
Austin Bible Church

Pastor's Ministry Workshop

Pastor Robert Bolender

A Syllabus of Studies in Hermeneutics

by Rollin Thomas Chafer

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Contents

Part 1	1
I Introduction	1
Part 2	4
II Historical Sketch	4
Part 3	9
II Historical Sketch (continued)	9
Part 4	11
III Some Axioms of General Hermeneutics	11
Part 5	15
IV The Relation of Logic to Interpretation	15
Part 6	30
IV The Relation of Logic to Interpretation (continued)	30
Part 7	37
V Four Prerequisites	37
VI Four General Rules of Interpretation	41
Part 8	43
VII Figurative Language	43
VIII Accommodation	47
IX Interpretation of Prophecy	48

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 1

Part 1

I Introduction

Biblical Hermeneutics receives scant attention in the modern theological curriculum. Even before the time of the virtual abandonment by liberal seminaries of the idea that the Scriptures are the authoritative source of Christian dogmatics, the study of Hermeneutics was relegated mostly to the department of Old Testament. At the same time, it too often degenerated into an arbitrary classification of favorite interpretations which were dictated by accepted creedal dicta, rather than by the application of the laws governing logical interpretative procedure. It seems certain that the thought that Hermeneutics as a science has to do with the mastery and the applicability of the *laws* governing interpretation was too often forgotten.

Terry does indeed draw a distinction between Hermeneutics as a *science* engaged with the study of the governing laws, on the one hand, and Hermeneutics as an *art* concerned with the concrete application of the laws, on the other hand;¹ but the latter seems to me to be but another description of exegetical praxis. In the closing words of his first chapter Terry senses this when he says: "For if ever the divinely appointed ministry of reconciliation accomplish the perfecting of the saints, and the building up of the body of Christ, so as to bring all to the attainment of the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God (Eph 4:12, 13), it must be done by a correct interpretation and efficient use of the word of God. The interpretation and application of that word must rest upon a sound and self-evidencing science of hermeneutics."²

Perhaps no widely quoted hermeneut has more consistently emphasized the essential fact that Biblical Hermeneutics is, first of all, a study of the *laws* which govern sound Biblical interpretation than the late M. Cellérier, Professor in the Academy of Geneva, Switzerland, whose *Manuel d'Hermeneutique Biblique* was in large part made available to American readers in a translation and revision by Elliott and Harsha, published in 1881. In the first four chapters of his work he reiterates and emphasizes this definition at the beginning of each section as though he were seeking to combat an erroneous conception of the science: "Hermeneutics is the science which furnishes the true principles of interpretation."

We must insist again that Hermeneutics is not a collection of favorite interpretations gleaned here and there from a bibliography of interpretative writings. A hermeneut is one who, through familiarity of the laws governing sound procedure in the interpretation of the Scriptures, is thereby enabled to test any and all interpretations of the Word of God presented to him. Apart from this thorough understanding of the governing laws he must be dependent upon the opinions of other men.

¹ Biblical Hermeneutics. p. 20.

² *Ibid*, p.22.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 2

The necessity of being guided by sound laws is sharply brought out by Lockhart in the second chapter of his *Principles of Interpretation*, wherein he lists fifteen axioms, one of which is here cited: "The true object of interpretation is to apprehend the exact thought of the author." On this Dr. Lockhart comments: "It is not the privilege of any interpreter to impose his own thought upon the words of an author, nor in any way to modify the author's meaning." The moment that one allows himself this privilege he ceases to be an interpreter and becomes a collaborator with the author. To essay this role with the Spirit Author of the Scriptures should give pause to a larger number of careless interpreters than is daily evident.

Several standard works on Hermeneutics describe the relative place this science occupies in Theological Encyclopedia and Methodology. One of the most concise statements is made by Cell  rier and is as follows:

"(a) The Christian divine, called to expound and interpret the Word of God, ought first to explain the history, the circumstances, and the form of the Bible. This is the first object of Introduction, or *Isagogics*. [This is often called the Higher Criticism, and the student should keep in mind that there is a vast field of constructive higher criticism as well as the destructive variety. The term, "higher criticism" should be used with qualifying adjectives].

"(b) He must, in the second place, determine, as nearly as possible, the true and original text; and endeavor to disengage it from the numerous variations with which eighteen centuries of citations and transcriptions have encumbered it. This is the object of the *Criticism of the Text*." [Often called the *Lower Criticism*].

"(c) Before attempting the explanation of the phrases and ideas of the Bible, a third test, and the most important of all, is necessary. The theologian should understand the principles, according to which they must be explained. The exposition of these principles receives the name of *Hermeneutics*."

"(d) After these three successive processes have been finished, the Biblical interpreter enters upon his work. He reads, he analyzes, he develops, he comments on the Holy Word, line after line. He no longer constructs a science; he practices an art-*Exegetics*: he accomplishes a task - *Exegesis*."³

Although the word *Exposition* is often used as a synonym for *Exegesis*, in popular usage it is more often used to represent the popular platform presentation of the results of exegetical study.

In the field of Biblical interpretation there are two principal methods of procedure:

- (1) that which functions inductively within the sphere of the Scripture testimony; and
- (2) that which approaches the Scriptures wholly or partly from without, and which is deductive in method.

³ Cell  rier. *Manuel d'Hermeneutique Biblique*. Elliott and Harsha tr. p. 1f.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 3

It was a favorite classroom saying of the late Dr. B. B. Warfield that “all theologies divide at one point - does God save men or do they save themselves?” As truly it may be said that all systems of Bible interpretation divide at one point-is the Bible a self-interpreting book or does it require a humanly contrived system of interpretation in order to be understood? In other words, does the Bible contain its own hermeneutical laws which are sufficient, and capable, when rightly understood and followed, of guiding the student to a correct interpretation of its own disclosures: or is it deficient in such interpretational provisions, and therefore dependent upon the resources of human reason to supply that lack?

Intelligently or unintelligently, Bible students in general follow the principles of one or the other of these alternative systems, either wholly or in part. It is a startling fact that many students who assert their belief that the Bible is revelation from God, divinely inspired, accept the latter alternative without realizing its logical implications. To hold that human reason-and how often the phrase occurs in connection with this or that interpretation, “it is not reasonable in the light of present-day knowledge”-is the final arbiter, even in moot questions, leads to definite experimental results in the student himself and eventually leads to the conclusion that it is admissible to accommodate particular Scripture passages to harmonize with extra-Biblical hypotheses.

Writing concerning the work of the students at the Harvard Medical College, Jerry McQuade said: “Psychologists classify men into two types-the type which accepts whatever is told to them as a predigested compendium of all that they should know, and never ask any further questions; hence quietly pass into oblivion, and the type, which feels the impulse of life and the thirst to ask why, wherefore, whither, how; hence etch deep on the tablet of time for the ages to come.”

There are two groups of theological students which may be classed under Mr. McQuade's first type. The first group comprises those who accept without question what they are taught by heterodox teachers. The members of this group, with few exceptions, become ministers of mere human righteousness, and therefore tools of Satan.

The other group represents those who, professing orthodoxy, also follow the line of least resistance and adopt without question interpretative teachings, furnished in predigested form, which may or may not have been formulated in accordance with sound laws of Biblical interpretation. Failing to gain a first-hand experience in the application of the fundamental principles of Biblical hermeneutics by which they may test the Scripturalness of all teachings, the members of this group become mere echoing mouthpieces of other men's theological and creedal opinions, a state which is intolerable to an honest student, and one which is destructive of self-respect, intellectual and spiritual.

In schools of theology, as in other technical institutions, here and there are found students who may be classified under Mr. McQuade's second type, diligently seeking the Biblical “why, wherefore, whither, how,” of every teaching, not content with the

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 4

rumination of predigested theological dicta. Bringing to their task believing hearts and a dependence upon the illumination of the Spirit Author, they truly prepare to "etch deep on the tablet of time." Moreover, as in the case of no other class of technicians their work is peculiarly preserved to shine not only during time but in eternity.

Biblical interpretation, in contrast to the systems dictated by human reason, is inextricably bound up with intelligent and acceptable Christian service. There is no appeal to human reason in Paul's word to Timothy: "The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (2 Tim 2:6, 7). It is indeed true that the Lord gives the understanding, but he imparts this richly to those who, with believing hearts, heed that further injunction to Timothy: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (v. 15).

Part 2

II. Historical Sketch

Brief historical outlines of the development of Biblical Hermeneutics are found in several of the standard texts on this science.⁴ These writers agree that Hermeneutics as a formulated science had no existence before the Reformation. Comparatively speaking, it is a newcomer in the family of subjects constituting Theological Encyclopedia and Methodology. However, principles claimed to have hermeneutical value, howbeit fraught with destructive elements, emerged in the third century and with accretions during the following centuries persist today.

Cellérier divides the historical development of Hermeneutics into eight (8) periods. As it is advantageous in this study to give consideration only to the governing principles of systems that have had a marked effect upon Biblical interpretation, details of some of these periods which did not seriously change the trend of the science will not receive more than cursory mention. It is of prime importance, however, to note the sources and following development of systems that have made permanent contributions, destructive as well as constructive, to methods which are defended and employed by their respective endorsers up to the present moment.

FIRST PERIOD. This may be disposed of in a few words. During the first two centuries of the Christian era "Hermeneutics did not exist, and could not exist." Several reasons contributed to this state. The church was harassed by persecutions, having little time for speculation in the realm of interpretative thought. "The Church of this era was, moreover, so near to the time of the preaching of the Apostles and of

⁴ Works to which I refer more frequently than other texts, namely, *Biblical Hermeneutics* by Terry, and *Manuel d' Hermeneutique* by Cellérier, trace the outline of this history. I am indebted to these comments, besides material on the subject in general ecclesiastical histories, for the factual matter in this section of the Syllabus. Responsibility for the interpretative comments on these historical facts is mine.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 5

the publication of their writings, that these were sufficiently perspicuous and fully explained by the oral traditions so carefully sought for at that time." A questionable system of interpretation is demanded only when there is a desire to avoid the application of the plain truth. On the other hand, a sound system of hermeneutics is essential to counteract such methods. The fact that an elaborate system of interpretation was not needed in the immediate post-Apostolic period is of important, nay determining, significance. It was an indication that Apostolic authority had not in the main been abandoned, although here and there departures from the truth were beginning to be manifested.

SECOND PERIOD. In the Patristic Age which followed, far-reaching departures from former beliefs were introduced. These changes were engendered by the rise of a scientific spirit, encouraged largely by philosophizing theologians of the Christian school at Alexandria, whose methods of interpretation had been profoundly influenced by the mode of allegorizing promulgated by Philo and the Jewish school.

Origen emerges as the most important figure of this period. A product of the Alexandrian school, he possessed an extraordinary ability for sustained mental labor. This industriousness coupled with a remarkable memory won for him a reputation for scholarship. Like many scholastics, however, he lacked the ability to think straight. His system of interpretation constantly exhibits the fact that he ignored fundamental laws of logic. He had been trained in a philosophy developed by the eclectic mode as taught by Clement, rector of the school, and the new Platonic system founded by Ammonius Saccus, his preceptor. Mosheim says: "He held that all things that exist, whether corporeal or void of gross matter, emanated eternally from God, the source of all things. This first principle of the new Platonic school, derived from Egyptian wisdom, was the basis or foundation of Origen's philosophy."⁵ Finding much in the literal statements of Scripture that was repugnant to his adopted philosophy, he introduced three principles of interpretation by which he attempted to harmonize the Bible to his preconceived ideas, always, it is needless to say, at the expense of the former. The very character of the principles themselves provided for this. These were:

(1) ***The divinity of the Bible.*** Because it is divine it cannot contain anything unworthy of God. This statement is innocent enough, and would meet with general agreement of believers in the Bible as the Word of God. He qualified this, however, by saying that the Bible taken in its plain literal sense contains much that is unworthy of God, much that is false and misleading. Therefore human reason, proceeding on the basis of philosophy, must be the judge as to what and what is not worthy of God in the Scriptures. What is thus found to be unworthy must be changed *by interpretation* to something consonant with what he considered to be worthy of God. Thus the divine authority, governing the revelation as transmitted through the sacred writers, was nullified in the passages thus revised.

⁵ Historical Commentaries on the State of Christianity. Tr. James Murdock. Vol. II., p. 150.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 6

(2) *Multiple sense of the Bible.* To allow for ample latitude in carrying out his desire to bring the Scriptures into harmony with his philosophy, Origen adopted the doctrine of the double sense in Scripture, passed on to him by Clement from the teaching formerly developed by the Pharisees and Essenes. To this doctrine he committed himself unreservedly, elaborating it into a system which included four categories, viz.: ”*grammatical, moral, analogical or mystical, and allegorical.*”

Under a method which allowed the application of these various meanings, it is at once apparent that a Scripture might be made to mean almost anything but the true intent of the sacred author. To preserve the fundamentals of his philosophy at any cost, he threw logic to the winds and distorted plain statements of revelation to fit his notions as to what is worthy of God. On this Cell erier comments as follows: “The principle of multiple sense, has little respect for the Scripture, inasmuch as it delivers them over to the imagination and caprice of the interpreter, that is, to the fancies and whims, which they ought to control.”

The great influence of Origen’s writings resulted in widespread acceptance of this method which was modified and in some respects amplified during the succeeding centuries. The disastrous effects resulting from its use will be pointed out more fully in a later section of the Syllabus. Suffice it to say at this point that there are many theologians claiming orthodoxy today who defend the general principles, here outlined, in the interest of a philosophizing theology which embodies an unscriptural world view and curtailments of other vital and legitimate elements of the theology of the Scriptures.

(3) *The Mystic Force of the Bible.* Another principle which survived only amongst extremists, was that the Bible, as a book, possessed a mystical force which exerted an influence upon those who read it whether they understood what they read or not. This idea may be disposed of with two quotations, viz.: “This was a pious, but dangerous superstition” (Cell erier); “It is pious nonsense” (Scofield).

Although attempts to formulate rules of interpretation did not result in anything approaching a true system of hermeneutical laws, the destructive method of allegorizing plain statements of Scripture secured a strong foothold which has never been entirely dislodged from the formal theologies of the various Christian faiths. To whatever extent it has been employed it has been a blight upon hermeneutical progress and a serious hindrance to the understanding of the divine revelation.

In order to put his system into practical use Origen formulated seven (7) rules which resulted in replacing the authority of the Word of God with human judgment. Of the seven rules the first two only will be cited here:

Rule I. When the words of any passage in either Testament afford a good sense, one worthy of God, useful to men, and accordant with truth and sound reason,- this must be considered a sure sign that the passage is to be taken in its literal and proper sense. But whenever anything absurd, false, contrary to sound reason,

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 7

useless, or unworthy of God, will follow from a literal interpretation, then that interpretation is to be abandoned, and only moral and mystical senses are to be sought for.” ”

Rule II. Consequently, that portion of sacred history, both in the Old Testament and the New, which narrates things probable, consonant to reason, commendable, honest, and useful, must be supposed to state facts, and of course must be understood literally. But that portion of sacred history which states actions or events that are either false, or absurd, or unbecoming of God and holy men, or useless or puerile, must be divested of all literal meaning, and be applied to moral and mystical things in both the spiritual worlds.”⁶

These are high-sounding words which have misled the unthinking all down the centuries since they were penned. The fallacy underlying these propositions is that the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the divine disclosures is to be judged by the finite mind. Much of the plain and didactic teaching of the Scriptures is repugnant to man, just as these were repugnant to Origen's philosophy. Under this dangerous authority of reason changes in the plain intent of the Scriptures came in like a flood, originated and fostered by Origen and his followers. It is one thing to properly interpret a Scripture allegory. It is quite another thing to allegorize a plain “Thus saith the Lord,” violating thereby all the laws governing the transmission of thought.

During the next century after the introduction of this system, Augustine, adopting the allegorizing method, added to the “practice of interpretation” (no real science of hermeneutics yet existed) three elements, namely:

- (1) *”The qualifications necessary to the interpreter;*
- (2) *the analogy of faith;* and
- (3) *the authority of tradition.”*

These three propositions at first made slow progress. The first and second come up for fuller discussion in the later divisions of the study. The latter became one of the dominating principles in the church of the following period.

THIRD PERIOD. The Middle Ages. The Church developed the errors introduced in the former period. The authority of an extra-Biblical tradition became strongly entrenched. Under this authority all the abuses in the Church of the times, the adoption of dogmas of pagan origin, and other perversions of Christianity were justified. There could be no progress toward a true hermeneutical science in this age.

FOURTH PERIOD. The Reformation. This movement “was destined to exercise and did exercise, an immense influence on Hermeneutics.” In fact, it is in this period that a true science of hermeneutical principles had its beginning. Three new principles were generally accepted, namely:

⁶ Mosheim. *Historical Commentaries on the State of Christianity*. Tr. James Murdock, pp. 181,182, Vol. II.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 8

(1) *Theopneusty*. Inspiration of the Scripture “taken in its absolute sense.” But Bannerman wrote: “Within the pale of the Protestant Church there soon emerged a difference of opinion, which has subsisted with growing divergence ever since. The one principle of the singular and supreme authority of Scripture found its natural expression in the views of Calvin and his followers in the Reformed Churches, with respect to inspiration.”⁷ The return to the authority of the Scriptures opened the way for the recognition that the Bible is a self-interpreting book. It opened the way for the development of the principles which resulted from the examination of the Scriptures themselves.

(2) *The Analogy of Faith*. “This principle, according as it is explained and applied, is a fruitful source of error, or of truth. It is very much like reposing on a treacherous wheel, which is ready to run either way. Nevertheless it merits all confidence, so long as we take for the rule of faith the uniform teaching of Scripture. But if, on the contrary, we take the faith of the Church or official doctrinal symbols for the rule of faith, and apply it in theory, or in fact, to the interpretation of the Scriptures, we are guilty of the fallacies of *petitio principii* and of reasoning in a circle. This would be the death of all examination, and of all Hermeneutics, and of all exegesis. Undisguised Popery could not be worse.”⁸

Although Augustine first mentions this principle there could be no progress in its use until the church had thrown off the shackles of traditionalism. “With the Reformation of the sixteenth Century the mind of Germany and of other European states broke away from the ignorance and superstition of the Middle Ages, the Holy Scriptures were appealed to as the written revelation of God, containing all things necessary to salvation, and the doctrine of the justification by faith was magnified against priestly absolution and the saving meritoriousness of works.”⁹

This freedom to study the Scriptures inductively, resulting in the formularies which became crystallized as controversy arose, has not survived to any such extent as the truth demands.

Amongst a great many churchmen there has been the tendency to keep within the bounds of the Reformation creeds as constituting the analogy of faith by which the Scriptures are to be interpreted, instead of being conformed to the whole tenor of Scripture teaching. In view of this it needs to be said that no short credal statement does or can exhaust the wealth of Scripture truth, on the one hand, nor does any group of exegetes hold a mortgage on what measure of truth is embedded in the creeds, on the other hand.

The Spirit-led believer has the God-bestowed freedom, within the confines of revealed truth, to enter every room of the revelatory structure and make himself at

⁷ Quoted by Cell erier from *Bannerman on Inspiration*, p. 135.

⁸ Cell erier. *Man. d' Her.* p. 17.

⁹ Terry. *Bib. Her.* p. 47.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 9

home in all the counsel of God. To deny him this on the grounds of a so-called Protestant traditionalism is no better in principle than the withholding of the right under the Roman Church traditionalism. Such is the perversity of human nature, however, that this denial of the right of such freedom is frequently voiced by those who are jealous for the limitations of the creeds.

In connection with the vital challenge of Scripture, a discerning writer has said: "For orthodoxy, let us observe, is not my 'doxy' or the other fellow's 'doxy.' It is *what it is, viz.: sound or right teaching according to the Scriptures* and inspiration, the guarantee of orthodoxy, like a flaming sword, turns every way on an approach to Scripture. Those who attack the Bible, if they had vision enough to perceive it, are *always bound* to fail in carrying the assault. This (from a philosophical standpoint) explains why the modernist so often takes refuge in affixing stupid and unmeaning labels on those who challenge him to show that the claims of Scriptures are not worthy of the highest credence."¹⁰

This also precisely explains why the creedal limitationist attaches stupid labels on those who do not follow the traditionalism which had its beginning in the Patristic age and insist on going back to take a stand with the Apostles. The frequently repeated label is, one is devoid of "scholarship" if one does not *accept* this traditionalism. One may *know* all the quirks and turns of it, but to take one's stand instead with the source of Truth, is unscholarly.

(3) *The Comparison of Scripture with Scripture.* "The Reformation, while rendering Hermeneutics more intellectual, more logical, and more Biblical, enabled interpreters to derive more benefit, than their predecessors had done, from the Bible itself, by the method of comparing its different portions. Suffice it to remark that this new tendency, to compare Scripture with Scripture, did more than anything else to prepare a conscientious and logical exegesis, and began the work of placing Hermeneutics upon its true foundation."¹¹ This comparative study of the Scriptures is included as a fundamental principle of Biblical interpretation by all standard works on Hermeneutics. An elaboration of it will be made in a later section, entitled, "Four Fundamental Rules of Interpretation."

Part 3

II Historical Sketch (continued)

Following the Reformation several marked movements took place, none of which presented entirely new principles of interpretation. Rather, they were revivals of ideas long held by various leaders, some of the views dating back to the first century and others originating in the third century or thereafter. These movements included the prominence in the seventeenth century of the demands of the Socinians that

¹⁰ Amos. *The Vital Challenge of Biblical Certitude*. p. XIX.

¹¹ Cell  rier. *Man. d' Her.* p. 17.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 10

Revelation be subject to reason, and the demands, at the other extreme, of the Quakers who would subject “the written Word to the *Inner Word*, that is, to individual revelation.”

In the early part of the eighteenth century three schools of different principles emerged:

(a) **The Logical School**, founded by two Genevese, Le Clerc and Turretini, who succeeded the Arminians. “This school broke the despotism of the allegorizing school, but through its cold logic lost the spiritual truths of the Bible.”

(b) **The Pietistic School**, founded by Spencer, which was a reaction from the former. Although accused of mysticism, Spencer opposed the Quakers thus: “Our feelings are not the norm of truth, but divine truth is the norm of our feelings. This rule of truth exists in the Divine Word *apart from ourselves.*” (

c) **The Naturalistic School** of the German Naturalists, a destructive reaction.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries four systems, the underlying principles of which are still appealed to, should be noted more particularly, namely:

(1) **The Postmillennial System**, introduced by Daniel Whitby, an English Arminian theologian who died in 1726. Although he published his system admittedly as a “new hypothesis,” he employed principles which the savants of the Alexandrian school followed as early as the third century. It became the accepted interpretation in the majority of the theological schools of Christendom, and held the first place for many years. More recently it has been replaced by the *Amillennial System* which differs in certain respects and in other features is similar in interpretation. A comparison of these systems will not be presented in this brief historical sketch.

(2) **The Grammatical School** founded by Ernesti. He based sound interpretation on the philological study of the text. Although productive of valuable results it failed in general exposition of Scripture. It is true that sound interpretation must begin with the grammatical sense of the text, and this does indeed hold first place in the rules for interpretation, nevertheless it is possible to trot all day in a grammatical half-bushel and fail to get the great sweep of the meaning of the broad context. Hence there are other rules, presented in a later section, which safeguard against an overemphasis of grammatical considerations.

(3) **The Historical School**, founded by Semler, “occupied itself principally, and too much, with exposition,” interpreted by “the facts, usages, and prejudices of the times.” “Semler was the real father of German rationalism. This school bore its fruits. It filled Germany with a crowd of theologians, without piety, without faith, and without life, with now and then original thinkers and keen critics, distinguished only by the rashness and fickleness of their theories, and by the superficial and vain levity of the hypotheses which they advanced with jealous rivalry. To sum up in a few words, the grammatical school was judicious, methodical, enlightened; but it was insufficient; to complete it other methods and

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 11

other principles were necessary. The historical school would have been useful if it had been inspired by a spirit of sound criticism and of pious prudence, and, in the exercise of this spirit, been contented with the modest character of an auxiliary, instead of aspiring to supremacy.”¹²

(4) *The Premillennial System.* Although there are writers who, either being unfamiliar with the facts of Church history or willing to ignore these facts, claim extreme modernity for the Premillennial faith, the truth is that the chiliasm of the Apostles and the First Century Church is identical in all its major features to the Premillennial system held by orthodox Christians today. Throughout the history of the Christian Church God has had His witnesses to this truth. During periods of great spiritual declension this body of Scripture truth has been kept alive by a few only. With every revival of the spiritual emphasis in life and Bible study by Christian people, this faith has come to the fore, thus evidencing the blessing of God upon the testimony whenever it has recurred.

The bulk of the literature on Hermeneutics has been produced during the last century. In many of the works the laws governing interpretation have been sound, but the application of the laws have not always illustrated the principles inherent in the laws themselves. This inconsistency is often noticeable in connection with points on which the author is prejudiced in favor of a preconceived or adopted interpretation. That this common fault is not in harmony with sound Hermeneutics will be amply demonstrated in future sections of our study. We shall next consider some of the fundamental axioms on which sound Hermeneutics rest.

Part 4

III Some Axioms of General Hermeneutics

An axiom is a self-evident truth. Although this is the primary definition of the lexicographers, it cannot be said that all fundamental principles of the various sciences are at once self-evident, and therefore at first sight axiomatic in character. Some essential principles become clearly axiomatic to the student only after an understanding of the background and general field in which the principle is operative has been gained. This is generally true of various sciences, therefore we may expect to find it true also in the science of Biblical interpretation; for here, moreover, an element intrudes itself which is not found in any other science. The natural man cannot see the spiritual things of the divine revelation. The principles which all regenerate men readily recognize as the axioms of the faith, unbelievers are unable to understand or accept.

The axioms related to language as a medium for the expression of thought, secular and sacred, are so simple it seems to the student a waste of time to consider them; and yet, simple and self-evident as they are, they are so frequently violated or disregarded

¹² M. Cellerier, *Man. d' Her.* tr. p. 26.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 12

by scholars that heed must be given to them as the foundations of hermeneutics are laid.

Practically all writers on hermeneutics now and then refer to the simple and fundamental principles governing the use of language without formally announcing them as axioms. Dr. Clinton Lockhart, however, in his *Principles of Interpretation* devotes a chapter to axioms, listing fifteen. I have selected seven of these as representative and on which some comments and quotations may be made. The order followed by the author is changed to suit this condensed treatment.

Axiom 1. *The true object of speech is the impartation of thought.*

This lays "the foundation of all hermeneutics." The objective true is important; for in the face of the fact that much speech is innocent of thought it still remains true that the impartation of thought is the true object of speech. Many believe that the Book of Revelation cannot be understood, yet the Apostle used understandable language and familiar Biblical symbols to convey definite thoughts which may be understood in their true meaning under right methods of study. The habit of many interpreters of setting aside what the author really says, replacing it with what they want him to say and what he does not say, must be ruled out as a legitimate procedure in Hermeneutics.

Axiom 2. *Language is a reliable medium of communication.*

This axiom calls for the presupposition that the language employed be grammatically correct, clear in statement, accurately expressing the thought to be communicated to others. If these precautions are complied with, the writer has a right to expect that his thought committed to writing will be understood as he intends to have it understood. The unethical practice by some interpreters of reading into the author's words foreign meanings, and thus perverting the sense as the writer communicated it, is all too common with Biblical interpreters. I remember an article by a theologian in which he gave it as his opinion that the word *new* should be interpolated before the word *Jerusalem* throughout the Old Testament text because of his aversion to the prophecies concerning the literal City of Jerusalem, located in the earthly Holy Land, at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea which occupies a definite area of the surface of this literal earth on which the writers were sojourning. The honest interpreter will respect the writer's confidence in the language he uses to express his thought. Without such confidence legal papers would not stand in court, and no will and testament would have validity. Further, it would not be possible for God to give through the sacred writers an accurate revelation of His mind and heart concerning His eternal purposes and plan for His creatures.

Axiom 3. *Usage determines the meaning of words.*

Students of the history of the growth of any language have no difficulty in accepting this axiom. Through usage words may in time change radically in meaning or become

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 13

obsolete. On the subject of word usage in the New Testament Cellérier says,¹³ “The more perfect revelation of God’s will, as given in the New Testament, necessitated a more perfect usage of language. The thought and affections of men were to be drawn into new channels, hence it was necessary for language to follow wherever thought and affection led. Thus resulted the creating of new words, or, more frequently, the giving of new significations to the words then in usage. This powerful influence made itself felt throughout the New Testament and modified, still more, the language of the Greek Fathers.” He lists, for example, fifty-two Greek words which were invested with special meaning through usage. It is quite necessary that the interpreter take into account meanings which grow out of special as well as common usage.

Axiom 4. The function of a word depends on its association with other words.

Perhaps no axiom related to language is more important for the interpreter than this one. Lockhart cites the word *top*, indicating eight distinct meanings, each governed by the use of other words in association with it. No other fundamental principle related to hermeneutics is more often violated than this one by ignoring the qualifying words chosen by the Holy Spirit to distinguish the use of a word in varying contexts. The interpreter who argues that the word “gospel” means “good news” and therefore wherever the word occurs it means one and the same thing regardless of the qualifying words (kingdom, grace, everlasting, etc.) would be discredited as a literary interpreter of Shakespeare should he employ the same method. His standing as a literary critic would be seriously lowered. Are the secular classics worthy to be treated more seriously than the inspired Word of God? To fail under this axiom to make distinctions where the qualifying words in the context demand such distinctions is comparable to claiming that the word “top” always means the same thing, whether the context refers to the *top* of the house or a toy spinning on the sidewalk.

Axiom 5. The true object of interpretation is to apprehend the exact thought of the author.

After considering the foregoing axioms related to language itself it is important to consider the object of the interpretation of thoughts expressed by language. If language is a reliable medium of thought and men have conscientiously committed their thoughts to language, it should be the first care of the interpreter to learn the exact thought of the writings under examination. The moment the interpreter injects his own thoughts in the place of those expressed by an author, he ceases to be an interpreter and becomes a collaborator. If this intrusion is forced upon a secular writer without his consent a serious infringement of the ethics of writing occurs. When one essays this role with the Spirit Author of the Word of God something far worse than the violation of mere ethics is involved. On this axiom Lockhart comments as follows: “The interpreter is not responsible for the thought, whether it be true or false, consistent or inconsistent, good or bad doctrine. His only province is to apprehend the

¹³ *Man. d’Her.* tr. p. 85.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 14

precise thought imparted by the author's words, and leave the author responsible for the character of his thought."

Axiom 6. *Truth must accord with truth; and statements of truth apparently discrepant can be harmonized if the facts are known.*

Seeming discrepancies in all classes of true evidence may be harmonized if the pertinent facts are made known. It is proven by experience in courts of law, general investigations, and in solving apparent discrepancies in the Bible.

Axiom 7. *An assertion of truth necessarily excludes that to which it is essentially opposed and no more.*

On this Lockhart says: "A proposition purporting to set forth a truth must not be supposed to exclude everything as false that it does not contain; but it must exclude everything that is in opposition to it. For example, when Jesus says, 'The truth shall make you free' (John 8:32), he does not exclude his own statement, 'If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed' (v. 36). The latter does not oppose the former. The truth and the Son are not mutually exclusive."

To those selections from Lockhart's chapter¹⁴ on the axioms of Hermeneutics the following from Cellèrier is also added:

Axiom 8. *One cannot interpret without understanding that which he interprets.*

This is a self-evident truth. Now, to understand the thought of another is so to conceive it in one's own mind as to be able to reproduce it to others *without change or modification*" (italics mine).

The attentive reader cannot escape certain conclusions which must be adopted if the truth of these axioms is accepted. Not only is the language of a properly worded and constructed statement a reliable means of communicating thought, and men may confidently commit their thoughts to such language, but the interpreter has no right to change that meaning by any method of interpretation which changes the plain intent of the writer. The "spiritualizing" method of Bible interpretation not only seeks to introduce a meaning in the text which the plain intent of the writer does not warrant, but the system is defended on that very ground. The strong implication is that the modern interpreter knows the mind of God more fully than the inspired writers did. This is hardly defensible, even on the grounds of common sense and logic.

¹⁴ Clinton Lockhart, Ph.D., LL.D., *Principles of Interpretation*. p. 18ff.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 15

Part 5

IV The Relation of Logic to Interpretation¹⁵

Accepting the prerequisite fundamental facts enumerated in the preceding sections as a basis upon which general interpretational study must advance, the next step should be the choice of the right method of logical procedure, and to avoid ultimate confusion this must be consistently adhered to. Some writers place before all else the necessity of attention to grammatical construction, idiomatic expression and other textual consideration. Although these very important matters should have close attention in their proper order, it remains a fact that one may trot all day in a grammatical half-bushel and not come within clear sight of the great themes of the Bible and their logical development.

The Bible is not a handbook of Logic. It is not a compendium of Natural Science. Its own themes, however, are developed in accordance with the principles of logic and in harmony with classification of proved facts. The logic of the sacred writers has been made a subject of special attack by radical critics, one such writer voicing the sentiment of the many in the thought that Paul was too logical, that his logic is so inexorable that modern thinkers are forced to reject his conclusions. It is a sad commentary on certain phases of so-called orthodox theologies that this sentiment, now boldly voiced by spiritual outlanders, exhibits the evidence of its influence in various theological formulas.

Sadder still is the fact that many hold these dicta to be normative as a standard by which the Word of God itself should be interpreted. In whatsoever measure this idea is allowed to influence the student's thinking it weakens to that degree faith in the fundamental fact of the Spirit's authorship of the Scriptures. To attack the logic of the sacred writers is to attack the logic of God. This is the necessary conclusion if the Biblical doctrines of revelation and inspiration are accepted.

In revealing God's thought the Holy Spirit not only employs the bald and dogmatic statement of fact which must be accepted without argumentative proof (Example, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"); but also He makes use of the reasoning process, amplifying the bald statement of truth by comprehensible proof and illustration (Example, in 1 John 4:8 the dogmatic statement, "God is love," is not revealed as a bolt of sheer truth flashed from heaven to dazzle the human mind, but the gracious proofs are given in the context, as also in such a passage as John 3:16, cf. 1 John 3:16, wherein the argument that the giving of the Father's only begotten Son proves His *so* great love and through the terminology of family relationship brings it within the comprehensibility of the simplest mind).

Not only is it revealed that God deigns to reason with man in specific instances (Example, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord," Isa 1:18), but

¹⁵ The writer is indebted to the following authors of works on Logic for definitional matter quoted in this section: Gregory, Schuyler, Hamilton, Ueberweg and Mill.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 16

much of the Scripture is cast in the form of argumentative reasoning. Dr. A. B. Winchester emphasizes in a lecture the fact that the language of Paul “is not the language of the poet, the historian or the romancer, but the language of the logician.”

Among the accepted ideas which are included in definitions of applied logic the following concise formula meets the requirements of this discussion, namely, *Logic is the science of the principles which govern correct thinking and sound reasoning.* If the doctrine of the omniscience of God is accepted, if the revelation given to Isaiah is believed, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts,” if God’s thoughts are correct and His reasoning perfect, His revelation expressed in human language must be logical. Although this may seem to be truistic and its statement superfluous, it is vitally related to the subject of Biblical interpretation.

If it be granted that the Spirit Author expressed divine thought in accordance with the laws governing human language, correct thinking and sound reasoning-and no other conclusion is possible to one who accepts the Bible as revelation inspired by the omniscient Spirit-it stands to reason that any interpretation which does not follow these same laws will be subversive and misleading.

An exhaustive treatment of logic is neither possible in this work nor is it necessary, the whole discussion being confined to certain fundamental principles of interpretation. The discussion of this section, therefore, will be confined to an outline of the fundamental principles, postulates and forms of logical process which are applicable to the study of the Scriptures.¹⁶

Logicians reduce the laws of logic to four fundamental principles:

(1) “The Law of Identity, or Affirmation. *Everything is identical with itself, or is what it is, and we may affirm this of it.*” This is “at the basis of all consistent affirmative thinking.” The Scriptures affirm that God is. Related to faith the word is, “for he that cometh to God must believe that he is” (Heb 11:6). They consistently identify Him with himself as apart from, above and over all creation. The Bible affirms that sin is, and that it is what it is-sin. To deny this fact results in illogical and absurd conclusions (Example, the vagaries of Christian Science.)

(2) “The Law of Contradiction, or Negation, or as Hamilton terms it, Non-contradiction, may be stated as follows: *Everything is not what it is not, and we may affirm this of it.*” The Scriptures never confuse opposites. Law and grace are antipodal. A thing can not be what it is not, and Paul applies this Law in the words, “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Rom 11:6). *”The Law of Contradiction lies at the basis of all distinction in thought.”*

¹⁶ A thorough course in Logic is earnestly urged as a prerequisite to the study of Hermeneutics. At the Dallas Theological Seminary it is a required prerequisite.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 17

(3) **“The Law of Excluded Middle, or Exclusion,** may be stated as follows: Of two contradictories one must be true and the other false. If one is affirmed, the other is thereby denied.” Predictive prophecy is a component of the divine revelation, or it is not. If by the Law of Identity it is true that the Scriptures contain predictive prophecy, then, by the Law of Exclusion, the proposition that they do not contain it is false.

(4) **“The Law of Reason and Consequent, or Sufficient Reason.**-The Law is stated as follows: All continuous thought must be rationally connected. The Law has been formulated: Infer nothing without a ground or reason. The starting-point in continuous thinking is the affirmation of some knowledge by which the mind is necessitated to affirm or posit something else.” Thus the *“logical reason”* is followed by the *“logical consequent,”* and the relation between them is the *“logical connection”* or *“consequence.”* This involves the relations of *“cause to effect,” “effect to cause;” “whole to part,” “part to whole,”* etc. Hamilton points out that this axiom takes both a positive and negative form. When a reason exists there must be a consequent, and *vice versa*; where no reason exists there can be no consequent, and *vice versa*. This law is in evidence throughout the Scriptures. The contexts governed by Paul’s “wherefores” and “therefores” may be cited especially.

Two fundamental postulates of logic should be noted:

The First Postulate.-*There is such a thing as truth which can be ascertained, and on which all minds, acting in accordance with the laws of thought, must agree.*

This is true of truth which comes within the purview of the natural mind. All minds following the laws of correct mentation must arrive at the result, 4, when 2 and 2 are added. The Scriptures, on the other hand, disclose divine truth which is not perceivable by natural men. The Lord said to Pilate, “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?” All natural men share this perplexity of the Roman procurator, for none can perceive God’s revealed truth until regenerated and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5, 6; 1 Cor 2:14).

At this point, however, the dictum of Dr. Wright should be called to mind: “The written word or God, like the Word which became flesh, must be human in its manward aspect; for the written word is divine thought manifest in human language as Christ was God manifest in human flesh. As the compound personality of Christ was conditioned by the flesh, so the compound character of a written revelation is conditioned by the nature of language.” Although it is true that only the children of God are divinely enabled to perceive His truth, it remains a fact that the ascertainment of a comprehensive and correlated knowledge of revelation is dependent upon adherence to the laws governing logical thought. Intelligent “searching of the Scriptures” predicates a logical procedure on the part

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 18

of the student because the Scriptures themselves are expressed in conformity with the laws governing logical thought.

Many sincere Christians are befogged in their understanding of great portions of God's truth because they have accepted illogical and misleading interpretations instead of the logical conclusions of the Bible's own testimony.

The Second Postulate.-This, as stated by Hamilton, is, 'to be allowed to state explicitly in language all that is implicitly contained in thought.'

Logic deals ultimately with thought, and it has to do with language only as expressing thought. It is, therefore, proper to ask, in connection with any term, proposition, or argument, 'What is the thought in this?' or, in other words, 'What is the full and exact meaning of this?' and to state in full this meaning." The province of Bible interpretation is to get at the meaning of the divine thought as expressed in the human language chosen by the Holy Spirit.

This brings us to a consideration of the forms of logical process a general understanding of the principles of which is necessary to intelligent judgment of current theological interpretations of Scripture. There are two fundamental forms of logical procedure, namely, Induction and Deduction. There is another form which is reducible to a combination of these two, namely Inference by Analogy.

1. Induction

"Logical Induction (we are not here concerned with Mathematical Induction) is the process of reasoning from all the parts to the whole." "The product of Inductive Reasoning is a Generalization." Two rules must be observed:

- (1) "Observe, analyze, and classify the facts to be generalized and explained, in order to ascertain their reality and their various elements and relations."
- (2) "Correctly interpret the facts" in order that a true basis for the generalization may be found.

A Perfect Induction takes place "when, by a perfect enumeration of all individuals or particulars, the whole sphere of the universal is exhausted," and an Imperfect Induction "includes the cases in which the universal is reached by inference, without the complete enumeration of objects."

There are two fallacies to guard against in the inductive form:

- (1) The first "may result from *careless and incomplete observation of facts*, and may then be called the Fallacy of Insufficient Observation."
- 2) "The false generalization may also result from the hasty assumption of something as the cause which is not the cause."

These two fallacies bulk large in the writings of evolutionists. On the other hand, scientists of first rank who have taken all of the particulars into account, and who have faithfully avoided assumption that anything is a fact until it is proven to be a fact, are united in their testimony that the theories of evolution have not yet been

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 19

proved to be facts. This testimony, however, does not reach the general public effectively because the popular channels of information are largely under the control of that class of disseminators of materialistic teachings who lecture dogmatically on these themes to callow youth in the classroom or scribble their indiscriminate and unfounded assumptions to that larger audience represented by readers of the Sunday Newspaper Supplement. In like manner these fallacies underlie all heretical offshoots from Biblical Christianity for the departures of which a Scripture basis is claimed.

The Bible is a collection of writings certified by the Holy Spirit to be God's Word. It is a documentary evidence of the divine thought. Although here and there short summaries of important doctrines are found, complete statements of thematic teachings seldom occur in a single passage. Rather, the general principle of the revelatory method is the progressive development of the Bible themes, partial statements of them being scattered through several, or in some instances many, of the writings.

This being true, the *inductive method* of the thematic study of the Scriptures is of first importance, for Scripturally defensible thematic generalizations result only from perfect, or near perfect, induction, that is to say, "when, by a perfect enumeration of all individuals or particulars, the whole sphere of the universal is exhausted." In this connection, it should be noted that many students arrive at a correct generalization without a complete induction, faith carrying them over many neglected particulars which are necessary, nevertheless, to sustain a logical conclusion. Such students too often rely on the conclusions of others and are, therefore, even when holding right conclusions, poorly equipped to support their position with Scripture proofs.

Before passing on to a consideration of the deductive form of logical process as applied to the study of the Scriptures, an example of the inductive method will be cited. Many of the accepted generalizations of Protestant theology were formulated from an inductive study of the respective themes as revealed in the Bible, and upon these orthodox Christians generally agree. On the other hand, other generalizations were formulated from an unwarranted application of the deductive method which will be examined in the section under Deduction. The inclusion of these statements which were not formulated through the inductive process has been the cause of divisions amongst Christians with continued controversy and disagreement.

An Example of the Inductive Method: A Study of the Doctrine of the Resurrections.

Among other similar problems, every Bible student is confronted with the question: Is the theological dictum that there will be only one and all-inclusive resurrection of the bodies of the saved and unsaved of mankind immediately preceding the ushering in of the new heavens and new earth Biblically correct, or is the doctrine of two resurrections separated by a period of time the teaching of the New Testament? It will be recognized at once by a student whose chief concern is to learn what the Spirit has revealed on the subject that an unassailable generalization from the viewpoint of the New Testament revelation can only be arrived at by a complete enumeration of the particulars of the theme which exhaust the sphere of its universal.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 20

Applying the first rule of this procedure, all the passages containing the particulars and facts to be generalized or explained must be collated, observed, analyzed and classified. Only after this has been done faithfully is it possible to proceed to the second rule, namely, correctly interpret the facts thus analyzed and classified in order that a true generalization may be formulated.

The following three general rules under observation should be noted:

- (1) Observe all the essential facts, parts, or properties in any case.
- (2) Admit no fact, part, or property that does not belong to the case in hand.
- (3) Avoid all delusive mixtures of inference with the facts of observation.

The particulars of the example are as follows:

First Particular

John 5:24-29

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The [an] hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear [shall have heard] shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.

28 Marvel not at this, for the [an] hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice.

29 And shall come forth; they that have done [ποιήσαντες, followed, were devoted to, practiced] good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done [πράξαντες, did] evil, unto the resurrection of damnation”

The central thought in this passage is the authority given to the Son by the Father in the issues of life and death, but these issues are linked with two bodily resurrections—one unto life eternal and the other unto condemning judgment. The Lord first states the conditions which must be met by men to secure eternal life (v. 24).

He then predicts the bestowal of life to all that hear His voice in “an hour” which not only existed as He spoke but which as the then “coming” hour of grace is still in extension (v. 25), for the issues of life are given to the Son of the Father, and authority to execute judgment to the incarnate Word—the Son of man (vs. 26, 27).

This is followed by the prediction of another “hour” in which those that have previously heard His voice and have received life shall then be clothed with their

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 21

immortal bodies, while those that have been deaf to His voice, and therefore have not passed "from death unto life" but in death have passed from death unto death, are raised unto judgment.

The one point to determine is, does this first New Testament passage in which two futures resurrections are mentioned allow without contradiction for the further development of the doctrine of two resurrections separated by a period of time? The point hangs on the Lord's use of the word "hour."

There can be no question that the words, "an hour is coming, and now is," indicate a long period of time. It can be no other than that extended period of time during which men have the opportunity to hear His Word and receive that Life the possession of which alone makes possible that practice of good which is pleasing to God and the final concomitant of which is the immortal body. It is, therefore, in perfect harmony with the passage to consider the resurrection "hour" also as an extended period of time.

An observable rule of revelation is that the passage which contains the beginnings of a doctrine is so stated that it does not contradict the later and fuller revelations on the subject (Example, the words, "God" and "Heaven," in the first verse of the Bible are both in the plural number, thus allowing for the later revelations that all three members of the Godhead took part in creation and that three heavens are distinguished in the Scriptures).

It is entirely admissible to suppose, until either confirmed or disproved by other Scriptures, that one resurrection occurs at the beginning and is continued during the early part of an extended period of time and that the other takes place at the end of the same period of time. If the "hour" during which eternal life is bestowed has already lasted nearly two millenniums, it is entirely permissible to suppose that the resurrection "hour" may include one millennium between the close of the first resurrection and the occurrence of the second resurrection. At this early point of the observation, however, this permissible supposition must be reserved as an hypothesis to be verified later.

The first particular to be noted, then, is that this New Testament passage in which mention of two resurrections occurs allows, without contradiction of anything in the passage, for their separation in point of time, based upon the extensiveness of the word "hour" as used by the Lord in connection with the sharp contrast between the subjects of the resurrections and their following states.

Second Particular

I Thess. 4:13-17

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:13, 14).

22 For as in Adam all die, even in Christ shall all be made alive.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 22

23 But every man in his own order. Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor 15:22, 23).

13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent [precede] them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord"

Phil. 3:10,11

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death:

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of [ἐξανάστασιν, resurrection out of] the dead"

Each of these four passages contains a restrictive phrase which precludes the idea that a simultaneous resurrection of the bodies of the believing and unbelieving dead shall take place. Saints are to be "recompensed at the resurrection of the just"; "they that are Christ's" are to be given their resurrection bodies "at his coming"; when the Lord descends with a shout "the dead in Christ" shall be raised and shall precede the translation of the then living believers; while Paul writes not of attaining unto *mere* resurrection but the "out-from-among-the-dead" resurrection. In these first three passages the restrictive element is clearly evident in the English translation and needs no further comment.

That Paul has in mind, in the Philippians passage, that resurrection which he limits in the two preceding quotations by the phrases "they that are Christ's" and "the dead in Christ," is evident for two reasons:

(1) Paul was well aware that all believers and unbelievers that pass through natural death shall be joined to their resurrection bodies. In his defense before Felix he speaks of his own belief in common with that of the accusing Jews, in the words: "And have hope toward God, which they themselves allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." For Paul to write of merely attaining unto bodily resurrection which all men *must* experience would be absurdly illogical, a serious charge to bring against this divinely inspired logician.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 23

(2) In this single instance in the Scriptures of the use of the compound of ἐξ and ἀνάστασις Paul clearly has in mind that summons of the shout of the Lord which shall call out from among the dead the bodies of all those only who shall have passed through natural death in Him.

The second particular to notice is that the testimony of the New Testament is that the resurrection of the bodies of believers is to take place at the coming of the Lord for His own. No Scripture even hints that the bodies of unbelievers are to be raised either in this “the day of Christ,” when He comes in the air with His saints to give them their immortal bodies, or at His succeeding glorious advent with the clothed saints to reign and judge during the “day of Jehovah.”

Third Particular

1 Cor. 15:20-25

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet” 1 Cor 15:20–25).

In this passage the complete order of the resurrections is given but without a specific reference to the resurrection of unbelievers, there being only the provision for it in the order at “the end,” and implied in the words, “every man in his own order.”

First, Christ in His resurrection became the “first fruits of them that slept”—those sleeping “in Jesus” (the death of unbelievers never being spoken of as sleep). “Afterward [ἔπειτα] they that are Christ's at his coming. Then [εἶτα] the end” when He shall have accomplished the objects of His earth rule. These two Greek words are synonymous, the lexicons giving the same meaning to each which may be according to the context, “then, afterward, or next in order,” etc. In this context whose central disclosure is an order of events the latter definition expresses what evidently seems to be the meaning.

Between the resurrection of Christ and the predicted resurrection of believers' bodies nearly two millenniums have already elapsed, and yet in the divine program of resurrections the resurrection of believers' bodies is the *next* in order. This is followed with “Next in order the end” [“cometh” being supplied by the translators].

The common interpretation that the fulfillment of “the end” immediately follows the preceding resurrection which is supposed to synchronize with a universal

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 24

resurrection, is unwarranted for two reasons: The believers' resurrection being next in order as to the sequence of resurrections but only after an elapse of an extended period of time, the same interpretation concerning the time element in the phrase "next in order the end" is in harmony with the preceding use of the word as translated "afterward."

Moreover, the context specifically places "the end" after the Lord has accomplished the objects of His reign and "shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father," this reign being here set forth clearly as occurring between the first "next in order," namely, the resurrection of those that are "Christ's at his coming" and the second "next in order," namely, "the end."

The third particular to note is as follows: In view of the statements of this passage that (1) every man is to experience resurrection but in his own order or rank, (2) that an extended period of time occurs between Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of believers only at His coming for His own, (3) and that the context clearly indicates an extended period of time between that restricted resurrection and the end resurrection, it is clear that the "every man" whose rank will exclude him from participation in the resurrection of believers will be raised in the "next in order" time,-the end of Christ's dealings with man in the old earth,-and which will be the final or end resurrection.

Fourth Particular

Rev 20:4-6, 11, 12, A.V., 14, 15 R.V

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

11 I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, even the lake of fire.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 25

15 And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire

The Book of Revelation presents a part of its revelatory matter in symbolic form, the majority of the symbols employed being those consistently used throughout the Scriptures by the sacred writers to denote well defined ideas. Besides these symbols which were familiar to the early Christians, especially to those of Jewish origin, a few new ones were introduced for the first time in this the last book of the Bible, but in each instance of such use of a new symbol an explanation of its meaning accompanies it in the text (Example, 1:20).

On the other hand, much of the book is couched in language as devoid of symbolism as any other part of the Bible and as assuredly intended to be understood by the plain meaning of the words employed. To force a symbolic meaning on such passages under the excuse that the Revelation is a book of symbolism is unscientific in method and indefensible under the laws of Biblical interpretation.

In the above quotations from chapter 20 we have the capstone of the revelatory structure which discloses the doctrine of the future resurrections. In respect to this unfolding the only new element introduced in this final message on the subject is the length of the time period which shall elapse between the close of the resurrection during which "the just," "the dead in Christ," "they that are Christ's at His coming," and "they which came out of the great tribulation," shall receive their glorified bodies. It is not only revealed that the order or rank, in the words-"every man in his own order," applies to the sequence of the resurrections of the saved and the unsaved, but we have the strong implication of a sequential order in the resurrection of believers.

Paul uses military language in 1 Thess 4:16, and the implication is that the saved of all ages come forth in an order of phalanxes. This may be inferred, also, from the fact that heavenly companies are distinguished (Heb 12:22, 23), and in addition to these, tribulation saints are mentioned as a separate company (Rev 7:14).

It is this latter company of believers which comprises the rearmost phalanx of the first resurrection. Although these tribulation saints are especially in view in the 20th chapter, the promised blessing in the words, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power," is not confined to them but applies to all severally in whatsoever division they belong. The change to the plural pronoun in the rest of the sentence, "but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and reign with him a [the] thousand years," however, implies a more restricted antecedent, for we know from other Scriptures that the "they" refers not to all who have part in the first resurrection, but only to the church [ἐκκλησία, called-out ones] of Christ, that is to say, that divisions of saved ones which the Lord had in mind when He prophesied, "I will build my church," and which He has been doing through the ministry Of the Holy Spirit since the day of Pentecost.

The only new feature revealed in the 20th chapter concerning the reign of this portion of those who shall have part in the first resurrection is, as in the case of the

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 26

resurrections themselves, the length of the time period of their reign with Christ on the earth. The promise that the church saints shall reign with Christ (2 Tim 2:12) with a "rod of iron" (Rev 2:27) on Christ's own throne (Rev 3:21) "on the earth" (Rev 5:10) is merely completed in the 20th chapter with the revelation that the reign on earth is to be coextensive with the time elapsing between the resurrections of the just and the unjust.

That the second resurrection is not "unto life" but only "unto judgment" is clear for the following reasons:

There are two classes of divine judgments, namely, the one whose issue is life or death and which is wholly separate from any complicity with the others, and the class of judgments which deal with the "works" of all mankind and which have nothing to do with life and death.

The first is the judgment of the cross. The question of eternal life for those who receive it by faith in Christ and what He accomplished in His death and resurrection, on the one hand, and the continuing state of death for those who fail to accept Christ and His gift of eternal life and which death is to be sealed eternally with the "second death" at the "great white throne," on the other hand, was eternally settled on the cross.

With His approaching death in view the Lord said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall [*shall*-the execution of it is yet future] the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die" (John 12:31-33). His death was to be the judgment of the crucifying world and its head, the usurping prince of evil. When it soon after became a historical fact He not only judged the World, but He bore the curse for every man. Thus the issues of life and death were bound up in that transaction, turning thereafter for each individual during the dispensation of grace upon the acceptance or rejection of Him and what He accomplished in His sacrificial, substitution death and justifying resurrection. This He makes clear further on: "He that rejects me and receives not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (vs. 48).

In an earlier revelation with especial reference to the bestowal of eternal life He said: "He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18 R.V.). Believers are to be raised "unto life" because they receive eternal life before natural death. Unbelievers are to be raised "unto judgment" because, not accepting eternal life before they pass through natural death, they are judged already as to life and death, and are to be judged at the end only according to their unbelieving works, which brings us to the second class-the judgment of works.¹⁷

¹⁷ Only two of the judgments of this class are cited here. An inductive study of all the judgments should be made.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 27

Believers are to appear before the “judgment seat” of Christ (Cf. 1 Cor 3:11–15 and 2 Cor 5:10. Note that the “any man” of the former and the “we” of the latter refer only to believers). This is the reward throne of Christ at which the subject of life and death is not raised, only those possessing eternal life appear there. In the last chapter of Revelation the testimony of the Lord is, “And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me,” thus synchronizing the time of adjudging rewards to believers with their resurrection “at his coming.”

On the other hand, nothing is said of rewards at the judgment following the second resurrection. Following this resurrection “the dead” are to be “judged out of those things which were written in the books”-the records of their unbelieving works. Life or death is not the issue in this judgment as it is not at the reward judgment of believers. As only the spiritually alive are to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so only the spiritually dead are to appear before the great white throne. They are raised “unto judgment” which terminates in “the second death” that eternal state which “hath no power” on them that shall have part in the first resurrection.

It should be noted that “the dead” are not judged out of the book of Life. In the consummation of God’s dealings with unregenerate humanity its open pages stand only as testimony to the eternal Truth and to the long-suffering love of God who “gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The plain meaning of the words in this context warrants no other conclusion than that the second resurrection is as restrictive concerning its participating subjects as is the revelation concerning the subjects of the first resurrection. This final word of the unfolded doctrine harmonizes perfectly with the preceding revelations on the subject. The language is specific in its restrictive distinction. The “blessed” and “holy,” the subjects of the first resurrection, are set over against “the dead,” the subjects only of the second resurrection, who are to be judged according to their works. Before yielding to the temptation of reading into these plain words a meaning not warranted by their consistent use in the Scriptures the student should ponder the warning against tampering with the words of the Spirit (Rev 22:18, 19).

The fourth particular to note, therefore, is that a time period specifically mentioned as “the thousand years” separates the resurrection of the “blessed” and “holy” on whom “the second death hath no power” (which can be said only of those who have “passed from death unto life”), and the resurrection of “the rest” on whom the sentence of the second death is pronounced.

Fifth Particular

1 Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

This quotation is representative of all the passages which refer to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. These do not bear specifically on this discussion, excepting as the

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 28

resurrection of His body “out from among the dead” is a pattern of the believers’ out-resurrection, hence it is not necessary to take further notice of this group of passages.

Sixth Particular

John 11:24, Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Acts 23:6, But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

These two passages are representative of all those in which the two unspecific phrases, “in the resurrection” and “resurrection of the dead,” are found, and which phrases taken without due attention to the contexts in which they occur have seemed to afford a Scriptural warrant for the belief in one general resurrection. The first of these unspecific phrases occurs six times (Matt 22:28, 30; Mark 12:23; Luke 20:33, 36; John 11:24).

In Matt 22:28, Mark 12:33 and Luke 20:33 the phrase occurs in the three records of the Sadducees’ question, “therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?” The Sadducees did not believe in any resurrection, much less the doctrine held by the Pharisees, namely, the resurrection of the just and unjust. In their attempt to trap the Lord it was a question only of the *fact* of resurrection. In His reply the Lord not only touched upon the marriage relationship in heaven, but in the use of the quotation concerning the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He gave them a silencing thrust concerning the fact of resurrection.

It should be noted that only in the Matthew record of His reply (vs. 30) is the Sadducees’ phrase repeated. In both the Mark and Luke accounts the restrictive ἐκ νεκρῶν [out from among the dead] is used to denote the character of the resurrection, instead of the unrestricted νεκρῶν [of the dead] in the recorded question of the Sadducees. And this restrictive sense is doubly emphasized by the Lord immediately following in Luke’s account. “Neither can they die anymore; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

Commenting on the conversation of Martha with the Lord concerning the death of Lazarus, Grant says: “The Lord tests her at once with an assurance of a joy too great for her: ‘Thy brother shall rise again.’ She sinks at once into mere orthodoxy. ‘I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’”¹⁸ She voiced only that which had been hitherto revealed to God’s people, but the reply of the Lord contains the fuller revelation on which the later disclosures concerning the separate resurrection of believers is based, namely, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and

¹⁸ *Numerical Bible*. Vol. The Gospels, p. 555.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 29

believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:25). It is only such about whom later it could be revealed, on them "the second death hath no power," because they only are partakers of His life, and possessing His life shall have part in the first resurrection.

The inference that there is to be a simultaneous resurrection of the just unto life and the unjust unto judgment, based on the expression "in the resurrection," is groundless. The expression is introduced by the unbelieving Sadducees and a partially instructed disciple, none of whom knew the later and fuller disclosures on the subject.

Furthermore, even if the use of this unspecific expression had the sanction of the Lord, the context would indicate that one of the two resurrections, according to the class of resurrection subjects occupying His thought, was referred to (Cf. Matt 22:30 with Mark 12:25 and Luke 20:35. Note the restrictive phrase, "from the dead").

The phrase, "the resurrection of the dead," is employed ten times in the New Testament, one of which is attributed to the Lord (Matt 22:31), and four reported by Luke in connection with Paul's addresses (Acts 17:32, 23:6, 24:15, 21), four recorded by Paul (1 Cor 15:12, 13, 21, 42), and the last probably recorded by the same Apostle (Heb 6:2). It seems clear from all these quotations that the *fact* of the resurrection of the bodies of all the dead, as opposed to the Sadducean doctrine of *no* resurrection, is in the mind of the Lord and the Apostle Paul when employing the phrase, "the resurrection of the dead." In the Lord's controversy with the Sadducees; the dissent of the Athenian philosophers "when they heard of the resurrection of the dead" from Paul's lips on Mars' Hill; and in Paul's speeches before the Sanhedrin and the governor, Felix, as well as the Apostle's argument against the Sadducean theory in 1 Cor 15, resurrection as a *fact* is in view and not any specific resurrection.

Likewise, in Heb 6:2, the Apostle includes the doctrine of resurrection of the dead as one of the fundamental tenets of the Jewish belief as well as the Christian faith. Both the Lord and the Apostle Paul, on the other hand, use specific and restrictive phrases when the *participating subjects* of the resurrections is their theme. An example of this is the very specific treatment of the believers' resurrection by Paul in 1 Cor 15 in contrast to the unspecific term in the argument against the theory of no resurrection in the same chapter.

When these facts are kept in mind the seeming lack of harmony between the use of the general expression, "the resurrection of the dead," and the specific revelations concerning the resurrection of "the dead in Christ" and the resurrection of "the rest of the dead," disappears. To base the doctrine of a general simultaneous resurrection on this unspecific phrase carries with it the implication that it overrides the specific revelations of two resurrections, which implication is logically untenable.

Reduced to a simple statement the particulars found in the forty references in the New Testament in which the word "resurrection" occurs, classified and analyzed above as an example of inductive interpretation, are:

- (1) The passages which mention the resurrection of both the just and unjust allow without contradiction in their own statement for the later revelations concerning

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 30

(2) the clear prediction that only the bodies of believers of the past and present dispensations are to be raised at the coming of the Lord for His own in the "day of Christ";

(3) the program of resurrections, namely, first, Christ the first fruits, next in order, believers, and finally in order, "the end";

(4) the specified period of time which shall elapse between the believers' or "first" future resurrection, and the unbelievers' or "second" future resurrection at "the end."

(5) The passing over of the passages which treat of the fact, meaning and present effect of Christ's resurrection as not affecting the discussion of two resurrections, only in so far as His resurrection is a pattern of the believer's resurrection.

(6) The contexts in which the two unspecific phrases, "in the resurrection" and "the resurrection of the dead," clearly indicate that the *fact* of the resurrection of the body is the question at issue, and that nothing in these passages is out of harmony with the other revelations which treat of the separate resurrections of the just and the unjust.

As a result of this complete enumeration of all the particulars and their analyses there is but one generalization possible by induction, namely, The New Testament teaches that there are to be two future resurrections, (1) that of the bodies of believers only at the coming of Christ, and (2) that of the bodies of unbelievers only after an intervening period of time specified in the final revelation on the subject to be a thousand years. Judged by the laws of inductive reasoning the theory that there is to be a simultaneous resurrection of the bodies of believers and unbelievers rests upon one of two faulty processes:

(1) either the well intentioned but careless and inadequate observation of particulars, in other words, the "fallacy of insufficient observation," or

(2) the deliberate isolation and distortion of certain particulars together with the ignoring of essential particulars which detract from the tenability of the theory. It is impossible to reach a sound generalization through either of these procedures.

Part 6

IV The Relation of Logic to Interpretation (continued)

Deduction

"Deduction as contrasted with induction is reasoning from the general to the particular," and "it means the drawing out of a particular proposition or conclusion from the universal premise." "The product of deduction is the Syllogism proper. Syllogisms are divided, by the form of the judgments embodied in them, into categorical and hypothetical." In the categorical syllogism the three propositions, namely, the major and minor premises and the conclusion, are stated categorically

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 31

(Example, The worship of graven images is gross idolatry; Israel worshiped a graven image of gold while encamped at Sinai; therefore, Israel was guilty of gross idolatry).

In the hypothetical syllogism “the reasoning turns upon some hypothetical judgment embodied in the major premise.” Both of these forms of the syllogism are divided into monosyllogisms and polysyllogisms, the former having one argument and the latter being constituted of two or more related arguments. Hypothetical syllogisms, as well as the categorical forms, are frequently employed in interpretational writings. The hypothetical monosyllogism takes two forms,

(1) conjunctive (Example, If the Bible proclaims the only way of salvation all men ought to heed its testimony; but it does proclaim the only way of salvation; therefore, all men ought to heed its testimony);

(2) disjunctive (Example, The Bible is either the product of human reason or a revelation from God; it is a revelation from God; therefore, it is not a product of human reason).

The hypothetical polysyllogism takes several forms only one of which will be mentioned here, namely, that which has been called the *horned syllogism*, or the *dilemma* in the strict sense. It is composed of “a plurality of conditional antecedents all having one common consequent.” It is called the *horned syllogism* “because it confronts an opponent with two assumptions, on which it tosses him as on horns from one to the other, each being equally fatal to him” (Example, If we are confronted with obstacles in Christian service which we can overcome we ought not to worry about them; if we are confronted with obstacles in Christian service which we cannot overcome we ought not to worry about them; but all obstacles in Christian service can or cannot be overcome; therefore, we ought not to worry about the obstacles in Christian service). Further subdivision of the syllogism is not necessary for the purpose of this discussion.

As a means of analysis the syllogistic form of argument is of great value, but it is also the means of many false conclusions. The necessity of testing the premises of a syllogistic statement is ever present when this form of argument is employed. Dr. Gregory emphasizes in his text this necessity when studying the arguments of even great intellectual leaders: “In all deductive reasoning, it should be remembered, that the conclusion can never be any more certain than the premises. Forgetfulness of this is the source of many and great errors in both Science and Philosophy.” This caution is of peculiar force when considering theological conclusions.

Dr. G. Frederick Wright¹⁹ illustrates this forcefully: “A Cretan once remarked that all Cretans were liars and knaves. A bystander interposed: ‘But you are a Cretan!’ Whereupon a neighbor added, ‘Then, of course, he is a liar, and his testimony is worthless.’ To put this reasoning in the syllogistic form, it stands thus:

(a) All Cretans are liars: (major premise);

¹⁹ *Logic of Christian Evidences*, Chapter II.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 32

(b) This man is a Cretan: (minor premise);

(c) Therefore he is a liar: (conclusion).

To this form all syllogisms in deductive logic can be reduced. But in such reasoning the question arises, How do we know *all*, before we know *each*? By what authority do we pronounce all Cretans liars and knaves before the character of this particular Cretan has been observed?

To vary the illustration, consider the syllogistic form of Hume's objection to the proof of miracles:

(a) All purported miracles are incredible;

(b) The resurrection of Christ is a purported miracle;

(c) Therefore the resurrection of Christ is incredible (or, as he would say, incapable of being proved by human testimony).

But how are all miracles known to be incredible till the particular evidence for this one is fully considered?

Another form of Hume's argument illustrates the point still better:

(a) All events which happened in the first century have a parallel in those occurring in the eighteenth century;

(b) The resurrection of Christ has no parallel in the eighteenth century;

(c) Therefore it is incredible that it really occurred in the first century.

It is plain here, that the thing needing proof is the major premise from which the conclusion is drawn. On what grounds is it decided that the historical developments of the eighteenth century will perfectly correspond to those of the first? There is no known universal principle from which that conclusion follows.

Since deduction is based on a previous generalization [which, in turn, is arrived at by induction], the process may easily be made to conceal the real steps of the reasoning. In a properly constructed syllogism the conclusion comes out of the premises mechanically. The difficulty lies in showing how it legitimately got into the premises. In the conclusion the *implicit* contents of the premises are *explicitly* stated. But the conclusion must first have been *involved*, before it could be *evolved* [italics of the latter sentence mine].

The major and minor premises may with propriety be compared to the upper and the nether millstones, between which the coarser products of our thought are ground to powder. But nothing can reach the bag which was not first put in at the hopper. However important to clearance the process of deduction may be, it is utterly unproductive of material additions to knowledge. On the other hand, induction is productive. Inductive logic always holds us down to the vicinity of facts, and compels us to interrogate nature as to what really is. The Baconian method first chastens

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 33

arrogance and curbs fancy, even though at length it furnishes wings on which to rise far higher than the imagination could otherwise soar.”

In contrast to the conclusion that there shall be resurrections of the just and unjust separated by an extended period of time, which necessarily results from an inductive study of all the New Testament particulars, the claim that the theological doctrine of a simultaneous resurrection of believers and unbelievers “at the end of the world” is the result of a valid deduction should be tested by every Bible student prejudiced in favor of that conclusion only by creedal statements.

Calling to mind the meaning of logical deduction that it is the drawing out of a particular proposition or conclusion from the universal premise, the question arises at once, Is the premise from which this conclusion is drawn Scripturally true? For strenuous mental drill perhaps nothing can be more highly recommended to the student than to attempt to find the Scripture material for this assumed universal premise and construct a syllogistic statement which logically results in the conclusion under discussion. No theologian has ever accomplished this, but that fact should not discourage an honest student if he has determined to accept this conclusion, for he must make the attempt or abandon a dogmatic position on the matter. A sincere attempt to prove the tenability of a wrong conclusion has often been used of God to lead the seeker after truth into the light of the Word.

Referring to the same example, if by induction it is proved that the New Testament teaches the doctrine of two resurrections separated by a period of time and if this is the only generalization possible from an enumeration and careful analysis of all the New Testament particulars, it must follow that any assumed universal premise from which the conclusion is drawn that there is to be a simultaneous general resurrection is Scripturally false. The second and third fundamental laws of logic demand this for we are here confronted with contradictories and both can not be true. It is a significant fact that the written defenses of the doctrine of a simultaneous general resurrection are faulty in procedure in one, two, or all of the following manners:

- (1) The isolation and misapplication of a part of the essential particulars, while ignoring the rest, as a basis for a universal premise which is faulty because it is not founded on the data of the whole field of evidence;
- (2) the citation of lists of proof texts without analysis under unwarranted and gratuitous statements with which the texts themselves are at variance;
- (3) the never absent and gratuitous statement that Rev 20 does not refer to the resurrection of the body and that there is no hint of two resurrections elsewhere in the New Testament. Any deduction drawn from premises thus formed is untenable.

Instead of deductively proving the desired conclusion such a process proves it to be logically invalid, in other words, the premises being inadequately grounded in the Scripture doctrine the deduction is Scripturally invalid.

Analogy

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 34

Analogy involves “both induction and deduction, the inductive being the principal element. As analogy depends upon some assumed likeness, its kinds may be indicated by the kinds of properties in which the likeness is found.” Three kinds are based upon resemblances: those of essential properties, non-essential properties, and relations. There is also analogy from contradictories. “Analogy based upon resemblance in essential properties is the most valuable kind.”

In Biblical interpretation inference from analogy is sometimes useful, but it is of little value excepting when used with strict attention to *essential* resemblances or differences. The danger in its employment is that the question as to how far the analogy holds true may not receive adequate attention. This is especially true of inferences which follow analogy based upon *resemblance of relations* (Example, There is a relation between thought and language. Divine thought, satanic thought and human thought alike depend upon language for intelligent communication amongst men, but the analogy from the resemblance of the relation between these classes of thought and language ends there)

Although language is the necessary vehicle for the expression of all thought, the thinker must *control* the language which expresses his thought. The control by the divine Thinker of the language of geniuses such as Moses, Isaiah and Paul, as well as the language of sacred writers of more limited natural ability, places it in a unique class. The acceptance of this expressed thought not only results in the individual believer in that peace with God which passes all understanding but when generally accepted it results in its concomitant also, namely, peaceful relations amongst men.

On the other hand, the control by Satan of the mind of such a genius as Nietzsche places his language in an entirely different class. When it is accepted and acted upon its repulsive doctrines concerning Jesus Christ and His teachings and its abominable ideas concerning might and right not only prevents any peace with God in the individual but causes a whole people to run amuck bringing chaos, ruin and untold suffering upon humanity. Again, there is a gulf between the expressed thought of mere human genius and the expressed thought of the divinely controlled writers of the Bible.

There is much truth which is discoverable by the human mind. The person and attributes of God and His eternal purposes are not discoverable apart from His revelation. Any truth concerning the things of God put forth by man is only the reflected truth from the divinely inspired Word which for all time has been spoken and recorded. There can be no argument by analogy that the writings of all geniuses are divinely inspired. Two facts must classify all writings: the source of their ideas and the effect of those ideas when accepted and tested as rules of life. Mere human genius has never risen above idealism. But idealism does not carry with it the dynamic power for its own realization. The Bible not only holds before man the loftiest idealism, but it alone reveals the dynamic power by which it may be realized and the conditions on which this power may be secured.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 35

When we turn to analogy based upon essential properties we sometimes find it helpful in grasping the reality of that which must be received by faith (Example, All men of rational mentality recognize the reality of natural human life. On the other hand, many men deny the reality of that which the Scriptures reveal as "eternal life," this term being a technical one which connotes far more than mere continued existence).

In the passages which treat of eternal life, several of the terms which express essential properties of natural life are employed in revealing the reality of eternal life.

Both are said to follow a begetting process,-natural life following generation in the flesh and eternal life following regeneration by the Spirit.

Both are said to issue through birth,-the one through natural birth and the other through spiritual birth, the fact of the latter being expressed in the phrases "born of the Spirit," "born again," and "born of God"; two natures are attributed in the Scriptures to man, the Adam nature which is the common inheritance of all men and the divine nature of which the "born again" man only is partaker in addition to the Adam nature

Both the possession of natural life and the imparted divine life are said to be the result of the creative power of God,-man created in the image of God and, having lost his high estate, recreated as part and parcel of the "new creation"; natural life as well as eternal life is said to be everlasting, and in harmony with this the thought of annihilation is foreign to the Scripture teaching concerning death.

The following formula expresses the Scripture teaching concerning life and death: the man born but once [natural birth] must die twice [pass through the transitional experiences of natural death and "the second death"]; while the man born twice may never die, the happy experience of translation replacing the dissolution of death should the Lord come during the believer's lifetime in the flesh, and at the most must die but one [natural death]. The *fact* of eternal life must be accepted by faith, but the analogy between natural life and eternal life based upon the resemblance of essential properties, as cited above, helps the believer to grasp the *reality* of eternal life as a present possession.

In conclusion, the foregoing discussion brings out the fact that, within the province of logical procedure, Biblical interpretation is chiefly dependent upon the inductive method. While it is true that the deductive method is valuable in testing premises and conclusions by reducing thoughts to a syllogistic statement, and while it is true that the analogic method is helpful within certain prescribed limits, the fact must never be overlooked by the student that thematic generals of Scripture can be logically formulated only as a result of inductive study of their respective particulars.

No theological conclusion based upon an extrabiblical general is of any value to the Bible student. Calling to mind the dictum of Dr. Gregory that a conclusion can be no more certain than the premises from which it is drawn, the premises of all theological deductions should be carefully tested by comparison with the respective concordant

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 36

teachings of the Scriptures. Experienced Bible expositors recognize certain catch phrases in theological literature as signals which, like the bell buoys of a harbor channel, sound a warning of hidden dangers. These catch phrases are surface symptoms which indicate that fallacious premises are at the bottom of the reasoning. The following and similar phrases should put the student on his guard: "in the light of modern scientific research," "judged by twentieth century learning," "crass literalism," "accommodation to the 'thought forms' of the first century," "outworn Jewish notions," etc. The reasoning in which such phrases occur will be found, when analyzed, to contain indirect denials of the inspiration of the Scriptures.

Protestant theology as it emerged in its variant forms out of the Reformation period is a composite system. It is not only composed of doctrines which were formulated as a result of *inductive* study of all the particulars of their respective Scripture themes, and on the conclusions of which all believers have generally agreed; but it also contains points *deductively* arrived at from premises arbitrarily set up without reference to the Scripture particulars of their respective themes, and on which points there has always been disagreement and of necessity must always be controversy. This controversy divides on the fundamental question. Shall *every* doctrine of our creed be formulated only as a result of painstaking inductive study of all its Scripture particulars, or shall we make exceptions to this rule and raise to canonical authority arbitrary theological dicta on certain points irrespective of the Scripture teaching?

Why should we insist upon the doctrine of regeneration as inductively arrived at after taking account of all that the Scriptures reveal on the subject, on the one hand, and accept an arbitrary theological statement that there is to be a simultaneous resurrection of the just and the unjust, on the other hand?

Why insist upon an inductively arrived at doctrine of blood sacrifice and accept an arbitrary and unscriptural dictum that there is to be one general assize at the end of the world into which both the just and the unjust are to be brought?

Why insist upon all the minutiae of prophetic and fulfilled testimony concerning the first advent of Christ and throw overboard many of the distinguishing features of the prophecies concerning His second advent?

Why insist upon the inductive study of Scripture testimony concerning every feature of salvation truth and balk at the application of this method of study concerning the Scriptural distinctions in the revelation of kingdom truth?

Why insist upon an inductively formulated doctrine of the Holy Spirit and ignore the Scripture details of the provision for a victorious life in the Spirit?

Why enter protests against Professor Kent's Shorter Bible while at the same time employing a method of interpretation which effectually reduces the student's Bible to a shorter Bible and cuts him off from great sections of revelatory matter which contain precious promises and rich spiritual food as well as light on God's revealed program of the ages?

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 37

Every theme of the Scriptures must be studied inductively, collating, observing, classifying and analyzing all the passages which treat upon it. There is no other way to know all that God has spoken on any revealed subject. The student should not be disturbed by the slurs cast upon this serious work.

Some writers have rather contemptuously spoken of this inductive study as a “hop, skip and jump” method. A recent writer calls it, “seining through the Bible for proof texts.” It only needs the reminder for an effectual answer to such thoughtless remarks that if some one had not “hopped” from passage to passage of those which treat of the doctrine of the blood sacrifice, and for the time “skipped” irrelevant passages, there would be no completely formulated statement of the doctrine; and that if faithful expositors had not gone “seining” through the Scriptures for all the detached and fragmentary details of the subject of justification that great doctrine never would have been put into such complete form from all the Scripture particulars that sinners saved by grace may grasp the meaning of it and have the assurance that they have been in God’s court and have been justified forever through faith in Christ.

The student who is not prepared to lay aside all prejudice and has not become possessed with a desire to know “the whole counsel of God” is ever in danger of being led into controversy over the mere captions of theological systems, sharing in all the misunderstandings that result there from. Theological captions are words with which prejudiced writers often conjure. The business of the seeker after a fuller knowledge of the Lord and His truth is to lay aside all prejudice and search for all the particulars which God has revealed on each and every theme of revelation. A prayerful classification and analysis of the data thus brought together will bring that fuller knowledge, blessing and joy which the true seeker craves.

Part 7

V Four Prerequisites

Under the tests required by the Bible it proves itself to be unlike any other literature. The world recognizes it only as a fallible collection of ancient religious lore, but the child of God proves its divine origin daily as the Spirit author discloses its hidden riches in response to his believing search. There are four Scripture terms which, in their Biblical significance, differentiate the Bible from all other writings. In both their interrelations and separate functions these Scripture facts are basic to an understanding of the Bible. All trustworthy principles of interpretation operate in conformity to these four facts and no reliable principle of Scripture explanation is divorceable from them. The truth of this is so generally recognized that those who attempt to force an extra-Biblical interpretation on the Bible either deny or tone down the Scriptural significance of these terms.

These four fundamental facts are:

(1) Revelation - both the subject matter imparted from the mind of God and the method of that impartation;

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 38

(2) **Inspiration** - the divine means employed by which the revelatory matter is accurately transmitted;

(3) **Illumination** - the Spirit's action upon the mind of the believer, enabling him to perceive the truth of the divine disclosures; and

(4) **Interpretation** - explanation of the meaning of the verbal expression through which God's thoughts are transmitted, applied in the Bible to both isolated subjects and the systemic development of themes and doctrines.

These terms taken collectively express the necessary elements for the transmittance of God's thoughts to the mind of man. On the other hand, it is essential that their respective functions should be clearly differentiated. This we may do only in outline in this course.

The Function of Revelation.

The function of divine revelation is to *reveal*. Its office is to uncover, bring to light and make known those things of God which man cannot otherwise know. This God has done through His recorded Word. If the Word is not received ignorance must result. Man can not know God apart from His revelation of Himself. He can not know the way of life apart from God's disclosures on the subject. He has never been able to guess God's purpose in the earth. He knows it only because it has been made a subject of revelation.

“Moreover, although writing is not essential to revelation as thus defined, ‘the idea of a written revelation may be said to be logically involved in the notion of a living God. Speech is natural to spirit; and if God is by nature spirit it will be to Him a matter of nature to reveal Himself’” (quoted, Fairbairn, *Christ in Mod. Theo.*, p. 496).

Dr. Arthur T. Pierson defined revelation thus: “Revelation is the divine impartation and communication of truth to the mind of man, whatever be its mode or channel,” citing Rom 1:17; 16:25; Eph 3:3–5; Amos 3:7.²⁰ Angus-Green give the following: “The word revelation (lit. *drawing back the veil*) is the Latin equivalent of the Greek apokalupsis (Apocalypse), an uncovering.”²¹

There are, among others, three facts the believing acceptance of which is necessary to an understanding, and therefore an interpretation, of the divine revelation.

(1) ***The Authoritativeness of the Scriptures.*** Reliance upon the authoritativeness of God's recorded Word is the bedrock requirement of one who would become a Biblically correct interpreter of the significance of that selfsame Word.

“What think ye of Christ?” divides all classes of humanity into two groups—believers and unbelievers. It is not a matter of intellectuality, but a heart adjustment to God in Christ. Dr. Pierson puts it thus: “It is a unique law of the

²⁰ *Knowing The Scriptures*, p. 14.

²¹ *Cyclopedic Handbook of the Bible*, p. 125f.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 39

spiritual life, that knowing is not in order to believing, but believing is in order to knowing. Faith is not the result, as the condition, of the highest knowledge. God sent Isaiah to say to Ahaz, 'If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established' (Isa 7:9). The deep meaning is that if they (Judah) *would not believe they would not be established in knowledge.*"²²

(2) *Progressiveness in the Divine Revelation.* Revelation had a beginning and ending in time. Between these termini, separated by many centuries, God revealed His doctrine, plans and eternal purpose gradually, progressively, unfolding the revelatory bloom petal by petal.

It is fundamental to Biblically correct interpretations that not only the fact of the progressiveness of these unfoldings be taken into account, but, because of this fact, systematical study of them is necessary for the acquirement of a balanced knowledge of the Truth.

(3) *Orderliness in the Progress of the Divine Purpose.* Has God revealed an orderly sequence of events through and by which His eternal purpose in the earth has been, is being and will be accomplished? An affirmative answer starts the student on that straight and narrow way which leads to the fullest possible knowledge of God's programmed purpose, with very definite and circumscribed instructions for his service in the dispensational age in which he lives. On the other hand, a negative answer leads inevitably into the broad way of destructive interpretation which, by blurring the clear dispensational lines of demarcation in the Word, admits a wide scope of mere human opinion concerning not only the Christian's present-age service but the trustworthiness of predictive prophecy.

Although the Scriptures do not outline God's complete program in any one context, they do reveal here and there segments of it, varying in comprehensiveness, which, when studied together, furnish a knowledge of the successive steps of God's purpose so far as He has revealed it. There is a law of revelation, ignored by many theologians, which the student should keep clearly in mind, namely, that wherever portions of the divine program are treated in the Bible the great divisional events are *found in the same sequence.*

An example of this is found in the comparison of Deut 30:1-10 and Acts 15:13-18. This comparison will disclose the synchronizing steps and those which are complementary.

The Function of Divine Inspiration.

Divine inspiration of the Scriptures and the revelation disclosed by means of it are inseparable. In fact, the doctrine of Scripture inspiration is one of the disclosures of God's revelation, and not something extraneous to it. It is God, the Spirit, who spoke

²² *The Making of a Sermon*, Intro., p. 9.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 40

through a lowly fisherman that classic Scripture, "Holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21; cf. 2 Tim 3:16).

Although revelation and inspiration are thus inseparably bound together in the Scriptures as not only exhibited in these instances but by specific treatment in 1 Cor 2, for application to all revelation, an important distinction in their relation to the content of Scripture should be made. Not all Scripture is revelation of *God's mind and will*. On the other hand, all *Scripture is divinely inspired*. Again we quote:

"Every student must observe what in Holy Scripture carries authority, and what only accuracy. Satan's words to Eve (Gen 3:5), though accurately recorded, are false and misleading in intention and sentiment, exactly contrary to God's mind. The greater part of the book of Job, though an inspired record of events and sayings, is expressly disowned of God as not rightly spoken (Job 42:7). We must therefore discriminate and distinguish *three degrees of authority* in the inspired record:

- (1) An authoritative narrative where sentiments and acts are not sanctioned and may be disowned as disapproved of God.
- (2) An authoritative narrative where sentiments and acts are not expressly approved or disapproved and must be judged by the general standards of Scripture teaching.
- (3) An authoritative narrative where the sentiments and acts are inspired and controlled by the Spirit of God, and therefore represent His mind and will.

"Lack of proper discrimination in matters such as these has often led to much confusion and needless controversy. But, with these careful limitations, Verbal Inspiration is an absolute necessity if, in any proper sense, there be divine inspiration at all. As Dean Burgon has expressed it, what music would be without notes, a mathematical sum without figures, so would an inspired book be without words controlled by the inspiring Spirit."²³

If God by inspiration has transmitted His revelation accurately through the medium of language-and this accurate transmission by means of words is the function of inspiration-it follows that close attention and loyalty to the words *as transmitted*, and not as some theologians wrest them to fit extra-Biblical theories, are fundamental to Biblically correct interpretations.

The Function of Divine Illumination.

In various grammatical forms the Greek word *photizo*-to illuminate, give light to, shine-occurs eleven times in the N.T. In one passage only it is used to denote physical light (Luke 11:36). In the realm of the spiritual it is used in three senses: revelatory (Example, 2 Tim 1:10); lighting with the glory of God (Example, Rev 21:23); and the illuminating of the human heart (Example, Eph 1:18; 3:9; Heb 6:4; 10:32). In these

²³ Pierson, *Knowing the Scriptures*, p. 16f.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 41

latter passages the synonymous words, “illuminated” and “enlightened,” are both employed in the A.V.

Extended example: Eph 1:17–19.

The Function of Biblical Interpretation.

The Bible employs the word *interpretation* in two of its defined senses, namely (1) Explanation (Examples, peshet, interpretation, occurring 31 times in Dan 2:4–7:16; hermeneuo, interpretation, Heb 7:2). (2) Translation of words from another language (Example, the Lord’s cry on the cross, Mark 15:34). The general meaning of the word, as used in the Bible, is explanation, making clear what otherwise would be obscure.

Biblical interpretation, as employed under the direction of the Spirit by the sacred writers, predicates an understandable Bible. Concerning the adaptability of the Bible to human capacity, Perry Wayland Sinks writes: “The Bible even as literature-and both in its origin and history-is a human as well as divine Book. It is *human* in that it is *to* and *for* man, and not *to* and *for* supernatural intelligences or the conceived populations of other planets; it is *divine* in that it is *of* God and *from* God.”²⁴

VI Four General Rules of Interpretation

These four general rules of interpretation, all finding their place under the inductive method of study, are incorporated in all standard works on Hermeneutics. The order found in, and the quotations from, these various works are followed in this section. “These are not peculiar to Scripture, but simply bespeak in regard to it those qualities of candor and intelligent common sense which the study of any literature requires.

The first rule of Biblical interpretation is: Interpret grammatically

Give due regard to the meaning of words, the form of sentences, and the peculiarities of idiom in the language employed. The sense of Scripture is to be determined by the words: a true knowledge of the words is the knowledge of the sense. The words of Scripture must be taken in their common meaning, unless such meaning is shown to be inconsistent with other words in the sentence, with argument or context, or with other parts of Scripture.

The true meaning of any passage of Scripture, then, is not every sense which the words will bear, nor is it every sense which is true in itself, but that which is intended by the inspired writers, or even by the Holy Spirit, though imperfectly understood by the writers themselves.”²⁵

Out of the multitude of examples cited in the various texts, one from Lockhart on Ephesians 2:8 may be cited. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of

²⁴ Sinks, *The Reign of the Manuscript*, p. 40f.

Also lecture quotation from G. Frederick Wright, *Divine Authority of the Bible*, p. 103.

²⁵ Angus-Green, *Cyclopedic Handbook of the Bible*, p. 180.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 42

yourselves: *it is* the gift of God.” He says: “We may ask, what is the gift of God? Many would answer, ‘grace,’ many others, ‘faith,’ some, ‘salvation.’ But what does the grammar require?” After eliminating “grace” and “faith” as the antecedents of “that,” he proceeds: “The only other possible antecedent is the salvation expressed by the verb ‘saved.’ Some have objected that the Greek noun for salvation is feminine; but we must notice that salvation is here expressed by the verb, and Greek grammar again requires that a pronoun which refers to the action of a verb for its antecedent must be neuter.

This exactly suits the case; and the meaning is, Ye are saved by grace through faith; but the salvation is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Here the interpretation that accords with the grammar is reasonable and satisfactory.”²⁶ I have pointed out before, however, that the observance of all grammatical requirements often leaves one short of the meaning of the doctrinal contents of the text. Cellérier has this in mind when he says: “Suppose that he [an interpreter] undertakes to explain the words of Jesus to the paralytic: ‘My son, thy sins be forgiven thee’ (Mark 2:5), Grammatical Hermeneutics may readily do its work, but it will not fathom the depth of meaning which these words contain.”²⁷

The second rule of interpretation is: “Interpret according to the context.”

The meaning of a word will often be modified by the connection in which it is used. This rule is often of great theological importance.”²⁸ (Examples: Various meanings of *Faith, Flesh, Salvation, Grace*, etc.). “The study of the context is the most legitimate, efficacious, and trustworthy resource at the command of the interpreter. Nothing can be more convenient than to explain an author by himself, and to have recourse to the entire train of thought. It is much less easy for sophism to abuse this mode of interpretation than that of dealing with etymology, philology, and exceptions of syntax.”²⁹ Although these latter are often valuable aids, they may also be pushed to harmful effects. (Example: The etymological study of some words indicates that their significance has entirely departed from the root meaning.

On the ground of etymology, therefore, it would be misleading for an interpreter to hold to the root meaning in such cases). One of the most helpful results of contextual study is furnished by the definitions of the author’s own terms. (Examples: “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.” 2 Tim 3:17. By *perfect* here is meant, “Thoroughly furnished” for service. There are a number of contexts in which the word *perfect* needs the light from the context for its exact meaning. In such passages the thought is not perfection in its widest sense, but maturity in a specified line of experience or endeavor.)

²⁶ *Principles of Interpretation*, p. 83f.

²⁷ *Man. d’Hermen.*, p. 53.

²⁸ Angus-Green, *Cyclopedic Handbook of the Bible*, p. 186.

²⁹ Cellérier, *Man. d’Hermen.*, p. 191.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 43

The third rule of interpretation is: “Regard the scope or design of the book itself, or some large section in which the words and expressions occur.”

Sometimes the context does not give all the light needed to determine the meaning of a word or a phrase. In such cases the third rule is necessary.³⁰ The purpose in writing a book is often clearly mentioned, especially in the N.T. Epistles. This avowed purpose will often throw light on passages otherwise obscure. Terry gives the following example: “There can be no doubt that, after his opening salutation and personal address, the apostle [Paul] announces his great theme [of Romans] in verse 16 of the first chapter.

It is *the Gospel considered as the power of God unto salvation to every believer, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek*. It manifestly expresses, in a happy personal way, the scope of the entire epistle.” After an analysis of the entire epistle, he says: “It will be found that a proper attention to this general plan and scope of the Epistle will greatly help to the understanding of its smaller sections.”³¹

The fourth and most comprehensive rule of Biblical interpretation is: Compare Scripture with Scripture.

A Scripture truth is really the consistent explanation of all that Scripture teaches in reference to the question examined; and a Scripture duty is the consistent explanation of all the precepts of Scripture on the duty.”³² As has already been noted, this procedure was not employed until the Reformation; and sound hermeneutics was not developed until this method was adopted. It results in “the analogy of faith which regulates the interpretation of each passage in conformity with the whole tenor of revealed truth.” Under this general head Cellérier also says: “To admit a positive revelation and to reject things positively revealed is a great inconsistency.”³³ This inconsistency is not uncommon. Some interpreters who claim to accept the Bible as the revealed Word of God, reject specific revelations in it because these do not fit into the framework of their preconceived theology.

Part 8

VII Figurative Language

The literature of all lands and tongues abounds in figurative language. The Scriptures are no exception to this universal fact. In this connection Cellérier says: “It should be remembered, however, that this is no concession to those who deny the inspiration of the Word, since a figure or parable may be just as much inspired as a rigid

³⁰ Angus-Green, *Cyclopedic Handbook of the Bible*, p. 192.

³¹ *Biblical Hermeneutics*, p. 111.

³² Angus-Green, *Cyclopedic Handbook of the Bible*, p. 195.

³³ Cellérier, *Man. d’Hermen.*, p. 19.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 44

syllogism.”³⁴ Our Lord’s speech was replete with all kinds of figures, including under tropical words and phrases, *metaphorical* (Ex. “I am the true vine.”), *synecdochical* (Ex. “Ye shall drink indeed of my cup.”), *metonymical* (Ex. “If I wash thee not,” etc.) expressions; as well as the various forms of allegories, as parables, types and symbols. The various tropes are easily recognizable as figures, and the meaning is generally clear from the context.

In determining whether a word is tropical or literal Lockhart says: “It is usually sufficient to inquire in any case of doubt, Does the literal make good sense? If the literal proves to be *absurd*, or in any way *inconsistent*, either with other parts of the sentence or with the nature of the things discussed, we may conclude with tolerable certainty that the language is figurative.” On the other hand, he points out that it is important to look for a literal meaning before accepting one that is figurative. “Many interpreters have understood Zion to be a figure, and the Christian church to be really meant. This is purely a surmise, as the Psalm makes no allusion to a future development, nor to any characteristics of the church that would not better apply to the literal city of Jerusalem. This Psalm is a fine hymn of praise to the sacred capital of the Jewish nation; and a figurative view robs the piece of its beautiful patriotism.”³⁵

These reasons for not taking the word as figurative are valid, but they are buttressed with other teachings of the Scriptures which make it very clear that Zion is always connected with Jerusalem in meaning. As Dr. Scofield says: “Zion and Jerusalem mean Zion and Jerusalem, not the church. The church is not in prophecy at all. His (Christ’s) purpose to form a church during His rejection by Israel is never disclosed until announced by Jesus Himself” (Matt 16:18; Eph 3:3–10).³⁶

Interpretation of Allegories: “The great rule of interpretation of allegories is to ascertain the scope of the allegory either by reference to the context or to parallel passages; and to seize, the main truth which it is intended to set forth, interpreting, all accessories in harmony with the central truth.”³⁷ In the study of allegories of various kinds, namely, parables, types and symbols, the interpreter must be careful not to treat plain statements of Scripture as is demanded of language couched in figurative expressions.

There is all the difference possible in interpreting a Scripture allegory, on the one hand, and the allegorizing of a plain Scripture on the other hand. Although the latter violates the rules of sound hermeneutics by changing the plain intent of the author, this system is defended by those who have to resort to it to make plausible the creedal tenets they hold. The defenders of the postmillennial and amillennial systems openly

³⁴ *Man. D’Hermen.*, p. 142.

³⁵ *Principles of Inter.*, pp. 157 and 159.

³⁶ *Corres. Course*, Vol. I, p. 128.

³⁷ *Cyclo. Handbook of the Bible*, p. 224.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 45

espouse the allegorizing of plain Scriptures to meet the needs of their systems of interpretation, a fair example being Wyngaarden's rather recent work, *The Future of the Kingdom and Fulfillment*.

Single Sense of Figurative Language: The literal sense of the words employed in a figure of speech is not to be taken as the meaning of the figure, but rather the sense intended by the use of the figure. In all such instances, therefore, there is but one meaning. In such cases the literal is not the sense. In this connection Cell erier says: "Revelation has been clothed with popular forms strongly impressed with the habits of the East, that is to say, with metaphorical, poetical, and parabolic forms, which convey a meaning different from that of the literal sense of the words. But even then there are not two senses, the literal and metaphorical. The metaphorical is alone the real sense; the literal does not exist as a sense; it is only the vehicle of the former; it contains in itself no result, no truth. There is therefore only one true sense."³⁸

Parable -"A short fictitious narrative from which a moral or spiritual truth is drawn; as, the *parables* of Christ" (Webster).

The Lord used parables constantly in his teaching. Several classified lists of these parables have been published. Few of such classified lists have met with general agreement by interpreters. Perhaps the most profitable exercise would be for the student to make up his own classified list, proceeding under the laws of hermeneutics in the task. One parable only, that of the two sons, will be analyzed in class as an example for such interpretation. Analysis given orally.

As a result of this analysis the professor offers the following caution: In the use of the parables spoken by the Lord before the cross, clearly applicable under pre-Cross conditions, the following rules should be kept in mind to safeguard the teaching from confusing applications: (1) Keep the application true to the principles of grace. Avoid any compromise with the idea of human merit in a sinner's approach to God. (2) Keep the teaching true to the terms of the gospel. Avoid applications which are confusing on the point of faith, and not works, required for salvation. (3) Keep the applications true to the principles governing the walk of the believer in the Spirit.

Consistently following these rules will save one's ministry from bringing confusion into the minds of inquirers. The unsaved have problems enough without the introduction of needless ones under our ministry.

Types -"As an Allegory is a double representation in *words*, a Type is a double representation in *action*; the literal being intended and planned to represent the spiritual" (Angus-Green). Many of the best interpreters do not recognize as a type any allegory unless specifically used as such in the Scriptures. The story of Joseph and his brethren is a beautiful illustration of many phases of the Lord Jesus' life and his church, but it is not mentioned as a type.

³⁸ *Man. D'Hermen.*, p. 41.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 46

“A type may be (a) A person (Ex. Adam-Christ, Rom 5:14); (b) An event (Ex. the events of Exodus (1 Cor 10:11, mar.); (c) A thing (Temple veil-human body of Christ, Heb 10:20); (d) An institution (Ex. Jewish high-priesthood-high-priesthood of Christ); (e) A ceremonial (Ex. Passover-sacrifice of Christ, 1 Cor 5:7). Types occur most frequently in the Pentateuch, but are found, more sparingly, elsewhere. The antitype, or fulfillment of the type, is found, usually, in the New Testament.

Interpretation: A type must never be used to teach a doctrine, but only to illustrate a doctrine elsewhere explicitly taught (Ex. John 3:14-1 Cor 5:7).”³⁹

Symbols-“Other outward representations of spiritual truths are *Symbols*. Generally speaking, the Type is prefigurative, the Symbol illustrative of what already exists (Ex. of Symbols: Bread and wine served at the Lord's Supper-His body and blood).⁴⁰

Kinds of Symbols

- (1) Miraculous. (Examples: Pillar of fire-cloud; burning lamp and smoking furnace, symbolizing God's presence).
- (2) Materials. (Examples: Articles of furniture in the tabernacle).
- (3) Visional. (Examples: The highly figurative vision of John descriptive of the person and offices of Christ in Revelation 1). Visional symbols are the most numerous amongst the various kinds of symbols.

Symbolical numbers. Principal items.

- (1) One-Deity, unity, one God, etc.
- (2) Three-Triune God, tripartite nature of man, etc.
- (3) Four-World number: four winds, four corners of the earth, etc.
- (4) Six-Fullness of evil-trebled, the number of superman beast, 666.
- (5) Seven-Completeness: perfection in the sense of completeness; covenant and dispensational number.
- (6) Ten-Rounded fullness; fullness of human responsibility, etc.
- (7) Twelve-Rule of God, twelve tribes, twelve thrones, etc.
- (8) Forty-Testing: flood, fasting of Moses, Elijah and Christ, etc.
- (9) Seventy-Prophetic number: rounded fullness, three score and ten years, seventy years of captivity, seventy times seven, seventy elders, etc.
- (10) Time symbols-Time (year), times (two years), half time (half year); three and a half years-42 months-1260 days.

Symbolical colors

³⁹ Scofield *Corres. Course*, p. 44f.

⁴⁰ Angus-Green *Cyclo. Handbook of the Bible*, p. 221.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 47

Blue, heavenly; purple, royalty; scarlet, sacrifice; white, purity; black, sin, death; red, blood, war.

Symbolical metals

Gold, deity; silver, redemption; brass, judgment; iron, strength; clay, instability.

VIII Accommodation

There is a true and a false application of accommodation. Without question the Scriptures contain evidences of accommodation. As we shall see, as presented in another paragraph, Revelation itself is in a sense an accommodation. Finding evidences of true accommodation in the Scriptures, German writers developed a false application of the principle of accommodation. Of this movement Terry says: "A method of exposition, which owes its distinction to the celebrated J. S. Semler, the father of the destructive school of German Rationalism, is known as the Accommodation Theory. According to this theory the Scripture teachings respecting Miracles, vicarious and expiatory sacrifice, the resurrection, eternal judgment, and the existence of angels and demons, are to be regarded as an accommodation to the superstitious notions, prejudices, and ignorance of the time. The supernatural was thus set aside."⁴¹

After reviewing the effects of such methods as applied to the N.T., Cellérier says: "If by accommodation, in this connection, is meant that Christ and His apostles accommodated themselves to the ignorance and the prejudice of the Jews, we reject it as derogatory to the character of our Lord, and to that of the sacred writers of the N.T. Infidelity itself has not impeached the rectitude and purity of the Savior. His life has always been reckoned the embodiment of absolute perfection. No one, after a careful perusal of the N.T. can point to any compromise between truth and error."⁴²

The destructive critics and all modernists of our own days who reject the authority of the Scriptures join in the chorus that the Lord Jesus employed the thought forms of the first century although, as they claim, He knew them to be untrue. If this is true, He was the greatest impostor of History. We may, however, dismiss such theories of accommodation and lay the cause of imposture at His detractors' doors. Such false theories of accommodation affect the matter or substance of revelation.

That there is a true form of accommodation which has to do with the forms of language employed to express the divine thought we cannot doubt. Sweet, in his article on Accommodation in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, says: "The Bible teaches that in the height and depth of His being God is unsearchable. His mind and the human mind are *quantitatively* incommensurable. Man cannot by searching find out God. His ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts. But, the Bible affirms with equal emphasis the essential *qualitative* kinship

⁴¹ *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Intro., p. 62.

⁴² *Man. D'Hermen.*, p. 274.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 48

of the divine and human constitutions. God is spirit and man is spirit also. Man is made in the image of God and is made to know God.”

These two principles affirm the necessity and possibility of Revelation. God's thoughts may become ours through divine accommodation. He can thus utter them in forms that are suited to our capacity to receive them.

There are two prominent classes of examples of this method of accommodation, pointed out by Lockhart:⁴³

(1) **Anthropomorphism**. Example: “I will put thee in a cleft of a rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by: and I will take away my hand and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen.” (Exod 33:22, 23). Such examples can be multiplied many times throughout the Bible, and such forms of expression which are foreign to God's being are deliberately used as accommodations to man's modes of thought to make God's meaning plain.

(2) **Anthropopathism**. This has to do with the ascription of the passions and emotions of man to God. This is as necessary as the ascription of the members of the human body to God under the anthropomorphic figures. Example: “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great fury.” (Zech 8:2). Israel's idolatry brought out this strong statement, the meaning of which could not be dodged.

Practically all the tropical language of the Scriptures is accommodation to man's ability to catch the ideas intended to be transmitted, but we have not the space to mention other classifications.

In general one hermeneut has summed it up as follows: Wrong methods of Accommodation seek to foist on the Scriptures ideas foreign to the intent of the sacred writers, while the true method seeks the elucidation of the truth.

IX Interpretation of Prophecy

Introduction: “The *sine qua non* of true prophetic teaching is that it must persistently and consistently remain Scriptural. The testimony of the written word alone presents faithfully the future purposes of God and of Satan. To give room to fancy or to human wisdom and reasoning, is fatal in prophetic study. True prophetic teaching stands the test of time simply because it is Scriptural.”⁴⁴

Prophecy appears in the Bible with a two-fold purpose, the office of the prophet being designed to fulfill this two-fold purpose. The prophet was both a forth teller and a foreteller. He was both a teacher for the times in which he lived, and the instrument through whom God transmitted predictions for the future. The general rules of hermeneutics govern the interpretation of the first aspect. Besides these some special

⁴³ *Principles of Interpretation*, p. 182.

⁴⁴ C. Fred Lincoln, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 94, p. 503.

Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 49

considerations should be heeded in connection with the interpretation of the predictive portions of prophecy.

Predictive Prophecy Demands Literal Interpretation.

This is denied, of course, by those who spiritualize the prophetic Scriptures, but the Bible itself has established this rule governing prophetic interpretation by the fact that every record of fulfilled prophecy exhibits literal fulfillment in detail. This is manifested by the recurring use of the phrase in the New Testament, "that the Scriptures might be fulfilled," in connection with all the details of the predictions in the Old Testament concerning the Person, life, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Also this is true of the fulfilled predictions concerning the nation Israel, and judgments meted out in history to the heathen nations. Even when the predictive portions are couched in figurative language, that which the figure stands for is to have a literal fulfillment. On the other hand, very much of predictive prophecy is given in nonfigurative, plainly understood language. To treat such language allegorically, placing an entirely different meaning upon the language than the plain intent of the words warrant, resolves itself into a revision of the Spirit Author's message. This some so-called interpreters do not hesitate to do.

The Means Used Vary.

(1) Theophanic Manifestations.

- (a) Appearances in human form, as when the Angel of Jehovah appeared and conversed with men.
- (b) By an audible voice, as at the birth, baptism and transfiguration of the Lord. Also many instances recorded in the O.T.
- (c) Also in other forms, as through animals, example: Balaam's ass; through inanimate things, example: the burning bush.

(2) Visions, Dreams and States of Ecstasy.

- (a) Visions, such as Isaiah's vision of the Lord, high and lifted up in the temple.
- (b) Dreams, such as Jacob's at Bethel.
- (c) Prophetic Ecstasy, such as John experienced on Patmos.

One difference between Dream and Ecstasy is that the dream might come to a pagan, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar; while ecstasy was the experience only of men of God, as Daniel, Isaiah or Ezekiel.

Some Rules Governing the Interpretation of Prophecy.

- (1) The Source of Prophecy (2 Pet 1:21). Not by the will of men, but from God. This insures accuracy and trustworthiness (Isa 46:9-11).
 - (2) The Grand Divisions of Prophecy (1 Pet 1:10-12). The things related to the two advents—"the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them."
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Pastor's Ministry Workshop	Austin Bible Church
Syllabus in Hermeneutics	Page 50

(3) The Central Person of Prophecy (Rev 19:10). Jesus Christ spoke through the prophets concerning Himself (Luke 24:27).

(4) The Fundamental Principle of Prophetic Interpretation (2 Pet 1:20). *Idias* (tr. private) is generally used in the sense of "one's own" (John 1:11; 1 Cor 12:11; Matt 14:13). Prophecy is a harmonious whole. No prophecy is to be interpreted by itself, but in the light of all God has spoken on the subject. It then follows:

(a) That if prophecy is a self-consistent whole, unfulfilled prophecy is as sure of fulfillment as was the case of any fulfilled prophecy.

(b) Moreover, the harmony of the prophetic Word does not allow for the erroneously-called Spiritual fulfillment of some prophecies while demanding the literal fulfillment of others.

(c) Although prophecy in some cases allows for partial fulfillment with a fuller and final consummation, the former must not be made the reason for denying the latter.

(d) As logic requires that cause must precede effect the application of this law will settle many controversies. Example: "If Christ's second coming is the cause of the millennium, as the trend of prophecy indicates, then His coming must be Premillennial."-Hopkins.

Practical Value of the Study of Prophecy.

It reveals the purpose of God in Christ from the beginning to the final and sure triumph. The "night" is still in progress. Prophecy gives light on the path until the day dawn. Faith looks back to a finished work. Hope is tied to the sure word of prophecy, and dispels the gloom in the light of God's own predictions.