that since Westcott and Hort, fifteen editions of the Greek New Testament had been published, all differing from one another. Some of them were Roman Catholic, some were Protestant, reflecting their respective theologies while solemnly claiming to be the "original text." This led him to suggest that perhaps Gospel accounts such as Matthew resulted from "a process rather than a single act," gradually taking shape "in the life of the church, rather than that it suddenly emerged full blown from the head of the author," asking:

Is it not possible that there may have been a whole series of

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Review 73 (1980): 131–51; cf. Kurt Aland, "The Twentieth Century Interlude in New Testament Textual Criticism," in *Text and Interpretation*, ed. Ernest Best and Robert McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

21. See F. Neirynck, "The Synoptic Gospels According to the New Textus Receptus," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 52 (1976): 363–79; Ian A. Moir, "Can We Risk Another 'Textus Receptus'?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 (1981), 614–18; H.-W. Bartsch, "Ein neuer Textus Receptus für das griechische Neue Testament?" *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981): 585–92. Cf. Kurt Aland, "Ein neuer Textus Receptus für das griechische Neue Testament?" *New Testament Studies* 28 (1982): 145–54.

22. Merrill M. Parvis, "The Goals of New Testament Textual Studies," in *Studia Evangelica*, vol. 6, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingston (Berlin, 1973).

23. *Ibid.*, 393.

> Matthews, a whole series of gradually approximating collections of the lectionary materials.…
>
> There is, I believe, the possibility that there may never have existed any one original text of Matthew, that there never was any one point in time which marked the composition of the book as a book, that there never was any one autograph from which all of the later tradition descends.[24] {100}

Such open-ended questions were simply the result of not being able to arrive at one textual theory that would lend itself to an agreed-upon "original text." Parvis was no mere cynic or an outsider speculating on an unproductive discipline, rather he stood in the forefront of the discipline when he posed his unsettling questions.[25]

He acknowledged that "the sort of textual studies which we have been considering constitute not so much text criticism, as that term is commonly understood, as they do text history."[26] He acknowledged that if in fact no original emerges clearly from the data, we may be dependent on the work of the church catholic in the early ages of development, when she was "gradually deciding among these readings and selecting one of them to be incorporated into her scriptures."[27] This was Burgon's position, seventy years earlier, with one modification: Burgon argued that "the traditional text" was that recognized by the church and hence was the "original" text, but Parvis will only grant that while "the *textus receptus* is the text of the church" produced "by the church and her fathers over a period of more than a thousand years," it "is not *the* 'true' text of the New Testament" because he feels that no one such entity probably ever existed. Yet the Textus Receptus "was the scripture of many centuries of the church's life. It cannot today displace our so-called critical texts, but it is worthy of a place, a very special

24. *Ibid.*, 398.

25. Parvis, along with Colwell and Wikgren, were responsible for the plans that led to the International New Testament Project. See Merrill L. Parvis, "The International Project to Establish a New Critical Apparatus of the Greek New Testament," *Crosier Quarterly* 27 (1950): 301–8.

26. Parvis, "The Goals," 406.

27. *Ibid.*, 406–7.

place, beside them."[28]

Four years after this was published, another, younger text critic, Edward Freer Hills, would confirm that an original text could never be reconstructed by the Enlightenment method. He would return in a more formal way both to Burgon and to the Reformed creedal statements regarding the divine sanction historically afforded by the Reformation churches to the "traditional text."

Edward Freer Hills (1912–81)

Hills's Background

Edward Freer Hills (1912–81) was born on May 16, 1912, in Oak Park, Illinois, to Edward Rowland Hills, a successful estates lawyer, and Mary Walker Moore. Her father, Nathan Grier Moore, was also a lawyer, for such clients as the Art Institute of Chicago and the Northwestern Railroad.[29] One of Nathan Moore's neighbors in Oak Park was Frank Lloyd Wright, who designed and built two homes for him.

Hills's paternal grandfather, Dr. Oscar A. Hills,[30] a graduate of Western Seminary (1862), became a director of the seminary in 1878, the same year Warfield arrived, and a trustee of Wooster College in 1885. He {101} pastored First Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, Ohio (1865–78), First Presbyterian Church, Santa Barbara, California (1881–82), and was supply at First Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, California (1882–83). He also authored several books.[31] All of Oscar Hills's children attended Wooster

28. *Ibid.* Of interest here is the fact that Parvis joined the Roman Catholic Church two years before his death, under the influence of his son, Paul Parvis, a priest in the order of the Blackfriars. His son relates that this essay "came, in a sense, from a directed study which I did with him in my last year at Candler. A number of the arguments and the actual wording of, I suppose, a half of the paper were mine, but the impetus was his." Letter from Paul Parvis to the author, August 30, 1986.

29. Interview with Grier Hills, December 9, 1984. All of the following biographical material, unless designated otherwise, is from this interview.

30. Oscar Hills is listed in *Who Was Who in America*, vol. 3, 1960, and *Ohio Authors and Their Books* (Cleveland, 1962).

31. *Companion Character: A Series of Studies in Bible Biography* (New York, 1883); *Carmina Subsecvia: Songs from Near and Far* (New York, 1900); *New Shafts in the Old Mine: An Exposition of Some Classic Passages of Holy*

College.

As a young man Edward F. Hills showed a great interest in the Bible, being strongly influenced by a "very evangelical" Sunday school teacher.

Hills devoured such works as Matthew Henry's *Commentaries*, reading them over and over again; he knew all the kings of Israel "just like a person from the United Kingdom knows all of the kings of England"; he also knew all the battles from the Old Testament.

As a youngster his father taught all the children the Lord's Prayer and the Shorter Catechism, and required that other portions of Scripture be memorized as well while sitting quietly in a chair.

His father wrote poetry, and his library of literary classics in glass-covered bookcases reached to the ceiling. If his father arrived home in the evening and found the children "fooling around and making a ruckus he would say 'Go get yourself a book,' and that was the way things were settled."

Hills's brother recalls that Edward "didn't take part in too many social activities" though he was quite athletic, lifting weights, playing high school football, jogging at night or early morning, even after going off to seminary. He was on the crew team at Yale.

Hills was argumentative and analytical: his father wanted him to be a lawyer. Edward felt a personal obligation to oversee the spiritual condition of the family; he developed an apologetic element to his faith, always looking for

> a very consistent chain or network... so that unbelief would not take hold of him or anyone else in our family and he had a thought for each one of us afraid that we would get off on the wrong track.

His resolute convictions eventually led to a falling out with Nathan Moore (a vice-moderator of the Presbyterian Church) once Princeton was reorganized and Westminster was formed because Hills sided with Machen in his dispute.

Scripture (Philadelphia, 1906); *The Testimony of the Witnesses: A Devotional and Homiletical Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles* (New York, 1913); *Familiar Talks on Sermon Building* (New York, 1918).

Hills's Undergraduate Career

Hills graduated with distinction from Oak Park High School, entering Yale as a classics major in 1930. F. S. C. Northrop, Hills's philosophy professor at Yale, assessed him as {102}

> an outstanding student in philosophy, very serious minded and an excellent person. He was very well balanced, thoroughly adjusted socially, and cultivated with respect to his sentiments and tastes.[32]

Hills was a scholar of the second rank in his freshman and sophomore years, and attained the first rank his junior year.[33] As a junior he also won three out of five prizes in Latin and Greek: the John W. Corwith Memorial Scholarship Prize for excellence in Latin; and first prize in the annual Lucius F. Robinson Latin Award for Special Proficiency in Latin; and he shared the Noyes Cutter Prize in Greek.[34]

He graduated *summa cum laude* and delivered the annual "Ivy Ode" oration on graduate day (a commencement that saw Delano Roosevelt receive an honorary doctorate).[35] He was also elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

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32. Letter from F. S. C. Northrop to Harvard Divinity School (addressed to Miss Helen Prescott), October 4, 1943, found in Hills's file at Harvard.

33. Second rank, general average of 85–89; first rank, 90 or above, Yale catalogue, 1930-31.

34. *Yale Alumni Weekly*, July 6, 1934.

35. The ode is as follows:

Natus Alcmenes iteri paratus
Ante doctori seniori aquosa
Oscula stanti puerum monenti
Ingerit ore.
Lacrimis nostris etiam notamus
Moenia haec splendentia, saxa cara;
Liberis quae dulcia sunt, manebunt,
Optima mater.
Semper aeternumque domus iuventae
Plena doctrinae studiisque clara,
Artibus devota, per omne saeclum
Incluta restet.
Mox ferant connubia feta prolem
Filios omnes tibi dedicamus;
Dulciorem nam videt divus usquam
Phoebus viator.

History of the *Class of Nineteen Thirty-Four*, Yale College, 1934.

Hills's Relationship with Machen

It was while at Yale that he established a relationship with J. Gresham Machen. The split with Princeton had occurred while Hills was still in high school; at Yale he immediately aligned himself with an Orthodox Presbyterian church and invited Machen to come to Yale to speak. His enthusiasm for Machen was immense.

For example, Edward and his brother Grier were rooming at the YMCA while Edward was taking graduate courses at the divinity school when their parents came for a visit. Grier overheard them trying to persuade Edward to attend Princeton Seminary, but Edward was already determined to sit under Machen at Westminster. As Grier recalls:

> I think what they were trying to get him to do was to go to Princeton Seminary; and they were very much alarmed when he said that he wanted to go to Westminster Seminary; and his reply was evidently to something they had said, I just heard his reply, as they were rather soft-spoken, but his reply was quite vociferous and he said, quoting from Philippians, "There are many contentions but Christ is preached," and that was his reply to my folks and so the next year he enrolled in Westminster Seminary.

Grier was very much influenced by his elder brother, Edward; after he graduated from Yale, he followed him into Westminster.

Edward even dreamed of uniting himself, Grier, and his other younger brother, Sidney, in an effort to influence the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. to return to her historic, orthodox roots. But in his second year at Yale as an undergraduate, Sidney parted company with Edward, later attending McCormick Seminary in 1944 and studying under W. F. Albright at Johns {103} Hopkins University, earning his Ph.D. in 1954. He then became professor of Old Testament at Pittsburgh Seminary (formerly, Western Seminary) from 1954 to 1972. He recalls his relationship with Edward:

> As far as his academic views are concerned I parted company with him in my second year in college. Since then I never talked to him seriously about his views and never corresponded with him. We had very little in common in these matters....[36]

> ... [m]y relation with Edward was a difficult one. I was five years

36. Letter, Sidney O. Hills to the author, June 25, 1986.

younger... and did not know him well as a boy.... I came under his influence when I was a senior in high school in 1934–35. From that time through my first two years at Yale we often talked about the Bible and theology. He was now (1935) starting at Westminster and was an ardent supporter of Dr. Machen. He was expounding the same views he later elaborated in his books. He dominated me with his logic and his great learning.

However, my views began to change drastically and Edward's orthodoxy no longer seemed convincing. From then on I ceased to talk with him seriously. We were occasionally thrown together and I listened politely and with respect but I would not reply. And so it continued to the end. My whole view of the authority of the Bible and its proper interpretation came to be so different from his that discussion was impossible.

However, I always found Edward fascinating and impressive. His elephant-like memory for details astonished me as it did all his family and friends. His wit and humor always made him interesting to be with. He had real affection for his parents, for his wife and children, and many others I am sure. He took a real interest in me hoping for a while that I would follow in his footsteps. I am sorry that was not possible.

His prowess with language was considerable. In high school he was famous for his humorous essay "The Music Lesson" published in the school literary magazine.... He displays here a most astonishing vocabulary for a high school student, using it here for humorous effect....

He had other qualities that perhaps were not so attractive. He was very stubborn and belligerent, famous for his battles on the school grounds. He was very difficult to engage in a real dialogue. And yet I like to remember him as a vigorous and faithful defender of a certain point of view which he considered to be sacred. He held that view with amazing consistency throughout his life at great cost to himself.[37]

Machen may have influenced Hills's theological consistency. He saw Machen as a champion who had risked all to protest the drift that ultimately reorganized Princeton and founded Westminster.

37. Letter, Sidney O. Hills to the author, October 11, 1982.

Like Machen, Hills had established himself as a classicist,[38] the better to join in the fray. Siding with Machen, he hoped to make his own contribution to {104} the new coalition. In his letter of application to Westminster he expressed himself to Machen in the following terms:

> I might mention a few views that I have acquired during the last several years that I have spent here [at Yale], of course it goes without saying that any religion that is to claim adherents with whom I wish to number myself must have a rational basis, a collection of irrational, fanatics is one of the worst gathering places for sin that I know of—Well, to go on, Christianity for me must be rational and after some struggle I have come to the view that it is. I would like to win people on the same basis. To me at the present time there seems to be two provinces which the devil has made into the intellectual fortresses of unbelief into which the average infidel runs for shelter. If these can be demolished of course it [is] too much to expect him to believe but at least he is driven to stick his head in the sand like the ostrich which is the more absurd posture and surely must afford less comfort by far than his former complacent ensconcement in what we fondly imagined to have been a fortress. The first of these fields is one in which the main battle will always continue. But in recent years however an ambush planted in our rear threatens to annihilate us. It is hard to tell whether Scylla is more fearsome than Charybdis. I would like to fight. I would like to fight on both sides, that is, run from front to rear and front again. Your seminary is one of the few that is doing any fighting. That is why I am applying for admission. In most seminaries the champions are so benumbed by the hostile blows as almost to go comatose completely, the greater part have cracked under the strain and run daft around the field of battle. Uncle Sam ought to padlock these. The rest ought never to have left the house as incapables, unable to live any where without a respirator to say nothing of battle. Well I have been rattling on in a facetious vein. It is only because I know you already and look upon this as a personal letter. Now these fields of endeavor concerning which I have been commenting upon at length, carried away by my attempts at informal presentation, I find that I have treated with such easy familiarity as not to name. Which may seem to you

38. Machen was a classics major at Johns Hopkins University and graduated valedictorian and like Hills was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1901. See C. Allyn Russell, *Voices of American Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia, 1976), 136, and Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*.

> singular. To be specific the first province is that of New Testament criticism. The historical problems of the New Testament. This I would like to make my life study if I am found capable. The second is that which is formed by the problems which arise from the first chapters of Genesis including the refutation of evolution. These as I said before are the two fulcrums upon which the average man leans his load of unbelief. Knock these out and—well no more metaphors—but any way one ought to make converts.[39]

Here we see the vigor and enthusiasm of a young Yale classicist, an honors graduate like Machen, offering to throw his laurels at the feet of the man he would like to win as a mentor. Such single-mindedness of purpose, evident to everyone who knew Edward Hills, resulted in his {105} treating these two subjects of New Testament text criticism and the theory of evolution side by side in his *Believing Bible Study* (1967).

In an unpublished memoir Hills wrote that his interest in the subject of New Testament text criticism was precipitated by the New Testament commentaries of Charles Hodge, and by C. R. Gregory's introduction to the subject:

> I have been interested in the problem of New Testament textual criticism since my high school days in the 1920s. At that time I began to read the commentaries of Charles Hodge, books that were part of my Presbyterian heritage. I noticed that Hodge would sometimes mention variant readings, mostly, however, just to show that he was knowledgeable, for he rarely departed from "the common text" (textus receptus) and "our English version" (King James). Even so my curiosity was roused, so that in 1931, when I was a sophomore at Yale University, I took down C. R. Gregory's *Canon and Text of the N.T.* from a library shelf and began to read. I was dismayed at the large number of verses that, according to Gregory and his teachers Westcott and Hort, must be rejected from the Word of God. Nor was I much comforted by Gregory's assurance that the necessary damage had been done and the rest of the text had been placed on an unassailable basis. How could I be sure of this? It seemed to me that the only way to gain assurance on this point was to go to Westminster Seminary and study the question under the tutelage of Dr. Machen, who preached in New Haven rather frequently in those days, talking to Yale students at

39. Letter, Edward F. Hills to J. Gresham Machen, April 11, 1935, found in Hills's file in the registrar's office, Westminster Theological Seminary.

least twice.[40]

Clearly Machen could not have been much help to Hills, since there is no evidence Machen ever abandoned the position of B. B. Warfield, nor spent any time mastering the subject, since his published works are exegetical, historical, or popular,[41] whereas Warfield had mastered both the data as well as the practice of New Testament text criticism.[42] But neither Machen nor anyone else at Westminster was any sort of expert in the field.

Several years after Hills graduated from Westminster he earned his doctorate in New Testament text criticism from Harvard. His first journal article, based on his dissertation, appeared in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. He sent a copy to Ned Stonehouse, who had taught New Testament at Westminster while Hills was there.[43] Stonehouse answered in part:

> When I received your letter of August 9th and the reprint of your article in *JBL*, I glanced through it rather hastily, hoping that I would soon be able to read it carefully. You had requested some critique of your theses, and I was clear that nothing constructive would develop unless I took more time {106} to evaluate it. I now have read it with some care, and though I fear that I am not in a position to be of any particular help in the development of your studies, I at least want you to know that I am delighted at the work

40. Unpublished memoir by Edward F. Hills (undated) sent to the author with a cover letter dated November 14, 1981; Hills died the following month.

41. For a bibliography of Machen's works see Richard Gamble and Charles Dennison, eds., *Pressing toward the Mark* (forthcoming).

42. See Warfield's excellent yearly updates on text critical developments as they appear in *Independent*: "New Testament Textual Criticism in 1883," 36 (1884): 520; "New Testament Textual Criticism in 1885," 38 (1886), 103; "New Testament Textual Criticism in 1886," 39 (1887): 75–76, 107–8; "New Testament Textual Criticism in 1887," 40 (1888): 78–79, 111–12.

43. Hills wrote Stonehouse on August 9, 1947. Receiving no answer, in late October he complained in a letter to Robert Marsden, then General Secretary of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (he was also the father of George Marsden, formerly professor of history at Calvin College but now at Duke University). Marsden wrote Stonehouse on October 22, 1947: "Ed Hills mentioned that he sent you his article on textual criticism weeks ago asking your opinion and criticism of it. He says you haven't even acknowledged its receipt. Can't you find some nice things to say about it? His address is Dana College, Blair, Neb. Bob." Letter in Ned Stonehouse papers, Westminster Theological Seminary Library, Philadelphia, PA.

> you have done, and hope that you may be stimulated to further solid work in this field.
>
> Although Westminster has stressed the significance of textual criticism far more than appears to be true of conservative schools generally, I am constantly seeking to impress upon the students in my courses the basic character of this discipline, I fear that we have done little or nothing that would actually contribute to the advancement of this phase of biblical studies.[44]

Clearly, the student had surpassed the teacher, who admitted that no one from Westminster was contributing much to the discipline.[45]

Hills at Westminster

Westcott and Hort were uncritically accepted at Westminster as a kind of new Textus Receptus, following the lead of the last great Reformed text critic, B. B. Warfield. Hills relates that when he was a student under Stonehouse,

> I found that the first day or so was mainly devoted to praising Dr. B. B. Warfield. He was lauded for being among the first to recognize the "epoch making" importance of the theory of Westcott and Hort and for establishing the Westcott and Hort tradition at Princeton Seminary, a tradition which was now being faithfully perpetuated at Westminster Seminary....
>
> I noticed another thing. Almost as much time was spent in disparging Dean Burgon as in praising Dr. Warfield. This again aroused my curiosity. Who was this Dean Burgon?[46]

Westminster, then, inadvertently introduced Hills to Burgon!

We know from one of Hills's classmates at Westminster, H. Evan Runner (later a professor at Calvin Seminary), that Hills was airing this issue at least with other students, if not with the professors as well.

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44. Letter, Ned Stonehouse to Edward F. Hills, October 24, 1947, the Ned Stonehouse papers, Westminster Theological Seminary Library.

45. Hills is the only graduate from Westminster, to my knowledge, ever to earn a doctorate in the subject of N.T. text criticism, and certainly the first to be published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature.*

46. Edward F. Hills, unpublished memoir in the author's possession, 1981.

> I knew him at Westminster Theo. Seminary in the late 1930s. I did know him somewhat; we had some talks, also about the *textus receptus*. But Hills was aloof, not in an arrogant way, but as coming from a different background from most of his fellow students at Westminster and as a Yale man.[47]

If Hills ever broached the topic with Machen[48] in a formal manner he was probably politely listened to at best. It was no proper topic for a young seminary student, whose youthful enthusiasm was pitting him against the experts. {107} But just before he arrived at Westminster, Hills attempted to advise Machen on the publishing of a journal and a magazine to popularize their efforts:

> Edward Freer Hills
> 313 Forest Ave.
> Oak Park, Illinois
>
> Aug. 26.
> Dear Dr. Machen
>
> Pardon me if I seem to intrude myself in any way or burden you with any gratuitous advice, but it has so turned out that it may actually [be] my duty to unburden myself in regard to this new paper which I hear that you and your friends are about to launch. And I count myself, too, your friend and all the more because we have eaten together. As in ancient times so now that common meal ought to make us hospites or ξένοι.
>
> Mr. Long wrote to me a short time ago asking for a small sum of money to help him start a magazine. I did not send him any because in the first place I thought it would be too much of a task for one man but chiefly because I thought that Christianity Today could be reformed and would answer the purpose. I also said many other things which, with your permission, I am going to repeat to you presently. Mr. Long replied in a letter which was full of the most amazing information about Dr. Craig. I can hardly believe it. But this is nothing to the point. The point is that Mr. Long told me that

47. Letter, H. Evan Runner to the author, July 22, 1986.

48. Machen was aware of a popular attempt to critique Westcott and Hort. He owned a copy of Philip Mauro, *Which Version*: *Authorized or Revised?* (1924), now in the library of Westminster Theological Seminary. He seems not to have annotated it or otherwise written in it significantly (beyond his mere signature).

you were about to start a paper and might not be altogether put out by advice, even unsollicited [*sic*] advice, providing only that it should be good. And I am so confident that I say that I seem to myself to be offering excellent advice. If I delude myself, undeceive me.

In short it seems to me that you need two publications not one. If this seems a piece of wanton extravagance to have two papers where one would do, remember that there have already been two papers which you have been using Chr. Today and Board Bulletin. Then, too, it is not very clear what one might mean by this word "do." A man can "do" with one leg but he needs two. And just so your cause can "do" with one paper perhaps, but still you should have two papers for the following reasons.

In the first, it seems to me that what the world today needs most is news certainly, but not the news about men and affairs, but news about God. They need to know his commandment for them. They need to have shown to them how God that can not lie has not deceived men in his works nor in his written Word. I believe that it can not be successfully maintained that the bible says one thing and that any real fact of history or science says another. God does not say yea and nay, but all the promises of God are yea and amen. People should have this demonstrated to them in a real and gripping way. There is a great need, I think for a magazine, not a small newspaper, which will have several distinctive features that mark it off from all other publications and will increase its effectiveness. In the first place {108} it should be of decent size about three or four articles of a certain length, not just a few scattered paragraphs. Secondly it should be in regular magazine form like Harpers or the Atlantic Monthly. By this I mean that the articles should run straight through until they are finished. None of this beginning at page one and then turning to page one hundred and two. When one has to hop about like this it is hard to sustain interest. And then, too, such a dismemberment disfigures the publication very much. Perhaps some of the subscribers would like to bind their copies. In that case they would be very much inconvenienced [*sic*] if the articles were scattered all over. Also the publication should be run on a certain plan and not in the haphazard manner in which most of our modern church magazines seem to be managed. The reason seems to be that the whole magazine is in the hands of the editor. Everyone leaves the job to him and often he has a hard time getting articles. He has no planned program and no source

to supply him with material. His paper is hodge podge sometimes with good articles and sometimes not so good with no unity to keep them together. To avoid this I should think that you would want to make the entire faculty of Westminster Seminary associate editors. Have them meet at the beginning of the year and lay out a scedule [*sic*] of what they want especially to teach during that year and then assign the part that each one is to play in the years [*sic*] program according to his specialty and taking into account any other private consideration or preference. In this way the effect would be a unified whole and the task of writing would be lightened if everything were planned in advance. Make the coming publication a teaching organ of Westminster Seminary. If every professor would put in writing the information he gives orally to his classes, think how widely his influence would reach and think how many people would be grateful to him. In short I think there is need of a magazine of the type and of the calibre and scholastic standing of the old Princeton Theological Review, but differing from the Review in that while the one appealed almost exclusively to theologians, this should be for laymen and intelligent people who perhaps are outside the Church even but are fair minded enough to read both sides of a question. Employ as little technical language as possible. I think that it is not possible to combine great clearness and intelligibility with thoroughgoing scholarship and even profundity. On the other hand when some of the more involved and technical language is stripped off, many an attempt of this sort begins to show up more plainly as a mere "stuffed shirt." Technical language is often like a tight garter stopping the circulation and not an aid to thinking.

Well to get back to point, I say that such a magazine ought to contain little else but teaching and instructive articles in it. All other articles and items such as news of the church[,] editorials on church topics and policies, topics and comments drawn from the news of the day, letters and communications, childrens [*sic*] page ect [*sic*], all these things ought to be kept separate and to have their own proper vehicle. Certainly, we need a paper with news of the church today presented from a fitting and unprejudiced {109} standpoint. But do not attempt to combine it with this teaching magazine that I have been talking about. I will try to show why it is impossible to combine the two things successfully.

First it is unfitting that such a magazine should be mixed, I might say contaminated, by being bound up with a mere newspaper

[*sic*]. For there should be a dignity to the former which could not accrue to the latter however worthy that might be in its place. The one should be written in the style of the best theological works, the other in a more journalistic style. The duty of the one is to defend the faith and convert men, that of the other is to report on purely earthly affairs, merely to give a comparatively small group of people a bit of news about the situation in a particular organization, namely the Presby. Ch. U.S.A. I do not deprecate the importance of such a work; it is very necessary. But don't you think that the group that such a work could be carried on in [is] rather a select one in comparison with the whole population of the world? Is it proper that a newspaper limited as it is in scope and differing in style should be linked with a Theological Journal proper?

Secondly the difference between a paper and a journal make it almost impossible to combine them successfully. A paper should be of the ordinary news paper type with all the news to the front. If put in the back of a journal it is neglected. On the other hand if the matter which should go into a journal should be put into a newspaper the matter would be strung out all over, the paper could not be bound or kept in any permanent form and a great injustice would be done to the author who should have spent so much labor upon so transitory an object. So you can see that even from a practical angle a journal and a newspaper could not be combined.

Then, too, I hope that you will want to reach a wider class of people with your journal than you will be able to with your newspaper. There would be many people to whom you could sell a teaching journal who would not be in the Presby. Ch. U.S.A. at all and would not care for a newspaper. Then, too, news of such a kind may have a bitter taste in the mouths of some people. Why prejudice your message? Win people over to approve of your theory and they will agree with you in practice. If two disagree in theory they probably will in practical matters. It seems to me nevertheless possible and fitting to have in the back of the journal a detachable application blank for the news paper so that people have a chance to subscribe to both if they so desire. As to costs I do not think that two papers would [be] more expensive than one. Also a pure newspaper would not need to be so large. You could expand the board bulletin. In short I hope that you will put out two publications one a newspaper and the other a magazine in form like the Atlantic Monthly containing some such matter as has been suggested.

Excuse the liberty of my advising you. This idea seems so obvious to me that I am sure it has already occured [*sic*] to you. I merely want to show my interest in what I think to be a great forward step which will {110} spread the influence of Westminster Seminary. If some such magazine as this is founded you could count on me trying to get new subscriptions. I will see you quite soon I hope, for as you know I am planning to enter the Seminary this fall.

Yours truly
Edward F. Hills[49]

Machen responded cordially, and took Hills's sincere academic interest seriously enough to give a detailed reply.

September 3, 1935

Mr. Edward Freer Hills
513 Forest Avenue
Oak Park, Illinois

Dear Mr. Hills:

Your letter of August 26th addressed to me at Westminster Seminary, has just come into my hands. I am very greatly interested in it.

Since we are to meet so soon, I think it will be better for me to postpone any detailed answer to the considerations which you adduce until you come to Philadelphia. But even now I can say, in a preliminary way, that I quite agree with you that the ideal for us would be to have two papers, a theological journal with articles of some length, on the one hand, and a church paper on the other. I do not quite agree with you in the way in which you characterise the difference between these two. It does not seem to me that the paper would be distinguished from the theological journal as "containing news about me" as distinguished from "news about God." I do agree with you, however, in thinking that two publications are needed, and I agree with you in holding that the kind of articles that a theological journal will contain are different from the kind of articles that an effective church newspaper contains.

49. Letter, Edward Hills to J. Gresham Machen, August 26, 1935.

If we had the money and the time, it would he highly important for us to publish a theological journal of the kind that you have in mind. There is no theological journal anywhere today which quite takes the place of the PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW. The EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY of Edinburgh perhaps comes nearer than anything to doing so, but all the same it does not do so. But the experience of the PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL REVIEW was that such a journal takes a great deal of money. We simply have not the money at Westminster Seminary. If the money comes in it will be a different matter. There is, however, another difficulty. It is the difficulty that we of the Faculty are overworked. In addition to our academic duties, many of us have other duties of the most engrossing kind.

What I am getting at is that your ideal is a splended ideal. I believe that every member of the Faculty of Westminster Seminary would agree with you in holding that a journal very much of the kind that you suggest would be a splended thing. But I am afraid that we might all agree that it is not a practical thing just at the present moment. When it does become {111} a practical thing we shall rejoice with you in welcoming a further opportunity of Christian service.

The thing that I do like about your letter particularly is that you feel the need of a paper which shall engage in Christian apologetics and in the presentation of the system of truth that the Bible contains in a much more connected and extended way than is possible in a weekly or monthly church newspaper. That shows real insight on your part, and I join with you in hoping that the need may be met.

Meanwhile, the need of a newspaper which shall present the great issue in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and in other churches, is pressing. There can be no postponement whatever about some effort to satisfy that need. Moreover, I cannot agree with you in thinking that a paper providing such news is a paper that contains "news about men" as distinguished from "news about God." The distinction does not, it seems to me, hold. The Church Visible is the Church of the Living God, and the application of the teachings of the Bible in the lives of the men of the present day is a very sacred thing and quite necessary to everyone who believes that the Bible is true. But my impression is that your difference from me on that point is a difference of terminology rather than a difference of underlying meaning. Your letter certainly gives room

> for thought. I am grateful to you for writing it, and I am looking forward to the pleasure of talking with you about these matters when you come to the Seminary.
>
> Very sincerely yours,
>
> J. Gresham Machen[50]

Hills's suggestion that Westminster and her faculty publish journals, one to take the place of the old *Princeton Theological Review* and a more popular church oriented magazine, was prescient. He prophetically anticipated both the *Westminster Theological Journal*, first published in 1938, and *Christianity Today*,[51] which "Machen not only supported... very liberally with financial gifts but also was one of the principle contributors to its pages for more than five years."[52]

When Machen died on January 1, 1937,

> It was a great blow to Edward.... My feeling was that kind of pulled the rug out from under Edward and that he didn't really feel—now I don't know whether this should be on record or not—but I don't think he really felt that the rest of the faculty was up to Dr. Machen....[53]

Hills's Career at Columbia Seminary

Hills graduated from Westminster in the spring of the following year, with a Th.B.; in 1940 he applied to Columbia Theological Seminary, in Decatur, Georgia, to enter its Th.M. program. Before leaving for Columbia {112} he spent a year or so doing church planting work in Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, for the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

While a student at Columbia he took a church as stated supply, in the Presbyterian Church U.S. (the old Southern Presbyterian Church), and for a young pastor was given a difficult chore. As Rev. John R. Richardson, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Alexandria, Louisiana, wrote to the president of Columbia in

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50. Letter, Machen to Hills, September 3, 1935.

51. Not to be confused with another publication by the same name currently published in Wheaton, Illinois.

52. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen*, 462.

53. Interview with Grier Hills, December 9, 1984.

1941:

> My dear Dr. Richards:
>
> I am writing you in regard to Rev. Edward F. Hills. Mr. Hills served for a few months as stated supply at our church in De Ridder, Louisiana. Mr. Hills found and inherited a difficult situation. There was a flagrant case of immorality in the congregation. This had to be dealt with. With Christian courage he did so. Because of this fact it was impossible for him to remain in the congregation and the congregation to be unified. It is for this reason that he was unable to stay.
>
> I am sure with your experience in the ministry that you are aware there are times when someone must vicarously suffer for a successor. This has been the case with the situation at De Ridder. The man that succeeds Mr. Hills will find it a different situation at this time.
>
> From my observation Mr. Hills is a man of unusual ability and consecration. I would be doing him an injustice if I did not write you and give this explanation, because it was through no fault of his that this unpleasant experience arose.[54]

Hills only spent one year in residence at Columbia, and maintained a single-minded purpose: to write a thesis on inspiration. Manfred Gutzke, one of Hills's professors personally involved with this proposal, remembers him:

> I think maybe the most significant, maybe, or the impression I had of him as a whole as a student was that he was quite conscious of the fact that he was not primarily interested in the ordinary interests of the ordinary seminary student. He had special interests, and these special interests were doubtless what he was following through with—the interest that he had from the beginning in this special research work that he was doing. I would say that on the whole in the student body as a whole he was inconspicuous because the interests of the average student—he was way beyond the interests of the average student so far as his orientation was concerned and this is the impression that there is in my mind. I wasn't surprised when he left Columbia and went somewhere else because I figured that we were not, our faculty as a whole, did not particularly

54. Letter, John R. Richardson to McD. Richards, May 28, 1941, in Hills's file at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia.

> interest themselves in the things that he was interested in and so he came and got a certain amount of basic work done with us but I wasn't surprised when he left us and went somewhere {113} else because he came from somewhere else and was with us a while and then went.[55]

Hills's original topic was "The Development of the Doctrine of Inspiration of the Scriptures in the Christian Church"—but when he submitted his thesis it was turned down. So was a second thesis. Professors Kerr, Cartledge, and Gutzke had their reasons: his second attempt departed from his original topic, it did not meet the guidelines of the catalogue bulletin, and was in an unacceptable form. If he wanted to change the topic he was asked to do so formally, and his first chapter would have to be reviewed before he proceeded any further. An outline with bibliography was also required.[56]

Hills had not even been on campus for most of his year of residence so had not been working closely with his advisor. Gutzke recalls that: "What he had to say about the subject of inspiration was not authoritative enough and it would have required much more research than he had done. Not an easy topic."[57] And his final topic was "The Teaching of the Scriptures Concerning Slavery, the Attitude of the Church toward It, and Their Signficance for Present-Day Social Problems."

Hills chose this topic in part because

> [u]nbelievers often use the fact that the Scriptures do not condemn slavery as evil in itself as a weapon wherewith to assail their full and errorless inspiration, and it is only when we know what the teaching of the Scriptures is upon this point that we are able to show the charges brought against them to be groundless.[58]

This time his thesis was accepted—he was awarded his degree in

55. Interview with Manfred Gutzke, April 14, 1986.

56. Letter from Manfred George Gutzke to Edward F. Hills reporting the decision of the Department of Biblical Theology reached on March 21, 1941, a copy of which is found in Hills's file at Columbia Theological Seminary.

57. Interview with Manfred Gutzke, April 14, 1986.

58. Edward F. Hills, "The Teaching of the Scriptures Concerning Slavery, the Attitude of the Church toward It, and Their Significance for Present-Day Social Problems" (Th.M. thesis, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, GA, 1940–41).

the spring of 1942.[59]

Doctoral Studies at Chicago

After finishing at Columbia, Hills returned home to Chicago, and tried to enter the doctoral program of the University of Chicago Divinity School in New Testament text criticism under Ernest Cadman Colwell, perhaps the leading authority of his time. But Hills could not ask any of his professors from Westminster to recommend him for doctoral studies at one of the most antagonistic, liberal schools in America.[60] So he asked Professor Samuel A. Cartledge, who had reviewed Hills's Th.M. thesis at Columbia, and had earned his own Ph.D. at Chicago. Cartledge wrote this to Colwell: {114}

> October 18, 1941
> Dear Pomp,
>
> Mr. Hills received his B.D. [*sic*, Th.B.] from Westminster Theological Seminary, the seminary of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He has completed his work for his Th.M. with us and will receive his degree in May. He is a Phi Beta Kappa from Yale.
>
> He was something of a problem to us, and I hardly know what to write to you about him. I am going to write to you frankly, and I hope you will consider this confidential.
>
> His key from Yale seems to have given him the idea that he had already attained. We had a hard time knocking that idea out of his head, but I think we were able to do a pretty good job of it. We flatly rejected the first thesis he turned in, and it was a great shock to him. But about a year later he turned in another one that was a most satisfactory piece of work.
>
> For a time he seemed greatly worried about the lack of orthodoxy

59. His thesis is found in the stacks in Columbia Seminary and has been checked out continuously from October 1971 through July 1983, according to the date due information found presently in the back of the MS.

60. See George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*: *The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* (Oxford, 1980), 145–48, for evidence of the fierce animosity between the fundamentalists (specifically the premillennialists) and the divinity faculty of the University of Chicago during the First World War. I am indebted to Professor Holifield for directing me to this information.

> of at least two of our professors,[61] including myself, and he was somewhat antagonistic about it. We, of course, were not trying to force our views on him, but for a time he was trying to force his on us. His attitude improved a great deal during the year he was with us.
>
> He talked with me about Chicago and other graduate schools, and I recommended Chicago to him. I spoke very plainly to him about these matters and tried to show him what attitude he should take, and he seemed to react favorably to it. I told him that no attempt would be made to get him to give up his theological views but that he would be expected to understand the views of his professors. I told him that he should not take the attitude of trying to convert any of his teachers to his particular views.
>
> His record at Yale and here makes me believe that he has a high degree of a certain type scholarship, the plodding German type. He is not very congenial to new ideas, but I am still hoping that that side of him can be developed. I really would like to see you give him a chance. He seemed particularly interested in textual criticism, and I believe that he has possibilities of developing into a good worker, though I may say that he took no work in text under me here. Take him in, and give him as much sympathetic guidance as you can, and I believe that he will do a very creditable piece of work for you....
>
> Cordially,
> Sam [62]

Though Professor Cartledge ended on a positive note, encouraging Colwell to "give him a chance," Hills had no idea he was entering Chicago under such a disadvantage.

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61. Since one's point of reference will have much to do with how one determines if another is liberal or conservative, it must be kept in mind that after spending three years in the reactionary environment of Westminster Seminary, most any place else would have been regarded as suspect by Hills to some degree. It is of interest, however, to note that Professor Gutzke concurred with Hills's assessment somewhat: "We were in that tradition [Westminster/ Orthodox Presbyterian Church]; we belonged to them, in that sense. Our faculty would have wanted to be considered as being orthodox. They weren't really; I mean they weren't carefully orthodox; they allowed too much of the liberal ideas to have credence."

62. Letter, Samuel Cartledge to Ernest Cadman Colwell, in Hills's file at the University of Chicago.

In 1947 Colwell delivered a series of lectures at the University of Virginia; in their published form (*What is the Best New Testament?* 1952) he commented that

> it is often assumed by the ignorant and uninformed—even on a university campus—that textual criticism of the New Testament is supported by a {115} superstitious faith in the Bible as a book dictated in miraculous fashion by God.[63] That is not true. Textual criticism has never existed for those whose New Testament is one of miracle, mystery, and authority.[64]

Thus from Colwell's perspective, textual criticism did not exist for Edward Hills! After five quarters of work including exams in French and German and in intermediate courses, Hills was denied permission to continue in the program.[65]

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63. Thus, Colwell captures the popular, evangelical belief that those who hold to a traditional, verbal view of inspiration can practice text criticism with impunity for the faith, and even view it as a scientific ally. A. T. Robertson, a conservative Southern Baptist, published a handbook on the subject in 1925, but was not practicing text criticism so much as popularizing Westcott and Hort via Warfield: "No one else outside of Hort [besides Warfield]... had so clearly and so fully set forth the principles of textual criticism...." He published his work specifically so "others also may have the method of Hort with sufficient fulness for the student." Robertson, *Introduction to Textual Criticism*, viii. Such a posture with regard to Hort was considered unwarranted dogmatism by Colwell's day. See Ernest Cadman Colwell, "Genealogical Method: Its Achievements and Its Limitations," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 66 (1947): 109–33.

64. Ernest Cadman Colwell, *What is the Best New Testament*? (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 8. J. Coert Rylaarsdam noted that "historicism did flourish in biblical studies at Chicago; and it served its time exceedingly well. The focus was on the data; not on the data in the light of some tradition of faith or interpretive perspective, but on the data as such." "Introduction: The Chicago School—and After," in *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship*, ed. J. Coert Rylaarsdam (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 5. Also, Rebecca S. Chopp, former assistant professor of theology and director of the ministry program, University of Chicago Divinity School (1983–86), remarked regarding the ethos of the "Chicago school": "Now it is common to define pluralism in terms of the variety of world religions, and I think importantly so, but there is another pluralism we don't have much of—pluralism even in Christianity.... We have little work done in evangelical Christianity or in non-Western Christianity. These may be unimportant issues for us, but they certainly dominate the contemporary Christian scene and will probably have a far more determinative role than theological liberalism; in the future of Christianity.... Is it easier to deal with pluralism around the globe than at home?" *Criterion* 25, no. 3: 12.

65. One is reminded of an earlier example of someone who regarded himself as a guardian of classical studies. Julian the Apostate denied Christians' right to teach classics, and perhaps their children's right to learn them. Ammianus

No doubt he must have felt his academic career had ended, that he would never become a New Testament text critic. On October 22, 1943, he received a letter from the dean of students, Bernard M. Loomer, who informed him that:

> On the recommendation of the Biblical Field Committee the A.M. Ph.D. Committee, in its last meeting, voted that you should not be admitted to work for the Ph.D. degree in the biblical field. This position was taken by the A.M. Ph.D. Committee because of your failure to develop a satisfactory research subject in the area of your specialization. In the minds of both committees this fact proved your inability to handle the requirements for the degree program.
>
> On the basis of this decision, the A.M. Ph.D. Committee strongly advises you not to continue to work for the Ph.D. degree in the Divinity School. I regret that such an action has become necessary. I trust that you can make a better adjustment, perhaps at some other institution.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Bernard Loomer [66]

Certainly, if Hills *had* felt a smug superiority about his undergraduate attainments, this one experience must have been sobering in the extreme.

But as the fair-minded and judicious Bruce M. Metzger, professor emeritus of New Testament language and literature, Princeton Theological Seminary, recalls Hills's treatment at Chicago:

> I got acquainted with Edward Hills when both he and I were at the same campus, the University of Chicago campus in the summertime. They allowed him to go two years there for a Ph.D. and then they told him that we don't think that your mind is sufficiently liberal for us to grant the Ph.D. degree so he had to find another school. That was a terrible thing for the University of

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protested, however: "But this one thing was inhumane, and ought to be buried in eternal silence, namely, that he forbade teachers of rhetoric and literature to practise their profession, if there were followers of the Christian religion." W. H. C. Frend, *The Rise of Christianity* (London, 1984), 604. The parallel is not exact, however, in that Colwell was not opposed to Christanity, just a particular understanding of it.

66. Letter from Bernard M. Loomer, dean of students, to Edward Hills, October 22, 1943, a copy of which is found in Hills's file, the University of Chicago Divinity School.

> Chicago to do it seems to me. If they did not think that he was the kind of person that they wanted to give a Ph.D. to they should have found that out much earlier instead of having him, you might say, waste two years there, paying their tuition and so on, before they tell him that, even when he has not yet failed anything.[67] {116}

Metzger acknowledges that he heard this from Hills himself. So somewhere along the line Hills must have realized the cards were stacked against him.

Earlier, Colwell had given Hills a collating assignment; after reviewing it, he wrote him the following letter:

> February 24, 1942
> Dear Mr. Hills:
>
> I have gone over the collation which you turned in to me and have checked two sections of them against the manuscript with very discouraging results.
>
> In spite of your claim that the accents were correct this time, I found several mistakes in accentuation. Worse than this, your record of variation is exceedingly inaccurate. A check of your copy of Chrysostom's comment on the inscription on the cross indicates that it is done with exceedingly high degree of inaccuracy.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Ernest Cadman Colwell [68]

Hills's reply is the model of a humbled man who desperately wants to please someone he could probably never please.

> February 25, 1942
> Dear Dr. Colwell,
>
> I received your kind letter this morning. First of all I wish to thank you for all the kind attention that you have given me this year and for all the time that you have devoted to me. Perhaps it has been nothing but wasted labor on your part. I am certainly a very careless and inaccurate worker. This fact has never been so brought home to me as now. I realize now that, no matter what I do, I must take my time and go over my work again and again. If I do things in

67. Interview with Bruce M. Metzger, July 1986.

68. Letter, Colwell to Hills, February 24, 1942, found in Hills's file, the University of Chicago Divinity School.

a hurry, I will miss the mark.

It may be that you think that I ought to drop out of the field of textual criticism altogether. If this becomes necessary, it will be a very sad day for me, for I have developed a very great interest in this subject. The fact that I have this interest gives me a glimmer of hope that there may yet be some future for me as a textual critic. Now that I have discovered my deficiencies I have the interest to work vigorously to remedy them. The other reason that I have for some hope is the fact that at the beginning of the year you seemed to think that I had made a start on the study of textual criticism by acquiring a fair understanding of Westcott and Hort. I got that by careful study. Can I not get this other material in hand if I work very hard at it?

May I presume upon your patience just this once by making the following suggestion? I put upon your desk yesterday seven pages of Greek which I had copied out and upon which I had expended much effort to avoid making any errors in accenting. I wonder if you would be so kind as to go {117} over it and let me know how well I succeeded in my endeavor. Would you also allow me to turn into [*sic*] you for your examination another collation of decent length from the Gamma Gospels? I will make every effort to achieve perfection. I did not check my other collation at all. If, in spite of all of my efforts, I still prove to be hopelessly inadequate and inaccurate as a scholar, then, of course, there is nothing for it but to drop out and take up something else for which I am more fitted. But if, on the other hand, my work shows marked improvement from this time forth, your kindness in allowing me to continue would put me under a lasting, a lifelong, obligation.

Yours sincerely,
Edward F. Hills[69]

Colwell's response:

February 26, 1942
Dear Mr. Hills:

I am returning the paper in "practice in accenting." The mistakes are not excessively numerous, but they are rather devastating in quality. I call your attention to the error on the first page, one

69. Letter from Hills to Colwell, February 25, 1942, found in Hills's file.

of those on the fourth page and one on the fifth as examples of mistakes which go against the very commonest rules of accents....

Sincerely yours,
Ernest Cadman Colwell [70]

Hills also had trouble with his topic again. After a brief conversation with him, Colwell told Hills there might be some work for him on the topic of local texts; so on April 21, 1942, Hills announced his topic as "The Local Texts of the New Testament."[71] However, by September 2 he had changed it to "A Study of the Component Parts of the K-Text."[72] (The K text was Von Soden's nomenclature for the Byzantine text.) He proposed listing all of the evidence then available in relation to the K manuscripts, in order to prove that "the K MSS that had attestation among the oldest witnesses would be older than those that had many variants without such attestation." But no doubt his real goal was to illustrate that "also this method of analysis would make it easy to count the number of words in the TR. that are common to all the ancient witnesses, or common to all the K MSS, or common to both."[73] This would enable him to highlight in a criticial apparatus the fact that many so-called late Syrian readings in the K text are found in the recently discovered early papyri and elsewhere.

Colwell probably detected what Hills was up to and rejected his choice of topics: {118}

December 9, 1942
Dear Mr. Hills:

I have looked over the paper "Proposed Analysis of the K-text of the New Testament" and have the following comments to make:

In the first place it is my judgment that the nature of value of what would be learned by the proposed study is nowhere clearly stated. It sounds like an impossibly extensive effort to create a critical apparatus far beyond any individual's ability. It seems, moreover,

70. Letter from Colwell to Hills, February 26, 1942.

71. Letter from Hills to the Field Committee, Biblical Field, April 21, 1942, found in Hills's file.

72. Letter from Hills to Old Style Field Committee, Biblical Field, September 2, 1942.

73. Written Ph.D. dissertation proposal found in Hills's file.

> that it would be done to no purpose or rather to a scattering of purposes so vaguely defined as to have little prospect of realization by the action proposed in your document. In short, it seems to me to propose little more than the production of an extensive critical apparatus based entirely on materials now in existence but with these materials rearranged.
>
> The one new element in the proposal is this suggestion that the elements of the apparatus be arranged as K-text materials and non-K-text materials but nowhere in your proposal do you define what a K-text reading is.... I cannot see what the contribution to knowledge would be if the apparatus were to be arranged in this fashion.
>
> In the second place, the apparatus which you turned in as a sample is inaccurate. I have marked some of the details on the pages you turned in. Finally, the apparatus is incomplete. It gives no fair indication of the number of manuscripts of the kappa type who have variations from this *textus receptus.* My check on your work indicates, for example, that you have failed to use the manuscript Omega which is a leading witness to one of the kappa family.
>
> Mr. Wikgren also has read this proposal and it was discussed at a meeting of the Biblical Field yesterday. They concur in my judgment that this is not a possible subject for a Ph.D. dissertation and I therefore refuse to serve as your advisor in connection with it.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Ernest Cadman Colwell[74]

It is unclear what occurred next. Hills may have tried to rectify the shortcomings Colwell detected, or he may have started on a new topic. Then on October 22, 1943, he received a letter from the dean of students informing him he was through, period.

Hills at Harvard

On August 19, 1943, Hills wrote to the registrar of Harvard Divinity School:

> Dear Sir,

74. Letter from Colwell to Hills, December 9, 1942, found in Hills's file.

I would like to make application for admission as student to the Harvard Divinity School for the coming fall term. I intend to work for the Th.D. degree.

I am a graduate of Yale College, class of 1934, degree B.A. I received a Phi Beta Kappa key. I majored in the classics and at graduation was Ivy {119} Orator, an honor which involved the composition and recital of a Latin ode. For references as to my career at Yale, my general character, and my qualifications for advanced study, I give you the following names: Professor Clarence Mendel (formerly Dean of Yale College), Professor Harry Hubbel, and Professor Harmon, all of the Classics Department.

I have also received a Th.D. degree from Westminster Theological Seminary, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Pa., in 1938. For references as to my work and life there, I give you the following names. Professor Paul Wooley, Professor C. Van Til, Professor R. B. Kuiper, all of Westminster Seminary. Also, H. Evan Runner, 24 Irving St., Cambridge, Mass., (Junior Fellow of Harvard University), and John Gerstner Jr., 5 Haskell St., Cambridge, Mass., (a student in the Harvard Divinity School).

In 1942, I received the degree of Th.M. from Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga. For references to my work there, I give you the following names. Pres. J. McDowell Richards, D.D., and Professor William Childs Robinson (who received a Th.D. degree from the Harvard Divinity School about 13 or 14 years ago).

Some time ago I wrote you for a catalogue of the Harvard Divinity School, but, unfortunately, I have not as yet heard from you. Thus, I decided to make application anyway. I hope that it is not too late. If, there is any further information that you desire, please let me know. I am white, unmarried, 31 years old, born May 16, 1912 at Oak Park, Ill. My parents are both living. My father is Edward R. Hills, attorney at law, 1 North La Salle St., Chicago, Ill. I am a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church; my draft classification is 4 D; my draft board is Beauregard Parish, DeRidder, La.

Hoping to hear from you soon as to any further steps that must be taken to insure admittance to the Harvard Divinity School this fall, I remain

Yours sincerely,

Edward F. Hills[75]

In this desperate letter Hills pulls out all stops, citing all his undergraduate accomplishments and later academic work—without waiting for an application form!

He does not mention the University of Chicago in his letter nor on the application form he sent in later; and he no longer lists Cartledge as a reference, but gives three Westminster professors, C. Van Til, R. B. Kuiper, and Paul Woolley.

In a letter to the dean, Dr. Willard L. Sperry, he says only that "I have done some work in New Testament text criticism which I would like to continue. The problem of the text of Origen, especially his Caesarean text, is of particular interest to me."

Paul Woolley, professor of church history at Westminster, wrote an interesting letter of recommendation: {120}

August 26, 1943

> ... Mr. Hills is a man of intellectual ability distinctly above the average, and he had a consistently good academic record here in the Seminary. His inclinations are all toward academic pursuits, and I think that his greatest service will be in the field of research. He has a genuine interest in preaching the gospel, but experience has indicated that he is not well adapted to that work. He is a man of strong convictions, rather individualistic in character, and he does not find it easy to understand or fully sympathize with the point of view of others. He comes from a good family and makes an attractive personal impression at first sight, though in time it appears that he is something of a recluse and not socially inclined. I think he would make a thoroughly acceptable student if the bent of his tastes and inclinations is recognized at the beginning. It may be that he will be able to make a contribution to knowledge of some value, though I think it is too early now for me to be very certain on that point.
>
> Sincerely yours,
> Paul Woolley[76]

At Harvard, Hills found what had been missing in Chicago—a

75. Letter from Edward F. Hills to the Harvard Divinity School, August 19, 1943, found in Hills's file, Harvard University Library archives.

76. Letter, Paul Woolley to Willard L. Sperry, August 26, 1943, found in Hills's file at Harvard.

sympathetic adviser, Henry J. Cadbury, who could recognize "the bent of his tastes and inclinations," and who could also provide Hills with a congenial topic. J. Harold Greenlee, a doctoral student who was at Harvard at the same time, recalls Cadbury:

> Cadbury was a great man—a very fine Quaker... an exceedingly gracious man. It didn't matter how divergent your views theologically were, he was gracious and fair-minded, and I sometimes quote a couple of instances to show how he went out of his way to be fair-minded in contrast with what was going on at some other theological schools not a world away from Harvard at that time.... He wanted us to deal with the resurrection of Jesus—we were studying the book of Acts and just getting started.... He went out of his way to say he was not asking us to pass judgment on whether the gospel records were correct or whether the disciples actually saw Jesus or anything like that; in other words, all he cared about was, according to the written record of the New Testament where were they [the apostles] when they became convinced that the risen Jesus appeared to them.[77]

Hills thrived under Cadbury; his dissertation, "The Caesarean Family of New Testament Manuscripts," had for one of its readers the famous New Testament text critic, Kirsopp Lake (although Lake had been retired from Harvard since 1938). Hills's dissertation demonstrated the harmonizations in the Caesarean text of Mark, a contribution still noted in the literature.[78] And Hills had three essays published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, all rec-

77. Interview with J. Harold Greenlee, January 30, 1985.

78. The following are sources that make reference of Hills's dissertation and/or his *JBL* articles from it: Roger Lee Omanson, "The Claremont Profile Method and the Grouping of Byzantine New Testament Manuscripts in the Gospel of Mark" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1975); Larry Weir Hurtado, "Codex Washingtonianus in the Gospel of Mark: Its Textual Relationships and Scribal Characteristics" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 1973); Larry Weir Hurtado, *Text-Critical Methodology and the Pre-Christian Text*: *Codex W in the Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: n.p., 1981); Alfred Wilkenhauser, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg, 1956); Alfred Wilkenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, trans. Joseph Cunningham (1958); Metzger, "The Caesarean Text of the Gospels"; Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*; J. Harold Greenlee, *The Gospel Text of Cyril of Jerusalem* (Copenhagen, 1955); Klijn, *Survey*; Harry Merwyn Buck, *The Johannine Lessons in the Greek Gospel Lectionary* (Chicago, 1958); Williams, *Alterations to the Text*; Zuntz, *The Text of the Epistles*. Omanson's dissertation highlights several significant aspects of Hills's contributions to the study of the Caesarean text.

ommended to the editor by Cadbury.[79] {121}

Hills graduated from Harvard Divinity School on June 6, 1946, with a Th.D. Having proved he could perform New Testament text criticism work of a doctoral level of study, he wrote the University of Chicago attempting to apply again to enter their Ph.D. program. The last item in his Chicago file (August 14, 1946) is a memo to A. P. Wikgren from C. G. Hoffman:

> In my opinion Mr. Hills's new petition is perfectly legitimate provided his situation is really altered. He has presented evidence to your committee as proof of his changed circumstance. If your committee judges this to be valid proof that he is ready to do Ph.D. work here, his petition can be given to the A.M. Ph.D. Committee with the Biblical Field Committee's recommendation. It would seem that the petition is out of order under any other circumstance.[80]

There is no evidence that Hills ever intended to pursue this matter in earnest.

Post-Graduate Activity

After his essays were published he was fully accepted into the ranks of New Testament text critical scholars.[81] Jacob Geerlings wrote him on August 19, 1947, to praise his first essay, "Harmonizations in the Caesarean Text of Mark," commenting that,

> my study of Matthew confirms the notion that you expressed.... "The tendency of the Caesarean witnesses, in Mark at least, toward agreement with the other Gospels is an almost certain indication that the Caesarean text is, above all others, a harmonistic text."...
>
> I sincerely hope that you will have an opportunity to study the matter further in the other Gospels. Administrative responsibilities fairly well keep me from devoting as much time as I should to

79. Letters and postcards from Cadbury to Hills from 1946 to 1949, in the papers of Edward F. Hills, in the possession of his wife, Des Moines, Iowa.

80. Memo from Hoffman to Wikgren, August 14, 1946, found in Hills's file at Chicago.

81. When Hills was a professor of classics at Heidelberg College, he even wrote to Colwell, who was now president of the University of Chicago, regretting that he could not attend the Goodspeed celebration held at Chicago. Colwell's response was brief and cordial.

research in New Testament fields.

Sincerely yours,
Jacob Geerlings
Dean of the Faculty[82]

And Merrill M. Parvis answered an inquiry regarding the publishing of codex 2427:

Dear Ed:

I am sorry to say that 2427 has not been published. We hope however to have the work complete by the first of the year. Whether or not the publication can be out in 1949 remains to be seen.

You will be interested to know that we recently received a letter from Professor Kilpatrick asking us to cooperate in the publication of the apparatus. {122} At the conference which was held here last month the plan was enthusiastically endorsed by the group. President Colwell is now busy with negotiations with the British Committee, and in an attempt to finance our share of the project. I hope you will be able to participate in the work of collating.

I hope I will be able to see you at the New York meetings next month.

Sincerely yours,
Shorty
Merrill M. Parvis[83]

Parvis was inviting Hills to join the International Greek New Testament Project, and attend the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis in New York.

After graduating from Harvard, Hills returned home to Chicago, hoping a position would open up at Harvard. But when he asked Cadbury about this he answered:

I am not aware of any clerical job available now, but I would not know. I know various of our students find jobs without much difficulty but I am afraid you would have to be on the grounds to

82. Letter from Jacob Gerlings to Edward F. Hills, August 19, 1947, in Hills's papers, in the possession of his wife.

83. Letter from Parvis to Hills, November 17, 1948.

get one. If you return you would enjoy the facilities of our library.[84]

Teaching Career

That summer he applied at several teacher placement services, securing his first position the following fall at Dana College, Blair, Nebraska, a small liberal arts college of the American Lutheran Church.

He taught classics for a year. He was only one of two with doctorates on the faculty. Paul O. Peterson was on the faculty with Hills:

> I recall that he was a good teacher and well respected by students and fellow faculty members. He was at Dana during the time when students were a bit cynical and a few did test his temperament—Dr. Hills was somewhat vulnerable and naive. However, since he had a good sense of humor, these few episodes ended as harmless events.
>
> I do not know the reason why Dr. Hills left Dana. As has been often the case here at Dana, the majority of teachers leaving have indicated the low salary as their reason. It would be my judgment that Dr. Hills left for this reason.[85]

The next year he took a position in the same field in Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio, another small liberal arts college, affiliated with the German Reformed Church. Professor Carl H. Klopfenstein was a history professor there and recalls Hills's stay at Heidelberg:

> Dr. Hill [*sic*] was on the faculty at Heidelberg for the academic year of 1948–49 as a one year replacement to Dr. Frank Kramer who was on a {123} leave of absence. I returned to my alma mater, Heidelberg, that fall of 1948 to assume the chairmanship of the Department of History and have some interesting memories of Dr. Hill. First, he was a [*sic*] very much a loner. Let me relate to you several instances of my recollections of him. First, he had a young woman "one on one" in a Latin class and according to her relation of it, he would not face her in the class room but instead kept his back to her and face[d] the blackboard during each hour of their sessions. Second, I had a delegation of students come to me

84. Letter, Cadbury to Hills, September 25, 1946, in Hills's papers.

85. Letter, Paul O. Peterson to the author, April 21, 1984.

> to complain in re: his testing and grading techniques, one of whom showed me his midterm estimates which were all A's except one an F in Ancient History which Dr. Hill taught. I did speak to him about the student concerns and in the end he gave all of them A's and B's in the course whether in frustration with my interference or because of his proclivities I do not know. Third, a group of faculty and students were on a weekend retreat at a local camp and during the course of the evening we sang the Yale Whiffenpoof song. Dr. Hill highly resented this and refused to remain in the camp with us when we refused to cease singing the song. Lastly, there was a fire in the rooming house where he lived and he threw his notes out of a second story window (for which action I do not fault him) but this caused my brother-in-law who was a fireman considerable glee.[86]

Apparently Hills found the teaching of undergraduates less than rewarding. After Heidelberg, he never tried teaching again.

In 1949 he married Marjorie Jonker, a school teacher and member in the Christian Reformed Church. He determined to attend Calvin Seminary, the seminary of the Christian Reformed Church, possibly hoping to teach there.[87] While this never happened, he was ordained as a minister and took a church in Des Moines, Iowa, where he would live the rest of his life.

Return to the Textus Receptus

Hills mentions in his memoir that in 1952 he had a "formal" commitment to the position of John Burgon; four years later his *The King James Version Defended* appeared. Since he was inclined toward Burgon's position at least as far back as his Westminster days (1934–38), how do we explain his position after he left the University of Chicago? In the last chapter of his Harvard dissertation he supports the Westcott-Hort view of the Byzantine text—that is, that it is of late origin and the result of combining other earlier text-types. How to explain, then, his "return" to Burgon in 1952? What precipitated it?

Hills himself cryptically shrugged off this aspect of his disserta-

86. Letter, Carl G. Klopfenstein to the author, March 14, 1985.

87. When he wrote Harvard for his transcript on March 8, 1950, he mentioned this goal.

tion as his great "lapse."[88] {124}

At Chicago, Hills realized that unless one accepted the dogma that the Byzantine text type was of late date, and hence unimportant, one could never gain credibility within the text criticism guild. Hence, role theory[89] might well explain how Hills could conform to the expected posture while at Harvard, since to succeed in text critical studies there he had to assume the role of one unconcerned with the Calvinistic, scholastic view of the text and begin at the assumption of viewing the Ecclesiastical text as late and nearly worthless, something most text critics believed from 1881 on.[90]

Whatever his compromises, by 1952, Hills was ready to return full circle to his historic Reformed roots and affirm with the Westminster Confession, the priority of the Textus Receptus. Only now he would do so from fully within the inner *Sanctum sanctorum* of the text criticism citadel.

Perhaps the lectures of E. C. Colwell, published in 1952, gave Hills the push finally to write the book that had been his goal as far back as 1935, when he confided to Machen his desire to contribute to New Testament criticism.[91] Whatever the catalyst, "Finally after some years of hesitation, I definitely committed myself to his [Burgon's] view in 1952."[92]

He was free of fashionable academic orthodoxy and able to work in a fresh ecclesiastical context. He planned to start within

88. In personal conversations with the author.

89. Thomas C. Cochran gives as a brief definition of social role: "The part played by an individual in response to an understanding shared by members of a group as to the attitudes and behavior that should normally follow from his occupation of a given position or status." "The Historian's Use of Social Role," in *Generalization in the Writing of History*, ed. Louis Gottschalk (Chicago, 1963), 103.

90. Clearly Hills was torn between what role theory has called the *defining group*, which provided him with his shared ideational expectations, and his *reference group*, orthodox, scholastic Calvinism, which provided him with his desire to attain to the status of a scholar in the field of N.T. text criticism in order to offer an apologetic for the text.

91. Oddly enough, Hills's book measures at the same dimensions as Colwell's in regard to format and could be seen as a response to Colwell's title: *What is the Best New Testament?* Hills's: *The King James Version Defended*: *A Christian View of the New Testament Manuscripts.*

92. Hills, unpublished memoir in the author's possession, 1981.

the Christian Reformed Church, hoping to influence the other Reformed churches—and as many within other traditions as would listen—by writing a handbook on New Testament text criticism, which he initially called: *Text and Time*: *Textual Criticism from the Reformed Point of View.*[93] Hills recruited his former professor and friend from Westminster, R. B. Kuiper, now president of Calvin Seminary, to write the preface.

Hills's Works on the Textus Receptus

He submitted the manuscript to Baker Book House, a young Christian Reformed-oriented publisher in Grand Rapids. Its director, Herman Baker, sent the manuscript to Bruce Metzger and Ned Stonehouse for evaluation—both recommended against it. According to Metzger:

> His book, I may say, on *The King James Version Defended* was submitted in MS form for publication—it was submitted to I think to Baker Book House. Herman Baker sent the MS to Ned Stonehouse to read. Herman Baker also sent the MS to me to read. And I am sure that in both respects, Stonehouse and I agreed, that Baker ought not to publish it.[94] {125}

Ironically, Ned Stonehouse was Hills's former New Testament professor. Back in Hills's post-doctorate days (when he was supporting Westcott and Hort in his dissertation and journal publications) he had sent his first published essay to Stonehouse, who was impressed that "at least one person of Reformed outlook is taking the subject seriously and has given evidence of ability to make a real contribution."[95] Stonehouse admitted he lacked the time for text critical studies, but encouraged Hills to "press forward in these studies and help to meet the present challenge," even asking, "Have you thought of writing articles for the Westminster Journal?" adding:

I have not discussed this matter with the editors of the Journal,

93. It was Mrs. Hills who suggested the title that eventually obtained, *The King James Version Defended.*

94. Interview with Bruce M. Metzger, July 1986.

95. Letter from Ned Stonehouse to Edward F. Hills, October 24, 1947, found in the Stonehouse papers, Westminster Theological Seminary Library, Philadelphia, PA.

> but I believe that they would welcome such materials. My best suggestion at present is that you should write a general article or two before presenting anything quite as specialized as the article in the JBL. What I have in mind is an article that would evaluate the work done in this field since Westcott and Hort, and which would necessarily include consideration of their approach as a whole.... Over a period of time, you might do sufficient work of this kind to be encouraged to undertake a volume on the subject. I sincerely hope that you may become convinced that the objectives presented to you here are really worthwhile.[96]

Earlier in the letter Stonehouse noted an explicit shortcoming in Westcott and Hort, and emphasized that the discipline needed a distinctively Christian view, in actual practice, not just in theory. Hills was arguing for the same thing in his book. As Stonehouse had said to Hills so many years before,

> I have increasingly felt that one's Christian viewpoint necessarily becomes decisive for his evaluation of textual problems. This appears most pointedly in connection with the evaluation of what Hort called "intrinsic probability," for there one is actually dealing in terms of exegesis, and nothing is clearer [than] that a Christian has distinctive principles of interpretation with regard to the Scriptures. There seems to be a great need, therefore, for Christians to devote themselves to this field.[97]

One almost feels that Stonehouse wants to remind the Harvard graduate of his Westminster roots, which demanded that no discipline be treated in an exclusively neutral or naturalistic fashion. This, of course became the thesis of Hills's books.

Furthermore, there was an earlier precedent at Westminster for opposing the modern translation impulse in the person and work of Professor O. T. Allis, in his extensive reviews and critiques of the Revised Standard {126} Version and other twentieth-century translations.[98] Allis was not merely concerned about the effects on orthodox doctrine by certain passages in the RSV, he also noted that some textual critics had begun to argue that

> [t]he *higher* critic is ultimately to supersede the *textual* critic in

96. *Ibid.*

97. *Ibid.*

98. See Note 1 at end of article.

> the field of New Testament textual criticism. He is to have the last word! We have long been accustomed to draw a sharp distinction, in principle at least, between lower and higher criticism.... The difference between these two spheres, practically considered, is this, that while the one aims or should aim to be as objective as possible, the other tends to become subjective and even dangerously so.[99]

Hence, Allis's answer was to stay with Westcott and Hort, who were "objective." Stonehouse, however, had admitted the clearly subjective element even in Westcott and Hort. Furthermore, Hills, the only graduate from Westminster fully to qualify himself as an authority in the field in the post-Westcott and Hort era, knew that no one now regarded the Westcott and Hort theory as either "objective" or valid. The subjective method of eclecticism was now the standard fare—an organic outgrowth of the "intrinsic probability" component of Westcott and Hort's method.

Why Hills was Rejected at Westminster

Why, then, did Stonehouse reject Hills's book, which was clearly written to draw attention to the problems not only in Westcott and Hort, something Stonehouse had acknowledged, but as these had developed further in the twentieth century? Why is it that though Hills was invited by Stonehouse to contribute articles to the *Westminster Theological Journal*, when he published his book on textual criticism, it did not even merit a review in the pages of the *Journal*?

Part of the problem was the title chosen by Hills: *The King James Version Defended.* It gave no indication it treated text critical issues. Other works written by Allis had the rival version in the title—the unknown "modern" intruder into the church. This was fair game. But to set up the King James for defense, a version most loved but one whose foibles were well known by educated Christians everywhere, was a dubious enterprise. Why would anyone *want* to defend those?

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99. O. T. Allis, *Revision or New Translations? The Revised Standard Version of 1946* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1948), 151. This source is no longer to be found in the stacks at Westminster Theological Seminary Library.

Furthermore, neo-evangelicalism was now asserting itself,[100] and in attempting to put an intellectual face on the old "fundamentalism" it influenced Westminster. Three years after Hills's book appeared, Edward {127} John Carnell, a Wheaton graduate, who also graduated from Westminster and Harvard—the perfect credentials to be an "evangelical" spokesman, characterized those who clung to the old Bible as follows:

> The intellectual stagnation of fundamentalism can be easily illustrated. Knowing little about the canons of lower criticism, and less about the relation between language and culture, the

100. A selection of works treating this movement up to the present time are: Ronald H. Nash, *The New Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1963); David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *The Evangelicals* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1975); Bernard L. Ramm, *The Evangelical Heritage* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1973); Louis Gasper, *The Fundamentalist Movement*: *1930–1956* (1963; repr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981); Donald G. Bloesch, *The Evangelical Renaissance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973); Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1974) and *The Worldly Evangelicals* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1978); Bob E. Patterson, *Carl F. H. Henry* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983); Richard Allen Purdy, "Carl Henry and Contemporary Apologetics: An Assessment of the Rational Apologetic Methodology of Carl F. H. Henry in the Context of the Impasse Between Reformed and Evangelical Apologetics" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1980); John Jefferson Davis, *Foundations of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984); James Davison Hunter, *American Evangelicalism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1983); George M. Marsden, ed., *Evangelicalism and Modern America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984); Richard G. Hutcheson Jr., *Mainline Churches and the Evangelicals* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1981); Joel Carpenter, "The Fundamentalist Leaven and the Rise of an Evangelical United Front," in *The Evangelical Tradition in America*, ed. Leonard I. Sweet (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984); Grand Wacker, "Searching for Norman Rockwell: Popular Evangelicalism in Contemporary America," in Sweet, *The Evangelical Tradition in America*. For those who have evolved out of evangelicalism, or who simply offer a critique, see Donald G. Bloesch, *The Future of Evangelical Christianity*: *A Call for Unity amid Diversity* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983) and *Crumbling Foundations*: *Death and Rebirth in an Age of Upheaval* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie, 1984); Bernard L. Ramm, *After Fundamentalism* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1983); Francis A. Schaeffer, *The Great Evangelical Disaster* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1984); James Barr, *Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977) and *Beyond Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984); John Johnston, *Will Evangelicalism Survive its Own Popularity?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980); Robert K. Johnston, *Evangelicals at an Impasse*: *Biblical Authority in Perspective* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1979); Carl F. H. Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976); Millard Erickson, *The New Evangelical Theology* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1968).

> fundamentalist has no norm by which to classify the relative merits of biblical translations. As a result, he identifies the Word of God with the seventeenth-century language forms of the King James Version. Since other versions sound unfamiliar to him, he concludes that someone is tampering with the Word of God.[101]

Carnell is not describing Hills, but who would want to risk being tainted by such a cause?

The most likely reason Stonehouse gave Hills's book the silent treatment can be found elsewhere.

In June of 1956 (the year Hills's book appeared) the Seattle Christian Reformed Church recommended

> that the Christian Reformed Church endeavor to join with other conservative churches in sponsoring or facilitating the early production of a faithful translation of the Scriptures in the common language of the American people.[102]

This was to replace the "antiquated" King James and American Standard Version and to offer an alternative to the liberal Revised Standard Version.[103]

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101. Edward John Carnell, *The Case for Orthodox Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 120. Carnell, a leading spokesman for the "new," *intellectual* evangelicalism, had the Warfieldian approach to text criticism, and refused to admit any connection between lower and higher criticism; see Edward John Carnell, *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1948), 192–97. L. Harold De Wolfe challenged on this very point— "The intimate and inseparable relation between textual and historical studies of the Bible seems not to be adequately appreciated by some conservative scholars. For some example, Edward J. Carnell praises unstintedly the devotion, skill, and results of textual criticism.... On the other, when the same writer considers the work of historical or 'higher' criticism, he has nothing to say for it." *The Case for Theology in Liberal Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), 51–52.

Carnell rejected the high critical approach because "a fundamental presupposition of the higher critic is that the Bible is just another piece of human writing, a book to which the scientific method may safely be applied, not realizing that the Bible message stands pitted in judgment against that very method itself." *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, 194. Carnell apparently did not know that Warfield himself had the very same criteria as a presupposition of lower criticism, held to by all text critics, no matter their theology, from Warfield's day onward in America.

102. Form–letter from Calvin Seminary to Ned Stonehouse, circa 1956, in the Stonehouse papers.

103. W. La Sor said that the NIV was created "so evangelicals won't have to use the R.S.V." W. La Sor, "What Kind of Version is the New International?"

> A form-letter to this effect was issued, requesting that
>
> your denomination, through its General Synod, or a similar body,... appoint a committee for correspondence with our Committee, concerning the feasibility and desirability of this matter, and for possible, eventual cooperation with our denomination's Committee.[104]

Ned Stonehouse received a copy.

This project led to the *New International Version*, a project directed by Westminster faculty from the beginning.[105]

A few months later Hills publicly announced for the first time his views of text criticism and modern Bible translations, in an editorial in the *Banner*, the official church organ for the Christian Reformed Church.

> The *use* of the American Standard Version involves the *defense* of the American Standard Version, and the defense of the American Standard Version leads eventually to downright modernism.[106]

He argued that opting for the RSV was no solution. Only a return to the view of the Bible consistently held by the Reformers and the Westminster {128} Confession could protect biblical authority from naturalistic text critics. In other words, keep the Bible that was created during this period of the church's history—the King

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Christianity Today 23 (1978): 18.

104. Form–letter from Calvin Seminary.

105. Such as Edwin Palmer, chairman of the committee; other Westminster faculty on the project were Richard Gaffin Jr. (N.T.), and Raymond Dillard (O.T.).

106. Edward F. Hills, "Dr. Hills Condemns the American Standard Version as Being Modernistic," *Banner*, September 28, 1956, 1206. For responses for Hills's editorial (all in *Banner*) see: Mrs. Ben Benkema, "Deems the King James Version a Better Translation of the Bible Than the American Revised Version," December 21, 1956, 1590; Andrew J. Bandstra, "Gives Observations in Defense of Text Used in American Standard Version," January 11, 1957, 22; Hills, "Objects to Recommendation of the American Standard Version," February 1, 1957, 22; Vernon Boerman, "Demonstrates the Need of Periodic Retranslations of the Bible," February 22, 1957, 23; John A. Houseward, "A Reply to Dr. Hills's Strictures on the American Standard Version," May 3, 1957, 29; David E. Holwerda, "Takes Issue with Dr. Hills on the Matter of Bible Versions," May 24, 1957, 28–29; Hills, "Comments on Textual Criticism and King James Version," June 7, 1957, 28; Marten H. Woudstra, review of *The King James Version Defended*, September 13, 1957, 28–29; Hills, "Rejects Textual Criticism of Naturalistic Scholars," Oct. 18, 1957, 28–29; John H. Hubers, "Object to American Standard Version and Believe our Church is Drifting," January 11, 1957, 22.

James Bible.

With this plea Hills had officially returned to the historic, Reformed-scholastic view of the text, not in ignorance of current text critical data and practice, but *because of* his first-hand acquaintance with it, and the conclusions to which he felt it tended![107]

Hills's book was not reviewed extensively, though both Greenlee and Metzger mention it in their handbooks.

He was also asked to introduce a 1958 reprint of John William Burgon's monograph, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Mark*.[108] Together, these two essays called for a formal review of the textual work of Burgon, who had been the last to attempt to integrate his theological view of the text with the data of late nineteenth-century text criticism. Hills believed he was doing this for the twentieth century—while also asking the Reformed tradition to recognize her creedal demands and not separate her theology from her text critical praxis, unlike Warfield. Hills gave Warfield a fair share of criticism in both pieces.

Hills was fully abreast of the twentieth-century "scientific" approach to text criticism, with its organic connection with higher criticism and skepticism regarding the possibility of ever locating Warfield's *autographa*. Hence, because of his knowledge of mod-

107. He assessed the scholastic confessional approach as follows: "If, now, the Christian Church has been correct down through the ages in her fundamental attitude toward the Old and New Testaments, if the doctrines of the *divine inspiration* and *providential preservation* of these Scriptures are true doctrines, then the textual criticism of the New Testament is different from that of the uninspired writings of antiquity. The textual criticism of any book must take into account the conditions under which the original manuscripts were written and also those under which the copies of these manuscripts were made and preserved. But if the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures are true, then THE ORIGINAL NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS WERE WRITTEN UNDER SPECIAL CONDITIONS, UNDER THE INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND THE COPIES WERE MADE AND PRESERVED UNDER SPECIAL CONDITIONS, UNDER THE SINGULAR CARE AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD." Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 9 (emphasis his).

108. Edward F. Hills, intro. to a reprint of *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to St. Mark*, by John William Burgon (Ann Arbor, MI: Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1959). The same publisher asked Hills to contribute entries to a new encyclopedia, called the *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, to which Hills contributed nine articles in the first and only two volumes, on N.T. topics and N.T. text critics. See bibliography for a complete listing.

ern theory—and its shortcomings—he argued powerfully against abandoning the Reformed tradition's theological view of the text, first enunciated in the Westminster Confession.

The Influence of Dutch Calvinism on Hills's Textual Views

Now there was one Calvinistic tradition that had not surrendered its presuppositions of faith to the so-called objectivity of the scientific approach. This was Dutch Calvinism, forcefully articulated at Westminster in the person of Cornelius Van Til.

Van Til criticized Warfield's Scottish "common sense" approach to apologetics for having wrought havoc with the precious commodity of epistemological certainty in the post-Kantian era of the twentieth century.[109] And Hills naturally saw the implications this had for New Testament text criticism. At Westminster, Hills had been struck by the contrast of the old Scottish "common sense" approach of Warfield in the New Testament Department with the Dutch presuppositionalism of Van Til in the Apologetics Department. So he very gingerly, but forcefully, attacked Warfield, {129} at the risk of losing considerable favor with those in the American Reformed tradition. His own unpublished memoir offers an illuminating analysis:

> Why was Dr. Warfield so inconsistent in the realm of New Testament textual criticism? Dr. Van Til's course in apologetics enabled me to supply the answer to this question. Dr. Warfield's inconsistency was part of his scholastic inheritance, an error which had been handed down to him from the middle ages. Let me explain.
>
> During the middle ages the school men tried to reconcile the philosophy of Aristotle with the dogmas of the Roman Catholic

109. See Jack Bartlett Rogers, "Van Til and Warfield on Scripture in the Westminster Confession," in *Jerusalem and Athens*, ed. E. R. Geehan (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977), for an excellent treatment of how Van Til broke ranks with the old Princeton orthodoxy on these epistemological grounds. For other sources that treat the Dutch tradition or Van Til's apologetic, in contrast to Warfield's, see Marsden, "The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia," in David F. Wells, ed., *Reformed Theology in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985); Vander Stelt, *Philosophy and Scripture*; Robert D. Knudsen, "Progressive and Regressive Tendencies in Christian Apologetics," in *Jerusalem and Athens*, and "The Transcendental Perspective of Westminster's Apologetic," *Westminster Theological Journal* 48 (1986): 223–39; Kenneth Dale Boa, "A Comparative Study of Four Christian Apologetic Systems" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1985).

> Church by separating faith from reason and praying from thinking. While dealing with dogma, faith and prayer were appropriate, but the study of philosophy was reason's province. So the medieval school men contended, and soon this doctrine of the separation of faith from reason became generally accepted throughout the medieval Roman Catholic Church.
>
> The Protestant Reformers were fully occupied with other matters. Hence they spent but little time combatting this medieval, Roman Catholic error of the separation of faith and reason. Hence this false scholastic doctrine survived the Reformation and soon became embedded in the thinking of conservative Protestants everywhere. In the eighteenth century Butler and Paley built their apologetic systems on this false principle of the separation of faith and reason, and in the nineteenth century, at Princeton and other conservative theological seminaries, this scholastic principle even governed the curriculum and the way in which the several subjects were taught. Systematic theology, practical theology and homiletics were placed in one box labeled FAITH. All the other subjects, including New Testament textual criticism, biblical introduction, apologetics and philosophy, were placed in another box labeled REASON.
>
> We see now why Dr. Warfield was so inconsistent. We see why he felt himself at liberty to adopt the naturalistic theories of Westcott and Hort and did not perceive that in so doing he was contradicting the Westminster Confession and even his own teaching in the realm of systematic theology. The reason was that Dr. Warfield kept these subjects in separate boxes. Like an authentic, medieval scholastic, he kept his systematic theology and the Westminster Confession in his FAITH box and his New Testament textual criticism in his REASON box. Since he never tried to mingle the contents of these two boxes, he was never fully aware of the discrepancies in his thinking.[110]

In effect, Hills was pitting Protestant, Reformed scholasticism (the Westminster Confession) against the Roman Catholic, medieval scholasticism which allowed Warfield to employ his "common sense" philosophy and led him irretrievably into the grip of the Enlightenment approach.

While Hills was able to offer such a critique of Warfield, because he had attained the same status of expertise in text criticism that

110. Hills, unpublished memoir in the author's possession, 1981.

Warfield {130} had in his day, and was aware of its results in the twentieth century, no one else at Westminster ever did, including Van Til, so Hills's critique was never fully appreciated. Outside of Westminster, however, other Calvinists saw his point.

The *Free Presbyterian Magazine* reviewed Hills's work, acknowledging that

> [f]rom 1831 on, the textus receptus has been subjected to relentless criticism and every endeavor has been made to find fault with it. Thus when the Revised Version was published in 1881, the Greek text from which the translation was made was a new one compiled by Westcott and Hort, two English scholars, from whom the text took its name. Sad to say, this text found favour both in liberal and conservative circles despite the powerful attacks made on it by Dean Burgon (1813–1888) and others. Liberal critics have long since departed from the Westcott and Hort text although conservatives have been inclined to retain it. Now it appears that there is a tendency to go back to retain it [the Textus Receptus].[111]

Hills's book enjoyed other favorable reviews—and they all seemed to appreciate Hills's presuppositional approach, as being what most clearly distinguishes the Protestant scholastic method from that of the Enlightenment:

> Anyone who looks upon the Bible as a divine revelation cannot approach it as he would any other book written by a human author.[112]

Alfred Martin, though working apart from the Reformed tradition, had anticipated Hills five years earlier in his doctoral dissertation.[113] As he later remarked:

> Textual criticism cannot be divorced entirely from theology. No matter how great a Greek scholar a man may be, or no matter how great an authority on the textual evidence, his conclusions must always be open to suspicion if he does not accept the Bible as the very Word of God. While the textual critic is merely collecting and studying manuscripts, comparing readings, and classifying them,

111. Donald MacLean, review of *The King James Version Defended*, by Edward F. Hills, *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, June 1960, 53–56.

112. *Ibid.*, 55.

113. Alfred Martin, "A Critical Examination of the Westcott-Hort Textual Theory" (Ph.D. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1951).

> it does not matter particularly what his theological views are; but when he begins to theorize upon the data he has assembled, then it matters greatly. Christians who would not for a moment accept the leading of liberals in theology often unhesitatingly commit themselves to such leadership in New Testament textual criticism....
>
> Hoskier and, in our own day, Hills have shown how textual criticism has become, since Westcott and Hort's edition, intertwined with the "higher criticism." [114] {131}

Reviewing Hills's introduction to the reprint of Burgon's monograph on the ending of the Gospel of Mark, Martin said:

> If New Testament Textual criticism took a wrong turn with Griesbach... then the present generation may have to retrace steps and start anew.... Dr. Hills seems to be one man who is attempting this.[115]

Hills received two positive reviews in the Southern Presbyterian Review,[116] one of them by his former professor at Columbia, William Childs Robinson (father of James Robinson, the Gnosticism scholar who edited the Nag Hammadi library).

Those who differed with Hills usually did so for the same reason that attracted his supporters: "argument... based upon several presuppositions which the average New Testament scholar would be hesitant in accepting."[117] F. F. Bruce, while conceding that Hills was

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114. Alfred Martin, "John William Burgon—A Memorial," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 123 (1966), 154.

115. Alfred Martin, review of *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Mark*, by John William Burgon, *Sunday School Times* 102 (1960): 216.

116. John R. Richardson, review of *The King James Version Defended*, by Edward F. Hills, *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 15, no. 33 (1956), 19; R. William Childs Robinson, review of *The King James Version Defended*, by Edward F. Hills, *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 15, no. 39 (1957): 18–19. Richardson concluded: "This book is of exceptional merit. It contains the very finest of New Testament scholarship and yet each of the six chapters are lucid and easy to understand. We strongly recommend this volume to our readers and feel sure that no one will be disappointed. It should be of priceless value to theological students and young ministers." William Childs Robinson gave probably the best review, "In this book as in his several articles in the Journal of Biblical Literature, Dr. Hills shows himself a master in his field and offers a thesis deserving of full consideration by the current textual critics."

117. S. S. Johnson Jr., review of *The King James Version Defended*, by Edward F. Hills, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 114 (1957): 279–80.

"a wellknown textual critic and probably the most distinguished contemporary defender of the superiority of the Byzantine text-type,"[118] echoed the old Warfieldian position: "We agree with Professor John H. Skilton, of Westminster Seminary, that 'textual criticism, in God's providence, is the means provided for ascertaining the true text of the Bible. Its fruits cannot be obtained from any other tree.' " [119] This review by Bruce assured evangelicals in Great Britain that the Westcott and Hort text-type would continue to be the *textus receptus* of conservatives.

Skilton's response to Hills (quoted by Bruce above) is the only response ever offered from Westminster.[120]

Hills's Influence

The Rise of the Majority Text School

But thanks to Hills's courageous and thoroughgoing book, others began to reevaluate text critical theory in the light of verbal inspiration and especially the notion of inerrancy. Hills himself, unlike Warfield, seemed uninterested whether the *autographa* were theoretically inerrant by the Enlightenment standards of precision.[121] Scholastics were also not interested, being wholly concerned with the *preservation* of the in-hand texts, not their precision. They readily acknowledged errors in transcription.

But the dispensational school of Dallas Seminary (and Moody Bible Institute) held very rigorously to the old Baconian position of Warfield, although they rejected his Calvinism. So the review of Hills that appeared in their journal *Bibliotheca Sacra* saw that

118. F. F. Bruce, review of a reprint of *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to St. Mark*, by John William Burgon, with an intro. by Edward F. Hills, *Evangelical Quarterly* 31 (1959): 235.

119. *Ibid.*, 236.

120. Skilton, "The Transmission of the Scriptures," 141–95. In a later essay Skilton seems favorable to Hills's demand for a Van Tillian approach toward text criticism, but only on a theoretical basis, not on the basis of actual praxis. See Skilton, "The New Testament Text Today," 3–26.

121. In all of Hills's works the words can only be found once, i.e. in the introduction to a reprint of Burgon's *Last Twelve Verses*. His locus of discussion was always the Textus Receptus and the King James Version, both of which he readily admitted were textually imperfect.

Hills's final weakness was his admission "that the Byzantine text is not free of errors itself."[122] {132}

A new hybrid thus arose within some fundamentalist-dispensational institutions, mixing Warfield's inerrancy position with Hills's advocacy of the Byzantine text. Warfield had felt that God's providence had provided the Westcott-Hort text, and that the closer one came to the autographical standard the closer one came to arriving at the originally *inerrant* text. But the dispensationalists instead believed that the *Byzantine text* was closest to the original inerrant autographs.[123] They shared with Warfield the notion that a supposedly neutral, scientific method was both possible and

122. Johnson, review of Hills, 280. Hills never argued for anything more than "maximum certainty." "God's preservation of the New Testament text was not miraculous but providential.... Hence there are some New Testament passages in which the true reading cannot be determined with absolute certainty." *The King James Version Defended*, 4th ed. (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1984), 224.

123. See Martin, "Critical Examination"; Zane C. Hodges, "A Defense of the Majority Text," course notes, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1975; Hodges, "The Greek Text of the King James Version," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 125 (1968): 334–45; Hodges, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Majority Text: A Response," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21 (1978): 143–55; Hodges, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Majority Text: A Surrejoinder," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21 (1978): 161–64; Hodges and Farstad, eds., *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*; Wilbur N. Pickering, "An Evaluation of the Contribution of John Burgon to New Testament Textual Criticism" (Th.M. thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1968); Pickering, "Contribution of John William Burgon to New Testament Textual Criticism," in *True or False*, ed. David Otis Fuller (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1973); Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1977; 2nd ed., 1980); Pickering, " 'Queen Anne...' and All That: A Response," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21 (1978): 165–67; Pickering, "The Majority Text and the Original Text," *Selected Technical Articles Related to Translation (*March 1981); Jakob Van Bruggen, *The Ancient Text of the New Testament* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Premier, 1976); Van Bruggen, *The Future of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1978); Van Bruggen, "The Lord's Prayer and Textual Criticism," *Calvin Theological Journal* 17 (1982): 78–87; Van Bruggen, "The Text-Fixation in the Pericope 'Plucking Grain on the Sabbath,' " in *The Identity of the New Testament Text*, ed. Wilbur N. Pickering, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson). Van Bruggen is the only scholar not affiliated with a fundamentalist-dispensational institution. Though he is a Dutch, Reformed N.T. scholar, he shares with the others the belief in a neutral, scientific approach to this subject.

preferable.[124]

Like Hills, Zane Hodges began by attacking Westcott and Hort's *rationalistic* methodology. Hodges's 1971 essay, "Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Text Criticism," does not allude to Hills's work,[125] but makes many of the same arguments. Hodges later settled on a statistical probability approach, no less naturalistic than Westcott-Hort's.

In 1968, another Dallas student, Wilbur N. Pickering, wrote a Th.M. thesis, "An Evaluation of the Contribution of John William Burgon to New Testament Textual Criticism." Unlike Hodges, Pickering freely acknowledges and even quotes from Hills. Pickering's work was subsequently published in a symposium and then again as a monograph.[126] Pickering sent Hills a copy of the first edition of his work with a letter:

> Dear Dr. Hills:
>
> I would like to thank you again for your *King James Version Defended*! and "Introduction" to the reprint of Burgon's *Last 12 Verses*.... They have made a contribution to my understanding of N.T. textual criticism. Please accept the attached book as a token of my appreciation and esteem.
>
> I have deliberately organized my discussion without reference to the doctrines of inspiration and preservation so as to demonstrate to

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124. Hodges and Pickering both think "statistical probability" assumes that the text found in the majority of MSS must have been autographic, since it is so predominant (see appendix C in Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text*). But as Fee rightly sees, this theory gratuitously assumes transmission was normal and uninterrupted. Hodges can only plead that no other explanation can account for the dominance of the Byzantine text. In text critical circles, no one finds this argument convincing; see the following reviews of Hodges's text which he (with Arthur Farstad) based on this theory: Moisés Silva, review of *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, ed. Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, *Westminster Theological Journal* 45 (1983): 184–88; Gordon D. Fee, review of *The Majority Text*, *Trinity Journal* 4 (1983): 107–13; Larry Weir Hurtado, review of *The Majority Text*, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46 (1984): 162–63; G. D. Kilpatrick, review of *The Majority Text*, *Novum Testamentum* 26 (1984): 85–86; J. K. Elliott, reviews of *The Majority Text*, *Journal for Theological Studies* 34 (1983): 590–92, and *Bible Translator* 34 (1983): 342–44.

125. In the bibliography of the Farstad-Hodges Greek text, Hills is not even listed.

126. Pickering, *The Identity of the New Testament Text* (1977; 2nd ed., Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1980).

> naturalistic scholars (and everyone else) that even on their grounds the W-H theory is demonstrably erroneous and critical texts based on it demonstrably inferior. My own theological presuppositions are given in Appendix A....
>
> I hope we can get acquainted sometime.
>
> Sincerely, in our Lord,
> Wilbur N. Pickering[127]

The letter dramatizes two approaches now existing which both claimed to be a restoration of Burgon's view. Pickering employs the old "common sense" approach, confident that the scientific method will work. His theological point is a mere tacked-on "Appendix," not a visible part of his method (though his critics quickly accuse him of harboring this {133} "hidden agenda"), while Hills—along with Burgon—honestly asserted his presuppositions regarding the inspiration and preservation of the text as necessary rightly to interpret the data.

Pickering, Hodges, Martin, and Hills received a popular circulation in works edited by a Baptist minister who was a graduate of "Old Princeton," David Otis Fuller, starting with *Which Bible?*[128] No other work did more to bring this perspective to the grassroots than did this symposium and two others published in the series.

Later Responses to Hills

One result of the revival of this view[129] was that Hills began to gain scholarly recognition as a topic to be dealt with in dissertations

127. Letter, Wilbur N. Pickering to Edward F. Hills, July 28, 1977, in the author's possession.

128. David Otis Fuller, ed., *Which Bible?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1970); see also David Otis Fuller, ed., *True or False?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1973) and *Counterfeit or Genuine?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids International Publications, 1975).

129. By 1979 Eldon J. Epp was speaking of "a revival of the almost century-old view of J. W. Burgon... a curious and regrettable retrogression" from his perspective. Epp, "New Testament Textual Criticism in America," 95. Earlier he alluded to Hills's work under the topic of "The Return of the Textus Receptus," saying, "I suspect that no one of us will need take these books seriously, but that they could be written at all and published in our own day is, in a way, an indictment of our discipline.... In a striking way they return us to the days when

and theses. The first was Richard A. Taylor, "The Modern Debate Concerning the Greek Textus Receptus: A Critical Examination of the Textual Views of Edward F. Hills" (1973). Oddly enough, this was written not by one from a school regarded as advocating critical biblical studies, but by a student from Bob Jones University, an ultra-conservative, fundamentalist school. The reason for this is that the critical school already regarded the intrusion of theology in the praxis of text criticism as an unwarranted presuppositional consideration. Hills was dismissed as a text critic who had gone awry. But for those who still hold to Warfield's methods (as do nearly all fundamentalists), Hills poses a real challenge.

Taylor initially questions Hills's terminology. Then he dismisses as unacceptable the guiding principle of theology in determining the textual boundaries of the church's Bible. Taylor had no personal contact with Hills that might have clarified his theological tradition. He worked from within a virtual vacuum in his assessment of Hills's views. Taylor's work presents no relevant biographical information on Hills. And Taylor is oblivious to the Calvinistic, scholastic approach that Hills was consciously reviving.

Several other dissertations and theses attempt to refute Hills, written from within conservative, fundamentalist institutions, by students unacquainted with historic Reformed scholasticism, gauging Hills instead by the inappropriate canons of Enlightenment praxis.[130]

At odds with the academic community as well as with his own Reformed tradition, Hills eventually aimed for the general Christian reader on the popular market. The covers of his books, with their "space age" artwork, show his aggressive attempt at reaching the wider grassroots lay Christian readership.[131] And in later edi-

Dean Burgon made his... attacks upon Westcott and Hort." Epp, "The Twentieth Century Interlude," 405.

130. See n.4 in the introduction for a list of such works. A master's thesis written at Dallas Theological Seminary, Donald L. Brake, "The Doctrine of the Preservation of the Scriptures" (1970), shows an understanding of the scholastic approach, alluding to both the Westminster Confession and the Helvetic Consensus Formula.

131. Hills related his strategy in a letter to Van Bruggen: "Though arousing public opinion it may be possible to break up the monopoly that modernists have secured in church and state.... From a human point of view the situation looks hopeless.... But I believe that a new reformation may still come, if the Lord

tions he digressed to take up {134} the issues of evolutionary theory and other aspects of modern science, areas he was not really qualified to address.

For a time his works were forgotten by the academic world. But in 1978 the "world's largest publisher of Bibles," Thomas Nelson, issued Pickering's thesis as a trade book, promoting it extensively—and Hills's original 1956 position took on new vitality.

In 1978 the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* printed a debate between Zane C. Hodges and Gordon D. Fee[132]—who (as we have noted) astutely pointed out that Hodges was himself as rationalistic as those he was criticizing, because he argued from the theory of "statistical probability."[133] In an earlier issue of the same journal, Wilbur Pickering's work was reviewed by Richard Taylor, and Pickering responded, thus expanding the debate.[134]

Westminster Seminary also felt the need to rebut Pickering, and published Gordon Fee's extensive critique.[135] Hills was amazed that Westminster's own faculty was apparently incapable of response:

> I am disgusted that Westminster had to bring in a Pentecostal to defend their Westcott and Hort worship. Don't they have any Calvinistic textual scholars to defend their position? It may be that Westminster is still the most scholarly conservative seminary, but it seems to me that this is because the others are so bad rather than any general excellence on their part.[136]

Hills believed that Fee was bringing little that was new to the

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tarries. But before it comes we must return to the Reformation text of the Holy Scriptures." Letter from Hills to Van Bruggen, August 6, 1977, in the possession of Professor Van Bruggen.

132. See Gordon D. Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the Textus Receptus," and "Modern Textual Criticism and the Majority Text: A Rejoinder," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21 (1978): 157–60; Hodges, "A Response" and "A Surrejoinder."

133. Fee, "Modern Textual Criticism and the Revival of the Textus Receptus," 21.

134. Taylor, "The Modern Debate Concerning the Greek Textus Receptus"; Pickering, " 'Queen Anne...' and All That: A Response."

135. Gordon D. Fee, "A Critique of W. N. Pickering's 'The Identity of the New Testament Text,' " *Westminster Theological Journal* 41 (1979): 397–423. See also Fee, "The Majority Text and the Original Text of the New Testament," *Bible Translator* 31 (1980): 107–18.

136. Letter, Edward F. Hills to the author, August 11, 1980.

debate. For instance, Fee rejected Burgon's massive collection of quotations of the church fathers used by Pickering to demonstrate the antiquity of the Byzantine text as being unreliable, because not based on "critical" editions. But while Hills never wrote a response to Fee for publication (because Fee had not addressed his own work), Hills wrote to this writer informally:

> In regard to my references to the Church Fathers, I am sure that if you examine the notes to my KING JAMES DEFENDED and my BELIEVING BIBLE STUDY, you will see that I have taken care to look up all of Burgon's references in the most modern editions available. During the years 1950–55 I spent many weeks at this task. In fact, all my references in all my books have been searched out and verified with the very latest source material. Hence there is no need for me to write a special defense against Fee. My published books are my defense. If anyone doubts this, let him study my notes, look them up, and prove me wrong. Whether Pickering looked up all Burgon's references or not, I do not know. At any rate, Fee's rebuttal is a very ancient one, rather out of date, namely, the attempt to {135} invalidate Burgon's patristic references by alleging that the editions of the Church Fathers which he used were old and out of date. Fair-minded naturalistic scholars, however, like Rendel Harris (1909), have recognized that Burgon's arguments cannot be so easily disposed of. In fact, the newer German editions of the Church Fathers differ little from those of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Certainly not enough to affect Burgon's arguments.
>
> Fee argues that in Mark 13:14 the words *spoken of by Daniel the prophet* were added to harmonize the passage with Matt 24:15. This is one of Fee's strongest arguments against the majority text. But it is not invincible. Here we may have a case of *homoioteleuton* similar ending. In Greek both the word before the omitted phrase (*desolation*) and the word after the omitted phrase (*standing*) end in *os*. This fact may have caused some scribes to omit the phrase inadvertently. But when the phrase is omitted the verse makes no sense. *Let him that readeth understand.* Readest what? Obviously Daniel. Hence the reference to Daniel is not a harmonization but a necessary part of the verse. Even the scribes and modern critics who have omitted this reference to Daniel have been obliged to supply it mentally from Matthew. Only in this way can they make sense out of the verse. And this proves that Fee's naturalistic textual

criticism is wrong. His strongest point turns out to be his weakest.

> Fee's other argument against Pickering is that in Mark 1:2 *in Isaiah the prophet* found in *Aleph B* was changed to *in the prophets* found in *A W* and the majority of the manuscripts. But why so? Why wasn't [it] the other way round? Why wasn't *in the prophets* changed to *in Isaiah the prophet* by someone (to use Fee's own words) "who was trying to be more precise and failed to recognize that the first part of the quote came from Malachi"? In fact, we have a good example of such a change. In Matthew 13:35 *Aleph* and a few other mss change *the prophet* to *Isaiah the prophet.* Here we have an example of a scribe "who was trying to be more precise and failed to recognize" that this was a quotation from a Psalm of Asaph and not from Isaiah. Here most editors (not Tischendorf) follow the majority text, but only because *B* does. If *B* had agreed with Aleph, Fee and the others would be importing this contradiction into the sacred text and deriding us haughtily for not doing likewise. But if Fee admits that the majority text is right in Matthew 13:35, how can he be so sure that the majority text is wrong in Mark 1:2?
>
> In the rest of his review Fee tries to refute Pickering by pointing out instances in which the various readings could not have arisen from theological causes. But whoever said that *all* the variations in the NT text have arisen from theological causes. But the fact that some of the variations did not arise in this manner does not disprove the fact that many variations *did* arise from theological causes. Let Fee disprove this, if he can. In my next edition of KJVD I may discuss Fee's review in an Appendix.[137]

But before another edition could be published, Hills had died.[138] {136}

Finally, the apparent (at least to some) vacuum produced by a purely academic or scientific approach to biblical studies has prompted certain scholars to see a crisis in other areas of biblical criticism[139] as had Hills in the area of text criticism, specifically

137. Letter, Edward F. Hills to the author, February 15, 1980.

138. According to his family, Edward Hills was walking home from the store on a cold, snowy day and was seen grasping his chest, whereupon he set the bag of groceries he had in his arm, on the ground, and died of a massive heart attack. He was sixty-nine years of age.

139. E.g. Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970).

in regard to the use of Scripture in believing communities. Thus some see the revival of the Ecclesiastical text (culminating in perhaps its most tangible form in the publishing of a critical edition of this text and a modernization of the King James Version)[1] as an indication of the impasse of the discipline. Still others find in the old Textus Receptus the starting point and context for "canon,"[2] a concern that was at the very heart of Hills's goal in returning to the scholastic method and the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Conclusion

In chapter 1 we illustrated how the Reformed scholastics determined the canonical shape of the texts of Scripture, examining closely Theodore Beza's method. Beza's concern was to obtain the most objective, verifiable text possible by relying on the majority of the manuscripts surviving at the end of the medieval era.

In response to various challenges to these texts by Roman Catholics, High Church Anglicans, the school of Saumur, and certain Socinians, John Owen wrote a definitive, systematic-theological exposition of the doctrine of providential preservation legitimizing the ecclesiastical texts.

Turretin, in turn, coauthored the Helvetic Consensus Formula, which, with the Westminster Confession, gave final creedal sanc-

1. Thomas Nelson, publishers of *The New King James Bible* (N.T. 1979, O.T. 1982), gave their reason for rehabilitating the old English Bible: "The publishers are familiar with the issues of the continuing discussion between textual critics. Recently there has been growing concern among reputable New Testament scholars that the nineteenth-century text suffers from over-revision, and that the traditional Greek text is much more reliable than previously supposed." *The New King James Bible New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1979), v.

2. See Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon*: *An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985): "In spite of the excessive rhetoric Burgon sensed that the theological dimension of the *textus receptus* was not being properly handled in the critical approach of Hort" (523). However, while Childs sees that "working within the initial context of the *textus receptus*, the text critic enters into a process of searching for the best received, that is, canonical text" (528), he would not agree with Hills on the theoretical possibility that "the *textus receptus* represented the oldest text which was closest to the original apostolic autographs" (524). However, what from Childs's analysis constituted the strictly historical process that led to the canonical configuration of the text, from Hills's point of reference within his theological framework, had to be interpreted theologically as the superintendence of God's deliberate providence.

tion to these texts, in much the same way the Council of Trent did for the Latin Vulgate. Turretin's influence on this subject originally prevailed at Princeton, as can be seen in the works of Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge.

After studying biblical criticism in Germany, Charles Hodge and, after him, his son Caspar Wistar Hodge began cautiously to introduce the German method via Griesbach. It was not until Warfield adopted the German method employed by Westcott and Hort that Princeton broke completely from her scholastic moorings.

Warfield was able to retain the traditional view of verbal inspiration, but by a reinterpretation of the Westminster Confession he introduced an innovative bifurcation between the texts now in our possession and unassailable, scientifically inerrant *autographa*. Hence, Warfield was able to both enter into Enlightenment text criticism and retain a view that the text was perfect in its "autographic state." Thus, ironically, Warfield's apologetic strategy led to the introduction of biblical criticism at Princeton, which in turn contributed to the reorganization of Princeton in 1929.

While Westminster, led by J. Gresham Machen, broke away from Princeton, it never broke from Warfield's approach to text criticism. Hence, Edward Freer Hills was trained to embrace Warfield while a student under Machen and Ned Stonehouse. However, he detected a grave inconsistency between the Apologetics Department and the Biblical Studies Department. Van Til's presuppositionalism demanded {150} that one's faith commitment never be surrendered in order to establish the truth claims of Christianity on a neutral, common–ground basis with unbelievers; while in the New Testament Department, Warfield's method of treating the Bible as any other kind of literature prevailed.

After attaining the status of a text critic himself, Hills learned that Warfield's confidence in the finality of Westcott and Hort's method was not held by the discipline in the latter part of the twentieth century. In place of their theory and text, a prevailing consensus arose despairing of ever recovering an "original" text. Therefore, Hills saw himself as called to fulfill a mission not unlike that of his mentor, J. Gresham Machen.

As Machen had called all "orthodox" Presbyterians to depart from the apostasy of Princeton and the now liberal Presbyterian

Church, U.S.A., so Hills felt that he had discovered the origin of his defection from historic Calvinism in Warfield's betrayal of the Westminster Confession's decree regarding the providential preservation of the texts of Scripture. Hills therefore published a handbook on New Testament text criticism that was faithful both to the data of the twentieth century and to the theology of the Westminster Confession. In so doing, Hills returned to the original position of Princeton (while under Archibald Alexander and Charles Hodge) and the Calvinistic scholastics.

Hills was rejected by the Orthodox Presbyterians[3] because the faculty at Westminster still clung to Warfield, failing to take into full account the further developments of the discipline since his day. Furthermore, Warfield's theoretical argument regarding the inerrancy of the *autographa* was seized upon for apologetic purposes while his dependence upon German criticism went little noticed.

Moreover, the influence of neo-evangelicalism at Westminster blunted its former militancy in upholding a self-conscious identity that celebrated the distinctives of *historic* Calvinism. Hence, Hills's call for a return to scholasticism on this point fell on deaf ears.

Finally, the Bible–publishing industry played a much larger role than the once autonomous seminary context, in influencing both faculty and students by means of a marketing manufactured consensus. Hence, the highly financed *New International Version* project was promoted from the beginning by Westminster faculty who helped produce it and assured that Hills's book, titled *The King James Version Defended*, would not be taken seriously. {151}

In a larger context, Hills's attempt to return to the scholastic approach of his Calvinistic forefathers should not be seen as an isolated event limited to a small branch of conservative Calvinists. We have pointed out that no less an eminent New Testament critic than Merrill Parvis came to feel the compelling nature of Burgon's arguments regarding our dependence on the Church catholic for the ultimate form of the text eventually transmitted; and our sub-

3. A Reformed academician in the Orthodox Presbyterian circle, Gordon H. Clark, in one of the last works published before his death, advocated the view held by Edward F. Hills. *Logical Criticisms of Textual Criticism* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1986). Because Clark was enamored with Aristotelian logic, he was more inclined to the "common sense" approach of Pickering and Hodges.

sequent inability, by all accounts, to get behind this form to an autographic exemplar. He even went on record saying:

> The textual critic... might well venture to say that a certain reading can be accepted, not as an original reading, but, nevertheless, as a part of the N.T., because it comes to him in the stream of tradition.... These readings and these texts need not be only the oldest possible texts and readings. If they proclaim the faith of the church, they are scripture.…
>
> The textual critic who works from within the Christian tradition works, not with documents which are like all other ancient documents, but with documents which are for him scripture, and his attitude toward that scripture is determined by the time and place and religious community from which he comes.[4]

This admission certainly legitimizes Hills's attempt to restore the canonical shape of the texts sanctioned by the creedal authority of *his* religious community. What is all the more interesting is that his attempt was anticipated by Burgon, a High Church Anglican, and subsequently taken up by certain American fundamentalists. Certainly this is a development of catholic dimensions and reflects a sense of loss at the result of a purely academic exercise begun in the nineteenth century in the noble but overly ambitious attempt to arrive at the original text. {152}

Note 1.

Professor O. T. Allis's extensive reviews and critiques of the Revised Standard Version and other twentieth-century translations:

See O. T. Allis, "The Comment on John IX.38 in the *American Revised Version*," *Princeton Theological Review* 17 (1919), 241–311; "The Bible Revision and Celebration and the American Revised Version," *Presbyterian* 92 (1922): 8ff.; "Dr. Moffatt's 'New Translation' of the Old Testament," *Princeton Theological Review* 23 (1925): 267–317; "Dr. Moffatt's 'New Translation of the Old Testament' Is It a Reliable Help toward the Understanding of God's Word?" *Sunday School Times* 67 (1925): 443–44; "Dr. Moffatt's New Translation of the Old Testament," *Moody Monthly* 26 (1926): 464ff.; "The

4. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Text, N.T.," by Merrill M. Parvis, 613.

Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments—A New Translation," *Princeton Theological Review* 25 (1927): 484–90; "The Modern Reader's Bible for Schools—The Old Testament," *Princeton Theological Review* 25 (1927): 138–41; "The Sacred Scriptures, Concordant Version," *Princeton Theological Review* 25 (1927): 680–82; "An 'American' Translation of the Old Testament," *Princeton Theological Review* 26 (1928): 109–41; "The Short Bible—Its Meaning and Menace," *Evangelical Quarterly* 6 (1934): 7–25; "The Menace of the Short Bible," *Moody Monthly*, December 1934, 164ff.; "The So-Called Moffatt Translation," *Serving and Waiting* 26 (1936): 10–11; "The Moffatt Translation of the Bible," *The Presbyterian* 91 (1941): 3-4; "The Revised Standard Version of 1946," *Calvin Theological Journal (*November 1946): 11–15; "Evangelicals and 'The New Version'," *United Evangelical Action* 11 (1952): 15ff., September 15, 3ff., October 1, 5ff., October 15, 6ff., November 1, 6ff., November 15, 4ff.; "A Great Issue in Bible Translation," *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 11, no. 2 (May 14, 1952): 8-9; "Isaiah 7:14 According to the 'Introduction' to the RSV Old Testament," *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 11, no. 32 (December 10, 1952): 8; "Isaiah 7:14 According to the RSV Old Testament," *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 11, no. 26 (October 29, 1952): 5–6; "The Revised Standard Version, *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 11, no. 1 (May 7, 1952): 7–8; "Revised Standard Version of the Old Testament: A Critique," *Eternity* 3, no. 11 (November 1952): 5–7, 44–46; "The Conflict for an Authoritative Text of the Word," in *The Conflict for the Word of God* (Lake Luzerne, NY: 1953): *Revised Version* or *Revised Bible*? (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1953); "The Personal Equation in Bible Translating," *Sunday School Times* 96, no. 14 (April 3, 1954): 278–79; "Reply," *Southern Presbyterian Journal* 14, no. 39 (January 25, 1956): 2ff.; "RSV Appraisal: Old Testament," *Christianity Today* (Washington), July 8, 1957, 6ff.; "Translating the Bible," *The Sunday School World (*July-November 1958); "Bible Translation and the New English Bible," *The Sunday School World* (September-January 1962); *The New English Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1963); "Review of *The New English Bible with the Apocrypha*," *Westminster Theological Journal* 33 (1970): 81–93.

Also note that John H. Skilton, professor of New Testament at Westminster with Ned Stonehouse and after, wrote his Ph.D. dis-

sertation at the University of Pennsylvania on the topic of "The Translation of the New Testament into English, 1881–1950: Studies in Language and Style," 1961, wherein he concluded: "If it is true, as Goodspeed has said—although our study does not appear to support his position—that the modern translator rarely looks at the King James Bible, a change of approach is necessary. The literary gifts that helped to make that Bible a truly distinguished work belonged to no one man, but were more like those of a period or an era, united to produce a work of unique excellence. It is not likely that the private translator today or even a company of translators will possess gifts that will equal or exceed those that contributed to the development and final shaping of the Authorized Version" (857–58). This fairly reflects a continuity of consensus held by virtually all of the Westminster faculty from Machen until the introduction of the *New International Version* project at Westminster, when the past consensus was replaced with the new posture in direct proportion to Westminster's faculty being commissioned to the editorial staff of the project, funded by the Zondervan publishing concern. John Skilton was one of the few Westminster professors to resist the new position. See John Skilton, review of *The Holy Bible*: *New International Version*; *The New Testament*, *Westminster Theological Journal* 37 (1975): 256–65; John Skilton, "The King James Version Today," in *The Law and the Prophets*, ed. John H. Skilton (n.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1974).

Abbreviations

ATR	Anglican Theological Review
B	The Banner
BSac	Bibiotheca Sacra
BT	The Bible Translator
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CH	Church History
CrQ	Crosier Quarterly
CTJ	Calvin Theological Journal
CT	Christianity Today
CTP	Christianity Today: A Presbyterian Journal, 1930–49
CTW	Christianity Today (Washington)

EQ	Evangelical Quarterly
Et	Eternity
ETL	Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses
ExpTim	Expository Times
FPM	Free Presbyterian Magazine
HibJ	Hibbert Journal
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
Ind	The Independent
Int	Interpretation
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JPHS	Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society
JR	Journal of Religion
JSNT	Journal for the Study of the New Testament
JTS	Journal for Theological Studies
MM	Moody Monthly
NovT	Novum Testamentum
NTS	New Testament Studies
P	The Presbyterian
PRR	Presbyterian and Reformed Review
PTR	Princeton Theological Review
RQ	Restoration Quarterly
SPJ	Southern Presbyterian Journal
SST	Sunday School Times
START	Selected Technical Articles Related to Translation
SSW	The Sunday School World
SW	Serving and Waiting
Th	Theology
UEA	United Evangelical Action
USM	Union Seminary Magazine
WTJ	Westminster Theological Journal {153}

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2.
BIBLICAL LITERATURE

UGARITIC LITERATURE AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

Stan F. Vaninger

1. Introduction

The Discovery of Ugarit

During the spring of 1928, a Syrian farmer made an accidental discovery that was to have a tremendous impact upon biblical research. Mahmoud Mel la az Zir was plowing some land at a place near the Mediterranean coast of Syria. When his plow struck a very solid object just under the surface, Mahmoud investigated and found a passageway leading to an ancient tomb. France governed this area at the time, and eventually news of the discovery came to the attention of the French archaeological community.

Near the location of the tomb was a very conspicuous mound or tell which caught the eye of the French archaeologists. The tell, called *Ras Shamra* by the local populace, was sixty-five feet high and showed good prospect of being the site of an ancient city. Excavations were begun in 1929 at the initial tomb site, and a large cemetery was uncovered confirming that the nearby tell was a sizable metropolis in ancient times.

Just a few weeks later, excavations were transferred to the tell where impressive remains were immediately found. The French expedition returned the following year and in every subsequent year {174} until the outbreak of World War II in 1939. Excavations were resumed in 1948 and continue to the present.

By far the most significant result of these excavations was the discovery of a large number of clay tablets written in several different languages and scripts. The translation of some of these tablets soon confirmed the suggestion made by W. F. Albright that the

ruins were of the ancient city of Ugarit. The contents of these tablets, and, more specifically, the parallels that some of these writings display to parts of the Old Testament, will be the focus of this paper.

The History of Ugarit

The archaeological periods in Palestine and Syria and the dates that are conventionally assigned to them are shown in figure 1 (some of these dates will vary somewhat from source to source).

Figure 1. The Archaelogical Periods

Period	BC. Date
Paleolithic	2 million–16,000
Mesolithic	16,000–8,300
Neolithic	8,300–4,000
Chalcolithic	4,000–3,200
Early Bronze I, II, III	3,200–2,300
EBIV/MBI Intermediate Period	2,300–2,000
Middle Bronze II	2,000–1,500
Late Bronze I	1,500–1,400
Late Bronze II	1,400–1,200
Iron Age	1,200–330

The city of Ugarit has a long history of occupation beginning during the Neolithic period and terminating at the end of the Late Bronze Age (except for some isolated finds suggesting habitation on a small scale during some phases of the Iron Age). Five major levels of occupation were discovered by the excavators between the Neolithic period and the Late Bronze Age. Figure 2 shows the archaeological periods represented by these five levels, Level I being the most recent and therefore the most accessible and Level V being the most ancient and deepest. {175}

Figure 2. The Occupational Levels at Ugarit

Level I	Late Bronze Age
Level II	Middle Bronze Age
Level III	Ubaid/Chalcolithic/Early Bronze
Level IV	Chalcolithic Age

Level V Neolithic

The earliest occupational level at Ugarit (Level V) corresponds to the Neolithic Age (conventionally dated 8300–4000 BC) which is characterized by hunting, food gathering, the beginnings of wheat growing, distinctive burial practices, and the carving of jewelry items and statuettes. The earliest phase of Level V appears to be a pre-pottery Neolithic culture, but later phases reveal a relatively advanced type of pottery. Traces of an even more ancient Paleolithic culture have been found just seven kilometers north of Ugarit.

The next settlement at Ugarit (Level IV) was during the Chalcolithic Age, conventionally dated from around 4500 or 4000 BC to around 3100 BC Painted pottery associated with the Halafian period of Mesopotamian culture was found at this level.

The next occupational level (Level III) displays several distinct phases. The earliest phase is an intrusion of the Ubaid culture from Mesopotamia characterized by a polychrome pottery decorated with geometric designs. This was followed by a resurgence of the indigenous Chalcolithic culture in a second phase and then three phases of Early Bronze Age culture. It appears that the city was destroyed by fire sometime during this period and subsequently rebuilt on a large scale, elevating Ugarit into the category of a large city for that era. Khirbet Kerak ware, a handmade pottery which is characteristic of the Early Bronze III period in Northern Palestine, appears in the last phase of Level III at Ugarit.

The remains found at Level II indicate that during the Middle Bronze Age, conventionally dated from 2100 to 1500 BC, Ugarit began to assume the place of a significant port and the capital of a small kingdom. The entire Middle Bronze Age in Palestine and Syria was characterized by population growth, increasing prosperity, and significant cultural advances. Some artifactual evidence suggests that there was contact with Twelfth Dynasty Egypt during this period.

The last occupational period at Ugarit (Level I) corresponds to the Late Bronze Age, conventionally dated from 1500 BC to 1200 BC {176} The latter part of this period (the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC) is considered to be "Golden Age" Ugarit, a

time when the city enjoyed great prosperity and had dominion over a small kingdom of approximately 1,300 square miles.

Virtually all of the clay tablets found at Ugarit are from this last period of occupation during the Late Bronze Age. Most scholars feel that many of the literary/religious texts were actually composed during the earlier periods (see below) and systematically collected and copied anew during the Late Bronze Age (some, having been previously transmitted orally, may have now been put down in writing for the first time). This occurred in the reign of Niqmed II (Niqmaddu), who was a contemporary of the Eighteenth–Dynasty pharaoh Akhnaton and is therefore conventionally dated around the middle of the fourteenth century BC.

In addition to the literary/religious texts, other tablets discovered in the ruins have preserved the royal and administrative correspondence and also records of the trading activities of Ugarit during the Late Bronze Age. By piecing together bits of information gleaned from these tablets, modern scholars have been able to gain some insight into the political, military, and economic history of Ugarit during its final phase of occupation.

The available data indicates that during this time Ugarit held a prominent place in eastern Mediterranean trade and had considerable contact with the Hittite, Mittani, and Egyptian empires, at times coming directly under their control. It is known, for example, that King Ammishtamru I of Ugarit was an Egyptian vassal and that his successor, Niqmed II, paid tribute to the Hittite king, Suppiluliuma. Ugarit's crucial geographic location on the Mediterranean and near important land–trade routes made it a strategic site that invited the meddling of the major powers.

Ugarit suffered a great destruction during the Late Bronze Age occupation in the midst of its "Golden Age" referred to above. In the last occupational level (Level I), the excavators believe that they have found evidence of a natural catastrophe befalling the city, an earthquake and tidal wave followed by a fire. In one of the Amarna letters, written to Pharoah Akhnaton from Abimilki, the king of Tyre, it is reported that Ugarit had been burnt and half of the city no longer existed. It is usually held that this destruction occurred sometime during the first {177} half of the fourteenth century BC in the reign of Ammishtamru I or his successor Niqmed II.

At the end of the Late Bronze Age, Ugarit was violently de-

stroyed by fire, never to be rebuilt or resettled. This destruction is usually considered to be the work of the so-called "Sea Peoples" who swept across the Mediterranean world at this time producing great devastation. In accordance with the conventional dating of the archaeological ages, this final destruction is normally dated ca. 1200 BC[1]

The Literature of Ugarit

During excavations at Ugarit, several large archives of clay tablets were unearthed. Although eight different languages and four different scripts were represented on the tablets, the majority were in a previously unknown language written in a thirty-letter alphabetic cuneiform script. By the end of 1930, less than two years after excavations were begun, the new language, now known as Ugaritic, had been deciphered and the tablets could be read.

As the new language was analyzed and deciphered, it quickly became clear that it was a semitic language very closely related to the Hebrew of the Old Testament. Although written in different scripts, the close similarity of Ugaritic and biblical Hebrew has enabled modern scholars to fill in some of the gaps in their knowledge of the text of the Old Testament. The meaning of many Hebrew words or phrases, used only once or very rarely in the Old Testament, had remained obscure. A comparison of how these words or phrases were used in the Ugaritic texts often gives additional insight into their meaning. Mitchell Dahood has shown that certain spellings and grammatical constructions, previously thought to be in error by Hebrew specialists, have been verified by their appearance in the Ugaritic texts.[2]

In addition to the diplomatic and economic texts mentioned previously, many of the Ugaritic tablets recorded religious and literary texts. These include epic tales such as "The Conflict between

1. For a more complete history of Ugarit during the Late Bronze Age, see Michael E. Astour, "Ugarit and the Great Powers," in Gordon E. Young, ed., *Ugarit in Retrospect* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1981): 3–29, and Margaret S. Drower, "Ugarit in the Fourteenth and Thirteenth Centuries B.C.," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed., vol. 2, pt. 2 (1975): 130–48.

2. Mitchell Dahood, *The Anchor*: *Bible Psalms I* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), xx-xxix. Further examples are given throughout the volume and in two subsequent volumes.

Baal and Yam," "The Building of Baal's Palace," "The Conflicts of Baal and Mot," the legend of Keret, the legend of Aqhat, the tale of Shahar and Shalim, and also ritual texts decribing various cultic rites and procedures. It is primarily the contents of these religious and literary texts that will concern us in this paper. {178}

Similarities between Ugaritic and Biblical Literature

Both liberal and conservative scholars agree that many of the religious and literary texts found at Ugarit display some remarkable similarities to portions of the Old Testament. Consider the statements given below:

R. K. Harrison:

> The poetic material from Ras Shamra... indicated that Hebrew poetry did not depend so much upon analogous forms in Egyptian and Babylonian religious texts as upon the literature of Ugarit, which contained a vast number of stylistic forms, phrases, and grammatical expressions in common with the Hebrew.... The discovering of the Ras Shamra texts has pointed clearly to the close interrelationship between Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry in terms of language, poetic forms, and syntax.... It is now apparent that the earliest poetry of the Bible is replete... with rhythmical patterns that are thoroughly characteristic of the Canaanite poems of Ugarit. Far-reaching parallels in grammar and syntax, as well as literary style, have served to emphasize the closeness of the relationship between Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry.[3]

J. C. de Moor:

> The literary texts of Ugarit show that Hebrew poetry was quite similar to Canaanite traditions.... Precisely because of the close linguistic affinity, the formal similarities between Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry are undeniably significant. Frequently the same words are found in parallel contruction, identical figures of speech are employed, and the rhythmic structures of the verses hardly differ.[4]

Baruch Margalit:

3. Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 37, 983, 998.

4. J.C. de Moor, in A.S. van der Woude, ed., *The World of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 105.

> The number-one crux posed by the Ugaritic literature, the poetry in particular, [is] its unparalleled, at times even uncanny, resemblence to the (poetic) literature of the OT, especially in matters of structural form, poetic technique, and diction.[5]

Most of the Ugaritic religious and literary texts are poetic in form and exhibit the same parallelism that is so prominent in the poetry found in the wisdom literature, Psalms and songs, and prophetic writings of the Hebrew Scriptures. In addition to this common poetic parallelism, there are many cases of striking similarities that involve unusual grammatical constructions, distinctive words and phrases, and even entire compositions. Numerous examples will be cited below. {179}

The Issue of Dependence

Many scholars who have recognized the close similarities between Ugaritic and biblical literature have come to the conclusion that these similarities are the result of the biblical writers borrowing from the Ugaritic literature. Thus Ginsberg, in an article published over forty years ago, could write:

> When, therefore, a comparative study of Ugaritic and biblical literature reveals resemblances which can hardly be accounted for otherwise than by borrowing, it must be the Israelites who borrowed from the Canaanites and not vice versa.[6]

This conclusion of Ginsberg and of many other scholars since is based primarily upon chronological considerations. If the conventional dates of the archaeological periods in Palestine and Syria are accepted, then there is really no other possible alternative.

We have already seen that occupation at Ugarit ceased once and for all at the end of the Late Bronze Age, conventionally dated around 1200 BC All but the most conservative scholars have now accepted the "Late Date" of the Exodus and conquest of Canaan which places Israel's entry into Canaan at the end of the Bronze

5. Baruch Margalit, "The Geographical Setting of the AQHT Story and its Ramifications," in Young, *Ugarit in Retrospect*, 157.

6. H.L. Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," in Edward F. Campbell Jr. and David Noel Freedman, eds., *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*, vol. 2 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1957, etc.), 40. This is a revision of an article first published in *Biblical Archaeologist* 8, no. 3 (May 1945).

Age or slightly later. The implications for the question of dependence are obvious:

> The one kingdom [Ugarit] ceased to exist before the other [Israel] came into national existence.[7]

Writing in the *Cambridge Ancient History*, Margaret Drower shows that at the time of the final destruction of Ugarit, much of the religious literature was already quite old:

> It must be admitted that there are reasons for supposing that a gap of some centuries separates the composition of the texts and their copying or redaction in the fourteenth century BC... On the strength of such evidence it has been claimed that the mythological poems of Ugarit are of very ancient origin, some perhaps antedating the second millennium altogether, or at least that they were some hundreds of years old at the time when our copies were made by King Niqmaddu's scribes.[8]

As mentioned earlier, the nonliterary texts date mostly from the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC during the last occupational period of Ugarit.

As for the scriptural writings, the very earliest (the Pentateuch) would be dated to the time of the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan, and the rest would be variously dated over the following centuries {180} down to the fifth century BC Many liberal scholars date the composition of the Pentateuch long after the time of the Exodus and conquest. In any case, despite the impressive similarities, there is apparently little or no chronological overlap between these two bodies of literature.

> It is fairly safe to say that the Ugaritic texts always have chronological priority over the Hebrew texts in comparative studies, though the chronological gap in such studies varies from ca 100 years to 1000 years, depending upon the identity of the texts under comparison.[9]

Thus it is no wonder that when there is obvious evidence of borrowing, modern scholars conclude that the biblical writers bor-

7. Peter C. Craigie, "Ugarit, Canaan, and Israel," *Tyndale Bulletin* 34 (1983): 146.

8. Drower, *Cambridge Ancient History*, 3rd ed., vol. 2, 2, 155.

9. P.C. Craigie, "Ugarit and the Bible: Progress and Regress in 50 Years," in Young, *Ugarit in Retrospect*, 106.

rowed from the Canaanites and not the other way around. If we accept the conventional dating of the archaeological ages, no other conclusion is possible.

A most remarkable situation presents itself for our consideration. It appears that modern scholars are asking us to believe that the Israelites borrowed much of their literature from a people whose kingdom and culture was destroyed before Israel emerged as a nation, a people with which Israel had absolutely no historical contacts. We are asked to believe that the Israelites borrowed vocabulary, grammar, syntax, style, and even entire compositions from a people they did not know and who lived hundreds of years before them. We are asked to believe that despite the chronological gap, that the two languages could be similar enough even to allow such borrowing.

2. Parallels between Ugaritic and Biblical Literature

Levitical Ritual

It is not difficult to establish the close relationship between the worship of Israel prescribed by the Levitical ritual of Mosaic law and the worship of the people of Ugarit. The literature is full of open admissions by both liberal and conservative scholars:

K. Bernhardt:

> As material has been studied more and more closely, it has become increasingly clear that Yahwistic religion assimilated far more Canaanite elements than had generally been supposed. Thus we already find in ancient Ugarit the various forms of sacrifice which occur in the Old Testament and the terminology for them.[10] {181}

G. E. Wright:

> It is now evident that much of the sacrificial ritual found in the book of Leviticus was borrowed from Canaan.[11]

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10. Karl-Heinz Bernhardt, "Ugaritic Texts," in Walter Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Religious Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 186–87.

11. G. Ernest Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), 117.

C. F. Pfeiffer:

> Much of the vocabulary associated with the Mosaic offerings was current in the Ugaritic literature.... The sacrificial animals are also comparable.... The "law of first-fruits" is common to biblical usage (Ex. 23:19; Lev. 23:10; Deut. 18:4), and is here seen to have been observed in Ugarit.... Many of the sacrificies mentioned in the Ugaritic texts have names which are identical to those described in the book of Leviticus. Ugaritic texts speak of the Burnt Offering, the Whole Burnt Offering, the Trespass Offering, the Offering for Expiation of the Soul, the Wave Offering, the Tribute Offering, the First Fruits Offering, the Peace Offering, and the New Moon Offering. The term "offering without blemish" also appears in the Ugaritic literature.[12]

John Bright:

> The Ras Shamra texts and other evidence show that Israel's sacrificial system, though less elaborate, had numerous similarities to that of the Canaanites in types of animals offered and, to some degree, in the terminology and outward form of the various sacrifices. Some connection must be assumed.[13]

The more conservative writers, while acknowledging the similarities, will deny that any borrowing has occurred. Charles F. Pfeiffer, for example, having pointed out the long list of identical names for the sacrifices practiced by both Israel and Ugarit, can write:

> There is no evidence of borrowing on the part of Israel or the Canaanites of Ugarit. Similarities are doubtless the result of the common Semitic background of both peoples.... Although Moses is rightly regarded as the Israelite lawgiver, the Old Testament does not imply that the sacrificial system associated with his name had its beginnings at Sinai. Sacrifices are mentioned as early as the time of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:3–5), and Noah is said to have made Burnt Offerings after leaving the ark (Gen. 8:20). Abraham and his immediate descendants regularly offered sacrifices (Gen. 22:13; 26:25; 33:20). The sacrificial system of Israel was codified as a part of the Mosaic law, but its origins are much earlier. The Ugaritic

12. Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1962), 38, 47, 57.

13. John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 163.

documents attest to the antiquity as we meet on the pages of the Old Testament.[14]

Pfeiffer's line of argument is not very convincing. What he is really saying is that the entire Levitical sacrificial system existed hundreds of years before the Pentateuch was written and was used not only by {182} Israel but by Gentiles as well. The biblical evidence cited is embarrassingly meager, and the whole line of reasoning is obviously *ad hoc.*

It is clear from Genesis that there were pre-Mosaic sacrifices of various types from the earliest times (in addition to the references given above by Pfeiffer, see also the drink offering mentioned in Genesis 35:14). But these instances show nothing more than that there were pre-Mosaic sacrifices; they do not even begin to demonstrate that the very complicated Levitical system was in use prior to the time of Moses. The only compelling evidence is that of the Ugaritic literature: if it did not exist, no one would even suggest that the Levitical ritual predated Moses. More recently, the same line of reasoning has been restated by Monty Mers in the conservative *Near East Archaeological Society Bulletin.*[15]

Conservative scholars find themselves in a genuine dilemma. Their views on the inspiration of Scripture will not allow them to say with the liberals that Israel borrowed her religion directly from the Canaanites. But the alternative they have chosen unfortunately leads to forced arguments and a mishandling of Scripture. A third alternative will be outlined below which will avoid the problems associated with the first two.

The Psalms

Probably no part of the Old Testament writings display more similarities to the Ugaritic literature than the Psalms. Apparently wanting to minimize the significance of Hebrew/Ugaritic comparative studies, Craigie has pointed out that "there are no Ugaritic psalms" but then qualifies this by adding that "there are portions of

14. Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible*, 39, 58.

15. Monty Mers, "A Consideration and Comparison of Sacrificial Terminology and Practice in Ancient Israel and Ugarit," *Near East Archaeological Society Bulletin* 15–16 (1980): 5–21.

the [Ugaritic] poetic texts which have a hymnic character,"[16] Curtis clearly states why it is legitimate to compare the Ugaritic texts (the literary texts are all poetic in form) to the Hebrew Psalms:

> The fact that both Ugaritic and Hebrew poetry have as their most striking feature parallelismus membrorum, i.e. the same or similar sense is given twice (or occasionally three times) in different words, and that "fixed pairs" of parallel terms (e.g. sea/river, hand/right hand, heart/liver) are common to both languages, suggests that they shared a common poetic tradition.[17]

Once again, the literature abounds with statements regarding similarities and evidence of borrowing: {183}

W. F. Albright:

> The literary texts of Ugarit do demonstrate that many of the Psalms are saturated with Canaanite stylistic and verbal reminiscences, and even with direct quotations from passages found in Ugaritic sources already known to us.[18]

John Bright:

> Psalms of Canaanite origin were adapted for Israelite use.[19]

One specific example involves the reference to "Leviathan that twisted serpent" (Isa. 7:1) in Psalm 74:13–14:

C. F. Pfeiffer:

> The Hebrew Leviathan is a variant of the name Lotan.... Baal's victory over Lotan is paralleled by the victories of Yahweh over Leviathan.[20]

H. L. Ginsberg:

> An example is the notion of his successful combat long, long ago, with a hydra-headed sea-dragon (Psalm 74:14), known as Leviathan and by several other names and epithets, and with other enemies. The seven-headed dragon, the very name Leviathan, and

16. Peter C. Craigie, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 19, *Psalms 1–50* (Waco, TX: Word, 1983), 55.

17. Adrian Curtis, *Ugarit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 109.

18. W.F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 5th ed. (Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1968), 128.

19. Bright, *History of Israel*, 215.

20. Pfeiffer, *Ras Shamra and the Bible*, 30, 34.

> most of the other names and epithets, recur in the Ugarit texts, according to which the same beings were vanquished by Baal (with the aid of trusty allies).[21]

Another example is "the designation of Yahweh in Psalm 68:4 as 'he rides upon the clouds,' since a frequent epithet of Baal in the Ugaritic texts is 'he who rides the clouds.'"[22] Curtis draws the conclusion that, "It is probable that an epithet of Baal has here been attributed to Yahweh."[23]

Craigie reminds us of the "chronological problem" that leads many modern scholars to this kind of conclusion:

> The chronological problem may be stated concisely as follows: any comparative study must keep in mind the gap of two to seven centuries which separate the Ugaritic texts from the Hebrew Psalms. The Ugaritic texts were composed, for the most part, between the fifteenth and the thirteenth centuries BC; in contrast, the majority of the psalms were probably composed between the tenth and sixth centuries BC[24]

Since very few of the biblical Psalms date before the time of David (1000 BC), the "chronological problem" is greater here than in the case of the Levitical ritual where there was at least some possibility of a chronological overlap (if one accepted the "Early Date" of the {184} Exodus and conquest of Canaan during the second half of the fifteenth century BC). For the Psalms, there is definitely a chronological gap of several centuries or more; David and the other psalmists lived 300–700 years after the Ugaritic literature was composed. Perhaps the most significant question raised by this chronological gap is how to explain what Margalit refers to as the "fundamental continuity" between the literature of Ugarit and that of the Old Testament (see below). We will deal with this question shortly.

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21. Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," 45.
22. Curtis, *Ugarit*, 110.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 53–54.

Psalm 29

Perhaps the most widely known example from the Psalms is Psalm 29, which is usually attributed to David and would therefore date to around 1000 BC:

H. L. Ginsberg:

> We also have a complete composition, namely Psalm 20, which is full of echoes of Canaanite poetry and whose geographical standpoint is not Palestine but Phoenicia, or at least the Syro-Palestinian "sphere of Canaanite culture"....The cumulative evidence for the ultimately Canaanite origin of Psalm 20 is therefore overwhelming.[25]

G. E. Wright:

> Psalm 20, dominated by this type of nature imagery, is now believed to have been originally a hymn to Baal, borrowed and used of Yahweh.[26]

K. Bernhardt:

> Here we come against a wealth of phrases and poetic imagery which are already characteristic of Ugaritic myths—sometimes there are even exact verbal parallels. On the basis of such a comparison, Psalm 20, which is very early, can be identified as an ancient Canaanite cult hymn which has been superficially adopted in terms of Yahweh.[27]

F. M. Cross:

> H. L. Ginsberg in 1936 drew up conclusive evidence that Psalm 20 is an ancient Ba'l hymn, only slightly modified for use [by] the early cultus of Yahweh. Further study has steadily added confirmitory detail.[28]

Over a fifteen year period, Dr. Peter C. Craigie (previously of the University of Calgary and now deceased) made a concentrated effort in urging restraint and caution in the field of Hebrew/Ugarit comparative studies. In his numerous articles, Craigie sought to minimize the implications {185} and importance of the similari-

25. Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," 45–46.

26. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, 109–10.

27. Bernhardt, *Near Eastern Religious Texts*, 187.

28. Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 151–52.

ties and evidences of borrowing. His primary purpose apparently was to discredit the popular notion among liberal theologians that the Hebrews borrowed much of their religion from the Canaanites and to suggest alternative explanations for the Hebrew/Ugarit similarities and apparent evidences of borrowing.

As we might expect, in dealing with Psalm 29, Dr. Craigie does argue against the view of those authors quoted above, that Psalm 29 was originally a hymn to Baal that was borrowed and adapted by the Hebrews. But it is significant that Craigie does acknowledge the similarities to Canaanite literature (in a footnote) and offers two possible explanations for them (in the same footnote), seemingly even leaving open the possibility of borrowing (although he later argues against this alternative):

> The use of language similar to that used of Baal may indicate Canaanite influence and/or may be deliberately employed; Yahwels victory may be stressed by the attribution to him of some of the characteristics of the god of the defeated enemy.[29]

The latter suggestion is the one Craigie is really seeking to promote. Unfortunately, it seems to be a rather forced explanation in view of the fact that the Old Testament writers made a special point of stressing the uniqueness of Yahweh and the differences between Yahweh and the false gods of the surrounding nations (see, for example, Ps. 96:4–5 and Jer. 10:1–16; 14:22). A very similar view is expressed in the same writer's recent commentary on Psalms 1–50:

> Thus, the poet has deliberately utilized Canaanite-type language and imagery in order to emphasize the Lord's strength and victory, in contrast to the weakness of the inimical Baal.[30]

Allen P. Ross says outright what Craigie hints at, that "Psalm 20 is a polemic against pagan beliefs in false gods who were credited with being responsible for storms."[31] A polemic is really the only acceptable explanation for a conservative writer (such as Ross) who is committed to the inspiration of the Scriptures. Any other

29. P.C. Craigie, "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel," *Tyndale Bulletin* 22 (1971): 19n48.

30. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 246.

31. Allen P. Ross, "Psalms," in John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: *Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 815.

kind of explanation would seem to compromise the integrity of Scripture considerably.

Although this kind of explanation is in theory possible, it seems to this writer to be somewhat *ad hoc*, being based solely upon the Ugaritic similarities and apparently being intended only to avoid the conclusion that much of the "inspiration" of the Old Testament writings {186} came from Canaanite literature. A genuine polemic, as is found in 1 Samuel 5 (against Dagon), in 1 Kings 18 (against Baal), or in chapters 40–48 of Isaiah (against idol worship), is obvious from reading the Scripture passage alone rather than being based only on external evidence.

Craigie seems to betray an awareness of the weaknesses of this "polemic" explanation by arguing that the apparent borrowing of Canaanite poetic imagery by the Hebrew writers was done to achieve "a subtle effect."[32] What Craigie is trying to do is to convince his reader that the Hebrew compositions are a form of polemic without demonstrating any evidence of polemic from the context. Craigie often resorts to this "subtle polemic" kind of explanation when the evidence for borrowing is quite apparent. When we blow away the smokescreen of Craigie's cautious reserve and "subtle effect" arguments, we see that there is evidence for borrowing or influence but no evidence of polemic. Craigie seems to be making a desperate attempt to uphold the integrity and inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures without plainly stating his purpose.

We should point out that in a few cases, the similarities are so great that even Craigie is compelled to admit that the Hebrew writer must have borrowed from the Canaanite composition. In his discussion of the Song of the Sea in Exodus 15, for example, Craigie draws the following conclusion:

> There is present in the Song a cluster of motifs which have a striking similarity to the motifs of the mythological Baal texts. They have been radically adapted to suit the "singer's" purposes... The Song of the Sea contains evidence of Canaanite resources which have been adapted to the new Hebrew context.[33]

32. P.C. Craigie, "Deborah and Anat: A Study of Poetic Imagery (Judges 5)," *Zeitschrift Fur Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 90, no. 3 (1978): 381.

33. Craigie, "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel," 25. Compare this article, 11–14, and Craigie, "Deborah and Anat," 380–381.

Hosea

Perhaps the most impressive chronological gap in Hebrew/Ugaritic comparative studies is encountered when we consider the example of the eighth–century prophet Hosea. Writing in 1962, G. E. Wright says, "It seems probable, for example, that the prophet Hosea (about 740–735 BC) makes use of words, phrases, and imagery drawn from the rites of Canaan connected with the worship of Baal."[34] Further research seeks to confirm Wright's statement. Writing from Israel, archaeologist Dr. Eva Danelius supplies more recent information: {187}

> At the nineteenth Congress of the Israel Society for Biblical Research held in Jerusalem in 1971 and dedicated to problems connected with the writings of the so-called "minor prophets," a young Israeli scientist, Izhaq Avishur, gave a lecture (published in Hebrew in Beth Mikra vol. 48 [1], 1971, 36–50), concerning "The similarity of style and language between the book of Hosea and the literature of Ugarit." Quoting scores of examples from both sources, the lecturer showed the amazing identity of symbols, expressions, connections of words—some words being hapax legomena in the Old Testament—as proof for the close relationship between the language of the Ugaritic texts and that used by the prophet. Now, Hosea lived and preached in the eighth century BC, while the Ugaritic epic of Keret, for instance, has been dated by experts to the fourteenth century BC[35]

Hosea lived and wrote over 400 years after the destruction of Ugarit and 600 years or more after the composition of the Ugaritic literature. And yet the comparative studies give every indication of contemporaneity.

It is certainly true that the literature of Ugarit could have survived the destruction of that city in 1200 BC if it were in extensive use in other regions of Phoenicia and Palestine. The archaeological evidence suggests that this is not the case; tablets written in the same language and script have been found at other places, but the distinctive literary and religious texts of Ugarit have not been

34. Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, 112.

35. Cited in Immanuel Velikovsky, "A Reply to Stiebing," *Pensee* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1973–74): 40.

found anywhere else.[36] But it is the enormous span of time involved beween the end of Ugarit and the time of Hosea that stretches the credibility of what the evidence suggests to the breaking point. Margalit has fully recognized the problem:

> There is a seemingly unbridgeable gap, both in time and space, between Jerusalem and Ugarit alongside... a fundamental continuity in their respective Iiteratures.[37]

Solutions for both the chronological and geographical gaps will be suggested below.

The Issue of Inspiration

Many more examples could be cited and discussed. The list of comparisons where there is evidence of influence or borrowing is enormous and continues to grow. The passages involved include the Song of the Sea (Ex. 15), the Song of Deborah (Judg. 5), David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam. 1), the Song of Solomon (5:10–16, in particular), Isaiah 52:13–53:12, the Son of Man imagery {188} in Daniel 7, Habakkuk 3, and many of the Psalms. Almost every part of the Old Testament is involved. We have already seen that "the Ugaritic texts always have chronological priority over the Hebrew texts" and would thus appear to be the prototypes of the Hebrew writings whenever there is evidence of significant influence or direct borrowing.

The evidence that has been presented above is enough to make any conservative Christian who adheres to the inspiration of Scripture feel very uncomfortable. The evidence suggests that Israel borrowed much of her religion and literature from the Canaanites. For conservative Christians to accept this would certainly involve allowing their concept of the inspiration of the Old Testament and the uniqueness of the biblical faith to be deflated considerably. In the following section, we shall see why this is not necessary.

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36. Craigie, "The Poetry of Ugarit and Israel," 26 (also see n. 70 on the same page).

37. Margalit, "The Geographical Setting of the AQHT Story," 157. Also compare Craigie, "Ugarit and the Bible," 106, Craigie, "Ugarit, Canaan, and Israel," 166, and Mitchell Dahood, *Anchor Bible*: *Psalms II* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1968), xv.

3. The Historical Revision

During the past few decades, there has been a growing interest in the work of a number of scholars who are producing a reconstruction of the history and archaeology of the ancient Near East. The man who gave the initial impetus to this movement was the Jewish scholar Immanuel Velikovsky, who first saw the need for a revision of ancient history in 1939. Velikovsky devoted many years of research to his revision and produced four volumes of his proposed reconstruction of ancient times before his death in 1979.[38]

Ages in Chaos

Central to Velikovsky's revision is the recognition that the dating of some of the periods of Egypt's ancient history is in error by hundreds of years. Since the dating of many other ancient kingdoms is based upon synchronisms with Egypt's history, the errors in the chronology of Egypt directly affect the history of much of the ancient world.

Velikovsky's approach was to study the historical sources of the Hebrews and those of the Egyptians looking for definite synchronisms. Despite the many contacts between Israel and Egypt recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, Velikovsky noticed that in modern accounts of Egypt's ancient history, very few of these contacts were apparent. By ignoring the conventional chronology of ancient Egypt, Velikovsky began to search for direct historical synchronisms between the histories of Israel and Egypt. The result was a radical reconstruction of ancient {189} history that shifted forward in time by hundreds of years major portions of Egypt's ancient history.

Velikovsky lowers the date of the end of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt from the conventional date of 1786 BC by 340 years to synchronize with the Israelite Exodus from Egypt which occurred, according to biblical chronology, in 1446 BC During the Second Intermediate Period which followed the Middle Kingdom, Egypt

38. Immanuel Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1952); *Oedipus and Akhnaton* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1960); *Peoples of the Sea* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977); *Ramses II and His Time* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978).

was ruled by the Hyksos. Velikovsky identified the Hyksos as the Amalekites who ambushed Israel in Sinai shortly after the Exodus and who were defeated about 350 years later by the military campaigns of Saul and David. Thus the end of the Second Intermediate Period and the beginning of the subsequent New Kingdom Period was moved forward from the conventional date of 1567 BC by about 550 years to synchronize with the rise of the monarchy period in Israel.

Numerous remarkable synchronisms were established between Eighteenth–Dynasty Egypt and the early part of Israel's monarchial history. Space does not allow a review of the vast quantity of very impressive evidence for these synchronisms that Velikovsky has produced in *Ages in Chaos.* The interested reader is urged to study this work carefully. Subsequent periods of Egypt's history were also shifted forward on the BC timescale, some as much as 800 years. For a more complete summary of Velikovsky's reconstruction, the reader is referred to two previous articles by the present writer.[39]

The Exodus Problem

In 1956, a scholar in California, Dr. Donovan Courville, also began working on a revision of ancient history. Stimulated by reading *Ages in Chaos* by Velikovsky, Courville began a similar study of his own, taking a somewhat different approach. Fifteen years later, a two-volume work was published, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications.*[40]

Courville agrees with Velikovsky that the Exodus occurred at the end of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt and that it was, in fact, the catastrophic nature of the ten plagues that actually brought about the end of the Middle Kingdom and ushered in the Second Intermediate Period when Egypt was ruled by foreigners (the Amalekites in the Old Testament; the Hyksos in the Egyptian re-

39. Stan F. Vaninger, "Archaeology and the Conquest of Canaan," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, 7, no. 1 (Summer 1980): 110–34; "Archaeology and the Antiquity of Ancient Civilization: A Conflict with Biblical Chronology?" pts. 1/2, *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (June 1985) and no. 2 (September 1985).

40. Donovan A. Courville, *The Exodus Problem and Its Ramifications*, 2 vols. (Loma Linda, CA: Challenge Books, 1971).

cords). Courville also agrees with Velikovsky in his redating of the Eighteenth Dynasty, although there are significant differences for some of the later periods. Both Velikovsky {190} and Courville follow the chronology of the Old Testament Scriptures and thus redate the end of the Middle Kingdom to about 1450 BC.

Velikovsky's reconstruction begins at the close of the Middle Kingdom of Egypt, but Courville extended his revision all the way back to the First Dynasty and even the predynastic era. One of the fundamental assumptions of modern Egyptologists is that most of the thirty-one dynasties were consecutive and nonoverlapping. Courville has challenged this assumption and has presented a wealth of evidence to show that many of these dynasties were contemporary and overlapping, ruling over different segments of Egypt at the same time. The duration of Egypt's dynastic history is thus greatly reduced and the beginning of the First Dynasty is redated from the conventional figure of around 3100 BC to around 2150 BC.

Redating the Archaeological Ages

Although Velikovsky's reconstruction requires some redating of the archaeological ages, his published volumes do not address this issue systematically or at any great length. Courville has given a lot more attention to this issue and has suggested a scheme for redating the archaeological ages that greatly enhances the overall coherence and credibility of the reconstruction. A previous article by the present writer has defended at length a redating of the archaeological periods very close to the scheme first proposed by Courville.[41]

Figure 3 shows the archaeological periods in Palestine and Syria relevant to this study, the conventional dating of these periods, and the revised dating accepted by the present writer. It should be noticed that in the revision, all of the periods have been shortened somewhat and have been moved forward on the BC timescale considerably.

According to the revised dating of the archaeological ages, the

41. Stan F. Vaninger, "Abraham to Hezekiah: An Archaeological Revision," pts. 1/2, *Catastrophism and Ancient History* 5, pt. 2 (July 1983), and 6, pt. 1 (January 1984).

Early Bronze Age and all previous periods correspond to the Canaanite era in Palestine before the conquest of the land by Israel. During the latter part of this Canaanite era, Israel was enduring the long period of bondage in Egypt and then the forty years of wandering in Sinai after the Exodus (see figure 4). The conquest of Canaan, which put an end to this Canaanite era, occurred at the end of Early Bronze III, the date of which is shifted from ca. 2300 BC to ca. 1400 BC to correspond to the date of the conquest derived from the chronological data of Scripture. {191}

Figure 3. The Conventional and Revised Dates of the Archaeological Ages

Period	Conventional Dates BC	Revised Dates BC
Early Bronze I–III	3200–2300	1900–1400
EBIV/MBI Intermediate	2300–2000	1400–1200
Middle Bronze II	2000–1500	1200–925
Late Bronze I, II	1500–1200	925–700
Iron Age	1200–330	700–330

The EBIV/MBI Intermediate period together with Middle Bronze IIA correspond to the era of the Judges in Israel, which, according to biblical chronology, lasted about 350 years. The last phase of the Middle Bronze Age corresponds to the period of the United Monarchy when Saul, David, and Solomon served as the first three kings of Israel ruling over all twelve tribes.

Shortly after the death of Solomon, the Jewish state broke up into two separate nations, the ten northern tribes becoming known as Israel and the two southernmost tribes becoming known as Judah. This period of the Divided Monarchy lasted from 925 BC to 722 BC when the northern kingdom of Israel was conquered by Assyria and most of the population carried away into captivity.

The southern kingdom of Judah continued for another 135 years until 587 BC when it was conquered and taken into captivity by the Babylonians. According to the revised dating, the Late Bronze Age corresponds to the 200 year period of the Divided Monarchy while the last 135 years of Judah would probably fall into the first phase of the Iron I period. Later phases of the Iron Age would correspond to the brief Babylonian captivity of Judah and the resettlement of Judea by some of the exiles during the era

of the Persian empire during the sixth and fifth centuries BC.

Figure 4. The Periods of Israel's Ancient History According to Biblical Chronology

Period	Dates BC
Patriarchal Period	2100–1877
Bondage in Egypt	1877–1446
Wandering in Sinai	1446–1406
Period of Judges	1406–1051
United Monarchy	1051–925
Divided Monarchy	925–722
Last Years of Judah	722–586
Babylonian Captivity	586–539
Post-Exile Period	539–330

The Date of Ugarit

Although there are a number of significant differences between the revisions of Velikovsky and Courville (especially after the Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt), both agree that the conventional dates assigned to the ruins of Ugarit (specifically the last two levels) are in error by about 500 years. In *Ages in Chaos*, Velikovsky devotes a long chapter (forty-four pages) to the evidence for lowering the dates for Ugarit. Despite the fact that Velikovsky seems to confuse the final destruction of Ugarit with the earlier destruction during the era of Niqmed II (see "The History of Ugarit" in Part 1 above), the evidence he presents is nevertheless still valid and very compelling.

One of the more impressive lines of evidence concerns the chamber tombs found in the necropolis of Ugarit and their virtual identity in construction to burial vaults found on Cyprus and dated to the eighth and seventh centuries BC by the Swedish excavators. Velikovsky cites the excavator of Ras Shamra (Ugarit) as saying:

> One fine example is the burial vault of Trachonas on the east coast of the Karpas peninsula, exactly facing Ras Shamra.... Some five hundred years lie between the Trachonas tomb and those of Ras Shamra.[42]

42. Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos*, 183.

It is, of course, absolutely incredible that the people of Cyprus could have copied the tombs of Ugarit hundreds of years after that city was destroyed and forgotten, and yet that is the conclusion we are forced to if we accept the conventional chronology of ancient times. Velikovsky's own conclusion is a very different one: {193}

> The vaults on Cyprus across the strait and at Ras Shamra are of identical construction; they must have been built in the same age.[43]

Another piece of evidence concerns the existence of Greek elements in the writings found in Ugarit, 500 years too early according to the conventional dating of that city:

> Nikomedes is an old Greek name. The similarity between the name Nikomedes, regarded as originally an Ionian name, and the name of the Ugaritian King Niqmed, is so obvious that, after deciphering the name of the king, two scholars, working independently, related it to the Greek name. Other scholars, however, rejected this equation of the name Niqmed (who also wrote his name Nikmes and Nikmedes) with Nikomed (Nikomedes) of the Greeks, asking how an Ionian name could have been in use in the fourteenth century before this era. Those who made the identification were unable to defend their position against the mathematics of conventional chronology.[44]

Velikovsky interprets the legend of Keret, one of the epic poems found at Ugarit, as being a Phoenician account of the defeat of "Zerah the Ethiopian" (who is identified as Amenhotep II of the Eighteenth Dynasty of Egypt) by King Asa of Judah, who reigned 910–869 BC (2 Chron. 14). This legend, usually thought to be composed in the fourteenth or fifteenth century BC or earlier is brought down to the ninth century BC in the revision.[45]

The reader is encouraged to study the chapter entitled "Ras Shamra" in *Ages in Chaos* in its entirety for additional confirmation. More recently, Courville and Isaacson have contributed additional evidence.[46] Lester J. Mitcham has cleared up the confusion in *Ages in Chaos* regarding the final destruction of Ugarit making

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, 185.

45. *Ibid.*, 211–19.

46. Courville, *Exodus Problem*, vol. 2, 115–18; Israel M. Isaacson, "Applying the Revised Chronology," *Pensee* 4, no. 4 (Fall 1974): 5–20.

it plain that this occurred at the end of the Late Bronze Age about a century and a half after the time of Niqmed II.[47]

Thus, according to the revised dating of the archaeological ages shown in figure 1, the final destruction of Ugarit occurred somewhere around 700 BC during the period of the Assyrian empire. During this time the Assyrians conquered Damascus in Syria (732), Samaria in Israel (722), Carchemish in northern Syria (717), the Philistine cities of Ashdod and Gath in southern Palestine (714), and besieged Jerusalem in Judah. Although the Assyrians threatened all of Palestine and Syria during this period, they may not have been responsible for the final destruction of Ugarit. {194} According to the conventional history of the ancient Near East, a conglomerate of tribes originating somewhere in the eastern Mediterranean known as "Sea Peoples," were responsible for the destruction of Ugarit and many other sites along the Mediterranean coast around 1200 BC and also for invasions of Egypt during the reigns of Merneptah of the Nineteenth Dynasty and Ramses III of the Twentieth Dynasty. In *Peoples of the Sea* (1977), Velikovsky has attempted to show that the "Sea Peoples" belong in the sixth and fifth centuries BC during the era of the Persian empire. This proposal seems to have generated as many problems as it purports to solve and has been generally rejected by those who favor some kind of reconstruction.

Courville's revision, on the other hand, lowers the date of the "Sea Peoples," along with the dates of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Dynasties, to the end of the eighth century BC during the time of the Assyrian empire. This arrangement seems to be much more satisfactory than the one proposed by Velikovsky. Perhaps Ugarit was indeed destroyed by the "Sea Peoples," but, if so, this destruction occurred 500 years later than the conventional date.

Although many writers have made valuable contributions to the development of the historical revision begun by Velikovsky and Courville, one in particular deserves special mention. Dr. John Osgood, an Australian scholar, is producing a series of articles that have not had a lot of exposure in the United States but are well worth careful study. (Especially interesting is the evidence Dr. Os-

47. Lester J. Mitcham, "Syria and Ugarit," *Catastrophism and Ancient History 4*, pt. 1 (January 1982): 19–28.

good presents for dating the entire Stone Age after the Flood of Genesis 6–9 and for correlating the end of the Neolithic Age and much of the Chalcolithic Age with the era of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.)[48]

Contact between Ugarit and Israel

We have seen that the historical revision eliminates the unbridgeable gap in time between Ugarit and Israel spoken of by Margalit. We now can briefly turn our attention to the so-called unbridgeable gap in space (distance) between these two states.

The sites of Ugarit and Jerusalem are separated by a distance of over 250 miles, and the northern boundary of Israel during ancient times was less than 175 miles from Ugarit. These distances are almost negligible in our own modern era of autos and jet airplanes and even in ancient times could hardly be considered an unbridgeable gap for cultural exchange. The statement about an unbridgeable gap in distance {195} was perhaps a bit of an exaggeration. A little further reflection will reveal that not only is cultural contact between Ugarit and Israel during ancient times perfectly reasonable, but even very likely.

48. A.J.M. Osgood, "The Times of the Judges—A Chronology," *Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 1 (1984): 141–58; "The Times of the Judges: The Archaeology; (a) Exodus to Conquest," *ENTJ* 2 (1986): 56–76; "The Times of Abraham," *ENTJ* 2: 77–87; "*A Better Model For the Stone Age*," *ENTJ* 2: 88–102; "A Better Model for the Stone Age, Part 2" (forthcoming); "The Times of the Judges: The Archaeology; (b) Settlement and Apostacy" (forthcoming); "From Abraham to Exodus" (forthcoming).

Given the long period of contemporaneity between Ugarit and Israel that is provided by the historical revision, the obvious link between them are the two Phoenician city-states of Tyre and Sidon. Located midway between Jerusalem and Ugarit, these two Phoenician seaports had easy access to Ugarit through the network of Mediterranean Sea trade. Dahood has pointed out that the epic myths found at Ugarit were actually more likely composed in the region around Tyre and Sidon.

> A careful examination of their contents reveals that the Ugaritic mythological texts were not composed in Ugarit (or its suburbs). Their more southern provenance is evidenced by references to the Lebanon, the anti-Lebanon, Apheq, just north of Beirut, Tyre, Sidon, and Semachonitis (= Lake of Huleh in northern Galilee).[49]

The other leg of the link between Israel and Ugarit is provided by the close relations that existed between Israel and Phoenicia during ancient times. The numerous references in the Old Testament to both Tyre {196} and Sidon make it clear that the Hebrew people were very much aware of these two important seaports and trade centers throughout Israel's history.

Furthermore, we know that close relations were maintained between the Phoenicians and the Hebrews during at least two particular periods of Israel's history. We read in 2 Samuel 5:11 that King David built a palace using materials sent from Hiram, king of Tyre, and with the aid of craftsmen from that city. We learn from 2 Samuel 24:6–7 that David's kingdom extended right up to the vicinity of both Tyre and Sidon. In 1 Kings 5:3 we have a message from Solomon to Hiram in which the new king of Israel reminds Hiram of the good relations that existed between their states during the reign of David. Solomon then requests that Hiram send cedar and cypress timber from Lebanon as he had to David, this time for the construction of the temple of Yahweh.

About 100 years later, during the period of the Divided Monarchy, according to 1 Kings 16:31, King Ahab of Israel married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians. Such a marriage suggests some kind of political alliance between Israel and Sidon and certainly confirms that there was trade and cultural

49. Mitchell Dahood, *Anchor Bible*: *Psalms III* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970), xxiv.

links between the two. It is a well known fact that King Ahab also adopted the religion of the Phoenicians, the worship of Baal, one of the primary deities in the Ugaritic texts. Thus, during the reigns of David and Solomon, during the time of King Ahab, and perhaps during other periods as well, Israel had close relations with Phoenicia.

Even during periods when relations were not particularly close, it is likely that traders and travelers could journey by land from anythwere in Israel to Phoenicia in a matter of two or three weeks and in just a few days more journey by ship from Phoenicia to Ugarit. This was certainly a common occurrence during ancient times since the prosperity of all three depended to a greater or lesser degree on trade. Citizens of both Ugarit and Israel would have had easy access to the literature of the other, and we should not be surprised at all to see the abundant evidence of "the close, at times uncanny, connections of Ugaritic poetry with that of the Hebrew Bible."[50]

Archaeology provides us with further evidence of cultural contact between Israel and Ugarit. Davey has shown that the layout of temples found at Ugarit is very similar to many found in Palestine.[51] This is a clear indication of cultural and religious continuity. We know from {197} Scripture that during much of their history down to the Babylonian Exile, the Hebrews adopted many of the religious practices of their Canaanite neighbors. Periodically, this trend was reversed by some of the more godly rulers through concentrated reform efforts but seldom with complete success (1 Kings 15:9–15; 22:41–43; 2 Kings 10:18–31; 12:1–3; 14:1–4; 15:1–4; 18:1–4; 22:1–23:25). The biblical writers, on the other hand, were uniformly opposed to this trend to assimilate Canaanite religion, especially the historians and the prophets, and it is inconceivable that those who were so zealous for the faith of Yahweh would themselves borrow from the religious literature of the Canaanites.

In addition to the evidence regarding the layout of temples, tablets written in the same script and in the Ugaritic language have

50. Margalit, "The Geographical Setting of the AQHT Story," 135.

51. Christopher J. Davey, "Temples of the Levant and the Buildings of Solomon," *Tyndale Bulletin* 31 (1980): 140–41.

been found at several sites in Palestine (including Mt. Tabor, Taanach, Bethshemesh, and Aphek).[52] These two lines of archaeological evidence confirm the biblical evidence that there was no unbridgeable gap in distance between Israel and Ugarit.

4. The Implications of the Historical Revision for Hebrew/Ugaritic Comparative Studies

Our purpose in this section is not primarily to present additional evidence in support of the historical revision briefly described in the previous section (although some will be pointed out in the course of the discussion). The reader who desires to see confirmation of the revision is urged to read the books of Velikovsky and Courville and some of the many articles that are available.[53] In these works, a wealth of evidence is presented, the cumulative weight of which, in this writer's opinion, is overwhelmingly convincing.

Our purpose, rather, is to look at the implications of the revision for Hebrew/Ugaritic comparative studies beginning with the assumption that the historical revision is generally true and valid. Those who are committed to the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture and believe that the religion of Israel was supernaturally revealed will be pleased to find that the historical revision suggests some conclusions entirely consistent with this position. But this need not be considered as an additional line of evidence supporting the revision. Our acceptance or rejection of the historical revision can be based exclusively upon the degree of correlation that can be achieved between the archaeological evidence and the historical evidence (which includes the biblical records). Those who do accept the revision will find that it {198} has implications that are much more compatible with the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture.

52. Curtis, *Ugarit*, 30.

53. The best single source of material on the historical revision is the journal *Catastrophism and Ancient History*, edited by Dr. Marvin Luckerman and published twice a year since 1978. Additional articles have been made available through the publication of the proceedings of three symposiums held in 1982, 1983, and 1985. For further information, write to *Catastrophism and Ancient History*, 3431 Club Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90064.

Israel and Ugarit Contemporary

We are now ready to take another look at some of the numbers involved in the redating of the archaeological ages and compare them to the chronology of Israel's history. Courville was the first to correlate the end of Early Bronze III with the Israelite conquest of Canaan and has produced very convincing evidence in support of this sychronism. He has accordingly shifted the date for the end of Early Bronze III from 2300 BC to about 1400 BC to agree with biblical chronology (see figure 3).

We have seen that despite significant differences in the revisions of Velikovsky and Courville, for some periods, they seem to be in agreement that the conventional dating of the city of Ugarit is on the order of 500 years too old. Since it is clear that the final destruction of Ugarit occurred at the end of the Late Bronze Age, Courville has shifted that date from 1200 BC to about 700 BC (see figure 3).

Both Velikovsky and Courville accept the biblical chronology and thus date the Exodus and conquest of Canaan in the second half of the fifteenth century BC (the dates most commonly used are 1446 BC for the Exodus and 1406 BC for the conquest of Canaan). It should be noted in passing that these fifteenth-century dates have been rejected by all but the most conservative biblical scholars who are deeply committed to the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. The vast majority of biblical scholars who have rejected these fifteenth-century dates have done so because of the lack of historical evidence from Egypt that the Exodus occurred at this time and the lack of archaeological evidence from Palestine that the Israelite conquest occurred at this time. Since the historical revision eliminates the contrary evidence, no reason remains for questioning the chronological data of the Old Testament.

This means that, according to the revision, there was an enormous 700 year overlap in the histories of Israel and Ugarit. Israel's history as a distinct nation began at the end of Early Bronze III with the conquest of Canaan (ca. 1400 BC). The city of Ugarit remained until the end of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 700 BC). During the entire length of the EBIV/MBI Intermediate Period, the Middle Bronze Age, and the {199} Late Bronze Age, Israel and Ugarit were contemporary (see figures 3 and 4).

We have already seen that most scholars date the composition of at least some of the Ugaritic religious and literary texts to the Middle Bronze Age which corresponds to the Level II occupation (see Figure 2). According to the revision, this would be during the latter part of the period of the Judges in Israel and the period of the United Monarchy (the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon).

Most of the historical, economic, and diplomatic texts found at Ugarit date to the "Golden Age" of the city in the latter part of the Level I occupation during the Late Bronze Age. According to the revision, this would correspond to the latter part of the period of the Divided Monarchy in Israel. All of the literature of Ugarit, therefore, would have been composed sometime during the era of Israel's national existence (after the Exodus and conquest).

Reassessment Needed

In view of the above, there is the need for a total reassessment of the relationship between the literatures of Israel and Ugarit and the evidence for influence and borrowing between them. Before proceeding, however, it would be helpful to make a distinction between three different categories of similarities or parallels between the literatures of Ugarit and that of the Old Testament. The purpose of this distinction is to help clarify our thinking regarding the issue of influence and borrowing.

General Similarities

It must be emphasized that we are not going to argue that all of the similarities between the two bodies of literature are the result of borrowing from the Hebrew to the Ugaritic. On the contrary, the vast majority of the similarities and parallels are of a very general nature and are without a doubt due to cultural contact and the closely related languages of the two peoples. Examples would include identical word pairs used so frequently in the parallelism characteristic of the Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry, the use of identical terms and phraseology, and the identical use of distinctive and unusual grammatical constructions. The vast quantity of this more general kind of similarity provides valuable literary evidence that the two peoples who produced these two bodies of literature were, in fact, contemporary. {200} We are not here talking about the borrowing of religious concepts, the ritual of worship, or religious

compositions. It should be obvious that these more general similarities are irrelevant to this kind of borrowing and are irrelevant as well to the issue of the inspiration of the Old Testament (other than clearing up some alleged errors in spelling and grammar in the Hebrew Bible).

Religious Interaction

A second category of similarities would include certain kinds of influence resulting from a conscious conflict between two rival faiths. One kind of example would be the obvious polemics found in Scripture against Canaanite worship mentioned earlier (see part 2 under "Psalm 29"). These passages (and others as well) mention the names of rival gods and religious practices but of course do not reflect any influence of Canaanite religion on the biblical writers. Although many of the Hebrew people were influenced by Canaanite religion and to a greater or lesser extent adopted it, the Old Testament *writings* themselves are characterized by a vigorous stance against Canaanite religion. This kind of negative influence of the Ugaritic literature and religion on the Old Testament writers is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of inspiration.

Another possible example of this second category in the use of Leviathan in Scripture (Job 3:8; 41:1; Psalm 74:13–14; 104:26; Isa. 27:1). This term is equivalent to the Ugaritic word "Lotan," a mythical creature usually thought to be a seven-headed dragon or serpent. We have already seen that the Ugaritic texts recount the defeat of Lotan by Baal and his allies (see part 2 under "The Psalms"). One of the biblical occurrences of Leviathan seems to be a parallel to this Ugaritic myth:

> You divided the sea by your strength;
> You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters.
> You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces,
> And gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
>
> —Psalm 74:13–14

Packer, Tenney, and White state that:

> Biblical writers deliberately made references to familiar myths. It seems impossible to avoid this conclusion. What would allusions to a dragon or leviathan mean to Isaiah's audience, unless the people

were already familiar with stories about the creatures?[54] {201}

The above statement, even though written from the perspective of the conventional chronology, may nevertheless be essentially correct. It is possible that the Psalmist borrowed from Canaanite mythology the account of the defeat of Leviathan. In the biblical account, however, Leviathan is defeated not by Baal and his allies but single-handedly by Yahweh. To the Hebrew listener familiar with the Baal-Lotan myth, the biblical account would perhaps be a form of reverse parody intended to make a mockery of the Baal myth and at the same time to assert the superiority of faith in Yahweh.

If this is the case, then this rewriting of the Leviathan myth by the Psalmist should be considered a literary device and a form of polemic rather than a wholesale borrowing of Canaanite worship with merely a substitution of Yahweh for Baal. This particular parallel, consequently, would not challenge the divine origin of the biblical faith. The reader should note that this kind of polemic is very different from the "subtle polemic" that Craigie argues for where the attributes of false gods are supposedly ascribed to Yahweh.

Other explanations for this paraticular parallel are possible. The biblical account of Yahweh's defeat of Leviathan would refer to a *real historical event* and be the prototype of the Canaanite myth. The term "Leviathan" is used in three different Old Testament books by three or four different writers, and one of these books (Job) is usually considered to be one of the oldest compositions in the Old Testament. This suggests that these passages preserve recollections of some event from Israel's early history (Psalm 74:13–14 itself seems to point to the time of the Exodus and forty years in Sinai). Additional research and perhaps further discoveries will be required to get to the bottom of the Lotan/Leviathan parallel.

Religious Syncretism

A third category of the similarities or parallels would be those where it appears that the borrowing of religious concepts, ritual,

54. James I. Packer, Merrill C. Tenney, William White Jr., eds., *The World of the Old Testament* (Nashville, TN: Nelson, 1980), 176.

or compositions or worship occurred. This is the category we are primarily concerned with below since it is the only one that is relevant to the issue of inspiration and the origins of the biblical faith.

We have seen that the conventional chronology has artificially produced a chronological gap between Ugarit and Israel. This phantom chronological gap has forced modern scholars erroneously to conclude that whenever there is evidence of this kind of similarity, the borrowing {202} must have been done by the Hebrew writers. The revised chronology requires that this category of similarity or parallel be entirely reassessed. A complete reassessment would involve a separate examination of each particular parallel. While that is beyond the scope of this article, we would like briefly to outline several general reasons why it appears that the Canaanite writers borrowed from the religion, ritual, and literature of Israel. To this we now turn.

Chronological Priority to the Hebrew Writings

When we accept the validity of the historical revision, then, in some cases, the tables are turned, and the Hebrew writings have chronological priority over the Ugaritic texts. In other cases, the two would be approximately contemporary. In very few cases, if any, would the Ugaritic texts retain their supposed chronological priority over the Hebrew writings. Specific examples can be cited.

Assuming the general validity of the historical revision, we find that the Pentateuch predates all of the Ugaritic texts by as much as two or three hundred years and some by even more! (This also involves an acceptance of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and a fifteenth century BC date for Moses that is required by biblical chronology). When we consider the evidence for borrowing in the case of the Levitical ritual, for example (the long list of identical names of offerings cited by C.F. Pfieffer is quite impressive), then it seems quite evident that the Canaanites must have borrowed much of their ritual from the Israelites.

In the case of the Psalms, the two bodies of literature would be roughly contemporary, and borrowing or influence of various sorts conceivably could have occurred in either direction. The Roman Catholic scholar, Mitchell Dahood, has been severely criticized from many quarters for his extensive use of Ugaritic parallelisms in his translations of the Psalms and other portions of the Old Tes-

tament. The main reservation seems to be the chronological gap between the two bodies of literature. Dahood quotes one of his own critics, the Assyriologist A. Leo Oppenheim, as saying, "To see him at work one would almost suppose that the psalms arose in the suburbs of fourteenth-century Ras Shamra."[55] Oppenheim's criticism is perfectly valid, of course, if we are working with the conventional chronology. If, on the other hand, the revised chronology is generally correct, then Dahood's {203} extensive use of Hebrew/Ugaritic parallels is fully justified (this would not mean, however, that all of his conclusions are necessarily correct). Similar to the Psalms is the case of Hosea who, according to the revision, would have probably lived sometime during the last century of Ugarit's history. Borrowing and influence could have occurred in either direction. In such cases, we would have to look to other evidence to determine the direction of any borrowing that may have occurred.

Literary Superiority

Those scholars who have most closely studied and compared the contents of these two bodies of literature, while accepting the chronological priority of the Ugaritic literature, freely admit to the superiority of the biblical writings.

W. F. Albright:

> The Israelites adopted many of the rhetorical devices from the Canaanites, employing them even more effectively, as we can see from the Song of Miriam, the Song of Deborah, and the Lament of David. Both in early times and later they borrowed very extensively from Canaanite hymnology, trimming away polytheistic expressions and discarding crudities.... Hebrew poetic literature has preserved most of the beauties and few of the crudities of older national literature.[56]

H. L. Ginsberg:

> I have yet to say a word about the quality of Ugaritic poetry. After what I have already hinted about the crudity of the Canaanite concept of divinity, it will come as no surprise that some of the passages are quite crude, and that few display real power or profundity, However, some—especially those about men!—are not

55. Dahood, *Psalms III*, xxiii.

56. William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 15.

> without delivery and grace. But there can be no two opinions about it: the Israelite pupils far outstripped their Canaanite masters.[57]

M. Dahood:

> The poetry of the Psalter can be highly sophisticated, subtle, full of nuances. Often its conciseness results in ambiguity, and in some cases the abiguity seems willed. All know that its dominent structural feature is parallelism, but the innumerable devices employed by the psalmists to ensure that the second colon would elaborate, not merely repeat, the thought of the first are still being discovered. The poets' consistency of metaphor and subtlety of wordplay bespeak a literary skill surprising in a people recently arrived from the desert and supposedly possessing only a rudimentary culture.[58] {204}

Speaking more generally, John Bright can write that Israel's literature is "unsurpassed in the ancient world."[59]

Craigie points out that "the Ugaritic texts are often incomplete, semilegible, and difficult to interpret."[60] (Some of this, admittedly, is due to the poor condition of many of the clay tablets that the texts are written on.) This is in marked contrast to the Old Testament texts which, despite a much longer period of transmission, are in a remarkable state of preservation and present relatively few difficulties in textual interpretation.

Spiritual and Moral Superiority

The Ugaritic texts reflect a much inferior form of religion that includes polytheism, idol worship, and cultic prostitution. The Israelites, at times, of course, practiced all three, but it is significant that when these practices are referred to in the literature of the Old Testament, it is always with a strong sense of disapproval and condemnation. The Israelites were warned repeatedly to avoid the false religion and immorality of their Canaanite neighbors and were condemned and punished when they failed to do so.

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57. Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," 50.

58. Dahood, *Psalms III*, xxv-xxvi.

59. Bright, *History of Israel*, 215.

60. Peter C. Craigie, *Ugarit and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 68.

Historical Consciousness

It is generally recognized that the Hebrews were the first to develop the concept of writing history and that this development occurred during the tenth century BC, approximately 500 years before a similar development in Greece.

> Israel had a unique concept of history... Hebrew historical literature is without any genuine parallel, at least before the emergence of Greek historiography.... Historiography, in the proper sense of the term, developed only in Israel among the peoples of the ancient Near East.[61]

The concept of the historical narrative, which constitutes a major portion of the Old Testament, was a unique innovation of the Hebrews.

No other nation with which Israel had contact during ancient times produced what we would today consider "history."

> The Babylonians never wrote history in the modern sense.... With the exception of a small number of "chronicles" and the historical allusions to be found in texts recording omens, there was no deliberate writing down of historical events.[62] {205}

> The Egyptians had no real sense of history in the classical or modern sense. There are no extant Egyptian histories; even chronicles and annals do not extend beyond a single reign or lifetime.[63]

Babylon and Egypt were the two greatest centers of culture and civilization in the ancient Near East. Neither one produced history writing; nor did any other nation of the fertile crescent except Israel.

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61. J.R. Porter, "Old Testament Historiography," in G.W. Anderson, ed., *Tradition and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 125–26. These statements do not reflect the view of Porter but rather are intended to represent the general consensus of opinion.

62. Joan Oates, *Babylon*, rev. ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1986), 16, 18.

63. William K. Simpson, in Hallo and Simpson, *The Ancient Near East* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 191. Also see Cyril Aldred, *The Egyptians*, rev. ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1984), 7. Compare similar statements cited by Van Seters, *In Search of History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 127. Van Seters himself takes exception to these statements.

Van Seters has recently challenged this conventional view arguing that the Hebrews did not begin writing history until during the Babylonian Exile of the sixth century BC and that this occurred as a result of considerable foreign influence.[64] During the nineteenth century, it was fashionable among religious liberals and secular scholars to assign a very late "post exilic" date (after the sixth–century Babylonian Exile) to the vast majority of the Hebrew Scriptures, and Van Seters seems to be trying to breathe new life into this out–of–date view.

Some important archaeological discoveries, however, have refuted one of the main arguments of the nineteenth-century liberals by showing that the peoples of Palestine and Syria were quite literate at very early times. Languages written in alphabetic script and very similar to Hebrew have been discovered at both Ugarit and Ebla dating from the Middle Bronze and Late Bronze periods. These finds show that a very early date for the writing of parts of the Old Testament (for example, the books of Moses) is very reasonable. Some of the tablets found at Ebla, in fact, date as early as the Early Bronze/Middle Bronze transition period (often termed Early Bronze IV), the very time, according to our historical revision, that the Israelites were entering Canaan.[65] Moses would indeed have been able to put down in writing the five books ascribed to him (by Scripture itself) in a language very close to the biblical Hebrew of later times. It will be of interest to note here that Dahood's argument for an earlier composition date (prior to the Babylonian Exile) for many of the Psalms is based upon the many close parallels with the supposedly much earlier literature of Ugarit.[66]

We cannot take space here to deal any further with the now refuted arguments of the nineteenth-century liberals or with the more recent view of Van Seters. Suffice it to say that if one is open to the testimony of Scripture itself and other available evidence, there is good reason for believing that much of the historical narrative found in the Hebrew Scriptures was first written down in

64. Van Seters, *In Search of History*, 8.

65. Paolo Matthiae, *Ebla*: *An Empire Rediscovered* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 51

66. Dahood, *Psalms I*, xxix-xxx, and *Psalms III*, xxxiv-xxxvii.

periods much earlier than the Babylonian Exile.[67] {206} This has important implications for the origins of history writing. If Moses did indeed write the Pentateuch during the fifteenth century BC (the Scriptures do not themselves leave open any other possibility), then we are forced to conclude that the Hebrews were writing history approximately 1,000 years before the time of Herodotus ("the father of history") and Thucydides, the two earliest Greek historians (both of the fifth century BC)!

The development of history writing by the Hebrews had a tremendous impact on subsequent civilization especially in the West.

> Israelite preoccupation with history has created a Western civilization imbued with a like historical consciousness.[68]

This "historical consciousness" pervades the entire Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi and is found even in much of the non-historical material, especially the prophetic books and the Psalms. It is this "historical consciousness" which makes the Hebrew literature so unique in the ancient Near East, being totally absent from the literature of Babylon, Egypt, and Ugarit.

The absence of any "historical consciousness" in the literature of Ugarit and its prevalence in the Old Testament is, in fact, one line of evidence that suggests that the Hebrew literature was indeed original and not derived from supposedly earlier Canaanite prototypes. In the Ugaritic literature, instead of history, we find epic myths which are totally absent in the Hebrew Scriptures.

> Israelite monotheism leaves no room for any powers which are not subject to the sovereign will of God. Consequently, it leaves no room for mythology.[69]

The historical consciousness, the sheer bulk of historical narrative, and the absence of mythology do not demonstrate the "lateness"

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67. For some of the standard arguments against a very late date for the composition of the Old Testament, see K.A. Kitchen, *The Bible in Its World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1977), 49–51; R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 201–10; Gleason L. Archer Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 91–118.

68. Frank Moore Cross, "Biblical Archaeology Today: The Biblical Aspects," in *Biblical Archaeology Today: Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1985), 14.

69. Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," 47.

of the Hebrew writings but rather their superiority, originality, and uniqueness.

On the other hand, the Canaanite texts of Ugarit show every sign of being a derived, degenerate, and inferior body of literature. The literary quality, the religious concepts, the morality, the quality of transmission, the mythology, and the lack of historical consciousness all demonstrate an inferiority to the Old Testament writings. If it were not for the supposed chronological priority of the Ugaritic texts, there would be little or no basis for concluding that the Hebrews borrowed from the Canaanite writings. {207}

If we accept the historical revision, on the other hand, any obvious evidence of borrowing of religious concepts would most naturally suggest that it was from the vastly superior Hebrew writings to the Ugaritic. Further research would be necessary in the light of the revised chronology to investigate each specific case where borrowing obviously occurred. But the burden of proof would clearly be on those who would maintain that the Hebrews borrowed from the Canaanite literature of Ugarit.

Inspiration

The doctrine of inspiration is crucial to the Christian understanding of the Old Testament. If the Hebrew Scriptures were not inspired by God, then the Hebrew's faith was no different than any of the other major world religions and contained no more truth than they. Since the Christian faith is based squarely upon the message of the Old Testament, this would mean that it, too, is nothing more than a man–made religion and not the revelation of the one true God.

Inspiration, of course, does not mean dictation. The vocabulary, phrasing, and style of the various books of the Old Testament vary considerably due to the different human authors involved. But the doctrine of inspiration maintains that the message was determined and supernaturally communicated through the human author by the Lord Himself. This teaching is quite incompatible with the thought that the ancient Hebrews borrowed much of their worship ritual and some of their hymns of worship from the Canaanite religion of Baal and Dagon. Those who adhere to the conventional chronology must somehow deal with this dilemma.

The revised chronology and superiority of the Old Testament

writings, on the other hand, suggest that where borrowing did occur, it was by the Canaanites rather than by the Hebrews. This is, of course, entirely compatible with the inspiration of the Old Testament.

We have seen that there are many similarities between the literature of Ugarit and that of Israel. At the same time, we have also seen that there are some very significant differences between the two. How can we best explain the similarities and the differences? We have already stated that the nature of the similarities strongly suggests that the two bodies of literature were the product of the same era and of closely related cultures and that some interaction and borrowing occurred. {208} At this point, we would like to add the suggestion that the differences are best explained by the *unique nature of Israelite faith.* One of the basic presuppositions of Christianity and of the biblical writings themselves is that the biblical faith is a revealed faith. In contrast to the Old Testament faith of Israel, the contemporary, pagan religions of Old Testament times included much that was the product of human invention and Satanic influence. Wherein lies the uniqueness and superiority of the Hebrew faith and the Old Testament Scriptures? In our view, the only possible answer is the doctrine of biblical revelation; the almighty Creator and Lord of all has shown Himself in a most remarkable way to the ancient Hebrews.

5. Conclusion

The literature of Ugarit and that of the Old Testament are remarkably similar in many respects. What makes these similarities especially notable and enigmatic is that, according to the conventional chronology of ancient times, the two bodies of literature were written during two different eras having little or no overlap. The kingdom of Ugarit was finally destroyed ca. 1200 BC; it is generally thought that the Israelites did not enter Canaan until the same time or slightly later.

Some of the similarities are so striking that many liberal and even some conservative scholars have acknowledged that borrowing must have occurred. If one adheres to the conventional chronology, this borrowing could have occurred in only one direction. The Israelites must have borrowed from the Canaanite literature of Ugarit. Some of the biblical writers, in fact, must have borrowed

from Canaanite literature composed over 500 years earlier (or as much as 100 years earlier if Van Seters is correct in his very late dating of much of the Old Testament).

This generates two problems. First, the credibility of the conventional chronology is strained by the literary evidence which gives every indication of the contemporaneity of Israel and Ugarit. Second, the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is challenged by the apparent borrowing by the biblical writers from the literature of the Canaanites. In recent decades, a number of scholars have challenged the conventional chronology and have been working on a complete revision of ancient history. This revision includes the redating of the archaeological ages and of many ancient kingdoms including Ugarit. According {209} to the revision, Israel and Ugarit were contemporary for about 700 years.

This long period of contemporaneity would explain the vast majority of the similarities which are of a more general nature. Cultural contact between Israel and Ugarit would have been very easy and natural. Hebrew and Ugaritic are very closely related languages, and both kingdoms had close trade relations with Phoenicia. The similarities between the two bodies of literature are, in fact, inexplicable except in light of the historical revision.

The vast superiority of the Hebrew literature suggests that the more striking similarities where borrowing must have occurred are due to the Canaanites borrowing from the biblical writings. In some cases, the Hebrew compositions would actually have a definite chronological precedence over the corresponding Ugaritic compositions. But in every case, in addition to the acknowledged similarities, various aspects of the Old Testament literature display a remarkable degree of originality, uniqueness, and superiority. Unless conclusive proof to the contrary can be produced for specific cases, the most natural explanation would be that the Canaanites borrowed from the Hebrew writers. This conclusion is consistent with the teaching of inspiration that is contained in the Scriptures themselves.

THE FUNCTION OF MATTHEW 5:17–20 IN MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

J. Daryl Charles

Statement of the Problem

Matthew 5:17–20 stands among those portions of the Scriptures which are unparalleled in density and difficulty. A nuisance to commentators, these verses traditionally have elicited a wide variety of interpretations. Yet 5:17–20 is very pivotal in the Matthean Gospel—in its position and its meaning. The historical situation of this Gospel adds to the complexity of our problem. There is a "shift" occurring, a transition from a once Jewish-Christian church to an increasingly Gentile-Christian community. And if there was one element in the Jewish-Christian tradition which was exceedingly difficult for the Gentile members to absorb, it was the Law.[1] Taking consideration of Matthew's intention will aid in properly interpreting Jesus's words.[2] The task at hand is one of understanding 5:17–20 in light of several crucial factors: a developing Chris-

1. The factors of the historical situation are very admirably treated in J.P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), 22–28. Observing the movement of salvation-history, Meier sees the whole Gospel as a portrait of transition, with 28:18–20 a goal of the movement. This will contribute to his interpretation of 5:18, and while the breadth of Meier's discussion is extremely thorough and helpful, we take issue with his view of "fulfillment" (πληρωσαι, v. 17).

2. Matthew 5:17–20 illustrates the general contribution of intentional analysis (= redaction criticism). Much of the drama of Matthew's Gospel is missed without observing the tensions of a growing church in the first century AD. This study, however, is not an attempt to deal with Matthew's sources or contrast Matthew's and Jesus's theology of the Law, as is frequently done by commentators.

tian community, prominent Matthean motifs, rabbinic Judaism of first-century Palestine and the *halakah* of Jesus Himself.

Different extremes have characterized critical analysis of Matthew 5:17–20 in the past. Martin Hengel[3] cautions against one of those pitfalls: seeking to transform it into an abstract ethical entity, i.e., modifying the verses so as to speak only of the "spirit" of the teaching.[4] Very often commentators make statements concerning the text which ultimately contradict one another, an example being A. Plummer: {214}

> He [Jesus] does not mean taking the written law as it stands, and literally obeying it[5].... Christ leaves the old commandment standing.[6]

A prime example of how confusion, generated by the cruel taskmaster of not–so–biblical theology, characterizes much of what passes for "Christian" interpretation is found in Robert Guelich's *Sermon on the Mount*:

> ... τέλειος is not a call to radical obedience but to a new relationship with God.[7]

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3. M. Hengel, "Die Bergpredigt im Widerstreit," *Th. Beit.* 14 (1983):54.

4. An example of which is W. D. Davies, in "Matthew 5, 17–28," in *Melanges Biblique: Redignes en L'Honneur de A. Robert* (Paris: Blond and Gay), 430–31. Davies plays an interesting game of interpretation and the following statement is an example: "We suggest that there are two facets of Jesus's relation to the Law which account for the complex nature of the material in our sources. Before His death He [Jesus] could, by word and deed, give signs that there was now a deeper Torah to be obeyed than the old, *and in private*, *among His disciples*, *He could explicitly annul parts of the Torah*, *but He would not explicitly state this in public*, *although the sheer pressure of human need sometimes led Him to break the Law openly.* But after His death the principle of freedom from the Old Law would ultimately be established." Davies, of course, does not establish the above sensational statements in the text; he found the "private-public" dichotomy reading between the lines! Consider what Davies is saying: the Torah was not "deep enough"! Jesus's practice among His friends was different from that in public! And, due to "sheer pressure," He gave in, allowing the Torah to be broken! Someone has once said that the ridiculous deserves ridicule.

5. A. Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, repr. 1982), 76.

6. *Ibid.*, 78.

7. R. A. Guelich, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 236. Guelich conveniently ignores the many New Testament exhortations to keep Jesus's comandments. Obeying is the evidence that we know and love Him (John 14:21, 15:20; 1 John 2:3).

Unfortunately, Guelich is representative of many who separate obedience from a relationship to God. Yet, Jesus is making it quite clear in Matthew 7:21–27 that, apart from obedience, God acknowledges no "relationship" ("I never knew you").[8]

While the question whether or not the commandments alluded to in Matthew 5–7 are "fulfillable" is provocative to the modern reader, it was not a question for Matthew. What is commanded can and should be done. Jesus's threat could not be clearer: only the ones "doing" will "enter" (7:13–27). The verb ποιειν, occurring eighty-three times[9] in the whole Gospel, appears twenty-two times in Matthew 5–7 alone![10] Far from invalidating Old Testament law, the "case illustrations" which follow reinforce the Old Testament imperatives.[11] Furthermore, early Christianity, as Hans-Dieter Betz[12] has noted, was united on the fact that Jesus taught and affirmed the Torah. In terms of Jewish theology, His teaching was orthodox.

At this point, the exegete might consider what his own view of "Torah" is before approaching the text. If the Torah is perceived as the *basis* for covenant, i.e., what one does to merit God's grace, one is forced to treat 5:17 as Marcion did, who maintained that Jesus must have said the exact opposite; hence, this translation:

> τί δοκειτε ὅτι ἦλθον πληρωσαι τὸν νόμον . . . οὐκ ἦλθον πληρωσαι ἀλλὰ καταλυσαι[13]

On the other hand, if the Torah is seen as an expression, i.e., a result, of covenant and election, then the Torah takes on the character of grace, since covenant is an ongoing relationship.[14] It is re-

8. 7:23.

9. W.F. Moulton, A.S. Geden, and H.K. Moulton, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1978), 824–25.

10. *Ibid.*, 825.

11. Most commentators on Matthew unfortunately refer to 5:21–48 as "antitheses." These verses, in actuality, are a *reinforcement*.

12. H. D. Betz, "The Hermeneutical Principle of the Sermon on the Mount," *JStSA* 42 (1983):17.

13. See comment by H. Ljungman in *Das Gesetz Erfüllen* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1954), 18, and A.F.C. Tischendorf, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 7th ed. (Lipsiae: Sumptibus Adolphi Winter, 1959), 15.

14. R. Banks, in *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 18–89, does some creative reflection over

grettable that commentators are inclined to juxtapose Jesus and the Torah, grace and law.

Tracing critical analysis of 5:17–20 in this century, we find, generally, most critics willing to attribute these sayings to Jesus. Form-critics have {215} tended to relegate 5:17–20 to a conservative Jewish-Christian milieu, while redaction-critics have emphasized the role of the Evangelist's reworking of the tradition (e.g., stressing christological or ecclesiastical concerns). The inherent tension of the passage explains why not a few commentators contend we have here a mixture of editing and early traditions, examples being W. Trilling[15] and F.W. Beare.[16] For many, of which A. Sand[17] is representative, Matthew and Paul stand in broad contradiction. However, Jesus nowhere is setting aside the ethical demands of the Law. Rather, He is setting aside a *wrong interpretation* of those ethical demands, which is precisely the contextual flow: verses 21–48 build upon 17–20, whereby Jesus employs five illustrations of how the Law's ethical demands have been circumvented. The true disciple of the kingdom, on the other hand, will, out of love, fulfill those demands. His very thought life and innermost motivation yearn to do them. Obedience will be "second-nature" because the disciple is doing it from a heart of love for God.

5:17–20 Within Greater Matthew

Thematic Structure of Matthew

The Gospel in its written form completed what began as oral tradition; hence, the tendency toward a formulaic style by the author, as well as repetitive devices which stress a particular theme.[18] A good example of this is the refrain of 5:17–48: "You have heard...

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the Torah (e.g., "achieving *vs.* responding," "flexibility *vs.* rigidity," "eternality *vs.* provisionality"). The character of "law" and "grace" is discussed further in the appendix, 243–44.

15. W. Trilling, *Das Wahre Israel* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1964), 168.

16. F.W. Beare, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1981), 138.

17. A. Sand, "Die Polemik gegen 'Gesetzlosigkeit' im Evangelium nach Matthäus und bei Paulus," *BZ* 14 (1970):113.

18. So C.H. Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew," *CBQ* 23 (1961):408–11.

but tell you...." C. H. Lohr[19] has suggested a noticeable symmetry in the structure of the Gospel:

1–4 narrative:	birth and beginnings
5–7 sermon:	blesssings, entering the Kingdom of Heaven (KOH)
8–9 narrative:	authority and invitation
10 sermon:	mission
11–12 narrative:	rejection
13 sermon:	the KOH
14–17 narrative:	acknowledgment
18 sermon:	community
19–22 narrative:	authority and invitation
23–25 sermon:	woes, coming of the Kingdom
26–28 narrative:	death and rebirth

This design, in a clearer fashion than that of B.W. Bacon,[20] who earlier in this century revitalized an old theory dividing the Gospel into five books of teaching, similar to Moses, elucidates the various {216} themes running throughout. The movement of this collection of "narratives and sermons" goes initially from a "true" Moses-type, to his "Torah," to his mighty authority, then follows the evolution of the "true Israel," over against which Pharisaical Judaism, under divine curse, stands. The Gospel culminates in a "rebirth" and commission from the "Rabbi" par excellence who is embued with divine authority.[21]

When a Jew thinks of a "mountain," he thinks first of Sinai. Thus, it is no accident that Jesus is compared to Moses in the Matthean Gospel. The Hebrew boys slain (chap. 2), the flight from Egypt (chap. 2), the 40 days in the wilderness (chap. 4), the transfiguration account (chap. 17) and the "seat of Moses" (chap. 23) leave no

19. *Ibid.*, 427.

20. B.W. Bacon, "Jesus and the Law: A Study of the First 'Book' of Matthew," *JBL* 47 (1928):203.

21. D. Daube (*The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, [London, Athlone, 1956], 5–11) notes three aspects of resemblance between Moses and Jesus: a supernatural birth, prophetic ministry without honor, and intercession.

room for doubt.

Certainly, the gnawing question of many—then as well as today—would be, "Is this a new teaching?" particularly by one who is called "Rabbi" ("my Great One") fourteen times[22] in the four Gospels. It is noteworthy that immediately Jesus begins with a vigorous accent on the validity of the Sinai commandments. Matthew is not portraying Jesus as the "new Lawgiver,"[23] nor is Jesus purporting a "new Torah."[24] Rather, He came (note the ἦλθον sayings throughout Matthew; ἦλθον could almost be a subtitle for the Matthean Gospel)[25] to reestablish, i.e., to reaffirm, God's covenant (exactly *how* that covenant relationship is carried out in the New Testament, e.g., as described in the letter to the Hebrews, is not our concern here).

Another model for understanding the structure of Matthew has been suggested by A.B. du Toit,[26] who makes note of a formula in 4:23, the use of three participles describing Jesus's ministry—διδάσκων, κηρύσσων, and θεραπεύων—which are repeated again in 9:35 almost verbatim. Within this sketch, Matthew 5–7 offers us a profile on one of these three aspects: Jesus ὁ διδάσκαλος.

5:17–20 and Related Issues of the Matthean Community

1. Δικαιοσύνη

In order correctly to perceive what "righteousness" for a disciple of the Kingdom should entail, much of the Matthean Gospel is devoted to what δικαιοσύνη is *not*. Much within 5:1–7:29 presents a contrast between distorted and bona fide "righteousness." The disciple learns by observing in concrete terms what δικαιοσύνη

22. A. Schmoller, *Handkonkordanz zum Griechischen Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1982), 446.

23. E.g., as does Davies, *Melanges Biblique*, 430.

24. *Ibid.*

25. So suggests E. Arens, *The* ΗΛΘΟΝ–*Sayings in the Synoptic Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 114.

26. A.B. du Toit, "Analysis of the Structure of Mt. 4:23–5:48," in *Neotestamentica*, vol. 11, *The Structure of Matthew 1–13* (1977), 32–37.

is not.[27] Matthew's intention is to highlight δικαιοσύνη against the backdrop of Pharisaical distortion. Φαρισαιοι, (appearing twenty-seven times[28] throughout the Gospel) and γραμματεις (nineteen times)[29] achieve their climax in chapter 23, where Jesus pronounces seven woes[30] against {217} them due to a deficiency in δικαιοσύνη. These "curses" stand in contrast to the "blessings" pronounced by Jesus upon the truly "righteous" in 5:1–12. In Matthew's eyes, Pharisaical Judaism already stands judged.[31]

The weight of divine rebuke is in direct proportion to the influence of the scribes and Pharisees among their contemporaries. The scribes were venerated as the prophets of old, held in highest esteem, for they were the bearers of sacred knowledge. Even before AD 70, the Sadducean scribes exercised less influence than did those who were Pharisees.[32] The rabbis took excruciating pains to learn the "correct" interpretation of the Torah. One must become "learned" in the Torah. Whoever does not learn is guilty, for no "unlearned" person is righteous.[33]

Matthew is not in any way seeking to "dejudaize" the message of Jesus. Rather, Jesus's teaching, with its ethical implications, is best understood against the background of δικαιοσύνη. Δικαιοσύνη is the direct antithesis of ὑπόκρισις, which will establish a context for verses 21–48. By comprehending the negative view of δικαιοσύνη, the disciples will appreciate the positive.

Not incidently, ὑπόκριτής[34] occurs ten times in Matthew (always in the plural), whereas once in Mark and Luke.[35] In the Di-

27. E.g., 5:20–48; 6:1–2; 6:5, 7, 16, 19, 25; 7:1–5, 15–23; 12:1–9, 31–37; 13:19–22; 15:1–20; 16:1–12; 23:1–33.

28. Moulton, *Concordance*, 985.

29. *Ibid.*, 175.

30. Matthew 23:13, 15–16, 23, 25, 27, and 29.

31. It would be unfair to intimate that all Pharisees (or scribes) were "hypocrites." Mark 12:28–34 indicates that good was to be found with rabbinic Judaism.

32. J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 243.

33. H. Braun, *Spätjüdisch-häretischer und frühchristlicher Radikalismus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1957), 11.

34. Moulton, *Concordance*, 979.

35. *Ibid.*

dache (8:1), it is used disparagingly of a Jew. Jesus's vehement reaction to ὑπόκριτής (e.g., "you white-washed tombs" and "you blind fools") is no different than that of John the Baptist ("you brood of vipers"):[36] it is imprecatory. Οὐαί, and ὑπόκρισις[37] are related: hypocrisy yields the woe![38] The woe utterances of the Old Testament prophets were deadly serious; a catastrophe loomed ahead. For the disciples, then, it was *absolutely* crucial to grasp a correct notion of δικαιοσύνη. It is the disciples and the crowds, not the Pharisees, who are the audience in chapter 23: Τότε ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν τοῖς ὄχλοις καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ λέγων.... The significance of Matthew 23 is that, as in 5:21–48, it demonstrates a distorted view of righteousness and helps us in appreciating Matthew's redactive interests.[39] In the mind of Matthew, it is the disciples who will replace the scribes and Pharisees as the transmitters of the faith (28:16–20).[40]

The failure of the Φαρισαιοι was not that they gave alms, prayed, fasted, kept certain Mosaic commandments, etc.; indeed, these they "ought to have done" while observing the others (ταυτα δὲ ἔδει ποιησαι κἀκεινα μὴ ἀφιέναι).[41] Through "the traditions of men" they were {218} negating the commandments of God in question. Specifically, the scribes and Pharisees (1) bound "heavy burdens" and "laid them on men's shoulders" (23:4), (2) loved "to be seen by men" (23:5a), (3) loved to be honored (23:6), (4) loved the title "Rabbi" (23:7), (5) prevented men from entering the KOH (23:13b), (6) traveled land and sea for one proselyte, who, in the end, became twice the villain they were (23:15b), (7) sought an outward show of godliness by oathing (23:16–22), (8) neglected the "weightier" matters of the Torah (23:23c), and thereby missed the essence of what was required (23:24), (9) appeared holy on the outside but were filled with putrefaction (23:25–28), and (10) built

36. Matthew 3:7.

37. In 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27 and 29, ούαί and ὑποκριταί stand together in Jesus's strong rebuke.

38. So D.E. Garland, *The Intention of Matthew 23* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), 34–63.

39. As far as Matthew is concerned, the Pharisees reject Christ; hence, He must reject them. And, as a result, the "true Israel" emerges.

40. Garland, *Intention*, 34–63.

41. Matthew 23:23.

a false pretense of honoring the prophets (23:29–32).[42] Hence, the disciples were to learn what "righteousness" is not.

Positively, the disciples' δικαιοσύνη is one which "exceeds" (περισσεύειν) that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20). Not only is it not "doing as the Pharisees do," it is "doing all that I have commanded you" (28:20). It consists of (1) "doing the will of my Father in heaven" (7:21), (2) concrete deeds (25:44), (3) "letting your light shine" (5:16), (4) doing "every word which proceeds from the mouth of God (4:4 and Deut. 8:3), and lastly, (5) teaching (διδάσκειν) and doing (ποιεῖν), these two being indivisible (note 5:19 and 23:2–3).[43]

Doing "all" (intimated in 4:4 and 5:18) is demonstrated in 5:21–48 with respect to the commandments found in the Decalogue. These are to be kept with a *proper heart motive*, without which a violation of the Old Testament law, prohibiting the act, occurs. The "doing" will issue out of love for God, based on faith and trust.[44] We do not need J. Jeremias's deficient explanation of what "doing all" means. Jeremias uses the categories of "perfectionistic ethic," "impossible ideal," and "interimethic" to seek to interpret Jesus's "Sermon on the Mount" teaching.[45] According to Matthew, one "does" because one loves God.

Δικαιοσύνη, occurring seven times[46] in Matthew (not at all in Mark, once in Luke, and twice in John),[47] corresponds to *sedeq* of the Old Testament. Noah (Gen. 6:9) was a *sāddîq* man. The Lord is *sāddîq* (Ex. 9:27; 2 Chron. 12:6; Isa. 41:26; 45:21; Jer. 12:1; Lam. 1:18; Dan. 9:14; Zeph. 3:5; Zech. 9:9). No ten *sāddîq* men were found to forestall Sodom's judgment (Gen. 18:16–19:25). The *sāddîq* Lord loves righteousness (Ps. 11:7). In the Psalms by themselves, the saints are referred to as *sāddîq* (an adjective) forty-five

42. For further discussion of "hypocrisy" in Matthew, see I.W.J. Oakley, "'Hyprocrisy' in Matthew," *IrBibSt* 7 (1985):118–38.

43. Note, in general, the emphasis in Matthew's Gospel on "doing": δικαιοσύνη, 7x; τηρεῖν, 6x; ποιεῖν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πατρός, 3x; ὑποκριτής, 13x; ἀνομία, 4x; μισθός, 10x.

44. Note the episodes of elicited faith throughout the Matthean Gospel.

45. J. Jeremias, *The Sermon on the Mount*, trans. N. Perrin (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 1–12.

46. Moulton, *Concordance*, 218.

47. *Ibid.*

times[48] while "righteousness"—*sedeq* or *sêdāqāh*—appears eighty-one times.[49] The term clearly possesses a vertical {219} aspect (i.e., part of God's nature) as well as a horizontal (what man "does" as a result of his relationship to God).

True "righteousness" is profoundly Matthean.

2. Ἀνομία

Matthew seems to be waging a polemic on two fronts: against Pharisees who distort the Law and against antinomians.[50] Without the Torah,[51] there is no righteousness, there is *no standard*. Without νόμος, one is left with ἀνομία. People without the Law were considered "Gentiles"[52] and "tax-collectors."[53] Although Matthew knows the Torah can be misused (evidenced by 5:21–48), he recognizes that a proper understanding of δικαιοσύνη will fulfill the demands of the Torah.

There are several aspects of Jesus's teaching directed against those with antinomian tendencies in the Matthean Gospel which are worthy of note: (1) hearing and doing (ποιεῖν)[54] His sayings (note His sharp rebuke against the workers of ἀνομία: "I never knew you. Depart from me..."),[55] (2) future judgment awaiting the ἀνομία,[56] (3) a link between ὑπόκρισις and ἀνομία,[57] and (4) the increase of ἀνομία with the drawing near of the end of this age.[58]

In Matthew's thinking, rejecting the Law (= ἀ + νόμος) is the opposite of δικαιοσύνη. "Lawlessness" leads to dying love; it has

48. G. Lisowsky, *Konkordanz zum Hebräischen Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Privileg, Württ, Bibelanstalt, 1958), 1205.

49. *Ibid.*, 1207–9.

50. So R. Hummel, *Die Auseinandersetzung zwischen Kirche und Judentum im Matthäus-Evangelium* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1963), 66.

51. Consult 267–71 of the exegesis (5:17) for a fuller discussion of "Torah."

52. Matthew, more than the other Gospel narratives, refers to οἱ ἐθνικοί.

53. 5:46; 9:10–11; 11:19; 18:17; 21:31–32.

54. In Matthew's Gospel, "hearing" and "doing" are associated together in 5:21–48; 7:24 and 26; 10:27; 11:4; and 28:20.

55. 7:23 within the fuller context of 7:21–29.

56. 13:41–42.

57. 23:28.

58. 24:12.

no regard for God's law. Ultimately, practicing "lawlessness" yields an eschatological harvest. Interestingly, the term ἀνομία is not employed in the other Gospel narratives.

This is exactly the significance of Marcion in the second century, who sought to loosen the Christian message from its Jewish heritage. For him, Jesus's coming marked a new *beginning*. Without parentage, Jesus supposedly appeared without warning, full-grown, in the synagogue at Capernaum. And His message essentially was that God had nothing in common with the Old Testament. The fruit of Marcion's "ministry," however, can be seen in the full-blown schools of Gnosticism which fluorished in the second and third centuries.

3. Discipleship

In the Matthean Gospel, the concept of μαθητεύειν entails "holding" or "teaching" what Jesus taught (e.g., 28:20). It makes transparent in the present what following Him involves.[59] Illuminating the commandments in their deepest meaning (5:21–48), Jesus exhorts His disciples to do *them and more* in action.[60] He insists on both the outward act *and* the inward motive. Christian discipleship is imitating God; it fulfills the ideal of the Torah, is the realization of δικαιοσύνη[61] (vv. 21–48), and will seek to "be perfect" {220} (ἔσεσθε τέλειοι) as God[62] (v. 48). Nothing less than the total heart was demanded of the disciple.[63]

Doing "all," out of love for God, is the true covenantal response by the disciple of the kingdom.

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59. So U. Luz, "Die Jünger im Matthäus-Evangelium," *ZNW* 62 (1971):158.

60. T.W. Manson, *Ethics and the Gospels* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), 45.

61. G. Strecker, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962), 214.

62. The imitation-imperative occurs no less than five times in Leviticus.

63. Τέλιος carries the sense of "wholeness" as in the Hebrew *šālóm* (see further discussion in exegesis of 5:48, 288–91).

4. Ἦλθον-sayings

This group of logia by Jesus, of which we find five in the Matthean Gospel which relate to Jesus's mission,[64] reflects His messianic awareness and indicates Matthew's interest in Jesus's coming (note the christological concerns exhibited throughout the Gospel). The ἦλθον-saying in 15–17 is one of four "types" of sayings found in 5:17–20.[65]

In verse 17, ἦλθον, explains, in effect, Christianity's relationship to the Old Testament.[66] God's law, an expression of covenant, endures; His standard is unchanging.

There are two identical "Think not that I have come..." formulas in the Matthean Gospel: 5:17 and 10:34:

> Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον καταλῦσαι τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προφήτας· οὐκ ἦλθον καταλῦσαι ἀλλὰ πληρῶσαι.

> Μὴ νομίσητε ὅτι ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν· οὐκ ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰρήνην ἀλλὰ μάχαιραν.

Jesus is opposing a normal misconception associated with His appearance which may have lingered in the Christian community of Matthew's day. In 5:17, Jesus is declaring, "Think not that I have come in mission to set aside Old Testament law; I have indeed come to affirm and amplify it." This is not a "radical reversal" of the law, as is so commonly held by commentators. Matthew is painstaking to establish Jesus—the "Coming One" of prophetic, rabbinic, apocalyptic, as well as John the Baptist's expectation[67]—as the *divine historical-theological link* to the Old Testament.

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64. 5:17; 9:13; 10:34–35; 18:11; 20:28.

65. These four are the ἦλθον-saying (5:17), a legal saying (5:18), a statement on "holy law" ("Satz des heiligen Rechts," E. Käsemann, *NTS* 1: 248–50) in 5:19: and an entrance-saying (5:20). See Guelich, *Sermon*, 134, for comment.

66. So Arens, HAΘON–*Sayings*, 114.

67. The messianic expectation reaches a climax in Matthew 17 with the appearance of Moses and Elijah to Jesus. Here the variety of expectations are united with a preview of the nature of "the Coming One's" ministry. Note the assortment of contemporary views reflected in the first chapter of the fourth Gospel: no less than twelve titles are alluded to by the author.

The Matthean Style

1. Matthew the Scribe

It has been suggested that Matthew was a converted rabbi.[68] Indeed one could find much evidence in the Gospel narrative to support such a notion: (1) frequent and repetitive use of rabbinic formulations, (2) a passion for the Old Testament, (3) an understanding of *haggadah* (non-legal exposition) and *halakah* (legal instruction) in the oral traditions, (4) use of apocalyptic, (5) concern for the role of the Torah, (6) the strained relationship with the scribes and Pharisees, (7) the distinction between "true" and "pseudo-Israel," {221} (8) association between Jesus and Moses, (9) the "mountain" locations, (10) "blessings" and "woes," frequent in wisdom literature, (11) parabolic discourse, and (12) an assumed chiastic structure for the Gospel as a whole.[69]

Most intriguing is the writer's allusion in 13:52 to "a scribe trained for the kingdom of heaven," who "brings forth out of his treasure things both old and new," which illustrates his scribal tendencies. Perhaps this verse is autobiographical. If Matthew was not a rabbi, his thinking was that of a scribe, a "provincial schoolmaster," in the words of M. Goulder.[70] Matthew's use of the Old Testament, vivid imagination, and sense of rhythm and sentence–form attest to his mid–rashic inclination.[71]

True to rabbinic fashion, Matthew recognizes that a commandment from the Torah must be interpreted correctly. To teach false-

68. E. von Dobschütz, in "Matthäus als Rabbi und Katechet" (in *Das Mätthaus-Evangelium*, ed. J. Lange [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980], 52–64), was the first to argue for this earlier in this century.

69. The observations and comment by P.F. Ellis, *Matthew*: *His Mind and Message* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1974), particularly 3–10, were quite helpful here. In his very readable book, Ellis analyzes the Gospel according to three categories: "Rabbinic Matthew," "Meticulous Matthew" (on structure and arrangement), and "Theological Matthew." See also O.L. Cope, *Matthew*: *A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven* (Washington, DC: CBA, 1976).

70. M. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974), 5.

71. An aid in appreciating this side of the author is Goulder, *ibid*., 5–27. K. Stendahl (*The School of St. Matthew* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968], 23), echoing Bultmann and von Dobschütz, sees the Matthean Gospel as a type of "Manual of Discipline" intended for the Church. See also Cope, *Matthew*, 124–30.

ly (e.g., 5:19) and influence others is a grave error. Out of the treasure of the "old" (e.g., the Torah) things "new" are brought forth in the Gospel.

2. A Case for Vocabulary—Matthew and James

The similarity between Matthew and James in the New Testament is unmistakable. James, far from working against the liberty of grace, stresses the need for concrete practical deeds as the evidence of a dynamic faith.[72] James, as well, (1) has a high view of the Law,[73] (2) makes love a priority,[74] (3) prohibits the wrathful vindictiveness of the individual,[75] (4) affirms the standard of measure-for-measure,[76] (5) associates faith and grace *with* works and the law,[77] (6) denounces antinomian attitudes,[78] (7) castigates hypocrisy,[79] prohibits oaths,[80] (9) admonishes being "perfect,"[81] (10) exhorts toward humility,[82] (11) prohibits judging,[83] (12) insists on keeping the whole law,[84] and (13) underlines doing the word.[85] It is in the epistle of James that the words of Jesus most frequently reappear in the New Testament.[86]

72. Note especially 1:22–27; 2:14–26; and 4:17.

73. 2:8–12 and 4:11.

74. 2:8.

75. 1:19–20.

76. 2:12–13 and 3:1.

77. 2:14–26.

78. 2:14–26 and 3:1.

79. 1:26; 2:14–26; 3:17; and 4:1–5.

80. 5:12.

81. 1:4 and 3:2.

82. 4:6, 10.

83. 4:11.

84. 2:10–12.

85. 1:22–25.

86. It would be worthwhile to note the parallels between Matthew and James (see W.D. Davies's *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964], 402–3. They are innumerable. Davies's list mentions about half of those existing.

5:17–20 within Matthew 5:1–7:29

Though not a "sermon,"[87] chapters 5–7 as a unit issue a profile of Jesus "the Teacher"[88] and are considered to be the "Magna Carta" for the "true Israel."[89] Jesus, a bona fide teacher of the Torah, gives the Torah in an orthodox Jewish sense (the sense in which 5:17–20 is to be understood). Ultimately, Jesus's (and the church's) clash will be with Pharisaical Judaism, not the Torah.

Growing up in an orthodox Jewish home, Jesus understood the meaning of the Torah as any first-century Palestinian Jew. It represented {222} covenant made with Israel's fathers and was a guide for the whole of life. The problem, then, was not with belief, but with πραξις. For, under "Torah," one understood as well countless *oral translations*. And it is to these traditions (Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη ... ἐλὼ δὲ λέλω ὑμιν) that Jesus will speak in 5:21–48. Interestingly, Jesus will reaffirm the Old Testament commandments two and three times, whereby He will strip away distortions and expose root attitudes.

Many commentators use the word "radical" to depict the teaching of Jesus in chapters 5–7, without fully understanding the implications of this word. Stemming from *radix* (Latin), the term means "inherent" or "fundamental," i.e., "going to the root or origin."[90] Contrary to the notion of "fully new," Jesus's teaching is rooted in the foundation of the "old."[91]

Structurally, the focus of 5–7 is seen by some as the Beatitudes (5:3–16),[92] by others as the model prayer (6:9–13).[93] Our view is that 5:17–20 represents the core. This is based on the following

87. Davies, *Setting of the Sermon*, 13.

88. See Strecker's comparison of the Torah and the "Sermon on the Mount, *Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit*," 17–47.

89. So du Toit, "Analysis," 37.

90. *The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, ed. C.T. Onions (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), 735.

91. Pinchas Lapide, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1986), 12–15, is one of the few who correctly notes this in 5–7. 12:6 ("A greater than the temple is here...") underlines what *has* passed as "old": the *temple*, not the law.

92. E.g., Jeremias, *Sermon*, 31.

93. E.g., U. Luz, *Das Evangelism nach Mätthaus* (*Mt. 1–7*) (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1985) 186.

reasons:

1. The ἦλθον-saying (5:17); the locus is Jesus ("I have come..."), Who establishes the moral basis for the Kingdom.

2. The issues of the Matthean church (e.g., dealing with Pharisaical distortions on the one side, antinomians on the other, and growing Gentile influence).

3. The all-encompassing view of Matthean δικαιοσύνη (over against a flawed or erroneous view).

4. The syntactical link between 5:16 and 17—τὰ ἔρλα— and broader contextual considerations (i.e., the enduring effects of "salt" and "light" from true disciples).

Jesus has just been speaking to the disciples of "righteousness" ("Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after δικαιοσύνη" and "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of δικαιοσύνη"). Living a life of true δικαιοσύνη among men will bear a cost. But its effects, like that of salt (5:13) and light (5:14), are enduring, allowing the disciples to have a prophetic and covenantal function, just as salt, a covenantal sign (Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19). The implications of the salt imagery are highly significant and speak of duration, i.e., the unchanging nature of the covenantal relationship.[94] Jesus's statement as to the Law's validity (5:17–18) is all the more significant in that it follows His allusion to the preserving effect of salt and light. {223}

5:17–20 in Relationship to 5:21–48, The Case Illustrations

The Historical Situation

1. Matthew's Audience

Regardless of one's view of how prominent "Hellenistic" or "Jewish" motifs in the Matthean Gospel are, J.P. Meier[95] is correct that the primitive Christian community is undergoing transition.

94. W.J. Dumbrell, "The Logic of the Role of the Law in Matthew v.1–20," *NovT* 23 (1981):12.

95. Meier, *Law and History*, 22.

A once strongly Jewish-Christian church is becoming increasingly Gentile. Within this continuum during the first century AD, there will be new aspects with which to deal. One dilemma facing the church of Matthew's day would have been the question of how Jesus could commission His church, which dispenses with Old Covenant circumcision, yet substantiates adhering to the commandments of Mosaic law.[96] Are the "old" and "new" reconcilable? Is this a new teaching? Is the Torah not binding with the advent of the messianic community?

Matthew is addressing those in the fledgling church who might feel the commandments are no longer valid. Yet, on the "other side of the street," where there is now a synagogue and where rabbinical debates between the schools of Hillel and Shammai are raging, the oral tradition, i.e., the "fence around the Law" (ἡ παράδοδις των ἀνθρωπων) has obscured the true meaning of the commandments. In a day when the *halakah* was enroute to being absolutized, it was the "abrogators" who would meet the fury of Jesus.[97] In short, stringent Pharisaical interpretation as well as total freedom from the commandments were to be rejected. Jesus affirms the validity of the Old Testament commandments yet clarifies the spirit of the laws. One cannot help but sense the strongly pedagogical tenor of chapters 5, 6, 7, and 23. For the disciple, a proper understanding of "righteousness" was absolutely crucial.

2. Rabbinic Judaism in First-Century Palestine

Jacob Neusner, in his book *From Politics to Piety*,[98] maintains that the portrayal of the Pharisees we receive via the Gospel narratives is accurate of pre–AD 70 Judaism. The Pharisees' claim to rule over the Jews was grounded upon their possessing the "oral Torah" of Moses, i.e., traditions not in the Scriptures which were

96. Meier's solution to this tension is "continuity with changes" (*Ibid*., 27–28), by which he means a division between Jesus's earthly ministry and the Church, the line of demarcation being His death and resurrection. "Till all is fulfilled" (5:18), for Meier, means "until Jesus's redemptive work." This, however, violates the context, which concerns the enduring validity of the law, the apocalyptic "passing" of the elements, as well as the abiding validity of individual commandments underscored in vv. 21–48, *not* God's redemptive activity through Christ.

97. See B. F. Meyer, *The Aims of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1979), 150.

98. *From Politics to Piety* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), xxi.

nevertheless revealed at Sinai.[99] They traced themselves through a line of "masters" back to Moses and produced the rabbinic masters who, after AD 70, defined the normative law and teaching for Judaism.[100] {224}

With the destruction of the temple and consolidation of power among the Pharisees, the centrality of the Torah was strengthened; there was nothing left of Judaism except the Torah. While the background for Matthew 23 could be the pending catastrophe of AD 70, the frequency of the occurrence of συναλωλή[101] may suggest a post–70 dating.

When political conditions disallowed the Sanhedrin from functioning, the influence of the schools of Hillel and Shammai was extended. Tradition indicates fairly certainly that the House of Hillel dominated before AD 70, and Shammai after 70. Although Luke-Acts only mentions Gamaliel (and Paul, growing up a Pharisee, makes no mention), both houses fluorished in Jerusalem until 70 as small circles.

Hillel and Shammai seem to have spent most of their energy ruling on matters such as the Sabbath, uncleanness, sacrifice, tithing, washing, offerings, etc. (i.e., ceremonial or cult-related issues).[102] Gamaliel, on the other hand, dealt more in sectarian matters, such as marriage and divorce.[103]

Several characteristics found in Matthew 5:17–20 were principles used by the Hillel school of interpretation: (1) the notion of "light-heavy," (2) a principle stated followed by a case (e.g., 5:17, then 5:21–48), and (3) a *kelāl* or "summarizing" (e.g., 5:44 and 7:12), (4) the rabbinic habit of inserting interpretation (e.g., 5:22, 28–30, 32, 34–37, 39–42, 44–48), (5) the tendency of rabbis to illustrate repetitively in three's (e.g., 5:21–22), (6) basing the *halakah* on a precept from the Torah, and (7) starting with a text,

99. *Ibid.*, 11. This agrees with Josephus's description of the Pharisees as having considerable political clout.

100. *Ibid.*

101. 4:23; 9:35; 10:17; 12:9; 13:54; 23:34.

102. J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70*, vol. 3 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 290–91.

103. *Ibid.*

then working back to the text, as in 5:43–48.[104]

3. Jesus as Rabbi: the Matthean Halakah

Matthew does not portray Jesus as the "new Law-giver," rather as one who fully expounds the Torah (as in Deut. 1:5)—the "legitimate interpreter."[105] The expounding of the Torah in 5:21–48 would suggest that no one had appeared in Israel yet to "straighten out" distorted notions of the Law.[106] Hence, ὁ διδάσκαλος is breaking new ground while communicating in true rabbinic fashion.

Ironically, Jesus proceeds to use the same vice as the rabbis employed.[107] After tearing down the "fence" or "hedge" of oral traditions, detailed rulings which "halt a man like a danger signal before he gets within breaking distance of the divine statute itself,"[108] Jesus builds a new "fence" around the Torah:[109]

5:21–26: don't become angry.

27–30: don't lust in the heart.

31–32: don't divorce your wife and cause someone else to marry her, causing her to commit adultery.

33–37: don't swear at all.

38–42: don't take retaliation into your own hands; tend toward forbearance which can diffuse situations.

43–47: since you never know who will be "near" you (= neighbor),

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104. These principles constitute only a portion of Hillelite method, more of which is cited in Goulder, *Midrash and Lection*, 24–27.

105. 4:23 and 9:35. See M. Lehmann-Habeck, "Das Gesetz als der gute Gotteswille für Meinen Nächsten-Zur bleibenden Bedeutung des Gesetzes nach dem Matthäus-Evangelium," in *Treue zur Thora*, ed. P. von der Osten-Sacken (Berlin: Institut Kirche und Judentum, 1977), 48.

106. So. I. Broer, *Freiheit vom Gesetz und Radikalisierung des Gesetzes* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1980), 28–30.

107. M. J. Suggs, "Wisdom and the Law in the Gospel of Matthew," in *Wisdom, Christ and the Law* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 111, focuses on the presence of wisdom and rabbinical techniques in the Matthean Gospel.

108. G. F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era*, vol. 1, *The Age of the Tannaim* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University 1932), 33.

109. See B. Przybylski, *Righteousness in Matthew and His World of Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 81–82.

treat everyone the same, in love.

The issue in this formulaic portion of Matthew 5 is not opposition or pure contrast to the Torah, as D. Daube[110] notes. Nor is it abrogating certain parts of the Torah either.[111] Both Jesus's teaching and the Law are reconcilable. Jesus brings the fullest meaning and implications to bear. It was the apologetically rigidified understanding of the Law (the "hedge" around the Law) which no longer measured up to the message of the prophets; this became irreconcilable with the divine covenant and had to be broken.[112]

The case illustrations of 5:21–48 demonstrate what commitment to God involves: the "law of God's lordship."[113] The whole function of the "supertheses"[114] is to exemplify a kind of δικαιοσύνη and obedience to the will of God that is "at once more radical and more inward than that of the Pharisees"[115] (5:20). The very structure of 5:17–48 suggests that the case illustrations are assuming the validity of Mosaic law: verses 17–19 form the fundamental teaching, verse 20 acts as a bridge into the application and particularizing of individual commandments, and verses 21–48 are an "exegesis" (as opposed to the so-called "antithesis" of most commentators' liking) of the Law, interpreting individual commandments correctly.[116]

110. Daube, *New Testament*, 60, *contra*; Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, vol. 1 (London: SCM, 1970), 253.

111. *Contra* Meier, *Law and History*, 30–38, and R.G. Hamerton-Kelly, "Attitudes to the Law in Matthew's Gospel: A Discussion of Mt. 5:18," *BR* 17 (1972):21.

112. So M. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 308–9.

113. So Hengel, "Bergpredigt," 56.

114. Lapide, *Sermon on the Mount*, 47.

115. So R. Mohrlang, *Matthew and Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 21.

116. *Contra* Davies, *Setting of the Sermon*, 44, 48–49.

Commentary

Textual Considerations

In contrast to the difficulty of the text's interpretation, 5:17–20 is well attested in the manuscripts. With four minor exceptions, there are no variant readings. In 5:18, four witnesses (Θ, the "family 13" of MSS, the minuscule 565, and Irenaeus) add και των προφητων after από του νομου, and B omits the αν from the second ἑως ἄν clause. 5:19b is absent from two manuscripts: χ and D. Also, in 5:19d, Clement of Alexandria and Cyprian read μελίστος instead of μέλας. {226}

5:17

The prohibition Μή νομίσητε is a rhetorical device in a polemic against popular opinion.[117] What was the opinion? That Jesus in His "coming" (ἦλθον) had purposed to abolish (καταλυσαι) the "law and the prophets." Notably, it was the "setting aside" or "abrogation" of the Law which was considered *the* criterion for a Jewish heretic.[118] The use of the aorist subjunctive in the New Testament, with few exceptions, prohibits the beginning of an action, whereas a present imperative demands the cessation of an action in motion. Hence, Jesus is saying, "Do not begin thinking, do not even consider the possibility of, abrogating the law and the prophets."[119]

The first of the ἦλθον-sayings in Matthew, 5:17 is interpreted by many as being eschatologically pregnant, drawing from Malachi 4:5-6 (= 3:23–24), the "Son of Man" expectation in apocalyptic literature and John the Baptist's pronouncements. While the Matthean Gospel, admittedly, is given to definite christological concerns, most commentators seem to read "New Testament theology" back into this ἦλθον-saying, ignoring its *place* in the Gospel. Jesus reflects through ἦλθον the awareness of His mission, yet His purpose in "coming" must be measured here as it relates to

117. Betz, "Hermeneutical Principle," 18–21.

118. *Ibid.*, 21.

119. The Lukan parallel to Matthew 10:34 employs δοκειτε ("Do you suppose"). The negation formula μὴ νομίσητε is clearly the stronger of the two; it is countering a false assumption.

5:17–20 as a unit.[120] Was He a "new mystic" who would "ascend into the heavens" as Moses for new revelation? If so, this was sure to be met with a midrashic counter, for according to rabbinic Judaism, the Torah was *fully on earth.*[121]

A key to our understanding of 5:17 lies not only in the proper definitions of νόμος (for νόμος does not retain adequate meaning) and the verbs πληρωσαι and καταλυσαι, rather the *relationship* that exists between the two verbs as well.

For the first-century Jew, the meaning of the "Torah" was unmistakable. According to rabbinic thought, it was created before the world[122] and a "master-builder" in aiding in creation of the world.[123] More importantly, however, it received its worth and depth from *covenant*; it constituted the visible expression of covenant with God.[124] This is why the prophets relied upon the Torah. It represented a "signpost" for the individual, to direct his ethical and religious thought. T.W. Manson, in *Ethics and the Gospels*,[125] offers this comment:

> The idea that underlies the word "Torah" is not primarily the formulation of a series of categorical commands and prohibitions with appropriate sanctions.... It is rather a body of instruction regarding man's place in {227} God's world and his duties to God and his neighbor. The "Torah" is divine guidance as to the right way in which man should behave as a subject of the heavenly king.[126]

The corpus of "wisdom" literature, most notably the Psalms, embraces the Torah. There exists a strong link between wisdom, covenant and the Law: the Torah offers instruction to the *wise* and practical advice to the *faithful.* Wisdom itself is not perceived as a burden, rather as a gift from God. The Psalms, which mir-

120. Ljungman is one of the few who has noted this (*Das Gesetz Erfüllen*, 11).

121. P. Schäfer, "Die Torah der messianischen Zeit," *ZNW* 65 (1974):28–30.

122. *Ibid.*

123. *Ibid.*

124. O. Michel, "Der Abschluss des Matthäus-Evangeliums," *EvT* 10 (1950/51):32.

125. Manson, *Ethics and the Gospel*, 29.

126. W. Trilling, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), 77–78.

ror the Law's glory,[127] speak of it as "perfect" (*tāmîm*),[128] "upright" (*yāsār*),[129] "making glad" the heart (*sameha*),[130] "pure"[131] (*bār*), a "delight" (*sha'ashu'îm*).[132] H. J. Kraus[133] maintains that, apart from the concept of "covenant," the Torah cannot be fully understood or appreciated.

Four uses of *tôrāh* appear in the book of Jeremiah: *tôrāh* as (1) "written law," (2) the Decalogue, (3) "instruction" or "revelation," and (4) an "inward" principle.[134] Interestingly, Jeremiah 31:33–34 seems to encompass all of these, speaking of the Law "written on the heart" and linked to the "knowledge of the Lord."

The "Law" as Jesus used it in 5:17 would have encompassed the Pentateuch and the prophets (ὁ νόμος ἤ οἱ προφηται), the letter and the spirit.[135] As W. Zimmerli in *The Law and the Prophets*[136] has noted, there is a unity between "the Law" and "the prophets"; no tension exists between the two.[137] The ἤ is not distinguishing between the Pentateuch and the prophetic corpus.

Several factors combine to explain the difficulty of 5:17 in the past. This is the only place in Matthew where the verbs πληρωσαι and καταλυσαι appear together. Commentators do not agree as to the role of the verbs to "the law and the prophets." Most problematic is πληρωσαι, whose meaning will influence our interpretation of the five case illustrations in 5:21–48. The verb, we should

127. H. J. Kraus, in "Freude an Gottes Gesetz," *EvT* 10 (1950/51): 337–51, has accurately captured this.

128. 19:7.

129. 19:8a.

130. 19:8b.

131. 19:8c.

132. 119:24, 77, 92, 143, 174.

133. Kraus, "Freude," 341.

134. Note Banks's discussion of this on 66 of *Jesus and the Law.*

135. By τὸν νόμος ἤ τοὺς προφητας Jesus is not speaking in a "predictive" sense, i.e., of Old Testament revelation and promise, as P. Stuhlmacher, "Jesus Vollkommenes Gesetz der Freiheit," *ZTK* 79 (1982): 289–91, is inclined to read in.

136. W. Zimmerli, *The Law and the Prophets* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 13.

137. The Samaritans were known to recognize only the Pentateuch. Contrarily, in the synagogue on the Sabbath, a piece from both the Torah and the prophets was read aloud.

note, will, however, derive its proper inflection in 5:17 from the antithetical parallelism found in verses 17, 18 and 19. πληρωσαι and καταλυσαι ("to abrogate," not in a passive ignoring, but in a deliberate "binding" or "setting aside") are mutually exclusive, and this relationship is expressed by the strong adversative ἀλλά.[138] D. Daube[139] states πληρωσαι to mean "uphold," equivalent to the Hebrew *qêyyām*, demonstrating the technical idea of agreement. C.F.D. Moule[140] renders the verb "confirm" in 5:17, fitting the Greek sense of ἱστάναι, as in Romans 3:31: {228}

> Do we render ineffective (καταρλειν) the law by faith? God forbid. Rather, we establish (ισταναι) the law.

The context of 5:17 must establish our translating of πληρωσαι. It goes deeper than the "prediction-verification"[141] or "transcending" solution which many are quick to impose. Other notions which best fit πληρωσαι in verse 17 are "establish"[142] or "restore in full measure."[143] The οὐν ("therefore") of 5:19 negates any definition of πληρωσαι in the sense of "transcending."[144] Rather than contravening the commandments, Jesus, in 5:21–48, is calling for an obedience to the commandments which ἀλάπη would fulfill.

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138. Of the countless who have offered comment on Matthew 5:17, H. Windisch (*Der Sinn der Bergpredigt* [Leipzig: Hinrich, 1929], 46), D. Daube (*New Testament*, 60), C.F.D. Moule ("Fulfillment-Words in the New Testament," *NTS* 14 [1967/68] 313), D. Wenham ("Jesus and the Law: An Exegesis on Matt. 5:17–20," *Them* 4 [1979]: 92–93), G. Bahnsen (*Theonomy in Christian Ethics* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977]: 64–65), and B. L. Martin ("Mathew on Christ and the Law," *TS* 44 [1983]: 65) best capture the correct sense of πληρωσαι in 5:17.

139. Daube, *New Testament*, 60.

140. Moule, "Fulfillment-Words," 313.

141. While πληρωσαι normally in Matthew carries the notion of promise–fulfillment, it possesses a totally different sense in 5:17. Because Matthew indeed seems to have a passion for the "promise-fulfillment" formula, it is easy to understand why no examples of πληρωσαι are found in the Mishna. As B. Metzger ("The Formulas Introducing Quotations of Scripture in the New Testament and the Mishnah," *JBL* 70 [1951]: 306–7) notes, a Christian view of history is quite different!

142. Wenham, "Jesus and the Law," 93.

143. Bahnsen, *Theonomy*, 64.

144. Davies, *Melanges Biblique*, 431.

G. Maier[145] advocates a definition of "affirmation" which allows two possible meanings: (1) Jesus's commission was to "affirm" the Law through διδαχή, and (2) His commission was also to *do* the Law, i.e., πραξις.

Nonetheless, Matthew's view of the Law cannot *merely* rest on our exegesis of πληρωσαι. Its meaning in context is clearer if we translate together ἀλλά πληρωσαι,[146] in opposition to καταλυσαι.[147] Billerbeck[148] sets καταλυσαι as equal to the Hebrew *bittēl* and Aramaic *battēl* ("to cease"). It was because Israel had sinned and *abrogated* the Law in the first place that the covenant had to be renewed. During the later Seleucid domination of Palestine, the forerunners to the Pharisaical sect received their zeal as a result of Hellenistic "reformers" who sought to "abrogate" the Torah, a theme reflected in the Maccabean books.

The spirit of 5:17 is duplicated elsewhere in the Synoptics:

> Neglecting (ἀφιέναι) the commandment (εντολη) of God, you hold to the tradition (παράδοσυς) of men (Mark 7:8).
>
> ... [Y]ou nicely annul (ἀθετειν) the commandment (ἐντολή) of God in order that you might establish (ἱστάναι) your tradition (παράδοσυς). (Mark 7:9)
>
> By invalidating (ἀκυρουν) the word of God through your tradition (παράδοσυς) which you have handed down (παραδίδωμι).... (Mark 7:13)
>
> You disregard (παρέρχομαι) justice and love of God... these you should do (ποιησαι) without neglecting (παρειναι) the others. (Luke 11:42)

It has been suggested that the Old Testament still lives in the New, which we cannot fully understand without it.[149] This is, es-

145. G. Maier, *Matthäus-Evangelium*, vol. 1 (Neuhausen-Stuttgart: Hännsler-Verlag, 1979), 142–44.

146. So G. Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 67.

147. πληρωσαι and καταλυσαι must be looked at as opposites, just as δειν and λνειν in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18. Our interest lies in the element of *contrast.*

148. H. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrash*, vol. 1 (München: Beck, 1922), 241.

149. C. Lattey, " 'I came not to destroy but to fulfill' (Mt. v. 17)," *Scr* 5 (1952/53):50.

sentially, what Calvin understood:

> ...[W]e must not imagine that the coming of Christ has freed us from the authority of the law; for it is the eternal rule of a devout and holy life, and must, therefore, be as unchangeable, as the justice of God, which it embraced, is constant and uniform.[150]

5:18

What is expressed negatively in the previous clause is expressed positively in 5:18[151] through the strengthening of the authoritative formula ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμιν. Occurring fifty times[152] in the Synoptic Gospels and 30 times[153] in Matthew, Jesus's introductory formula confirms *without exception* the certainty of what follows.[154] In the Old Testament, ἀμήν affirms a task, confirms the application of a divine promise or threat, or attests the praise of God.[155] Not surprisingly, due to the somewhat polemical nature of the Matthean and Johannine Gospels, the term, widely used in the synagogue, appears most frequently in these two Gospel narratives. Further, the emphatic form ἐγω δὲ λέγω ὑμιν (5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, and 44) is employed by Jesus to set aside traditional rabbinical notions.

Verse 18 employs the language of hyperbole. Matthew's selection of terms—ἰωτα, κεραία, ἐντολή, ἐλάχιστος, παρέρχομαι, πάντα—is aimed at suiting the meticulous rabbinic scholarship.[156] To the rabbis, the Decalogue, specifically, was the "ten words"

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150. J. Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists*, *Matthew*, *Mark*, *and* Luke, vol. 1, trans. W. Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, repr. 1963), 277.

151. Matthew 5:17–20 is rife with devices which permeate wisdom literature. It contains rabbinic parallelism, in which the second colon says something different than the first (A ≠ B), dynamic parrallelism (A = B plus more), as well as antithetic (the same thought from two different perspectives) and repetitive parallelism. One can even find chiasm (introverted parallelism).

152. Moulton, *Concordance*, 51.

153. *Ibid.*

154. So Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 242. ανμν takes on, in essence, a prophetic character.

155. See V. Hasler, *Amen* (Stuttgart: Gotthelf-Verlag, 1969), in particular, 168–74. The Hebrew *āmēn* is frequently translated in the LXX as γένοιτο.

156. So Daube, *New Testament*, 250.

(*haddebārîm aseret*)[157] whereas "commandments" (*misôt*) is used in Deuteronomy alone no less than forty-two times[158] and almost uniformly throughout the Old Testament. Accordingly, A. Sand[159] and W. Zimmerli[160] argue that νόμος in 5:18 encompasses the *tôrāh* and *nébî'îm* together. To be sure, the Decalogue was the guiding force of the Torah. While we shall not seek to argue conclusively that νόμος in 5:18 means the Decalogue, it is interesting that the structure of Matthew 5:17–48 resembles that of Exodus 20:2-23:13—the core teaching followed by the amplification of the commands.[161]

The use of ἰωτα and κεραία implies a Semitic background to the text.[162] That a Hebrew, not a Greek, text is here alluded to by Jesus strengthens the notion that this is an aimed polemic. The transliteration of *yōd*, the tenth and smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and *waw*, the sixth letter, into Greek presents no real difficulty since the letters were proverbial in both Greek and Hebrew.[163] The question is how the *waw* would be described as κεραία, for the *waw* possessed a double meaning: the sixth letter of the alphabet as well as "hook."[164] {230} The key lies in (1) the relationship of *waw* to *yōd*—they are of the same kind, proverbially and alphabetically—and (2) their parallel relationship to "heaven and earth." Jesus

157. E.g., Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; and 10:4.

158. Lisowsky, *Konkordanz*, 851–53.

159. A. Sand, *Das Gesetz und die Propheten* (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1974), 33.

160. Zimmerli, *Law*, 14.

161. The following is a breakdown of the Law in Exodus: (1) 20:2–17, the Decalogue (duties to God, duties to man), (2) 20:22–23:13, detailed application, (3) 23:14–19, observances related to the cult, and (4) 23:20–33, results of keeping the commandments.

162. Betz, "Hermeneutical Principle," 22, rightly notes that one would have assumed a Greek script in the first century AD, unless, of course, there is a polemical background.

163. Matthew most probably was conversant in Hebrew and Greek. On the *yōd-waw* comparison, cf. G. Schwarz, "ἰωτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία (Matthäus 5, 18)," *ZNW* 66 (1975):268–69, and H. Schürmann, " 'Wer daher eines dieser geringsten Gebote auflöst...' Wo fand Matthäus das Logion Mt. 5, 19?," in *Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den synopstischen Evangelien* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1968), 128.

164. Schwarz, "ἰωτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία," 268.

is speaking in rabbinic terms of *smallness*.[165]

In stressing that not the "smallest" detail of the Law would "pass away" Jesus draws upon the language and imagery of the apocalyptic: the "passing (παρέρχομαι) of the heavens and earth," a motif reappearing in chapter 24. As can be expected, most of the debate concerning verse 18 has raged over the interpretation of ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται, rendered normally "until all is fulfilled." The translation of the relative clause rests upon whether ἕως possesses a temporal or nontemporal aspect, what "all" is referring to, and the rendering of γένηται.

Many are quick, in light of Matthean eschatological interests,[166] to see "all things" (πάντα) as pertaining to Jesus's death and resurrection[167] or the church[168] or the Parousia.[169] Others equate it with the theme of "doing all the will of God," "fulfilling all righteousness," which is pervasive in Matthew.[170] Preference, however, is given to the apocalyptic notion behind "heaven and earth passing." The eternal validity is mentioned, for example, in Baruch 4:1 (ὁ νόμος ὁ ὑπάρχων εἰς τὸν αἰωνα) and Wisdom 18:4 (τὸ ἄφθαρτον νόμος φως), as well as in the pseudepigraphical 4 Ezra (9:37). Furthermore, rabbinic literature assumes the permanence of the Torah (= Pentateuch).[171]

Matthew 5:18 should be understood as a Jew of the first cen-

165. Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 244–47, would seem to confirm this.

166. We agree with Strecker (*Der Weg der Gerechtigkeit*, 47) that Matthew knows a tension between the historical and the eschatological, exemplified by the frequency of πληρουν, ῥηθέν, or ῥηθέις (Strecker's so-called *Reflexionszitate*, 49–51). However, many commentators are prone to read the "eschatological" into 5:17–20 (5:21–48 included), which causes one to miss or "spiritualize" entirely part of Jesus's mission (ἦλθον) in the continuum of human history. Nineteen centuries later we are locked into a false dichotomy between "law" and "grace."

167. E.g., Meier, *Law and History*, 31.

168. E.g., E. Schweizer, "Matth. 5, 17–20: Anmerkungen zum Gesetzverständnis des Matthäus," in *Neotestamentica* (Stuttgart: Zwingli, 1963), 400.

169. E.g., Wenham, "Jesus and the Law," 93 (though Wenham is not dogmatic on this reading).

170. Strecker, *Der Weg*, 141. Strecker considers πας to be a typical rabbinic "given," relating to the Hebrew idea of wholeness.

171. Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 245.

tury would have.[172] The most "insignificant" aspects of the Law remain, apocalyptically speaking, until (ἕως) a new heaven and a new earth appear,[173] or, according to rabbinic dogma, "never."[174] Jesus's words in Matthew 24:35 affirm this sense of 5:18. His death and resurrection are not intended in 24:35. A.M. Honeyman[175] has offered perhaps the best explanation of verse 18 by translating *Éws* in a *modal*, not a temporal, sense: "... so that (or, "to the extent that") all (of the law's demands) will be fulfilled." B.L. Martin[176] agrees that the temporal aspect does not suit here, ruling out reference to Jesus's redemptive work.

Nonetheless, we shall not argue dogmatically against a temporal interpretation, since, in 24:34, the same clause appears again (ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται) in reference to the fall of Jerusalem or the Parousia. Rather, 5:18 is best rendered when we observe the antithetical parallelism of the previous verse. γένηται is the opposite of παρέλθη {231} ("lose force" or "become invalid"),[177] and it is the Pharisees who are "taking away from" the commandments in 5:21–48.

Grammatically, the double negative ὀυ μή constitutes the most definitive negation, and, contextually, the discernible train of thought is the *enduring nature* of the law and not a timepoint of its passing (whenever). The very chiastic structure of the verse fortifies this:

ἕως ἄν παρέλθῃ	ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ
ἰωτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία	ὀυ μή παρέλθῃ

172. Philo affirms the permanence of the Law "until the sun and the moon and the whole heaven and world be moved" (*Vita Moysis II*, 136).

173. The "new heavens and earth" of apocalyptic expectation did not happen (γ€νrlrai) with Jesus's coming.

174. E. Arens, *HAΘON–Sayings*, 92.

175. A. M. Honeyman, "Matthew v. 18 and the Validity of the Law," *NTS* 1 (1954–55):142.

176. Martin, "Matthew on Christ and the Law," 68.

177. W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 625–26.

Why was Jesus so adamant about detail (e.g., ἀμὴν, ἰῶτα, κεραία, οὐ μή)? Why is Jesus's view of the Torah conspicuously resembling that of the Jews? His teaching on the "least" surfaces again in Luke's Gospel:[178]

> ὁ πιστὸς ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ καὶ ἐν πολλῷ πιστός ἐστιν, καὶ ὁ ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ ἄδικος καὶ ἐν πολλῷ ἄδικός ἐστιν.

This principle, in effect, undergirds what follows in verse 19.

5:19

It is of utmost importance to note, through the inferential and transitional particle ουν ("consequently," "accordingly," "therefore"),[179] the practical implications of the previous verse. The ramifications of "loosing" one of the "least of these commandments" (ὃς ἐὰν οὖν λύσῃ μίαν τῶν ἐντολῶν τούτων τῶν ἐλαχίστων) and teaching men the same are sobering: a loss of rank in the "kingdom of heaven." Verse 19 continues the theme of the law's abiding validity, treating the ἐντολαί, the individual precepts.

The context of 5:17 (καταλυσαι) determines our rendering of λυειν: "breaking of annulling by action,"[180] or "a relaxing" (equivalent to the Hebrew *nātar*),[181] a "loosing of what was binding."[182] What did Jesus mean exactly by speaking of "the least of these commandments"? Solutions to this have included the "shortest" commandment,[183] Jesus's command to follow Him,[184] or a wordplay.[185] These, however, do not satisfy the context, which relates to

178. Luke 16:10. In comparison, Luke 16 has a statement concerning "the law and the prophets," one regarding nothing "passing" from the law, and a divorce-saying. Yet it lacks the polemical "fire" of Matthew 5:17–48. This illustrates clearly the redactive purposes unique to each writer.

179. Bauer, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 592–93.

180. So Meier, *Law and History*, 9.

181. F. Brown et al., *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1979), 684.

182. So Ljungman, *Das Gesetz Erfüllen*, 50.

183. F. Dibelius, "Zwei Worte Jesu I. Die kliensten Gegote II. Der Kleinere ist im Himmelreich grösser als Johannes," *ZNW* 10 (1919):188.

184. E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 111–12.

185. T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1949), 24.

the *yōd* idea, the *detail* of *individual* commandments (ultimately being brought to bear on δικαιοσύνη, 5:20).

"Light" commandments stood in contrast to *rab* or *gādôl* commandments. An example of the former was the Pharisaical custom of tithing on herbs and species (Matt. 23:23 = Luke 11:42). "Heavy" {232} commandments related to the breach of the Sabbath (e.g., 12:1–9, 10–13, and implied in 28:1), profaning God's name (e.g., 26:63–65; Mark 14:61–64; John 10:33; 8:58–59), and profaning the temple (e.g., Matt. 26:61; 12:6, and implied in 21:12–13 = Mark 11:15–18 = Luke 19:45–48 = John 2:14–17).

Jesus's hermeneutical principle becomes that of Matthew and He places emphasis where emphasis should be found—the exact opposite of the Pharisees:

> ... [Y]ou pay tithe on mint and dill and cummin yet you abandon (ἀφιέναι) the weightier matters of the law—justice, mercy and fidelity. These you should do while not abandoning the others. (25:23)

Absolutely scrupulous with respect to details (an ardor not wrong in itself, but a monstrosity when contrasted to the abrogating of "weightier" principles of social morality), Pharisees tithed, as the law required, on "all the increase of your seed which comes year by year from the field" (Lev. 27:30 and Deut. 14:22), but did so to the extent of trifling absurdity (e.g., mint, dill, and cummin were used for medicinal as well as flavoring purposes).[186] Such inversion of priorities is further typified by a Near Eastern hyperbole: in seeking to strain out an insect while drinking and thus avoid swallowing what was considered "unclean" (Lev. 11:2–23), they inadvertently swallowed the proverbial camel—another "unclean" beast. The point of the proverb is the *size*!

While "playing" with contemporary rabbinical categories and giving a valid hermeneutical rule which put broad principles as well as detail into their proper perspective, Jesus's rule of thumb was not new. Deuteronomy 22:6–7, one's obligation if chancing upon a bird's nest, demonstrates that "smallness" has its proper place in the divine economy. That the Old Testament does not teach an "either... or," rather an "as well as" mentality, is reflected

186. A. Plummer, *Exegetical Commentary*, 318. Note the two triplets in Matthew 23:23 set in contrast. In Luke (11:42), there is no contrast of triplets!

even in rabbinic literature, an example coming from the first century AD:

> Run to the light as well as to the weighty commandment. Be heedful of a light commandment as of a weighty one, for thou knowest not the recompense of reward of each commandment.[187]

Significantly, Jesus teaches on the value of the στρουθίον (Hebrew: *sîppôr*), the small undomesticated bird translated "sparrow" in Psalm 84:3 and Proverbs 26:2, and proverbial symbol of low value in Matthew 10:29 = Luke 12:6–7. Implicit is the value to the Father of these "least" in creation.[188] {233}

Twice in 5:19 the verb διδάσκειν occurs, once associated with λυειν and once with ποιειν. "Doing" and "teaching" go hand–in–hand. For the disciples, this fact cannot be overstated. They are explicitly warned to "do" (ποιειν and τηρειν) "all" that the Pharisees "say,"[189] but *not* what *they* do (23:3). In rabbinic circles, the importance of a commandment was measured by how *difficult* it was to fulfill.[190] Hence, the "light" onces were not significant!

This carries consequences for the disciples. The appearance of διδάσκειν twice in 5:19 (combined with the weight of chapter 23) shows the significance of a "missionary" motive.[191] What is being propagated? Pharisaical zeal drives them to sojourn across land and sea in order to find one proselyte, only to turn him into a product twice as lamentable as they (23:15). "Teaching" and "doing" are indivisible; both are inseparably linked in 5:21–48. The case illustrations reject the tragedy of false "teaching" and "doing."[192]

In 5:19, protasis and apodosis combine to link the condition—fidelity to the commandments—with the resultant reward—punishment. We find a similar legal formula in 16:19 as well as 18:18.

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187. Cited in R.M. Johnston, " 'The Least of the Commandments': Deuteronomy 22:6-7 in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity," *AUSS* 20 (1982): 207.

188. Johnston, in a fascinating discussion, uses the "bird nest" commandment as a paradigm for the "least" of the commandments.

189. I.e., what comprises the *written* Torah.

190. For comment, see Betz, "Hermeneutical Principle," 25–26.

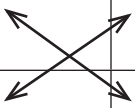
191. So Arens, *HAΘON–Sayings*, 96–97.

192. M. Lehmann-Habeck has rightly defined this relationship (*Das Gesetz*, 49).

J. P. Meier[193] has correctly noted here an agreement with the measure-for-measure standard running throughout the Old Testament. The Old is still the core of the New. Again, we may note the chiastic structure, which merely serves to highlight the above, in 19a and 19b:

ὃς ἐὰν οὖν λύσῃ		μίαν τῶν ... ἐλαχίστων
ἐλαχίστων		κληθήσεται

... and, 19a, b, c, and d as a whole:

ὃς ἐὰν οὖν λύσῃ ... καὶ διδάξῃ		ἐλάχιστος κληθήσεται ...
οὗτως μέγας κληθήσεται		ὃς δ' ἂν ποιήσῃ καὶ διδάξῃ...

Losing rank in the "kingdom of heaven"[194] was understood by a Jew, for he could not expect bliss if he had set aside the Torah. Jesus elsewhere in the Matthean Gospel presents the contrast of "rank" in the kingdom of heaven. In 18:4, the "humble" (ταπεινός) are acclaimed "great"; in 20:16, the "last" are made "first" and the "first," "last"; and in 20:26, the "great" ones are those who become a διακονος. E. Arens[195] argues that being called "least in the kingdom of heaven" need not be taken literally if it is being used for the sake of the parallelism, as in 5:19. I. Broer[196] suggests that we stand on safer ground in viewing "exclusion" to the Kingdom of Heaven as a parallel {234} *form*, i.e., a literary device, rather than digging for the content of the statement. And R.H. Gundry[197] describes

193. Meier, *Law and History*, 99.

194. A trademark of the Matthean Gospel, βασιλεία των οὐρανων occurs thirty-two times. Mark and Luke use βασιλεία του θεου. Since both are interchangeable in Matthew 19:23–24, we may equate them. They designate God's lordship, His reign or place of rule (see G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus* [Minneapolis, MN: Klock and Klock, repr. 1981], 92–93).

195. Arens, *HAΘON–Sayings*, 96.

196. Broer, F*reiheit vom Gesetz*, 1.

197. R.H. Gundry, *Matthew*: *A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 1982), 82.

this as "poetic justice."

In short, 5:19 is intriguing. Its parts—the "whole" law, "light" parts, "practice," and "teaching"—are Jewish to the core (at least in rabbinic circles). The very "Jewish" New Testament epistle of James stresses the same: all the commands, performed out of love, are to be observed.

5:20

Joined to the flow of 5:17–19 by means of the inferential-descriptive connective γαρ,[198] verse 20 forms a bridge into a section of the Matthean Gospel in which Jesus moves from principle to practice. In this bridge, we notice a shift from the apodictic third person singular (ὃς ἐάν) to the second person plural (ὑμῖν). Three times in 5:20, "you" or "your" occurs; the matter is serious for the disciples. P. Lapide[199] describes λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν as an exegetical key to Jesus's style of interpretation. It pits the disciples' δικαιοσύνη with that so-called of the scribes and Pharisees.

Eighteen times throughout the Matthean Gospel, Jesus's example or teaching is in conflict with that of the scribes and Pharisees.[200] Chapter 23, as well as 5:21–48, monitors how the πραξις of the "abrogators of the law" is blemished. Jesus is looking for a "better righteousness," one which "far exceeds" (note the emphasis on comparison: περισσεύειν, "increase" or "exceed," plus πλεῖον, "more than" or "greater than," the comparative degree of πολύς) ἡ δικαιοσύνη τῶν γραμματέων καὶ Φαρισαίων, which consists of ἡ παράδοσις των πρεσβυτέρον. Πλειν is not quantitatively "more" in the sense of "more commands" or more detail, rather "more" in a fundamental or qualitative sense.[201]

The rabbinic notion of δικαιοσύνη was lacking due to its meticulous drive to fulfill endless legal prescriptions, not being performed from the heart; hence, Jesus's "inside-outside" analogies in

198. Bauer, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 151.

199. Lapide, *Sermon on the Mount*, 20.

200. 5:20; 9:3; 12:38; 15:1; 16:21; 20:18; 21:15; 23:2, 13, 15–16, 23, 25, 27, 29; 26:3-4, 57; 27:41. It is noteworthy that Matthew's order—"scribes and Pharisees"—occurs nine times, while Mark does not use it at all and Luke only three times.

201. For comment, see Lohmeyer, *Evangelism*, 114.

23:25–28. Late Judaistic literature reflects the emphasis on avoiding at any cost the *appearance* of a *lack of deeds*.[202] The "righteous" had become the honorific title of those who avoided "sin." By Jesus's day, δικαιοσύνη had been reduced and narrowed in its meaning to almsgiving, or, the equivalent of a weak "charity" today.[203] Stated succinctly, "their legalism was illegal."[204] {235}

Jesus's idea of δικαιοσύνη, related to *character* (already alluded to in 5:6: μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην...), was rooted in the attributes of God—kindness and fairness—yet contained also the horizontal aspect of social morality.[205] The Greek δικαιοσύνη does not adequately convey the nuances of the Hebrew *sedeq*, particularly the aspect of divine love. *Sedeq* involves the goodness of God initiated toward men, as well as the resultant good deeds which act as leaven in a society. God's righteousness and man's are related![206] And on both counts, scribal Judaism was found wanting. The strong negation formula ἐὰν μὴ…οὐ μή is used one other time in the Matthean Gospel and includes the very same "exclusion clause":

> Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐὰν μὴ στραφῆτε καὶ γένησθε ὡς τὰ παιδία, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. (Matt. 18:3)

Jesus is *not* saying that entering the Kingdom of Heaven is based on what one does. However, He *does* say simply that by *not* obeying one will *not enter.* Why, may we ask, was Jerusalem destroyed in AD 70 (i.e., in the "New Covenant" time-frame)? Did the representatives of Palestinian Judaism—the scribes and Pharisees—observe the Torah too closely? The next generation certainly knew why: their fathers were judged according to the valid norm of the Torah itself. Jerusalem lacked the "better righteousness." John the Baptist sent a warning throughout Judea to that effect. Repentence

202. Braun, *Spätjüdisch-häretischer*, 4.

203. See T. H. Weir, "Matthew v. 20," *ExpTim* 23 (1911/12):430.

204. So Bahnsen, *Theonomy*, 89.

205. Lapide, himself an orthodox Jew, paints a marvelous picture of the vertical and horizontal aspects of *sedeq*: obedience that responds out of love toward God, which will be manifestly evident as men live in society (*Sermon on the Mount*, 20–23).

206. See also J. P. Louw, *Neotestamentica*, vol. 1, *The Sermon on the Mount*: *Essays on Matthew 5–7* (1967), 37–40.

entailed a change, not in belief, but in deeds.

5:17–20 as a Unit

As argued earlier, 5:17–20 constitutes the core of Jesus's teaching found in 5:1–7:29, as evidenced by the statement of Jesus's mission, issues facing the Matthean community, and a distorted view of "righteousness." These four verses lose their profound force in English.[207] Considering alone the verbs of 5:17–20—μὴ νομίσητε, ἦλθον, καταλυσαι (twice), πληρωσαι, λύσῃ, παρέλθῃ (twice), διδάξῃ (twice), κληθήσεται (twice), ποιήσῃ, περισσεύσῃ, εἰσέλθητε—this pericope is not weakly suggesting that the commandments will have their value until the end of the world, rather it declares that they remain *in force* until *everything* which needs to be *done* shall be wholly accomplished. Palestinian Jews understood, above all else, the implications of tampering with the Torah. {236}

These verses encompass Palestinian Torah-bound Jews as well as Hellenistic "Torah-free" factions within Christendom and communicate in very contemporary terms. After affirming the high moral standard of the Old Testament,[208] and emitting of consequences where the validity of the Torah is denied,[209] Jesus issues a call to truly "righteous" living, using the "abrogators" from official Judaism as a means of contrast. The "better righteousness" is *doing*, not *misusing*, the Torah, so that 5:17–20 can be seen as a "preamble"[210] to 21–48. It serves as a statement of principle aimed at preventing the misunderstanding of the provisions following.

The church of Matthew's writing is like Israel; its ethical base is the same. There is no separation between loving God and social behavior. *Haggadah* (homiletic exhortation) and *halakah* (exegesis of the law), kerygma and teaching, go hand-in-hand. Cov-

207. This matter is recognized by J.M. Ross in his article "Problems of Translation in Matthew," *BT* 29 (1978):337.

208. Matthew's concern is the *ethical standard*.

209. Broer (*Freiheit vom Gesetz*, 69) speaks of the "presence of an aorist environment" to illustrate Jesus's stress in 5:17–19 on continuity or indefinite time period of the Law's validity.

210. Manson, *Sayings*, 153.

enant, writes C. H. Dodd,[211] assumes both divine initiation and human obligation, and the disciples, like Israel, are obligated, as an "outside colonizing power," to transform the world through the leaven of their presence.[212]

5:21–48 as the Application of 5:17–20

The Ἠκούσατε ... ἐρρέθη Formula

Matthew 5:21–48 mirrors typical rabbinic debates which were going on in Jerusalem between the schools of Hillel and Shammai and employs five (six according to most commentators) examples of how Pharisaical distortions had caused them to miss the will of God, thus abrogating the commandments. Verses 21–48 should not be viewed as a dissent from the Law.[213] Rather, Jesus explains a "better righteousness" by unveiling the intent of the commandments, then intensifying them by addressing matters of the human heart. Between Jesus and the scribes exist harmony and contrast—harmony in that the basis or foundation of faith and ethics, the Torah, is valid, and contrast in the sense of motivation and application.[214] Normally designated as "antitheses" by Matthew commentators, the case illustrations could well be called the "supertheses" inasmuch as they intensify or amplify the single commandments being discussed. The movement of 5:21–48 is one of building toward the climax of the love-motive (vv. 43–48), whereby Jesus is teaching the disciples to go beyond *mere* prohibition to the heart of the commandment. Murder *and* anger (vv. 21–16) are condemned, adultery *and* lewd thoughts are illicit (vv. 27–32), oath-making *and* perjury are a snare (vv. 33–37). {237}

211. C. H. Dodd, *Gospel and Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), 67. Indeed, the foundation of "covenant" remains intact.

212. G. W. H. Lampe, "Secularization in the New Testament and the Early Church," *Theology* 71 (1968):168.

213. Old Testament law was not "imperfect." Meier (*Law and History*, 14–61) is exemplary of many commentators who suggest this, if not explicitly, then implicitly. He views Jesus's teaching on divorce, oaths, and retaliation in the case illustrations as setting aside the Old Testament commandments. Much to the contrary, Jesus is *intensifying* the basic commandments, exposing the corruption of the human heart and then reaffirming the law as it stood.

214. See Lapide, *Sermon on the Mount*, 44–124, for helpful discussion.

The scenario painted by Matthew adds maximum force to Jesus's denunciation. What the scribes and Pharisees "say" (ἐρρέθη in 5:21, 27, 31, 38, 43; εἴπωσιν and λέγουσιν in 23:3) is not so much the issue; it is, rather, what they "do" (τὰ ἔργα αὐτων and ποιουσιν in 23:3).[215] ἠκούσατε could be translated "through tradition you have received," while ἐρρέθη implies "as tradition it has been taught"[216] and corresponds to the *shenne'emar* in rabbinic literature.[217] Nowhere else do we find Jesus using ἐρρέθη to quote from the Old Testament. He normally employs γεγράπται ("it is written").[218]

5:21–48—The Supertheses

1. vv. 21–26

The first illustration involves a case in which the rabbis had restricted guilt only to the overt act of killing itself. Far from suspending Old Testament law regarding murder, Jesus uses an antithetical parallel in verse 22 describing penalties, followed by a demonstration (vv. 23–24) that obedience is better than sacrifice,[219] closing with a parable (vv. 25–26) that illustrates the principle of accountability.[220] The three different levels of accountability in verse 22 represent three types of "judicial" (note ἔνοχος) response, one being eschatological (εἰς τὴν γέενναν).[221] Hillel, as contrasted with Shammai, generally embodied a more forbearing and tolerant expression of Judaism.[222] Yet, one only need go to the

215. Scribal error is demonstrated by their failure to retain "as yourself" with "love your neighbor," not to mention justifying "hate your enemy."

216. J. Lightfoot, *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, repr. 1979), 107, suggests "you have learned by hearing" and "it is an old tradition."

217. E.g., Aboth I, 18; III, 8 and 14; IV, 1–3, 7–9, and 11.

218. ἐρρέθη would be far too generic an expression.

219. 1 Sam. 15:22 and Mic. 6:6–8.

220. The point of the parable is not "agreeing with your enemy," nor does it teach on earthly penalties *per se.* The key is the link ταχύ. That is, deal "quickly" with the dilemma... at its root.

221. For further discussion on 5:22, see R.A. Guelich, "Mt. 5:22: Its Meaning and Integrity," *ZNW* 64 (1973):39–52.

222. So Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 198.

corpus of Old Testament wisdom literature, particularly the Proverbs, to see that Jesus is offering no "new" teaching. The teaching on anger does not abrogate the sentence for murder, rather it adds to its implications.[223] In verses 2–26, Jesus is masterfully utilizing the rabbinic "hedge" around the Torah. He rips down the "hedge" of being angry (ὁ ὀργιζόμενος τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ), diffusing the situation by saying that *it* has its consequence (ἔνοχος ἔσται τῇ κρίσει), implying that silence could be a "hedge" for true wisdom. In addition, Jesus turns the tables by evoking empathy as the hearers imagine being in the brother's shoes in the midst of a holy act at the altar. The timeless principle is reminiscent of Psalm 24:3–4:

> Who may ascend the Lord's mountain?
> And who may stand in the holy place?
> He that has clean hands and a pure heart....

2. vv. 27–32

Though normally treated as two separate "cases" (vv. 27–30 and 31–32), 5:27–32 forms a cohesive unit. Many commentators {238} will approach this text with a view of using it to ground certain divorce cases which are not morally wrong. However, the *issue* here is the utter seriousness of the prohibition of adultery (vv. 27–32) with verses 31–32 illustrating how some have circumvented the Old Testament forbidding it. Evidently, some in Jesus's audience did not perceive it as adultery. The καί in verse 32 links verses 31–32 with what has preceded it (27–30). 5:27–32 as a unit portrays divorce as an *example* of adultery and underscores two areas where problems arise: (1) the thought life (vv. 28–30), and (2) divorce, which *leads to adultery.*[224]

If having a "certificate" was "proof" of divorce, and according to Jewish tradition, only the *husband* could secure the certificate,[225]

223. So Strecker, *Der Weg*, 48.

224. J. J. Kilgallen, "To What are the Matthean Exception–Texts (5, 32 and 19, 9) an Exception?" *Bib* 61 (1980):102, is one of the few who analyzes 5:27–32 correctly, doing justice to the relationship between lust, adultery, and divorce as presented here. Unfortunately, many get mired in seeking to find an adequate definition for πορνεία or μοιχαται. See also, J. Fitzmyer, "The Matthean Divorce Texts and Some New Palestinian Evidence," *TS* 37:197–226.

225. So U. Nembach, "Ehescheidung nach alttestamentlichem und jüdischem Recht," *TZ* 26 (1970):168.

the loss would inevitably be the woman's, since the man *leads* her (note the accusative direct objects in 5:28, αὐτὴν, in 5:30, αὐτὴν ,and 5:32, τὴν γυναικα αὐτου) into the adulterous situation. Thus, he has misled her, adultery being the *outcome* of divorce.[226] Jesus, however, diffuses this potential dilemma by dealing with the heart of the *man*. Adultery in the heart (v. 28) profanes the marital bond. It follows logically that if *lust* is forbidden, how much more the ending of a marital covenant.[227] Jesus presents a "radical," i.e., fundamental, interpretation in this polemic against the Pharisees in an hour when, due to current rabbinic debates, the definitions of marital violations were being "broadened" (note also the background to the "marriage debates" in chapter 19: controversy). Added to this confusion would be the increase of Gentiles into the Christian community who would naturally have questions regarding "normal" marriage or what constitutes πορνεια.

Jesus's teaching in 5:27–32 assumes the absolute indissolubility of the marital bond (Mark 10:6–9 adds clarity) and, furthermore, sets the fundamental requirement as *absolute moral purity.* The "hedge," used properly, is a pure heart in the sight of God. The mind and body (illustrated by vv. 28–30) are related.

3. vv. 33–37

Jesus turns to the question of making oaths, i.e., strong statements viewed as binding which gave an outward attestation of piety. Making "oaths" or "vows" received detailed instruction in Numbers 30:2–16. Jesus, in essence, condenses the Old Testament teaching into the following maxim: given the dishonesty of the human heart, it is best not to swear at all. {517}

Jewish tradition distinguished between four types of "oath" or "swearing": (1) testimony before a judge, (2) purification oaths of a debtor, (3) solemn affirmations of piety, and (4) oaths obligating oneself before God.[228] For each, nonetheless, Deuteronomy 23:23

226. K. Haacker, in "Der Rechtssatz Jesu zum Thema Ehebruch (Mt. 5, 28)," *BZ* 21 (1977):113–16, particularly, 114, has discerned the spirit of what is going on in this text: the husband is imputing injustice to the wife, placing her in a difficult situation which causes her yet other complications.

227. Lapide's (*Sermon on the Mount*, 56–69) insights into the "covenant" background of 5:27–32 are excellent.

228. *Ibid*., 70.

("That which is gone out of your lips you shall keep and perform... as you have vowed unto the Lord your God, which you have promised with your mouth") was still valid. The "hedge" utilized here by the rabbis was the warning of procrastination in the fulfilling of vows.[229] Jesus pulls down the "hedge," making it clear that "substitutionary formulas" (e.g., ἐν τω οὐρανω or ἐν τη γη or εἰς Ἱεροσόλνμα) do not circumvent the reality of God's omnipresence. God takes an oath seriously.

James 3:1–18 teaches that the control of the tongue is integrity and the embodiment of *true wisdom.* His statement in 5:12 is almost word-for-word that of Jesus and agrees in spirit with Jesus's teaching: nothing less than honesty is demanded. While men are free, in *sobriety*, to consecrate themselves ("oathing" in a sense; Jesus's ἀμήν formula represents a type of oath; Jesus also testified "under oath" in 26:64 before the high priest), men are inclined to be liars. Hence, what is required is speaking truthfully. A truthful heart cannot be supplied by oaths.

4. vv. 38–42

Whereas these verses are almost uniformly held by New Testament commentators to be a nullification of the *lex talionis*, and hence, a refutation of the "eye-for-an-eye" measure from Old Testament law,[230] Jesus's teaching is not directed against Old Testament teaching. The structure of these verses illustrates its chief point: the danger of applying the "eye-for-an-eye" measure, which is valid in the corporate legal sphere, to *all personal injury*, a matter already touched upon in 5:11–12. Note that in 5:38 what was "taught as tradition," ἐρρέθη, has deleted "life-for-life," i.e., *criminal* punishment, from the Old Testament commandment. Hence, we see here a "selfish" inclination toward a nice, neat, calculated compensation for personal injury. By Jesus's day, "compensation" for "damages," which, to the rabbis, amounted to *humiliation*, was worked out monetarily in great complexity.[231] Three practical examples of potential conflict from living within the Empire

229. *Ibid.*, 71.

230. Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; and Deut. 19:21.

231. For further treatment of the background to vv. 38–42, see Daube, *New Testament*, 255–58.

follow: (1) a slap on the right cheek (denoting insult),[232] (2) losing one's tunic in court (referring to day-laborers and the rights of the weak; see Ex. 22:26–27) before the judge, and (3) the αλλαρεια, the compulsory service to the Romans, allowing any {240} legionary to load his bags on a Jewish passerby to be carried for a mile (e.g., Simon of Cyrene, in Mark 15:21).

The question at hand in these verses has nothing to do with whether or not the legal standard of measure-for-measure as compensation is valid. Rather, Jesus is prohibiting *personal* vengeance.[233] The setting of 5:39 may well be, on a regular basis, the synagogue. Verse 40 infers a very poor man, since ordinary garments play a part in a lawsuit only if a man has no other property.[234] According to Deuteronomy 24:13, it had to be given back if, given as a pledge, it served as the man's blanket. Regarding the "two" coats mentioned in verse 40, the poor, as a rule, had two garments. Interestingly, Jesus assumes this in Matthew 10:10 when qualifying what the disciples may bring along in following Him: no *two* tunics. Discipleship, while not equating poverty with righteousness, was accessible to the poor of this world. Therein lies no entanglement in things or possessions. Yet, lest verse 40 be construed as spineless passivity in the face of personal injury, the text reads "give him" , not "let him have" ἄφες.

If a Jew, under constraint of a Roman soldier to carry his baggage, tried to flee, he often faced draconian penalties.[235] Conversely, if the subject bore up under the task and offered to carry the load a second mile, more than likely a friendly conversation would arise and the door would be wide open to "gospelize."

One thread runs throughout each of these individual situations: the compliance and "inner strength" of the weaker just might soften the rigidity of the offender, giving rise to even more forbear-

232. Talmudic discussion identifies this—a slap to the right cheek from the left hand—as a gesture of contempt.

233. Cf. Lapide (*Sermon on the Mount*, 121–23), Martin ("Matthew on Christ and the Law," 56) and Bahnsen (*Theonomy*, 117–18). It may be well to take cognizance of the place of vengeance in apocalyptic literature, a factor no doubt influencing the atmosphere of first-century Palestine.

234. See R. C. Tannehill, "The 'Focal Instance' of Matthew 5," *JR* 50 (1970):378–79.

235. Lapide, *Sermon on the Mount*, 112.

ance. In any case, each of the examples contained in verses 38–42 evokes a similar response from the hearer—one of bewilderment. Yet the disciple, found in a place of "weakness," manifests a hidden strength.

5. vv. 43–48

Predominating in rabbinic traditions of pre–70 AD Judaism, Hillel taught a similar version of what is considered the "Golden Rule":

> What is hateful to yourself do not do to your neighbor.[236]

However, what was being translated on to the masses as πρᾶξις was a far cry from Hillelite doctrine: Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη, Ἀγαπήσεις ... καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρόν σου (Matt. 5:43).

The first half of this tradition contained an Old Testament citation ("you shall love your neighbor..."),[237] Two things strike the hearer: {241} (1) the qualifying phrase "as yourself" is omitted, and (2) "you shall hate your enemy" is not a concept found anywhere in the Law, prophets, or writings, having been inserted here. Several theories suggest its origin. L. Goppelt surmises that it became a Qumran tenet, as community members hated the "sons of darkness"[238] (though it is questionable how much influence the Qumran sect had in Jesus's day). Or, perhaps it rose out of a "rabbinic twist" nurtured over time. The mention of οἱ τελῶναι and οἱ ἐθνικοὶ in verses 46 and 47 hints at a probable background.

It is these two groups of people—tax-collectors and Gentiles—which will help qualify Jesus's notion of πλησίον. To a Palestinian Jew, these two were representative types, whose deeds were

236. Cited in Neusner, *Politics*, 13.

237. Leviticus 19:18. David Flusser maintains, in "A New Sensitivity in Judaism and the Christian Message," *HTR* 61 (1968):126, that while Judaism forbade hatred, it did not prescribe love for the enemy. However, this neglects the quantity of detail given in the Law, not the least of which were the laws regarding the poor, the foreigner, the widow, and the fatherless (Ex. 22:21–27). The "Gentile" (i.e., the "foreigner") was to be treated (= loved) as the widow, proceeding logically from this section of the law.

238. L. Goppelt, "Die Freiheit zur Kaisersteuer (zu Mk. 12, 17 und Röm. 13, 1–7)," in *Ecclesia und Res Publica*, ed. G. Kretschmer and B. Lohse (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961), 43–44.

considered revolting.[239] Neither had the good of the Jew in mind. As Israel was before the nations, so the disciples of Jesus were to reflect their God. Jesus includes "tax-collectors" and "Gentiles" as "neighbors" (as an adverb, πλησίον can mean "near" or "close by";[240] hence, the one with whom I have to do at the moment).

What was the customary alternative to "loving your enemies"? If one prefers the "Zealot" motif, one seeks to throw off the yoke of the Roman *imperium* by means of violent aggression, revolution. In occupied Palestine, Roman law forbade the Jews to carry swords and looked on a Jew possessing one with illegal suspicion, often ending in crucifixion.[241] So, either way, one "carried his cross." If he were a Zealot, chances are good he would hang on it. If he were a Christian, "carrying a cross" also meant a love for one's enemies which took a variety of forms.[242]

Widely developed in rabbinic theology was the notion of imitating Yahweh.[243] Even this maxim was not original to the rabbis of Jesus's day. Its antecedent is to be found in the Old Testament:

> ... [B]e holy, for I am holy.... (Lev. 11:44).

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239. For comment, see W. Wolpert, "Die Liebe zum Nächsten, zum Feind und zum Sünder," *TGI* 74 (1984):262–82.

240. Bauer, *Greek–English Lexicon*, 672.

241. See Lapide, 115.

242. Material from the so-called "Sermon on the Mount," 5:43–48 as an example, is often cited by those seeking to justify pacifism through the New Testament (little encouragement is offered in the Old). It would be well to note that the *Sitz im Leben* of 5:1-7:29 is not national Israel, or even the messianic community, as it deliberates over civil or legal responsibility. The *Sitz im Leben*, as well as *Sitz im Denken*, are related to matters of the *individual heart*. The implications affect those under Jesus's ministry and the Matthean church. Neither Jesus nor John the Baptist called soldiers, once they manifested faith (e.g., Matthew 8:5–13), out of the service of the state. They were exhorted, however, on how to conduct themselves *within* the context of *service* (*e.g.*, Luke 3:14: "... He said to them (soldiers), 'Extort no one forcefully for money, do not take bribes and be content with your wages.' " Further, Paul, in all of his many encounters with Roman soldiers in the book of Acts, is not once recorded as having persuaded a centurion or legionary to leave his vocation. Rather, the apostle viewed the apparatus of the state as the unwitting vehicle of the Sovereign Lord to bring the Gospel to the nations (the movement of the book of Acts and Romans 13:1–7 seem to agree: the state, though passing away, becomes a S&&icovos of God).

243. See H. Frankmülle, *Jahwebund und Kirche Christi* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1974), 172.

> ... You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy. (Lev. 19:2)
>
> And you shall be holy unto me, for I, the Lord, am holy. (Lev. 20:26)

Jesus's instruction to His disciples finds its climax in the imperative ἔσεσθε πέλειοι. In contrast to the scribes' and Pharisees' lack of moral standard, τέλειος is significant.[244] The command ἔσεσθε πέλειοι follows on the heels of (1) the Torah abiding, (2) the enduring of the commandments, (3) the close connection between teaching and doing, (4) the example of the scribes and Pharisees, and (5) redefining of {242} rabbinic "hedges." In the light of all these (οὖν), Jesus says, "Be perfect." This injunction agrees with Deuteronomy 18:13.

However, this "perfection" or "wholeness" cannot be divorced from love of God. The hearts of the kings of Israel, in the mind of the Deuteronomic historian, had not been "perfect"[245] (LXX: τέλειος); their hearts were divided. The heart that is "perfect," on the other hand, is "undivided,"[246] not partial or self-serving, as in verses 46–47. It is a love that the Heavenly Father Himself shows (v. 45); it is indiscriminate. God is our example (ὡς ὁ πατὴρ ὑμων ὁ οὐράνιος τέλειός ἐστιν).

Matthew 5:48 sums up 5:17–20, which is followed by 21–48: do the law; be perfect.[247]

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244. To the Greek mystery religions, τέλειος was the high point of becoming a mystic. Paul borrows this shade of τέλειος in 1 Corinthians 2, speaking of πνευματικός and rebuking the πνευματικοί sarcastically in 12:1–3. Not accidentally, τέλειος and γνωσις appear in 1 Corinthians. A false sense of "perfection" was being propagated.

245. E.g., 1 Kgs. 11:4; 15:3, 14; and 1 Chron. 28:4.

246. See L. Sabourin, "Why is God Called 'Perfect' in Mt. 5:48?" *BZ* 24 (1980):267.

247. We must reject the opinions of Luz (*Evangelium*, 313) and Jeremias (*Sermon*, 31), who view 5:48 as "perfectionistic." Jesus's command to "[b]e perfect" or "[b]e whole" stems from the idea of *šālom* (see H. Bruppacher, "Was Sagte Jesus in Matthäus 5:48?," *ZNW* 58 [1967]:145). James, not incidently, uses τέλειος six times. He, too, is concerned about *evidence* for one's faith.

Conclusion

Seen in light of its position in the Gospel narrative, particular themes important to the writer, and rabbinic techniques employed throughout, 5:17–20 is pivotal to the Matthean Gospel. Peculiar to Matthew is the strong Jewish-Christian endorsement of Old Testament law and a proper view of "righteousness" that is vastly different from representatives of official Judaism. Both elements serve to form a basis of Matthew's (= Jesus's) ethical teaching. The author stresses "doing" the law ("true" righteousness)[248] as the goal of the disciple. The fulfilling of the Law (5:17) is the "better righteousness" (5:20ff). No part of the Law is to be abrogated (5:18) *because* the righteousness of the disciples must exceed that of scribes and Pharisees. 5:21–48 merely serves to draw out the practical implications of "true" righteousness.

The relationship of the disciple to the Law has an "ecclesial" dimension.[249] How could the first-century church demonstrate itself to the Judaism of the synagogues that it was to be "the people of God"? How could it appear credible and represent a continuity of the purposes of God? By doing "righteousness," whose basis is revealed in "the law and the prophets."

A very fitting analogy which demonstrates the unity and integrity of 5:17–20 has been suggested by G. Maier,[250] who likens it to a tree, (1) whose roots represent the promises of the fathers, (2) whose trunk is the Old Testament, and (3) whose fruit is the New Testament, the goal of it all. Hence, to speak of a "new law" is to do injustice to Matthew's intention.[251] For the crown cannot exist apart from the trunk, and the fruit is only understood in light of

248. This is summed up well in U. Luck, *Die Vollkommenheitsforderung der Bergpredigt* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1968), particularly 17–36. See also H. D. Betz, "Die Makarismen der Bergpredigt (Matthäus 5, 3–12)," *ZTK* 75 (1978):5.

249. So J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäus-Evangelium*, vol. 1 (Freiburg: Herder, 1986), 148.

250. Maier, *Matthäus-Evangelium*, 142.

251. Similarly, the vantage point of the fourth Gospel, as A. Feuillet ("Morale Ancienne et Morale Chretiténne D'Apres Mt. v. 17–20. Comparaison avec la Doctrine de L'Épître aux Romains," *NTS* 17 [1970/71]: 131) has pointed out, is an indispensable complement to the Synoptics in explaining the new economy, e.g., the role of the Spirit.

the roots and trunk. {243}

Appendix

Matthew and Paul

It is unfair here to attempt defining Paul's use of νόμος in the New Testament. This we shall not do. However, because most commentators on Matthew draw comparison to the Apostle—whether justly or unjustly—some remarks are appropriate. The first has to do with the writer's intention. Paul's use of νόμος in Galatians is totally different from that in the Roman epistle. New Testament theologians are inclined to sum up "law" in Paul with one lone formula, a sort of "beef stew." To many it might seem erroneous, even heretical, to suggest that Paul did not view the Law as abrogated. For that which was considered by Paul to be "holy"[252] and "spiritual"[253] and "good"[254] (i.e., nothing at all substandard or "imperfect") continues in validity:

> Do we then render the law void through faith? God forbid, indeed we establish the law. (Rom. 3:31)

> For not the hearers of the law are justified before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. (Rom. 2:13)

Paul is not always discussing νόμος in a "redemptive" sense. Matthew does not do this at all. δικαιοσύνη in Matthew is not what God has done through Christ vicariously, rather what Jesus's disciples are to produce. Matthew need not be portrayed as "standing on the side of Paul's adversaries."[255]

Christian Theological Reflection

One grows aware, in scholarly literature, of a somewhat anti–judaistic tendency, whereby "law" and "grace" are pitted against each other. This is, though there are exceptions, very noticeable among

252. Rom. 7:12.

253. Rom. 7:14.

254. Rom. 7:12.

255. This is the contention of Luz (*Evangelium*, 70).

German theologians as well as their American counterparts.[256] Perhaps, with respect to the former, one should note that having had two world wars take place on German soil can have a powerful influence on one's exegesis. And this is wholly understandable. Yet, "law" and "oppression" are *not* synonymous, as one German, H. J. Kraus, in *Freude an Gottes Gesetz*,[257] notes. Regarding the latter (the Americans), if there exists a stereotype, probably it is antinomian in character. Unless one views the Torah as a "classical Wellhausian," i.e., seeing it as having "evolved" from something primitive and restrictive to something in which the Psalmist could actually "delight" {244} (e.g., Ps. 37:3–31; 40:8; 119:24, 77, 92, 143, 174), we shall then need to view it as a Jew would—a gracious and loving gift, an expression of covenant, for which unceasing thanks was given.[258]

D. J. McCarthy, treating the "classically Protestant" question of "Doesn't the Law contradict the Gospel?" in *Der Gottesbund im Alten Testament*,[259] explains that a typical modern view of the Law does not understand that "Torah" was *not* the *condition* whereby one earned God's favor or presence. It was not the *means* of being justified,[260] rather it described the content of a *relationship* to Yahweh. McCarthy remarks, in addition, that all the particular covenants of the Old Testament contained the aspects of promise, grace, and obedience.[261] Law and blessing, he writers further, are *results* of grace.[262]

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256. A thorough survey of representative theologians of the present century with their views is found in C. Klein, *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

257. *ET* 10 (1950/51):337–51.

258. For further discussion, see Lapide, *Sermon on the Mount*, 15–17.

259. D.J. McCarthy, *Der Gottesbund im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Biblewerk, 1967), 80.

260. *Ibid.*

261. *Ibid.*, 82.

262. *Ibid.*

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The Hagar Story in Galations 4:21–31

In Defense of Paul's Use of Allegory

Charles D. Provan

Among the writings of the Apostle Paul, several passages have come in for severe criticism; and one of the most attacked is the well-known "Allegory of Hagar" in Galatians. In the book of Galatians, Paul is writing against a group which is attempting to lead the Galatian Christians into certain incorrect doctrines, such as circumcision necessary for salvation, and salvation by works. Paul's opponents attempted to legitimize their views by appealing to the Old Testament. Paul strikes back at them, showing that the Old Testament actually backs *his* view. He says that "the Law" in reality demonstrates that the Old Covenant would be discontinued ("gotten rid of," to paraphrase Galatians 4:30), while the New Covenant would remain.

What bothers many people is the Old Testament proof which Paul cites: the Hagar story of Genesis (Gen. 16:1–15; 17:15–22; 18:10–15; and 21:1–14). Here we list the Galatians passage under scrutiny (Gal. 4:21–31, NIV).

> 21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23 His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise. {259} 24 These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. 26

> But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written: "Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labor pains; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." 28 Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29 At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. 30 But what does the Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." 31 Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Some Christians reason like this: "Well, Paul in this passage does seem to get carried away—I certainly wouldn't get his allegory from reading the story in the Old Testament. Therefore, Paul must have gotten this mystical idea direct from God, and since he was an apostle, I should believe it." The motive ("I should believe the Apostle") is good, but the logic is flawed. Unless we can get the allegory *from the Old Testament*, Paul's argument is destroyed, for he says that his view is proven by "the Law," not by his assertion.

Similarly, examine Acts 17:11: "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." Note that according to this passage, the noble Bereans required Old Testament proof for Paul's assertions. Paul gave it to them, they examined it, *then* they accepted what Paul said.

So, can we find anything from Genesis itself which indicates that the Hagar story is intended to have prophetic significance? The answer, as you may suspect, is: "Yes!" First, however, we will look at the Genesis information about Hagar, then compare it to other similar passages in the Bible.

The Hagar Story

Abraham had been informed by God that he was to have a son. Sarah, the wife of Abraham, being barren, desired for her husband {260} to have a child. So, following ancient custom, she gave her servant Hagar to Abraham to be his second wife. Abraham took Hagar as his wife, and Hagar became pregnant. Hagar then looked with contempt upon Sarah, and Sarah retaliated by mistreating

her. Hagar then ran away, but was told by the Angel of the Lord to return, which she did. Hagar subsequently bore Abraham his first son, Ishmael. (Gen. 16:1–15).

Later, God said that Abraham would have a child by Sarah. Abraham thought this was funny, and so laughed, since he was then not physically able to father children, and Sarah herself was age ninety. God reaffirmed the promise, and told Abraham to name the future son Isaac. (Gen. 17:15–22).

God appeared again to Abraham, and mentioned once more that Sarah was to bear a son. This time Sarah laughed (Gen. 18:10–15).

About a year later Sarah did become pregnant by Abraham, and bore a son. The boy was named Isaac, and, after Sarah weaned him, a celebration was held. At this celebration, Ishmael (then about seventeen) mocked Isaac. Sarah was upset and said that Abraham should "get rid of" (this phrase can mean, among other things, "divorce") Hagar and her son Ishmael, "for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac" (Gen. 21:10). Abraham was distressed about this, but God told him to do as Sarah said, since "it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned" (Gen. 21:12). So Abraham sent them off (Gen. 21:1–4).

There are several "unusual" features to this Scripture narrative, among them the fact that Hagar was punished with divorce, though she had done nothing wrong. Ishmael was the one who mocked Isaac. So why was Hagar punished at all, let alone with divorce? Scripture says pointedly that parents are not to be punished for the sins of their children (Ex. 32:32–33; Deut. 24:16; Jer. 31:27–30; Ezek. 18:1–4, 20). And, according to the Bible, the only valid reasons for divorce are fornication (Matt. 5:32) and desertion (1 Cor. 7:15). Whatever else we may say about the marriage of Hagar and Abraham (and we are well aware that polygamy falls short of God's ideal for marriage), we can at least recognize that it was tolerated by God, since Abraham, Hagar, and Ishmael were all blessed by God. Further, the same term applied by Scripture to Sarah ("Abraham's *wife*") is also applied to Hagar ("his *wife*") in Genesis 16:3. (They are the same word in Hebrew.) God later announced in Malachi 2:16, "I hate divorce." {261}

We will have more to say on the significance of this divorce later. Now let us move on to other incidents wherein God commanded

people to do things which contradict His will as revealed.

Some Examples from the Bible

1. Hosea's Wife and Children (Hosea 1:1–9).

In this passage of Scripture, God instructed Hosea the prophet to marry an adulterous wife. According to the law of Moses, such women were to be executed, thus removing them from the list of potential wives (Deut. 22:20–22; Lev. 20:10).

What is very interesting about Hosea's marriage is the fact that Hosea's marriage *and* children are said by God Himself to have a spiritual meaning beyond themselves. Hosea's marriage symbolized the marriage of God to adulterous Israel. The first child was named "Jezreel," because God was going to destroy Israel's military power in the Valley of Jezreel. The second child was named "Lo-Ruhamah," which means "not loved," because God did not love Israel any more. The third was called "Lo-Ammi," which means "not my people," because God no longer regarded Israel as his people.

It appears that God drew attention to the symbolic nature of Hosea's marriage and children by commanding Hosea to marry someone forbidden by the Law of Moses.

2. Isaiah's Nakedness (Isaiah 20:1–6).

God told Isaiah to "take off the sackcloth from your body and the sandals from your feet." Isaiah did as he was told, "going around stripped and barefoot." This command resulted in shame for Isaiah (20:4) and appears to be contradictory to God's law on nakedness in Exodus 28:42–43. Further, Hosea 2:2–3 says that being stripped naked is a bad thing. Yet Isaiah was told to do this.

Now, why would God tell Isaiah to go around naked? Because Isaiah's action had symbolic meaning! God Himself said that Isaials nakedness foretold the nakedness of the Egyptians and the Cushites as they were being led away as captives by Assyria. So, as in Hosea 1:1–9, God draws attention to a symbolic act by introducing a command contrary to His revealed will. {262}

3. Ezekial's Food (Ezekiel 4:9–17).

God instructed Ezekiel to take some food and cook it "using human excrement for fuel." In Leviticus 15:31, Deuteronomy 14:3,

and Deuteronomy 23:12, God instructed the Israelites not to eat any such defiled food. What was the purpose of God's command to Ezekiel? Just this: in the same manner that Ezekiel would eat defiled food, so "the people of Israel will eat defiled food among nations where I will drive them." Notice that a divine command to set aside part of God's law calls attention to a symbolic prophetic message.

4. Jonah's Three Days and Three Nights (Jonah 1:1–17).

Jonah, commanded by God to preach to Nineveh, decided instead to run away. He boarded a ship which was headed for Tarshish. A severe storm overtook the ship. The crew of the ship was instructed by Jonah the prophet that the only way to save themselves was to throw him overboard. The crew refused, because they didn't want to shed innocent blood. However, their efforts to escape the storm proved futile, so eventually they threw Jonah off the ship. God was pleased by this; the storm stopped. A great fish swallowed Jonah, who stayed inside the fish for three days and three nights. Then he was vomited on shore, alive.

The crew was commanded (in their words) to kill "an innocent man." Jonah had done nothing to them, yet God wanted him thrown overboard. Shedding innocent blood is forbidden by Deuteronomy 19:11–13, Psalms 106:35–40, and Proverbs 6:16–19. Once again, we find that God drew attention to a symbolic occurrence by a command to break God's revealed word. As for the meaning of the three days and three nights in the fish, Jesus said (Matt. 12:40) that it symbolized the burial of Himself for the same time period, followed by His resurrection!

5. Peter's Vision of the Sheet from Heaven (Acts 10:1–48).

One day Peter went on the rooftop to pray. He then saw a vision of a sheet from heaven, which contained all kinds of unclean animals. A voice kept telling him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." Peter refused, telling the voice that he had "never eaten anything impure or unclean." (Here Peter was referring to Old Testament passages, such as Leviticus 11:44–47, which forbid the Israelites to eat the types of animals in Peter's vision.) Shortly thereafter, Peter was asked to visit a Gentile, {263} contrary to Jewish custom. Peter did so, and revealed the vision and its meaning to his audience: "God

has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean." From this time on, Gentiles were allowed into the church. Notice that the same sequence as our other passages occurs here: first, the contrary command, then the symbolic meaning of the event.

6. Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac (Genesis 22:1–18).

God instructed Abraham to go to "the region of Moriah" and sacrifice Isaac "as a burnt offering." This command contradicts the law of God in Deuteronomy 12:29 and 18:10–12, and Hosea 13:2–3, which passages forbid, in no uncertain terms, human sacrifice.

Yet Abraham obeyed God and took Isaac. On the way to the sacrifice, Isaac asked where the sacrificial lamb was; Abraham replied that "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering." Arriving at the place of sacrifice, Abraham bound Isaac and was about to slay him, when God called Abraham and told him not to kill Isaac. Abraham looked over to a thicket and saw a male lamb, which he sacrificed instead of Isaac. Abraham then named the place "Jehovah-Jireh," which means "the Lord will provide." Right after this, Genesis 22:14 says, "And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.' "

This last observation gives the symbolic prophetic meaning of the incident. According to the only Old Testament passage besides Genesis 22:2 which mentions Moriah, Moriah was the area of Jerusalem (2 Chron. 3:1). John the Baptist (John 1:29) said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." And Jerusalem "just happens to be" the location to which Christ said He *must* go to be mistreated and then killed (Matt. 16:21). So evidently both Jesus and John the Baptist viewed the Genesis 22 incident (which is *introduced* by God's command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac) as having prophetic symbolism, foretelling Christ's death for our sins, and also the location of this sacrifice for sin: Jerusalem.

7. The Blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48:8–20).

Jacob decided to bless the two sons of his son Joseph. Joseph positioned the sons (Manasseh and Ephraim) in front of Jacob in such a way that the great blessing (that of the right hand) would be given to Manasseh. (The right hand signifies primacy.) However, Jacob crossed {264} his hands, so that the right hand rested on

Ephraim, the younger son. (Now, according to the law of God in Deuteronomy 21:15–17, the "right of the firstborn" belongs to the *firstborn.* The principle seems to be that the higher blessing should go to the elder son.) Joseph protested his father's arrangement, but Jacob replied that his unusual action had prophetic significance: the tribe of Ephraim would in the future grow to be greater than the tribe of Manasseh. This is actually what did happen, so much that after Israel was divided into two kingdoms, the ten tribes of Northern Israel became known collectively as "Ephraim."

Returning to the Hagar Story

As we mentioned previously, we would return to the matter of Hagar's divorce. Observing that Hagar's divorce contradicts several points of biblical law, we then should realize that *this is a definite indication that the Hagar/Sarah story has allegorical meaning.*

Examining the story itself, we see that Sarah's view of Hagar, namely, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac," is approved by God, who said, "Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, *because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.*"

So we see that God's blessings to the seed of Abraham do not follow mere physical descent from Abraham. The inheritance applied to Isaac *only*. Is there anything unusual about Isaac in the book of Genesis? Yes, Isaac's birth was promised to Abraham and Sarah on at least two occasions prior to his conception. Secondly, Isaac was conceived by the extraordinary power of God's Spirit, since prior to the conception neither Abraham nor Sarah possessed the physical ability to have children. (In fact, both thought God's promise as funny, humanly speaking.) Third, Isaac's mother Sarah possessed the full rights of being a wife, while Hagar, though Abraham's wife, was still a slave, as Genesis 16:9 proves.

In Isaiah, we have a very interesting parallel to this story. The nation of Israel, by her constant departure from God, had failed in her attempts to bring "salvation to the earth": "We were with child, we writhed in pain, but we gave birth to wind. We have not brought salvation to the earth; we have not given birth to people of the world (Isa. 26:18). Further, those Israelites who disobeyed God were doomed to destruction, were not the true seed of Abraham,

and had no inheritance rights (Isa. 65:8–12). Without repentance and obedience, {265} they were slaves (Isa. 61:1–3). In addition, disobedient Israel is divorced from God (Isa. 50:1).

On the other hand, true spiritual Zion (composed of Israelites obedient to God) is prophesied by Isaiah to give birth to a holy nation by the miraculous power to God (Isa. 54:1–2; 66:7–9). She is the true seed of Abraham, receiving the inheritance of God (Isa. 65:8–12). The true Zion is freed by God, and becomes the "wife" of God (Isa. 61:1-3; 54:5).

It is therefore not surprising (given the symbolisim of the Hagar/Sarah story) that Paul ties the Genesis passages in with the book of Isaiah (Gal. 4:27/Isa. 54:1), which contains many of the same events, on a spiritual level.

Paul also brings in the idea of the Old and the New Covenants, which is mentioned in the Old Testament by name only in Jeremiah 31:31–34, NIV:

> 31 "The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

This passage mentions that God will do away with the Mosaic covenant and replace it with the "New Covenant." The Old Covenant, which was disobeyed continually by Israel, is "broken," and therefore ends with curses, slavery, and destruction, due to the sins of Israel. Now we will list, in an orderly form, some of our findings: {266}

Now, these facts which we have listed are from the Old Testament, not the New. When you put them all together, the result is just what Paul says in Galatians 4:21–31.

Paul informs the Galatians that "the Law" itself proves his position, namely, that the rite of circumcision and the idea that salvation may be obtained by mere human works are *not valid.* He shows the Galatians the story of Hagar and Sarah (contained in Genesis), and correctly {267} interprets its allegorical meaning. This meaning is apparent from the Old Testament *alone* following the same pattern of prophetic symbolism to be found in several other passages, such as Isaiah's nakedness, Hosea's wife and children, and Ezekiel's food. This method of interpretation is also validated by Jesus (Jonah's three days and three nights in the fish) and Peter (the sheet from heaven).

Ishmael, the son of Abraham and the slave Hagar, represents those who are children of Abraham only according to the flesh. Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah, represents those who are children of Abraham according to the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit.

Ishmael persecuted Isaac, and Paul points out that the Jews of his day, who gloried in the flesh and the works of the flesh, persecuted the Church of Christ.

Ishmael was denied status as the true offspring of Abraham, though physically he was so. In the same manner, the Jews who rejected Christ (whom Abraham believed as the Angel of the Lord) were rejected by God as children of Abraham, though they were Abraham's seed physically.

Ishmael was cast out of Abraham's community and received no inheritance. Likewise the Old Testament itself says that physical ancestry is not enough to please God—godly obedience resulting from electing grace (via faith) is necessary. So the destiny of those who reject Christ is disinheritance and being cast out by God.

Further Old Testament study in Isaiah and Jeremiah also results in the same doctrines: the Old Covenant, which Israel professed to accept, but actually disobeyed, resulted in the punishment and enslavement of disboedient Israel, and the abrogation of the Old Covenant itself. It was replaced by the New Covenant, whose adherents have the law of God in their hearts. These parallels are tied in with the Hagar/Sarah story, for they represent the ultimate fate of the Old Covenant, due to the Ishmael-like, disobedient Israelites. Paul also ties in the Isaiah story of the two Zions, one evil, one good, and their childbirth.

So then, the allegory of Hagar in Galatians, rather than resulting in the discrediting of the Apostle Paul, results, after careful study, in his vindication.

> Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! (Rom. 11:33).

Summary

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">GENESIS:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Hagar and Ishmael
—Hagar a slave
—Ishmael born by human effort
—Hagar and Ishmael cast out without inheritance
—Ishmael not reckoned the seed of Abraham by God
—Ishmael persecutes Isaac</td><td>Sarah and Isaac
—Sarah a full wife
—Isaac born miraculously by the power of God
—Sarah remains the wife of Abraham, Isaac receives the full inheritance
—Isaac reckoned the true seed of Abraham by God
—Isaac persecuted by Ishmael</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">ISAIAH:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Evil Israel</td><td>Godly Israel (True Zion)</td></tr>
<tr><td>—remains in slavery due to continuance in sin, divorced by God</td><td>—freed by God due to repentance, becomes the wife of God</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(Isa. 61:1–3; 54:5; 50:1)</td></tr>
<tr><td>—mere human efforts to give birth to the world end in failure</td><td>—gives birth by the miraculous power of God</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(Isa. 26:17–18; 66:7–9)</td></tr>
<tr><td>—destroyed by God, not reckoned as the true seed of Abraham</td><td>—received by God, reckoned as the seed of Abraham, receiving the inheritance of God</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(Isa. 65:8–12)</td></tr>
<tr><td>—persecutes the godly Israelites</td><td>— persecuted by their evil brothers</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">(Isa. 66:5–6)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">JEREMIAH:</td></tr>
</table>

Evil Israel	*Godly Israel*
—continually disobedient	—obedient to God
(Jer. 31:32–33)	
—under the curse of God due to disobedience to the Old Covenant	—under the New Covenant, which results in blessing
(Jer. 31:31–32, 34, with Lev. 26 and Deut. 28)	

3.
REVIEWS AND RECONSTRUCTION

The Impossible Religion of Leo Tolstoy

Ellen Myers

Introduction

Count Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) is world famous as the author of the great historical epic *War and Peace* and the novel *Anna Karenina*. His short story *The Death of Ivan Ilych* is also one of mankind's literary treasures and a stunning testimony to his lifelong fascination with death. At his best, he is an unexcelled master in the vivid portrayal of individual men and women, human action and nature as they appear to us in real life.

All Tolsoy's fiction is strongly autobiographical, for throughout his long life he was obsessed with his own character, perfection, and identity. His voluminous diaries, his private correspondence, and the witness of those who knew him well agree that other people and events mattered to him only insofar as they impinged upon himself. Less known but more influential than Tolstoy's fiction are his profuse religious writings. He produced them pursuant to an inward crisis in the late 1870s which ended in his formulation of a religion he called "Christianity," but more appropriately labeled "Tolstoyanism" already in his lifetime. It consisted of a concept of God as "the infinite Source of Life" or simply "the infinite," and an individual and social morality demanding utmost simplicity of attire, diet, and work, communal living, absolute nonviolence, and the abolition of state, church, science, and {269} industry. The arts and literature were to be comprehensive to everyone and to communicate the alleged oneness of all mankind and God. In the name of human reason, Tolstoy rejected the God of the Bible, the Creator and Preserver of the world, the Trinity, and the deity, miracles, and resurrection of Christ. Denying creation, he had no

concept of man's identity and no place for man's dominion under God. Instead, he defined man's service of the "good" as rejection of pleasure and the keeping of ascetic rules of conduct. Man's purpose was self-perfection within the "infinite." Tolstoy himself could not live up to this standard, and peace of heart eluded him to the last.

Because of its monism, in which all things are essentially one in the "infinite," and which borders on solipsism, the view that all observed phenomena are the product of our own minds, Tolstoyanism is closely related to Buddhism and similar pantheistic religions and thought systems. In Tolstoy, Enlightenment rationalism and irrationalism met and alternated. His most important follower was Mohandas K. Gandhi, one of the most revered figures of the burgeoning "New Age" movement of our own time. Such a movement already flourished during Tolstoy's later life, considered him its prophet and teacher, and received his explicit endorsement. Tolstoy's and Gandhi's leadership in it, as well as the heterogeneous rationalistic or mystical beliefs of other "New Age" personalities, show that the basis of their unity was precisely their common monistic "one-world" outlook and their common rejection of the transcendent, personal, sovereign God, the Creator and Lord, of the Bible.

An effective critique of Tolstoyanism and similar religions is hence possible only from the perspective of biblical Christianity and its belief in the God of creation. Only thus can its willful ignorance of actual reality be exposed and overcome. Only within the biblical Christian worldview can man know the true reality and have meaningful identity, purpose, dominion, peace, and joy.

Tolstoy's Early Hedonism and Religiosity

Tolstoy was born, spent most of his life, and lies buried at Yasnaya Polyana, his country estate in the province of Tula, some 130 miles southwest of Moscow. Both his parents died when he was still a little child. "Aunt" Tatyana Yergolskaya, a gentle spinster brought up by his grandparents, cared for him and his four siblings. Though attached to Russian Orthodoxy, she passed on to him her refusal to believe in {270} the everlasting torment of sinners. She also hoped he would learn about sexual relations from a

respectable married woman, become an aide-de-camp to the tsar, and marry a very rich girl.[1] He later felt that such piety mixed with disbelief and wordliness was the norm among people of his class and education.

In his teens, Tolstoy became so enamored of Rousseau that he replaced the baptismal cross on a chain around his neck by a miniature portrait of the French philosopher, whom he continued to cherish all his life. Like the Enlightenment thinkers, he all but worshipped autonomous human reason. With Rousseau, he believed in the essential goodness of natural man, especially of children and the simple, uneducated common people. By the time he attended the university, he had already totally rejected the Russian Orthodox faith and the fundamental doctrines common to all Christianity. He vaguely thought of God as an infinite being of which he somehow was a part, together with all nature. Though mostly absorbed in womanizing and gambling, he intermittently gave himself detailed rules for his moral and social conduct, which he tried to obey by sheer will power. One of his earliest rules was to avoid the society of women, not surprising in view of his infection with gonorrhea at age nineteen, "caught where one usually catches it of course."[2] His diaries, begun at this time, "greatly exceed in length and scope those of any other Russian author";[3] their bulk and their constant and harrowing self-analysis prove his extraor-dinary preoccupation with himself. He sometimes spoke of his "two selves," the one moral and ascetic, the other hedonist. Dmitri Merejkowski, a contemporary author and critic, used a passage from *Childhood*, *Boyhood and Youth*, Tolstoy's first book, written when he was twenty, to show the two Tolstoys, extant since boyhood,

> one absorbed in Christian thoughts of death, who, to inure himself to suffering... "went into the pantry and with a rope lashed his bare back so hard that tears streamed involuntarily down his face." The

1. Leo Tolstoy, *A Confession*; *The Gospel in Brief*; *and What I Believe*, trans. and intro. Aylmer Maude (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 7–8 (hereafter cited as Tolstoy, *Confession*).

2. Leo Tolstoy, *Tolstoy's Diaries*, vol. 1 (1846–1894), ed. and trans. R. F. Christian (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), 4 (hereafter cited as Tolstoy, *Diaries* 1).

3. *Ibid.*, vii.

> other self, impelled by the same thoughts of death, would suddenly remember that death was awaiting him every hour, every minute; and determine to give up all study and "for three days do nothing but lie abed and revel in reading novels and eating gingerbread and Kronov honey, which he bought with his last few pence."[4]

Merejkowski also recognized that Tolstoy preferred a primitive, uncultured lifestyle already in his youth, rather than only after the 1880s, as is often assumed. For instance, Tolstoy's autobiographical hero, {271} Olenine, in The Cossacks, written between 1853 and 1862, was already "setting his primitive life among the Cossacks... over against the inferior civilized life of the rest of mankind."[5] Merejkowski spotted Tolsoy's essentially pagan pantheism in Uncle Yeroshka, a character in The Cossacks, as well as in Olenine himself:

> And suddenly on Olenine there came such a strange feeling of causeless happiness in his love for the All, that he, from old childish habit, began to cross himself, and mutter thanks to someone... [he felt that he was] simply just a gnat, or just such a pheasant, or deer, as these that at the moment had their being about him.[6]

A similar passage from Tolstoy's Childhood, Boyhood and Youth crosses the line from pantheism to outright solipsism:

> I imagined... that there was nothing and nobody in the universe except me, that objects were not objects, but appearances, visible only when I paid attention to them and vanishing the instant I stopped thinking about them.... There were moments when I became so possessed by this *idée fixe* that I would whirl around, hoping to ambush the void where I was not.[7]

In this remarkable testimony, Tolstoy described himself at about the age of twelve. Numerous other pantheistic and clearly solipsist statements occur in his earlier and later diaries.

Tolstoy's ascetic-moralistic self was eclipsed during his years in

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4. Dmitri Merejkowski, *Tolstoi as Man and Artist* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1902, repr. St. Clair Shores, MI: Scholarly Press, 1970), 7.

5. *Ibid.*, 12.

6. *Ibid.*, 16.

7. Quoted in Henri Troyat, *Tolstoy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1967), 37.

the Russian army around the time of the Crimean War and while he struggled for literary recognition. He later believed that his fellow writers whom he met during this time taught him "abnormally developed pride and an insane assurance; that it was my vocation to teach men, without knowing what."[8] In reality, they probably only helped develop qualities already latent in his character. He found this same pride and trust in their own call to instruct others also among the prominent and learned men he encountered during his travels in Western Europe. They also shared a common faith in the world's and mankind's inevitable progress, expressed in evolutionist terms. Only when Tolstoy tried to teach the peasant children upon his return to Yasnaya Polyana did he realize he could not do so without knowing what to teach, and he even wondered whether it might not be more appropriate for the children to teach him and the various intellectuals wishing to spread enlightenment among the common people. This {272} impasse, he later wrote, might have brought him to the state of despair he reached fifteen years later, had it not been for his happy marriage and family life and the wealth and applause he gained as an author. His "only truth" was then that "one could live so as to have the best for oneself and one's family."[9]

Tolstoy's "Conversion" to Self-Perfection

During this period when his worldly self was predominant and he was on the whole happy, Tolstoy was plagued, at first rarely and then more and more frequently, by moments of perplexity in which he would ask himself why he lived and what he lived for. On occasion utter terror and depression assailed him. For a long time he dismissed these incidents and questions from his mind, but eventually he reached the point when he felt he must resolve them or die. He would wonder in the midst of his daily routine what it all mattered, and,

> My life came to a standstill.... the truth was that life is meaningless.... And it was then that I, a man favoured by fortune, hid a cord from myself lest I should hang myself... and I ceased to go out shooting with a gun lest I should be tempted by so easy a way of ending my

8. Tolstoy, *Confession*, 10.

9. *Ibid.*, 15.

life.[10]

He came to see life as a stupid and spiteful joke played on him by "someone," even though "I did not acknowledge a 'someone' who created me." Sickness and death, "stench and worms," would come; "my affairs... will be forgotten, and I shall not exist. Then why go on making any effort?"[11]

Tolstoy sought an answer in natural science. It only spoke of the overall change and evolution of tiny particles in infinite space, time and complexity, entirely missing the point. He henceforth scorned and despised it, including Darwinism, for the rest of his life. As for the "abstract" or social sciences, in particular philosophy, they could only admit they had no answer.

At this stage, Tolstoy, though still clinging to his absolute faith in reason, felt that perhaps the masses of simple, uneducated people knew something he did not:

> It was like this: I, my reason, have acknowledged that life is senseless. If there is nothing higher than reason (and there is not; nothing can prove that there is), then reason is the creator of life for me.... How can reason deny life when it is the creator of life?... {273}

> The reasoning showing the vanity of life... has long been familiar to the very simplest folk; yet they have lived and still live. How is it they all live and never think of doubting the reasonableness of life?[12]

Tolstoy asserted that they received the meaning of life in "irrational knowledge," which was

> faith, that very thing which I could not but reject. It is God, One in Three; the creation in six days; the devils and angels, and all the rest that I cannot accept as long as I retain my reason.... there—in faith—was nothing but a denial of reason, which was yet more impossible for me than a denial of life.[13]

Tolstoy then persuaded himself that the solution lay in a relation

10. *Ibid.*, 17–18.
11. *Ibid.*, 19–20.
12. *Ibid.*, 43.
13. *Ibid.*, 47.

between the finite, man's life, and the "infinite," God. Attempting to define this relation, and God Himself, more clearly, he again denied God as "the Creator and Preserver," feeling this concept made him dejected and robbed him of what he needed to live. Then he "became terrified and began to pray to Him whom I sought.... But the more I prayed the more apparent it became to me that He did not hear me."[14] He repeated this futile sequence time after time. Having first rejected the personal, sovereign God of Scripture, he received no answer from "Him whom I sought," that is, the vague impersonal "infinite" of his own imagination and desire.

Finally Tolstoy decided to "[l]ive seeking God, and then you will not live without God." He also felt he must live in accordance with "God's will," and that the expression of that will lay in the reasonable beliefs shared by all humanity. The meaning of life for man, then, was to "save his soul, and to save his soul he must live 'godly' and to live 'godly' he must renounce all the pleasures of life, must labour, humble himself, suffer, and be merciful."[15]

This is essentially the religion Tolstoy held and preached for the remainder of his life. He later spoke of its adoption as his "conversion," even asserting that he had spiritually died in 1881 and led a new life thereafter. However, it is clear that he was not converted to a new or different belief system; he merely became single-minded in attempting to subdue his worldly, hedonistic self to his ascetic one. His concept of God remained the same as before, as did his desire to teach it to others. Already in March 1855 he had become inspired

> with a great idea, a stupendous idea, to the realisation of which I feel capable of devoting my life. This idea is the founding of a new religion {274} appropriate to the stage of development of mankind—the religion of Christ, but purged of beliefs and mysticism, a practical religion, not promising future bliss but giving bliss on earth.... *Consciously* to work towards the union of mankind by religion is the basis of the idea which I hope will absorb me.[16]

In February 1860 he noted that he

> [m]echanically thought about prayer. But pray to whom? What sort

14. *Ibid.*, 63.

15. *Ibid.*, 67.

16. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 1, 101.

> of God is it that I can imagine Him so clearly, can ask Him things and communicate with Him? And if I imagine Him to be like that, He loses all greatness for me. A God of whom one can ask things and whom it is possible to serve is an expression of weakness of mind. He is God precisely because I can't imagine to myself His whole being. Besides, He is not being; He is law and might. Let this page stand as a memorial to my conviction of the power of the mind.[17]

However, he expressed these ideas much more frequently and polemically during and after his "conversion." In April 1876, he wrote a friend that "worldly people, priests, etc.... don't see... the God who is more indeterminate, more distant, but more lofty and indubitable." Then follows one of Tolstoy's most vituperative attacks against the God of the Bible:

> The God of Sabaoth and his Son, the God of the Priests, is just as little and ugly and impossible a God—indeed far more impossible—than a God of the flies would be for the priests, if the flies imagined him to be a huge fly only concerned with the well-being and improvement of flies.[18]

When the Russian Orthodox Church belatedly acknowledged his apostasy and excommunicated him in February 1901, Tolstoy wrote a "Reply to the Synod," in which he reaffirmed his denial of all fundamental Christian teachings about God, and stated that his God was "Spirit, Love, and the First Principle of everything. I believe, too, that He is in me, and I in Him.... the will of God is... set forth in the teachings of the human being, Christ, to accept whom as a God and to pray to Him—I look upon as a great sacrilege."[19] Similar statements can be multiplied almost at random from Tolstoy's writings after 1880.

Even non-Christians could quickly recognize his enmity to God and Christ. For instance, the communist Maxim Gorky, who visited Tolstoy a number of times after 1900, wrote that for Tolstoy

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17. *Ibid.*, 156.

18. Leo Tolstoy, Tolstoy's *Letters*, vol. 1, selected, ed. and trans. R. F. Christian (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), 298 (hereafter cited as Tolstoy, *Letters* I).

19. Alexandra Tolstoy, *Tolstoy*: *A Life of My Father* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 410 (hereafter cited as Alexandra Tolstoy, *My Father*).

the thought of God seemed "not to be a thought, but a violent resistance to {275} something which he feels above him.... I think that it comes from his exquisite pride."[20] Tolstoy

> advised me to read Buddhist scriptures. Of Buddhism and Christ he always speaks sentimentally. When he speaks about Christ, it is always perculiarly poor, no enthusiasm, no feeling in his words, and no spark of real fire. I think he regards Christ as simple and deserving of pity, and although at times he admires him, he hardly loves him.[21]

While Tolstoy never came to change his beliefs, he had moments of severe doubt. For example, in the night of September 2, 1909, he was

> overcome by a state of coldness never experienced, I think, before, a state of doubt about everything, above all about God, about the correctness of my understanding of the meaning of life.... Only this morning I came to my senses and return to life.[22]

Instead of the biblical doctrines he despised, Tolstoy, as always, wanted a set of clear rules to obey. Aided by German higher criticism, he made up his own *Union and Translation of the Four Gospels*, later further condensed as *The Gospel in Brief*, radically excising and rephrasing whatever did not fit his views. He turned for help in translating the original Greek and Hebrew of the Bible to the tutor of his children, who reported that Tolstoy "would have liked the text to say exactly what he thought it ought to say," and was vexed because the young teacher's translations mostly concurred with those of the church. "In a fever of excitement, he would cry out, 'What do I care whether Christ is risen? Is he risen! Well, God be with him! What I care about is to find out what I must do, how I must live!'"[23] On occasion, Tolstoy did not scruple to make up a version of Christianity no instructed believer would accept—in order to ridicule it. Thus he wrote that

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20. Maxim Gorky, *Reminiscences of Tolstoy*, *Chekov*, *and Andreev* (London: Hogarth Press, 1948), 13 (hereafter cited as Gorky, *Reminiscences of Tolstoy*).

21. *Ibid.*, 16.

22. Leo Tolstoy, *Tolstoy's Diaries*, vol. 2 (1895–1910), ed. and trans. R. F. Christian (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), 630 (hereafter cited as Tolstoy, *Diaries* 2). See also *ibid.*, 641 and 657.

23. Troyat, *Tolstoy*, 416.

> [a] faithful believer ought to be convinced that since the coming of Jesus, the earth brings forth without labor, that childbirth no longer entails suffering, that diseases no longer exist, and that death and sin, that is, error, are destroyed; in a word, that what is, is not, and what is not, is.[24]

This passage also contains Tolstoy's often repeated belief that sin is not the transgression of the law of the God of the Bible, or lawlessness (1 John 3:4b), but "error."[25]

While many prayers can be found in Tolstoy's diaries, he himself explained that he prayed from mere habit and not to receive help from a personal God. Beyond this, prayer meant that {276}

> [i]n every man there is the divine spark, the Spirit of God. Every man is the son of God. Prayer consists in calling forth in oneself the divine element... and... entering by it communion with Him of whom It is a part... and testing oneself, one's actions, one's desires, according to the demands not of the external circumstances of the world but of this divine part of one's soul....
>
> Prayer is a test of one's present and past actions according to the highest demands of the soul.[26]

Tolstoy added that such testing of oneself in prayer would make everything change, producing harmony between one's life and faith and thereby peace and joy. This is one of the many instances where he asserted that reality is the product of one's own mind and thought, the worldview of solipsism. Furthermore, Tolstoy saw prayer not as a call for grace or help as do orthodox Christians, but as a means of self-perfection which he obstinately defended as possible over against Christianity:

> It is this very superstition, that man does not approach perfection by his own efforts... which is one of the most terrible and pernicious errors,—and it is this which is strenuously preached by all the

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24. Leo Tolstoy [Lyof N. Tolstoi], *My Religion* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1885), 3.

25. On at least one occasion Tolstoy replaced the word "devil" with "error," or "Error," when retelling the temptations of Christ by Satan in Matthew 4:1–11, and Luke 4:1–13. Tolstoy, *My Religion*, 178n.1.

26. Leo Tolstoy [Lyof N. Tolstoi], *The Kingdom of God Is Within You. What Is Art? What Is Religion?* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), 368–69 (hereafter cited as Tolstoy, *Kingdom of God*).

> Churches....
>
> [God] not only has not ordained us to be perfectly righteous and sinless, but on the contrary He has given us a life the meaning of which consists only in our liberating ourselves from our sins, and so *approaching* toward Him....
>
> There is no more immoral and pernicious teaching than that man cannot perfect himself by his own efforts.[27]

However, Tolstoy's own life testified to the fact that his religion of self-perfection was impossible for man to observe. His deepest misery was his hopeless failure to perfect himself despite a treadmill of constantly reiterated scrupulous efforts. No matter how strenuously he strove for extreme simplicity and austerity, he always felt guilty about falling short of perfection; improvement was always goading him on within his own conscience or through the rebukes of fellow religionists. When his most zealous disciple, Vladimir G. Chertkov, frowned at his pleasure in bicycle riding, he decided not to touch his bicycle again. His daughter Tanya was happy for him "because I know how much he loves to deny himself things"; she was also happy for herself and the household because this decision spared them much inconvenience.[28] Tolstoy would praise himself for drinking his tea without sugar and be ashamed for eating asparagus, a luxury. For a while a filthy, ragged, {277} barefoot old Swede stayed with the family, "digging the ground for potatoes; and preaching to us." A vegetarian, he also foreswore milk and eggs. One morning, when tea was about to be served,

> the Swede rose and, like a prophet, pointed to the samovar and said with a reproachful tone: "And you bow down before that idol!... the Chinese... are suffering because their best lands are pre-empted by tea plantations... you are accessories to robbing our Chinese brethern of their daily bread." [Tolstoy]... ceased to drink tea; in place of it he took barley coffee.[29]

Tolstoy took perverse satisfaction in his constant feelings of guilt, even writing Chertkov that the very best state for one's soul was

27. *Ibid.*, 361–63.

28. Troyat, *Tolstoy*, 539.

29. Alexandra Tolstoy, *My Father*, 322.

not to be guilty, but to feel guilty. He could note in his diary, "Thank God, I'm loathsome and worthless to the last degree,"[30] by no means an untypical statement.

Tolstoy taught that everyone should be totally self-sufficient so as not to exploit others. He therefore dressed like a peasant, took pride in cleaning his own room, spent many hours attempting to make his own shoes, and habitually worked in the fields alongside the peasants on his estate. Even so, he neither did nor could live up to his exacting principles while he resided in comparative ease at Yasnaya Polyana. This fact did not escape the attention of his critics who accused him of hypocrisy, and increased his self-torment. In the end, he left his home, caught pneumonia, and died ten days later at the railroad station of Astapovo. His followers and the international press proclaimed him a saint and martyr to his convictions. In a sense, they were quite right: only by death could he really satisfy the excruciating demands of his religion, an impossible faith for any living, breathing, eating and drinking, flesh-and-blood man or woman.

Tolstoy and Love of Neighbor

Tolstoy spoke much about a diffused pantheistic, universal love to be shown not only to men but to every living creature, because

> [h]umanity is a fiction, and therefore it cannot be loved.... Why should we exclude the higher animals, some of whom are superior to the lowest representatives of the human race... love is not a necessity, neither is it attached to any special object; it is the inherent quality of a man's soul.[31]

True to this statement, Tolstoy was indifferent to mankind and its fate. In an 1888 letter to Chertkov, he opposed all sexual relations, and to {278} the objection that this would mean the end of the human race, he countered that "[t]he antediluvian animals are gone from the earth, human animals will disappear too.... I have no more pity for these two-footed beasts than for the ichthyosaurus."[32] When people spec-ulated about the possible destruction of the earth by

30. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 2, 644.

31. Tolstoy, *Kingdom of God*, 97, 99–100.

32. Troyat, *Tolstoy*, 499.

Halley's comet in 1910, Tolstoy wrote:

> The thought that the comet might hook onto the earth and destroy it was very agreeable to me. Why shouldn't we admit this possibility? And, having admitted it, we see with special clarity that all the material consequences, the visible, tangible consequences of our activity in the material world, are nothing. Spiritual life can no more be disturbed by the destruction of the earth than the life of the universe by the death of a fly.[33]

Tolstoy held that love was true only when directed to people who did one wrong and who were unattractive. Such moralism had permeated his attempts at romantic love already before his "conversion," and his relations with other people were always overshadowed by his preoccupation with his own self. A girl he considered marrying rebuked him for lecturing her in his supposed love letters and conversations, and an older relative with whom he was on good terms noted that even his very close friends, like herself, were only secondary characters for him. He alienated all his sons and had better relations with his daughters mainly because they were more receptive to his views.

Most affected by his lack of love was, of course, his wife, Sophia Andreyevna (Behrs), who fell in love with him and married him in 1862 when she was seventeen and he thirty-four. For forty-eight years, she catered to him, bore and raised their thirteen children (of whom several died in infancy), copied and recopied his endlessly revised manuscripts, managed the estate, and published his works written before 1881. Their married life was happy until his "conversion," after which it became miserable due to the spouses' irreconcilable religious beliefs. Sophia Andreyevna observed that her husband's periodic outbursts of sexual passion for her were

> always followed by long periods of coldness. I sometimes feel the need of a warm, gentle affection, and of mutual friendliness;... yet every time I try to establish this cordial friendly relationship I come up against his dull look of surprise, and his coldness, his terrible coldness. And his excuse for this gulf between us is always the same: "I live a Christian life and you refuse to recognise it; you

33. George Lewis Kline, *Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 23 (hereafter cited as Kline, *Religious Thought*).

spoil the children, etc., etc." {279}

What is Christian about it when he hasn't an atom of love either for his children or for me or for anybody except himself?[34]

Tolstoy on his part vacillated between pride when he considered himself "loving" and remorse when not "loving" towards his wife and others. A reader of his diaries cannot help wondering whether he ever truly loved anyone. The nearest he apparently came to it was when falling in love with Sophia and during the first fifteen years of their marriage, when self-perfection and religion were farthest from his mind. After his "conversion," he also became hostile to all sex, for sex gave pleasure, and Tolstoy's legalistic moralism imposed nothing so much as foresaking pleasure in order to achieve self-perfection. He also never really understood women and increasingly despised and disliked them because they tempted him. His religion made a normal, fulfilled and joyful marriage and family life impossible.

Tolstoy's Social Thought

Early after his "conversion," Tolstoy summed up his basic thought in a letter to a young inquirer:

If I knew nothing of Christ's teaching apart from these 5 rules, I would be just as much of a Christian as I am now: (1) Do not be angry. (2) Do not fornicate. (3) Do not swear [oaths]. (4) Do not judge. (5) Do not make war. This is what the essence of Christ's teaching is for me.[35]

In his extended social thought, he also demanded absolute non-violence and the abolition of all national boundaries. He asserted that state, government, courts, police, and armies, in their enforcement of justice and national defense, did as much or even more evil as did criminals:

The villain raises a knife over his victim; I have a pistol in my hand and can kill him. But I really do not know, and cannot know,

34. Sophia Tolstoy, *The Countess Tolstoy's Later Diary*, *1891–1897*, authorized trans./intro. Alexander Werth (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, [1929] 1971), 90.

35. Leo Tolstoy, *Tolstoy's Letters*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. R. F. Christian (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), 361 (hereafter cited as Tolstoy, *Letters* 2).

> whether the upraised knife will effect its evil purpose. It may not, while I most likely *shall* accomplish my evil [*sic*!] deed.[36]

Consistent with this total anarchism, Tolstoy refused to serve when called to jury duty in September 1883 on the grounds that his religion forbade him to inflict punishment, an act of civil disobedience which cost him a fine of 200 rubles. He opposed capital punishment, counseling Tsar Alexander III in 1881 to pardon the assassins of his father. With his Enlightenment faith in the natural goodness of man, he believed that criminals were men very much like anyone else and hence naturally just as reluctant to commit crimes as their victims. Concern for the {280} victims was not part of his position. He also believed that the numbers of criminals could be reduced by changes in environment and moral influence. He used a similar argument against the use of armies in international conflicts. His hostility toward war dated back to his youth; already while serving in the army he had written that "[w]ar is such an unjust and evil thing that those who wage it try to stifle the voice of conscience within them."[37] After his "conversion," he felt all human differences could be settled by the preaching of equal love for everyone, and by complete individual abstinence from violence. He therefore repeatedly attacked not only the tsarist government authorities but also the Marxist and anarchist revolutionaries of his day, saying that men should simply stop supporting the state, any state, as private individuals through passive refusal to serve.

Sharing the shallow optimistic utopianism of his generation, Tolstoy asserted that

> [v]iolence is diminishing, and clearly tending to disappear... because the conscience of mankind is becoming more clear. Hence even the wicked men who are in power are growing less and less wicked, and will at last become so good that they will be incapable of committing deeds of violence.[38]

He also predicted that equality, brotherly love, community of goods, and nonresistance of evil by violence would be achieved

36. Kline, *Religious Thought*, 27. The disgusted "*sic*!" is Kline's.

37. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 1, 65.

38. Tolstoy, *Kingdom of God*, 228.

soon. In late life, his confidence in the future became dependent upon deliberately closing his eyes to the possible consequences of his beliefs:

> It's not anarchism, the teaching by which I live. It's the fulfillment of the external law which doesn't permit violence or participation in it. But will the consequences be either anarchism, or, on the contrary, slavery under the yoke of the Japanese or the Germans? That I don't know and don't wish to know.[39]

Such willful ignorance is an impossible foundation for responsible social teaching and international relations while war-loving "Japanese or Germans" or international subversive movements like Nazism and Communism exist. Besides, Tolstoy received his "external law" entirely from his own religious rules; had it really been an "external law," its existence would have disproved his denial of objective authority. No rules and "laws" are really possible in a religion of lawlessness in principle like Tolstoy's.

Tolstoy's ideal for social organization was the rural commune, resembling the plan he drew up in 1881 for himself and his family {281} but never implemented. He proposed to restrict his needs to the utmost, and hence to keep servants only while needed for instruction in subsistence chores. Men were to live together in one room, women and girls in another. Additional rooms were allowed for a library, a general work room, and a sickroom, "since we are so spoiled." Everything superfluous, including the piano, furniture, and carriages, was to be given away. Only those sciences and arts which could be shared with everyone were to be studied. The aim was "happiness, [consisting] in being content with little and doing good to others."[40] Dmitrij Tschizewskij has correctly stressed the importance of Tolstoy's notion of *oproshchenie* (literally "simplification"): "The word, which I have rendered as 'simplifying life,' means that people should refrain from satisfying their 'superfluous' and 'unnatural' needs, and by this Tolstoy meant everything which the Russian peasant had to do without."[41]

Tolstoy also applied his "simplification" principle to art and lit-

39. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 2, 647.

40. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 1, 199–200.

41. Dmitrij Tschizewski, *Russian Intellectual Thought*, trans. John C. Osborn, ed. Martin P. Rice (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1978), 243–44.

erature. In his book, *What Is Art?*, he viewed good art's purpose not as the giving of pleasure but solely as helping men to recognize their universal union with God and hence each other. Works of art could be called great only if they were accessible and comprehensible to everyone. Tolstoy deplored the enormous amount of labor wasted on mostly useless art, art's soporific effect upon the idle rich, complex art's perplexing children and simple people, placing beauty above moral demands, and the use of art to spread superstition (presumably in the supernatural as found in the Bible), patriotism, and sensuality. Apart from the stories, "God Sees the Truth But Waits" and "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," Tolstoy condemned all his own magnificent fiction, along with Dante, Raphael, Bach, Pushkin, Shakespeare, Goethe, Beethoven, Wagner, and other giants of world art. He approved of the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, Old Testament stories and prophets, Gospel parables, the story of Sakya Muni, who left the world to become the Buddha, and hymns of the Vedas. Among the moderns, his favorites were Molière, Victor Hugo, Charles Dickens, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and, oddly, Guy de Maupassant, comparable to the French and Russian symbolists whom Tolstoy abhorred. His views of art were part of his overall religion of moralistic simplicity.

Already in 1865 Tolstoy was captivated by the idea of a social structure without landed property, feeling that the statement "property is theft" was "an *absolute* truth."[42] After his "conversion," he wrote in his diary that to speak of "Christ in business" was "the same as {282} saying *Christ in kicking or killing*,"[43] and he asserted that merchants, manufacturers, landowners, bankers, capitalists, teachers, professors of painting, librarians, and like professionals lived "off the proceeds of theft and robbery."[44] In a summary of his social thought written after the Russian Revolution of 1905, he fulminated against modern industry which gave mankind such "stupid, trifling and nasty things... as cannons, fortresses, cinematographs, cathedrals, motors, explosive bombs, phonographs,

42. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 1, 184.

43. *Ibid.*, 278.

44. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 2, 598–99. See also Tolstoy, *Kingdom of God*, 333–34.

telegraphs, and steam printing-machines."[45] When the Russian prime minister Pyotr Stolypin implemented his successful land reform enabling enterprising peasants to leave the antiquated, initiative-stifling *mir* communes, Tolstoy entreated him to abandon it and to introduce Henry George's single tax on land use. Stolypin declined.

Tolstoy occasionally gave alms to needy people, and in the 1880s he did all heavy farm labor for a poor widow on his estate, but he was basically opposed to private charity. This attitude was his first reaction to the 1891 famine when his followers implored him to help raise funds for the starving. As always, he offered his solution of self-improvement as "love": "A good deed consists not in feeding the hungry with bread, but in loving both the hungry and the well-fed.... I'm [writing] to those people with whom one is continually having to talk and who assert that to collect money or to obtain it and hand it round is a good deed."[46] In his article "Help for the Hungry," he wrote that "[t]he people are starving because we eat too much.... The privileged classes must go to the people with the attitude that they are guilty."[47] Only after his wife gave of her money and collected large public contributions for famine relief did he grudgingly help administer the distribution of supplies.

Probably best known among his efforts in behalf of people and sects persecuted by tsarist government and church authorities is his support of the Dukhobors. He contributed the royalties from his novel, *Resurrection*, for their resettlement in Canada. He also interceded for a number of private individuals and of his followers with varying results. Yet when urged to help defend the French Jewish officer Dreyfus, falsely charged with high treason (and later exonerated), Tolstoy refused because Dreyfus was not a peasant or sectarian but "an officer, that is, one of the worst possible sort. Guilty or not, he was unworthy of consideration."[48] This reaction was consistent with his lack of concern for victims, and contempt

45. Leo Tolstoy, "The Meaning of the Russian Revolution," in Marc Raeff, ed., *Russian Intellectual History*: *An Anthology* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 348. See also Alexandra Tolstoy, *My Father*, 485.

46. Tolstoy, *Letters* 2, 481.

47. Troyat, *Tolstoy*, 523. See also Alexandra Tolstoy, *My Father*, 314–16.

48. *Ibid.*, 564.

for justice as essential to society. {283} Tolstoy opposed the use of modern medical methods. When his favorite daughter Masha was on the point of death, he wrote Chertkov that "any rational or rather not rational, but clever struggle against [death], like medicine, is unpleasant and bad."[49] When his daughter Tanya underwent a difficult operation, he inveighed against medical clinics as "a bad thing" because they were "created by merchants and factory owners who have ruined... thousands of lives." Furthermore, only a few "chosen" people were helped there, and prevention and hygiene were more important than healing.[50] This attitude was part of his rejection of all modern technology, and also of his lifelong attraction to death. His son Ilya recalled that in the latter part of his fatherly life, this "'greatest of mysteries' fascinated him to such an extent that his interest came near to love."[51] Tolstoy insisted that all human effort was futile because death might overtake man at any moment, and because all human works disappeared eventually, leaving no trace behind them. He thought that Nirvana, at the time his euphemism for death, was "far more interesting than life" and "*nothing*."[52] However, at many other moments he saw death as the door to transformation of eternal life within the "infinite."

Tolstoy, Gandhi, and the "New Life" Movement

As Tolstoy's thought spread, a steady stream of inquirers flocked to Yasnaya Polyana. His family and servants nicknamed them the "dark people" who consumed food and labor, gave no tips, tracked in dirt, and were a general nuisance to the household. From morning till late at night, they wearied the conscientious Tolstoy with their religious, ethical, and sometimes personal problems. He also corresponded with many of them.

Largely under the capable leadership of Chertkov, Tolstoyan ideas circulated internationally in pamphlets, articles, and translations of Tolstoy's religious works. Tolstoyans also tried to influence Russian sectarians by opposing Marxist recruiting, and by

49. Tolstoy, *Letters* 2, 661–62.

50. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 2, 477.

51. Ilya Tolstoy, *Tolstoy*, *My Father: Reminiscences*, trans. Ann Dunnigan (Chicago: Cowles Book Co., 1971), 233.

52. Tolstoy, *Letters* 1, 255–56.

taking part in a journal for evangelical Christians. However, its publisher disassociated himself from non-evangelical sects, including Tolstoyanism, in 1896. Eight years later Russian Baptists correctly affirmed that "[t]he views of the Evangelical Christians include all the basic principles of the Russian Orthodox Church,"[53] barring Tolstoyanism from their midst for good. Some Tolstoyan communes were formed in Russia and abroad. {284} Tolstoy's most famous follower was Mohandas K. Gandhi, who never met Tolstoy but corresponded with him after 1909. He read most of Tolstoy's religious works and later wrote that *The Kingdom of God Is Within You* saved him from religious skepticism, especially about "soul-force" and "ahimsa" (the Buddhist concept of absolute nonviolence, even nonaction). Both men held to a relativistic, experimental definition of truth and to a monist-pantheist concept of man's life in the universe. In his "Reply to the Synod," Tolstoy even expressed the belief, identical to the Buddhist idea of Karma, that his bodily death was "birth to a new life," and that "every righteous act increases the true welfare of my eternal life, and that every evil act diminishes that welfare."[54] Writing on the religious education of children, he excoriated the "coarse, incoherent, stupid, and, above all, cruel Jewish legend" of creation, the fall, and Christ's redemption, and stated that he would answer a child's question about the origin of the world by pointing to "the anomaly of such a question (in the Buddhist world no such question exists)."[55]

While Gandhi was an avowed mystic, Tolstoy was predominantly a rationalist. However, he also had a strong irrational side. He was superstitious in seeking guidance by card laying, and about the significance of certain numbers, especially twenty-eight. His always latent and increasingly explicit solipsism was also irrational to the core: "When I meet someone I try to remember... that he and I are one. It's particularly difficult to remember during a conversation."[56] In his old age, he wrote that

the whole world as we know it is only the product of our external

53. A. I. Klibanov, *History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia, 1860s–1917* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982), 317.

54. Tolstoy, *Kingdom of God*, 314.

55. *Ibid.*, 374, 377.

56. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 2, 580.

> senses... and our ideas. And how can we believe in the reality, the one and only reality of the world as we imagine it to ourselves? What is it like for fleas?... and space and time—it's all constructed by me.... One thing, only one thing, exists, namely that which has consciousness, and not that which it is conscious of, and how.[57]

This is the irrational view of the world as illusion held by Buddhism and Zen.

The only major difference between Tolstoy and Gandhi was Tolstoy's internationalism versus Gandhi's Indian nationalism. They agreed on all other important issues, and their personal lives were remarkably similar. Gandhi, like Tolstoy, opposed political action in principle (though hardly in practice). Gandhi, like Tolstoy, rejected civilization, {285} law courts, modern technology and medicine, hospitals, railways, factories, and machinery. Tolstoy sewed his boots, Gandhi wove at his loom. Both were vegetarians and austere in their habits. Both paid much attention to their bodily functions. Both came to condemn all sex. Both alienated their sons (Gandhi's oldest son, Harilan, committed suicide), and virtually repudiated their wives; Gandhi even let his wife die of pneumonia by refusing her treatment with penicillin, which might have saved her life.[58] Both saw history as basically meaningless and as a mere record of wars among the mighty. Both attacked the professions and trades as parasitic.

Gandhi and Tolstoy belonged to a network of groups and individuals centered in what Martin Green has called "the London of the New Life." It included George Bernard Shaw, the Bergsonian "vitalist" pantheist and witty author; Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the founder of modern theosophy, and her lieutenant and successor, Annie Besant, a pioneer of birth control; H. M. Hyndman, a prominent Marxist; Edmund Gurney, founder of the Society of Psychical Research; Havelock Ellis, the famous sexologist; and leaders of the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party. There were vegetarian societies, Thoreau and Whitman groups, the Socialist League, and especially the Fellowship of the New Life, founded in 1882 and containing significant numbers of Tolstoy-

57. *Ibid.*, 591–92.

58. Richard Grenier, *The Gandhi Nobody Knows* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 34.

ans. Ramsay MacDonald, the future prime minister, was its secretary for ten years. Secular rationalists and religious mystics mingled and worked together in this network. According to Green,

> Tolstoy was in touch with all this activity—was himself a member of the movement. In a list of the magazines he read, drawn up on March 15, 1890, he put down a Swedenborgian journal called *New Christianity*, the American *World's Advance Thought*, and *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, the Orientalist *Open Court*, the Theosophical *Lucifer*, *Theosophical Siftings*, and the Brotherhood Church's *Dawn Sower.* This is a very representative list of New Life publications, and shows Tolstoy as received as well as giving its doctrines.[59]

The Brotherhood Church was closely linked with the Fellowship of the New Life. It was pastored since 1894 by John C. Kenworthy, who also founded the Brotherhood Publishing Company with Tolstoy's chief disciple, Chertkov. In 1896, this company published Kenworthy's book, *A Pilgrimmage to Tolstoy*, "written in the form of letters home from Russia to the magazine *The New Age*."[60] Kenworthy also helped {286} people join Tolstoyan communes in the English countryside. *New Age*, another like–minded journal named *New Order*, and *Labor Annual*, "a publication Tolstoy read and prized," reported on these settlements. The network of New Life/New Age movements "was the general crop that grew up after Tolstoy's sowing, and Gandhism was the oriental and immortal wheat he had intended."[61]

Critique

While initial reaction to Tolstoy's teachings was largely favorable, there were dissenting voices. Tolstoy's devoted follower, translator, and biographer Aylmer Maude already timidly wondered whether it might not "benefit a man to be forcibly restrained from pursuing an evil course."[62] Here was incipient opposition to both absolute nonviolence and total anarchism, the key planks of Tolstoyanism. The utopian optimism about mankind's inherent

59. Martin Green, *Tolstoy and Gandhi: Men of Peace* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 98. See also Tolstoy, *Diaries* 2, 456, 506, and 707n.4.

60. Green, *Tolstoy and Gandhi*, 99.

61. *Ibid.*, 100.

62. Tolstoy, *Confession*, 331n1, and 532n1.

goodness and progress towards universal peace shared by Tolstoy and his generation was shattered by World War I, and its abysmal misreading of human nature became even more obvious with the horrors of the Communist and Nazi atrocities and World War II. It has taken forty years since then for this error to attract a wide following again in the "New Age" movements of our own day. Bible-believing Christians understand that man's cruelty is part of his fall into sin, which lawful authority must restrain (Gen. 9:6; Rom. 13:1–8).

Merejkowski took Tolstoy severely to task over his condemnation of the great Western playwrights and composers. He called Tolstoy's attacks upon them "childish blasphemies" and countered that "[l]iterature to man... is as natural as singing to birds.... he who quarrels with the artificiality of culture quarrels with the nature of man, and with the most divine and permanent force in it."[63] Merej-kowski had reality on his side. Man is culturally creative in adornment of himself and his dwellings wherever he lives. He sings and fashions musical instruments, makes poetry and stories, paints and sculpts in primitive as well as civilized surroundings. The more freely he is allowed to act as an individual, the more varied and intricate become his artistic creations. Again Tolstoy had neither an explanation nor a place for this irrepressible trait of man's real nature. Tolstoy's hostility to artistic endeavor springing from man's innate love of beauty and creativity without any didactic or propagandistic motive, was and still is often accepted as "Christian." This tragic ignorance of man's artistic {287} nature as part of his creation in God's own image and likeness exists even in Christian circles. The God of the Bible is first of all Himself the Creator, and His creation abundantly shows His own love of beauty: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined" (Ps. 50:1). If God's dwelling and work stresses beauty and joy, then so may man's. While fallen man may use his artistic gifts in a perverted way due to the fall, forbidding him to use them at all is false and also impossible, for God's created talents will not be denied.

Tolstoy's doctrinaire legalism was perceived early. The philosopher Lev Shestov called all Tolstoy's later work a "sermon" with "only one goal—to make the conception of the world that he has

63. Merejkowski, *Tolstoi as Man and Artist*, 128–29, 132.

forged obligatory for all."[64] Gorky wrote that Tolstoy sometimes seemed "to be conceited and intolerant, like a Volga preacher, and this is terrible in a man who is the sounding bell of this world."[65] As more evidence about Tolstoy became available, adulation of the ascetic old sage faded. R. F. Christian, a leading Tolstoy scholar, reports that "Rebecca West once described [Tolstoy] as a monster who had earned the contempt of the whole world," and that "Edward Crankshaw called him... a person who was very far from admirable—indeed an intolerable man."[66] Yet Tolstoy sincerely labored with great intensity to practice what he preached, and was intolerable most of all to himself. His religion of self-perfection in an impersonal monist-pantheist "infinite" was impossible for man, as his own tortured life proves. Surrounded by a large family and devoted admirers, he was yet isolated in the solitude of his own self, of which the whole world was but an extension or illusion. Having rejected the "other-than-self," transcendent, personal Creator and Preserver of the Bible, he became his own savior and slave, torturer and victim. How different, how liberating is the God of the Bible, who offers forgiveness and deliverance from sin through Jesus Christ, hears and answers prayer, and therefore grants man sure peace of heart, certain knowledge of reality by virtue of His creative and preserving decree, freedom to serve Him, and everlasting joy. The yoke of Christ is easy and His burden light, and He promises the weary and heavy-laden rest for their souls (Matt. 11:28–30). This is why Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Tolstoy's equal as an author of epic historical novels, but unlike Tolstoy, a Christian believer, could exclaim, "How easy for me to live with You, O Lord! How easy for me to believe in You!" in the midst of outward oppression.[67] The self-imposed yoke of Tolstoy—his religion of self-perfection to "approach the infinite"—was so heavy it crushed him in the midst of universal admiration. {288}

The distinguished historian Isaiah Berlin, though generally

64. Lev Shestov, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Nietzsche* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1969), 11.

65. Gorky, *Reminiscences of Tolstoy*, 36–37.

66. Sophia Tolstoy, *The Diaries of Sophia Tolstoy*, trans. Cathy Porter, intro. Professor R. F. Christian (New York: Random House, 1985), ix.

67. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Solzhenitsyn: A Pictorial Autobiography* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1974), 88.

friendly to Tolstoy, accuses him of deliberate falsification of historical evidence in *War and Peace*. The figure of General Kutuzov in particular "is totally unhistorical for all Tolstoy's repeated professions of his undeviating devotion to the truth." Tolstoy "treats facts cavalierly when it suits him" in order to substantiate his "thesis—the contrast between the universal... but delusive experience of free will... and... the reality of inexorable historical determinism... known to be true on... theoretical grounds."[68] As we have seen, Tolstoy likewise tailored the original Gospel records to fit his "thesis" in religion. He also placed not only historical determinism, but his knowledge of reality as a whole on the "theoretical grounds" laid down by his own thought, misreading true reality in the process and treating it as "fiction." Hence the true reality he sees and describes so well is mirrored only in his fiction, which he mostly condemned as bad art.

Berlin also shows that the crucial philosophical issue of the One and the Many was a central problem in Tolstoy's thought. He asserts that Tolstoy did not possess a vision of the whole, the One, but rather perceived only details, the Many. Tolstoy himself put it somewhat differently in his diary, saying that

> materialists must grant the absurdity of a creator in order to explain how matter took shape in such a way that out of it were formed individival creatures, first of all "I," and with such properties as feelings and reason.
>
> But for the non-materialist it is clear that everything that I call the material world is the product of my own spiritual "I." The chief mystery for him is my and other creatures' separate identity.[69]

This statement shows that Tolstoy not only had no vision of the whole, the One, whose existence as a pantheist "infinite" he merely postulated, but also had no vision of the separate identity of the "creatures," the Many, either. In this fundamental ignorance about what reality is as a whole or in its parts, or even whether anything is or is not real at all, he was a follower not only of Schopenhauer and Buddhism but also of Kant, whose rationalistic theory of "knowing" observed phenomena by defining them through the categories

68. Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers* (New York: Pelican Books, 1979), 43.

69. Tolstoy, *Diaries* 2, 618–19.

of human thought he explicitly shared. From the Enlightenment rationalism of Kant to the irrationalism of Schopenhauer, Buddhism, the assorted pantheists, {289} mystics, and materialists in the "New Life" movement, and Tolstoy himself, it was thus but a short step. Within the monistic worldview denying biblical creation, positing an "objective" world and solipsism are but two sides of the same coin: our own perceptions, that is, we ourselves, determine what shall count as "real" or "true." Monism can never solve the problem of the One and the Many. Biblical Christianity, anchoring existence and knowledge of reality in creation by God who is Himself Triune, One and Many, One Godhead in Three Persons, is the unique and only worldview which can and does solve it.

Berlin also refers to the problem raised by Tolstoy's Rousseauist primitivism with regard to whether the educated should teach simple people and children or vice versa, noted earlier. Tolstoy abandoned his schools for peasant children because he could not solve this dilemma. In actual reality, of course, teaching, with its attendant authority of superior knowledge or experience, is an integral part of human existence. Tolstoy himself was nothing so much as a teacher, and an authoritarian one at that, after his "conversion," even though often denouncing as pride any claim to be able to help others live well and calling private self-perfection the only method of influencing them towards righteousness. Such statements, of course, contradict his view of art as an at least implicitly didactic means of strengthening human brotherhood. They also prove by their very existence that he could not help exercising authority any more than any other man: to remain totally private and nonactive about his beliefs, he should have ceased writing and teaching. Again Tolstoy's monist-pantheist premises made it impossible for him to account and have a place for what actually occurs in real life, in this instance the reality of man's authority among men and over other creatures. This reality, however, is in perfect accord with the biblical creation record which explains human authority by man's creation in the image and likeness of the sovereign Lord and God Himself, and also as man's explicit dominion mandate from his Creator (Gen. 1:26, 28). Tolstoy's primitivist opposition to medicine, technology, and industry, and his opposition to the professions and trades as parasitic, were part of his blindness

about human creativity and dominion. Neither could he see the joyful fact that men have varying abilities and thus are enabled by their Maker to complement each other for the greater benefit and comfort of all and, ideally, by the greatest possible use of each man's individual and unique potential. {290} The assignment of all men and women to the most menial labor under the most primitive conditions is in no way the ideal of Christianity in action, but rather the dehumanizing practice of concentration camps.

Lev Shestov shows that Tolstoy's materialistic primitivism burdened his followers with ever-increasing guilt. By forbidding them to partake of the art, literature, and music they enjoyed, though the peasants might not, he robbed them of a great and real need of their individual nature. Because all men are not made exactly alike, their needs vary, and to prefer Beethoven to a folksong is not wicked but a testimony to individual variations. Shestov also points out that while Tolstoy ostensibly taught neighborly love, in fact neither his words nor his deeds had any relationship to the poor and needy, who were not helped at all. Tolstoy's real motivations in referring to them were his own self-improvement, and to make his accusations and sermons possible. By defining the "good" first as "God," and then as "the brotherly living together of all men," Tolstoy could "brand all those who dare to think that there are other goods in life besides brotherly living together" as evil.[70] The Christian answer to poverty and need is voluntary private charity as part of stewardship under God over one's material resources; property is not absolute, but precisely that stewardship.

The eminent Russian Christian, historian, and Orthodox theologian Georgii Florovskii correctly states that Tolstoy did not perceive "the whole radicalness of empirical evil, and naively tries to reduce everything to mere 'misunderstanding' or 'lack of judgment' " in the shallow rationalist Enlightenment manner. While Tolstoy's strength lay in his moral unrest, he yet "had no consciousness of sin, and shame is not yet repentance." Florovskii calls Tolstoy's legalistic moralism "a step backwards, a return from sonship [of God] to slavery."[71]

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70. Shestov, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Nietzsche*, 70.

71. Georgii Florovskii, *Puti russkogo bogosloviia* [*The Ways of Russian Theology*], 3rd ed. (Paris: YMCA Press, 1983), 408.

What was really wrong with Tolstoy was his obstinate attempt to perfect himself while yet remaining the same man he had been all along. It was impossible. Comparing Tolstoy to Dostoevsky, Shestov points to the only true remedy:

> Raskolnikov [in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*] is not interested... in anything that had been transferred from the Gospel to present-day ethics in accordance with Tolstoy's formula "Goodness and brotherly love—this is God." He had examined and tried all that, and, like Dostoevsky himself, was convinced that when taken separately, when torn from the general context of the Holy Scripture, it becomes not truth, but {291} a lie.... he tries again to revive in his memory that understanding of the Gospel that does not reject the prayers and hopes of a solitary, ruined man.... He knows that he will be heard here, that he will no longer be strung up on the rack of ideas... but he can expect all this only from the Gospel that Sonya reads, which is as yet uncut and unaltered by science and Count Tolstoy, from the Gospel in which there is preserved, along with other teachings, the story of Lazarus' resurrection... indicating the great power of the miracle worker.... In the very same way that Raskolnikov sees his hopes solely in Lazarus' resurrection, so Dostoevsky sees in the Gospel not the propagation of this or that moral philosophy, but the pledge of new life.[72]

Summary and Conclusion

In his many religious works, Leo Tolstoy spread his religion of monist-pantheist oneness of man, the universe, and God as the "infinite." He advocated self-perfection by ascetic simplicity of daily life and anarchist nonviolence, the abolition of all human authority, national boundaries, science, industry, and technological and medical advancement. He demanded that the arts and literature be comprehensible to everyone and communicate mankind's unity. He recommended that his followers live in primitive rural communes, and he considered all trades and professions except self-sustaining peasants and artisans parasitic. While he often spoke of universal love, he himself lacked love for others, being obsessed with his own self and its perfection. Because he could

72. Shestov, *Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Nietzsche*, 226–27.

never perfect himself to his satisfaction despite scrupulous efforts, inner peace eluded him all his life.

Tolstoy and his most important disciple, Mohandas K. Gandhi, took part in the leadership of an international network of organizations and publications in which rationalists and mystics cooperated on the basis of their common monistic "one-world" outlook. This was the forerunner of the "New Age" movement of our own day.

Critiques have centered on the fundamental error of Tolstoy's belief in the inherent goodness of man; his attacks upon great art and literature; his authoritarianism; his lack of truthfulness in the use of historical sources; his primitivism; his references to the poor and needy not to help them but rather for his own self-perfection and to stir up guilt feelings in his followers. Finally, Tolstoy erred in subverting the biblical Gospels to his rationalist ethics, missing entirely their promise of new life in Christ. His personal tragedy lies in his attempting the impossible, that is, to perfect himself while remaining the same man he had always been. {292}

Tolstoy had no place for man's creativity, sense of beauty, and exercise of dominion and authority in his impersonal monist world. Tolstoyanism and related monist-pantheist thought systems can neither explain nor cope with reality, but on the contrary border on solopsism in which the real and the illusory coincide. Such systems cannot account for the One and the Many, the whole of reality and the details. Only Christianity, with its belief in the One and the Many rooted in God Himself as the Trinity, and in creation of all things by His sovereign law-word out of nothing, has the answer.

Because Tolstoy's religion totally misreads reality, and in particular the nature, identity, and purpose of man, it is impossible as a means to personal, social, and universal welfare. It is impossible as an explanation of the world. It is impossible as a way of life but must inevitably lead to misery, hopelessness, torment, and death, as Tolstoy's own life shows. This, too, is in agreement with the wisdom of God, the Creator and Preserver of the Bible whom Tolstoy rejected: "But he that sins against me wrongs his own soul: all they that hate me love death" (Prov. 8:36).

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NEW AGE THOUGHT IN RUSSIA BEFORE WORLD WAR I

Ellen Myers

Introduction

Some prominent intellectual trends in tsarist Russia during the turbulent twenty years before World War I were strikingly similar to what calls itself "New Age" thought around the world today. In the 1890s, a brilliant array of poets and prose writers burst into the limelight of Russian culture in what became known as Russia's Silver Age of art and literature.

The new movement owed its inspiration to the French symbolists of the 1880s and '90s (Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Mallarmé, and others), and its adherents also called themselves symbolists. Their work was characterized chiefly by self-centeredness and alienation from the rest of society, by hostility to the spread of industry and technology, and by appeal to the "spiritual" rather than reason. While ostensibly politically indifferent, they sided with the revolutionary left when pressed for a choice, as in the abortive revolution of 1905. One symbolist leader, Valerii Briusov, joined the Bolsheviks after 1917 and served as Soviet censor of literature between 1918 and his death in 1924. Another, Andrei Belyi, of whom more below, fled abroad, then returned to the Soviet Union and had made an uneasy peace with its rulers by the time he died in 1934. Yet others, like Dmitrii Merezhkovskii {297} (1865–1941) or his wife Zinaida Hippius (1869–1945) opposed the tsar and also the Communists after they came to power.

The symbolists, also known as "decadents," saw art as its own goal and also as a means to apprehend a higher spiritual reality behind or beyond material phenomena. They experimented with various artistic and literary techniques to produce certain moods

or altered states of consciousness in their readers. They inherited their mysticism and belief in the essential oneness of all things from German monist-idealist philosophy (Schelling, Hagel, Schopenhauer), but more directly from Russia's most important philosopher, Vladimir Solovyov (1853–1900). Solovyov was a Darwinian theistic evolutionist who developed his own gnostic-occult brands of pantheism which he called "panentheism," though he renounced it all as heresy and returned to the Orthodox Christian faith in the last year before his death. The influence of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) was also extremely strong. It led to belief in anarchy as the height of liberated individualism and rejection of all moral and social norms.

In addition the Russian Silver Age was permeated by a strong revival of occult beliefs and practices. Russia's precarious economic and political situation fostered widespread apocalyptic dread of the future. This apocalypticism in turn fed and lent credence to numerous occult doctrines, such as theosophy, anthroposophy, spiritualism, a proliferation of self-styled holy men and magicians (of whom Rasputin was but the most notorious and powerful), Gnosticism, Manichaeism, witchcraft, astrology, and others. Not only the symbolists and occultists but also the Marxists-socialists were united in their common monism; they all saw the entire universe as fundamentally one, eternally self-existing and self-contained. They all denied the existence of the transcendent, sovereign, personal God of the Bible who created all things out of nothing. They all agreed on emergent evolution though the symbolists and occultists stressed "spiritual forces" behind evolutionist change while the Marxists-socialists professed strictly materialist randomism. As to the Orthodox Church, only simple believers accepted the Scriptures literally in the childlike faith, as did the justly famous and beloved St. Petersburg parish priest John of Kronstadt (1828–1908). The church as an institution was generally ineffectual; a not inconsiderable number of clergy in the seminaries were theological "modernists" and political leftists, as they are in the West today. {298}

To a significant extent literacy symbolism in the 1890s was a reaction against the prevailing dogmatic utilitarian positivism, stifling in its aridity and dictatorial in its stranglehold upon the leading publishing channels. Already since the 1860s a "censor-

ship of the left" had existed alongside the censorships of tsar and church, and it was even more powerful than they. Donald Treadgold writes that

> [i]f an artist or writer was in fact not an advocate of revolution, he risked failing to find a publisher... if, like Nicholas Gogol or Fedor Dostoevsky, he was too popular and gifted to be silenced, he was apt to find his works edited to produce a social and revolutionary message the author had not intended. (To this day the Western understanding of Gogol, for example, is distorted as a result.)
>
> Only in the 1890s did the radical grip on Russian thought begin to weaken.[1]

All the trends of symbolist literature—selfism, hostility for industry, technology, and reason, art as a means for altering consciousness, monistic pantheism, latent political radicalism and one-worldism, moral relativism, a strong revival of occultism—are present in the "New Age" movement today. Even some of the same cults (theosophy, anthroposophy, Gnosticism and Manichaeism, witchcraft, astrology, gurus and "holy men," plus modern psychology and psychiatry) flourish in the "New Age." Like the Silver Age, the "New Age" follows at the heels of materialistic and *de facto* monopolistic positivism in Western and world culture. Like the Silver Age, the "New Age" opposes an ineffectual, largely emasculated Christianity and church institutions, with only a small minority of faithful believers standing in the breach. Let us now consider the Silver Age in more detail by way of four of its leaders: Dmitrii Merezhkovskii, Nikolia Berdiaev, Fyodor Sologub, and Andrei Belyi.

Dmitrii Merezhkovskii (1865–1941)

The most important pioneering work of nascent Russian symbolism was written by Dmitrii Merezhkovskii and published in 1893 under the title "On the Reasons for the Decline and the New Currents of Contemporary Russian Literature." Merezhkovskii called for new men exploring new horizons in art and literature based upon an idealist, religious faith. He exclaimed that

1. Theophanis George Stavrou, ed., *Russia under the Last Tsar* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 73.

> merely prosaic, utilitarian liberty and utilitarian justice never fill the human heart.... only *creative faith in something infinite and deathless* {299} can set afire the human soul, create heroes, martyrs and prophets.... Without faith in the divine beginning of the world there is no beauty on earth, no justice, no poetry, no freedom![2]

While these words have a religious flavor, Merezhkovskii was not an orthodox Christian. His goal was a fusion of Christianity with classic paganism so that men might fulfill their worldly potential and the desires of the "flesh." Nevertheless, he opened the way for what the art critic Igor Grabar called "rebirth" of religion and idealism in an 1897 article in St. Petersburg's prominent periodical Niva (Field). Gabar joyfully noted that

> [m]en feel the necessity to receive something in exchange of the destroyed religion, and, not receiving anything, they find nothing better than to come back to it again. Positivism falters and metaphysics again makes a way for itself in the domain of contemporary philosophy.... Little by little... the symptoms begin to appear which show in an evident fashion the return to life of the already forgotton idealism.[3]

As Jesus Christ told the Tempter in the wilderness, man shall not live by bread alone (Matt. 4:4a). Russian symbolists as well as followers of the "New Age" movement today do understand this essential truth about man and also, as positivist-materialist reductionists do not, that reality is more than that which can be observed by man's empirical methods. This does not mean, however, that they are closer to biblical Christianity then positivists, even should they claim to be Christians, for they deny the remainder of Christ's statement—that man must live by every word of God, the God of the Bible (Matt. 4:4b). Thus Merezhkovskii defined Christianity as an ascetic denial of the "world," that is, the here and now (not sin). He also saw Christianity as man's own striving towards a merging with God in which man is freed from his consciousness. This is not biblical Christianity, but rather akin to the Buddhist

2. Dimitrii S. Merezhkovskii, *Izbrannye stati* [*Selected Articles*] (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1972), 302, 304.

3. Valentine Marcadé, *Le Renouveau de l'Art Pictural Russe, 1863–1914* [*The Renewal of Russian Pictorial Art, 1863–1914*] (Lausanne: Editions l'Age d'Homme, 1971), 143 and n. 297, 354.

concept of "Nirvana" and like the heterodox "Christianity" of Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) which was then acclaimed in Russia and all over the world. Merezhkovskii's successors in the Russian symbolist movement were even more remote from the biblical Christian faith than he, albeit mostly "religious."

Like many others in his circle, Merezhkovskii felt that Christianity and human cultural endeavors were incompatable. This idea was the burden of his long monograph on Gogol. In the ascetic village priest, Father Matvei, who strongly influenced Gogol shortly before the latter's {300} death, Merezhkovskii thought he heard the "genuine voice of 1,847 years of historical Christianity."[4] Father Matvei demanded that Gogol stop writing and become a monk. Gogol argued in reply that even in a monastery one would live in the world and expressed the dilemma in his heart as follows:

> If a talent is given to a writer, then truly not for nothing, and not in order to turn him into evil. If there is an inclination to paint in a painter, then truly not for nothing, and not in order to turn him into evil.... I do not know whether to discard the name of writer, because I do not know *whether this is the will of God*.[5]

Shortly afterwards and pursuant to a last visit from Father Matvei, Gogol burnt all his manuscripts and died. Merezhkovskii ended his monograph with an appeal to the church:

> Some say: one cannot be alive without denying Christ. Others say: one cannot be a Christian without denying life. We cannot accept either opinion. We want life to be in Christ and Christ in life. How can this be accomplished?
>
> The church gave no answer to this question to Gogol. Perhaps then the times and seasons had not yet been fulfilled. But now they are being fulfilled.
>
> Let the church answer, then. We are asking.[6]

The problem Merezhkovskii raised here is perennial and vital. He was right in challenging the un–Christian idea that Christians are forbidden to engage in literature and the arts. On the contrary,

4. Merezhkovskii, *Izbrannye stati*, 265.

5. *Ibid.*, 268–69.

6. *Ibid.*, 286.

man created in God's own image and likeness, was given the Creation Mandate to have dominion over the works of the Creator (Gen. 1:26, 28). Man's restoration in Christ to righteousness and holiness very much includes man's exercise of the creation mandate through all his God-given talents to God's glory and joy. Had Merezhkovskii been willing to base his opposition to Father Matvei's views about culture on the Bible, he could have referred to the dominion mandate of Genesis, confirmed by Christ's own clear and direct warning against His servant's burying their talents (Matt. 25:14–30; Luke 19:12–27). However, Merezhkovskii's concern was not the defense of the biblical faith; his fixed idea and goal was to spread a "new religious consciousness" in a "third kingdom of the Holy Spirit" where Christianity and paganism would be fused.

This idea also underlay Merezhkovskii's three novels, *Julian the Apostate*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, and *Peter and Alexis*, published between {301} 1895 and 1905 as a trilogy on the Antichrist. All of them contain a wealth of cultural and historical detail meticulously researched and often admirably described. However, Merezhkovskii's religious "thesis" always hovers behind the story, intruding and detracting from it. Furthermore, the characters all live, as it were, suspended in a vacuum, in a world of their own, essentially deaf to voices from outside their own selves. They do not begin or maintain organic, healthy, simple and normal human relationships. This same curiously impersonal, solipsist "flow of consciousness" atmosphere was common to all the symbolist writings because they were meant to enchant, almost to subvert, rather than to communicate clear meaning. In symbolist literature, as in "New Age" literature today, events increasingly "just happened" and people "just lived" without anchors, guideposts, or goals of any kind.

Sigmund Freud was greatly impressed by *Leonardo* and used it to form his own concept of the great Renaissance artist, based on his "Oedipus complex." *Leonardo* is also permeated with the occult. Merezhkovskii's ideas were very influential in Weimar Germany and continue to have an impact through his books' translations into the major European languages. The occult motto, "As above, so below," is a recurrent theme, as is Merezhkovskii's love of paganized, Hellenized, Nietzschean, "Dionysian" Christian-

ity. He also embraced the idea, prevalent in occult and heretical movements from antiquity to our own day, that God is inherently female as well as male, and that the first man was therefore an "endrogyne" (male-female) or hermaphrodite. This notion was also propagated by Vladimir Solovyov and his idea of "sophia," divine wisdom as the eternal feminine principal or even person, in the godhead, and it is widely found in symbolist literature. "New Age" thought today has embraced this idea as well; extreme women's liberationists speak routinely of God as "Goddess." Merezhkovskii went so far as to make the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Christian Trinity, the eternal feminine in God who would reconcile the stern, forbidding Father of the Old Testament with the ascetic, indiscriminately loving Christ, the Son of the New Testament, in a "third Kingdom of the Spirit."

Nikolai Berdiaev (1874–1948)

Nikolia Berdiaev was a close personal acquaintance of Merezhkovskii. After fleeing Soviet Russia in 1922, he became a well-known {302} existentialist philosopher in the West. He was not happy as a child, and he later felt he had been badly spoiled as a youngster by being allowed to do exactly as he pleased. He decided to study philosophy before he was thirteen, read Hegel and Schopenhauer before he was fourteen, and had become thoroughly familiar with John Stuart Mill's *Logic* and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* at the precocious age of seventeen.

In 1894, Berdiaev entered the University of Kiev. Like many Russian university students of the period, he was much attracted to Marxism and associated with clandestine political organizations. In 1897 he participated in a student demonstration against the government, and was arrested and released. In 1898 he was arrested again for similar activities and sentenced to three years' exile in the northern province of Vologda. There he organized a "Union of Exiles" and lectured at its meetings. At this time he was already moving away from Marxism and becoming a philosophical idealist. In 1901 he published his first book, *Subjectivism and Individualism in Social Philosophy.* After his release, he visited St. Petersburg in 1904 and became acquainted with Merezhkovskii. For a while Merezhkovskii fondly hoped he might win Berdiaev

over to his own "new religious consciousness." However, Berdiaev soon felt uncomfortable with Merezhkovskii, who, he thought, was "urged by a subtle love of power, and thought and lived in an atmosphere of unhealthy, self-assertive sectarian mysticism."[7] He soon turned to another symbolist leader, Viacheslav Ivanov, a self-styled "mystical anarchist," who began to hold weekly discussion meetings in his home in 1905, rivaling similar meetings at the Merezhkovskiis'. Berdiaev continued to attend Ivanov's "Wednesdays" for years. Similar private meetings, soirées, and literary circles were common at the time. Together with a burgeoning number of magazines of small circulation, they constituted the network of symbolist activities of the period, comparable to "New Age" networking in the West today.

Like Merezhkovskii and most symbolists, Berdiaev sensed the coming apocalyptic overthrow of traditional Russian society. Like other leading symbolists such as Merezhkovskii's wife, the eccentric poetess Zinaida Hippius, Berdiaev scornfully rejected normal family and sexual relations. Though married, he considered the family "a means of enslavement," the sexual act "unseemingly and ugly" and "degrading." He wrote that he was "repelled by the very sight of pregnant women" and that he "could not help seeing in child-bearing something hostile to personality." He even stated that "[w]hen I see a happy, loving couple {303} I experience mortal sorrow... comparatively happy family lives [are] the happiest of the commonplace."[8] All this is in conformity with his admitted "greatest sin," his "inability and refusal to bear the burden of the commonplace... the very 'stuff' of life."[9] He confessed that "[i]n the last analysis... I have been nonsocial.... I have always been a spiritual 'anarchist' and 'individualist.' "[10]

In religion, too, Berdiaev was an anarchist to whom "freedom is my own norm and my own creation of good and evil.... I have always believed that life in God is... anarchy in the true sense of

7. Nikolai A. Berdiaev, *Dream and Reality*: *An Essay in Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 145.

8. *Ibid.*, 72, 69, 75, 77.

9. *Ibid.*, 24.

10. *Ibid.*, xii.

the word."[11] He "rejected as un-Christian the notions of divine sovereignty and power and proposed to excise them from the Scriptures."[12] Like Merezhkovskii, and like Tolstoy, who even published his own revised New Testament, Berdiaev welcomed the then popular German "higher criticism" of the Bible. His attitude to the Scriptures parallels Merezhkovskii's attempt to fuse Christianity and paganism; the motivation of both men—to retain their own sovereignty over against the God of the Bible—is the same as well.

Like Merezhkovskii, Berdiaev spoke of "a new consciousness" which would "be an advance within Christianity."[13] He formulated this "new consciousness" in terms of nonbeing preceding creation as the fundamental reality surrounding God and that which is. This somehow concretely existing "nonbeing" was the root of man's existential and absolute freedom, in Berdiaev's philosophy. In an excellent analysis of the thought of Berdiaev and other thinkers of the period, George Kline has called the scheme "[a] confused and confusing restatement of the plain and ancient truth that the object of free choice is a possibility rather than an actuality."[14] The objection is well taken. Note that Berdiaev's anarchist-existentialist concept of "nonbeing" circumvents biblical creation in order to make room for man's self-deification in absolute freedom. The truth of biblical creation, the starting point of Scripture upon which all other biblical doctrine is ultimately based, does not permit man to be his own lord and master, and this is why it is so hateful to all anti-Christian thought (atheist, pantheist, rational, irrational, positivist, "New Age") throughout history.

Fyodor Sologub (1863–1927)

Another anti-biblical philosophy/religion of great antiquity resurrected in Russia before World War I was Manichaeism, which

11. *Ibid.*, 32–33.

12. James C. S. Wernham, *Two Russian Thinkers*: *An Essay in Berdyaev and Shestov* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 28.

13. *Ibid.*, 24.

14. George L. Kline, *Religious and Anti-Religious Thought in Russia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 97.

denies biblical creation and posits instead a perennial irreconcilable conflict {304} between a remote "good God" and an "evil god," Satan, who created the world. This was the faith of the poet and novelist Fyodor Sologub (pen name of Fyodor Kuzmich Teternikov). Sologub's father was a poor tailor and shoemaker who died when Fyodor was still a child, forcing the mother to work as a domestic servant. Her employer helped the boy to receive a comparatively good education at a teacher's institute. Upon graduation he was employed as a provincial schoolteacher and later as district inspector of elementary schools. In 1892 he was transferred to St. Petersburg, his birth place, where he held teaching and administrative posts until 1907. From then on, he could live entirely on income from his writing due to the great success of his occult novel, *The Petty Demon*, written between 1892 and 1902. Marc Slonim has written that

> [t]his bald, bespectacled bureaucrat... exuded middle-class respectability... yet underneath his placid manner and dull appearance he concealed a haughty, passionate, and perverted soul.
>
> Sologub believed... that Satan ruled all mankind, which was descended not from Adam but from Satan's own union with Eve, and the poet accepted the Prince of Evil as his master.... throughout his poems gargoyles, vampires, and succubae whirl in a saraband under the hostile, arrow-like rays of "that fierce dragan, the sun."...
>
> Deliberately he shut himself behind "a flaming circle"... and, like a sorcerer, performed weird rites, called up spirits, and made other efforts to escape "the prison of being." Sologub was a solipsist; he created worlds in his own image....[15]

D. P. Mirsky, another commentator on modern Russian literature, complements this account of Sologub's worldview and work:

> His Manichaean philosophy... is purely idealistic in the Platonic sense of the word. There is a world of good—which is that of unity, calm, and beauty—and a world of evil—which is that of diversity, desire, and vulgarity. This world of ours is a creation of evil.... To free oneself from the evil fetters of matter and to become a self-

15. Marc Slonim, *Modern Russian Literature*: *From Chekhov to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 96–97.

satisfied deity is the aim of man.[16]

The close kinship of this philosophy with Hinduism, Buddhism, Eastern mysticism, and "New Age" thought today is obvious.

Sologub's masterpiece is *The Petty Demon*, which must surely rank among the world's most horrifying literary creations. It is so perfect in immersing the reader in a totally evil atmosphere that excerpts cannot represent but only detract from an impression of the whole. {305} The chief character is a provincial schoolteacher named Ardalion Peredonov, a grey, sullen, vicious and disintegrating figure with no redeeming features whatever. He is a tyrannical, plodding, and, of course, totally humorless teacher. He toadies to the headmaster and to the socially powerful citizens of the town. He falsely denounces one of his students to the student's parents, knowing they will believe him and severely punish their son. In his imagination, he enjoys the boy's humiliation, pain, and powerless resentment of the injustice inflicted upon him. Peredonov's sex life is one of nagging weariness and routine rather than physical attraction or even lust. Amidst it all appears the "petty demon," the *nedotykomka* (untranslatable), a shadow or shapeless, furtive creature flitting in and out of rooms, hallways, walls, from beneath the dinner table or the bed, impossible to exorcise or, of course, to kill by physical means. In the end, its sight drives the desperate and half-insane Peredonov to murder. The sensual relationship between young Sasha Pylnikov, one of Peredonov's pupils, and Liudmila Rutilova is no counterweight of innocence but only another aspect of an entire world permeated with subtle and withering evil.

In *The Petty Demon* not only malevolent sensuality but the entire unrelieved weight and pressure of cosmic evil makes any "enjoyment" in the normal sense impossible. At most, the literary critic and the student of the period will grant the work's excellence in presenting the author's Manichaean worldview, and its value as a symptom of deep cultural sickness, confirmed as such by the book's enormous public success when it first appeared. Again, the doctrine of biblical creation establishing the Creator's goodness, sovereignty, and purpose for man created in His own image and

16. D. P. Mirsky, *Modern Russian Literature* (New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd., 1974), 442–43.

likeness with dominion over the works of His own hands was the focal point of attack. In addition, not man's sin but Satan as the evil creator-god of the world was at fault for the torment in the world, relieving man of guilt and responsibility before God. Lastly, the "good" God and the "evil" creator of the world were portrayed in eternal conflict, with "good" never victorious but under siege forever—denying Christ's triumph over death and hell, and thus in itself a victory for Satan. This is also the burden of "New Age" thought today, with its monistic "Force" in which "the light side" and "the dark side," "white" and "black" magic, remain forever locked in battle. {306}

Andrei Belyi (1880–1934)

In Andrei Belyi, we meet, as it were, a human seismograph, sensitive to the slightest pressure of the spirit of his time. He was a tall, slight, nervously eccentric, continually fidgety and talkative young man who invariably charmed his acquaintances at first sight, especially women who sensed his fundamental vulnerability beneath a biting sarcastic wit. He wrote the great masterpiece of the entire period, *St. Petersburg*, a novel which Vladimir Nabokov has compared to James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, and Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*. Berdiaev, who knew him well, called him Russia's greatest satirist after Gogol. His other writings, especially his first novel, *The Silver Dove*, also greatly contribute to a full understanding of the strange, sinister, and cloying atmosphere of apocalypticism and occultism befogging *fin-de-siècle* Russia.

The destructive role Belyi's parents played in his youth is so crucial to his development as a writer that it must be discussed in some detail. He was born Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev, the son of the brilliant mathematics professor Nikolai Bugaev and the pianist Aleksandra Egorova. She was some thirty years younger than her husband and a famous beauty. Professor Bugaev taught at the University of Moscow and was the inventor of an original mathematical theory, "evolutionary monadology." He was also physically ugly and renowned in Moscow society for his eccentric behavior. He married his wife out of infatuation with her youth and beauty, and she accepted him because of his academic standing.

After Boris, their only child, the mother did all she could to alienate him completely from the father and to make him her pliant and dependent pet, her "kitten." The father fought back to retain some influence over his son. Belyi later stated that "any equilibrium was broken down in me, and of course my father and mother did the breaking."[17] He attributed his lifelong mood of apocalypticism—a tense, yet hopeful, yearning for an end to the habitual way of life—ultimately to his blighted childhood. Doubtless many adherents of "New Age" thought today come from outwardly stable yet inwardly broken and only nominally Christian homes.

The first real friend in Belyi's life was a governess who introduced him to the beautiful poetry of the German Romanticists, Uhland, Heine, and Eichendorff, whom he adored. He also became enraptured {307} by the Romantic music of Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann and Schubert his mother played on the piano. He began to create for himself an imaginary world of his own through poetry and music. Yet his fantasies were not only bright and lovely but also beset by fears and nightmares. Eventually the governess was fired and the poetry and fairy tales, blamed by the positivist family doctor for a decline in Boris's health, were discontinued. The child was told that

> there are no devils, wizards and other evil forces, and that there could not be; that "God, so to speak, is the source of evolutionary perfection." The liberal professorial milieu of the 1880s was nourished on Darwin and Spencer. Nevertheless, the Gospel was read to the child, and he confessed that "the images of the New Testament filled his being to overflowing." [18]

However, the adult Belyi came to accept devils, wizards, and evil forces as quite real. He combined this faith with belief in an evolutionary and self-perfecting pantheistic deity whose supreme manifestation was a vaguely biblical but essentially occult "cosmic Christ." His mature "Christianity" thus anticipated the pantheistic process theology of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (d. 1955), one of the most venerated figures of the "New Age" movement of our

17. Konstantin Mochulsky, *Andrei Bely*: *His Life and Work*, trans. Nora Szalavitz (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1977), 15 (hereafter cited as Mochulsky, *Bely*).

18. *Ibid.*, 16.

own generation.

Eventually another governess managed to prepare Belyi for entry into the gymnasium in 1891. In the fall of 1892, while on his way to school, he skipped classes in order to examine the catalog of the Ostrovsky Library. He came across dramas of Ibsen, began to read, and was totally captivated. He did not return to school for over a month, absorbed in German and Russian classical writers as well as Russian and French symbolist poets. His reading opened a whole new world before him, directed him to aesthetics and philosophy as his life's work, and laid the foundation for his career as a writer. In later years, he also read Schopenhauer, Kant, and Vladimire Solovyov, and studied eastern religions and occult works. He encountered theosophy, the brainchild of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891) rampant at the turn of the century in Russia and the West, and its offshoot, the "anthroposophy" or "occult Christianity" of Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) in about 1910. By that time he had already anticipated their gnostic-pantheist mysticism and made it his own. Blavatsky and Steiner are again very influential today.

In 1893, Mikhail Solovyov, brother of the philosopher, became a neighbor of the Bugaevs. He befriended young Boris and encouraged {308} him in his early literary efforts. He exuberantly praised Boris's first play, named *The First Symphony*, financed its publication, and even chose his young protégés pen name, "Andrei Belyi" ("Andrew White"). Konstantin Mochulsky, Belyi's best biographer and critic, points out that in this play, Belyi fused "the Biblical paradise with pagan Lethe," and that "[t]his fantastic fusion... is crowned quite unexpectedly—by the coming of the Kingdom of the Spirit."[19] Here Belyi reflected Merezhkovskii's barely emergent idea of the "new religious consciousness" and of his "third Kingdom of the Holy Spirit."

Already in this play, Belyi saw the threat of malignant evil always hovering over light, life, and joy. This anxiety was reinforced by the general apocalyptic mood of the time, and more directly by Vladimir Solovyov's fear of a supposed Mongolian threat from the east. When vacationing in the province of Tula between 1899 and 1906, Belyi found an ancient network of ravines which kept ex-

19. *Ibid.*, 28.

panding by erosion in a westward direction. He threw rocks into the ravines to halt their sinister advance, which he mystically saw as part of the Solovyovian panmongolist danger.[20] On another occasion, he was sure he saw how "a completely black sky divided the blue sky, and glanced at the meadow out of the blue sky"; he used this vision in an essay, "Sacred Colors," published in 1903.[21] Reality and fantasy began to coalesce in his mind, a development fostered by the monist-pantheist philosophy of Solovyov, by the occult, and promoted by the whole symbolist movement. Belyi felt himself hopelessly exposed and delivered to capricious higher powers without mercy and respite in an emergent evolutionist world. The "flow of consciousness" mood and lack of genuine personal relationships and coherent plot, already noted in Merezhkovskii's novels and characteristic of all symbolist and "New Age" writing, is especially marked in Belyi's fiction.

Belyi's *Second Symphony* appeared in 1902. It was a stinging satire about the current symbolist social and literary milieu:

> In a literary circle, Drozhzhikovskii (Merezhkovskii) makes a speech; he preaches the synethesis of theology with mysticism and the church... Merezhkovich (Merezhkovskii again) writes an article on the unification of paganism with Christianity.... At a meeting of theosophists and orgiasts, a person coming from India exclaims: "For how long, how long, will they not understand thee, oh Karma!"[22]

However, there was also an undercurrent of despondency, due to the eternal sameness of time and the ever recurrent cycles of events (an {309} idea borrowed from Eastern religions and revived by the then very influential Nietzsche): "... above everyone hung the cone of heaven... filled with musical boredom, eternal boredom.... Eternally the same and the same."[23]

The themes of nihilism, ultimate boredom, and Nietzschean eternal recurrence were taken up again in Belyi's *Third Symphony*, published in 1905. In this play, Belyi denied that science gives or

20. Vladimir E. Alexandrov, *Andrei Bely* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 72.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Mochulsky, *Bely*, 35.

23. *Ibid.*, 34.

can give valid answers. In a striking passage, the play's protagonist, a chemistry student, is examined by his professors. He compares life and the world to a laboratory flask in which people "are precipitated like crystals":

> Perhaps progress moves in a straight line. Or in a circle. Or in a straight line and in a circle—in a spiral. Or a parabola replaces progress. Perhaps the spiral of our progress is not the spiral of the progress of atoms.... The huge water spout of the world carries every life in its stormy embrace. Before it is emptiness. And behind it the same.[24]

Just as many young students in the West after the 1960s, so young Belyi in Russia in the early 1900s had become totally disillusioned with positivistic scientism and turned to mysticism, idealism, and occultism instead.

In the summer of 1908, Belyi withdrew to a country estate belonging to friends in northern Russia with a gloomy old house in the midst of a dark pine forest. Here he delved deeply into books on alchemy, astrology, and the occult, and began work on his first novel, *The Silver Dove*. He also rounded out his mature emergent-evolutionist worldview by incorporating occultism in pantheist-idealist philosophy, not too difficult a task. He expressed his ideas in an article, "The Emblematics of Meaning," published in 1910. Vladimir Alexandrov, the author of an authoritative study of the relationship between Belyi's thought and Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, states that in this article Belyi proposed

> a transcendent unity, that, although unknowable in its essence, is the ultimate ground of all that exists. Proceeding from this unity, one realizes... that the goal of all symbolizing activity is the recognition that individuals are actually part of a whole: "I, you, he—are one...."
>
> ... "The Emblematics of Meaning" posits a transcendent, teleological process in the universe that makes itself manifest in the world of man through the seemingly independent symbolizing actions of individuals.[25]

This same worldview is the very essence of the "New Age"

24. *Ibid.*, 40.

25. *Ibid.*, 104–5.

movement today. Alexandrov also shows that {310}

> [Belyi's] world view... [is a variant] of metaphysical idealism and present[s] a transcendent spiritual realm undergoing a spiraling teleological evolution as the ultimate reality; in the end, all man can do is become a self-conscious participant in the process of which he is already a part.[26]

A special feature of this worldview was Beyli's belief that an individual person is not necessarily the originator of his own thought. Thoughts may, as it were, "think themselves" in him, produced by higher intelligences or forces of which he is but a part. Other people with "theurgic" or magic ability may also produce their own thoughts in those whom they want to manipulate for their own ends. This is a consistent extension of Belyi's overall pantheist-monist framework, and it provides a logical rationale for belief in sorcery and magic as feasible and real. Lastly, in this framework any distinction between reality and fantasy becomes ultimately meaningless. In Belyi's mature fiction this distinction is altogether obliterated: reality *is* fantasy, fantasy *is* reality. This feature is also prominent in "New Age" fiction of our own time. Because Belyi was so consistent in his monist thought, he became the master of the symbolist period in his two novels, *The Silver Dove* and *St. Petersburg*.

The Silver Dove is the story of a young student's involvement with the "Doves," a religious cult modeled after the Khlysty. This sinister and heretical cult was several centuries old and had many secret followers among the peasants and even in some ostensibly Orthodox monasteries and convents. (Rasputin reportedly became a Khlyst at the monastery of Verkhoture while on a pilgrimage through Russia in his younger years.) The Khlysty met secretly in each other's homes. Their meetings consisted in preaching, prayer, wild dance, and a final orgy of sexual promiscuity.[27]

Like Belyi himself, Daryalsky, the student, is a voracious reader who has studied Kant, Jacob Boehme, Meister Eckhardt, Emanu-

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26. *Ibid.*, 107.

27. C. Harold Bedford, *The Seeker*: *D. S. Merezhkovsky* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1975), 186n.68. See also René Fülöp-Miller, *Rasputin*: *The Holy Devil* (New York: Viking Press Inc., 1928; Popular Library ed., 1955), 24–29, 31–32.

el Swedenborg, and also Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle. This heterogeneous reading list was not untypical for Russian students before World War I. As the story begins, Daryalsky is an atheist. While visiting his fiancee in the country, he meets the village carpenter, Kudeyarov, the leader of the "Doves" and a sinister sorcerer. Kudeyarov wants Daryalsky to sleep with his own woman (explicitly not his wife), a heavyset, broadfaced, sluttish, pockmarked female named Matryona, who symbolizes "mother Russia" or "mother earth." "Dove"/Khlysty {311} lore has it that their tryst will produce a son who will be the reincarnation of Christ. Despite Kudeyarov's magic incantations, and although Daryalsky does indeed leave his fiancee to live with Matryona and the carpenter, no child is conceived. When Daryalsky recovers somewhat from his enchantment and determines to leave the village, Kudeyarov has him killed by a member of the "Doves" to prevent exposure of the cult.

A minor character in the story is an old German magician who befriends Daryalsky. He represents and practices "classic magic" according to ancient established rituals. In his study he keeps the Cabalah and other Jewish occult works, and books on astrology and other esoteric subjects. He uses numerology, pentagrams, swastikas, magic circles containing the letter Tau, sacred hieroglyphics, and diagrams copied from the Cabalah. All these books and practices were widespread in Russia at the time, penetrated even the imperial court of Tsar Nicholas II, and were found in almost all symbolist literature. Again we are reminded of the stunning revival of the occult in the West in our own generation.

Shortly after finishing *The Silver Dove*, Belyi wrote his chief work, *St. Petersburg*, first published in 1911. The story is set in St. Petersburg in 1905, the year of Russia's first abortive revolution. The plot can be told in two sentences: young Nikolai Ableukhov is charged by the terrorists in the revolutionary movement to kill his father, Senator Apollon Ableukhov, with a bomb hidden in a sardine can. Eventually the bomb explodes, more by error and accident rather than intent, and kills no one. The book achieves its effect by concentrating upon St. Peterburg's atmosphere of impending doom and its ghostly unreality of mists and shadows:

> Those were strange foggy days. Noxious October was striding through the city with icy gait; farther south, it had hung out its

> foul mists; through the forests, it blew its golden murmur which, descending to earth, turned to wild autumnal rustle....
>
> The icy blasts were already moving upon us in silvery clouds, yet everyone believed in the Spring; a popular cabinet minister had said that he was looking forward to the Spring.
>
> The ploughmen had already ceased scraping the soil.... In little groups they gathered in their hovels; they talked and wrangled; and then suddenly they surged in a swarm toward the landowner's colannaded house; the long country nights flared with incendiary fires....
>
> [In the city] everywhere there was the same ubiquitous garrulous person; fresh from the blood-soaked fields of Manchuria [Russia was {312} then fighting the disastrous war with Japan, 1904-05], a shaggy cap pulled over his eyes, a Browning in his pocket, he thrust badly composed leaflets into people's hands....
>
> Such were the days. Those who ventured at nighttime into the open suburban spaces heard a persistent moan with stress on the note "oo." "Oo-oo-oo-oo..." sounded in the open spaces. It was a sound from some other world....[28]

Alongside its overall mood of ominous and ever-present horror, *St. Petersburg* contains occasional satirical glimpses of the society of intellectual opinion leaders who Belyi, the inveterate mocker, could not help ridiculing. For instance, he tells us of a party given by Professor and Mrs. Tzukatov, where political liberals and conservatives mingle:

> There was one man of truly antediluvian appearance, with a distraught face and an oddly cut evening dress; he was a professor of statistics; from his chin hung a tufted beard and a voluminous mane fell to his shoulders like a piece of felt.
>
> In view of the current political events, something in the nature of a *rapprochement* was being prepared between a group that supported moderate humane reformers and the patriots.... The partisans of gradual humane reforms, greatly shaken and frightened by the effects of their reforms, began to cling to the partisans of existing norms... the liberal professor had taken the initiative and was the

28. Andrey Biely, *St. Petersburg* 2nd printing (New York: Grove Press Inc., 1959), 56–58.

first to step across the threshold.[29]

The professor runs into the editor of a conservative newspaper who sees the Russo-Japanese War, the Jews, and the Mongolian invasion as well as the freemasons, as part of a huge conspiracy. He informs the professor that "[t]he tricks of the Russian Jews and the emergence of the Boxers in China are closely connected...."[30] Mrs. Tzukatova, the hostess, stands by and overhears the conversation but understands none of it, while the liberal professor gets angry. (It should be noted to the honor of the symbolist intellectuals that they were free from anti-Semitism.) Our own generation in the West, too, has had its share of conspiracy theories.

The most important character in *St. Petersburg* after Apollon and Nikolai Ableukhov is the organizer of the bomb plot, the terrorist Lippanchenko. Belyi modeled him after the real-life double agent Evno Asef, by then exposed as having worked for the tsarist secret police as well as for the terrorist "Battle Organization" of the Social Revolutionary (Communist) Party. Lippanchenko is usually shown furtively meeting with his subordinate in the revolutionary organization, the {313} student Alexander Ivanovich Doodkin. Doodkin is of interest not only as Lippanchenko's underling, but also because he is consciously possessed by evil occult forces. For a long time he has suffered from nightmares and hallucinations, containing the incomprehensible, recurring word "Enfranshish" which terrifies him. Then one evening a certain Mr. "Shishnarfne," supposedly a Persian, visits him in his garret. Suddenly Doodkin realizes that the occult forces to which he had opened himself earlier are really in him, possessing him, inhabiting his soul:

> "Yes, our expanses are not yours; they run in reverse order...." Then he understood: "Shishnarfne;—Shishnarfne."
>
> From the apparatus in his throat came the reply: "You have called me... and here I am...."
>
> *Enfranshish* had come to claim his soul.[31]

Here is the ultimate horror of a man in Belyi's magic-monistic

29. *Ibid.*, 119.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, 229.

universe, realizing that "self-thinking thoughts" are in him, that higher intelligences are using him for their own ulterior purposes and motives, and that he has no way of determining where his own personality begins or ends, as not only "Enfranshish" but anything at all might mean its opposite. It is possible that Belyi chose the word "enfranshish" because of its close resemblance to the French "enfranchir" ("to enfranchise") to show that to be "enfranchised" or "set free" in his emergent evolutionist world is a nightmare and also its own reverse, slavery.

Doodkin then sets out to murder Lippanchenko. He crawls through the open window of Lippanchenko's cottage, finds him sleeping on his bed, and kills him by stabbing him to death with a pair of scissors. In the morning the corpse is found, with his arms stretched out, "and across his face—over his nose, over his lips—crawled the shadow of a cockroach."[32] The result of "Enfranshish"—of demon possession—in the soul of man is absorption by chaos and filth.

All Belyi's work after *St. Petersburg* was inferior to it, and most of it was autobiographical. Belyi contemplated writing "a vast, multi-volume opus tellingly entitled *My Life.* The provisional title for the first part was *I: An Epic*, and Belyi's plans called for a total of ten volumes."[33] Perhaps unconsciously, he wished to fight in this manner against his own emergent-evolutionist faith, which was robbing him of his identity. He experienced the disintegration of his person as is {314} inevitable when man relinquishes his true created identity which comes from outside and beyond this world from the mind and hands of the sovereign, personal, transcendent God of the Bible. Only this God can protect man against invasion by "forces" or "intelligences" outside himself, who rule the world unhindered if He does not exist. How ironical, how tragic, yet how just and fitting that man's desire for self-deification in a pantheist universe must, on its own premises, of necessity and inevitably destroy him as a person, an "I." The frantic search for the self, for "self-esteem," "self-actualization," "self-realization," or the self as the divine spark and particle of the imaginary pantheistic whole, which marked the Russian Silver Age and also marks the "New

32. *Ibid.*, 274.

33. Alexandrov, *Andrei Bely*, 95.

Age" movement of today, is itself proof that to put the self first as determiner of reality is to lose it. The same destruction of man takes place under the communist-collectivist-positivist branch of God-denying monism, where, in George Orwell's words, a boot stamps upon a human face—forever.

Summary and Conclusion

The foregoing overview of "New Age" pantheist-monistic thought in Russia before World War I, as represented by Merezhkovskii, Berdiaev, Sologub, and especially Belyi, shows the revival of ancient and modern monist occultism at that period of crisis. This same worldview is again dominant in the burgeoning "New Age" movement today. Its most important feature is its deliberate distortion of God-created reality, as though man could determine reality magically by his own mind. In this essentially solipsist manner, all currents of anti-Christian, rebellious thought meet.

The stages of this distortion of reality are (1) denial of the God of the Bible and His sovereign creation and rule (common to all anti-Christian thought of all times); (2) therefore seeing the universe as one self-existing, self-contained, evolutionist whole, either "spiritually" or materialistically (these two intertwine); (3) man's self-deification by way of a "new religious consciousness" allowing man a relativistic morality and anarchistic license forbidden by Scripture (Merezhkovskii, Berdiaev); (4) man as a powerless pawn in the battle of evil against good within an evil creation (Sologub); and lastly, (5) man is swallowed up by the whole so that he can no longer distinguish, much less determine, where "reality" ends and "fantasy" begins, or what divides "forces" or "intelligence" without him from his own thought, {315} personality, or soul. In fact, he has lost himself/his soul in the attempt to gain the whole world as "his own" (Belyi). This is the fulfillment of Christ's words that he who wants to save his life in this world will lose it, and that a man may gain the whole world and lose his own soul (John 12:25; Mark 8:36). Man can keep his soul, and his life, only by repenting of his self-deification and surrendering unconditionally to his Creator and Lord.

The Heart of Faërie

J.R.R. Tolkien, the Christian Gospel, and Fairy stories

Christopher Hodgkins

J. R. R. Tolkien concludes his influential essay, "On Fairy–Stories," with a short epilogue, in which he suggests that "the Gospels contain a fairy story, or a story of a larger kind which embraces all the essence of fairy stories.... But this story is supreme; and it is true. Art has been verified. God is the Lord of angels, and of men—and of elves."[1]

I begin my essay where Tolkien leaves off because I hope to work out the implications of his belief in an essential similarity between the message of fairy tales and the Christian Gospel. This project requires a great deal of balance, since the views which Tolkien expresses in his epilogue are potentially unsettling to Christians and non-Christians alike. The person who does not believe either in Christ's Deity or His Resurrection, and yet enjoys fairy stories—possibly even Tolkien's own masterful *Lord of the Rings*— "for their own sakes," may indeed be alarmed when Tolkien informs him that he has long been the object of a sort of subliminal evangelism, and that his enjoyment of Faërie's abundance is perhaps a symptom of his own latent Christianity. In addition to his uneasiness about having religion thus insinuated into his life, the unbeliever may also respond with indignance for the abuse of the fairy story's artistic autonomy. "Who is this Tolkien," he may ask, "believing Christian, to insult folk tales, which contain consummate Art in themselves, by implying that they somehow need justification

1. J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy stories," in Peter S. Beagle, ed., *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), 33–99. All further references designated "OFS."

{318} through being made mere harbingers and echoes of some supposedly higher 'Story?' "

On the other hand, Tolkien's suggestion may well bother the more rigorously orthodox Christian, whether Catholic or Protestant, and expecially one who depends on the Bible as the source and the standard of truth. He too may respond with indignant questions: "Who is this man immersed in pre-Christian lore to imply such a central connection between pagan wonder stories and the account of Our Savior and His great work of salvation?"

Clearly, the dichotomy established by these possible objections places Tolkien, like so many others who have tried to maintain some mediating position, squarely in the center of a controversy which would seem to promise him quite a lot of negative criticism from both sides. Most likely, the unbeliever will ask Tolkien to keep his religion out of Faërie, while the Christian would probably prefer it if Tolkien would keep his elves out of the church.

In this essay, I will attempt to defend Tolkien against unjust charges, and also to point out inconsistencies, and even dangers, that I find in his thought. My method will be to apply his theory of fairy stories to a pair of representative texts: "The Juniper Tree" of the Grimm brothers' collection, and the Gospel of Luke, particularly the 23rd and 24th chapters.[2] If Tolkien's view is correct, these narratives should be found not only to share certain elements in common (which would be a fact remarkable enough in itself); they should also share a common spiritual purpose. In other words, examination should reveal that the events of Jesus Christ's life produce essentially the same kind of wonder and joy on the cosmic scale that the shocks and surprises of "The Juniper Tree" produce in little. The heart of the Gospel should be found in the heart of Faërie.

There was indeed no place in this or any world, except perhaps Heaven, which was dearer to Tolkien's own heart than Faërie, "the Perilous Realm." The longing for a land of Enchantment was not so much a part of his childhood as something that he grew into: by his own admission, his "real taste for fairy stories was wakened by

2. "The Juniper Tree," in Ralph Manheim, trans., *Grimm's Tales for Young and Old* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 162–69. All further references designated *Grimm's*. All biblical quotations from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

philology on the threshold of manhood and quickened to full life by war" ("On Fairy stories," 64–65). It was then that he came to desire dragons "with a profound desire" ("OFS," 64); desire dragons, not merely as curiosities or diversions, but as links to an "Otherworld" where joys {319} and terrors were more piercing, and to an "Other Time" when "there was more green and less noise."

Because Tolkien came to his full love of Faërie as an adult, and because he believed that true fairy stories aren't intended primarily for children, but for a certain type of reader, whether young or old, I've chosen "The Juniper Tree" for one side of my comparison. The "beauty and horror" of this tale are more suitable to adults, says Tolkien. It may even be better, he suggests, if children "are spared the whole story until their digestions are stronger" ("OFS," 56, footnote); for, if we mollify its horror for their sakes, we destroy its beauty, power, and poignancy, and ultimately its "mythical or total (unanalysable) effect" ("OFS," 56). This effect is precisely what I wish to discuss.

I've chosen the last two chapters of Luke's Gospel as representative of the other Gospels, not because I think that Luke is either the best or the most "wondrous" of the Gospels, but because I think that Luke is especially explicit about the larger purpose of the wonders it records.

However, before moving into a detailed discussion of the two texts, a number of definitions are necessary. Because Tolkien speaks of "fairy story" and "Gospel-story," and because the term "story" often designates a narrative secondarily but not primarily true, it may seem that he sees the Gospels and *hausmärchen* as equally credible (or incredible). To conclude that he equates the two kinds would be unfair to Tolkien since he does differentiate between them. The Art of the fairy story, that is, its capacity to produce wonder, consists, according to Tolkien, solely in the way that the tale is told, while the Art of the Gospels is centered "in the story itself rather than the telling; for the Author of the story is not the evangelists" ("OFS," 88, footnote). By making this distinction, Tolkien presumably is stating that he believes in God to be the ultimate Author of the events in Christ's life; that he therefore believes the Gospels in the primary as well as the secondary sense; and that he considers Christ's life to be not *merely* mythical, but *also* historical. It is significant that for Tolkien, myth precedes fact.

Indeed, he views the Incarnation, in the words of the C.S. Lewis essay, as "Myth become Fact."[3] Fairy stories, even the most cunningly made and internally consistent of them, can merit no more than secondary belief, because even the greatest of Faërie's wonders are but a prefiguring and shadow of the substance which is to be found in Christ.

In short, Tolkien believes that true fairy stories contain an undeveloped form of the Christian *evangelium*, or Good News, and are {320} therefore on a spiritual continuum with Christianity. Their lack of development is, for him, not even a necessarily culpable lack. We say that a child is an "undeveloped" adult, but we don't blame a boy for "failing" to be a man. Rather, we blame him only for being a bad boy. In the same way, Tolkien might argue, we should not condemn all wonder stories just because some twisted imaginations have perverted their gift. The makers of ancient mythologies may often have fallen into darkened, pre-rational evil, but, says Tolkien, the fundamental, embryonic goodness of human Fantasy remains itself untouched. "Fantasy is a natural human activity. It certainly does not destroy or even insult Reason.... On the contrary. The keener and the clearer is the reason, the better fantasy will it make" ("OFS," 74–75). Fairy stories even take on a dignified, redemptive status for Tolkien, since they aid in the recovery of Otherworldly wonder at ordinary things, that "regaining of a clear view... of things as we are (or were) meant to see them" ("OFS," 77). Fantasy helps us to see the facts, he says; not the grim and grinding, transient "real life" facts of "electric street-lamps,... mass-production robot factories, and the roar of self-obstructive mechanical traffic ("OFS," 80), but the timeless facts of horses and elm trees, centaurs and dragons, heaven and the sea ("OFS," 81), and, above all, "Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief" ("OFS," 86). What Tolkien does, in effect, is invert the modern world's values to fit a Platonic scale he assigns those objects which seem most gratingly real, the hard, technological "facts," to the lowest place on the Chain of Being, where, temporal and insignificant, they can be ignored. He then focuses our spiritual longing for the intangible, our *Sehnsucht*, upward, towards that universal

3. C.S. Lewis, "Myth Became Fact," in Walter Hooper, ed., *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970).

Joy which we glimpse through a chink in the prison walls. This Joy he identifies with Christ, Who breaks down the walls and brings Joy back into the world as incarnate, divine Fact. Fairy story, Tolkien says, is the chink in the walls which provides the glimpse. No matter how clumsy or homespun the tales may appear, if they are truly of Faërie, they will speak from an Other-world to the image of God in man, calling him from his corrupt and slender being, his fallen self, his narrow house, up to Redemption and oneness with Deity. "It has long been my feeling (a joyous feeling) that God redeemed the corrupt making-creatures, men, in a way fitting to this [sub-creative] aspect, as to others, of their strange nature" ("OFS," 88). Man is a maker of {321} myths, so God sent Christ, Myth made Flesh. Without a doubt, fairy stories are very close to the center of Tolkien's religion.

In turning to a specific comparison of "The Juniper Tree" with Luke, it is necessary to define two more terms which are central to Tolkien's discussion of the Joy and sense of release created by fairy stories and the Gospels. These terms, "dyscatastrophe" and "eucatastrophe," are of Tolkien's own coincage, and can best be understood as a development and new application of Aristotle's concept of dramatic "catastrophe" discussed in the *Poetics*. "Catastrophe" is, literally, an "overturning"; when applied to the progress of a play, it appears to signify much the same thing as Aristotle's term, "peripeteia," that is, a reversal of the hero's situation, "a change by which the action veers round to its opposite" (*Poetics*, 11.1),[4] and is an essential part of any plot (*Poetics*, 11.6). Aristotle allows for two kinds of reversal in drama: quite simply, "a change from bad fortune to good" and "from good fortune to bad" (*Poetics*, 11.7). It is from this distinction between bad and good fortune that Tolkien draws his own further distinction about fairy stories; namely, that while tragedy, with its hallmark, the catastrophic turn of fortune, "is the true form of Drama, its highest function" (that function being to inspire fear and pity in the audience), "the *eucatastrophic* tale is the true form of the fairy-tale, and its highest function" ("OFS," 85). Eucatastrophe, "the good catastrophe, the sudden joyous 'turn' " ("OFS," 86), brings with it "the Consolation of the

4. Aristotle, *Poetics*, in Hazard Adams, ed., *Critical Theory since Plato* (New York: HBJ, 1971) 48–66.

Happy Ending. Almost I would venture to assert that all complete fairy stories must have it" ("OFS," 85). But in order for the eucatastrophe to have its proper emotional effect, it must be preceded and carefully prepared for by its opposite, "dyscatastrophe," the "bad turn" towards sorrow and defeat. Aristotle's prescriptions for producing tragic wonder follow a similar track: "Such an effect is best produced when the events come on us by surprise" (*Poetics*, 11.11). In other words, that event produces the most tragic wonder (or, as Tolkien says, the most Joy) in us which overturns all present appearances. Eucatastrophe occurs when universal, ultimate defeat is transformed to victory.

Let us look now at the series of preparations and surprising turns which make up "The Juniper Tree," and then compare them to what Tolkien sees as "the most complete conceivable" dyscatastrophe and eucatastrophe, the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.

"The Juniper Tree" shares a number of striking formal and incidential elements with the Gospel. It begins with the tragic, poignant longing {322} of the barren wife, reminiscent of Elizabeth in Luke. The boy who is be the sufferer and hero of the tale is born in answer to the good woman's prayer, through supernatural intervention, as is John the Baptist. Indeed, since the narrative omits a specific reference to the father's role in conception, there is even the suggestion (submerged as it may be) of a Virgin Birth. In the wicked stepmother who hates the boy without cause and is driven by the Devil to murder him, we see a parallel to Judas, whom Satan possessed to betray Christ to those who killed Him. But the passage that most strikingly parallels the Gospel is that series of marvels which comprises the dead boy's apotheosis, what Tolkien would call the tale's eucatastrophe. One could hardly imagine a more devastating preparatory dyscatastrophe: the hero has been made into a stew and unwittingly consumed by his father, down to the very bones. The sister Marleenken ties these bones up in her best silk handkerchief, and, weeping bitterly, lays them at the base of the juniper tree, an action which may bring to mind the Descent from the Cross, Christ's burial shroud, and His mourning female disciples; and what follows unmistakably suggests the Resur-rection. With a flourish of biblical imagery, the tree "claps its hands"

for joy (a literal enactment of Isaials prophecy[5]), mist and flame go up from the tree (suggesting the pillars of cloud and fire in Exodus?), a beautiful bird rises from the flame singing gloriously, the handkerchief with the bones is found to have vanished—and Marleenken, who came mourning, now leaves merrily, "as light and gay as if her brother were still alive" (*Grimm's*, 165).

Here, then, is the pivotal moment of "The Juniper Tree," told in a manner almost certainly intended to suggest connections with the Passion and Resurrection stories that the Grimms' German peasants must have known well. It is from this reversal that all later action in the tale flows—the boy-bird's visits to the goldsmith, the shoemaker, and the millers, the wildly discordant montage up to the judgment of the stepmother, the reward of the sister and father, and the ultimate return of the boy, in human form, to bed and board with his liberated family.

It is this sort of overpowering, sudden ascension from the very nadir to the emotional height of the story that is for Tolkien the signature of Faërie:

> The mark of a good fairy-story [is] that however wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures, it can give to the child or man that {323} hears it, when the "turn" comes, a catch of breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears.... ("OFS," 86).

The events of "The Juniper Tree" are indeed wild, fantastic, and terrible: the grisly spectacle of the boy decapitated by a trunklid, the sickened sympathy we feel with Marleenken when the propped-up head gives way at the slap of her hand, the gruesome cannibal stew, all serve to make the contrast between darkness and light more shocking, and the turn more astoundingly glad. As Tolkien asserts, "the whole story... is the setting of the turn" ("OFS," 86). All the elements of "The Juniper Tree" narrative are subjected to this higher purpose—physical laws and commonplaces must give way to the writer's and reader's transcendent quest for Joy. The world

5. Isaiah 55:12 reads: "For you shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." I take these biblical images found in the tale to be what Sir James Frazer calls "a threadbare Christian cloke" on a pagan original.

that it creates is governed by another kind of logic. In Faërie, birds carry millstones.

If this tale is as good an example of Faërian eucatastrophe as Tolkien claims (and I think we have no reason to doubt him on this point), then we are now in a position to consider the merits of his further claim that eucatastrophe is the link between Faërie and the Christian Gospel.

In making a specific comparison between the narrative strategies of "The Juniper Tree" and Luke 23–24, I'm struck primarily by the reserve with which the evangelist presents his material. For the writer interested in effective "preparatory dyscatastrophe" in the horrifying style of "The Juniper Tree," a Roman crucifixion would provide no shortage of riveting, sensational detail. The scourge certainly removed most of the skin from Jesus's back; His face was doubtlessly beaten bloody; and the victim of crucifixion dies primarily by suffocation. Yet Luke, the physician, gives us none of this. Instead, he tells us that "Herod and his soldiers treated Him with contempt and mocked him.... And when they came to the place which is called the Skull, there they crucified Him, and the criminals..." (Luke 23:11, 33). Astonishing signs and wonders are rendered without elaboration, indeed, with hardly a single adjective: "there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two" (23:44–45). Some violent emotion is mentioned—Jesus cries out in a loud voice (23:46), and spectators return home beating their breasts (23:48)—but we are shown this anguish briefly, and at a distance. Yet, although Luke mutes the brutality of the Crucifixion, the total effect of his narrative is not at all one of {324} cold, stoical indifference, for he brings us up close, into the very midst of the scene, quite often, and quite powerfully, for his purposes. It is significant that these moments of immediacy come as brief statements made by participants in the action, and by Christ Himself. "I find no crime in this man"; "He saved others, let Him save Himself"; "This is the King of the Jews"; "Truly, I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise"; "Father, into Thy hands I commit My spirit!"; "Certainly this man was innocent!" (23:4, 35, 37, 43, 46–47). Each quotation develops the Gospel's central theme: Jesus's identity—His innocence, His kingly stature, His authority to forgive sins—and the individual's response to His di-

vine Messiahship. Indeed, for all its reticence, this passage can be deeply moving, moving, as Tolkien would have it, even to tears; but the different techniques used by "The Juniper Tree" and Luke seem to suggest that the kind of tears one would shed for the tale's dead boy and for the dead Christ would be different, too. The two narratives may share a number of formal and incidental elements, but the closer we look, the more we see their purposes diverge from one another.

Luke's restraint and specific focus on Christ's person carry over from the Crucifixion to the Resurrection account. Again, we see a striking contrast between "The Juniper Tree" and the Gospel, this time in their handling of eucatastrophe. Taken together, the animate juniper tree, the rising mist and flame, and the glorious bird, give a detailed picture of a wonder in progress; Luke's on the other hand, brings us to the tomb only after Christ has risen—the stone is rolled back, and the body is already gone. The carefully maintained emphasis of the scene is therefore not the Resurrection as marvelous event (which indeed it is) but as the ultimate revelation of Jesus's personal significance. Although the women are met by two "dazzling" men, and in their fear bow to the ground, the men, interestingly enough, gently reprimand them for their amazement. "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" they ask, as if the women should have known better. And really, they should have, for as the men remind them, Jesus had predicted it all: "Remember how He told you, while still in Galilee, that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise. And [the women] remembered His words" (24:5–6). By telling us of the women's previous knowledge, and by classifying their wonder as a somewhat culpable lack of faith, Luke seems actually to violate Tolkien's sense of {325} eucatastrophe; since for Tolkien, the emotional experience of the surprise, the sudden turn, is of central importance, and is necessarily most intense when utterly unexpected. Therefore, Jesus's unnervingly specific prophecy of His own Death and Resurrection (first given in Luke 9:22) would seem to vitiate the element of surprise, and remove wonder from the central position that Tolkien would give it.

I am not at all suggesting that Luke disparages emotion, only that he doesn't write for a mainly emotional effect, and certain-

ly not for merely emotional persuasion. In fact, according to his prologue,[6] he writes to more fully inform an audience which either already believes, or is to be converted by other than emotional means. Yet, as I've suggested, he certainly doesn't neglect or deny normal human feelings. Sorrow and joy, weeping and happy laughter, occupy an honored and proper place in the story. Jesus's incognito appearance to the crestfallen disciples on the Emmaus road allows us to savor one of the most delightful moments of benevolent irony to be found in Scripture, or indeed anywhere. Here we see God's patient, loving play with man; yet play without frivolity, play with a serious purpose. For if we laugh at the disciples' comic realization that they have stupidly lamented the death of Christ to the risen Christ, it is because they, like the women at the tomb, should have known better. "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" Jesus scolds, and the application of His lesson is, of course, that if Cleopas and friend should have known better, we should know better too. Unbelief may be normal in man, He implies, but it is certainly not defensible.

So while Luke, unlike "The Juniper Tree," doesn't depend on our fascination with horrid or dazzling detail to move us, we can indeed find his account deeply moving, both to grief, and to joy; depending, of course, on whether we are moved by Christ Himself.

I should note at this point that Luke's careful moderation of emotion doesn't create insuperable difficulties for Tolkien's theory of Christian eucatastrophe, because, as mentioned earlier, he holds that the eucatastrophic Art of the Gospels is centered "in the story itself rather than in the telling" ("OFS," 88, footnote). Therefore, he could argue that the evangelist's selective manner of narration veils the full pathos and full glory which the divine Author intended the actual Event of Christ's Passion and Resurrection to have, and that it is this transcendent Event that matters most. {326} The time has finally come, then, to ask just what it is about the story of Christ that moves us, that gives it, according to Tolkien, "the inner consistency of reality,... the supremely convincing tone of Primary Art, that is, of Creation." Why is there "no other tale ever told that men would rather find was true" ("OFS," 89)? Tolkien's answer is

6. See Luke 1:1–4.

that the Gospel speaks to our deepest desires.

I have already discussed Tolkien's belief that fairy stories help us recover a vision of eternal "facts," beyond the walls of the "real world," and that Christ come down from Heaven is, by implication, eternal Fact incarnate. But Tolkien also believes that fairy stories go far in meeting other fundamental human longings, longings for Escape, Consolation, and Fantasy. In his view, Christianity fills these needs to perfection.

In seeking to define what Tolkien means by "escape," the question that comes first to mind is, escape from what, to what? Tolkien answers, quite significantly, escape from prison to freedom—escape from the personal miseries of "hunger, thirst, poverty, pain, sorrow...." And our escape cannot be merely to the larger world, which offers us nothing but the "noise, stench, ruthlessness, and extravagance" typified for Tolkien in the internal combustion engine ("OFS," 79, 83). It therefore appears that by "prison," he means the physical limitations of the body and all of external Nature: this prison-house, the Flesh, and this withered, Fallen World, where, according to Medieval ascetic tradition, our godlike souls are locked away from the land of their birth and comdemned to death. According to Tolkien, then, the fairy story and Gospel call us, not to cowardly desertion, but to patriotic resistance, and a quest. "Why should a man be scorned," he asks, "if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home?" ("OFS," 79). "He shouldn't be scorned, but praised!" is our natural, sympathetic reply. "Unless, of course, he's in prison for committing a crime."

Here it is important to note that Christ indeed proclaimed Himself as a liberator. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," He says in the synagogue at Nazareth, "because He has anointed Me... to proclaim release to the captives... to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18); but again, release from what? From Roman rule? No, Jesus says that God rules everything, but for now what is Caesar's is Caesar's. From physical suffering? Christ heals multitudes, but leaves many more multitudes unhealed. From death, then? Yes, He raises {327} Jairus's daughter, but then dies Himself on a cross. The closer one looks, the more he is struck by the fact that throughout his Gospel, Luke reveals Christ as One promising physical liberation, and indeed well *able* to enact it, but yet, at least for the time being, *unwilling* to do so. Presumably, Jesus had

waited to "restore the Kingdom" because another sort of liberation had to come first, a liberation which He spelled out to the Apostles before His Ascension: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentence and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations" (24:46–47). By "sins," Scripture usually refers to violations of God's Law; therefore, the Good News which Christ proclaims isn't primarily that of deliverance from external or physical constraints, but rather the possibility of a radical change of heart, and release from the penalty of a crime.[7] The future Joy of serving God freely in Heaven is reserved for those who will turn and serve Him while on earth.

This view of man as a law-breaker under sentence should send us back to reexamine Tolkien's use of the "prison" metaphor, and in so doing we may be struck by the absence of both "repentence" and "sin" from his vocabulary. For, of course, it is the prisoner's innocence that makes his "fugitive spirit" noble. If he were a convicted criminal, his attempts at escape would be merely criminal, too. So, in Tolkien's view, evil is basically a matter of body and environment, external to the soul, which, being the image of God in man, His "refracted Light" ("OFS," 74), is essentially good. The gross, transitory, material world obscures and oppresses the soul's deep, eternal longing. Therefore, evil is not a matter of simple disobedience springing from the unrepentent human heart.

Luke records two especially pointed statements about heart matters. Jesus, seeking to clarify for His disciples the source of a man's actions, tells them that "the good man out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart produces evil; for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks" (6:45). The state of man's heart is at issue here precisely because it can be either good or bad. Christ implies that at the core of man there is, not an invariable divine essence, but rather a ruling ethical commitment, either to do good, or to do evil. The battle between right and wrong takes place in the heart,

7. That God often brings oppression on those who break His commandments is an important theme in both Old and New Testament thought. See, e.g., Ps. 107: "Some sat in darkness and in gloom, prisoners in affliction and in irons, for they had rebelled against the words of God...." See also Rom. 1:18: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men...."

and is primarily a matter of motives, not external actions. {328} A further definition of these heart motives is found, interestingly enough, in a verse from Mary's "Magnificat," where, celebrating the fulfillment of God's promise in sending the Christ, she rejoices that the Lord "has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts" (1:51). The Greek word rendered here as "imagination," *dianoia*, refers specifically to the *purpose* or the *intent* of the proud heart.[8] Thus the implication is that culpable "imagination" is more than mere mental picture-making; it consists in scheming with the hope of transforming evil dreams into reality.[9]

The divergence of Tolkien's Faërian Gospel from this key scriptural emphasis on the heart grows more apparent when we turn to consider the Consolation that he suggests both fairy story and Gospel offer in the Happy Ending, which appeals not only to our desire for escape from death with scenes of Resurrection, but appeals also to our sense of justice with scenes of retribution. In fact, Tolkien criticizes Andrew Lang, the author of the variously "colored" *Fairy Books*, for sending his wicked kins and evil stepmothers to retirement on ample pensions instead of meting out the punishment they deserve ("OFS," 66). However, such "mercy untempered by justice" doesn't characterize "The Juniper Tree"; indeed, the excruciatingly well-drawn scene of the stepmother's undoing would seem to satisfy Tolkien's and our sense of justice quite nicely. The abominable woman is made to suffer most of the torments of Hell before our very eyes, and then her head is "squashed" by an emblematic millstone[10] dropped from Heaven.

But, to be more precise, the millstone is dropped, not by God, but by the bird. This creates a problem for us if we would hope,

8. *The Greek New Testament with Dictionary* (Munster/Westphalia: United Bible Societies, 1975).

9. See also Ps. 2:1–3 in regard to rebellious plots and imaginations. The Authorized Version has: "Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed. 'Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.' " Here again we see the use of "imagine" to suggest at once a plot and a doomed, empty dream.

10. Matthew 18:6: "... whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and be drowned in the depth of the sea." Again, a biblical image turned to an alien use.

like Tolkien, to reconcile the tale with a fully Christian sense of justice, since the bird is really the murdered boy in another form, avenging himself on his stepmother. In effect, the wronged boy takes the law into his own hands, which in biblical terms is to redress a wrong with a wrong: "Beloved, never avenge yourselves," writes Paul, "but leave it to the wrath of God" (Rom. 12:19). And, even more to the point, Jesus tells His disciples to "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6:27–28). Admittedly, it's easy for us to overlook what may seem like a very minor twist in the tale's handling of justice, since, after all, turning the other cheek is not second nature to anyone; but when we come to the tale looking, with Tolkien, for its affinities with Christianity, such a "minor twist," once noted, should raise a few questions, {329} for instance: how does the tale's narrative strategy make it especially easy for us not only to *overlook* the unsettling ramifications of the stepmother's destruction, but positively to *rejoice* when the millstone drops, "Bam!" on her head?

Once this question is breached, the answer is, I think, pretty obvious; we feel glad about the stepmother's death, and fail to recognize the boy's injustice, simply because the woman is so grotesquely, patently wicked. Her sins are drawn with such broad strokes that she seems as unmistakably evil as a Hitler or a Stalin, and therefore she is not only easy, but actually *pleasurable*, to condemn—for she is far worse than ourselves.

Here, certainly, is some reason for the Christian to be uneasy in the heart of Faërie. We often hear it said that a great appeal of fairy stories, whether short bedtime tales or Tolkien's own epic trilogy, is that they generally portray the good and bad characters as "clearly black and white." This is certainly true of "The Juniper Tree," but, as I am suggesting, the Christian should have some reservations about using or recommending such "moral" fairy stories as aids to biblical righteousness. For, of course, the central claim of Christianity is that all men have been so very wicked, so actively, deliberately evil, that only the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ could ever make us good again, and then only if we admit how bad we've been; while a major appeal of the moral fairy story seems to be its offer of relative goodness by contrast: "I've never cooked my stepson up into a cannibal stew, so maybe I'm

not such a reprobate, after all." Certainly, I overstate the point, but not that much; for, to ask another question: what applicable moral lessons, what exhortations to practical goodness, can we take away from a reading of "The Juniper Tree"? That it's always wrong to eat family members? That if a bird asks me for a millstone, I should give it to him? That all problems or miseries or bones should be laid at the foot of my juniper tree? The very absurdity of these and other possible answers shows, I think, that this tale isn't centrally concerned with the prosaic, everyday business of being fair, or loving one's enemy, or leaving the neighbor's fruit on the neighbor's tree, business which is spoken of so often in the Gospels; in fact, the heart of the tale appears to be elsewhere. Let me suggest that it is to be found in the juniper tree itself.

It is well known that trees were objects of worship in pre-Christian Europe, and, according to Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, {330} they were particularly sacred to the ancient Germans.[11] In many nations, especially northern countries, evergreens were believed to possess an unusually divine vitality because of their mid-winter foliage. Barren women, in particular, believed that fruit-bearing trees had the power to bestow fertility.[12] The fact that the juniper is a fruit-bearing evergreen, and therefore doubly potent, must be central to any understanding of this tale. I don't intend to make the mistake that Tolkien cautions against early in his essay, that of reducing a complex tale to anthropological, mythographic shorthand ("OFS," 45); but the connection of the facts just mentioned with our tale is so evident—the barren wife, the Germanic setting, the mid-winter beginning—that very little additional argument seems necessary to show that the story's stron-

11. Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, abridged ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1951). In chap. 9, "The Worship of Trees," pt. 1, "Tree Spirits" (127), Frazer writes: "From an examination of the Teutonic word for 'temple' Grimm has made it probable that amongst the Germans the oldest sanctuaries were natural woods.... How serious that worship was in former times may be gathered from the ferocious penalty [for peeling] the bark of a standing tree.... it was life for life, the life of a man for the life of a tree."

12. Frazer, chap. 9, pt. 2, "Beneficent Powers of Tree-Spirits" (138): "Among the South Slavonians a barren woman, who desires to have a child, places a new chemise upon a fruitful tree on the eve of St. George's Day.... Among the Kara-Kirghiz barren women roll themselves on the ground under a solitary apple-tree, in order to obain offspring."

gest affinities aren't with Christianity, but with paganism. The tree, which gives both birth and resurrected life to the boy, stands in the story as the symbolic focal-point of human desire, not for moral goodness, or justice, or even release from life's miseries, but desire for divine independence and for self-existent creative power. I hardly need to point out that these are the attributes of God Himself.

One would think that Tolkien, who allows his discussion of creativity to go only as far as "redemption" and "sub-creation," would certainly be uncomfortable with a tale appealing to motives so inconsistent with Christianity; yet, as I have tried to show, "The Juniper Tree" is not only a personal favorite of Tolkien's, but also an excellent example of that "essence" of fairy story which he believes is preeminently the "essence" of his faith as a Christian. This "essence" Tolkien sums up in one word, "Fantasy," which he sets forth as a necessary faculty of Man the Image of God, expressed most fully in "the primal desire at the heart of Faërie: the realization, independent of the conceiving mind, of imagined wonder" ("OFS," 42). If I read Tolkien correctly, he is saying here that we "making-creatures" love fairy stories because, deep down, we long to see the imaginations of our hearts fleshed out beyond ourselves into foursquare reality. And it would seem that although we must for the present subordinate our creative drive to a higher Authority, it is the very nature of this drive to make us hope for future independence, for development out of our embryonic state into full spiritual adulthood, to possess our own *fiat*. We would like very much to be Creators.

So, to conclude, it seems to me that Tolkien's error in drawing such close parallels between the fairy story and the Gospel is that he {331} tends to put man in the place of God. This, as I have tried to show, is something that the biblical Gospel will not allow. It is this longing for deity which, according to Christ, men must repent of if they are to be saved. "If any man would come after me," He says, "let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Tolkien's Christ seems to take His pattern largely from the pre-Christian myths that Tolkien loved so well. Luke's Christ, on the other hand, takes His pattern from the Old Testament: "These are My words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the law of Moses

and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). If indeed Jesus Christ is "Myth become Flesh," then it appears that there are at least two myths competing for Incar-nation. But the biblical myth has always asserted that it is not a "myth" at all,[13] in the sense of being either a creation or fulfillment of the human imagination, whether individual or corporate. If the imaginative heart of man is as disobedient as the biblical Christ claimed, then how would man conceive of a Christ Who comes to turn hearts from disobedience? The "myth" of Christ, insists Luke, is authored by God alone, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, of the physical and the spiritual, the seen and unseen; and a "myth" authored by God ceases to be a myth in any meaningful sense—there is no other Reality to compare it against.

I hope that I've shed some light on the controversy which I postulated at the beginning of this essay. After examining both sides of the issue, it seems to me that the alarmed, unbelieving lover of fairy stories has much less to fear from Tolkien than he had originally anticipated, and very little cause for resentment. They share quite a bit of common ground. As for the biblically-minded Christian, he should be grateful to Tolkien for defining the motive and appeal of fairy stories; but this knowledge should make the Christian careful of the way that he enjoys them. In fact, (and this is a hard saying), it may be wrong for him to enjoy them at all. To the lover of Faërie, this might seem to be an oppressive kind of self-vigilance; but, if the heart is as susceptible to proud imaginations as Christ says it is, then self-vigilance is merely a healthy precaution against self-destruction. So, when queried by friends who ask why he would leave Faërie, and give up the quest for Joy, the Christian may want to remind them that he who would save his life, or his Joy, will lose it, anyhow; and, after all, that it was the repentent prodigal son who was met with an embrace. {332}

13. See, e.g., 2 Pet. 1:16: "For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty." See also 1 Tim. 1:3–4, where Paul reminds Timothy that he has urged him to "charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor occupy themselves with myths and endless geneologies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is in faith;...." In both cases, a sharp distinction is drawn between the historical Christian testimony on the one hand, and the products of human imagination on the other.

Strategy of Bitterness

Identifying the Narrative Voice in Chaucer's "Merchant's Tale"

Christopher Hodgkins

The *Merchant's Tale* is remarkable for the paradoxical nature of the controversy that it has generated among its twentieth-century critics. All praise the work as brilliant, then fall immediately to arguing over who or what should be blamed for the unsettling effect of this brilliance. The disagreement, which centers around the problem of the poem's tone and narrative voice, has until lately divided critics into two major camps: those who believe that Chaucer intended the tale as a light-hearted fabliau but one that regrettably has been darkened by the later addition of the *Merchant's Prologue*, and those who regard the prologue as consistent in tone and content with the entire tale and blame the poem's intrinsic bitterness thoroughly on the Merchant narrator, thus absolving Chaucer of any but a descriptive relationship to the antifeminism of the piece.

The former, lighter view is defended by Professor Bertrand Bronson, largely on textual grounds.[1] Since "only twenty-three of the fifty-two MSS containing the *Merchant's Tale* include the *Merchant's Prologue*,"[2] in which the Merchant is portrayed for the first time as an angry, disillusioned husband, Professor Bronson suggests that the prologue was not originally written to preface the

1. B. H. Bronson, "Afterthoughts on The Merchant's Tale," *SP* 333 (1961): 583–96. Quoted in E. Talbot Donaldson, *Speaking of Chaucer* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970), 30–45.

2. Donaldson, *Speaking of Chaucer*, 32. Here Donaldson refers to J.M. Manly and Edith Rickert, *The Text of the Canterbury Tales*, 8 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), iii, 374.

tale, but was added as either a scribal error, or, more likely, as an authorial afterthought. However, according to Bronson, the later addition of the prologue "worked an {334} instant sea-change on the story itself," a change which "the poet may not at once have realized.... The Merchant's misogyny impregnated the whole piece with a mordant venom, inflaming what had originally been intended for the sake of mirth."[3]

The more traditional, grim view is set forth by Professor J.S.P Tatlock, who writes that "for unrelieved acidity the *Merchant's Tale* is approached nowhere in Chaucer's works, and rarely anywhere else; it is one of the most surprising pieces of unlovely virtuosity in all literature."[4] E. Talbot Donaldson, another notable defender of this view, takes Bronson to task for holding certain assumptions about Chaucer's personality. As he writes, "Professor Bronson... [seems to regret] the suitability of the *Merchant's Tale* to the Merchant as he is characterized in what is an undeniably authentic prologue... because of the preconceptions he entertains about the kind of poetry that witty, urbane, genial Chaucer ought to have written."[5]

However, although Donaldson rejects the critical commonplace of a uniformly "urbane, witty, genial Chaucer," he doesn't replace this popular image with an antifeminist or a misanthrope, but with a morally sensitive mimetic artist. It is vital to Donaldson's argument that we see the Merchant as one of many creations by Chaucer, and therefore agree that the poet is no more morally culpable for the Merchant's "articulate wrath" than Shakespeare is for Iago's malicious plots. "Any work of art," he writes, "that presents an honest picture of existence as seen through any eyes, no matter how jaundiced, hateful, or even wicked the beholder may be, is moral enough of itself."[6] And, although he normally dislikes "moralizing Chaucer's poetry," he does feel "forced to substitute something concrete for the laughter" that he refuses to let take

3. Bronson, "Afterthoughts," 596. Quoted in Donaldson, *Speaking of Chaucer,* 33.

4. J. S. P. Tatlock, "Chaucer's Merchant's Tale," *MP* 33 (1936): 367–81. Page 367 quoted here. Quoted in Jay Schleusener, "The Conduct of the Merchant's Tale," *Chaucer Review* 14, no. 3 (Winter 1980): 237–50. Tatlock quotation on 237.

5. Donaldson, *Speaking of Chaucer,* 33.

6. *Ibid.*, 44.

over the poem.[7] So Donaldson concludes that Chaucer's intention in the *Merchant's Tale* is "to present the kind of world that can come into being if a man's approach to love and marriage is wholly mercantile and selfish,"[8] to teach by a striking example and without any pedantic moral commentary the fearful consequences of ignoring the humanity of the opposite sex.

So, while those who hold the poem to be a conventional fabliau differ sharply with those who see it as thematically important, both parties agree that by modern standards, Chaucer is above reproach, and this agreement has provided the common ground necessary for their disagreement. However, two later critical essays question the {335} belief that the poet cannot be implicated in the vicious eloquence of his Merchant.

Emerson Brown Jr. and Jay Schleusener agree that the *Merchant's Tale* tells us more unpleasant truth about Chaucer himself than critics heretofore have admitted. However, they differ markedly on an equally important issue, that is, the primary target of the poem's attack. Brown believes that its rage is directed mainly at women and marriage. Schleusener sees the tale as an assault on far, far more. Brown, who proposes the "get beyond old controversies" with a discussion of the tale's unique "intrinsic genre," and some new evidence, ultimately maintains "that the tale has a consistent narrative voice apart from the poet's,"[9] but that Chaucer, who has shared a great deal of the Merchant's misogyny in time past, puts forth a conscious moral effort to enforce this distinction, and wins through to a new self-understanding. In this view, the poem becomes an act of repentence for the poet's sexism.[10]

Jay Schleusener points to the transparency of the Merchant's character as support for his assertion that Chaucer writes to implicate not only himself, but also us, his audience, in the Merchant's base motives and conduct. However, Schleusener further maintains that the poet's purpose isn't merely to trap and "wound us

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, 45.

9. Emerson Brown Jr., "Chaucer, the Merchant, and their Tale: Getting Beyond Old Controversies," pts. 1 and 2, *Chaucer Review* 13, nos. 2 and 3 (Fall 1978 and Winter 1979): 141–56, 247–62. Page 141 quoted here.

10. *Ibid.*, 256–57.

with our own bad taste," but to return us finally and with greater conviction to our own better manners, motives, and good sense. If I may extend Brown's metaphor, Schleusener believes that the poem works as a sort of general, corporate confession, admittedly forced upon us at first by Chaucer; yet he suggests that once we own this confession, it becomes for us not a self-abasing apology to some higher moral authority, but rather a simple admission to ourselves of "our common vulnerability to corruption" which "is part of what defines our common effort toward civility."[11]

In my response to this complex controversy, I will attempt to support four major assertions about the *Merchant's Tale*: first, that the poem is indeed a piece of "unlovely virtuosity"; second, that its strategy of bitterness is to sully and mock important social institutions, the entire human condition, the Christian religion, and even the Christian God; third, that there is more of Chaucer in the Merchant than formerly acknowledged; and fourth, that even Schleusener's very mild claims for an ethical purpose in the tale are founded on a very problematic passage, so that Chaucer and his tale, though artistically understandable, may not be morally defensible. {336} The mainstream of recent Chaucer criticism has tended to agree that the dispute over narrative tone in the *Merchant's Tale* should be referred to the main body of the work itself, rather than to speculations about the omission of the *Merchant's Prologue* in some MSS. Donaldson writes that "[o]nly if, as a literary fact, the tale failed to fit the narrator as he is characterized in its prologue would the existence of other MS alternatives to the prologue become significant, and only provided that among these alternatives we [were to find] a more satisfactory reading."[12] In other words, if the tale's narrative voice is demonstrably sarcastic, then Bronson's textual argument for a lighter view must be abandoned.

When we do turn to the poem apart from the prologue, this demonstration is not long in coming; we soon find the narrator's bitter cynicism seeping through large and numerous cracks in the wooden facade of his tale. We're told that the old bachelor-knight January, who all his life has "folwed ay his bodily delyt/On wom-

11. Schleusener, "Conduct," 249.

12. Donaldson, "Speaking of Chaucer," 32–33.

men, ther as was his appetyt," suddenly, "Were it for hoolynesse or for dotage," has been seized with "a greet corage... to been a wedded man" (E 1245–55).[13]

Even in these few initial lines, we feel the powerful undertow of the narrator's double-entendre. First, we should have doubts about the propriety of this aged fornicator's easy transmutation of desire into a yearning for marital pleasure, a movement which implicitly lowers marriage to the level of legitimated prostitution; also, we may wonder why the narrator virtually equates holiness with senility in his conjecture about January's motives; and we should note the deliberate ambiguity of "corage"—are we to believe that marriage is a joy to be desired or a battle to be fought? We are drawn down as if by gravity to the baser meaning, and we begin to sense that this narrative voice is at least as angry as the Merchant's in the prologue, indeed, angrier; for the tale seems to intensify the prologue's loud, broadcast rage into a more deadly subtlety.

This sense of the poem's dark tone, prepared for but not created by the *Merchant's Prologue*, is confirmed when we continue reading. As Charles Muscatine writes:

> The *Merchant's Prologue* is unusually important in establishing the narrator's attitude—he is savagely disappointed in his two months' marriage. His long preamble in praise of marriage (1267–1392) takes from this context a sarcastic reversal of meaning, supported internally by a few spaced barbs:[14] {337}
>
> ... For who can be so buxom as a wyf?...
> She nys nat wery hym to love and serve Thogh that he lye bedrede, til he sterve. (E 1287, 1291–92)
> ... A wyf wol laste, and in thyn hous endure, Wel lenger than thee list, paraventure. (E 1317–18)
> ... Housbounde and wyf... been so knyt ther may noon harm bityde, And namely upon the wyves syde. (E 1391–92)

After reading such biting sarcasm, we can safely assume that the prologue and the tale work together quite powerfully as a literary

13. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957). All line numbers refer to this ed.

14. Charles Muscatine, *Chaucer and the French Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 231–32.

unit. Indeed, it is difficult to understand how any critic could describe this poem as "lighthearted." Brown, following E.D. Hirsch, suggests the very plausible answer that critics like Bronson err by failing to approach a work in terms of its "intrinsic genre," that "sense of the whole" derived from the sum of its parts. According to Brown, the Merchant's Tale has sometimes been forced into the "extrinsic genre" of the "happy fabliau" because its basic plot derives from the "Pear-Tree" *märchen* which was told throughout Europe and Asia; this stereotype, Brown believes, has caused some critics to ignore the realities of the tale as Chaucer wrote it.[15] "Great is the power of an extrinsic genre,"[16] he writes, rather regretfully. Having compared the lighter reading of the tale to some details of the text itself, it is difficult to disagree.

But once the prologue and tale are admitted to be a literary unit, consistent in their negative, perverse intent with the voice of the Merchant narrator, questions begin to arise about the target of this bitterness. As noted above, Brown holds that the tale attacks women and marriage; Tatlock and Donaldson maintain that it goes far beyond mere misogyny or misogamy by expressing contempt for revered institutions, disgust for the human race, and insolence toward God; and Schleusener asserts that the poem reaches out with this hatred into the audience.

A treatment of the tale's degrading antifeminism is unnecessary here, since this facet of the work has already been amply demonstrated by most of its critics, and indeed, because both Donaldson and Schleusener have discussed the poem's misanthropy in such harrowing detail, I need give only a few examples to illustrate the Merchant's subversive means of drawing us into his hateful world.

One quality that makes the *Merchant's Tale* so oppressive is its utter lack of even a single sympathetic character; or rather, its lack of any character who remains sympathetic. For the Merchant's perversity delights to make us recoil in horror from characters whom we had {338} initially trusted. For example, the narrator first builds, then disappoints our expectations of Justinus. Once we've listened for a while to the Merchant's incessantly debasing, snide attacks, even the rather jaded prudence that Justinus suggests to

15. Brown, "Chaucer," 149.

16. *Ibid*., 257.

January begins to sound like wisdom from heaven:

> ... it oghte ynough suffise
> with any wyf, if so were that she hadde
> Mo goode thewes than hire vices badde;
> And al this axeth leyser for t'enquere.
> (E 1540–43)

Unlike his lecherous brother, and in spite of his own unhappy marriage, Justinus is at least willing to admit that women are persons with both good and bad qualities; and unlike the enraged Merchant-narrator in the prologue, he acknowledges that it simply takes time for a man to see beyond his passions in order to get more wheat than chaff. Basically, Justinus speaks with rueful, unloving common sense. He impresses us by speaking his mind to January, who apparently has some power over him, and our regard is heightened by the deliberate contrast with the toadying Placebo. Therefore, while Justinus is certainly no shining hero, we do grant him our more than grudging respect.

But this respect he quickly squanders when he turns unexpectedly to engineer January's marriage to May "by sly and wys tretee" (E 1692), now in league with Placebo. While we aren't exactly dashed by this mediocre betrayal, we are soured by it. "He might at least have done nothing," we think. "But of course, isn't that just the way of the world."

However, where Justinus merely disappoints our hopes, May all but destroys them. Because she is fair, and because she is set upon by the foul January, our hearts go out quite natually to her. For example, the portrayal of the wedding night, far from providing an erotic description of May's "fresshe beautee," is instead rendered from her point of view, with a horrid assault on our senses:

> He drynketh ypocras, claree, and vernage
> Of spices hoote, t'encressen his corage.... (E 1807-08)
> With thikke brustles of his berd unsoft, Lyk to the skyn of houndfysshm sharp as brere...
> He rubbeth hire aboute hir tendre face.... (E 1824–25, 1827)
>
> The slakke skyn aboute his nekke shaketh,
> Whil that he sang, so chaunteth he and craketh.... (E 1849–50)

"A man may do no synne with his wyf," the old lecher croaks to May in bed, "For we han leve to pleye us by the lawe" (E 1839, 1841). {339} A more terrifying picture of institutionalized rape can hardly be imagined.

It is therefore no wonder that, through May, the Merchant can take such embarrassing advantage of us. Swayed by our attraction to and pity for her, we make the mistake of assuming that she is good simply because she is treated badly. However, after our eyes are shocked open by her eager acceptance of Damian's advances, we are able to retrace our steps and discover that the early part of the poem is salted with intimations of May's true character. For, as January is a man given over to fantasy, May is, fittingly, a woman of appearances. We behold her "benygne chiere" (E 1742) and "meke look" (E 1745), her ravishing "beautee and plesaunce" (E 1749), but we do not see her heart until it overflows with tainted "pity" for the amorous Damian (E 1986). Thus the Merchant mocks us in retrospect; surely, we have been quite naïve. May has fallen, and because we trusted, we fall with her. From this point on, we are hard men; "we hoard our feelings," as Schleusener says, "to be sure that we will not be caught again."[17]

So we see that Justinus and May are the poem's two dynamic characters, but that their motion is a fall. Along with the merely hormonal Damian and the statically obnoxious January, they comprise the Merchant's squalid vision of humanity. In the world of the tale, goodness is a mere appearance, equated with the ability to conceal evil, and therefore more suspect than evil itself.

Because the Merchant directs his lethal attack at so universal a target as the entire human world, it is not surprising that in many passages we find his demeaning cynicism aimed at the Creator of the world order, the "hye God." This attack on God is, of course, indirect; and, having described it as an "attack," one naturally retreats from the description because this term seems so absurd and extreme; but, once the reader has been caught up in "the reductive machinery of [the Merchant's] sarcasm,"[18] the translation of praise into invective becomes easy, and the narrator's intent unmistakable.

17. Schleusener, "Conduct," 242.

18. *Ibid*., 244.

For example, in many places the Merchant makes perverse references to Christian Scripture and Sacrament. Donaldson observes that in one passage he dirties the biblical account of the creation of Adam and Eve by describing the new-made couple as pitiably "bely-naked" (E 1326), and that in another place he succeeds "in dirtying {340} the theological basis on which marriage was said to rest" by transposing a bit of the Song of Solomon from the allegorical into the "lewed" (E 2138–49).[19] In regard to the wedding ceremony itself, Donaldson notes the "contempt bred of familiarity" with which January's marriage to May is narrated:

> The preest... saide his orisons as is usage,
> And croucheth hem, and bad God sholde hem blesse,
> And made al siker ynough with holinesse. (E 1706–08)

"The priest," writes Donaldson,

> is seen as a kind of witch doctor who presumably controls the Almighty much as Prospero controls Caliban. He dispenses holiness as if it were some sort of magic powder that he can scatter around in order to secure the marriage—an insecticide to ward off the flies of evil. But we know his magic isn't going to work.[20]

Thus the Merchant works to destroy any trust that the audience might have in the church as a force for temporal justice. When the priest gives his perfunctory approval to January's queasy arrangement, the best that we can hope for is naïve clerical negligence. However, having come by now to expect the worst as a matter of course, we wonder whether God's ministers on earth don't sanction such travesties with a conspiratorial wink. And still the momentum of the Merchant's innuendo would carry our suspicions further up the great chain of being: if the ministers, we think, then why not God himself?

The Merchant does his level best to feed these suspicions; indeed, even his pious asides are more damning than most people's outright blasphemy, as two examples will illustrate:

> And certeinly, as sooth as God is kyng,
> To take a wyf it is a glorious thyng. (E 1267–68)

19. Donaldson, *Speaking of Chaucer*, 44.

20. *Ibid*., 41.

Since, by this point in the poem, we have already been led to equate a "glorious thyng" with "miserable bondage," is seems quite natural to follow through with a similar equation on the theological side of the ratio.

We see a slightly different strategy at work when the narrator, having condemned Damian as "servant traytor, false hoomly hewe" (E 1785), turns abruptly to offer him weird sympathy:

> How shaltow to thy lady, fresshe May,
> Telle thy wo? She wol alweys seye nay. {341}
> Eek if thow spekes, she wol thy wo biwreye.
> God by thyn helpe! I can no bettre seye. (E 1871–74)

In the first aside, the Merchant casts doubt on God's kingly potency, but here he insinuates something far worse: that the Deity may be a very present help for aldulterers. And, as the tale works toward Damian's astounding, almost providential success with May, this suggestion grows imperceptibly into an assumption in the reader's mind. As Schleusener writes of another, similar passage, "Even divine judgment is reduced to our level. God knows the cause [of May's eager yielding to Damian], but unless he is mistaken, he knows the same cause we do, and he shares our cynical attitude toward May and the rest of mankind."[21] The vast and complex world becomes a small and comprehensible place for the Merchant and those of us who follow him, not because we have grown, but because the Maker of the world has proven to be as mean as we are.

So the tale appears to be stunningly nastier than most critics have feared; the Merchant's vitriolic, calculated rage extends far past women and the married estate to the institutions of courtly love, the knight–squire relationship, and the church, to young lovers and old lechers, to the beautiful and the ugly, indeed, to all humanity, and to the God who imposes and maintains the miserable human condition.

However, having said this much about the *Merchant's Tale*, the question persists: why would "witty, urbane, genial Chaucer" write such a hate-filled piece? Why does he allow the Merchant such vicious eloquence, and his hearers so little relief? We should note that Chaucer provides a kind of answer whenever he defends his

21. Schleusener, "Conduct," 244.

sense of reportorial duty. For example, in the *General Prologue*, we find what amounts to an apology for his handling of all the *Canterbury Tales*:

> ... I pray yow, of youre curteisye,
> That ye n'arette it nat my vileynye,
> Thogh that I pleynly speke in this mateere,
> To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere,
> Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.
> For this ye knowen al so wel as I,
> Whoso shal telle a tale after a man,
> He moot reherce as ny as evere he kan
> Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
> Al speke he never so rudeliche and large,
> Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe, {342}
> Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe. (A 725–36)

And again, in the *Miller's Prologue*, he reaffirms:

> ... I moot reherce
> Hir tales alle, be they bettre of werse,
> Or elles falsen som of my mateere.
> And therfore, who list it nat yheere,
> Turne over the leef and chese another tale...
> Blameth nat me if that chese amyss.
> The Millere is a cherl, ye knowe wel this... (A 3173–77, 3181–82)

"As with the Miller," Chaucer might well say, "so with the Merchant. I give you him and his tale as they come to me. If the tale offends, it is only because the Merchant is an offensive man."

It is, of course, no longer necessary to expose Chaucer's facetiousness in these and like passages. Granted, that a number of Chaucer's characters, the Host in particular, can be approximately identified with historical figures in and about late fourteenth-century London,[22] so that one might be justified in supposing Chaucer actually to have endured a pilgrimage with someone very much like the Merchant; still, the overwelming majority of mod-

22. *Works*, 3.

ern scholars believe that the *Canterbury Tales* and their narrators are substantially the products of Chaucer's imagination, and that at numerous points, Chaucer himself speaks through them.[23] Our interest is in the extent to which Chaucer speaks through the Merchant.

Interestingly enough, the Merchant employs an argument much like Chaucer's claim to artless objectivity when attempting to justify his brutal rendering of Damian's copulation with May in the pear tree: "Ladyes, I prey yow that ye be nat wrooth;/I kan nat glose, I am a rude man—" (E 2350–51). Like Chaucer, he exalts plain-speaking as a virtue of sorts, but lacks Chaucer's studied uneasiness about offending others; instead of apologizing diplomatically to the "precious folk," he tersely warns them to run for cover.

The chief similarity between Chaucer and his Merchant as storytellers would then appear to be their pronouncements against "feynyng" and "glozyng," against the modification perceived reality in favor of unnatural scruples or a received view of the world. The Merchant attributes his obscenity to his own constitutional rudeness; Chaucer excuses himself on the grounds that the offending words belong not to him, but to his narrators. "My wit is short, ye may wel {343} understonde" (A 746), he says. We understand, and he catches us with wry smiles spreading across our faces. For of course, neither Chaucer nor the Merchant expect us to believe their explanations, yet we can reason from the tone and context of their apologies that they don't expect to be challenged much, either. Their confidence is at once flattery and insult; for by assuming our complicity with their game, they both appeal to our desire for the wisdom of serpents, and raise a knowing brow at our predictable willingness to give up the innocence of doves. At such points, Chaucer seems to share the Merchant's sardonic faith that everyman's morals are pragmatic, founded on convenience and advantage, that we humans will put on a show of righteousness as long as morality makes no claims on the desires of our hearts.

Please note that I am not identifying the poet univocally with

23. *Works*, 3. "Such inquiries and conjectures [into the possible contemporary models that Chaucer used for his characters], like the search for literary sources, help toward an understanding of the poet's imagination of the material on which it worked... Chaucer himself... as the author creates the atmosphere and medium of the whole narrative."

his literary creature. I only wish to consider evidence for what a number of Chaucerians have claimed, namely, that the Merchant's bitterness is not merely mimetic, that it is in fact artfully calculated to offend the reader deeply, and that therefore Chaucer, the artist, is somehow implicated, even involved, in the tale. As Emerson Brown puts it, "[Chaucer] did not have to search out a personality thoroughly foreign from his own as a model for his misogynistic and cynically clever Merchant."[24]

In fact, Brown argues that "the ultimate confession [of the *Canterbury Tales*] is not simply that of individual fictional narrators but of Geoffrey Chaucer himself," who gives the Merchant "closer ties with his own life and work than, so far as we can tell, he gives to any other pilgrim,"[25] and who "cannot easily be absolved of involvement in the Merchant's anti-feminism."[26] His major evidence for the latter assertion is the short poem, "Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton,"[27] in which Chaucer "not only condemns marriage from the same male point of view [as the Merchant's], but does so quite clearly in his own person."[28] He points out that although "Bukton" is "obviously meant as a joke," it is strikingly similar to the *Merchant's Tale* in phrasing, particularly when it speaks of "the sorwe and wo that is in mariage," the "dotage" of an elderly groom, and the "cheyne" and "prison" of wedlock.[29] Chaucer speaks in his own voice and, whether joking or not, he reveals at least a rhetorical sympathy with antifeminist views. As Brown goes on to suggest, "that the view Chaucer thus holds up to examination and evaluation [in the *Merchant's Tale*] is a view that he himself to {344} some degree entertains [in 'Bukton']" is all the more significant, and that therefore the tale should "be thought of as his palinode,

24. Brown, "Chaucer," 247.

25. *Ibid*., 255–56. Brown suggests that "references to 'Middelburgh' and 'Orewelle' may... point to possible affinities Geoffrey Chaucer, poet and civil servant, has with his Merchant narrator. Orwell is the seaport of Ipswich, and Chaucer's father was born in Ipswich and owned property there. Chaucer was controller of the Custom and Subsidy of Wools, Hides, and Woolfells from 1374 until 1386, and Middleburgh was a wool staple from 1384 to 1388."

26. *Ibid*., 256.

27. *Works*, 539.

28. Brown, "Chaucer," 247.

29. *Ibid*., 248.

or recantation... of a lifetime of anit-feminist raillery... Chaucer's willingness to face the full ugliness of the Merchant's view of life may move him here, as so often, from angry satire to hard-earned self-understanding."[30]

While I agree strongly with Brown that Chaucer is "closer to the Merchant than most of us would like to think,"[31] I'm uneasy about his grounds for resolving the complicity into a confession: he believes that "by putting the tale of January into a larger context and attributing it to a clearly defined fictional narrator, Chaucer is in effect distancing himself from that view of women and marriage and judging it."[32] But just how clearly defined is the Merchant? Since the tale strikes us as one which must be not so much attributed to as blamed on its teller, the problem assumes an almost judicial significance; for if Chaucer's acquittal relies finally on our being convinced that the Merchant has the kind of distinct, detailed personality which would provide us material to discover and understand the hidden motives of his bitterness, then the poet is in some danger. As Schleusener observes, we have reason to doubt Chaucer's tact because the Merchant lacks "the dramatic stature and complexity to support his own meanness.... Chaucer has provided him with a relatively simple character which does not respond generously to a critical reading."[33]

The Merchant's simplicity becomes all the more striking when we compare him with one of Chaucer's most complexly characterized narrators, the Wife of Bath, who, despite her stance as the lusty, self-assured voice of experience, has much to hide, both from her listeners and from herself. Chaucer renders a fascinating and pathetic woman who tries with her bullying sophistry and knowing innuendo to stay above our laughter and beyond our pity, but who fails because her overbearing urgency betrays the self-disgust which she attempts to hide. Thus, the stories which she tells in her prologue and tale are interesting mainly because in them we seek the outlines and traces of the story which she keeps from us.

In contrast, the Merchant frustrates any sleuthing tendencies

30. *Ibid*., 249, 256.

31. *Ibid*., 248.

32. *Ibid*., 249.

33. Schleusener, "Conduct," 238.

that his audience might have by revealing everything from the start. If anyone thinks to discover a malcontented husband lurking behind the arras in this fabliau of a man deceived by his wife, the Merchant jerks the covers off before the search can begin: {345}

> "Wepyng and waylyng care and oother sorwe
> I knowe ynogh, on even and amorwe,"
> Quod the Marchant, "and so doon other mo
> That wedded been. I trowe that it be so,
> For wel I woot it fareth so with me.
> I have a wyf, the worste that may be;
> For thogh the feend to hire ycoupled were,
> She wolde hym overmacche, I dar wel swere." (E 1213–20)

Here, the Merchant short-circuits our subtle analysis of his motives with an extreme and aggressive example of what appears to be his primary maneuver: throughout the poem, he anticipates our worst expectations and then far exceeds them, whether with a full frontal assault, as in the prologue, or with the tale's sustained, sarcastic degradation of all that has been thought to be good or lovely in the world. "In a way," Schleusener writes, "he effaces himself with the brilliance of his attack... he has nothing to hide from his audience.... The strength of his character is its transparency, which leaves us to confront the tale directly and which offers no defense against its cynicism."[34] Schleusener suggests that we readers would be far more comfortable if Chaucer's Merchant were more concrete and therefore more handily culpable: "If we treat the poem as speech, we may concede a nasty tone and mean intent but save the poet and ourselves by blaming it all on his creature, the Merchant."[35] By laying his motives bare, the Merchant employs the devastating strategy of scorched-earth war against his hearers; he destroys all that might have been dear to himself, especially his own reputation, thus exploding whatever psychological ammunition that his secrets might provide us and leaving us no weapon to fight with, nowhere to hide, and no one to blame but ourselves.

So, while Brown maintains that Chaucer incarnates his own misogyny in the Merchant and then sets him off to perform at a safe

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

distance as a kind of atoning spectacle, Schleusener stresses, first, that the tale is directed not merely at women, but at all humanity, and second, that because the Merchant has so little buffering presence, his devastating bitterness against the human condition constantly threatens to draw forth and even merge with our own. More importantly, once he has demonstrated the Merchant's evanescence, Schleusener frankly attributes the tale's deliberate assault on its audience to Chaucer himself, yet furthermore, holds that "Chaucer has no reason to apologize {346} either for our conduct or for his own. In a way he has taken advantage of our weakness, but in a more important way he has relied on the strength of our commitment to better manners and better motives than the Merchant's."[36] Brown would limit the poem's confessional efficacy to Chaucer alone; Schleusener believes that Chaucer's reductive rhetoric gets a hold on the entire audience and compels us to join in his confession, a confession which is, however, ultimately transformed into a reminder of our better nature, a kind of back-handed compliment. "If embarrassment had not led us to conceal the question of Chaucer's tact, we might have noticed that the reader of the *Merchant's Tale* is made a victim of bad taste only to be set free by his own good sense."[37]

While I agree that Chaucer must bear much more direct responsibility for the poem's tone, and that the poet certainly implicates the reader along with himself in the tale's meanness, I have trouble believing that Chaucer is in any way concerned for our moral or spiritual well–being. For if, as Schleusener suggests, it is the argument between Pluto and Proserpine in the enclosed garden which "returns us to ourselves with a modest reminder of common value,"[38] then we may be lost. "We concede the force of Proserpine's examples," he says, "because they rely on ordinary commitments to ordinary values and we have no special reason to deny them."[39] Thus Schleusener argues that Proserpine is the only consistent voice of even moderately good sense in the tale, a voice which Chaucer provides to break the power which the Merchant's

36. *Ibid*., 249.
37. *Ibid*.
38. *Ibid*.
39. *Ibid*., 248.

overwhelming corruption holds over us.

But let us look more closely at the dispute between Pluto and his wife. Each purports to speak for his/her own sex, so that the passage is set up, at least on the surface, as another skirmish in the endless war between man and women. Indeed, within certain limits, Schleusener is quite right to call this scene a "domestic farce,"[40] since the disputants are in many ways types common to that genre: Pluto is the bellicose but inadequate husband, lecturing his wife on "the tresons whiche that wommen doon to man" (E 2239), and yet comically unable to hold his ground when confronted with any sustained opposition from the distaff side; while Proserpine, scrappy but moderately fair-minded, is "a woman drawn largely from the conventional stock of quarrelsome wives but supplied with better sense and clearer arguments than most."[41] When Pluto asserts the "bountee of man" over woman with a thick-headed, peremptory appeal to Scripture (as if it were much praise of men for Solomon to have found one good man among a thousand!) {347} (E 2242–48), Proserpine responds, unlike May or the wife of Bath, with at least as much straightforwardly good reasoning as bad. The high-point of her answer is the following bit of clear-eyed exegesis:

> Though that [Solomon] seyde he foond no good womman,
> I prey yow take the sentence of the man;
> He mente thus, that in sovereyn bontee
> Nis noon but God, but neither he ne she. (E 2287–90)

Indeed, she seems remarkably zealous for the Lord; Solomon's authority on this point is in doubt; she insists, because "he was a lecchour and an ydolastre" who forsook the "verray God, that nys but oon" and, in addition to "Goddes hous," made "eek a temple of false goddis... as seith the book." "How myghte he do a thyng that more forebode is?" she asks, with pretty formidable rhetorical force (E2291–2300). In fact, if these lines were to be taken by themselves, we would have no trouble thinking of Proserpine as a simple, somewhat contentious, Bible-believing housewife who justifiably rebukes her husband's nonsense.

But, as usual, the Merchant is up to his perverse tricks; for this

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Ibid.*

stock husband and his wife are, after all, Pluto and Proserpine, god and goddess of the classical pantheon. The same self-righteous moralist who points to Ecclesiastes and then to Damian, "the lechour, in the tree!" (E 2257) is himself the lecher who "ravysshed [Proserpine] out of Ethna" (E 2230); while the ardent monotheist who supports her argument about Solomon's idolatry from the First Book of Kings is herself a nature deity. This fundamental self-contradiction puts the reader in an extremely uncomfortable position: the ill-fitting frame of this sub-scene seems purposely constructed to mock whatever good sense we find in Proserpine's speech, and by this late point in the tale, we can hardly doubt that such mockery is yet another example of the Merchant's contempt for Scripture and for Christianity in general; but what then becomes of our much-needed call to better motives? It appears that in ridiculing the last possible voice of even confused integrity and good sense, the tale passes from the deep shadows of Chaucer's typical moral ambiguity over into darkness, with Chaucer leading, and, if we have not somehow cut ourselves loose, with us in tow.

Yet, what is even more horrifying is that the segment which concludes the tale after May's prodigious raillery seems to portray life as {348} going on quite nicely in the darkness. In cynical reversal of the happy ending, each character is given that which he or she sought unlawfully: Damian, who has deceived his master, and May, who has cuckolded her husband, are rewarded with the guaranty of many future trysts, at least until January's "sighte ysatled be a while"; which promises to be quite a while, since upon perceiving May's threat to withdraw her kindness, he is overcome, as the Merchant might say, by a charity that touches his "herte roote": he suddenly becomes willing to "lat al passe out of mynde" (E 2390), and, in return for his convenient forgetfulness—Donaldson calls it "an inner blindness"[42]—May yields anew to his advances. Thus a new sexual economy is established, in which the old lecher doesn't seem to care much about who else has May, as long as he can have her when he wants.

> This Januarie, who is glad but he?
> He kisseth hire, he clippeth hire ful ofte,
> And on hire wombe he stroketh hire ful softe,

42. Donaldson, *Speaking of Chaucer*, 45.

And to his palays hoorn he hath hire lad. (E 2412–15)

Then comes the final slam, backed by the sarcastic weight of the entire poem, and directed at no one but us:

Now, goode men, I pray yow to be glad. (E 2416)

What, then, are we to make of the *Merchant's Tale*? If we agree that obscenity is less a matter of exposed flesh than of exposed intentions, we must admit that the tale is one of the most obscene works in any literature; for the Merchant, and ultimately Chaucer, bare their shame with an artistry so well-timed and perfectly calculated to horrify that we are left, not only wounded with our own bad taste, but confused about the distinction between art as a vehicle for pleasure and art as mere well-honed, deadly strategy for subversion and domination.

Here a comparison of the *Merchant's* to the *Miller's Tale* may help us to better understand the Merchant's use of sexual pleasure, since both tales are ostensibly erotic fabliaux. Of the two narrators, only the Miller provides a pleasure-seeking audience with actually erotic material in the form of naked bodies described and sensual passion enacted; the Merchant, on the other hand, doubly frustrates the pleasure-seeker, first by arousing him to the point of degrading fantasy while abruptly truncating the passage which might feed that fantasy, and second, by leering at him after awakening his shame. In short, {349} the Miller promises lewd pleasure and delivers; the Merchant promises this pleasure, but only as the bait to lure his hearers into the trap. Once the trap is sprung, he starves and mocks his victims. The Miller, though voluptuous and corrupt, still at least views sexual activity as somehow truly pleasant; the Merchant, dessicated and vicious to the bone, is beyond pleasure, and therefore can exploit our erotic impulses as the major weapon in his assault on our hearts.

But what, finally, of Chaucer? Has my focus on the *Merchant's Tale* caused me to forget that, as the author of such a diverse work as the *Canterbury Tales*, he displays a breadth of mind utterly incompatible with the narrow bitterness of the Merchant? In my eagerness to resolve the guilt and disgust which the tale generates, have I too hastily placed blame on a master artist?

Because blasphemy and misanthropy are such fearsome charges, I hesitate to make them against any man, living or dead. When the

man is separated from me by such an abyss of time, language, and culture as Chaucer, I grow more hesitant still. I think that I have shown that the evidence found in the *Merchant's Tale* is strongly against him, but in view of the wide variety of his writings, this evidence is finally not strong enough to condemn him. Therefore, because I cannot justify an outright accusation, let me conclude with an observation, which may also serve as a warning: early in the *Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer makes us uneasy with his premature apologies; a wary litigant, he seems to be building a case in advance of a crime, exacting our agreement for his future protection. By taking such pains to absolve himself of any responsibility for our moral and spiritual health, he places the distance of confirmed suspicion between himself and us. "Am I my brother's keeper?" he might as well ask. So, when the *Merchant's Tale* sets upon us with its implacable anger, we can't help but look askance at the poet, who has already earned our distrust. For this is the hard truth: Geoffrey Chaucer is often amiable, usually quite penetrating, and almost always brilliantly witty; but he is simply not our friend.

The Three R's Revisited: 'Riting, Rhetoric, Reconstruction

Gary R. Hafer

Crucial to the fostering of Christian Reconstruction is the acquisition of impeccable writing skills among its proponents. Research and observations, no matter how ingenious, are ineffectual if not accompanied by proficient expository execution. Casual and scholarly writing is too often crippled by mangled syntax, flawed diction, and tedious prolixity: lethal infections that breed misapprehension. Thoughts become shrouded rather than revealed. A sound argument augmented by an equally-sound prose style captures the reader's attention and not verbal immersion, the indigestible prelude to incoherency.

Typically, the Christian church, during this century, has largely ignored the necessity of obtaining rhetorical skills. Theological seminaries rarely offer a course in expository or polemical writing; instead, writing is seen as a matter of "individual style," which makes it subject to the grossest literary perversions. The modern fetish for expressionism in writing, devoid of any grammatical touchstones, has infiltrated the Christian church to an alarming degree. Its acceptance is indicative of one young pastor's comment: "I worry about people, not apostrophes."

Sadly, apostrophes are only the tip of a much larger iceberg. What lies beneath is a sad commentary on how the church has so conformed to contemporary society's depreciation of reading and writing skills. {353}

The 1983 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education found that verbal scores in the Scholastic Aptitude Test dropped an average of fifty points between 1963 and 1983,

ten points greater than the arithmetic scores.[1] The committee also discovered that 40 percent of seventeen-year-olds cannot draw inferences from written material, and that only one-fifth of this group could write a persuasive essay.[2] Over half of the newly-employed English teachers are not qualified to teach their subject, a figure that is supported by the persistent decline in SAT English scores.[3] As writing skills become increasingly more in demand during the coming decade, how can reconstructionists expect to recapture the "robes"[4] if they are part of such statistics?

The Plan of Action

If we are to say anything to the world at large, then we must learn how to say it. We must be equipped to disarm the unbeliever at every turn and sufficiently present our position in a clear and concise manner (2 Cor. 10:4–5). The church newsletter is an impossible venture—or at best, an admission of ignorance—when the writing is perfunctory. Replying to newspaper and magazine editorials requires an *a priori* attainment of rhetorical skills; otherwise, 'tis better to plead the Fifth!

Although it is ultimately the responsibility of the Holy Spirit to persuade men and to disable their objections, this acknowledgment need not preclude the adoption of rhetorical devices. R. L. Darby, in his classic *Sacred Rhetoric*, emphasized the significance of rhetorical study, for it "does not profess to create a vigorous understanding, feeling, taste, or genius, but only to teach their most effective use."[5] In written expression, the function of rhetoric is to bridge the gap between the writer's mind and the reader's, in as short a span as possible. Aristotle's definition of rhetoric as "the

1. National Committee on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1983), 8–9.

2. *Ibid.*, 19.

3. *Ibid.*, 23.

4. This reference is to the academic disciplines, or "robes," that have been captured by liberalism.

5. R. L. Darby, *Sacred Rhetoric* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, [1878] 1979), 14.

faculty of discovering possible means of persuasion"[6] could legitimately be expanded to "the dissemination of the whole counsel of God."

The application of rhetorical skills can have tremendous influence in disarming an opponent and in convincing a "neutral" audience. Recently, a well-circulated newspaper in the Eastern United States published a disparaging editorial about theonomy in its weekend magazine section. The author was a prominent liberal minister in the area, who had gleaned the essential details from a *Christian Century* article. In response, two theonomic pastors authored a carefully-written rebuttal (showing that the pastors knew their "audience," in a rhetorical sense) {354} that resulted in the offending minister's published apology the following week. Moreover, the liberal minister's supplementary article that accompanied the apology was so illogically constructed that, in his attempt to clear himself, he actually charged the *Christian Century* authors with inaccuracy! Consequently, his intention to appear innocent, though oblivious, failed; instead, he emerged as a gossip. Here, a sound rhetorical argument proved invaluable.

Recovering Lost Ground

How then can the classical art of rhetoric be restored? Probably the best way is to have elders and pastors first study the works of those who have labored in this field. A concise grammar is essential for any writer, and there is none better than Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*.[7] This thin grammar can be easily read within a few hours and is very handy for quick reference. Each grammatical and stylistic rule is summarized in a maxim, which is followed by full explanations and examples.

A thorough knowledge of the "informal fallacies" is indispensable in discovering errors in reasoning, particularly in polemical matters. Familiarization with the categories of fallacious reasoning frequently has the effect of removing heat from an opponent's fire.

Even the seemingly "tightest" theological essay can be guilty of

6. Aristotle, *Art of Rhetoric* trans. John Henry Freese, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939), 15.

7. William Strunk and E. B. White, *Elements of Style* (New York: Macmillan, 1979).

one of the most elementary informal fallacies. In the review article of *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, appearing a decade ago in the *Westminster Theological Journal*, author Meredith Kline unwarily commits the *absurdum ad hominum* fallacy in his initial paragraph:

> The temper and teaching of the Chalcedon school find typical expression in the overheated typewriter of Greg Bahnsen....[8]

Kline repeats the same fallacy at the end of the article:

> If, providentially, anything good is to come out of the Chalcedon disturbance....[9]

Theonomy author Greg Bahnsen correctly identified the fallacy, alluding to it at the end of his reply article:

> Perhaps the unhappiest aspect of Kline's article is its ready use of the ugliest forms of *fallacious reasoning*: ridicule, sarcasm, character assassination, name dropping, and caricature.... [This is] ridicule rather than reasoning.[10] {355}

Dr. Bahnsen makes additional comments on Kline's "hasty generalization," another informal fallacy. Of course, the average pastor or author will probably not be engaging in such a high-level debate. Nevertheless, recognition of the fallacies can be instrumental in a variety of "arenas," such as college publications where the church may be ministering. An author's knowledge of the informal fallacies will prevent him from making errors in reasoning. Often, an advocated position may be correct, but its awkward presentation casts a shadow on the argument.

A seminal work that discusses these fallacies at length is William Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*.[11] Corbett's book outlines the process of formulating a persuasive essay by analyzing selected treatises from the past. There is a section on the *use* of "selected and special topics" that enables the writer to

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8. Meredith Kline, "Comments on an Old-New Error," *Westminster Theological Journal* 41 (Fall 1978): 189.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Greg L. Bahnsen, "Meredith Kline on Theonomic Politics," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 7, no. 1 (1980): 197. Emphasis is mine.

11. William P. J. Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978).

construct an article in a logical sequence. More importantly, the book is an excellent reference source when a particular writing style is required or when a quick refresher is needed. A handy chart inside the front cover facilitates cross-referencing.

Rhetoric and the Future

Despite the proliferation of audio and video cassettes during the past decade, the written word continues to be major means of communication. The printed page offers an accessibility not found in other media: speedy reference, inexpensive distribution, and complete mobility. Readers can garner far more information in one hour by reading the newspaper than by watching an hour-long newscast.

Christian Reconstruction is founded on the conviction that the crown rights of King Jesus will prevail in every sphere of human activity. May that message resound in the clearest terms.

The Loss and Recovery of Truth

Otto Scott

The Loss of Truth

Pilate asked, "What is truth?" That intellectual shrug was not a philosophic question so much as an echo from the upper levels of Roman society in the time of Nero.

That was the period, you remember, when the Romans no longer believed in their own gods—or in any others. The government had become completely atheistic—and all that was left was Money and Power. In modern terms: Economics and Politics.

Pilate understood that. He was, after all, a Roman politician, in charge of a sub-province. His goal, before his term of office ended, was to collect three fortunes. One for Caesar, one for the Roman system, and one for himself. Then he could retire to his villa and relax.

What did truth mean to Pilate? A word. Shakespeare's Falstaff said that about honor. "What is that word, honor? Air." That was all truth meant to Pilate—and to his fellows among the Roman elite.

We who live in a similar society are very familiar with that attitude. We have similarly developed a nation that is heavy with highly skilled individuals, immensely capable along narrow lines. Like the Romans, we have a Senate inhabited by men of great wealth, who enjoy special {358} privileges at the people's expense, who enact laws to which they hold themselves exempt.

It is true that the head of our government has not turned the White House into a court as vile as Nero's, but we may elect another like John Kennedy—or worse. And if the open sex of Rome seems, at this distance, more spectacular than ours, that is an il-

lusion: for x-rated videos and live exhibitions in Times Square, in San Francisco, and elsewhere, mimic the Roman situation closely.

These are, however, ephemera on the waves of events. It is true that all evil is evil, but the evils of the flesh are not more contagious than the evils of the spirit. The sin of pride—which is an occupational hazard of the clergy—has silently ruined uncounted lives; the sin of envy has led to wholesale massacres and the destruction of entire civilizations. The sin of avarice exhibited by Ivan Boesky and many others—has cut down innumerable victims; the sin of sloth, which the Welfare State regards with favor, has curtailed the potential of millions. The sin of anger has led to countless murders; the sin of gluttony has shortened lives; while covetousness today is considered normal.

Now some may think I am giving a sermon, but I am not. I am, believe it or not, speaking sociologically, about not only the Roman society, but all societies. It may sound strange to use the term "sin" in such a context, but that is simply because social science no longer recognizes sin. There are only regulations. Or, as some would put it, the law.

Whatever is legal is permitted. Envy, being legal, is not punishable. Pride is legal. Gluttony is legal. Sloth is not only legal but admired, if it is connected to wealth. Covetousness, or the desire to obtain someone else's goods, or wife, or house, is the American Way. Anger is encouraged if it is directed against the wealthy, who are held to have stolen from the poor what the poor never have possessed. Lust needs no discussion in our society; its trail is too obvious.

Now the church Fathers, in their debates with the Romans, were able to point to the evidence, which surrounded them all, that a society that could not, or would not, curtail the seven deadly sins was doomed to suffer their ravages and could not endure. They argued from moral positions, however, and from the words of God. And the Romans did not believe in God. {359}

Not all of them. Although Nero's court was vicious beyond belief, St. Paul met persons from Nero's household who had witnessed incest, matricide, and every perversion—and who were converted to Christianity. So even in the depths of Rome, the presence of God was felt.

But the educated elite of Rome could not believe. They had

all the wealth and power of a great empire. Gibbon says that the northern shore of the Mediterranean, from Italy to Asia Minor, was dotted with huge mansions for mile after mile after mile. Mansions that contained swimming pools and heated floors in the winter amid rooms of painted marble, mansions surrounded by elaborate walks and gardens, mansions employing platoons of slaves, whose owners had their own galleys and manufacturies, who enjoyed every luxury. Nero, it is said, had slaves lined from the mountaintop to the city, who passed along flagons of honeyed ice for his summer refreshment.

And we know the arguments they posed against the ideals of virtue and morality. They pointed to the fact that the earthquake does not distinguish among its victims; to the prevalence of illness and suffering among the innocent, and to the glaring prosperity of so many who were wicked.

These are the same arguments we hear today. We pick up *People* magazine and read about creeps surrounded by the goods of the world. We hear complaints about the salaries of captains of industry and silence about Dan Rather's $3 million a year. We know that the earth labors under a curse; that all of our lives are shadowed by difficulty, distress, and the uneven distribution of both the rewards and punishments of this world. In view of these inequities, this disconnection between virtue and circumstance, the Romans asked, how can you believe in a God of justice?

Well, most people expect justice to be instantaneous. They are impatient to see it done at once. The time table of God, of history, of society, of the world, is both longer and larger than our allocated period of observation. The Roman society paid a heavy price for its denial. Nero himself died a miserable death. The death of the pagan world was painful and protracted.

Of course, modern social scientists long ago tossed history away. Its lessons are not the sort they recognize. Instead, they choose to restudy the human race, as though the accumulated wisdom of the past is unimportant. New methods of investigation are devised, and the sociologists credit August Comte with launching the study of societies. {360} Comte argued that religion was one of the foundations of social and moral life. That may sound self-evident to some of you, but you are not social scientists, so your opinions are of absolutely no value. When Comte said it, it meant something.

This brilliant man said that society must share certain principles and beliefs if it is to remain a society.

Then Emile Durkheim came along and argued—based on a study of Australian aborigines—that changes in religion lead to a change in moral values. And where Comte had argued that religion is a social phenomenon, Durkheim came close to the proposition that society is a religious phenomenon.

That did not mean that modern social scientists developed any respect for religion. On the contrary. They now believe that religion is dangerous, because it consists of an influence that social scientists do not control, cannot truly measure, cannot really respect, because its foundations are metaphysical, and beyond the reach of earthly measures. Since science does not regard as real anything that cannot be measured, weighed, or tracked, religion in the scientific community is labeled superstition. Social scientists, however, are allowed to discuss influences.

But the record of civilizations, which extends far beyond the study of Australian aborigines or South Sea islanders or primitives anywhere at any time, discloses a connection between religion and morality, and historians can track the decline of morality along with the decline of religion—and the decline of civilizations. The Romans, for instance, began with a very strict moral code, and a stern religion. They believed in austerity, in virility, in controlled and controlling behavior. They were famous for their discipline. They made violations of their religious codes illegal. Those who did not honor the gods were punished.

They believed in honesty, in duty and truth. They had several words for these qualities. Gravitas and virtue were honored—and their breach was punished. In other words, sin was illegal. It was held a crime against the state to fail to honor the gods, or to live properly.

Then the Romans began to conquer people who had other gods. They encountered the Greeks, who had come to believe that their gods were symbolic. But the Romans, being a practical race, did not believe in symbols or metaphors. They tried to solve the situation by combining their gods with the gods of Greece. And as they conquered further, they added the gods of the conquered to their own. Which meant the importation of strange Asiatic cults with their peculiar rituals {361} and sacred orgies. In due course,

the Roman pantheon became crowded with all sorts of strange forms of worship. Much as we are crowded with Hare Krishnas and Buddhists and Hindus worshipping sacred animals and incarnated beetles and 1,000-year-old Shirley McLaines and creatures claiming to be of a New Age.

Prosperity and travel, power and prestige, politics and money made the old gods and beliefs of the Romans seem as faded and unimportant as the historic relics of ancient Egypt. In fact, Roman tourists left their graffiti on the sides of the Sphinx and the Pyramids. Rome began to take on a New York aspect. Its streets showed every race and echoes to all languages. Roman families grew wealthy and enjoyed slaves and pleasures. Roman austerity vanished amid struggles for power. Romans contended not to conquer some other people or territory, but to achieve control over all other Romans. That struggle was, in the end, won by Caesar. And after him came, in due course, Nero and others.

By then Rome had a new religion: it was Power and Money; Politics and Economics. Its living god was Caesar. Truth became a word. The courts were clogged, and bribes determined the decisions of the judges. A man who told the truth in such a society was considered a fool. Much as today.

We know the rest. We know that as Rome crumbled, Christianity—a new religion—arose. And we know how it spread; how it flourished. How it rescued infants from being eaten by dogs; elevated the status of women from the depths of personal degradation; honored the manual laborer, the carpenter, and the farmhand, held aloft the Commandments.

The Ages of Faith grew under a sense of the transcendental. The arching sky was a reminder of the eternal presence of God and personal tribulations were reminders of Christ's suffering. Anti-Christians are fond of pointing out that men did not become saints, but less fond of pointing out that some men did become saints. And even ordinary men, evil men, acknowledged the reality of morality, and the superiority of virtue.

Henry Plantagenet, eldest son of Henry II, king of England, lived in the twelfth century and was wild and criminal. He rebelled against his father time and again, and was always forgiven. He launched a series of rebellions, burned churches and stripped shrines, and finally contracted a heavy illness. Fevered, he sought

refuge in a monastery, and called for his father to visit. The king would as soon have visited {362} a sick panther, and stayed away. Then the prince felt death approach. He confessed his sins first in private, and then aloud. He changed his clothing, put on a shirt of hair, tied a rope around his neck, and asked to be dragged to a bed of ashes he had ordered prepared. The monks obeyed him, and placed two large stones at his head and at his feet, so he died—in the arms of his church. That was when Christendom was not perfect—but it was believed.

That faith faded during the Renaissance, when Christendom began to repeat the pattern of Rome. First there were conquests, and then commerce with a larger world, containing previously unknown people. Italy first, and then other parts of Christendom, began to encounter strange gods and different customs. The Islamic heresy lured Frederick II, and his example of immoral power and worldly success led directly to the rise of power struggles in the Italian city-states—and the decline of the faith. The Renaissance, held aloft by modern historians as an age of progress and freedom, was actually accompanied by a loss of the people's liberties and the rise of despots and immorality.

Historians who say otherwise are misled by the glories of Renaissance art, of the spread of Western exploration, the riches that were amassed, the palaces built, the jewels and the silks, the books and the learning, the riches of success. In other words, by the same sort of worldly success that accompanied the rise of Rome—and the decline of religion.

Worse than that, such historians, with the outstanding exception of Jacob Burckhardt, the great Swiss historian of the nineteenth century, have made a connection between the decline of Christianity and the rise of science and wealth. This would be like crediting the decline of belief in the Roman gods to the rise of Roman victories in war. Only prejudice can draw such connections, but our modern academics are distinguished by prejudice; heavy with intolerance and short-sightedness.

In any event, the result of the Renaissance was the same as the decline of Rome. Morality altered as a new religion arose: the religion of Power and Money; politics and economics. The people groaned under tyrants; the courts of the despots began to display every sort of license and depravity—and even the church gave way.

In that terrible crises, which spread to France and Spain, England and Scotland, Belgium and other parts, God's Spirit touched Luther and Calvin, and their associates. And these leaders halted the collapse {363} of Christianity on the very edge of extinction. They returned to the arguments and insights of Augustine, the witness to the sins and the fall of Rome, and restored the faith.

That restoration, in keeping with the observations of Durkheim and Comte, altered the moral standards of western Europe—for the papacy as well as the reformers. In only a few generations, a reinvigorated faith spurred a greater spurt forward in scientific innovation and discovery than in all the centuries of the Renaissance. It introduced future-oriented capitalism into existence where only a present-oriented trade had previously existed. It gave dignity to work that the Renaissance had debased; saved women from exploitation for a second time in the history of the West, halted poisonings and assassinations, and lifted all learning, all vocations, all people to new heights of understanding and effort.

Its period of initial enthusiasm did not last long: only a few generations. But it was like a rocket launching, for the great engine it created soared far higher, and for a greater distance, than any modern historian is yet willing to credit. The Reformation was, in other words, a great sociological as well as a great religious movement.

Yet we live at a time when the reasons for its appearance seem largely forgotten. Once again, the very success of the West has created the illusion that wealth and power can overcome all the lessons of history; all the precedents and experience of the past. Our leaders are so many Pontius Pilates, to whom truth is just a word; a noise, an exhaltation, Falstaff's "*air.*"

Once again, we live in a world where the rewards of life appear to be tilted in favor of the wicked at the expense of the innocent. Once again, we live in a society where corruption and vice display themselves openly, without shame. Like our distant forbears, we live at a time when we are told there is no God—and no truth—and that money and power will determine all outcome of every situation. Once again, we live in a society that believes there is no sin—only illegality, a society that has determined it does not need morals, and can live on laws alone.

I don't know what this means to everyone else, but I can say

what it means to a professional writer. It means that one can write the truth, but that no publisher will print what is so written. It means that our society is telling itself lies about history and lies about the present. It means a nation whose president embraces and discusses peace with {364} our sworn enemies, who have not forsworn their enmity. It means a nation where grades in universities are no longer accurate or honest. Where the courts are clogged and the wheels of justice do not move; where murderers go free and a young Christian woman who pulled the plug on an appliance in an abortion clinic is sentenced to five years in the penitentiary. A nation where tens of millions are spent to earn offices that pay less than a hundred thousand. It means a society where Pontius Pilate would be welcome, and where Jesus Christ is condemned by a crowd larger than that which appeared in the streets of Jerusalem on the day that Pilate asked, "What is truth?"

Yet there is a way this society, our society, can be saved from the grave that enveloped that other, earlier, terrible example.

Regaining the Truth

Some years ago a novelist described society as a vast army, traveling across the landscape. At the head were the top leaders; along the sides were outriders, keeping the throng more or less together and marching. From time to time the leaders would stop and confer, and sometimes argue about direction.

Let me add to the metaphor the thought that times occur when the entire army, or caravan, is lost, and has to stop altogether and take bearings. On such occasions, it is necessary for the leaders to look backward, to see where they have been, in order better to assess where they are going.

For us today a look at the past is imperative, because we are Christians, and part of a Christian army of almost unimaginable size and length, seemingly irrevocably split, but in actuality united by a belief in Jesus, and—at this point—under attack from all sides by anti-Christian forces.

As Christians we are accustomed to retrospective evaluations, because the events in both the Old and New Testaments took place centuries ago. Less attention, oddly enough, is paid to the Reformation, of which we here today are the direct heirs. Yet it is to the

Reformation that I think we should look, because it was the Reformation that rescued Christianity once before, from the swamp known as the Renaissance. All western Europe had succumbed to the temptations of success that attended that period: immorality of every description had risen, and the faith had declined among the elite. {365}

The general trend of society in the early sixteenth century was toward totalitarianism in all but name. The kings of France, Spain, and England had reduced the hard-won rights of people and their representatives, and ruled by decree, through force and terror. The city-states of Italy were governed by usurpers and demagogues. The papacy reflected these trends. In other words, the people of western Europe were not only oppressed politically, but also religiously and intellectually.

Those terms were, at the time, interchangeable, because the vocabulary of Europe was then inescapably religious. And since theological speculations were dominated by a central authority, innovations had virtually ceased. Under such conditions, men suffer under a stifling elite.

That is not to say that everyone was miserable. The fact is, many people do not seem to demand, or even to notice, the need for liberty of thought, for they do not lead thinking lives. They are too busy providing for themselves and their families to have time for reflection, and become unhappily aware of the imperfections of the society in which they live mainly when they get into some trouble, or some dispute, with the authorities.

But on the middle and upper levels of society, where people have more leisure and presumably more education, they quickly become very aware of the limits of discussion and freedom in everyday life, as well as in larger matters. In the early sixteenth century, such persons found a spokesman in Erasmus.[1]

His background was mixed. Despite being illegitimate, he was heir to a modest fortune. But his guardians wanted the money and therefore put him into a monastery. Although he had little or no religious vocation, he had a great aptitude for learning. He taught

1. This interpretation is taken from James Anthony Froude's essay on "Times of Erasmus and Luther," in *Short Studies of Great Subjects*, vol. 1. (of 4) (London: Longman, Green and Co., London, 1885).

himself Greek, and his Latin was as "polished as Cicero's." A bishop heard about him, and sent him to the University of Paris.

There he studied, but also abandoned all pretense at being a monk. He spent several years haunting the university library and struggling against poverty. Then he met two English noblemen, who hired him as a tutor. Charmed by his company, they took him to England and introduced him to the aristocracy. He also met up-and-coming clergymen, including Thomas More, who became his closest friend, as well as Warham, who later became Archbishop of Canterbury, and many others. Money began to flow toward him; Lord Mountjoy gave him a pension. He moved about, entertaining and being entertained, {366} and produced a stream of essays for which he became famous all over Europe.

Finally the courts of Europe, and even the pope, competed to attach him. He wound up, eventually, at the University of Louvaine, in the Low Countries, with a handsome salary. From there he began to spread what became known as humanism. And, through a very extensive correspondence with bishops and the like, to make suggestions for the improvement of the church and clergy.

Knowing them from the inside, he pointed out their failings. But he did so in elegant Latin, which the average man could neither read nor speak. He spoke mainly for rootless and skeptical intellectuals like himself. That meant nothing changed, but a great many scholars and aristocrats had the illusion of living in greater liberty.

Meanwhile, Luther, the son of a farmer, raised by strict and pious parents, was lucky enough to be sent to school. At seventeen, he sang songs in the street for money enough to go to the university. But when he saw a friend standing beside him struck by lightning, he assumed this was a visitation from the Lord—and decided to become a monk.

Nothing could have separated Luther and Erasmus more distinctly. For the elegant literateur also saw lightning strike and destroy a brothel, but the worldly philosopher merely noted that it was foolish to store powder in an exposed position.

They were different also in their approach to monkhood. Where Erasmus took his vows lightly, Luther took his heavily. He prayed on the stones. He fasted. When the plague came near the Augustinian monastery, the regular clergy ran for the hills—but Luther

remained behind. This made the other monks uneasy, and the head of the monastery invented a reason to send him to Rome.

He traveled barefoot, and had to beg for food and lodging enroute. And Rome horrified him. He saw rich clergymen, wearing cloth of gold, carried on litters and in special chairs, through hordes of beggars and armies of the poor. He returned to the monastery, and was recommended for a university position as professor of philosophy—mainly to get rid of him, to stop him from embarrassing the other monks by his lifestyle.

By then he had read—and studied—the Bible. He was thirty-five. And it was then that Pope Leo, learned and polished, decided to complete the structure at St. Peter's that had been designed by Michelangelo. To raise the money, he sold indulgences, or pardons against sins. {367} These were special permissions that had been sold for centuries: to eat meat on fast days, to marry a close relative, to do almost anything. Letters of credit on heaven, so to speak. Luther nailed his protest against this and other practises to the door of the church at Wittenberg.

I have spoken before about how the printers carried this challenge to all the corners of Europe. But not about the howling that arose. One bishop called for the fire and wood. But the pope at first said, "A drunken German... when he has slept off his wine, he will be of another mind."

But the people of Wittenberg stood by Luther. And so, surprisingly enough, did the elector of Saxony. Not even the pope could reach past the elector. And all across Europe rolled, in inches at first and then in feet and then in yards, the waters of the Reformation.

When these began to cover the United Provinces, the people were officially told that they had to believe whatever the church taught. If they disobeyed, women who fell into heresy would be buried alive. Men—if they took it back—would lose their heads. If they remained obstinate, they would be burned alive.

By that time, Luther's stand against the power of the Vatican had all Europe enrolled on one or the other side. The elector of Saxony received word the pope wanted to see Luther in Rome—and everyone knew what that meant. To decide the matter, the elector asked Erasmus to come and advise him. The famous scholar said, "Luther has committed two sins: he has touched the pope's crown

and the monk's bellies."

But he advised the elector to protect Luther—for the time being. Meanwhile, Luther was asked to recant; to say he was wrong. He insisted on being told where he was wrong; on what?

And it is precisely at this point that we should see that we have been misled about the nature of the Reformation. It was not simply a religious dispute, but a resistance to tyranny: a demand for intellectual freedom. For the right to question authority; the right to speak in accordance with one's conscience, the right to stand up, the right not to be terrorized, the right to be rid of blind obedience and physical punishment for having a mind, and an opinion, and the ability to state that opinion openly, in safety.

Luther stood for freedom at a time when the very word had almost faded from society. That modern historians do not teach this is a scandal of stupendous proportions. That Christian students, that the {368} descendants of Christians, should find this blotted out of their classes in secular universities amounts to an intellectual crime of the highest order.

Meanwhile, all Europe looked toward Erasmus. What would the darling of princes and popes, scholars and universities, have to say? As the Reformation rose, all sides clamored for his opinion. But he remained cautious. "As to me," he wrote to the archbishop of Canterbury in England, "I have no inclination to risk my life for the truth. We have not all strength for matyrdom; and if trouble comes, I shall imitate St. Peter. Popes and emperors must settle the creeds. If they settle them well, so much the better; if ill, I shall keep on the safe side." He called this moderation, and advised everyone on each side to practice it.

Meanwhile, the storm raged around both men. The church used murder and torture, fire and faggot. It is amazing that historians dwell mainly on the excesses of the Reformers and omit that in their histories. Foxe's Book of Martyrs is no longer a staple in Protestant homes; the genteel mainline churches would not sanction such reading today. No television series will be made; no special school courses will be taught.

And I will not take this space to discuss, at this moment, the theological issues that arose. My purpose is to recall how the Reformation emerged and what it emerged against, because we are in the midst of a new Reformation, and I want you to understand

that it was not institutions or groups that rose, but individuals. Men and women of faith and courage.

There were regions where there was no elector of Saxony, and no loyal townspeople, where heresy was met with fire and sword. Lutheranism, as it coursed beyond Germany after Luther's death, permeated Anglicanism. Armininianism became heavy with half-measures and compromises. But these could not compete against the fierce soldiers and clerics of Spain, organized by Philip II, or the princes of Lorraine, who threatened Scotland, and the Huguenots of France.

It took Calvin to raise a standard based on the Bible—and especially on the Old Testament. Why the Old Testament? Because it was there that Calvin found a divine example of national government.[2] At Geneva, sins were treated as crimes, because they lead to crimes.

And it was from Geneva that John Knox learned the lessons he carried to Scotland. Of Geneva, he later said, "Elsewhere the word {369} of God is taught as purely, but never anywhere have I seen God obeyed as faithfully."

You recall that Knox wanted to put Mary Stuart, the queen herself, on trial for murder. He horrified Elizabeth I, because Knox and his followers believed that all men and women—not just those on the bottom or in the middle: but everyone—are under God's law.

This was a great revolution in political terms, just as it was a great revolution in religious terms. Why is it not taught as the cornerstone of all liberty? Because, of course, it involves the innovations, the sacrifices, the heroism, and the intellects of Christians in their unceasing struggle to create a Christian society in a depraved world.

Froude, the great nineteenth-century English historian from whose writings I have culled these examples, said,

> Calvinists have been called intolerant. Intolerance of an enemy who is trying to kill you seems to me a pardonable state of mind.
>
> It is no easy matter to tolerate lies clearly convicted of being lies under any circumstances; specially it is not easy to tolerate lies

2. "Calvinism," by Froude, in *Short Studies*, vol. 2 (1888.)

> which strut about in the name of religion, but there is no reason to suppose that the Calvinists in the beginning would have thought of meddling with the church if they had been themselves let alone.
>
> The Catholics chose to add to their... creed a fresh article, that they were entitled to hang and burn those who differed from them, and in this quarrel the Calvinists, Bible in hand, appealed to the God of battles.... It was natural that they should.

But that is part of larger developments. Let me remind you that all of the few men I have cited—Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, and Knox—started out as individuals. They had no inherited wealth and only modest backgrounds. Only Erasmus spent his life in safety, but it is interesting to note that his failure to choose one side or the other ruined his reputation. He died held in contempt by the people of his own day, because to the end he twisted and evaded. His posthumous reputation is held high today, but that's because we live amid twisters and evaders, skeptics and agnostics.

Calvin had to flee France for his life, and found sanctuary in Protestant Switzerland. John Knox was captured by the French and made a galley-slave at a time when such prisoners were as thoroughly worked to death as their modern counterparts in the slave camps of the atheistic Soviet Union. Luther, once penniless and an embarrassment to his fellow monks, died after many trials, many tests. {370}

To assume that any of these men lived in times easier than our own would be to misunderstand history. It is important to understand that it was not religion that aroused them so much as irreligion: antireligion. A false church, a fraudulent clergy, a despotic government, a feckless literati. People of the lie, lording it over people of the faith.

It is also interesting to recall that the names that shine brightly today are the names of those who did not fear: who rose to their feet at a time when everyone else cringed. Erasmus is a name held aloft only by anti-Christians.

Today, when we see some Christian clergymen hailed by the enemies of Christianity, we need know no more. Their admirers mark them, identify them, promote them.

But in looking back, like the army I mentioned at the beginning of this section, we see certain outcomes as having been de-

termined by the Hand of God. We see that some of those of unshakable faith suffered both martyrdom and terror, but that their leaders led their cause to victory.

Not forever. Not for every generation, for it is part of the folly of mankind to reject many of the lessons and truths and examples of previous generations. But we are among those generations chosen by God to be tested. It is not for us to live and die in times of peace, of quiet tranquility, or in a land where Christianity is favored by the authorities. Quite the contrary.

Torture and thought control have reappeared in our time, and have planted seeds in our universities, our media, our political system, our government—and among our clergy. We face the same problems that confronted the early Reformers. We are subjected to the same elegant depreciation that made Erasmus rich and famous and left everyone bereft and unimproved. We see the same haughty powers of mighty governments and the same forces of repression rising on all sides. The same hatred of Calvinism and Protestantism; the same efforts to silence us. And in time, if these trends that are so powerful continue their rise here at home, we and our children will see the same slavery and silence that now darkens half the globe.

Who will rise to meet this challenge? Only the Christians, who stand for freedom and against tyranny. The Christian community was responsible for the rise of individual rights, of free speech and free worship, and representative government, of science and art and medicine and innovation. The Christian civilization, whose fruits, to this {371} day, as in centuries past, support and advance all the people in all the world, remains the hope of the world.

How then do we regain the truth? By defending, by expanding, and by supporting on all levels, intellectual, political, academic, artistic, professional, and personal, the tenets and the history and the glory of our faith.

The Ministry of Chalcedon

[Proverbs 29:18)]

Chalcedon (kal•SEE•don) is a Christian educational organization devoted exclusively to research, publishing, and cogent communication of a distinctly Christian scholarship to the world at large. It makes available a variety of services and programs, all geared to the needs of interested laymen who understand the propositions that Jesus Christ speaks to the mind as well as the heart, and that His claims extend beyond the narrow confines of the various institutional churches. We exist in order to support the efforts of all orthodox denominations and churches.

Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition: "Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man...." This formula challenges directly every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; Christ alone can announce that "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of true human freedom (Gal. 5:1).

Christians have generally given up two crucial features of theology that in the past led to the creation of what we know as Western civilization. They no longer have any real optimism concerning the possibility of an earthly victory of Christian principles and Christian institutions, and they have also abandoned the means of such a victory in external human affairs: a distinctly biblical concept of law. The testimony of the Bible and Western history should be clear: when God's people have been confident about the ultimate earthly success of their religion and committed socially to God's revealed system of external law, they have been victorious. When either aspect of their faith has declined, they have lost ground. Without optimism, they lose their zeal to exercise dominion over God's creation (Gen. 1:28); without revealed law, they are left without guidance and drift

along with the standards of their day.

Once Christians invented the university; now they retreat into little Bible colleges or sports factories. Once they built hospitals throughout Europe and America; now the civil governments have taken them over. Once Christians were inspired by "Onward, Christian Soldiers"; now they see themselves as "poor wayfaring strangers" with "joy, joy, joy down in their hearts" only on Sundays and perhaps Wednesday evenings. They are, in a word, pathetic. Unquestionably, they have become culturally impotent.

Chalcedon is committed to the idea of Christian reconstruction. It is premised on the belief that ideas have consequences. It takes seriously the words of Professor F.A. Hayek: "It may well be true that we as scholars tend to overestimate the influence which we can exercise on contemporary affairs. But I doubt whether it is possible to overestimate the influence which ideas have in the long run." If Christians are to reconquer lost ground in preparation for ultimate victory (Isa. 2, 65, 66), they must rediscover their intellectual heritage. They must come to grips with the Bible's warning and its promise: "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (Prov. 29:18). Chalcedon's resources are being used to remind Christians of this basic truth: what men believe makes a difference. Therefore, men should not believe lies, for it is the truth that sets them free (John 8:32).

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