



HERMENEUTICS

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INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

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Biography:

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CHAPTER I

I. HERMENEUTICS IS THE SCIENCE OF INTERPRETATION.

- A. The word “hermeneutics” is derived from the Greek *Hermes*, the messenger of the gods and the interpreter of *Jupiter*.
- B. Every *Hermeneus* was, therefore, an interpreter, as he was supposed to have inherited some of the mystic qualities of this god, this patron of eloquence.
- C. Sacred hermeneutics is the science of interpreting the Scriptures.
- D. Exegesis means to “lead out.”
- E. Exegesis is the application of the principles of hermeneutics in bringing out the meaning of any writing which might otherwise be difficult to understand.

II. GOD EXPECTS US TO USE HIS BOOK IN BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH HIS CHARACTER, AND IN GAINING A KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL.

- A. The Bible is to be used as other books.
 - 1. An interpreter implies a misunderstanding between two parties, or, at least, a liability to such a misunderstanding.
 - 2. It is objected that if the Bible is of God it should be so plain that no one could misunderstand it.
 - 3. If God could give us such a book, and would not, He was certainly to blame if we do not understand it.
 - 4. But, if He would, but could not, He is not perfect in wisdom or ability to execute.
- B. This logic is not good.
 - 1. We might as well say that if God is the Author of Nature, its meaning should be so apparent that all would perfectly understand it and, therefore, understand it alike.
 - 2. We know scientists disagree about many things in nature.

3. The great masses of men are in ignorance, almost from first to last, respecting the whole question.
4. God has made it necessary to study nature in order to understand its lessons.
5. Geology, astronomy, physiology, etc., etc. are known only to those who study them.
6. It is reasonable, therefore, that He should make it necessary to study His word.

C. The weakness is with man.

1. Man is fallible, and his judgment is imperfect.
2. Nothing has ever been written which has been understood by all alike.
 - a. Our laws are made by our wisest and most careful men.
 - b. They are made with special reference to the people for whom they are intended so that no man may be misguided respecting his duty, and no criminal go unpunished.
 - c. Yet, our shrewdest lawyers and ablest jurists are in doubt as to the meaning of much of our law.
 - d. Religious creeds that have been wrought out by the ablest and purest of men are variously interpreted.
 - e. Churches wrangle and divide over them.
 - f. We cannot say that these were not plainly written in the first place.
 - g. But, age has come, custom has changed, religious sentiment has veered, words and forms have become obsolete or changed their meaning: hence, the many interpretations.
 - h. Man misunderstands his fellow man, and even himself, and is able to misinterpret the Lord also.
3. God does not inspire the interpretation.

- a. It is sometimes supposed that the Holy Spirit still directs men in their inquiries after truth so that no hurtful mistake can be made.
 - b. But we know even the very best of men differ widely in their views of the word of the Lord.
 - c. We know, too, these men make their investigations a matter of daily prayer.
 - d. We know truth is never contradictory, that error is dangerous and that pious men blunder in reference to the meaning of Scripture.
 - e. Clearly, whatever helps the Lord may give His servants, in their efforts to understand the Bible, He does not guide them by inspiration or the mistakes which are now made would not occur.
4. Divine wisdom has adopted the word-method of revelation.
- a. This being true, it is implied that all the weaknesses which belong to that mode of communication were adopted at the same time.
 - b. There would be no reason in giving a revelation which would need inspiration to interpret.
 - c. If the inspiration has to be given, there is no need of the word itself.
 - d. The inspiration would make known all the truth, as well without the word as with it.
 - e. Indeed, it would be better to have the inspiration alone than to have a faulty word revelation which might mislead those who are not inspired.
 - f. While the word would be of no practical value, it might do a great deal of harm.
 - g. Better that God had never given it, since its only power is to deceive.

- h. But when He made the choice between a direct revelation to everyone, and the selection of a few who should be the teachers of the many, He chose the latter.
- i. Hence, to those chosen as His revealers we look for a knowledge of the divine will.
- j. It does not change the question to claim that a few men are now chosen to interpret that word.
- k. We must have some means of knowing they are favored above others in divine endowments.
- l. Since those who claim a special call to this work differ widely respecting important matters we reject these exalted assumptions.
- m. Their claims are not sustained.
- n. There is no reason God should give special inspiration to interpreters now.
- o. He has no other truth to reveal, nor can He make it any plainer than He did when He gave us the Bible.
- p. The words of the men, whom He allegedly now inspires, are at least as difficult to understand as the words of the men He inspired years ago.
- q. If we cannot understand those, how shall we understand these?
- r. The ancients supposed that they must look to the law and the testimony for a knowledge of the will of the Lord.
- s. The truth was to be had by the same methods of study that were applied to any other branches of knowledge. (Ezra 7:10; Deut 29:29; Neh 8.)
- t. Ezra 7:10: "For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."
- u. Deuteronomy 29:29: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and

to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”

- v. Nehemiah 8 shows how they had to learn the law.
 - (1) Ezra reads the law from morning till noon, and is assisted by chosen men who go among the people and explain to them the meaning of any words which they did not understand.
 - (2) From Psalms 1:1-2; 19:7; 119:11,59,93-94,99,105, 130 we get David’s idea of coming to the knowledge of the will of the Lord.
 - (3) They must read that word, study it day and night, and get all its precepts in the mind in this way.
 - (4) Then may they assure themselves that they have more knowledge than the ancients – than all their teachers.
 - (5) Paul holds this view.
 - (6) He says to Timothy, that although he has known the Holy Scriptures from his childhood, which were able to make him wise unto salvation, he must study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly setting forth the word of truth.
 - (7) Hence he must give attention to reading, to exhortation and to teaching (2 Tim 2).

D. A CORRECT HERMENEUTIC WOULD GO FAR TOWARD HEALING THE DIVISIONS OF THE CHURCH.

- 1. A wrong interpretation is not the only cause of divisions.
- 2. Followers of Christ are another.
 - a. Jesus prayed for the unity of all those who should believe on Him through the word of the apostles.
 - b. The apostles condemned divisions on all occasions.

- c. Men who were division-makers were regarded as unworthy of a place in the church.
 - d. After the first and second admonitions they were to be avoided.
 - e. They were spoken of as not serving the Lord Jesus, but their own passions.
3. Selfish ambition cannot be removed by rules of interpretation.
- a. Even in the days of the apostles ambitious men rose up to draw away disciples after them, ready to make merchandise of them.
 - b. The desire for place and power led men then to adopt the claim of sanctity that they might gain a leadership which could come to them in no other way.
 - c. Sound exegesis can have little effect on such conditions of the heart.
 - d. However, a correct hermeneutic may do something toward rendering it impossible for these men to continue their work of deception.
 - e. If we could bring all the followers of Christ to a common interpretation of the word of God the power to create divisions would certainly be gone.
4. All divisions, however, are not the result of ambition or a sectarian spirit.
- a. Among the purest and best there are many differences of faith and practice.
 - b. They cannot be accounted for upon the basis of dishonesty or upon the ground of ignorance; these divisions contain men of equal learning.
 - c. Of course, many of these learned men were born to their particular views and all their study in the Scriptures has been to sustain these tenets.

- d. Still, the unfairness that comes from the prejudice of early training will not account for the many conflicting faiths among the followers of Christ.
5. The Bible is not at fault.
- a. Skepticism feeds on the divided state of the Christian world.
 - b. It declares that the book which we regard as God-given is to blame for all this misunderstanding.
 - c. Skeptics charge the Bible teaches doctrines which are contradictory, or so obscure, that a man is as liable to make one thing of them as another.
 - d. This we cannot admit.
 - e. If the Bible is of God it does not contradict itself, nor is it so obscure in its teaching that those who are seeking the way of life cannot understand it.
 - f. God gave man a book he needed, and that man needed a book which, with honest effort, he could understand.
 - g. Hence, if the Bible is God's book, it can be understood by all those who wish to know the way of eternal life.
6. The methods of interpretation are to blame for much of the disharmony which now exists.
- a. It is evident that the great body of Christians want unity; they deplore the divisions which now disfigure the church and retard the progress of the truth.
 - b. There is nothing else that we can say but that our manner of interpreting the word of God is wrong.
 - c. He who can bring before the world a correct system of interpretation will do more to heal the divisions than any other man.
- E. A sound hermeneutic would be the best possible answer to infidel objections to the Bible.
- 1. A wrong interpretation is not the only cause of unbelief.

- a. Much of the infidelity of the age is the result of impure hearts and bad lives.
 - b. Many men have made themselves opposite to the purity of the gospel of Christ.
 - c. Many things are believed because men wish them to be true, while others are disbelieved for a like reason.
 - d. In such cases it would matter but little what the evidence might be, they would not accept the gospel.
2. But, false interpretation is a strong support of unbelief.
- a. Someone has well said that, "The Bible is its own best defense."
 - b. But in order that it may be any defense at all, its teachings must be understood.
 - c. This can never be without a correct knowledge of the principles of interpretation.
 - d. Lacking a proper hermeneutic men have imagined they found discrepancies and contradictions in the Bible.
 - e. They would find any other book equally contradictory if they should treat it in the same way.
 - f. Men know that the laws of language must be observed in reading any other book.
 - g. If they would use the same care and common sense when reading the Bible unbelief would find no place.
 - h. It becomes evident that a correct exegesis will greatly weaken the power of unbelief.
- F. The last great need of a sound exegesis is that we may find our way to heaven.
- 1. Inquirers are discouraged by the different answers given to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?"

- a. Seekers after eternal life are confused, disheartened and do not know what to do.
 - b. They are told there is nothing they can do; that they must wait for the Lord to come and save them.
 - c. Others tell them they *can* and *must* give themselves to Christ so that they may be saved; and that unless they do, they will certainly be lost.
 - d. But they do not tell them how to give themselves to Christ.
 - e. If men were inquiring into any question of law or history they would be told where they could get the desired information.
 - f. If the Scriptures were studied in this way there would be but little difficulty.
2. Not only is the question of salvation involved, but the assurance of pardon also.
- a. Persons who have had the same religious experience differ widely as to the import of what they have heard, desired and felt.
 - b. One believes he is a child of God, and no doubt lingers.
 - c. Another, who has had the same experience, *hopes that he has a hope*, but is *only certain that he is not certain of anything*.
 - d. It is vain to say that this must be the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit, or that a Christian knows by his feelings just what his relations are with God.
 - e. If God taught one of these servants in this direct way, He certainly would not have left the other to grope his way in darkness, doubt and uncertainty.
 - f. The reason that the one regards himself a favorite of heaven, and the other is in doubt, is in the creeds of the men.
 - g. There is no perceptible difference between them except, by their creeds, they have interpreted these sorrows and joys differently.

- h. This difference of creed has arisen from the difference in their modes of interpretation.
- i. If it is God's will that one Christian should know his sins forgiven, it is certain that it is His will that all His servants should thus rejoice.

CHAPTER II

I. THE THINGS WHICH HELP US TO UNDERSTAND THE WORD OF GOD.

- A. Good common sense is the first requirement.
1. Someone has said that if a man lacks knowledge he can get it of his fellow-man; if he lacks religion, he can have it by going to God; but if he lacks common sense, he has nowhere to go.
 2. This remark has in it more wit than truth.
 3. Common sense has its root idea in the ability to discover harmony in the things which agree; and, to perceive unlikeness in opposites.
 4. To a man devoid of common sense there would be no difference between Mohammedanism and the religion of Christ; between the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ; between Catholicism and any form of Protestantism.
 5. Equally hidden from him would be the truths in all these systems.
 6. He would not be able to distinguish truth from error.
 7. A man may be learned in the abstract and know little of anything in the material.
 8. He may give himself so entirely to the study of philosophy that he will almost cease to have understanding of the events of life and be incompetent to decide between one thing and another.
 - a. If we are speaking of the interpretation of law or the study of medicine, no one would call in question our position.
 - b. There lurks the suspicion the less of real knowledge, and the more of the speculative qualities of mind you have, the more likely you are to arrive at the meaning of the Bible.
 - c. They forget that God gave this book to the common people, that He filled it with the experiences of men and that its writers have spoken in language which plain people can easily understand.

- d. It is a book to constantly show us dangers on one hand and the way of safety on the other.
- e. In this book we are constantly dealing with things in which the way of truth is made plain by its contrast with the works of darkness.
- f. Hence the more the student will study plain questions, and knows men as they are, the more likely he will be able to understand the word of God.

B. Faith in inspiration will help the student understand the Bible.

- 1. It is not meant to say unbelievers cannot know anything of the claims of the word of God.
 - a. They may know many things respecting the Bible.
 - b. The Jews who did not believe in the divinity of Christ understood many things respecting His claims.
 - c. If an unbeliever could not know such things he would not be responsible.
 - d. The ability unbelievers possess to investigate these subjects is the measure of their responsibility before God.
- 2. To receive a letter and believe it to be from someone else, who sent it to deceive, would not likely benefit the receiver.
 - a. It might be one of very great importance and yet, in a few hours, he would know little, if any of its contents.
 - b. So it is with the Bible.
 - c. If he is not in sympathy with it, in no way is he prepared to understand.

C. Mental industry is essential to any proper investigation.

- 1. The disciples, who did not always understand the parables of the Savior, went to Him afterwards and inquired about the meanings.
 - a. It is their investigating spirit that made it possible for them to learn the deep things of the Master.

- b. The Bereans are praised for this disposition of mind (Acts 17:11-12). “Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few.”
 - 2. There is no essential difference between the study of the Scriptures and the study of any other subject respecting the mental outlay necessary.
 - a. With all the advantages given Timothy through early instruction from his mother and grandmother, and the assistance of the apostle Paul, it was necessary for him to “study to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed: rightly setting forth the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15).
 - b. There can be no substitute for mental industry.
 - c. We must apply the mind and heart, or not know the things of God.
- D. A desire to know and do the truth is necessary.
 - 1. The most careless and indifferent may learn something about the word of God.
 - 2. But they are not likely to learn much, nor to learn *anything very well*.
 - 3. The soil must be healthful for seed or little is accomplished by sowing.
 - 4. There are men for whom the gospel of Christ has no more charm than pearls have for swine.
 - 5. There must be good ground; “such as have an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience” (Lk 8:15).
 - 6. It is this willingness to do the will of God that prepares the mind for the effort which is necessary to understand the law of the Lord.
 - 7. In Acts 13:48 we have a picture.

- a. The Gentiles who glorified the word of the Lord and were ordained to eternal life, believed; and those who were opposed remained in unbelief.
- b. Men can find what they look for but, what they do not want to see, it is difficult to make them understand.
- c. If there be not a good and honest heart there will be little fruit from the sowing.

E. Biblical interpretation.

- 1. The mind must be in rapport with the teaching to be received.
 - a. Further, indisposition not only prevents the examination necessary to thorough knowledge, but it fences against the pure word of God.
 - b. There are those who see in every remark something unchaste.
 - c. They can find double meanings in anything said.
 - d. They misinterpret actions in the same way.
 - e. To them every word and act seen or heard is prompted by ulterior motives.
 - f. The world is a mirror in which they see themselves as they attribute their own motives to the acts of others.
 - g. To the evil, all things are evil.
- 2. Truth is put within their reach which, if they will lay hold of it, will lift them up to that better condition.
- 3. It is possible for men to become so gross as to be removed even from the possibilities of faith: "For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (2 Tim 4:3-4).

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them which

showed of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not" (Acts 7:51-53).

4. Here is both the teaching and the living picture of the ability to harden the heart against truth until the soil of the soul is utterly destroyed.
5. "And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, by hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them" (Mt 13:14-15).
 - a. This language cannot be mistaken.
 - b. The reason they were not saved was they had not turned to God.
 - c. The reason they had not turned was they did not understand with the heart.
 - d. The reason they did not understand with the heart was that wickedness prevented them from considering the claims of Christ in any proper way.
6. "And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to naught by the manifestation of His coming; even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess 2:8-12).
 - a. These persons were perishing because they believed a lie and not the truth.
 - b. This they did because they did not receive the love of the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

- c. And because they would not have the truth, God turned them over to the falsehoods which they preferred.
- 7. It is possible for those who have once known the truth to fall so far away that they cannot be renewed again to repentance (Heb 6:1-6).
 - a. There are carnal minded church members who are too gross in their hearts to know the height and breadth, and length and depth of the riches and beauty and glory of the revelation which God has made to us.
 - b. It is first a humble, willing heart, good and honest, that will be easily instructed in the way of life in Christ Jesus.
 - c. Those eyes are best adjusted to the divine light and, therefore, better understand both the truth and Him who taught it.
- F. A correct translation is conducive to a reliable exegesis.
 - 1. This is true of ninety-nine out of a hundred Bible students for they are almost wholly dependent on a translation to learn what has been said to us by the Lord.
 - 2. The issue of “modern versions” is a controversial theme.
 - a. It is fraught with much emotion – more “heat” than “light” in many instances.
 - b. Extremism is characteristic of religious issues and the “translation” matter is no exception to this rule.
 - c. There are those who do not hesitate to vigorously promote virtually anything that sails under the name “Bible.”
 - d. At the opposite extreme a few critics allege the use of **any** version, save the King James, smells of liberalism.
 - e. Some have even taken the extreme position that the use of a particular Bible version should be made a test of Christian fellowship.
 - f. This is an extremely faulty viewpoint.
 - 3. A “translation” is simply the rendition of the original biblical text (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek) into one’s native language.

- a. Everyone, unless he reads the biblical languages, is dependent upon a translation.
 - b. Further, the word “modern” is obviously a relative term.
 - c. The Septuagint (3rd century B.C.) was a “modern” version compared to the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.
 - d. When the KJV was published in 1611 it was bitterly criticized as well – and rightly so in some respects; for instance, it contained the Apocrypha between the two Testaments.
 - e. Over the past three and a half centuries the KJV has undergone so many revisions that the edition of our day differs from the 1611 edition in hundreds of particulars though the general content, of course, is basically the same.
 - f. When the English Revised Version and its American cousin, the American Standard Version were issued in 1881 and 1901 respectively they were quite enthusiastically received.
 - g. The ERV and ASV were not without a few critics though, the most vocal of whom was John Burgon.
 - h. Burgon contended that the Greek text from which these versions were made was corrupt.
 - i. His views, however, were not widely accepted in scholarly circles.
 - j. And so no translation can be condemned merely on the ground of its modernity; it must stand or fall on the basis of its internal merit.
4. Since none of the original autographs (the actual manuscripts penned by inspired men) of the Bible exist today, one of the matters of prime importance is the establishment of a reliable text from which a good translation can be made.
- a. Regarding this, various schools of thought are sharply divided.

- b. The points of divergence are far too technical for discussion here (even if this writer were qualified to do it, which he is not).
 - c. It will suffice to say that a majority of competent scholars believe that the most reliable way of determining the best Greek text is by means of the “critical” method.
 - d. By this procedure the scholars compare ancient Greek manuscripts, early translations of the Scriptures, quotations from the early “church fathers” and internal evidence, and thus attempt to restore, as precisely as possible, the original New Testament documents.
 - e. This method assumes that, other factors being equal, the earliest sources (where there has been less copying) are probably the most dependable.
 - f. This procedure is commonly followed in the restoration of the secular writings of antiquity.
5. On the other hand, a small group of scholars is in staunch opposition to the construction of a “Critical Text.”
- a. Some of them argue for a return to the *Textus Receptus*, a Latin term meaning “the received text” – first appearing in the Elzevir text of 1633.
 - b. The textual basis for the *Textus Receptus* is a small group of relatively late minuscule manuscripts.
 - c. In about a dozen places its reading is supported **by no known Greek manuscripts.**
 - d. Others champion what they call the “Majority Text.”
 - (1) One thus determines the best Greek text by counting manuscripts and the text which is supported by the most manuscripts (even though they may date quite late) is alleged to more nearly reflect the original.
 - (2) Some scholars have responded to this by pointing out that sometimes a number of manuscripts can be traced to a common ancestor which would, therefore,

indicate fewer manuscripts than are frequently supposed.

- (3) This would tend to somewhat weaken the “majority” argument.
 - (4) Too, more recently discovered papyrus manuscripts, which are of great antiquity, have given support to the dependability of the early text type.
- e. The proponents of the “KJV only” doctrine are basing their position largely on the notion that the *Textus Receptus* and Majority Text (and these two are not completely identical – there are possibly some **one thousand differences**) are the only valid textual sources – and the dangerous thing is, they are making their views synonymous with “soundness.”
 - f. One must guard against being stampeded toward a particular position simply because he is fearful of being branded a “liberal” or a promoter of “modern versions.”
6. There are other important concerns which are a part of every translation effort.
- a. Some consideration should be given to the translator’s theological stance – what is his attitude toward the Scriptures?
 - b. It is theoretically possible for a scholar to translate faithfully even though he is a liberal; however, it must be admitted the translator who labors under the conviction that he is dealing with **God’s word** could be more highly motivated to fidelity than the man who feels he is merely dealing with the word of uninspired men.
 - c. The translators of the KJV had a very high regard for the divine origin of the Bible and, for the most part, so did the men who labored on the ERV/ASV.
 - d. The liberal element was in the minority, therefore their inclinations are reflected mainly in the footnotes.
 - e. By way of contrast, some of the versions of recent years have been dominated by theological liberals.

- f. For example, according to translator Henry J. Cadbury, all nine members of the Revised Standard Version New Testament translation committee were of “the liberal wing of scholarship.”
7. There is another point of special importance; it is what one might call philosophy of translation.
- a. There are two basic approaches to translating the Bible.
 - b. One, commonly referred to as Formal Equivalence (FE), attempts to translate “the words and nuances of the original as literally as possible” provided that clarity is conveyed in English. This is the preferred approach.
 - (1) This was the disposition of those who produced the KJV and the ERV/ASV and also the New American Standard Bible to a certain extent.
 - (2) The ASV translators stated that their aim was to bring the “plain reader more closely into contact with the exact thought of the sacred writers.”
 - (3) Scholars like Luther A. Weigle of Yale (Chairman of the RSV committee) and F. F. Bruce of the University of Manchester, though promoters of some of the more modern versions, have conceded that the ERV/ASV are the most meticulously accurate versions in the English language.
 - (4) They are the most useful Bibles for those who wish to be as close to the original text as possible, but who read only English.
 - c. The other philosophy of translation is known as “Dynamic Equivalence (DE).”
 - (1) DE attempts to convey the meaning of the text “in free and idiomatic **English without much regard for the exact wording of the original.**”
 - (2) Though this approach is not totally void of merit, it does present some real problems.

- (3) For example, whenever the translator feels a literal rendition is inadequate he will choose **his own** language to tell his reader what he feels the Greek text means.
 - (4) In effect, he becomes more of a **commentator** than a translator.
 - (5) D. A. Carson, a defender of the DE method, admitted that this attitude “can lead to all sorts of freedoms with respect to Translation.”
 - (6) He further conceded that “it is no doubt true that the closer one stands to the ‘loose’ end [of the FE-DE spectrum], the greater the chances of subjective bias.”
- d. A most important point in this connection is a recognition of the fact that the original autographs of the Bible were **verbally inspired** of God (1 Cor 2:11ff) and this involved even the various grammatical peculiarities which were a part of the sacred documents.
- (1) Christ made an argument on verbal tenses in His debate with the Sadducees shortly before His death (Mt 22:32) and Paul stressed the singular form of “seed” in his presentation to the Galatians concerning Jehovah’s promise to Abraham (Gal 3:16).
 - (2) The translator must strive, therefore, to stay as close to the original as he can so as not to lose those subtle messages reflected in tense, voice, mood, etc.
 - (3) This is certainly the ideal where no clarity of message is sacrificed.
8. It must be realized, of course, that an absolutely literal word-for-word Bible translation is an impossibility for a number of reasons.
- a. In the first place the word order of the Greek New Testament is frequently quite alien to the mode of English expression.
 - b. Consider Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 16:8-9 as it reads literally in the Greek: “I shall remain but in Ephesus until the

Pentecost. Door for to me has been opened great and effective and opponents many.”

- c. Second, sometimes the literal translation of a Greek word would make no sense to an English reader.
 - (1) Some philosophers of Athens asked regarding Paul, “What would this seed-picker (*spermologos*) say?” (Acts 17:18).
 - (2) The original term is best rendered, “babbling” or “gossiping,” since “seed-picker” hardly reveals the actual meaning of their sarcastic query.
 - d. Third, it is not always possible to translate the same Greek word uniformly in all of its occurrences.
 - (1) The Greek word *splanchnon* means “entrails,” “intestines.”
 - (2) And so when the body of Judas fell, “he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out” (Acts 1:18).
 - (3) Since it is known, however, that the Greeks used *splanchnon* for the seat of the emotions, it is best to render Philippians 1:8 as, “I long after you all with the **affection** of Christ Jesus,” rather than “in the **bowels** of Christ” (KJV).
 - e. A good translation, therefore, will strive for balance, staying as close to the original text as possible while conveying clearness of meaning to the reader.
 - f. In view of the foregoing factors – selection of the best text, attitude toward the Bible inspiration, translation philosophy and inherent translation difficulties – it should be apparent to every clear thinking person that: (a) there is no **perfect version** and; (b) there are bound to be disagreements among sincere Bible students concerning the relative values of the various versions and how those versions will be employed in one’s study and teaching efforts.
- G. A general and thorough education is of great value in the interpretation of the word of God.

1. Learning cannot take the place of good common sense and certainly not of a true heart and spiritual purity so greatly needed to understand the things given to us of God.
2. There is an idea that learning is destructive of spirituality.
 - a. I know of no evidence supporting that view.
 - b. Instead of learning standing *in the way* of faith and piety, it greatly *aids* it.
 - c. The man of knowledge may lose his respect for many of the traditions of the fathers, but his faith in God and His word will not be injured.
3. There is a mental drill in the attainment of knowledge that will greatly assist in preparing for the effort necessary to a complete investigation of the Scriptures.
4. I would begin my recommendations with the knowledge of one's language.
 - a. With us the English language is the great medium of knowledge.
 - b. If our knowledge of that medium is defective, the benefits derived from its use will be greatly lessened.
 - c. Most readers of the Bible are entirely dependent upon the English Bible and *all* are, more or less, dependent upon it.
 - d. Not only so but the commentaries, lesson helps and all the valuable suggestions by way of essays, sermons, etc., come to us through the English language.
 - e. Therefore it is of great importance that we should have an accurate knowledge of our own language.
5. A knowledge of the original languages in which the Scriptures were written would be of great assistance in getting an accurate acquaintance with the Bible.
6. A thorough drill in logic would greatly aid investigation in the Scriptures.

- a. This is true in the reading of any work of merit.
 - b. The propositions made to men are to be understood by the rules of logic.
 - c. There is no more direct assertion found in the Scriptures anywhere than in the teaching of the Master.
 - d. He ever spoke as one having authority.
 - e. Yet, the strictest and closest logic is constantly observed.
 - f. This was especially true in His many encounters with the Pharisees and Sadducees.
 - g. Take all the conversations at Jerusalem, during the last feast the Master attended and His parables are full of logical acumen.
 - h. The apostolic speeches and writings are full of logic.
 - i. If one is in need of the knowledge of logic in order to comprehend the great speeches, he will equally need that drill before undertaking to analyze the epistles.
7. A good knowledge of contemporaneous history will greatly aid in the study of the Scriptures.
- a. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote for those who were well acquainted with the facts.
 - b. They did not stop to explain many things which cannot be understood, except as we study history.
 - c. We must come into possession of the facts that were before *their* minds at the time they wrote these accounts.
8. A good knowledge of the lands of the Bible will render many things plain.
- a. The things said and done have much more meaning and interest to us if we know where they were when these things were done and said.

- b. The allegories of the *true vine* and the *good shepherd*; the teaching of the Master on the great day of the feast; the directions to the blind man, “*Go wash in the pool of Siloam*;” crossing the sea to the land of the Gadarenes or coming through the midst of Decapolis; the teaching of the Master in the borders of the city of Caesarea Philippi; the transfiguration that followed, are at least partially lost to us without a knowledge of the geography of the country.
 - c. Every student of the Scriptures ought, therefore, to become familiar with all the lands mentioned in the Bible.
 - 9. One should become as thoroughly acquainted as possible with the customs of the people during the times of the Bible.
- H. We should expect to understand the Bible.
 - 1. The Bible is regarded by many as a sealed book.
 - 2. The ability to read it as any other book, and understand it by reading it, is supposed to belong to unaided mortals.
 - 3. There are those who regard the Scriptures as a mystery not to be understood by the common mind.
 - 4. It is necessary to quote a few passages that we may realize our privileges: “But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture inspired of God *is* profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim 3:14-16).
 - a. The Scriptures which Timothy knew in his childhood were the Old Testament.
 - b. These, too, as they were fulfilled in Christ, were sufficient to perfect the man of God, filling him with all needed truth.
 - 5. “How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men. Unto me who am

less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery, which from all ages hath been hid in God, who created all things” (Eph 3:3-4; 8-9).

- a. It is evident the most difficult things presented to the world – those which were more mysterious than any former revelation – were to be read and understood by the whole church.
 - b. Paul was commissioned to make all men see this mystery as he did.
6. Let us remove the fog of superstition that has prevented so many from proper investigation of the Scriptures that all may know their rights to search this volume for themselves, and that they may understand it.
- a. All should be made to realize that they are responsible for their ignorance.
 - b. God has made a revelation of His will to us and if we do not avail ourselves of the privilege of reading it and knowing its contents, it is our own fault.
 - c. Under such circumstances ignorance is a sin against God and ourselves.

CHAPTER III

THINGS WHICH HINDER CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

INTRODUCTION.

- A. It is as necessary to understand the things that prevent us from understanding the word of God, as well as to know the things that will help.
- B. We may be injured by so many things that modify favorable forces that we get little benefit from them.
- C. We wish to know the things that will hinder, as well as the things that will assist, our understanding the word of the Lord.

I. A DESIRE TO PLEASE THE WORLD.

- A. It is not meant to say that all desire to please the world is wrong; indeed, we are required to please our neighbor for his good.
- B. No real man of God can have any interest in offending.
- C. When we have offended we have lost our power to do good, at least to a degree.
 - 1. But it is the inordinate, unlawful desire to please the world that hinders proper interpretation.
 - 2. Many men have been decoyed from the truth by popular applause.
 - 3. With vanity on the one hand and flattery on the other, all sorts of doctrines have been preached to tickle itching ears and bring the rounds of applause for which a vain heart flutters.
 - 4. To such men the word of God may never have been very precious, but the honor that comes from men continually lessens their feeling of loyalty to divine authority.
 - 5. Ultimately they are willing to preach anything, true or false, if it will only give them favor with the people.
 - 6. They become willing to sell themselves to the highest bidder.

7. The bid from the ungodly becomes a bribe to blind them to the truth.

II. THE BIBLE MADE THE PROPERTY OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

- A. This has been one of the great faults of the Catholic Church.
 1. This had enabled them to establish a monopoly of interpretation.
 2. The Bible is not the book itself; but the meaning of the book, as interpreted by the priesthood, that is the Bible to them.
 3. All restraints are removed from these men and they are at liberty to interpret the Bible in a way which will best suit their purposes.
 4. This kind of power is always dangerous and never acceptable!
- B. Protestantism is perhaps an improvement, but not such an improvement as will give us any particular cause of boasting, nor bring us fully to truth.
 1. The creeds in use are ancient and were made at a time when knowledge was lower and prejudices were higher than at present.
 2. Yet, we have been compelled to conduct our investigations in the light of these catechisms.
 3. Therefore it has not been so much, "What does the Bible say on the subject?" as, "What does the creed or catechism say?"
- C. Reverence for authority found in great names is very hurtful.
 1. These authorities have been canonized and as such are not to be disturbed.
 2. This is partly because of superstition and partly from laziness that makes us willing to accept statements rather than look for the truth ourselves.
 3. In this way errors are handed down from one generation to another for centuries, without having been suspected of being untrue.
- D. This is not intended to encourage disrespect for candor and learning.
 1. Authors may be used as aids in study of the Scriptures as well as in the study of anything else, but it should be remembered that noth-

ing but the word of God will do as a guide for the faith and practice of His people.

2. We should accept the assistance of these great men in obtaining that knowledge, but nothing more.
3. Their admirers have stereotyped them as the sum of all intelligence, and refused to have any view of theirs called in question.
4. This resulted in making these men the standard of doctrine and prevented the world from learning anything else.

III. USING THE BIBLE TO PROVE DOCTRINES IS A GREAT SOURCE OF MIS-UNDERSTANDING.

- A. The Bible is not a book with which to prove doctrines; *it is the doctrine itself!*
- B. Almost anything can be proven to the man who wants to find the proof.
- C. This leads to improper use of the Scriptures.
- D. Instead of searching the Scriptures for whatever they may contain, the doctrines of men have been first assumed, and then the Bible is compelled into some sort of recognition of the position.

IV. MYSTICISM.

- A. Spiritualizing the word of the Lord prevents knowledge.
- B. Instead of regarding it as a sensible communication from the God of heaven it is turned into a kind of "Samson's riddle" and made to say almost anything except what it does say.

V. MAKING THE BIBLE MERELY A BOOK OF WONDERS.

- A. It is treated as a kind of mental and spiritual museum – a box of curiosities.
- B. Men who search for quaint texts, and Sunday school teachers who have their students searching for some strange question, are constantly contributing to that kind of disregard for the word of the Lord.
- C. The pupils are asked to tell how many times the word girl occurs in the Bible, or what was the name of David's mother, or what man had twelve

toes; and the energies and time of the students are taken up with such incidentals to no profit.

VI. READING WITHOUT INTENDING OR EXPECTING TO UNDERSTAND IT.

- A. Reading from a sense of duty, or simply to be able to say they have read it through.
1. I have known persons who regarded it a duty to read the Bible through once a year and, having done this for a number of years in succession, seem quite fond of telling about it.
 2. This exercise will be something better than a pilgrimage to Mecca but, as a means of becoming acquainted with the Scriptures, it is very poor.
 3. The mind must be fixed upon the thought and purpose of the Bible, with the intent of knowing what they are.
 4. No more should be read than is understood, or at least partially digested.
- B. The Bible is read irregularly and without any system.
1. This is quite common in family worship.
 2. One time it is a Psalm; at another, a chapter from the Gospels or one from the Prophets. Some preachers use this method in preparing their sermons.
 3. Something may be learned in this way, but not very much.
 4. It comes from the want of method, which will be more fully discussed in another place.
- C. Reading only favorite Scriptures.
1. This is the method of a hobbyist (one who harps on favorite subjects).
 2. A man who has a particular hobby to ride may be expected to know little of the Scriptures outside of the round of texts that can be made to harmonize with his doctrine.
 3. There are many who treat their Bibles in this way.

4. They have their favorite chapters which they read again and again to the neglect of other and equally weighty Scriptures.
5. If any other study should be pursued in this way no one would expect anything to be gained by the effort.
6. Anything that will prevent thorough and continued study will prevent attainment of knowledge to its full extent.
7. Whether we read hurriedly or slowly is a small matter for each has some advantages; but the reading that is not pondered is nearly worthless.

VII. INTERPRETING FROM SINISTER MOTIVES.

- A. This is frequently done to save property.
 1. Being found in the possession of goods which are not right for us to have, we begin to excuse ourselves by some peculiar theory on that subject.
 2. The mind is drawn out in the defense, not simply of the theory, but of the property which the theory protects.
 3. We did not first advocate slavery in this country and then seek the slaves.
 4. The property came into our possession, we could scarcely say how.
 5. Rather than to let the servants go, the Bible was brought into the defense of the institution.
 6. Legislators make laws to shield themselves in the possession of property and many interpret law for personal gain or for protection in the business which they know to be ruinous to the people.
 7. Of course they will quote and apply the Scriptures to protect themselves.
 8. This desire for security in their business and property colors all their interpretations and vitiates all their exegesis.
- B. A wish to do as we please; to continue our customs, or begin new ones which we prefer.

1. Many men today are in the condition of the prophet Balaam; they are very anxious to do and say whatever the Lord may direct, provided the Lord will direct them to do and say the things they prefer.
 2. In the days of Christ the Pharisees and lawyers were ready to lay grievous burdens on the shoulders of others, but they were not willing to touch one of them with even a little finger.
 3. So it has ever been with the world.
 4. Almost anything men want to do, they can find some text of Scripture that will sound like giving support.
 5. It is exceedingly difficult to make any man see that he has been preaching untruth.
 6. He has posed before the people on that subject and is not willing to incur the humiliation of saying, "I was wrong, and my opponents were right."
 7. One thing is certain! A man's wishes may well blind his mind to truth if his wishes happen to be on the contrary side.
 8. We must be as far above such prejudice as possible.
- C. Sectarianism is responsible for much erroneous interpretation that prevents the world from knowing the truth.
1. The desire to be with the successful party furnishes a strong temptation to use the Scriptures so the party will approve.
 2. Indeed, the love of party will develop genius in its maintenance.
 3. In political matters it is not strange that men will bend the truth for party purposes and interpret all facts according to the interests involved.
 4. But good people doing this in matters of salvation is out of place.
 5. The world frequently subordinates the truth to the interests of sectarian preferences.
 6. It is possible for well meaning people to be blinded by these things.

7. Prompted by their love for their party or, perhaps what is worse, their hatred for the opposite one, they become willing to misrepresent the word of God.
 8. They find themselves in the heat of battle doing anything to win - at least to prevent defeat.
 9. Interpreting the Bible for party ends is one of the greatest hindrances of correct knowledge of the revelation of God to men.
 10. It is needful to put everything out of the mind except the desire to know the truth of God when we open His book.
 11. Let go, as far as possible, everything of self and sect and free the mind and heart from every wish or interest that may in any way, prevent the knowledge of the word and will of the Lord.
- D. Moral or practical atheism.
1. This is the disposition to do as we please about divine things.
 2. If they do not prefer to do the Lord's way, they feel He will accept them while they do their own way.
 3. These persons may *believe* there is a God and *believe* that He is the author of the Bible; but it has not entered their minds that it makes any particular difference whether they do His will or not.
 4. This is practical atheism.
 5. With such views of the authority of God it is not possible to understand the Scriptures.

VIII. THIRST FOR DISTINCTION; DESIRE TO BE KNOWN AS PERSONS OF LEADING THOUGHT.

- A. When the ambitious mind has only in view the exaltation of self, the exegete comes to stand in the way of every other effort than that which he is making.
- B. His thirst for distinction even prevents the acceptance of the plain and simple truth of the gospel.

- C. For the purpose of maintaining a reputation for independence of thought, these adopt anything and everything that promises to bring them to public view.
- D. Hence, they must find in the Scriptures what no one else has been able to find, or their claim to acuteness will not be well maintained.

IX. EFFORTS TO HARMONIZE SCIENCE WITH THE BIBLE ARE DOING MUCH HARM.

- A. I have no objections to any investigation into the subject of science and revelation.
 - 1. What I do object to is the demand that Scripture interpretation must keep pace with the guesses of scientific speculators.
 - 2. Every new theory advanced in science demands new hermeneutics.
 - 3. Words must be bent and shaded till they will fit the new science.
- B. The old theologians took advantage of science and declared that everything not in accord with their interpretation of the Bible could not be true.
 - 1. This was discouraging to scientific research.
 - 2. No man was at liberty to push his investigations beyond the creed of the church.
 - 3. All can now see the injustice and injury of such unrighteous jurisdiction.
- C. But, in latter times it has been changed so that the scientist comes and sets himself up in a kind of espionage over the interpreter of the word of God.
 - 1. These are both wrong and both to be condemned!
 - 2. Before any man is ready to say that the Bible and science are not agreed he must know two things.
 - a. First, he must know all there is to know about the Bible.
 - b. Second, he must know all there is to know about science.

- c. In the meantime the best thing he can do will be to learn all he can of either one or both.
- 3. He who made the universe made the Bible, and when we come to understand them both we will be delighted with their beautiful harmony.
- 4. It is, therefore, the privilege and duty of every man to push his investigations as far and as fast as he can.

CHAPTER IV STRENGTHENED WITHIN

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Someone said, “No importance can be attached to a religion that is not begun, carried on and completed by the Spirit of God.”
 - 1. Bible believers never deny Christians are led, guided and strengthened by the Spirit of God.
 - 2. But, misconceptions of how the Holy Spirit indwells and works are productive of much error.

- B. All that can be learned about the mind of God and how He works to save man comes from the Bible.
 - 1. But what the Bible says seems not to matter to a lot of folks.
 - 2. Feelings and emotions are given primacy.
 - 3. This is backwards!

- C. The fact that God spoke and preserved what He said should motivate diligent study of His word.
 - 1. I have not been hesitant to study what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit, but have been hesitant to write about Him.
 - 2. There are two reasons.
 - a. First, the actions of prominent partisans on any side of the subject are mean spirited and ugly.
 - (1) Snide remarks are disrespectful and inconsiderate of others.
 - (2) Sarcastic remarks produce hostility.
 - (3) They are not instructive.
 - (4) This conduct is opposed to everything Jesus taught (Mt 7:12).

- (5) As the rhetoric escalates everyone suffers, especially Christ who prayed for unity among His disciples (Jn 17:20-21).
 - (6) The spirit driving this conduct is in no sense a holy spirit.
 - b. Second, arrogance is not helpful.
 - (1) It is profane,
 - (2) It is repugnant and
 - (3) It harms the cause of Christ.
- 3. A large dose of humility is essential in this discussion.
 - a. No one can explain or quantify how his own spirit animates his flesh.
 - b. Therefore, we should be careful in making any pronouncements concerning the Holy Spirit.
- 4. We must be honest when taking issue with what others have written.
 - a. It is dishonorable to distort and misrepresent what another teaches so you can talk tough at our lectures or in writings.
 - b. We must put the Lord's cause ahead of our egos.

I. CHRISTIANS NEED STRENGTHENING.

- A. Christian, all of them, everywhere, need strengthening in their inner man.
- B. The Ephesians did (Eph 4:14-19).
- C. The Colossians required strengthening, too (Col 1:9-11).
- D. We also need it.
- E. Recent events put this beyond dispute.

II. THE DIVINE PRESENCE STRENGTHENS US.

- A. God the Father abides in His people.
 - 1. We are His temple (1 Cor 3:16; 6:16).

2. Paul wrote, "For it is God that worketh in you" (Phil 2:13).
 3. John says, "...God abideth in him and he in God..." (1 Jn 4:11-16).
 4. The entire Thessalonian church is said to be "in God" (1 Thess 1:1).
 5. Christians are in God and God is in them.
- B. The divine Son abides in Christians.
1. Paul said, "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor 5:17).
 2. Paul's writings contain 169 references to being "in Christ", "in Him", "in the Lord", "in the Beloved", etc.
 3. Paul claimed Christ dwelt in Him (Gal 2:20).
 4. Paul wrote to the Ephesians, ". . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph 3:17).
 5. Obviously Christians are in Christ and Christ is in them.
- C. The Holy Spirit abides in God's people.
1. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you (1 Cor 3:16).
 2. To the Romans Paul wrote, "The Spirit...dwelleth in you" (Rom 8:11).
 3. God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts (Gal 4:6).
 4. John said, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Rev 1:10).
 5. The clear teaching of the New Testament is: the Spirit is in Christians and Christians are in the Spirit.
- D. We should also note Christians are commanded "to have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5).
- E. The church is required to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col 3:16).

1. Each of these designations describes a single condition – salvation.
2. No philosophical manipulation can find a difference in the meaning of these descriptions of salvation through Christ.
3. The passages teach that when the words, thoughts and Spirit of God control our lives, God dwells in us.
 - a. When the gospel controls us, Christ dwells in us.
 - b. When we receive the gospel by the hearing of faith, the Spirit dwells in us.
 - c. Anyone claiming the Spirit dwells in us or strengthens us in another way must point to an explicit declaration of God’s word explaining and defining that other way.
 - d. That passage does not exist.

III. HOW THE SPIRIT STRENGTHENS WITHIN.

- A. The Spirit gives us faith; but this is accomplished through the medium of the word (Rom 10:17).
- B. The Spirit enables Christians to experience a new birth through the word (1 Pet 1:23): “. . . having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth . . .”
- C. The Spirit gives spiritual light by means of the word (Psa 119:130).
- D. He provides wisdom through the medium of the word: “But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim 3:14-15).
- E. The psalmist wrote, “The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple” (Psa 19:7).
- F. The Spirit converts us with the word: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul:” (Psa 19:7a).
 1. With His word He opens our eyes to the truth (Psa 19:8).

2. God's Spirit gives His people spiritual understanding through the word: "Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way" (Psa 119:104).
- G. The Spirit enlivens us spiritually through the ministry of His word (Psa 119:50).
 - H. Through the word of God the Spirit saves us: "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls" (Jas 1:21).
 - I. Through the ministry of the word the Spirit sanctifies us (Jn 17:17).
 - J. Through the medium of the word Christians are purified (1 Pet 1:22).
 - K. The word is the medium employed by the Spirit to free us from sin (Rom 6:17-18).
 - L. The Holy Spirit imparts the divine nature to Christians through the agency of the word: "Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust" (2 Pet 1:4).
 - M. He uses the word to fit us for glory: "And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).
 - N. The medium of the word strengthens us within: "Strengthen me according to thy words" (Psa 119:28).
 - O. These passages cover things the Spirit does for us in conversion and edification.
 1. The Spirit accomplishes each through the ministry of His word.
 2. Are you willing to let the Bible say what it says?
 3. Are you willing to allow God to accomplish mighty deeds through the ministry of His word if that suits His purposes?
 4. A friend exclaims, "Noting the Spirit does these things through the word does not prove He does not work in some additional way in conversion and sanctification."

- a. I am not obligated to make the other side's case.
 - b. I have shown what the Bible says about how the Spirit operates through the word.
 - c. The passages are explicit.
 - d. They are clear and concise.
 - e. It is easy to make emotive assertions about the actions of the Spirit. It is another matter to sustain those assertions.
 - (1) It is up to the other side to show evidence for the Spirit acting in conversion and edification in some other way.
 - (2) The Bible does not teach it!
 - (3) They are left with feelings.
 - (4) Feelings are unreliable.
3. It is not helpful to think you can receive the Spirit's strengthening within, without taking the word of the Spirit into your heart.
- a. The Spirit gave the word, dwells in it and imparts His spiritual blessings through it.
 - b. Will you accept His testimony?
4. Whenever we discuss spiritual matters let us guard our hearts against partisanship.
- a. May we never be provoked into lashing out in a devilish way toward Christian brothers.
 - b. Let all of us determine that our attitudes, words and deeds will reflect the Christ we all claim to serve.
 - c. Let us be sure the spirit directing us is the Holy Spirit.

IV. SOME CHRISTIANS THINK THOSE WHO BELIEVE THE SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH HIS WORD IN CONVERSION AND EDIFICATION DO NOT BELIEVE GOD ACTUALLY DOES ANYTHING FOR CHRISTIANS.

- A. This is not correct.
- B. All who accept the Bible as God's word believe He provides for His people.
 - 1. This provision is ongoing and ever present
 - 2. We are incapable of discerning when, where or precisely how God adjusts, manages and maintains the universe, but we know He does it.
 - 3. We also know He is mindful of His people.
 - 4. But this relates to what God does for us, not what is done to us or in us.
- C. Everything allegedly done directly by the Lord in conversion and edification is done through the Word.
 - 1. That is what the Bible teaches.
 - 2. Are we willing to accept what God said?
- V. Consider how the Spirit strengthens us through His word.
 - A. He is active in the new birth of every Christian. "Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (Jn 3:5).
 - 1. This is a direct statement of radical change.
 - 2. It is so radical that it is called a "new birth."
 - 3. In this new birth you must be reborn in heart, mind and body.
 - B. The word of God reveals how. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jn 1:12-13).
 - 1. God the Father gives us all things.
 - 2. Sometimes He does it directly.
 - 3. Sometimes it is done through an agent.

4. The Holy Spirit is His agent here.
 5. But, an agent may work through an instrument also.
 6. In this case the instrument is the word. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently; having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (1 Pet 1:22-23).
- C. How does the Holy Spirit produce change in a man through the agency of His word?
1. The mind is necessarily involved.
 2. The mind must be born again out of unbelief.
 3. The proclamation of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, according to the Bible breaks up unbelief.
 - a. This produces the conviction the gospel is true.
 - b. When the mind changes from unbelief to faith the mind is reborn.
- D. What of the heart?
1. It is unregenerate.
 2. It is either indifferent or hateful toward the gospel.
 3. The gospel sets forth God's love in Christ and the beauty of His sacrifice.
 4. This changes an apathetic or hateful heart to one that loves the Lord.
 5. Thus the heart is reborn.
- E. What of the body?
1. If the body is reborn, some element must be employed that acts directly upon it.

2. Hence the Savior says, "... born of water and the Spirit" because water can act on the body.
3. With heart and mind changed by the Spirit working through the gospel, and the body solemnly consecrated to God in water, the man is born again – all of him.
4. This is accomplished as the Spirit works in and through the gospel.

VI. WE ARE STRENGTHENED AS THE SPIRIT "BEARS WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRITS THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS" (ROM 8:16).

- A. This passage does not say the Holy Spirit bears witness *to* our spirits.
 1. It says the Holy Spirit bears witness *with* our spirits.
 2. Many mistakenly measure the witness of the Spirit by their feelings and emotions.
 3. If they feel good it is evidence to them of the Spirit's testimony; but, if they frequently feel bad whose testimony is that?
 4. Feelings and emotions come and go like the waves of the sea.
 5. Words remain. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away," says the Lord.
 6. A man should feel right because he knows he is right and not know he is right because he feels right.
- B. We have two witnesses concerning our being children of God: there is the Holy Spirit and there is our spirit.
 1. The Holy Spirit testifies as to who is a child of God; our own spirits testify as to what we are.
 2. If our spirits testify we are of the character the Holy Spirit says belongs to a Christian, then we have the testimony of the Holy Spirit bearing with our spirit that we are God's children.
 3. The Spirit's testimony, in the nature of the case, must be general.

- a. He testifies that whoever believes in Christ, repents of his sins, confesses his faith and is baptized for the remission of sins is a child of God.
 - b. He further testifies that such a one must continue to walk in the light to be saved.
 - c. Your spirit, likewise, must bear witness to your position on each of these points.
 - d. It must say whether you believe, whether you have repented, confessed and been baptized for forgiveness of sins.
 - e. It must testify as to your walking in light or darkness.
4. Someone objects, "Is that all the witness of the Spirit mentioned by the apostles means?"
- a. Yes, that is all.
 - b. What more could you want?
- C. Another argues, "I want something more than the mere word; I want to be saved like the thief on the cross."
- 1. "How do you know the thief on the cross was saved?" you ask.
 - 2. "Oh, the Bible says so," he replies.
 - 3. Exactly!
 - a. But that is only the testimony of the "mere word."
 - b. You have as much testimony for your own salvation as you have for the thief on the cross.
 - c. God's word testifies in both cases.
 - d. It is impossible to have greater testimony.
 - 4. Suppose God the Father transported you directly to heaven and sat you atop His great white throne.
 - 5. Further, suppose He proclaimed, "My child your sins are forgiven," before the numberless angelic host.

- a. You still have the “mere word” of God.
 - b. Criticisms of this word arise from unbelief.
 - c. It is not wise to make such criticisms.
- D. The Spirit intercedes for us.
- 1. This is not a work done *in* us or *on* us.
 - 2. It is done *for* us before God’s throne.
 - 3. I cannot dogmatically assert how He does it, but Paul says He does it according to the will of God.
 - 4. This appeals to our faith, not our experience.
 - a. It cannot be uttered; we can rest upon it and draw comfort from it as a child draws strength from his mother’s breast.
 - b. We can also draw comfort from knowing Christ “ever liveth to make intercession for us,” though we have no sensory knowledge of how.
- E. The Holy Spirit works to “change us from glory to glory” (2 Cor 3:18).
- 1. This figure is taken from the process of ancient mirror making.
 - 2. Coarse metal was worked and polished until one could see his reflection.
 - 3. So it is with Christians. We enter the great foundry of God as a rough block.
 - a. In the polishing process we begin to reflect the image of the Master more and more.
 - b. Remember Peter, Paul and John?
- F. Paul prayed the Holy Spirit would strengthen the Ephesians just as He strengthened their elders and just as He strengthens us (Acts 20:32).

1. When Paul knew he would not see them again he commended them to God “and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up” (Acts 20:32).
 2. He told the Corinthians, “Which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words” (1 Cor 2:13).
 3. The Spirit’s words are life: “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life” (Jn 6:63).
- G. The Holy Spirit will one day “quicken our mortal bodies” (Rom 8:11).
1. Hear Paul - “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”
 2. The Holy Spirit has always been with us, watching over us.
 3. He will never leave us. He will raise our bodies from the dead and fashion our vile bodies like unto the glorious body of the Lord.
 4. It does not matter that our bodies are buried in the unfathomed depths of the sea or lie on some unmarked mountain peak unknown to any man, the place is known to the Holy Spirit.
 5. He will quicken our bodies and present us faultless before God’s throne.
 6. It is hurtful to think you can receive the Holy Spirit’s strengthening without taking the word of the Spirit into your heart.
 - a. The Spirit gave the word.
 - b. He dwells in the word.
 - c. He imparts His spiritual blessings through it.
 - d. Will you walk according to the words of the Spirit and be strengthened within?

CHAPTER V WITHOUT MEANS?

INTRODUCTION.

- A. It was not surprising when Darryl Tippens went publicly awry concerning the Holy Spirit's mode of operation.
 - 1. At a Christian Scholars Conference he said: "Through spiritual illumination we can transcend the hermeneutic circle...still we can 'by faith' testify that we have encountered and have experienced the Divine, the 'transcendental signified.'"
 - 2. This view is popular with postmodern Christians.
 - 3. They do not honor the inerrancy of the Bible; but some source of authority is required.
 - 4. Consequently they claim a direct leading from the Holy Spirit.
 - 5. If you object to their efforts to reduce the Lord's church to a tepid "me, too" denomination, they seek justification claiming to "be led by the Spirit."

- B. Post-modern change agents are not alone in claiming direct leading from the Spirit.
 - 1. Some stalwart defenders of biblical inerrancy and vigorous champions of truth also assert direct intervention from the Holy Spirit within their spirits.
 - 2. I say "assert" because they can provide no proof.
 - 3. No signs, wonders or miracles substantiate their assertions.
 - 4. They claim to possess a spiritual gift they cannot demonstrate.

- C. They and post-modern change agents claim the same gift, the same direct intervention by the Holy Spirit, yet they teach different doctrines and pursue opposing agendas.
 - 1. It is closely parallel to what we see in the denominational world.
 - 2. Multitudes of denominational partisans claim direct leading from the Holy Spirit.

3. Both Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson claim God led them into the political arena.
 4. Yet, Jackson is a liberal Democrat and Robertson is a conservative Republican.
 5. Life is stranger than fiction.
- D. A brother supplied an argument for the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
1. He said it has been published abroad, but no one has successfully answered it.
 2. The argument is untrue.
 3. Before examining the argument, it is presented here:

I. DIRECT OPERATION ARGUMENT.

- A. “If the word of God can directly affect the human heart, and the Holy Spirit indwells a saint’s heart in conjunction with the word, and the word alone in a heart cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit, and the saint must produce the fruit of the Spirit THEN the Holy Spirit must directly affect a saint’s heart.
- B. “The word of God can directly affect the human heart (Psa 119:11; Acts 2:37), and the Holy Spirit indwells a saint’s heart in conjunction with the word (Acts 2:38; 1 Thess 4:8; Eph 5:17-19; Col 3:16-17), and the word alone in a heart cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit (Jn 15:1ff; Rom 8:9-11; Mt 7:16-20) and the saint must produce the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-25).”
- C. “Then the Holy Spirit must directly affect a saint’s heart.”

II. THIS ARGUMENT IS FLAWED BECAUSE ITS CONTENTS ARE UNTRUE.

- A. Not one proposition offered in support of the minor premise is true.
 1. The passages cited do not support the assertions made in the propositions.
 2. The exegesis of those passages is flawed, often ignoring the immediate and remote contexts of those same passages.

- B. First, he says, “The word of God can directly affect the human heart (Psa 119:11; Acts 2:37).”
- C. This is true provided “directly affect” is properly defined (see 1 Cor 1:21; Rom 1:16).
- D. Second, my brother set forth a series of propositions seeking to support his minor premise, each of which is wrong.
1. He says, “The Holy Spirit indwells a saint’s heart in conjunction with the word (Acts 2:38; 1 Thess 4:8; Eph 5:17-19; Col 3:16-17)...”
 2. This is incorrect.
 3. The Holy Spirit indwells the Christian *through* the word of God and *not in conjunction with it* as alleged.
 - a. Acts 2:38 refers to the promises and privileges associated with being God’s child, not the person of the very God.
 - b. It is parallel to Acts 3:19.
 - c. It does not speak of a supra-literary operation of the Holy Spirit. (Supra-literary = above, beyond or transcending God’s written word.)
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 4:8 does not hint at the Spirit operating in a supra-literary way in conversion and edification (note – “operating” does not equal “indwelling”).
 - (1) In the context God gave His apostles the gift of inspiration.
 - (2) It came through the agency of the Spirit that they might know the mind of God.
 - (3) They revealed the will of God to men.
 - (4) When men rejected the teaching of Spirit inspired apostles, they rejected God not men.
 - (5) This passage does not support the notion of a direct supra-literary influence from the Holy Spirit.

- e. Ephesians 5:17-19 does not teach a supra-literary operation of the Spirit in conversion and edification either.
- (1) The guiding thought is in verse 18, “be filled with the Spirit” (be “filled” *plerousthe*, is a second person plural present imperative verb).
 - (2) The imperative verb is followed by five plural participles which, agreeing with the verb, also have imperative force.
 - (3) These are: speaking (*lalountes*), singing (*adontes*), making melody (*psallontes*), giving thanks (*eucharistountes*) and submitting yourselves (*hupotassomeni*).
 - (4) Paul commands the Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit and tells them precisely how to do it: “...speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs...”
 - (5) There is no direct operation of the Holy Spirit here.
- f. Colossians 3:16 parallels Ephesians 5:18-19 at several important points.
- (1) “Let dwell” is *enoikeito*, third person singular present imperative verb.
 - (2) The expression translated “in you” is from *enhumin* signifying “in all of you.”
 - (3) Whatever is to be done, is to be done by all the assembled saints.
 - (4) There are two present participles which share the imperative force of the leading verb. They are “teaching and admonishing.”
 - (5) The word of Christ is to dwell in them “teaching and admonishing” them.
 - (6) There is no direct supra-literary action by the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the word in this passage.

- E. Third, my brother says, “The word alone in a heart cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit (Jn 15:1ff; Rom 8:9-11; Mt 7:16-20)...”
1. This is an unproven assertion without support from the passages cited.
 2. John 15:1ff has nothing to do with the indwelling or operative mode of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The fruit is the fruit of evangelism consistent with John 4:34-38.
 - b. Fruit may not, in this context, be viewed exclusively as the manifestation of Christian graces and holy living, though this would be included.
 - c. A more comprehensive meaning is included, namely, producing more Christians.
 - d. Conversions are the fruit Christ had in view.
 - e. One cannot assume every occurrence of the word “fruit” is talking about fruit of the Holy Spirit.
 - f. Even where spiritual fruit is discussed, a determination must be made as to whether it is fruit of God’s Spirit or of man’s own spirit.
 - (1) In John 15:1ff Jesus notes that disciples abide in Him as His words abide in them.
 - (2) They produce fruit preaching the words of Christ.
 - (3) It is Christ’s words that produce the fruit.
 - (4) There is no direct supra-literary action of the Holy Spirit in the passage.
 3. Romans 8:9-11 does not sustain my brother’s assertion.
 - a. Paul tells us how to determine whether we are fleshly or spiritually minded.
 - b. One is spiritually minded when the Spirit indwells him.

- c. I believe in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as strongly as my friend does.
- d. The question is how does the Spirit indwell – through means or without means?
 - (1) This passage asserts the fact of the Spirit's indwelling and says nothing of the mode and operation of that indwelling.
 - (2) My brother neglects the context which says, "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom 8:2).
 - (3) Paul is contrasting a spiritual man with a carnal one.
 - (4) The fleshly man is dead because of sin, yet the spiritual man is alive because of righteousness.
- e. Verse 11 is an allusion to the Lord's words in John 5:21.
 - (1) There speaking of the spiritual resurrection He says, "As the father raiseth and maketh alive the dead, even so the Son maketh alive whom he will," namely, from the death of sin as is plain from verse 25.
 - (2) Paul told the Romans in verse 10 that by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them their body was dead with respect to sin.
 - (3) Here, lest they fancy death indisposed their bodies for works of righteousness, he added, "If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you – He will make even your mortal bodies alive," namely to perform works of righteousness.
 - (4) Note also – "through his Spirit who dwells in you."
 - (5) Paul told them "sin dwelling in them" (Rom 7:17) was the ruling principle from which all their actions formally proceeded.
 - (4) But now "the Spirit of God dwelling in them" was the principle which directed both their body and soul.

- f. And, as under a sense of indwelling sin, they had cried out, “Who will deliver me from the body of this death?”
 - (1) It is now, “God will make alive even my dead body, my animal faculties and appetites, so that they become subservient to the spiritual life.”
 - (2) It is flawed biblical exegesis to say the Father and Son indwell and operate representatively and then insist the Spirit must indwell and operate directly.
 - (3) It is an unsubstantiated assertion.
 - (4) It is inconsistent with Paul in Romans 6:1-6, Colossians 2:8-13 and Galatians 5:22-25.
 - (5) There is no supra-literary direct action of the Holy Spirit in this passage.

- 4. Matthew 7:16-20 does not consider the Spirit’s indwelling or mode of operation.
 - a. It is a warning flowing naturally out of what immediately precedes it.
 - b. The broad way has its advocates.
 - c. Christians must recognize them for who they are.
 - d. They are disguised and there is one sure test – their fruit.
 - (1) The proper way to heed the admonition is for the sheep to know the Shepherd’s voice.
 - (2) To do this they must know His word.
 - (3) The remainder of the Sermon on the Mount (inspired words) is devoted to things that enable a child of God to distinguish true teachers from the false teachers.
 - (4) The inspired words perform this essential service.
 - e. Note also Jesus says evil persons do some good things like providing good things for their children (7:11).

- (1) He does not say aliens are incapable of doing any good.
 - (2) If He had we would be forced to accept the doctrine of total hereditary depravity.
 - (3) Also remember true prophets, favored by a direct influence from the Holy Spirit, sometimes sinned.
 - (4) Peter sinned (Gal 2:11-14), so did John (1 Jn 1:8-10).
 - (5) To say an alien can do nothing good means he is unable, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to obey the gospel.
 - (6) This passage does not sustain my brother's assertion.
5. Galatians 5:22-25 is the linchpin of my friend's theology of the Holy Spirit.
- a. Again he assumes what must be proved.
 - b. One cannot assume every time he sees the word "fruit" or "spirit" that the Holy Spirit is in view.
 - c. Our wretchedness is the result of allowing the flesh to prevail in the struggle between good and evil.
 - d. Each man is responsible for his own sin – not some outside power.
 - (1) If this were not so we could not justly be held accountable.
 - (2) What is true of "works of the flesh" (Gal 5:19-23) is equally true of "the fruit of the spirit."
 - (3) Goodness is not imposed by a power outside us.
 - (4) Righteousness arises within as it is informed by divine revelation, which is righteousness (Psa 119:172).
 - (5) If "works of the flesh" is human flesh then the "fruit of the spirit" in this context must be the human spirit.

6. “For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would” (Gal 5:17).
 - a. Human flesh is contrary to human spirit.
 - b. Flesh would have us do vulgar things, but human spirit would have us do ethereal things.
 - c. They fight one another.
 - d. This explains how we may observe good traits in people who are dead in sin, and how reborn souls show flashes of corruption.
 - e. The God-given (Heb 12:9; Ecc 1:7) unsaved spirit is still the child of God (though erring) and hungers for things bright and beautiful.
 - f. The twice-born spirit of the redeemed lives in a physical body in a fallen world which occasionally surprises him into sinning.

7. Everyone wages a war between flesh and spirit (Gal 5:17).
 - a. The flesh in this context is human contrasted with the spirit, which is also human.
 - b. The Holy Spirit is not in view.
 - c. Human flesh is contrasted with human spirit.
 - d. The struggle is between good and devil.
 - e. Self-control is dominating the flesh by refusing to yield to its covetousness allowing the spirit to excel as we give way to its noble yearnings – morality or integrity.
 - f. The direct supra-literary operation is not here.

- F. My brother’s argument ends with, “... then the Holy Spirit must directly affect a saint’s heart.”
 1. The conclusion does not follow.

2. The passages cited do not sustain his case.
3. It must be understood a direct operation of the Spirit is miraculous.
 - a. The direct work of the Spirit means something immediately happens in the material world apart from the normal process of natural law.
 - b. Therefore, there is no such thing as a direct non-miraculous work of God.
4. The Spirit works on the moral behavior of man in an indirect manner through means.
 - a. This preserves the free moral agency of man and upholds God's justice.
 - b. Through the means of natural law God has worked to affect the material world.
 - c. This work is indirect.
 - d. It is not miraculous.
 - e. However, change occurs.
 - f. In the same manner, God works through medium to change the moral behavior of man.
5. In the moral realm God works through moral law to affect the moral conduct of man.
 - a. His work is indirect.
 - b. It is through the medium of inspired words.
 - c. Moral change occurs.
 - d. However, this change is not miraculous.
 - e. Through means of the intelligible communication of words, the Spirit directs and leads the behavior of submitted men.
6. To be more specific, the Spirit operates on the heart of the sinner and the saint through the medium of revealed truth.

- a. Before the New Testament was written the Holy Spirit operated through inspired men.
- b. Now he operates through His inspired book.
- c. Even when the Holy Spirit operated miraculously through inspired men He did not operate in conversion and edification apart from His word.
- d. Miraculous signs and wonders revealed and confirmed the word by which sinners were converted and saints were edified.

CONCLUSION.

- A. My brother's argument is flawed.
- B. No proposition offered in support of his minor premise is true.
- C. The passages cited do not support the assertions made in the propositions.
- D. The exegesis of the passages is flawed, often ignoring the immediate and remote contexts of those same passages.
- E. The welfare of the church is greatly dependent upon our coming to advocate what the Bible says about the work of the indwelling Spirit.
- F. Therefore, let us speak where the Bible speaks; remaining silent where the Bible is silent.

CHAPTER VI CONCERNING METHODS

I. THE VALUE OF METHOD.

- A. Definition of method: an orderly procedure or process; a rational way of investigating or exhibiting truth; regular mode or manner of doing anything; characteristic manner.
- B. I use the word to indicate the arrangement or plan of investigation.
- C. It is the system by which facts are to be introduced and conclusions reached.
- D. Method is superior to rule.
 - 1. Methods are general and rules are special, hence the method governs all rules or directs their use.
 - 2. One of the weaknesses of hermeneutics is the want of system or of any thought that system is necessary in the study of the Scriptures.
 - 3. Rules have been furnished in abundance, but the great need has been for a method.
 - 4. An army might have all the rules necessary to success – marching, camping, cooking, fighting – but, without method, they would not unite against any foe or conduct a campaign with any profitable results.

II. WHY METHOD HAS NOT BEEN EMPLOYED.

- A. Several superstitions seem to have combined to prevent the world from the exercise of common sense in dealing with the word of God.
- B. The idea that it is a supernatural book, and must have a supernatural interpretation, has done much to weaken efforts at close and profitable study of the Bible.
- C. It has been regarded as the right of those who have been divinely appointed to bring out its meaning and that it would be presumption for others to meddle with their prerogatives.

- D. Men have looked upon the Bible as not having been given according to any plan.
 - 1. They have regarded it as a mass of truth irregularly thrown together.
 - 2. Further, they hold we are as apt to find its meaning without system in our investigation as with it.
 - 3. Understanding the meaning of the Scriptures is more a question of genius, or accident, than of study or research.
- E. Others, as we will see, have looked upon the Bible as a blind parable and, if it means anything, then it is as likely to mean one thing as another.
 - 1. They would not think of treating any other book in this way.
 - 2. When they read books of law and medicine they suppose intelligence, and a wish to communicate made the author present his thought in a way most easily understood.
 - 3. Why they imagine God acted less sensibly than men in making their communications I cannot understand.
- F. More than any other thought or feeling, a want of sound faith has contributed to a wrong system of hermeneutics and even to the abolition of all systems.
 - 1. At a very early date philosophies were introduced as the equal of the teaching of the apostles.
 - 2. The schools of theology were not so much to study the Bible as to become acquainted with the views of their great men.

III. IMPROPER METHODS OF INTERPRETATION ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MUCH OF THE MISUNDERSTANDING RESPECTING THE MEANING AND INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

- A. These methods are used to sustain many things known to be false.
 - 1. When the enemies of our religion can defend themselves using our creeds we are helpless.
 - 2. When the Bible is made to teach that there are no good impulses in our nature and that we can no more believe than we can make a

world, except by direct spiritual influence from above, the logical mind concludes that if he fails to believe, the fault is not his.

3. If he is to be damned it will be for unbelief, which he could not help.
4. When we make the Bible teach a man cannot even think a good thought, by himself, the thinking world says your Bible teaches what every man knows to be false.
5. Supposing that the Scriptures have been fairly dealt with, the thinking man turns away from them in utter disgust.

B. Not only is the Bible made to teach what we know to be untrue, but also to contradict itself.

1. It is said that to come to God in any acceptable way we must not only believe that God is, but that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.
2. Then we are told that faith is a direct gift of God and that the only thing one can do to become a believer is ask God for faith by which he can be saved.
3. The logical mind balks at the sight of such confusion.
4. Supposing that the exegetes have done their work, then declare the Bible to be self-contradictory and sneer at the claims of inspiration made in its favor.

C. False methods have turned the Bible over to the clergy as a kind of convenient toy.

1. It is a wonder Christianity has outlived the treatment it has received at the hands of its friends!
2. From the beginning of the fifth century to the close of the fifteenth, real scriptural examination was almost entirely dispensed with.
3. As the philosophical puzzles of the day had little or nothing to do with the Scriptures, everything was left to those who had the time and were paid to attend to such things.
4. Men demand that the meaning of the Scriptures, instead of human notions, shall be presented.

5. When that voice is heard from the pew the pulpit will address itself to the task.
6. The question will not be, "What can I make out of the text?" But rather, "What has the text in it for me and the people?"
7. It will not be, "How can I display my genius in discovering some new way of filling the text with a meaning it never had?" But, "What did the Lord mean when He directed its use?"

IV. THE MYSTICAL METHOD.

- A. This originated in heathenism. Because of its origin it is called "mythical."
 1. It maintained no man could interpret the communications from deities unless he was *en rapport* with them.
 2. This gave position and prominence to men of "holy calling."
- B. The several reformations have removed some of this veneration for the priesthood but have not entirely removed the mistake. While we have ceased to regard ourselves as the subjects of priest-craft we continue a superstition quite akin to it.
 1. A common error remaining is that God's book is to be miraculously interpreted – that no one is competent to understand these things unless he has been called and divinely qualified for the task.
 2. It leaves us dependent upon those highly fortunate ones who have been "miraculously endowed" for the work.
 3. If this theory were true the Bible would be of no value whatsoever.
 4. The inspiration in these interpreters would be sufficient without any Bible.
 5. Hence, the effect of this theory has been to prevent the people from looking to the Bible for instruction.
- C. The evil results might be called legion, for they are many.
 1. All kinds of ambitious pretenders have found security under such claims.
 2. Sects and parties have grown from this seed in great abundance.

3. As these leaders have differed regarding the things of God many of their followers have been led into doubt and skepticism.
 4. If these “inspired” men cannot agree concerning the things their God wishes them to do, the common people cannot be expected to know anything about it.
 5. They know, too, that where there is contradiction there is falsehood, for it is not possible that truth should disagree with itself.
- D. If the Bible does not mean what it says there is no way by which we can know what it does mean.
1. Indeed, if it is a revelation at all, then it must signify just what such words would mean if found in another book.
 2. If they have any other meaning they were absolutely misleading.

V. THE ALLEGORICAL METHOD.

- A. This method treats the word of God as if it had only been intended to be a kind of combination of metaphors – a splendid riddle.
- B. Interpreting by this method is not exegesis, but eisegesis – they do not obtain the meaning of the text but thrust something into it.
1. What the Bible may mean to any man will depend upon what the man would like to have it mean.
 2. The genius that would be able to make one thing out of it would be able to make it have the opposite meaning if he preferred.
 3. Clement of Alexandria maintained that the law of Moses had a fourfold significance – natural, mystical, moral and prophetic.
 4. Origen held that the Scriptures had a threefold meaning - answering to the body, soul and spirit of man; hence the meanings were physical, moral and spiritual.
 5. These are erroneous assertions.

VI. SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION.

- A. This method differs only in liberality from the Mystical.

- B. Instead of supposing that a few persons are favored above the rest of mortals it regards such power to be within the reach of everyone.
- C. Piety and a possession of the light of God in the soul will enable everyone to understand the Scriptures in this spiritual way.
- D. With them it is not so much what the Lord has said, as what He revealed to them as the meaning of that language.
- E. The Quakers hold this idea firmly, though there are many who hold similar views in other churches now.
- F. It is strange that those who are thus enlightened of the Lord do not interpret the Bible in the same way.
 - 1. Spiritualizers are not bound by any law.
 - 2. Whatever may be the pious whim of the exegete he will be able to find it in the Bible.
 - 3. Everyone becomes a law of interpretation unto himself.
- G. The Bible is, of course, worth but little to them for the inward light in the soul of each one would be quite sufficient.
 - 1. When a man's practice is found to be contrary to some direct statement of the word of God, the easiest way to reconcile his conduct with Christian faith is to say that such a passage is "spiritual."
 - 2. By that he ordinarily means the text agrees with his practice, whatever may be its statement to the contrary.
 - 3. No one would think of dealing thus with any other book.
 - 4. Law, medicine, science, history, mechanics or anything else except religion must be submitted to the rules of common sense.
 - 5. Everywhere else words are supposed to have a meaning, to be interpreted by the laws of language, but this superstition relieves its disciples from any bondage to law respecting exegesis.

VII. THE HIERARCHICAL METHOD.

- A. This method differs from the Mystical, or Mythical, not so much in the manner of receiving the knowledge from heaven as in the assumption of authority in presenting it.
 - 1. It affirms that the church is the true exponent of the Scriptures.
 - 2. As the church was built before the New Testament Scriptures were finished and was appointed as their guardian it has, therefore, the right to interpret them.
- B. This interpretation is to be given by the priesthood.
- C. But, when priests are not agreed then there must be provision for a higher tribunal than the parish priest.
 - 1. If his opinion shall be doubted the bishop of that Holy See may settle the question.
 - 2. But even then there may be trouble.
 - 3. Bishops differ like other men. Then we will have to go to the archbishop, or the matter may be carried to the Pope, if it should merit the attention of the "Holy Father."
 - 4. The Pope, according to their theory, commits no more mistakes!
- D. After all, their decisions have been reached something like those of other people.
 - 1. Some have maintained that whatever has always been believed must necessarily be right.
 - 2. This has been a conservatism to retain the opinions of the past and prevent any further search for truth.
- E. Pinning our faith to the sleeves of the fathers is one of the features of this method that remains, to some extent, even among Protestants at the present time.
 - 1. While that which has been held to be true by good and competent men should not be hastily thrown aside, yet it may be utterly false.
 - 2. Many errors have lived long, simply for the lack of examination.

- F. This method is followed, not so much to find what the Scriptures mean, as to know what the Lord would have them believe and do as revealed through the church.
 - 1. The question is not, "What say the Scriptures?" but, "What saith the church?"
 - 2. While we would retain a proper respect for the opinions of good and great men, we cannot assent to this method of interpretation as it sets the word of God at naught to make room for the traditions of men.

- G. According to this method God has chosen strange ways of causing His people to understand the good and the right way.
 - 1. Even now there lingers the suspicion that the Lord directs His people in the line of duty and shows them that they are right while they do not follow the Scriptures.
 - 2. If we are to learn the will of the Lord in this way, what use have we for the Bible?

- H. This method stands in the way of Christian liberty.
 - 1. It prevents all investigation and hinders the people from knowing more of the word of God than they did during the dark ages.
 - 2. Of all methods of interpretation yet considered, if we shall call this a method, it is the most unreasonable and attended with the greatest amount of evil.

VIII. THE RATIONALISTIC METHOD.

- A. It is very nearly the rule of unbelief.
 - 1. Though many of these exegetes have professed to strive only to know the exact meaning of Scripture, they have done more to compel the Bible to harmonize with the latest philosophies than anything else.
 - 2. With them, "Nature is the standard and Reason the guide."
 - 3. If the Bible can be made to harmonize with the notions of the reasoner, then it is to be understood as meaning what it says; but if not, it is to be regarded as mythical.

4. The interpreters are the guide and rule of life and the Bible is merely called upon to sanction their conclusions, not that they feel themselves at all in need of its light and instruction.
5. To patronize believers a little, they quote their sacred books to show that, after all, they are not bad friends.
6. No man holding their views of the right to compare the Bible with the thoughts and feelings of men, and to compel the sacred text to agree with erring men, can have any particular conviction respecting its inspiration.

B. The theory of Strauss.

1. In his *Life of Jesus*, Strauss lays down the following rules to guide in the investigation.
 - a. "A narrative is not historical when its statements are irreconcilable with the known and universal laws which govern the course of events;
 - b. "when it is inconsistent with itself or with other accounts of the of the same thing,
 - c. "when the actors converse in poetry or elevated discourse unsuitable to their training or station;
 - d. "when the essential substance and ground work of a reported occurrence is either inconceivable in itself, or is in striking harmony with some Messianic idea of the Jews of that age."
3. According to David Friedrich Strauss no one can interpret the life of Jesus, or any other portion of the sacred volume, until he is a confirmed infidel.

C. Other theories of the same kind.

1. The theories of Kant, Baur, Renan, Schenkel and Eichhorn, while they may differ from each other in many things, have the same general plan of investigation.
2. Human reason is held to be superior to anything that can be revealed in the Bible.

3. We shall not deny that men have held this view as the right method of investigation; that is, that everything must be made to harmonize with something they call reason, but we do say that the rule is of no value whatsoever, as it determines beforehand what must be found and thereby limits all investigation.

D. Further objections to the Rationalistic Method.

1. No new truth or fact could be received; hence all investigation would be stopped.
2. Every discovery is at variance with some preconceived idea and, therefore, adverse to what some interpreter will regard as the eternal and universal law.
3. This new truth being opposed to his previous ignorance, it would be rejected on sight.
4. It is a wrong use of reason.
 - a. The critical ability of every investigator should be employed to determine whether the Bible is from God or man.
 - b. All the mental resources should be brought into requisition to ascertain what it teaches.
5. For a man to make his reason the guide and standard of all truth is to say that the reason of others is worthless – that he alone is the standard of appeal.
6. When a man decides that nothing at variance with his reason can be admitted as true, he asserts he has had all possible facts reported to his mind that can have any bearing on the subject and that he has properly considered them so that in their use no mistake could have occurred.
7. This is too assumptive for any modest man and, we might say, for any man of common sense.

IX. THE APOLOGETIC METHOD.

- A. It maintains the absolute perfection of all statements in the Bible.
1. It was brought into being by the Rationalistic Method, as the mind swings from one extreme to another.

2. As the former denied everything but what agreed with the views of the exegete, this view binds its adherents to everything and anything that can be found in the Bible and regards it all as from God.
 3. Whether the witch of Endor, Cain, Ahimelech, Laban, Esau, Judas Iscariot or the devil himself, everything is filled with inspired truth and made to serve as a perfect guide to the world.
 4. This is unreasonable.
 5. Much of the Bible was spoken by the enemies of God's people and, for the correctness of what they say, the Bible is in no way responsible.
 6. It has reported them correctly, and that is all it had to do in the matter.
 7. David did many things which were wrong and the Bible tells all about it.
 8. David was a favored man. That does not demand that he should have been perfect in all that he did.
- B. This method opposes one of the very first rules necessary to any fair and thorough investigation – TO KNOW WHO SPEAKS.
1. Was it the language of Balak or Moses; of one of the three comforters of Job?
 2. Was the man inspired?
 3. Did he claim to be?
 4. Was he truthful?
 5. Was he competent to speak on such a subject?
 6. Job's wife offered very poor advice and yet it is a part of the Bible.
 7. To regard it as authoritative is to do more than Job did, for he said she talked like a foolish woman.
- C. This method takes it for granted that if a man was ever inspired, then he always was.

1. A man might have been inspired for one message only, while all his life before and afterward may have been without such divine guidance.
2. Caiaphas once spoke by inspiration, as well as Balaam; but it does not follow that they always did.
3. The beast on which Balaam rode had an inspiration, but it was for one occasion only.

X. THE DOGMATIC METHOD.

- A. This method is noteworthy for two things: first it assumes the doctrine to be true; and, second, it regards it as certainly true by being proven.
 1. It has, indeed, been the rule that that which was desired to be found, was looked for, and the conclusions reached were those that were desired at the beginning.
 2. Men have been able to find what they have looked for.
- B. It came into existence during the dark ages when speculators and Christian philosophers were the only guides of the people.
 1. These were soon found to differ from each other.
 2. There must be found some way to test the correctness of the positions taken.
 3. This correctness was determined by argument, tradition and Scripture.
- C. It has been kept alive by the same power that brought it into existence.
 1. The desire to rule in spiritual matters made it necessary for leaders and parties.
 2. But, men and parties hold and teach doctrines nowhere found in the Bible, so they must do something to support their theories.
 3. To go to a plain reading of the word of the living God for support would be ruinous.
 4. The assertion is made, and then something is found that sounds like the position already announced.

5. This is satisfactory to those who want the theory sustained.
- D. This method was begun in Catholicism and is continued in Protestantism.
- E. Truth has been found in this way and yet the manner of investigation has been a great hindrance.
1. It should be said that men have found truth in opposition to the method rather than by it.
 2. If we start out to find some particular doctrine or dogma in the Scriptures we shall probably find it.
 3. It may not be there; there may not be anything on the subject, but we can find a hundred things that comport with that thought and therefore conclude that it must be true.
- F. This does not indicate that the Scriptures speak in riddles or that they are not clear.
1. Such misuse may be made of any book.
 2. A man may not only prove anything he wishes by the Bible, but he may do so by any other book if he will treat it in the same way.
- G. It exalts traditions and speculations of men to an equality with the word of God.
1. In the heat of argument, with a determination to find a theory in the Scriptures, anything is accepted as proof.
 2. The fathers, the canonized authorities, the practice of the church – anything, to save the doctrine from which we are determined not to part.
- H. This method very greatly hinders the unity of the people of the Lord.
1. Much as we dislike to own it we maintain our creeds by its use.
 2. It serves us, not as a means of ascertaining the meaning of the Bible, but as a means of supporting our theories.
 3. The Bible may know nothing about the doctrine but it is kept alive by this method of assumption and proof.

- I. The Bible is not a book of proof for doctrines but is the doctrine of God itself.
 - 1. We are to go to God's book, not in search of our views with the intent to find them in some way or other, but to go to it for what it has in it for us.
 - 2. Many of the interpreters of prophecy are prophets first and then they go to the Bible to see if they can get the old prophets to agree with the new ones.
 - 3. Of course they always succeed.

- J. Notice the manner in which it is done.
 - 1. Conclusions are reached without the facts necessary to warrant them.
 - 2. Sometimes it is by a mere jingle of words, something like the theory.
 - 3. The exegete supposes that the author has his subject under contemplation, for what else could he be thinking about?
 - 4. In this way one man frequently misrepresents another – he hears a statement made, which, if associated with a position of his, a certain doctrine would be advocated.
 - 5. Then it is common to clothe that thought in one's own speech and say that a certain man taught it.

- K. Dogmatism first determines what it is willing to find in the Scriptures and then goes to work at once to find nothing else there and even to refuse that anything else shall be found.
 - 1. It is just as difficult for a man to be made to believe what he does not want to believe as it is to cause him to throw away long cherished opinions.
 - 2. No investigation will ever be worthy while conducted under this controlling power of prejudice.

- L. Liberalism is just as dogmatic as the most orthodox creed.

1. They who boast of their liberality are, many times, the most narrow and unreasonable bigots.
2. It is plain that they have reached their views without the tedium of the introduction of facts and the uncompromising use of logic, but have simply jumped to their conclusions without any such examination.
3. They are determined that the rest of the world shall adopt their views of liberality.
4. Those who are not able to do so are called "legalists."
5. When others fail to adopt their liberal ideas and still cling to the word of the Lord and the ordinances as they were first commanded, they are called bigots.
6. This is the way dogmatists quite commonly deceive themselves.

XI. LITERAL INTERPRETATION.

- A. This is most commonly employed by dogmatists in order to maintain a view that cannot be supported in any other way.
- B. It makes all the language of the Bible literal.
 1. It treats the word of God as if it were an essay on chemistry or mechanics.
 2. They do not stop to consider that God spoke to men in their own language and by such methods of speech as would render the thoughts of God most easily understood.
 3. If they would read Oriental writings on any other subject they would be convinced that much of it is highly figurative.
 4. These exegetes do not pretend that David's heart melted within him like wax; that all his bones were out of joint and were staring him in the face; that he was a worm; for they have no theory dependent upon the literal use of these figures.
 5. But let their theory be involved for a moment and then, if the literal meaning will avail them anything, they will use it and deny that any other is possible.

6. The disposition manifested by materialists does not differ much from the spirit of dogmatists generally.
7. Everywhere the aim is to carry the point and maintain the doctrine, whatever may come of Scripture truth.
8. Not one of these persons would think for a moment of interpreting the words of a friend in that way.
9. A letter having been received from father or brother, they would feel insulted if anyone should insist on such a mode of interpretation.
10. With such a communication before them the question would be, "What does the writer mean," not, "What can we make him mean?"
11. Much of the Bible is written in highly figurative language.
12. Not to recognize the fact and treat the language according to the figures employed is to fail entirely in the exegesis.

XII. THE INDUCTIVE METHOD.

- A. What is it? A leading or drawing of a general fact from a number of instances, or summing up the result of observations and experiments.
 1. In the uses of this method of interpretation all the facts are reported and, from them, the conclusion is to be reached.
 2. During the time of the collection of these facts there will be uncertainty as to whether some of them are facts or not.
 3. When the whole number of facts are reported it is probable that all the facts will stand approved and the guesses that were incorrect will be found to be wanting in the necessary evidences and will be easily thrown aside.
 4. We will not only induce or bring in all the facts, but we will reach conclusions as to truth from these.
- B. The law of analogy. Everything must be found to agree.
 1. Harmony is one of the first demands of truth.
 2. Two truths are never contradictory.

3. No interpretation can be true which does not harmonize with all known facts.
- C. This method demands that all facts shall be reported.
1. It assures if all facts are reported and permitted to speak for themselves, error will not be possible.
 2. The method demands that when all the facts cannot be had, as many shall be reported as possible.
 3. Before reaching a conclusion all facts attainable should be gathered.
- D. To always heed this command is difficult.
1. Men have ever been ready to deduce without having properly induced.
 2. From a partial introduction of facts we have really no report at all.
- E. The inductive method has long been used in almost all departments of investigation except that of theology.
1. Many passages from great jurists of the world show they follow this method in the interpretation of law.
 2. When witnesses give testimony in our common courts they are sworn to tell "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."
 3. This demand is made upon the presumption that the only way of dispensing justice is to render a decision according to all the facts.
 4. The great teachers in the science of medicine have long held to this method of investigation.
 5. The things already said of law and medicine may be truly said of political science, history or any other science or study that engages the attention of man.
 6. Facts alone are supposed to guide men in forming their conclusions.
 7. The Bible recognizes the correctness of this method.

8. When Jesus appeared to the two disciples as they went into the country He expounded to them all things found in the law and the prophets concerning Himself (Lk 24).
 9. He introduced all facts from that divine source that would bear upon their minds so that they might understand the truth.
 10. When Moses wished to prepare Israel to go over into the land of Canaan and inherit it according to the promise of the Lord, he made to them three speeches which constitute nearly the whole book of Deuteronomy.
 11. In these speeches he brings before their minds nearly all their history, with all the obligations that rested upon them to keep the commandments of the Lord.
 12. He does this that they may have all the facts in the case before them so that they may be guided thereby.
 13. It is everywhere apparent that when the Lord would conduct an investigation on any subject He did it by the inductive method.
- F. Inference may be used legitimately in the ascertainment of facts and also in the conclusions reached from them.
1. Abraham went down from Canaan into Egypt; when he came out from that country Lot returned with him.
 2. Though it is not said that Lot went into Egypt with him, we infer it.
 3. We are about as certain of this fact as we are that Abraham went there.
 4. Things assumed in the Bible are to be regarded the same as those which have been stated.
 5. In the first verse of the Bible it is said that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
 6. It is not stated that God existed; that He had the wisdom and power to accomplish this work; but it is assumed, and being assumed, no interpreter has the right to call it in question.
 7. Anything God takes for granted is true; hence, anything which He has assumed or taken for granted we are bound to regard as true.

- a. God has everywhere treated man as if he could repent.
 - b. He has nowhere said that man could not repent.
 - c. He has commanded all men everywhere to repent.
 - d. Thus, man can and must repent.
8. An honest heart is necessary to the reception of the truth.
- a. It is never stated in so many words.
 - b. Yet every attentive reader of the Scriptures recognizes the correctness of the statement at once.
9. Man's general wants are assumed.
- a. God does not stop to inform man that he is weak and wayward, that he is in need of a government to control and protect him.
 - b. He simply gives him that government and protection, and furnishes the necessary instruction respecting man's condition by the things He does for him.
- G. When a result is spoken which is commonly attributed to several causes, though in mentioning the result, at a given time, no cause should be assigned: they are understood to be present.
- 1. If we find the result, and yet one or two of the causes are not mentioned, it is taken for granted that they were present.
 - 2. They have been associated with the result as causes and, though not mentioned in a given case, we assume that these unmentioned causes were present.
- H. Religious truth may be gathered from approved precedent.
- 1. We learn from the authorized conduct of the children of God.
 - 2. If we can first be assured that what is done is approved, we can know certainly what we are at liberty to do likewise under similar circumstances.

3. Indeed, if the conduct has been directed by men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we learn from the example what we ought to do.
4. If the will of God has undergone no change since the New Covenant was completed, what His will was then is what His will is now.
5. If those men did that will, and we do the same now, we will be accomplishing His pleasure.
6. There is need of caution.
 - a. Because a man has been inspired for a given work, or a single message, it does not follow that he is always under the direction of such wisdom.
 - b. When Elijah directed the contest on the top of Carmel and saw the plentiful rain in the little cloud hanging over the Mediterranean, he was inspired.
 - c. But when he was frightened at the threat of Jezebel and fled to the Mount of God in the wilderness of Sinai, he acted on his own emotion for God did not approve of his course.
7. We must also be careful not to confuse mere incidents or accidents with the approved precedents.
 - a. The disciples met together in an upper room in Jerusalem, and so they did at Troas, but that does not make it binding on the disciples of today to meet in upper rooms.
 - b. These were accidents or conveniences.
 - c. The Master took all his journeys on foot, but it does not follow that we are at liberty to travel only in that way.
8. There are things which they did not do, yet which it would be perfectly right for us to do.
 - a. The apostles built no church houses or colleges, but this is not proof that the existence of these things is offensive to God.
 - b. How shall we determine what is an approved precedent?

- c. Those actions performed by the apostles, or other disciples in their day, which have a divine approval or an action by an inspired man which is nowhere opposed is approved.
 - d. Customs of the church under the eye and sanction of apostles.
 - e. A general custom is established in harmony with that which is allowed, taught, approved by the many.
 - f. If we find the whole church engaged in a common custom in religious service we can certainly know that such was the custom everywhere among the disciples in the days of the apostles.
 - g. Such practice will certainly show what the will of God is.
- I. To know the meaning of any statement we should know what the author was trying to say.
- J. In searching for causes, that upon which all facts agree is the cause or one of the causes.
- 1. If any known fact denies that it was one of the causes, then it must be dismissed from such a responsible position.
 - 2. If any fact claims it as a cause, then it must be so enrolled.
- K. We are not to reject a cause for the want of philosophical probability when a miracle is declared or assumed to be present.
- 1. When they came to cross the sea Moses was told to stretch out the rod over the sea and that its waters would divide.
 - 2. Philosophy would have said: There is nothing in such an act to bring the desired result.
 - 3. When they thirsted for fresh water in the wilderness and Moses was told to go and smite the rock, or, as afterwards, to speak to the rock, philosophy would have seen no connection between the act commanded and the water that was promised.
 - 4. We must remember, when we come to religious truth, God is its author and that it is His place to say what are to be the conditions of the reception of any grace or blessing.

5. This is the manner of God's legislation.
 6. He has not asked the counsel of the wisest of His people, but held all authority in His own hands and has, at all times, said what should and what should not be law.
- L. Contrary or negative facts may be used in the establishment of truth.
1. "He that believeth not shall be damned" is sufficient to show that faith is at least one of the conditions of pardon.
 2. Like this is the statement of the Master: "If ye believe not, ye shall die in your sins, and where I am ye cannot come."
 3. "For except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."
 4. This is equal to saying "those who repent not shall perish."
 5. This is the negative form of saying that repentance is one of the conditions of salvation.
 6. We read of some who "rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of John."
 7. This is saying in substance that if they had been baptized of John they would not have rejected the counsel of God against themselves.
 8. When Jesus was approached by Nicodemus, who seemed to want to be admitted as a disciple without endangering his standing among his people, the Master told him that except a man be born again he could not see the kingdom of God.
 - a. Beyond all question being born again was one of the conditions.
 - b. Though he tried to break the force of the statement by his question, "How can a man be born when he is old?" he finds no way of escape, as the Lord turns upon him with, "Verily, verily, I say unto you: except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

- c. This is as emphatic as language could make it and leaves no doubt respecting the requirement that men shall be born of water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of God.
 - d. We might continue this till we should find every duty marked out in this way, both as to the manner of becoming Christians and also as to how to live the Christian life.
- 9. When a truth is taught by the use of the negative it is the same as if that truth were taught by the use of a direct statement.
 - a. All that can be found in it is that the cause named is necessary to the result; but it does not follow that it is the only cause.
 - b. We are at liberty to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," but if we depend upon prayer alone for bread we shall go hungry.
- M. Causes will frequently become obvious by arranging the facts in the order of intensity.
 - 1. If we find in the Scriptures that with the increase of testimony faith becomes stronger, we at once reach the conclusion that faith comes by the medium of testimony.
 - 2. If we find that as people have been deprived of the word of God and their faith becomes weak, we learn by a negative rule that faith comes by the word of God.
 - 3. If among the heathen who have never heard of our Savior there are none who believe in Him, we conclude that without this word it is impossible to constitute people who believe in Christ.
- N. A particular fact cannot be learned from a general statement when something other than the cause mentioned might have produced the results.
 - 1. In the case of the conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:13-15) it is said "the Lord opened her heart, that she attended to the things spoken of by Paul."
 - a. It is easy to jump to the conclusion that this opening of the heart of that woman was by a miracle, for it might have been done in that way.

- b. But we are not at liberty to reason so hastily.
- c. We must ask, "Could her heart have been opened in any other way?"
- d. If the preaching of the word had been found to be sufficient to open the hearts of other men and women so that they would accept the gospel of Christ, and that power was present, then there is no reason for the supposition that the abstract power was present or that it had anything to do with the opening of the heart of that pious Jewish woman.

CHAPTER VII THE SEVERAL COVENANTS

I. THE NEED OF DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN THEM.

- A. No one can understand his duty without knowing what law he is under.
 - 1. God makes a covenant with Noah binding him to build an ark of certain dimensions and out of certain timber and to put into it all kinds of beasts that could not survive the flood without such help.
 - 2. I am not to learn my duty as a sinner, nor yet as a saint, by reading this covenant.
 - 3. It is not my duty to make an ark of any size.

- B. So it is with all the covenants God has ever made with man – each covenant is for the man, or the men, to whom it was given and for whom it was intended.
 - 1. It belongs to no other man, or men, except as extended to them by its Author.
 - 2. In all individual contracts God made with the Patriarchs the demands, duties and blessings were peculiarly the property of the men to whom the covenants belonged.
 - 3. Abel offered a sacrifice by faith (Heb 11:4); hence God had required the sacrifice; but it does not follow that I am to go to my flock and prepare an offering and then come and burn it with fire.
 - a. God has not required that of me and, therefore, I would not be rendering Him any service by such a worship.
 - b. Fathers were the high priests and rulers of the tribes that grew up about them.
 - c. To those men God gave many primary lessons containing principles that should remain and have a place in the highest worship that would ever be given to the world.
 - d. But there were also many things that were peculiar to the times and the people to whom these covenants belonged.

4. It is known in all matters of law that a man is amenable to the law under which he is living.
 5. Common sense has everywhere been sufficient for this question, except in religion.
 - a. Only when we come to ask the way to heaven do we lose our interest in the ordinary forms of intelligence and appropriate language, commands and promises that do not belong to us.
 - b. I open the Bible and read that it is the duty of the parent to circumcise his boy of eight days; and I go about the task at once, but every one knowing me is shocked.
 - (1) Why?
 - (2) Is it not in the Bible?
 - (3) You say that it belongs to another people and these rites and ceremonies are not Christian.
 - (4) That is the difference of covenant.
 - (5) That institution belonged to one age and one people and I belong to another.
 - (6) Not being under that covenant I am not to observe that commandment, unless I can find it in the covenant to which I do belong.
- C. Each covenant that God has made with men may have many things in common with all the others and yet be distinct.
1. There is nothing more common than to mistake similarity for identity.
 2. Every covenant God has ever made with man has contained the thought that God is the supreme and rightful Ruler of the universe and that it is the highest privilege of mortals to be in harmony with His wishes.
 - a. Therefore, the idea of worship and obedience can be found in every covenant between God and man.

- b. Yet, these covenants are not the same. They do not require the same acts of obedience and do not promise the same things; nor do they belong to the same people. Paul says (Rom 9:4-5):

“Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever.”

- c. The duties required in these several contracts were not obligatory upon other nations and peoples unless God had made covenants with them containing the same duties.
- d. The law given by Moses was only intended to serve as a schoolmaster, or a leader of children, till the Christ should come and establish the faith by which men should be saved (Gal 3:23-25).

- D. Language under one covenant may explain duties under another (in those features in which the two are alike).

- 1. Under all forms of divine law men have been required to worship God with a whole heart.
- 2. Whatever, therefore, may be found in any one of these, on that topic, may be used to enforce the thought and stir up the soul to that devotion which the Lord requires.
- 3. The devotional Psalms may be used by the Christian that we may understand the frame of mind that should characterize all who serve the God of heaven and earth.

- E. The laws of each covenant are supposed to be complete in themselves.

- 1. This does not mean a man would understand Judaism as well if he had not studied the dealings of God with the Patriarchs.
- 2. Nor does it mean a man can ever be perfectly taught respecting the New Institution without having had a knowledge of the Law and the Prophets.

3. It does affirm if a man had never seen the law given Moses he could know all his duty toward God by a careful and thorough study of the New Testament.
4. There were many Gentile congregations which had no knowledge of the law of Moses and who were entirely dependant upon the teaching of inspired men as they revealed Christ to them.
5. We learn from Christ, and the men He ordained, every precept which we are expected to observe.
6. To hear His sayings and do them is to do the will of His Father in heaven and, therefore, to build on the solid rock.

II. THE SEVERAL COVENANTS.

- A. The covenant made with Adam will be found in Genesis 1:28-29.
 1. Here we have a part of the covenant.
 2. The other part of it consists of man's obedience to God.
 3. Hence, by a fall into sin, man lost his divine right to be the ruler of the earth and has to be reinstated in that position by the redemption in Christ.
 4. Just what would have been the result of that covenant having been kept we do not know, but all the glories of the primitive state would certainly have been secured.
- B. Covenant with Adam and Eve after the fall (Gen 3:15-21).
 1. This contains a long struggle between the serpent and the seed of the woman, and the final victory in behalf of humanity.
 2. They had failed to keep the first covenant but this one they would keep for they could not help it.
 3. This is the first promise of a coming Savior to the world; a Savior who would be able to destroy the works of the devil.
- C. The covenant with Noah before the flood (Gen 6:13-22).
 1. Here we have all the features of a covenant revealed.

2. God makes a contract with this man to save him and his family and requires of them certain conditions to be kept.
 - a. The ark was to be built of the timber prescribed and according to the manner indicated in the contract.
 - b. The animals were to be gathered as God had ordained.
 - c. Noah had been selected from the world as the only man who was righteous in his generation and whose sons were also free from polygamy, which was then the curse of the earth.

D. Covenant with Noah after the flood (Gen 9:8-17).

“And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the fowl, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations; I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.”

1. Though duties are exacted only of men, still this covenant is made with all flesh or it concerns all flesh.
2. Thus again we see that the idea of a covenant implies obligations and a contract between two parties.
3. God’s promises will not fail, except by the failure of man, in violating the terms.
4. In that case God will cease to regard them and the covenant will fail by virtue of the failure of the contracting party.

E. The covenant made with Abram respecting Christ (Gen 12:1-3).

“Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto the land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

1. In one form or another this covenant was renewed many times.
2. It contained two thoughts seemingly distinct at the first, and yet they are bound together as one is the medium through which the other is fulfilled.
3. Making of Abram a great nation was necessary in order for the coming of the Christ and the preaching of that truth by which the world should be saved.
4. God is preparing a receptacle of His truth – a nation that will guard it, keep it and give it to the world.
5. They must be kept separate from the rest of the world that God’s promises may be fulfilled, that prophecies may be given and kept and that the Christ may be given to the world through whom the world may be saved.

F. A covenant made with Abram concerning land (Gen 13:14-17).

“And the Lord said to Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward and eastward and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for unto thee will I give it.”

1. This covenant was referred to when Abram first came into the land of Canaan (Gen 12:7) but it was some time after this that it was confirmed, as seen in the account above.
2. It was afterward referred to as having been already made (Gen 17:8; 24:7).

3. Isaac was assured that it was because of Abraham's faithfulness that he should inherit the land (Gen 26:4-5).
 4. And when Moses was taken up to the top of the mountain and shown the good land he was reminded that the contract which the Lord had made with Abraham was about to be fulfilled (Deut 34:4).
 5. Although this covenant is distinct, yet it is based upon the thought contained in the promise made concerning his descendants – that they should become a great nation.
 - a. Indeed, the land never belonged to Abraham in person.
 - b. The only way in which it could be fulfilled was by establishing his seed in that land.
 - c. The human part of it seems more implied than stated.
 - d. Yet, when Isaac is reminded of his inheritance, it is announced to be on account of the righteousness of Abraham.
 - e. And all the way through the history of the children of Israel it was understood that the inheritance was dependent on the continued obedience of the people to the will of God.
 - f. And it was because of a failure in this respect that they were taken into captivity by the Babylonians until they should learn to keep the commandments of the Lord.
- G. The covenant concerning circumcision (Gen17:9-14).
1. The ordinance was so distinctively Jewish that the apostles used the word "circumcision" many times to denote the Jews and "uncircumcision" to denote the Gentiles (Gal 2:7-8).
 2. In order that in the seed of this man the world should have a Savior, his posterity must be separated from the rest of mankind; hence the organization of a nation.
 3. This institution was given to fence them away from the nations that were round about them.
 4. Whether a covenant is between God and any man, or between two or more men, the thought of it is much the same.

- a. There are obligations on both sides, understood and agreed to.
 - b. If one party shall fail to keep his part of the contract the other party is freed from all obligation.
 - c. God has plainly said that He will act in that way.
- 5. In the Covenant of Christ it is required that those having accepted salvation continue steadfast to the end to receive the crown.
- H. The covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex 20:1-24).
 - 1. It contains the substance of the covenants of flesh, land and circumcision.
 - 2. It was to serve as a schoolmaster to prepare them for the Great Teacher who should come from heaven.
 - 3. In Exodus 34:27-28 we read:

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words, for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel. And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.”

 - a. The giving of the law on Mt. Sinai has the form of a covenant – it was given to that people for a guide and a test of obedience, and it was sealed with blood and enjoined upon them.
 - b. It was not wholly religious.
 - c. The purpose of God in preparing a people ready to receive the Lord when He should come to the world made it necessary that a government should exist by the means of a religious nation.
 - d. Hence, the law combines the purpose of those covenants of land and flesh in order that the world may be prepared for Christ (Gal 3:8, 16-25).
- I. The covenant of Christ; made by Him and sealed with His own blood (Jer 31:31-34; Heb 8:6-13; 9:15; Mt 28:26).

1. This covenant was in view during the former dispensations.
2. Every offering and service foretold of the coming redemption, and every prophet, priest and king typified the coming Saviour who should be the Anointed of the Lord.
3. He is to provide salvation for the race and extend it to us as a free gift.
4. It belongs to Him to say on what terms the blessings of His sacrifice may be enjoyed. He is the one Mediator between God and men (1 Tim 2:5).

III. THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COVENANT MADE WITH ISRAEL AND THE COVENANT MADE BY THE CHRIST.

- A. The change in the priesthood.
 1. It has been thought Christ was a priest under the law and He was introduced into that priesthood by John the Baptist.
 2. But of this there is no evidence.
 3. No apostle ever insinuated the Master was high priest while He was here on the earth.
 4. Indeed, the writer of Hebrews takes just the opposite view (Heb 8:4).
 - a. He was not of the tribe designated for such honors under the law.
 - b. Nor were any of the services observed initiating Him into the office.
 5. The high priesthood under that institution belonged to the tribe of Levi, the family of Kohath and the particular family of Aaron but, in this, it is in the line of Judah (of which tribe Moses said nothing concerning priesthood - Heb 7:14).
 - a. In the former covenant men were made priests who had sin, who needed an offering for themselves before they officiated for the people; but, in this, we have a priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled and made higher than the heavens (Heb 7:26-28; vv.1-4).

- b. Those priests discontinued by reason of death but Christ remains a priest forever (Heb 7:23-24).
 - c. Under that system one could become a priest without an oath but Christ was made a priest with an oath (Heb 7:16).
 - d. They were made priests by the law of a carnal commandment but Christ by the power of an endless life (Heb 7:16).
 - e. That priesthood belonged to the law of Moses, this to another covenant (Heb 7:11-13).
 - f. The high priest under the law was not a ruler and could have no connection with the government in any matter not connected with religious service or the cleansing of the people from some disease or legal defilement; but Christ is king as well as priest.
 - (1) He is priest after the order of Melchizedek, who was king and priest at the same time.
 - (2) In Himself, He answers all human want – He is the prophet to teach the way of God, the priest to remove all sin and the king to govern and protect all His disciples.

“Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need” (Heb 4:14-16).
 - g. The writer connects the priesthood of Christ with the throne of Christ.
 - h. Thrones did not belong to the high priest under the law but in this covenant our high priest is also a king.
- B. There was a change in the atonement. “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (Heb 10:4).

1. From Leviticus 23:26-32 we learn there was an atonement made once a year.
2. At this time there was a remembrance of the sins committed during the year (Heb 10:1-4).
3. The atonement differs –
 - a. In the time of offering;
 - b. The priest making the sacrifice;
 - c. The blood that was offered;
 - d. The place where the offering was made;
 - e. And the results of the sacrifice.

C. Change respecting limitation.

“For what great nation is there, that hath a God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon him? And what great nation is there, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?” (Deut 4:7-8).

1. This was the equivalent of saying, “We all know no nation has a God so near to them as our God is to us, and no nation has this law, nor anything that approximates it.”
2. There are many evidences the law of Moses was never intended to reach beyond the nation to whom it was given.
3. Its forms and ceremonies were to avoid the idolatry of the times – to maintain a people intact that it might be known in after times the promise made to Abraham, to bring the Messiah into the world through his posterity, had been kept.
4. The New Covenant was intended, from the very inception of it, to be universal.
 - a. The first feature of the commission is, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

- b. All its ordinances are arranged with reference to the universality of its principles.
- c. It is intended not for a given period but for all time; not for a portion of the race but for the whole human family.
- d. It was not to know any difference between Jew or Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, for all should be one in Christ Jesus, the Lord of all, who would be alike rich unto all that would call upon Him.

D. They differ in the promises (Heb 8:6):

“But now hath he obtained a ministry the more excellent, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises.”

- 1. It is not to be denied that those who were devout looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, and to the glorious redemption which He should accomplish for the whole race.
- 2. But they saw through a glass darkly.
- 3. Moses endured as seeing Him who is invisible; and Abraham beheld these things from afar and by faith brought them nigh, so He could embrace them.
- 4. Yet, it is too much to say they were a part of the covenant made with them at Sinai.
- 5. But the promises in Christ are far better.
 - a. They are complete pardon, sufficient help, every needed grace and providence, resurrection from the dead, inheritance in the mansions in the heavens prepared by the hands of the Master Himself.
 - b. No wonder the writer of Hebrews says this covenant has been established upon better promises than that covenant.

E. The law was written on stones but the new institution is put into the minds and the hearts of all who belong to it.

“Are we beginning again to commend ourselves? Or need we, as do some, epistles of commendation to you or from you? Ye are our epistle,

written in our hearts, known and read of all men; being made manifest that ye are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in tables that are hearts of flesh. And such confidence have we through Christ to Godward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to account any thing as from ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; who also made us sufficient ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the Spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (2 Cor 3:1-11).

1. When Jeremiah saw the coming of this glorious institution he announced it would be unlike the covenant God made with the children of Israel in the day He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.
2. In this new institution He would write His law in their mind and put it into their inward parts.
3. That covenant was outward and formal, but this is inward and spiritual.
4. Those who belonged to that covenant depended on the figures, types and symbols for their knowledge of the Lord; but in this, the Lord from heaven has spoken to us in words that are spirit and life.

F. All that are to have a place in the new covenant shall first know the Lord.

1. This is the statement made by Jeremiah when he foretold of the coming of the Christian institution:

“They shall all know me, from the least of them even to the greatest of them, saith the Lord.”
2. It is quoted in the eighth chapter of the Hebrew letter and applied to the New Covenant.
 - a. Under the law of Moses this never could have been said to be true.
 - b. They were brought into that institution when they were born.
 - c. There would always be many of them who did not know the Lord.

- d. If they ever should know the Lord they would have to be taught to know Him after they were members of the covenant.
 - 3. In the new institution it would not be so, for the first thing in it was to teach.
 - 4. After they became learners of the Christ they were to be brought into the kingdom.
- G. Sin shall be remembered no more; when once pardoned those sins cannot be remembered against that person again.
- 1. God said, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Cf. Ezek 33:16; Psa 103:2-3,12; Jer 31:31ff; Heb 8:8-12; 10:16-17).
 - 2. The Old Testament clearly states repeatedly that sins were being forgiven in those Old Testament times.
 - 3. The New Testament shows that Jesus confirmed Jehovah's righteousness in forgiving sins in Old Testament times by going to the cross (Rom 3:21-26).
 - 4. The New Testament shows that no sins were (in Old Testament times), or are (in New Testament times) forgiven except based on the blood of Christ (Heb chapters 8-10).
 - 5. Forgiveness of sins takes place in the mind of the forgiver. If there is no forgiveness in the mind of the forgiver (and in this case Jehovah's mind) there simply is no forgiveness.
 - 6. Because of Jehovah's omniscience He knew before the foundation of the world the fact that the blood of Christ would be shed (Rev 13:8).
 - 7. Jehovah has been, based on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, forgiving sins since the foundation of the world (Rom 3:21-26).
 - 8. Therefore, sins pardoned because of the blood of Jesus can never come up again - they are blotted out and gone forever.
- H. Into the Old Covenant they were born by a birth of their parents, but into the New they come by a New birth – of water and the Spirit.
- 1. This was the mistake of Nicodemus.

2. He supposed as he had been in the service of the Lord all his life, and was even a teacher of that religion, there could be no such demand made of him.
 3. Had he read the law and the prophecies closely, he would have seen there was coming a spiritual kingdom in which the law of the Lord should be written in the hearts of all its citizens, hence a new term of membership would be required.
 4. He was disposed to make the same blunder, that thousands have made since, in supposing there is no difference between the two institutions.
- I. They differ in respect to form and place of worship.
1. Sacrifices were once to be brought to the door of the tabernacle and there offered to the Lord.
 2. When the temple was built in Jerusalem that was the place where offerings were to be made.
 3. This again shows the old covenant was a national affair and was never intended to go beyond the precincts of Palestine.
 4. The ordinances of the church of Christ get their significance not from the idea of a coming Savior, but from a Savior having come, and having died and risen from the dead.
- J. The law has been abolished and the gospel remains.
1. It is well to have the Scriptures clearly before us when we make a statement like this. The world will ask us why we make it and we must be able to tell.
 2. In Acts 15:5 we have the demand of the Pharisees who accepted the Christian faith, that unless the Gentiles would be circumcised and keep the law of Moses they could not be saved.
 3. On the question the council was held, not that they might vote on the subject, but ascertain what God had revealed on the subject.
 4. They heard from Paul, Barnabas and Simon Peter as to what God had done by them, and then from James as to his view of the evidence so far adduced.

5. The conclusion of the whole matter was they were not under that law and, therefore, they should not require them to observe any such regulations, but only to observe a few necessary things.
6. Paul argues this question all the way through several of his epistles.
7. In Paul's letter to the Galatians this question is argued at length; in fact, the whole letter is largely occupied with it.

“Howbeit the Scripture hath shut up all things under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept inward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law hath been our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For ye are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female, for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed., and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:15-29).

- a. This argument cannot be met.
- b. Paul has shown it to have been the purpose of God, in giving the law, to furnish the people of Israel with such primary lessons and such government as would, under the circumstances, do them the most good.
- c. But that institution was temporal in its purpose.
- d. It was intended to lead them and prepare them for the great Teacher who would come from God.
- e. During the days of their minority they were under this teacher, but when the great Teacher is come they are no longer under the tutor.
- f. All admit the ceremonial, judicial features of the law were done away in the crucifixion of Christ, but many claim something they call the “moral law” was retained.
- g. But there is no authority for this division of the law.

- h. There is no such division made by any inspired man for the reason no one, directed by the Spirit of the Living God, ever had such an idea.
 - i. The apostle Paul makes no such difference, as insisted upon by modern theologians, but sums up the whole of the Old Testament institution and says it has been abolished.
8. In Colossians 2:13-17 Paul settles the question of the continuance of the Law as a rule by which Christians should live.

“And you, being dead through your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, you, I say, did he quicken together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses; having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross; having put off from himself the principalities and the powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ’s.”

- a. Let us realize the institution of Christ is distinct.
- b. If we would know our duty to God in this dispensation we must learn it from this covenant, not from that covenant.

IV. HOW CAN WE KNOW WHEN THE COVENANT OF CHRIST BEGAN?

- A. This is a question of no little importance.
 - 1. We have learned this covenant was not made with Adam or Noah or Abraham or the nation of Israel; but just when it did begin and just when all men ought to have yielded obedience to its requirements is not so easily determined.
 - 2. We have a few facts however that may be of importance in determining this matter.
- B. Christ lived and died a Jew: He walked in obedience to that law; He even went so far as to say:

“Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass

away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:17-19).

1. It is impossible to think Jesus had an independent kingdom at that time, or to suppose He lived indifferent to the demands of the Law given by Moses.
 2. Whatever there was in that Law, He proposed to keep it – God was its Author, and men should observe it.
- C. During His life His kingdom was spoken of as being “at hand,” as if it had not yet been established, but would be in the near future.
1. John came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. He said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Mt 3:2).
 2. When Jesus went forth into Galilee He preached “the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel’” (Mk 1:14-15).
 3. Just before His transfiguration Jesus said:

“Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom” (Mt 16:28).
 4. Supposing His disciples were well informed, the kingdom was not yet established when He ascended into the heavens.

“They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6).
 - a. He indicates it was yet future and they would be His agents in the presentation of His claims.
 - b. But the time had not yet arrived for the work to begin.
 - c. They must tarry at Jerusalem for the heavenly endowment, and when it was received the work might begin.

- D. The kingdom was presented by the Savior as having come so near men could press into it.

“The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it” (Lk 16:16).

1. What is the meaning of “kingdom” in this place?
2. This question will be best answered by determining under what plan John performed his work.
3. Did he come to establish the kingdom or the church of the Christ?
 - a. Gabriel tells Zacharias that John was to “Go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him” (Lk 1:17).
 - b. In verses 76 and 77 of the same chapter we have Zacharias saying, when the Lord had opened his mouth:

“Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people in the remission of their sins.”
 - c. It is evident from all this that John did not come to set up a kingdom, but to introduce the King and prepare a people for His reception.
 - d. When the kingdom was preached in the days of John, it was preached not as having come, but coming – near at hand.
 - e. Hence, when men pressed into it as if by violence, they pressed into that prepared condition which it was John’s work to direct.
 - f. This is the evident meaning of the language, it makes complete harmony with every other statement on the subject.

- E. While there was a gospel in the sense of good news respecting coming events, there could be no gospel in the complete sense till Christ had come and been put to death and had risen from the dead (1 Cor 15:1-4).

- F. The limits of Judaism were upon the disciples during the days of the Savior.
1. In the tenth chapter of Matthew we have the Master sending out the twelve into the towns and villages of Galilee, but straitly charging them not to go into any road that would lead to the Gentiles, nor into any village of the Samaritans, but to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
 2. But when He gave them the great commission, after He had risen from the dead, all restriction is removed.
 3. Then they were to be witnesses to Him in Judea, in Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth.
 4. Then they were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; they were to go and make disciples of all nations.
 - a. This could not be done while the bonds of Judaism were upon them.
 - b. Hence, the kingdom of Messiah could not have been in existence till the limitations of the Jews' religion were taken out of the way.
- G. The law and the priesthood were changed at the same time.
1. This we have already seen and only refer to it here by way of remembrance (Heb 7:11-12; 8:4).
 2. We have also seen Christ was not a priest upon the earth; hence the law was not changed till He came into that everlasting priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.
 3. This He did not do till He ascended into the heavens to make an atonement for the sins of the whole world.
- H. The new law of the kingdom of the Christ should go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
- “The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And

many peoples shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of His ways. And we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa 2:1-3).

1. It has been objected that this does not refer to anything that could have taken place in the days of the apostles, as it relates to the last or latter days.
 2. But the last days of what?
 3. If Isaiah was prophesying about the world then it would refer to the latter times of its history or being.
 4. But he starts to tell what awaits Judah and Jerusalem in the “latter times.”
 - a. Therefore, this prophecy relates to the latter times of that city and people; before the Jews should be finally dispersed and their city destroyed, the law should go forth.
 - b. Those changes came in the year 70 A.D., hence the law went forth before that time.
- I. The apostles had the keys of the kingdom (Mt 16:13-19) but they were not at liberty to use them till after the first Pentecost succeeding the resurrection of the Savior.

“And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high” (Lk 24:44-49).

- J. No covenant could be in force till it was ratified by the death of the sacrifice appointed to that end.

“For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death; for doth it ever avail while he that made it liveth?” (Heb 9:16-17).

1. It would be impossible, then, for the new covenant, or testament, to be of force while Christ, who had been appointed as the covenant sacrifice, was living.
2. A mistake is sometimes indulged here in maintaining nothing can be regarded as a part of this testament except that which had already been given by the Savior.
3. This, of course, would render all the writings of the apostles worthless and rule them out as being any part of the New Testament.
 - a. This pushes the meaning of the language entirely beyond its import.
 - b. All that is bound in a covenant may not have been mentioned at the time of sealing it with the people.
 - c. At the time Moses took the book and sprinkled it with blood and enjoined it unto the people, little more than the ten commandments had been stated.
 - d. The whole of the priesthood and the law of sacrifices had to come afterward.
 - e. They covenanted not simply with items of law, but with Him who had made the law and, therefore, bound themselves to all that adhered in this law.
 - f. So with the covenant of Christ.
 - g. The one article of the Christian's creed being accepted, everything belonging to it is accepted with it.
 - h. When men confess they believe with all their heart that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, they have accepted everything of which He is the author.

K. Christ was the corner stone.

“He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved” (Acts 4:11-12).

1. In 1 Corinthians 3:11 Paul says:
 “For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”
 2. In every figure in which the church of Christ is contemplated as a building, Christ is regarded as the chief corner stone.
 3. It is not necessary to say those who have constructed this figure did not have it in their minds that the building could be erected first and the corner stone afterwards.
 4. It is received without the statement they supposed the building was erected after the corner stone was laid and could not be built before that.
- L. In all mentions of the kingdom after the day of Pentecost it is spoken of as if it were in existence.
1. While the Savior was living it was said the kingdom was “at hand.”
 2. If now it is said to have come, to be in existence, the impression will be unavoidable that it was established in the meantime.
 “To the end that ye should walk worthily of God, who calleth you into His own kingdom and glory” (1 Thes 2:12).
 “Giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (Col 1:12).
 3. No one denies the church of Christ came and was fully established on the Pentecost after the ascension of the Savior.
 4. Hence, the law by which His people should be governed till His return was sent forth at that time.
 5. This was “the law of the Lord that should go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”
- M. The kingdom of Christ was set up on the day of Pentecost following His ascension.

1. Before the apostles would be qualified for the testimony which they should bear concerning Jesus, they would need this heavenly Comforter and Director that they might be freed from any weakness in the discharge of their duties.
2. According to Luke, in his gospel (24:47-48) and Acts 1:4, the Lord reannounced the commission just before leaving them for the heavens, but forbade them going out till they should receive the promise of the Father, that is – the heavenly Comforter, the Holy Spirit.
3. To find this beginning of the way of life in Christ we have only to find when the Spirit came into the world according to all these promises.
 - a. We have not long to wait for the fulfillment.
 - b. Within ten days after the Savior ascended the Spirit came.
 - c. And with His coming all that had been promised was fulfilled in their endowment, and the witness borne by the Spirit and by the apostles.

“And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).
4. Now there are a number of things it will be well for us to note.
 - a. This new covenant would be unlike the old one (Jer 31; Heb 8).
 - b. It would go forth from Jerusalem (Isa 2; Mic 4; Lk 24).
 - c. All nations would be represented there at that time (Isa, Mic, Lk, in Acts 2:5).
 - d. The Holy Spirit would be present at that time and give them supernatural power (Joel, Jn, Lk, Acts).

- e. The Holy Spirit and the apostles would bear witness at that time (Jn and Acts).
 - f. The demonstration would be at the beginning of the gospel plan of saving men (Lk 24:44-49; Acts 2:4; 11:15).
5. One who will not see, from this induction of facts, the kingdom of the Christ was set up on the day of Pentecost is either unable or unwilling to see the plainest truth.

V. THE TRIAL AS TO THE TIME OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM.

- A. We have already seen any theory which is opposed by any known fact cannot be true.
- B. Hence, we desire to have our theories tried by the facts that have been induced.
 - 1. If the kingdom of the Christ was in existence during the time of John the Baptist, then there were two Laws in force at the same time.
 - 2. Those texts which place the establishment of the kingdom later than the time of John upon the earth cannot be true if the church began during his life.
 - 3. The Jewish restrictions upon the apostles would be incomprehensible upon the hypothesis the kingdom of the Messiah was then in existence.
 - 4. If Christ had been king while on earth He would have been priest as well, for He became a priest after the order of Melchizedek who was king and priest at the same time.
 - a. And if He had been high priest on the earth then they would have had two high priests at the same time and that, too, by divine authority.
 - b. But Paul says, "If He were on earth, he would not be a priest."
 - 5. If John instituted the kingdom by the baptism of Jesus then it was not set up at Jerusalem according to the prophetic promise and according to the clear teaching of the Savior Himself.

6. If the kingdom had been established at a time prior to the resurrection of the Savior then it could not have been unlocked by the keys held by Peter.
7. If the church came into being prior to the death of the Savior then it was built before the laying of the corner stone.
8. If the Covenant of Christ was in force while the Savior was yet alive, then Paul got it wrong. He thought a covenant was of force after the death of Him who made it.
9. We have also seen that if the kingdom was established before the ascension of the Lord, then it was established without the apostles knowing it.
10. We have already seen the gospel in its fullness was not, and could not, be preached till Christ had died and risen again from the dead.
11. Hence, if the church was established before that time it was in existence before the gospel could be preached.

CHAPTER VIII

THE VALUE AND USE OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY IN THE INTER- PRETATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

I. WHO IS THE WRITER?

- A. That is the first question on opening any book.
- B. There are a great many questions we may ask about the writer, or the speaker, to assist in the interpretation of what has been said.
- C. Was he an inspired man?
 - 1. Is God the author of the communication?
 - 2. Did He direct the wording of the letter or the speech?
- D. Was the writer an educated man?
 - 1. This has no particular bearing if the writer is inspired.
 - 2. A Spirit who could give the message would have no problem adjusting to the man's personality, vocabulary, etc.
 - 3. By knowing this man's culture beforehand we are ready to enter with him into all the details and understand him.
- E. What religious bias or prejudice did he have?
 - 1. Once again, if inspired, it does not matter.
 - 2. This is questionable.
 - 3. While we feel compelled to say this much, even respecting men who were divinely employed to reveal the will of the Lord, we must remember many characters in the Bible were not inspired and did not claim to be.
 - a. Hence, their words are to be understood in the light of their prejudices just as if we were reading an account of their sayings in any other book.

- b. The Bible is responsible for nothing but a faithful record of what was said and done.
- c. The words of the worst men who have ever lived are found in the Bible.
- d. The sons of Belial had their say, and Satan himself gave his falsehood in his most attractive manner.
- e. Therefore we should know who speaks and especially his heart condition.

F. What of the style?

- 1. That speakers and writers greatly differ in their manner of composition no one calls in question.
- 2. Two men may have the same thing to say but the manner of saying it will show all the difference of mental temperament and drill.
- 3. The eight writers of the New Testament exhibit many styles of composition.
 - a. Some of these writings are in short sections so no particular violence will be done if the usual method of verse interpretation should be followed.
 - b. But most of them have a subject that must be considered as a whole, or the meaning will never be gathered.
- 4. Paul is peculiar for his logical acumen.
 - a. It never forsakes him.
 - b. From first to last he is severely logical.
 - c. It was his mental nature and any inspired thought that will come to us through him must assume that form.
- 5. He ordinarily presents his topic, directly or indirectly, and divides and subdivides, and brings out all the truth that relates to the matter at hand and reaches his conclusions by a careful induction of the facts.

6. Not only so, but he anticipates the objections that may arise in the minds of his readers and shows they are not well founded, or the conclusions are untrue.
 7. Now, what I insist upon is each writer shall be studied as to his own manner of composition.
- G. A writer usually condemns the evils which appear the most dangerous to him.
1. Hence, if he has been converted from any particular doctrine, he is likely to regard that as the prince of evils and give his time largely to opposing it.
 2. That will account, in part, for the great space Paul gives to show Christianity and Judaism were distinct and we are not under the Law, but under the Gospel of Christ.
 3. To know the history of the man will greatly assist in understanding him.

II. WE SHOULD KNOW TO WHOM THE WRITING IS ADDRESSED.

- A. What is their history?
1. Were have they been?
 2. What have they done?
 3. From whom have they descended?
 4. If they were Gentiles, carried away unto dumb idols, we should know it.
- B. We need to know their education.
1. It is presumed, at least, that every wise author will speak in the language of the people.
 2. The best dictionary respecting any word will be found referring to the use of the word made by the people.
- C. It is necessary to know their customs.

1. It might be a shame for a woman in the city of Corinth to be unveiled.
 2. And under such circumstances Paul would have her wear a veil; but it would not follow that every woman in the world must wear a veil or be regarded as unchristian.
- D. We should also know what are the sins to which they have been addicted.
1. In the city of Corinth a member of the church had taken his father's wife and was living with her as if she were his own.
 2. Now we ought to know why it was that they were not humbled, but rather puffed up, on that account.
- E. To what temptations were they subject?
1. Were they exposed to the subtle philosophy that claims to have received the good of all systems of religion and philosophy that would lead them into a conglomerate system made up of Judaism and heathenism, and then were baptized in the name of Christ?
 2. Were they surrounded with the deceitful claims of the Nicolaitans and urged to believe a Christian cannot sin in doing his own pleasure – having been begotten of the Father and His seed remaining in Him?
 3. Were there men among them who claimed to be apostles and who would readily make merchandise of them?
 - a. The disciples were troubled with those grievous wolves who rose up to head parties in their own interests.
 - b. There were foolish and vain talkers whose mouths had to be stopped.
 - (1) They withstood the teaching of the apostles, as Jannes and Jambres had withstood Moses when before the court of Pharaoh.
 - (2) For such contention men had to be prepared and many a lesson was given for that purpose.
 4. To know the trials through which they were passing will greatly assist in the interpretation of those Scriptures.

III. WHO ARE SPOKEN OF?

- A. One will be greatly assisted in reading the gospels and the Acts by knowing the characters who figure in government.
- B. So it will be in order to inquire about Pontius Pilate, Felix, Festus, Ananias and Agrippa.

IV. THE CHARACTER OF THE WRITINGS OR THE KIND OF COMPOSITION.

- A. In the Scriptures we have history, biography, law, prophecy, praise, poetry, the words of anger and of exultation.
- B. If we were reading any other book we would not think of using the same rules for the interpretation on those several kinds of composition.
- C. Poetry, whether found in the Bible or elsewhere, is granted a license of extravagance.
 - 1. It is supposed to have a right to play upon words for their sound.
 - 2. It is the style suited to strong imagination.
 - 3. No one thinks of interpreting the language of the poet the same as he does that of the essayist.
 - 4. A large portion of the Bible is in poetry.
 - 5. The simile, the metaphor, the allegory and the hyperbole furnish gorgeous chariots for the conveyance of the rhythmic mind.

V. WHEN WRITTEN?

- A. When we think about it, we will determine under what law or dispensation the writing or speaking was done, it becomes of great moment.
- B. If a man asks what he should do to be saved during the existence of the law of Moses every one would expect an answer that would harmonize with the demands of that law.
 - 1. It is seen, then, that it makes a great difference as to the time the writing, or the speaking, was done.

2. No one should go to the Old Institution to learn how a sinner can become a Christian, for the two covenants are radically different in that respect.
3. It should be borne in mind that time brings a change of circumstances and with such a change, customs, thoughts and feelings change also.

VI. THE PLACE OF WRITING OR SPEAKING.

- A. If we could always know the surroundings we would know very much of the intention of the speaker.
- B. An illustration will be clearer to the mind of the reader when he can be made to see the things referred to by the writer or speaker; and to have that knowledge sometimes it is necessary to know where the author was at the time of speaking.
 1. Much of the life of the Savior is not understood because the reader does not know where He and His disciples were at the time.
 2. There is a careless way of reading the Scriptures that marks nothing, and knows nothing of the passing events.
 3. When Jesus gave His disciples the figure of the vine (Jn 15) it should be borne in mind they had been in Jerusalem and had just gone out into the Mount of Olives.
 - a. Hence, at the time of giving this figure, they were on the hill-side east of the city and were looking down at those who were raking together the withered and dismembered branches and burning them in the night when they would not be liable to set fire to anything else.
 - b. Or they were then passing through the midst of such scenes on their way out of the city.
 - c. In either case the illustration becomes very forceful.
 4. So it was when the Lord gave His disciples the allegory of the good shepherd.
 - a. It was at the "feast of dedication and it was winter."

- b. During the winter season the shepherd put the flock into the fold at night and took it out in the morning.
- c. Hence, He presents Himself in the light of a true shepherd and, also, the door of the sheep.
- d. These have a common thought and were offered to make them understand their relation to Him and His care for them.
- e. If they would accept Him as their teacher and guide they should find food and protection at all times, for He so loved them that He would even lay down His life for them.

CHAPTER IX

RULES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF WORDS AND SENTENCES

I. RULES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF SENTENCES.

- A. It seems out of place that we should consider the question of sentences before words.
- B. It is certain that if we do not know the meaning of the words used in the construction of the sentence it will be impossible for us to know what the sentence means.
 - 1. Yet, enough import of the words will be in the mind to assist in the outline knowledge of the thought of the sentence.
 - 2. From that knowledge it will be comparatively easy to return and examine each word in detail as to its particular place in that sentence.

II. ALWAYS INTERPRET ACCORDING TO THE KNOWN PURPOSE OF THE AUTHOR.

- A. The sentence under consideration may be an essential feature of the investigation.
- B. Still, it is sometimes the case that a writer's purpose has been stated either directly or indirectly.
- C. If this knowledge is in the possession of the exegete the sentence must be interpreted in the light of that purpose.
 - 1. This is one of the weaknesses of many commentaries.
 - 2. The critic comments on single verses.
 - 3. He knows nothing of the general purpose of the writer and, therefore, many times applies the language to topics not at all in the writer's mind.
 - 4. This is a wrong we would not tolerate in the use of any other book!
 - a. It would be like taking a description of some part of Asia and applying it to the United States.

- b. We would, in that way, compel the writer to say things he did not intend to say.

- D. The work of the exegete is to bring out the meaning the author intended.
 - 1. In the interpretation of law this rule is of great value.
 - 2. If there are sections or passages in the law that are doubtful then recourse may be had to the intent of the legislators who made it.
 - 3. Sometimes in framing the platform of a political party a doubt arises as to the meaning to be assigned to a particular resolution.
 - 4. If the men can be found who framed the resolution, or any reasonable means furnished to know how the convention understood it, their understanding must interpret the passage.

- E. We ought to treat the Bible with as much respect as we do the words of men.
 - 1. The greatest care should be taken that every writer in the Bible be made to mean just what he wished to say.
 - 2. It is not what we can compel the Bible to say, but what it was employed to say.
 - 3. As an exegete our work is done when we find the meaning the author intended to convey.
 - 4. When the general purpose of the writer is discerned no interpretation should follow that is not in perfect accord with it.

- F. There is an apparent exception to this rule.
 - 1. An author frequently makes an incidental remark.
 - 2. It may or may not be essential to his argument or the record he is making.
 - a. When such a statement is made it has all the force any other affirmation coming from that writer.

b. A fact may be referred to by way of illustration and this might be our only means of knowing of the existence of that fact, yet that reference is sufficient to establish its existence.

(1) Paul says, "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses," and we learn these were the names of two of the magicians with whom he and Aaron had to contend.

(2) Paul was called Mercurius because he was the chief speaker.

(3) From this we would learn Mercurius was a god of eloquence, at least as compared with Jupiter who was supposed to be represented by the less talkative Barnabas.

(4) When the Master healed the blind man at Bethsaida, and by the first application he was made to see a little said, "I see men as trees walking." It reveals the man had seen trees before and had not been born blind.

(5) The question of Nathaniel, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" assures us the place was not held in very high esteem.

(6) Paul writes to the brethren at Rome and also at Colossae.

(a) To show that they were so completely separated from sin they could not think of returning again to its practice he says they had been buried with Christ in baptism (Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12).

(b) He was not writing on the action of baptism; but from the illustration we learn that when they were baptized they were buried.

G. In all this nothing causes the mind to part company with the author, or causes the interpreter to fail to interpret anything contrary to that intent.

III. HOW MAY WE KNOW THE PURPOSE OF THE AUTHOR?

A. The speaker or writer sometimes states what he wanted to accomplish.

1. If we were in doubt as to the purpose of the two parables beginning the eighteenth chapter of Luke, we would only turn and read again the first verse which declares the Lord spoke these for the purpose of teaching “that men ought always to pray and not to faint.”
2. If we did not know the purpose of the three parables of the fifteenth chapter of Luke the first and second verses would suffice, for we are there informed it was to answer those who objected to Him because He received sinners and ate with them.
3. Luke states to the most excellent Theophilus the exact purpose he had in mind when he began to write (Lk 1:1-4).
4. The apostle John tells us his purpose in writing the book known by his name (Jn 20:30-31).
5. Paul is quite as explicit in the announcement of his topic when he begins his letter to the “saints that be in Rome” (Rom 1:16-17).
6. The intention of the writer is not always so easily known.
 - a. Many times we are left to examine the contents of all the sections in the book to know exactly what the writer meant.
 - b. If the language under consideration was spoken, not written, then we may have to ask those who heard the speech what they understood by it.
 - (1) If there was any particular meaning in the manner of pronunciation, or in the intonation of the voice, those who heard the speech may be asked.
 - (2) When Micaiah was called forth to tell Ahab if he should go up against Ramoth in Gilead the prophet said, “Go and prosper” (1 Kgs 22:15-16).
 - (3) For all we could tell, from this distance, he meant for him to go and to feel assured his campaign would be successful.
 - (4) But Ahab, who heard him, knew from the manner in which he spoke he did not mean it and asked him to tell him nothing but the truth.

- (5) Then the prophet told him just what would come of the campaign.
- c. So, on the day of Pentecost when the multitude asked what they should do, we might be in doubt as to the meaning of the question.
- (1) “Do’ about what?” might be asked.
 - (2) But Peter, standing by, understood the meaning of the language and in the answer gives the meaning of their words.
 - (3) No one doubts he answered the question which he understood them to ask.
 - (4) Hence, in his answer we get the purpose of their inquiry (Acts 2:37-38).

B. Carefully consider the immediate context.

1. Certainly a knowledge of the context will greatly assist in the exegesis of any passage.
2. But it does not seem to be known there is a context of conduct.
 - a. What was done and said at the time may throw much light on the meaning of the words in question.
 - b. Pilate said to Jesus, “What is truth?” and then arose and went out.
 - c. He gives the Master no time to answer the question and his actions show he did not expect any answer to what he asked.
 - d. The conduct of this ruler precludes us from considering him an inquirer after truth, but he appears a mere cavalier and his question is no more than, “Humph! What do you know about truth?”
 - e. This, too, will show the estimation Pilate, at that time, had of the Savior.

- f. He thought Him to be a harmless crank – a man of no glaring faults that would render Him worthy of death, but quite out of place when trying to lead the people into new truth which the world, at that time, did not know.

C. The Bible, being the truth of God, must harmonize with itself.

1. Sometimes a doctrine is proposed and then the proofs and counter proofs are sought.
2. If the proofs are more numerous than the counter proofs, the doctrine is regarded as being sustained.
3. Infidelity feeds and fattens on this kind of interpretation.
4. Remember, no doctrine can be true if it is opposed to any clear statement of the word of God.
5. If the exegetes had been taught the word of God harmonizes with itself, and must never be interpreted as to bring its statements into collision, this work of fighting Scripture with Scripture would have been discontinued long ago.
6. But the unbeliever says, “You are not qualified to interpret the Bible for you start out with an assumption that it is of God, whereas it may not be from that source.”
 - a. The unbeliever is the last man who ought to complain!
 - b. Because all his examinations are for the purpose of finding, or creating, some flaw in this divine communication.
 - c. I say, then, examine first the claims of the Bible in respect to authorship.
 - d. When the mind is at rest on that question then proceed with the rules we have arranged, as they are adopted for consideration of the contents of all other books.

D. Light may be thrown upon a difficult passage by comparing it with other statements of the writer on the same subject.

1. In several letters of Paul he dwells more or less on the same subject.

2. In some of these he has treated the subject fully; in some of them he has merely referred to it.
 - a. From a slight reference the reader may not be able to gather the meaning of the writer.
 - b. But by turning to where he has treated the same subject at length the difficult passage will be fully explained.
 3. In the Ephesian and Galatian letters he shows the law given by Moses was no longer a rule for them; that it had been taken out of the way and nailed to the cross; it had served as a partition wall to separate Jew and Gentile, but when Christ was put to death on the cross that partition wall was broken down so they might be united in one body.
 - a. While that language could not be misunderstood by those for whom it was directly intended, it may be doubted whether Paul has in his mind some particular portion of the law, or all of it.
 - b. But in the Colossian letter (2:14-18) and in the second letter to the Corinthians (3:6-14), where he has written more fully on that particular point, he leaves no doubt as to his views.
 4. If we would understand him perfectly concerning our duty toward those who are not fully instructed in the gospel it would be well to compare 1 Corinthians 8:1-13 with Romans 14.
- E. Help may be had in the interpretation of sentences by examining the statements of other writers on the same subject, who are of equal authority.
1. If we say all the apostles were inspired then everything each said concerning any one thing must be true.
 2. If we will know for certain all the Savior said in the great Commission, we should read everything each writer has about it.
 - a. Matthew, Mark and Luke have spoken purposely on the matter.
 - b. They did not use the same terms in making their records.
 - c. But we may be sure they mean the same thing.

3. So, when we ask Paul as to his views concerning salvation in Christ without the deeds of the law, it is in order for us to ask James about the need of the obedience of faith.
 - a. For the parties to whom they wrote there was no need of a more complete statement.
 - b. To us there will be perfect instruction when we have the two compared.
 - c. 1 Peter 2:13-15 will be better understood if read it in conjunction with Romans 13:1-7.
 - (1) They both treat our duty towards civil government.
 - (2) By the comparison we get the sum of wisdom on that subject.
- F. The use of common sense respecting the things which we know of ourselves.
 1. This takes for granted there is knowledge in men – that, after all, it may be said, we do know some things.
 2. We have consciousness of being, of thinking and willing, and of being able to act according to our wills.
 3. Any theology that denies the power to do either of these things is rejected at once.
 4. The theory no man can, of himself, think a good thought or perform a good deed has made all thinking men either doubt the Bible, or the interpretation sustaining that theology.
 5. Caution in the use of this rule must be observed.
 - a. There are things we know and there are things we do not know.
 - b. We are not at liberty to assert an opinion as a standard.
 - c. It must amount to absolute knowledge.

- G. That which is figurative must be interpreted according to the laws governing figurative speech.
1. Literal language is not to be interpreted by figures, rather figures are to be interpreted by the literal.
 2. Almost any theory can be supported by the Scripture, if the exegete is at liberty to assume his positions and catch the sound of words from highly wrought figures, compelling them to do service as teaching agents.
 - a. David declares he is a worm and no man; Job declares man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more. Literal? Clearly not!
 - b. In this way the Jews made the Savior say the temple, which had been so long in construction and if it were destroyed, He would rebuild in three days.
 - c. They knew better but they could make the play on His words and that answered their purpose.

IV. RULES BY WHICH THE MEANING OF WORDS SHALL BE ASCERTAINED.

- A. All words are to be understood in their literal sense unless the evident meaning of the context forbids.
1. Figures are the exception, literal language is the rule.
 2. We are not to regard anything as figurative until we feel compelled to do so by the evident import of the passage.
 - a. Even here great caution should be observed.
 - b. We are apt to regard contexts as teaching some theory which we have in our minds.
 - c. Having so determined, anything to the contrary will be regarded as a mistaken interpretation.
 - d. If the literal meaning of the words are found to oppose our speculations we are ready to give the words some figurative import that will better agree with our preconceived opinions.

- e. Let us be sure the meaning of the writer has demanded the language be regarded in a figurative sense and it is not our theory which has made the necessity.
- B. Commands generally, and ordinances always, are to be understood in a literal sense.
- 1. Commands are rarely issued in figurative language.
 - a. The general who would issue orders in figurative language would certainly be misunderstood many times.
 - b. This would defeat his aim.
 - 2. The Savior does say, "Let your light so shine," etc., which is an order in a figurative use of words.
 - a. But in that case there is no probability of anyone failing to catch the exact thought.
 - b. He also said to Nicodemus that a man "must be born again" and He does not leave any room for doubt as to the meaning of the words employed.
 - c. For a man to be born of water and of the Spirit would never be mistaken by such a man as this ruler of the Jews.
 - 3. But at all times in giving a law with ordinances, nothing but the plainest use of words is to be expected.
- C. The literal meaning of a word is that meaning which is given to it by those to whom it is addressed.
- 1. It is always to be supposed when an author has written to a people, he knows in what sense they would certainly understand his words.
 - 2. He had the good sense to use the words in that way.
 - 3. If he has seen it proper to use the words in a better sense than the people did, he has given their meaning in some other way.
 - 4. In writing an account of the Savior's life, his words are sometimes employed in a sense not common to the people.

- a. But the apostles have immediately given the meaning the words have in that place.
 - b. If He said, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up again," the writer says He referred to the temple of His body.
 - c. Or again, when He said if anyone would come to Him and believe in Him, out of his belly should flow rivers of water, to prevent any misapplication of the language the writer says He said it of the Holy Spirit who would be given to His disciples after He is glorified.
5. How shall we know what the words meant, or in what sense the people understood them?
- a. This may be known by the use made of the word by the writer.
 - b. He probably employs the word several times in the communication and, in some one of these, he will have so surrounded it that its meaning is clear.
 - c. Again it may be determined by other writers who have lived at the same time and among the same people.
 - d. Indeed, it may be one of the people to whom the language was addressed has indicated the meaning they gave to it.
 - e. But if the writer has not made any use of the word that will clearly designate its import and if no one of the people of that age employed the word in question, then we are bound to the classic use of the word.
 - f. The classic use of a word may be assumed to be its import unless, because of the known education of the people to whom it was employed, there should be some good reason for departing from that meaning.
- D. The Scriptures give some words meanings they do not have in the classics, therefore the Bible becomes a dictionary of itself.
- 1. For instance, the word "elder" occurs several times with an official import.

2. But what office is intended by the word must be learned by the use of the word.
 3. By reference to 1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:17-28; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Timothy 3:1-8,17, we discover the office of bishop or overseer is intended when the word elder occurs as indicative of office.
 4. It does not follow from searching for the scriptural use of a word it is always to be understood in the same sense.
 - a. The word "tempt," many times, occurs in the sense of induce to do wrong, but generally it has the meaning of "to try" or "prove."
 - b. Thus, it is said God tempted Abraham and yet an inspired apostle says, "God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man."
 - c. Unless we shall allow the two meanings of the word in the Bible we are confronted with a contradiction in the word of the Lord.
 5. Sometimes a writer has a favorite expression and his use of it differs from the one generally used.
 - a. Phrases in the Bible are somewhat peculiar to the men who use them.
 - b. A favorite expression of Isaiah was "rush and palm branch."
 - (1) When we have become acquainted with him and his writings his meaning is very plain.
 - (2) It is a metaphor that stands for all the people.
 - (3) If they were to be carried away "rush and palm branch," they were all to be taken.
 - (4) He uses "head and tail" for the same purpose.
- E. Words of definite action can have but one meaning.
1. That is, they can have but one meaning that relates to action.

2. If they could have more than one meaning in this respect, they would not be words of definite action.
 - a. Jump, walk, run, sit, chop, dip, sprinkle, pour, shoot, hang, strike, sing, etc., are definite and, therefore, one meaning is possible to any one of them.
 - b. Hence, when action is ordered by any one of them, it cannot be obeyed by doing any other thing.
 3. As to the result, or consequence, this is not true.
 - a. To shoot may mean to kill, but it may mean to wound.
 - b. To hang may differ in results, sometimes having one effect and sometimes another.
- F. The writer's explanation is the best definition.
1. He is supposed to know, better than anyone else, just what meaning he wished to put into the word.
 2. Hence if he has told us in words that admit of no doubt, that is the end of all questioning in the matter.
 - a. Immanuel means "God with us."
 - b. Rabbi means "master" or "teacher."
 - c. Ordinarily Rabbi meant "great," but in this instance it means master; and this, too, is the meaning which is in the word in all its New Testament use.
- G. The proper definition of a word may be used in the place of the word.
1. If this is done, and the definition is wrong, the sense of the passage will be so destroyed as to make it apparent.
 2. The true definition of a word will give the same sense the word would give; hence, to remove the word and replace it with the definition is easily done and is a valuable method.
- H. Many times two positions are matched one against the other by antithesis.

1. The best illustration is found in the second letter to the Corinthians (3:6-14).
 - a. Paul here changes the terms several times on both sides; but, by this rule we trace his meaning without any possibility of being mistaken.
 - b. In his two double allegories (Gal 4:22-31 and Rom 11:16-26) these opposites serve a valuable end.
2. By proper attention to them neither is lost from sight nor misunderstood.
 - I. By the general and special scope.
 1. By the "general scope" I mean the main purpose in the mind of the writer.
 2. By the "special scope" I mean any sub-purpose having reference to any particular part of the general discussion.
 3. To illustrate: Paul wished to make it clear to the minds of the saints in Rome that the gospel was the only system by which men could hope for salvation.
 - a. He embraces this in his thesis (Rom 1:16-17).
 - b. But to find this proposition was true it was necessary to show men are lost.
 - c. There could not be a system of salvation if there was nothing to save; hence, he starts out to show all men are lost.
 - d. This again has to be divided in order that he may approach the subject in a way that would not give offense.
 - (1) So, he shows the Gentiles were sinners; they were responsible in that they once knew God; they could know of God by His works in nature; and in history, or in His dealings with the children of men He had revealed His wrath against all ungodliness.
 - (2) A second subdivision is to show the Jews were in no better condition than the Gentiles. Therefore, they were also in need of salvation.

- (3) He next proceeds to show they could not save themselves.
 - (4) That accomplished, he must show them the gospel could do what could not be accomplished in any other way.
- 4. Now there are new lines of thought that must be investigated, such as the extent and results of this salvation and whether there has been any injustice on the part of God in arranging this plan of saving men.
 - a. Also, when man has been redeemed from a state of sin he must be placed under some system by which he will be kept from sin and made to be the kind of man he ought to be.
 - b. To develop the man, should he be placed under the law Moses gave or will the gospel of Christ furnish him with those directions and helps which he needs most?
 - c. In this way Paul conducts the argument, following each proposition with another which connected with it.
- J. Etymological construction will many times tell the meaning of the word.
 - 1. Nearly all the names of the ancients had meanings and, when they were constructed of more than one syllable, the meanings of the several syllables will give the meaning of the whole word or name.
 - a. Beersheba, from “beer,” wells and “sebiah,” seven, would be “seven wells;” and Bethel from “house” and “God” would be “house of God” – are specimens of the meanings that attached to the names of places.
 - b. It must be confessed the rule does not always work, as some words have changed their meanings entirely since they were first made.
- K. The meaning of a word is frequently known by the words used in the construction with it.
 - 1. In this way we could first determine what part of speech it was.
 - 2. We could tell whether it indicated action or transition.

3. If a verb is used at any time in any unusual sense, or a preposition, its society will reveal the fact.
 4. This is especially true when we know the manner of the writer.
- L. Sometimes we may have to study the history of a word in order to get its meaning at any particular time.
1. It has occurred, in the history of some words, they have changed their meanings a number of times.
 2. Hence, if we are asked what such a word means, we must answer according to the time and place of its use.
 3. “Let” once meant “to hinder;” “prevent” once meant “to come before.”
 - a. All living languages are subject to changes as those just mentioned.
 - b. Thus, the necessity of carefully attending to the question of history when the meaning of a word is under consideration.
- M. Illustrations or parables may give the peculiar sense in which a word is to be understood in the Scriptures.
1. The young lawyer conceded to love God and to love one’s neighbor were the great commandments of the law.
 2. But to excuse himself, he was anxious not to know to whom he was neighbor.
 3. This the Savior brought out by the parable of the Good Samaritan, so the man himself agreed to do kindness was neighborly.
 4. And, like the Samaritan, race prejudice was to be forgotten in the face of want, and human sympathy was to have its rightful control.
- N. In finding a definition nothing but primary meanings are to be used.
1. “To eat” means literally “to chew and swallow.”
 - a. If this word shall be translated into any other language the word, or words, containing that thought must be used and no other.

- b. Then it may be translated again from that into a third, if the same precaution be used and no change occur.
2. But let us see what will become of the word in case we should be permitted to use secondary words in translating or defining.
- a. "To eat" means secondarily to corrode, to consume, to enjoy, to rub or fret, to wear away by degrees, to prey upon, to impair.
 - b. "To consume" means to waste away slowly, to be exhausted, to squander.
 - c. Now, as "to eat" means to consume, and fire consumes, and "to burn" is to consume, "to eat" and "to burn" are the same thing!
 - d. Yet, everyone knows that it is not true.
3. Unless this rule be observed there is no safety in translating from one language into another or in defining a definition in any language.

CHAPTER X FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. Much of Scripture was written in highly figurative language.
- B. Its poetry, prophecy and prose contain the loftiest Oriental hyperbole.
- C. It becomes us to acquaint ourselves with the rules governing this kind of speech.
- D. If we interpret literal language as if it were figurative, or figurative as if it were literal, we will certainly miss the meaning.

II. HOW CAN WE KNOW FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE?

- A. The sense of the context will indicate it.
 - 1. Nothing should be regarded as figurative unless demanded by the meaning of the immediate context.
 - 2. Or, the evident meaning of the passage as a whole will indicate a figure is in use.
- B. A word or sentence is figurative when the literal meaning involves an impossibility.
 - 1. In Jeremiah 1:18 it is said: "For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land."
 - 2. Literally we know this was not the fact.
 - 3. God had made this man to resemble these things in some respects: he should be strong and immovable like them, hence the comparison.
 - 4. "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strong rock, in him will I trust; my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower" (Psa 18:2).
 - 5. Literally it is impossible for God to be a rock, a tower or a horn.

6. It is evident to everyone, at sight, the author did not expect to be understood as indicating such a thing as God was a literal rock, etc.
 7. “This is my body; . . . this is my blood” (Mt 26:26-28).
 - a. It was a literal impossibility.
 - b. Metaphorically it was true, but literally it was not true.
 8. Great caution must be used in the application of this rule.
 9. We must pause long enough to know impossibilities are confronting us before demanding the passage be regarded as figurative.
- C. The language of Scripture may be regarded as figurative if the literal interpretation will cause one passage to contradict another.
1. That is, if we have two passages and the literal interpretation of both makes one contradict the other, we are at liberty to regard the language of one, at least, as figurative.
 2. There is one possible exception.
 - a. We have some words that are used in more than one meaning.
 - b. For instance, the word in one place may have one meaning and in another place depart from that thought.
 - (1) “All the wicked will He destroy” (Psa 145:20).
 - (2) Not only do the wicked perish, but the righteous also.
 - (3) “There is a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness” (Ecc 7:15).
 - (4) It is easy to have contradiction using a literal interpretation in each case.
 - (a) “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor 15:22).
 - (b) “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to keep the unrighteous un-

der punishment unto the day of judgment” (2 Pet 2:9).

- (c) Not only will God reserve the wicked as well as the righteous in the intermediate state, but He will send the one away into everlasting life and the other into everlasting punishment (Mt 25:46).
- (d) “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me, shall never die” (Jn 11:25-26).
- (e) Take all these passages in a literal sense and contradiction is inevitable.

D. When the Scriptures are made to demand actions that are wrong, or forbid those that are good, they are figurative.

1. “And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire” (Mt 18:8-9).
2. Perhaps a few have understood this to be intended to direct the actual physical pruning, but it is sufficient to say that ninety-nine out of every hundred, at least, have understood it to be figurative.
 - a. Indeed, it is not right for a man to dissect himself in any such a manner.
 - b. Therefore, the language is figurative.
3. “If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Lk 14:26).
 - a. Except those who have wished to find something in the Bible that is repugnant to all our knowledge of right and wrong, none have regarded this as literal speech.

- b. The command to honor father and mother would be violated directly, by the authority of the Savior, in demanding a literal interpretation.

- E. When it is said to be figurative.
 - 1. The author knew whether the language was figurative or not.
 - a. John 2:18-22 gives the statement of the Master that if they should destroy this temple He would raise it up again in three days.
 - b. They thought, or at least they pretended to think, He referred to the temple in the city of Jerusalem; but the writer says He spoke concerning the temple of his body.
 - c. In John 10:6 it is stated Jesus spoke a parable to them.
 - d. In Luke 18:1; 19:1 it is expressly stated He was speaking in parables.

- F. When the definite is put for the indefinite.
 - 1. This is many times the case in the Scriptures.
 - 2. Day, hour, year; ten, one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand and ten thousand times ten thousand.
 - a. Such expressions occur frequently.
 - b. They are rarely supposed to refer to just that number or period.

- G. When said in mockery.
 - 1. Men have always had the habit of using words to convey a thought quite different from that which a literal interpretation would indicate.
 - a. "And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked" (1 Kgs 18:27).
 - b. No one has ever supposed Elijah meant to say Baal was a god, for he said it mockingly.

- c. “But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine” (Acts 2:13).
- d. “And the rulers also scoffed at him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen” (Lk 23:35).
- e. They do not mean to concede He saved others; but that He had claimed to save them and that His hypocrisy was at last revealed in the fact that He could not save Himself, assuming that if He could not save Himself, He had not saved others.

H. Common sense.

- 1. Figures of speech sometimes occur when we have to depend on the things we know in order to decide if the language is figurative or literal.
- 2. We have many statements in the Scriptures that are in excess of the facts.
 - a. We do not need to be told they are figurative; we know it.
 - b. And yet no untruth is told if we keep the hyperbole in view.
 - c. It is used for the purpose of intensification and, with that purpose in mind, there is no danger of being misled.
- 3. When God says He will make His “arrows drunk with blood,” or Paul declares he is less than the least of all saints, there is nothing deceptive to those who will employ their common sense in the interpretation.
- 4. In Matthew 20:22-23 the Savior tells the disciples He had a cup to drink and a baptism to be baptized with and asks the ambitious James and John if they were able to endure these things.
 - a. They said they were able.
 - b. We have no direct rule that will reach the case except common sense.
 - c. By that rule we know the language was figurative.

5. I might continue till you become weary with those Scriptures all know to be figurative.
 - a. Yet we have scarcely a rule for determining that fact, nor do we need any.
 - b. We do not conduct the investigation of such passages by rules.
 - c. Through common sense all readers know them to be figurative.

III. RULES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

- A. Many of the rules which applied to didactic speech are applicable here.
 1. I depend upon you to keep those rules in mind.
 2. But some of them I am obliged to mention because of their peculiar use and value in the interpretation of figurative language.
- B. Let the author give his own interpretation.
 1. This, of course, applies as well to literal as to figurative language.
 2. It is seldom an author thought it necessary to interpret language that was strictly literal.
 - a. Generally he would not be able to do better by the second effort.
 - b. But many times, when the language is highly figurative, the writer feels some explanation is needed.
 - c. It is always safe to take his definition of the speech he has made.
 3. When Ezekiel saw his vision of the valley of dry bones (37) he gave the world of interpreters a vast field for the employment of genius.
 - a. Men have made many things out of that vision.
 - b. Yet, in the eleventh verse the prophet says it referred to the house of Israel – that as they were away from home and

seemingly neglected, they were ready to give up all hope of returning.

- c. But in this vision it was made known they should return to their land again.

C. The interpretation should be according to the general and special scope.

1. This is one of the rules for the interpretation of literal language.
2. If the rule is necessary to a right understanding of what was meant to be plain, certainly it is of great importance in the exegesis of what is confessedly difficult.
3. "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul" (Psa 19:7).
 - a. In the interpretation of this passage we must not lose sight of the topic under consideration.
 - b. God's ways are not as our ways; He employs silent forces for right ends.
 - c. In His handiwork we see evidence of His wisdom and goodness, and in His law is power to turn the souls of men from wrong to right.
 - d. This does not mean God had nothing to add to this law; it was perfect for the purpose for which it had been given.
 - e. We learn afterwards, from Paul, it was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ.
4. Matthew 5:13-15 is regarded as an easy figure and yet it can be removed from its purpose by a failure to keep in mind the topic before the mind of the Savior.

D. Compare the figurative with literal accounts or statements of the same things.

1. In doing this it will be seen you cannot make the figurative contradict the literal.
2. It may add beauty and strength to the literal statement, but it cannot teach differently.

- a. “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit” (Joel 2:28-29).
 - b. When we have carefully read the Scriptures respecting the Holy Spirit, we are sure that God is meant.
 - c. When we speak of the Spirit of the Lord we speak of God.
 - d. But how shall we think of God being poured out as if He were water?
 - e. His gifts may be given without limit, in such abundance as to justify the figure in the mouth of a poet, but no one expects to find anything that will seem like a literal pouring out of God on men and women.
3. The Savior tells of the same occurrence, but in very different style.
- a. His words are prophetic, but they are plain.
 - b. “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me” (Jn 15:26).
 - c. In the account of the fulfillment of this prophecy we have all the facts brought out. “And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).
- (1) By these literal statements, then, we have the figure of the Spirit of God being poured out.
 - (2) He came to the earth to make His residence with the disciples of the Master; He came with splendid gifts, and assumed the work assigned Him – that of com-

forting all disciples, and guiding the apostles into all truth.

- E. By the resemblance of things compared.
1. Christ is represented as a lamb slain from the foundation of the earth; and in His trial and crucifixion is presented to us as a sheep before her shearer and a lamb taken to the slaughter.
 2. When we have considered the characteristics of a lamb, we are not at any loss to see the force and beauty of the figure.
 3. But in the Revelation He is also called the Lion of the tribe of Judah.
 - a. How is He, then, both a lion and a lamb?
 - b. This last figure sends us back to look for other qualities in the Savior than those of gentleness and innocence.
 - c. He is mighty as well as meek.
 4. "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep" (Jn 10:26).
 - a. It is not easy to add a little to this statement and make out the idea that because they had not been foreordained from the foundation of the world to be saved they were unable to believe.
 - b. The Savior did not have that subject before Him at the time.
 - c. Still the language can be pressed into that thought.
 - d. If "sheep" here stands for the disciples, then they had to believe in order to become his disciples; and the language would be, in substance, "ye believe not, because ye believe not."
 - e. This would be so perfectly meaningless it cannot be admitted for a moment.
 - (1) In verse 16 He says, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold."
 - (2) All admit this reference is to the Gentiles.

- (3) Certainly they were not believers then, for they never heard of Him.
 - (a) They heard Him, they followed Him; they were therefore of willing mind that made them ready to hear and receive the truth.
 - (b) It was this unsuspecting quality in them that marked the difference between them and those Jews who refused to consider the evidence of His divinity and therefore remained in unbelief.

- 5. In the use of this rule we must be careful not to compare accidental qualities, those for which the figure was not employed.
 - a. An ingenious interpretation of Psalm 1:3 draws all attention to the fact the tree was planted by the streams of water.
 - b. It did not grow there of its own accord; and reaches a conclusion never in the mind of the author.
 - c. Whether the doctrine of foreordination that gives being to the exegesis is true or not, it is certain David was not discussing any such theology.
 - d. His contrast was simply between righteousness and ungodliness – righteousness prospered and iniquity was cursed.
 - e. The righteous man was like a tree planted by the rivers of water, getting moisture in the time of drought and, therefore, bringing forth his fruit in his season.

- F. The facts of history and biography may be made to assist in the interpretation of figurative language.
 - 1. If we can know what the man of God referred to then, by an acquaintance with that, we can find the point of his language.
 - a. In Jeremiah 1 the enemies to come against the land of Judah were pictured, in the evil that should work for that people, by a boiling caldron with its mouth spewing from the north.
 - b. Hence, it was about to overflow them and scald them to death.

- c. The coming and destruction of the Babylonians, related in the history of the nations, enables us to see the meaning and force of the figure employed by the man of God.
 - 2. In the interpretation of prophecy especially, it is of great importance to be well acquainted with the facts of history.
 - a. They tell of the destruction of many cities and countries in language that is highly figurative and, without any knowledge of the historic facts in the case we may form an incorrect view of the teaching.
 - b. Many prophecies will never be understood until fulfilled and then they will be grand evidences of the inspiration of the prophets.
 - c. The destruction of Babylon, as foretold by Jeremiah and Isaiah, can be easily understood in the light of the events that have occurred.
 - d. We can now go and stand with Isaiah on the walls of Babylon in the vision and see the two lines of smoke, or dust, rising from the East and listen to the wail from within the city and see well enough the two lines of the approaching army of Medes and Persians.
- G. Any inspired interpretation, or use of the figure, in an argument or teaching, will decide its meaning.
 - 1. In rule 1 we have the author's interpretation which, of course, must be admitted by every one.
 - 2. But this is based upon the same principle
 - a. If we concede the writers of the New Testament were inspired of God, then we must accept any application of Scripture they made.
 - b. To deny their exegesis of any passage is to deny the authority by which they spoke.
 - 3. Isaiah 6:9-10 is applied by the Savior in Matthew 13:14-15.

4. Paul's use of Sarah and Hagar and their sons, found in Galatians 4:21-32, is a good example.
 - a. "These are an allegory."
 - b. He not only announces they are an allegory, but tells what they mean.
 - c. The one stands for the Old Institution and other for the New.
 - d. We belong to the New, not to the Old.
 - e. The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free.
 - f. The one Institution gendereth to bondage while the other brings freedom.

H. We must be careful not to demand too many points of analogy.

1. Many proceed in the interpretation of figurative language as if it is their calling to invent as many features of similarity as their genius could originate, and then demand a corresponding thought and purpose for each.
2. If they could know certainly the man used as a type had a wart on his nose, or a mole on his ear, the wart or mole would have to come in for a hearing – they would see some typical intention in the whole affair.
3. You see, it would have been just as easy for the Lord to select one without these features as with them. Therefore, He must have had some divine reason for such a selection.
 - a. By these interpreters every occurrence of Old Testament times is supposed to have some feature of typology.
 - b. And in the interpretation of these types and symbols, every peculiarity in the type must have some antitypical thought.
 - c. The very purpose for which the type was employed is lost sight of in haste to identify small and unimportant features that have no part in the revelation of God to men.

4. Sometimes the apostles have taken up some portion of Old Testament history and used it for the purpose of illustrating some truth in hand; but it does not follow it was intended as a feature of typology.
 - a. Paul says, "Harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, and proved Me, and saw My works forty years."
 - b. It does not follow, from this, that all this stubbornness was intended as a type of anything in the New Testament time.
5. Much harm is done to the word of God by over interpretation.
 - I. It must be remembered figures are not always used with the same meaning.
 1. A lion may not always symbolize the same thought, nor need a sheep, water or fire always be employed for the purpose of expressing the same calamity or blessing.
 2. It is a grave error to compel every word that has, at any time, been used figuratively to always represent the same thought as in that passage.
 - a. Many are disposed to regard themselves at liberty to make anything out of the Bible their theology demands or their whims require.
 - b. If they find a passage will not harmonize with that view, the next thing is to find one or more words in the text used elsewhere in a figurative sense.
 - c. Then they demand such use be the Biblical dictionary on the meaning of that word.
 - d. Hence, it must be the meaning in that place.
 3. Because Jesus said He was the bread from heaven, it does not follow the word bread must always refer to Him.
 - a. He used the word leaven to represent teaching and influence both and, yet, these are the figurative uses.

- b. It does not mean the leaven the Israelites were to put out of their camps before the feast of the Passover was influence or doctrine.
- c. Nor because the word leaven, when used as a symbol, must always mean something bad because it usually has that usage.
- d. Jesus says the “kingdom of heaven is like leaven a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened” – surely the kingdom of heaven is not something to be shunned.

J. Parables may explain parables.

- 1. We have seen any figure of speech may be explained by the writer, or any other inspired writer, by literal language.
- 2. We have also seen a figure may be adopted by another writer in whole or in part and, in such cases, that which is free from doubt as to its import may be employed to make known what is not clear.
- 3. This rule only carries that thought a little farther and shows a parable, or other figure of speech, may be legitimately made to assist in the interpretation of another figure of speech.
- 4. In the first verse of the tenth chapter of John the Savior begins an allegory which closes in the sixth verse.
 - a. In this He introduces the thought of a shepherd, faithful in all his work, to illustrate his relation to them.
 - b. “But they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.”
 - c. He, therefore, began another allegory to give them this thought.
 - d. This time He takes the door, or the open space into the sheepcote, to assure them His help and protection would be sufficient (verses 7-8).
 - e. One of these illustrates the same thought the other does and, therefore, the one assists us in comprehending the meaning of the other.

- K. The type and the antitype are frequently both in view at the same time.
1. It is common to say a type is made of material things and the antitype is always a spiritual thought or fact.
 2. The anointing with oil prefigured the anointing of the Holy Spirit; the anointing of the prophet, priest and king of the patriarchal and Jewish times told of Him who should be our Prophet, Priest and King; the washing under the law symbolized the spiritual purity that should be in all the people of God.
 3. The wilderness of wandering represented the journey of life, with its many dangers, toils and trials; the Jordan told them of the death that was to be before the land of promise; and passing it prefigured the resurrection of the dead; and then, when they should enter the promised land, they had a type of heaven itself.
 - a. All this we can admit.
 - b. Indeed, I think it is quite true.
 - c. And yet several figures and types have been employed to represent the same antitype and several of these may be seen at the same time; and even the mind of the prophet may be fixed not only on several types, but on the antitype as well.
 4. Many of the prophecies of Isaiah are inexplicable by any other hypothesis.
 - a. In nearly all the latter part of his vision he is carried away to Babylon and is looking into the future from the time of the captivity.
 - b. Hence, he frequently sees the children of Judah and Benjamin returning home.
 - c. And the joy of the man of God becomes so great that everything seems to him to be ecstatic – the very land of Canaan itself is glad: its hills are frisking about like lambs and its mountains are skipping like rams; and the cedars of Lebanon are clapping their hands for joy.

- d. But in that ecstasy of mind the prophet is sure to see the still greater redemption in Christ.
 - e. Here are the type and the antitype both in prophecy.
5. There has been a great deal of misunderstanding of Matthew 24 on this account.
- a. Some have seen in it nothing but the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - b. Beyond any question the Savior did refer to the destruction of that city.
 - c. But others find in it language that must refer to the final judgment of the world and then hasten to the conclusion that it cannot refer to the destruction of Jerusalem at all but that it must all relate to the coming of the Lord and the end of the world.
 - d. But when we find that both of these things were before the mind of the Master at the same time, the trouble is taken out of the passage for we have in these two events all the language demands.

CHAPTER XI FIGURES OF THOUGHT

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Many things in the Bible are conveyed to our minds, not in teaching language, nor in figurative language, properly speaking.
- B. They are figures of thought rather than figures of speech.
- C. But several features of interpretation remain to be brought out which we cannot consistently denominate figures of speech.

I. ANTITHESIS.

- A. Of this word Webster says:

“An opposition of words or sentiments occurring in the same sentence; contrast; as, ‘When our vices leave us, we flatter ourselves we leave them.’ ‘Liberty with laws, and government without oppression.’”

- B. A rhetorical antithesis has the same grounding thought and purpose.
 - 1. Hence, if we can understand one member of the antithesis we can know what is intended by the other by knowing it is the opposite of the one we have described.
 - 2. If we know one is on the right we know just as certainly the other is on the left; if one is North the other is South – for such opposites inhere in the figure.
- C. If we are in doubt about what faith is we may get its opposites and understand it by the things which it is supposed to antagonize.
- D. The question of how faith comes may be settled in the same way.
 - 1. If we know the causes of unbelief, knowing faith is the opposite, we know causes opposite unbelief will produce faith.
 - 2. In the fifth chapter of Matthew we have several uses of antithesis.
 - a. Jesus says, “Ye have heard that it was said by them in old time,” etc.; “but I say unto you” (vers. 21, 27, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44).

- b. In all this Christ shows the righteousness He requires of His followers is higher than that demanded by the Pharisees, or even the law.
- 3. The duration of the punishment of the wicked can be settled by this law of antithesis (Mt 25:46):

“And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.”

 - a. The duration of punishment must be the measure of the eternal life.
 - b. In this case He used the same word on both sides; if the eternal life of the righteous is life without end, the punishment of the wicked is without end.
 - c. This is absolutely demanded by the law of antithesis.

II. SYMBOLS.

- A. This is from the Greek *symbolon*, a sign by which one knows a thing or infers it, from *sun*, with, and *ballein*, to throw, *to throw with* or *throw together*.
- B. Webster’s first definition fairly exhausts its meaning:

“1. The sign or representation of something moral or intellectual, by the images or properties of natural things; an emblem, a representation; as, the lion is the *symbol* of courage; the lamb is the *symbol* of meekness or patience.”
- C. A type is a real – person, place or thing, but a symbol is not real.

III. THE MIRACULOUS SYMBOL.

- A. The first is Genesis 3:24 and exhibits cherubim and a flaming sword at the East of the garden in Eden.
 - 1. It is emblematic of the fixedness of the word of God.
 - 2. Whether man had been separated from the tree of life to prevent him from living forever in sin and misery, or for some other reason, the one thought is everywhere seen the heavens and earth are put under tribute to keep the commandments of God

- B. When Moses saw the burning bush (Ex 3:2) God's glory was made to appear; it was not so much intended to tell of any future fact, as of the present majesty and dignity of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
- C. The pillar of a cloud and the pillar of fire that went with the Israelites (beginning Ex 13:21) was a constant symbol of God's presence and watchfulness.
- D. The acknowledgment of the Son at the time of His baptism and at the transfiguration (Mt 3 and 17) may be regarded in the list of miraculous symbols.
 - 1. So was the coming of the Spirit from the heavens on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
 - 2. The apostles had known of His coming and were waiting for Him.
 - 3. It had been interpreted for them previously. Its meaning was clear.
 - 4. These divine or miraculous symbols were not prophetic; they did not tell of some future event but of present truth.

IV. MATERIAL SYMBOLS.

- A. In selecting representatives of this kind of divine instruction, it is difficult to make clear distinction between symbols and types.
- B. Like many figures of speech between which the distinction is not clear, symbols and types frequently seem to overlap.
 - 1. Remember the symbol is supposed to relate to the present and only concerns the future as the things continue true.
 - 2. The symbol is employed to represent a thought that shall be true in time to come.
 - 3. But this is just where the type begins.
 - 4. It gathers its power of expression from the condition of things at the time and images before the things that are to come. Many things are clearly symbols and others are clearly types; while others seem to have the two thoughts and purposes combined.
- C. Many of the most beautiful and instructive of types had, at the time they were given, a symbolic truth to present.

- D. But there are enough left, that are symbols purely, for a careful study.
1. The “testimony” as applied to the tables of the law (Ex 25:16-21; 31:18) also called the tables of the covenant (Deut 9:9), because on the basis of these God made a covenant with Israel (Ex 34:27-28; Deut 4:13), served as a symbol as God’s judgment against sin.
 2. The offering of incense from the golden altar symbolized the thought of worship or the prayers of God’s children.
 3. In Isaiah 7:4 the prophet calls Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, two tails of smoking firebrands.
 4. O course, in the form this comes to us, it is a metaphor; but it should be remembered that a *symbol is in action, or being, what a metaphor is in speech.*
 5. This is true of the bread and wine of the Lord’s Supper (Mt 16:26-28). “This is my body,” “This is my blood,” etc., is metaphorical language; but the bread and the wine are symbols of the body and blood of the Savior.
 6. The bow set in the cloud (Gen 9:13) was a token or a symbol of the covenant.

V. GREAT NUMBERS OF SYMBOLS ARE VISIONAL.

- A. They were seen in a vision, in a dream or in the wakeful hours, but by the power of God.
- B. They are employed as object lessons to make the man of God understand some present truth or some event to come.
- C. In Genesis 40:1-20 we have the two dreams of men in prison with Joseph in Egypt.
1. Each had a dream: one saw what, in symbol, meant he would be restored – the three branches of grapes were an omen of good.
 2. The other dreamed of the three white baskets on his head and of the birds picking the meats from the upper, which meant within three days he would be beheaded.
- D. Two symbols were presented to Pharaoh in a dream, by which he was to know what was in store in the days to come. (See chapter 41.)

1. The seven fat kine and the seven lean that ate them up and the seven full ears of corn and seven thin ones that devoured them, told of seven years of plenty and then seven other years in which they would not be able to gather food.
2. In a dream similar to this Nebuchadnezzar was made to know of four universal monarchies, himself being at the head (Dan 2:1-45).
3. In the first chapter of the book of Revelation we have several beautiful symbols.
 - a. There are seven golden lampstands; one, like unto the Son of man, walking in the midst of them, who holds seven stars in His right hand.
 - b. We learn the lampstands were the seven churches and the seven stars were seven messengers of the seven churches.

VI. SPECIAL RULES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF SYMBOLS.

- A. These rules are few in number, yet they are needed.
 1. Many of the symbols have been interpreted by their authors; in such a case we have nothing to do but to accept the interpretation.
 2. Other symbols have been interpreted by other inspired authors. This, again, must stand as the interpretation.
 3. Sometimes the symbol has been given in a difficult manner, but another writer or speaker used the same illustration in a way that there is no doubt as to its meaning. That which is conspicuous must declare the meaning of that which is doubtful.
 4. The names of symbols are to be understood literally.
 5. There must be a resemblance, more or less clear, between the symbol and the thing signified.
 - a. In Jeremiah 24 we have a symbol of two baskets of figs.
 - b. After the description of the figs it is explained that of those who went into captivity, those who were true to the Lord were good figs and would be brought back again.

- c. The bad people, including Zedekiah, their king, would be too bad for any use. Therefore he would be tossed to and fro from Egypt to Babylon until utterly destroyed.
- d. God has interpreted it but that does not always protect the symbol from abuse.
- e. In Daniel 2 we have a symbol which is partly interpreted.
 - (1) So there are some things which we know about the dream of the king and some things that we must interpret by rules.
 - (2) We know the four sections in the image were four universal empires; we know the head was the Babylonian government; we know the three others followed in the order of silver, brass and iron; we know during the time of these kings, the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed.
 - (3) And when we use the divine interpretation as far as it goes, the meaning of the rest is easily found.

VII. TYPOLOGY.

- A. It is from the Greek *tupos*, from *tuptein*, "to strike." "A figure or representation of something to come; a token; a sign; a symbol; correlative to anti-type."
- B. It is necessary to remark, concerning types –
 - 1. That the original meaning of the word is not generally found in the Scriptures.
 - a. It does not generally mean to strike, nor yet the result of striking.
 - b. We say we have seen a horse's foot in the clay when we have only seen the impression of his foot, which would be the type.
 - 2. We must never expect the type and the antitype to be the same; that would not be type and antitype, but identity.

3. Remember the type has generally been selected for one purpose and finding that purpose makes the application easy.
4. It must foretell something. When it is a representation of a present truth or duty, it is a symbol, not a type.
5. It must not simply happen to represent something in the future. It must have been intended to represent that thought when it was given.
6. The Scriptures should be made to interpret them, as far as possible; and with such definition we must be content.
7. While we are always safe in calling anything a type that is so denominated in the word of God, it is not necessary to suppose we are limited to these statements.
8. As in the interpretation of symbols, the similarity between type and antitype will lead, in most cases, to the true meaning.
9. Anything, to be a type, must have been a real person, thing, event or office.
 - a. Not so with the symbols.
 - b. All the visional symbols were unreal – they were seen by assisted or superhuman sight – they were not present, though they appeared to be.
 - c. But the type is real.
 - d. Adam was a type of Christ.
10. The antitype is always superior to the type. If this were not the case there would be no reason in the type. The type is always visible at the time it is given because it is material; but the antitype contains divine or spiritual thought.
11. Sometimes figurative language is employed in giving a typical event. The figure should be treated as it would be if given under any other circumstances.
12. The rules for the interpretation of symbols apply to types as well.

VIII. THE SEVERAL KINDS OF TYPE.

A. Typical persons.

1. No person, as such, can be regarded as a type.
2. It must be because of some relation, office or characteristic, that typology is possible.
3. Adam is generally regarded as a type in that he is the head of the race (Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:22,45).
 - a. But the features of typology, as they are mentioned by the apostle, are opposites.
 - b. He represents the Christ by presenting just the antithesis of what Christ was and did.
 - c. He was at the beginning and Christ at the ending of sin; he was disobedient, Christ was obedient; he brought death, Christ brought life from the dead; he made many sinners, Christ makes many righteous; he was natural, Christ was spiritual; he was from the earth, Christ was the Lord from heaven.
4. Moses was a type of Christ in that he was a leader and a mediator between God and the people (Deut 18:15-18).
5. Melchizedek was a type of Christ (Gen 14:18-20; Psa 4; Heb 5:5-10, 6:20, 7:1-17).
6. David was a type of Christ (Acts 13:33-35; Isa 9:6-7).
 - a. He was not only a king, but was a model for his people.
 - b. In that respect he is about as complete a type as could be found.
7. Solomon was a type of the Messiah, though a more feeble one (2 Sam 7:13-15; 1 Kgs 8:18-20; Rom 1:1-4).
8. Zerubbabel was a type of Christ (Hag 1:1-12; Zech 4:1-10; 6:12-14).
9. Cyrus, king of Persia, was a type of Christ (Isa 44:27-28; 45:1-4).

- a. He was the anointed of the Lord. He was not intended as a representative of the Savior's character.
 - b. He gave the people liberty and even helped them to return to Jerusalem.
- 10. Elijah was a type of John the Baptist (Mal 3:1; 5:5-6; Isa 40:3-4; Mt 3:1-3; Lk 1:17; Mt 17:10-13).
 - a. The similarity between these men was known beforehand and stated by the prophets.
 - b. Indeed, John is called "Elijah which was to come."
- B. Typical things.
 - 1. Things, as well as persons, have represented the coming of the Savior and the work which He accomplished for men.
 - 2. The serpent in the wilderness (Jn 3:14; Num 21:9).
 - a. It was not because of the material out of which it was constructed.
 - b. It was to remove the sting of the serpent and, for that purpose, it was lifted up.
- C. Typical institutions.
 - 1. The sacrifices in patriarchal times, and in the times of the law, all looked either to the atonement of the Savior or to spiritual worship Christians should render the Father.
 - 2. The Sabbath was a type of the Christian's rest in Christ and of the eternal rest in heaven (Heb 4:1-10).
 - 3. The cities of refuge appointed for the man slayer (Num 35:9-34) were a type of Him to whom we may flee for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope that is set before us (Heb 6:18-20).
 - 4. The feast of Passover is full of the thought that we are spared from death by the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who is our *paschal sacrifice* (Ex 12; 1 Cor 5:7).
- D. Typical offices.

1. Every prophet, priest and king of the Old Testament served a purpose who answered to some particular work to be accomplished by the Savior.
2. These services grew out of the wants of the race.
 - a. The first want is knowledge. It was supplied by the man of God called a prophet, because he was to be God's man speaking to men.
 - b. Our next want was the removal of sin. This was accomplished by the offering made by the priest.
 - c. In the third place, we are in need of government and protection. This was met by a king.

E. Typical conduct.

1. This, in a general way, partakes largely of the nature of a symbol and, yet, when it clearly related to the future and, by divine purpose, the action becomes a type.
2. In this sense Abraham is a type of all believers in that he offered up his only son, he signified the gift of God's only Son for the sins of the world (Heb 11:17-19).
3. When Isaiah walked naked and barefooted (20:2-4) he not only symbolized conditions of the people, he foretold a future event.

F. Typical events.

1. From 1 Corinthians 10:1-10 we have the fact that the passage through the Red Sea was a type of Christian baptism; that the escape they accomplished from their former oppressors was typical of the escape of the sinner in being baptized into Christ and that the rock from which water was supplied represents Christ.
2. From John 6:36 we are assured the manna that fell in the wilderness could only faintly represent the true bread of life.
3. Peter held the view that in the ark of Noah we have a type of the sinner's salvation in baptism (1 Pet 3:18-22).

G. Typical places.

1. In the shadowy representation of divine things found in the tabernacle, the outer court stands for the world, the first veil for the church on the earth and the holiest of holies for heaven itself (Heb 9).
2. Egypt is made to typify bondage in sin since fleeing from there represents deliverance from sin.
3. The wilderness of wandering becomes the journey of life; the Jordan represents death; and the land of Canaan tells of heaven, the final and perfect rest of all who look for the glorious appearing of our Savior.
4. Egypt, Sodom and Babylon typify a fallen church with all the iniquity that comes as the result.

CONCLUSION.

- A. In this brief outline of types we have aimed at nothing more than a beginning for the student of the Bible.
- B. We have not thought of being exhaustive in their treatment.
- C. This would not have been possible.
- D. But having these outlines and the rules fairly well in our minds, there will be little difficulty in dealing with any type that appears in the investigation of any Scripture.

CHAPTER XII PARABLES

INTRODUCTION.

- A. In turning our attention to the interpretation of the parables of the Bible, we are studying the major figure of speech used by our Lord.
 - 1. At least one-third of the teaching of Christ was done in parables.
 - 2. It behooves us to pay close attention to them.
- B. The parables are also the most familiar part of the New Testament.
 - 1. We learned many of them before we were able to read.
 - 2. Because of their nature we probably remember them better than we do the doctrinal discourses in the epistles of Paul.
 - 3. We face the danger however, because the parables are so familiar to us, of neglecting their serious study or perhaps of misinterpreting them to our (and others') spiritual detriment.
- C. Many people have a confused understanding of the terms "literal" and "figurative."
 - 1. Some seem to think if a section of language in Scripture is figurative, that is the equivalent of saying it has no **real** or **definite** meaning.
 - 2. This results in both believers and unbelievers talking about "taking the Bible literally," "believing the Bible literally," and "interpreting the Bible literally."
 - 3. They intend to describe the convictions of those who believe the Bible to be the actual word of God and communicates definite truth, in contrast to those who believe the Bible to be myth or legend.
 - a. In the minds of many, "figurative" has come to mean "vague" and "literal" seems to be associated with the idea of "emphatic."
 - b. We hear people say absurd things like, "I literally jumped out of my skin."

- c. Such a statement sounds much more impressive and emphatic than, “I figuratively jumped out of my skin.”
 - d. But if any “skin jumping” was done it was figurative, not literal.
 - e. Literally, they were merely startled.
- D. Although the Bible uses such figurative language, such language always has a definite meaning.
- 1. The purpose of the Bible is to reveal God’s will to us.
 - 2. If the figurative language of the Bible did not have a definite meaning, it would serve not to reveal but to **conceal** and **obscure** the will of its ultimate Author.
 - 3. The parables of the Bible have a definite meaning.

I. WHAT IS A PARABLE?

- A. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word for parable is *mashal*.
- 1. It is variously translated “parable” (Ezek 17:2); “proverb” (Ezek 18:2; Prov 1:1); “byword” (Psa 44:14); and “like” (Job 13:12).
 - 2. There are two words translated “parable” in the New Testament.
 - a. The major word is *parabole*.
 - b. With one exception it is the word translated “parable” in the New Testament.
 - c. It is also variously translated as “comparison” (Mk 4:30); “proverb” (Lk 4:23); and “figure” (Heb 9:9; 11:19).
 - 3. The one exception mentioned above is the Greek word *paroimia*.
 - a. It is translated “parable” only once in John 10:6.
 - b. It should have been translated “proverb” there as it is everywhere else it appears.
 - 4. According to Thayer the word *parabole* literally means “a placing of one thing by the side of another, juxtaposition.”

5. He also offers the following definition:

A narrative, fictitious but agreeable to the laws and usages of human life, by which either the duties of men or the things of God, particularly the nature and history of God's kingdom, are figuratively portrayed.

B. The definition of a parable is complicated by the fact the parable resembles, in different degrees, other figures of speech.

C. But, strictly speaking, the parable belongs to a style of figurative speech which constitutes a class of its own.

1. It is essentially a comparison or simile, and yet all similes are not parables.

2. The simile may appropriate a comparison from any kind or class of objects whether real or imaginary.

3. The parable is limited in its range and confined to that which is real.

4. Its imagery always embodies a narrative which is true to the facts and experiences of human life.

a. It makes no use, like the fable, of talking birds and beasts, or of trees in council.

b. Like the riddle and enigma, it may serve to conceal a truth from those who have not spiritual penetration to perceive it under its figurative form; but its narrative style and the formal comparison, always announced or assumed, differentiates it clearly from all classes of knotty sayings which are designed mainly to puzzle and confuse.

5. The parable, when once understood, unfolds and illustrates the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

6. The enigma may embody profound truths and make much use of metaphor but it never, like the parable, forms a narrative or assumes to make a formal comparison.

7. The parable and the allegory come nearer together so that, indeed, parables have been defined as "historical allegories;" but they differ from each other in substantially the same way as simile differs from metaphor.

- D. It is perhaps simplest to think of the parable (and its closest relative, the allegory) in terms of simile (and metaphor).
1. The simile and the metaphor are two of the most common figures of speech in the English (or any other) language.
 2. You undoubtedly learned in high school a simile is a figure of speech that compares two things by using the words “like” or “as.”
 3. “My love is like a red, red rose” is a simile.
 4. A metaphor is a comparison made when one thing is said to be another.
 5. If Robert Burns had written, “My love is a red, red rose” that would have been a metaphor.
 6. Jesus used metaphors when he said, “I am the bread of life,” and “You are the light of the world.”
 - a. Although the subject and its comparison are identified as one, the author does not intend his words to be taken literally.
 - b. Christ is no more a piece of bread than Christians are photon emitters.
- E. In effect, the parable is an extended simile (“The kingdom of heaven is like unto...”) and the allegory is an extended metaphor (“...for these women are two covenants...”).
1. Although the parable and the allegory both use comparisons to teach spiritual truths there are some important differences.
 2. A parable is realistic but an allegory might not be.
 3. In an allegory Christ might be a door or a vine, believers might be sheep or branches.
 4. Though both might have a central theme the parable is created to make one principal point, whereas the allegory might be created to teach many related, or even unrelated, truths.
- F. Bernard Ramm points out there are four elements to a parable.

1. First, there is the earthly event, thing or custom.
 - a. This would be something very familiar to the audience.
 - b. It might deal with business, farming, family, social events, etc.
 - c. This earthly part of the parable must be rooted in reality.
 - d. Events must actually happen or be capable of actually happening.
2. Second, there is the spiritual lesson which the parable intends to teach.
3. Third, the earthly element has an analogical relationship to the spiritual element.
4. Fourth, because the parable has two levels of meaning there is need of interpretation.

II. THE PURPOSES OF THE PARABLES.

- A. Why did the Lord speak so often in parables?
 1. This is the question His disciples asked in Matthew 13:10. "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?"
 2. First, note what ordinary examination of and reflection on the parables tell us about their purpose.
 3. The general design of the parables seems to be obvious.
 4. Parables serve the purpose of setting forth the truth in an attractive and memorable form.
 - a. Many who know nothing else about the Bible can often recall the parables they have heard.
 - b. Even if one does not grasp or appreciate the spiritual truth contained in the parable when he first hears it, the ability of the parable to stick in the memory makes it possible for the truth to do its work over a long period of time.

5. Although parables were often rebukes targeted at certain ones, they were often more effective and disarming than straightforward language.
 - a. The parable often caused the listener to assent to the truth of the parable before realizing that the truth was aimed at him.
 - b. Thus, Nathan's parable about the unjust and wealthy neighbor who took and killed his poor neighbor's pet lamb to feed his guests aroused David's indignation.
 - c. When Nathan said, "David, thou art the man," David stood condemned in his own eyes and repented.
 - d. The parables of Christ disarmed those who resented His teaching and did not want to admit His parables hit them squarely, condemning their behavior.

- B. The special design of the parables is discussed by the Lord in Matthew 13:10-17:

"And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? And he answered and said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, And I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not."

1. Until this time the Lord had not spoken in actual parables, although we have many similes and other figures used in the Sermon on the Mount.

2. Now His entire sermon consists of parables.
3. His disciples ask why?
4. R. C. Foster suggests a reason for the sudden change in teaching methods.

“The sermon in parables was a sifting process by which Jesus prevented the violent, worldly, or curious elements in the throngs about him from becoming so dominant that they would try to take control of his campaign or that they would prevent his maintaining a spiritual atmosphere. The Zealots are not mentioned by name in the Gospel narratives, but we know from Josephus that they were numerous and powerful in Galilee. There can be no doubt that they exercised a strong, negative influence upon the ministry of Jesus. If we knew the circumstances that so frequently caused Jesus to make a swift departure by night to some other field of evangelistic labor, we might learn that the excitement here was at the point of violent explosion in a revolution against Rome headed by the Zealots. It is obvious this was the situation at the feeding of the five thousand. It seems highly probable that the Zealots were also fomenting violent aims now and furnished one of the reasons for Jesus’ change in his teaching methods. The general longing and expectation of the worldly-minded was for a messiah who would bring back the military and political glory of the reigns of David and Solomon. Jesus had to combat this undercurrent throughout his ministry. This sermon in parables was so difficult to understand that the worldly-minded who threatened to corrupt the atmosphere of the multitude were disgusted and turned aside. The spiritually-minded would be stimulated by the difficulty of the sermon to seek the more diligently for the hidden truths.”

5. Matthew 13:13 seems to say that the Lord spoke in parables because they **did not** see, or hear or understand.
6. Mark 4:11-12 seems to say that the Lord spoke in parables in order that they **might not** see, or hear or understand.
7. Which is correct?
 - a. Both.
 - b. Because they did not see, or hear or understand, the Lord spoke in parables to awaken their spiritual curiosity and move them to seek the truth.

- c. But the same message that awakens one will harden another.
 - d. The gospel is designed both to attract and to repel, depending on the heart of the listener.
8. The parables were a test of intellectual, spiritual honesty and hunger.
 9. To find truth we must first love truth (2 Thess 2:10-12).

III. THE INTERPRETATION OF PARABLES.

- A. Because the parable is an extended figure of speech it needs careful interpretation.
- B. We should not fall into the trap that some have of thinking since the language is figurative it is therefore elastic enough to fit almost any interpretation we may choose to give it.
 1. We should not approach the parables as an opportunity to show off our ingenuity in devising a novel interpretation never conceived before.
 2. Instead, recognizing the danger of misunderstanding and misapplying the parables we should approach them with great care.
 3. We should want to find in them only what our Lord intended to teach by them.
 4. Remember, although they are figurative in nature, they have a definite meaning that can be expressed in literal language.
- C. One of the great dangers in dealing with parables is to try to make them "walk on all fours."
 1. By this is meant the attempt to find meaning in everything mentioned in the parable.
 2. Unlike the allegory in which everything, or almost everything, has significance, in the parable some things are significant and some things are simply window dressing, necessary to give color and fullness to the narrative, but without relevance to the spiritual meaning of the parable.

3. In the parable of the prodigal son the ring his father put on his finger and the robe he put on his shoulders are simply illustrative of the warmth with which the father welcomed his lost penitent son home.
 4. It would be useless and harmful to try to attach some deep spiritual significance to these two items, to try to imagine what they **really** represent and how they differ in meaning from each other.
- D. We should also refrain from using our imagination to fill in details that our Lord did not see fit to give us.
1. It would be useless to speculate about what country the prodigal son traveled to, or what he and his elder brother looked like, etc.
 2. One of the worst habits we could fall into in dealing with the parables is “allegorizing” their interpretation and giving every detail some spiritual significance.
 3. At one time this was a common way of handling the parables.
- E. The basic principle of all proper hermeneutics is **context**.
1. We begin the interpretation of a parable by looking at its context.
 2. Search the **immediate** context in an attempt to discover its scope or aim – the thing to be illustrated by the parable.
 - a. Sometimes the object can be found expressed in so many words in the immediate context. “And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk 18:1).
 - b. Sometimes the occasion for the parable indicates its aim.
 - c. The occasion for the parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Mt 20:1-15) is the question Peter asked in Matthew 19:27: “Then answered Peter and said unto him, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?”
 - d. Often the audience to whom the parable is addressed gives us an indication of what the parable teaches.

- e. The parable of the good Samaritan is addressed to the smug, self-righteous lawyer who asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” (Lk 10:29).
 - f. He did not get the answer he was looking for, but he is forced to come face-to-face with the narrow limits of his love for others.
 - g. In the parable of the prodigal son Jesus is addressing those who had murmured against Him for receiving and eating with the sinners and Publicans who had come to hear Him (Lk 15: 1-2,11-32).
 - h. Sometimes we are given an indication at the end of a parable of its aim (Mt 13:49; Lk 12:21).
 - i. A similar passage elsewhere in Scripture may give us a valuable insight (compare Lk 15:3-7 with Mt 18:12-14).
- F. Having attempted to ascertain the scope and aim of the parable now turn your attention to the narrative itself, the earthly story.
- 1. In this study you will be attempting to identify the major analogy or comparison the parable uses.
 - 2. Note any minor analogies that are relevant to the aim of the parable.
 - 3. Try to identify irrelevant details, the stage dressing necessary to the story, but irrelevant to the lesson.
 - 4. This process is not difficult to do, especially if we are given some idea in the context of the aim of the parable.
- G. We are now ready to identify the spiritual lesson being taught.
- 1. We are fortunate in having two of the parables interpreted by Christ Himself (The **Sower**, Mt 13:1-23 and The **Tares**, Mt 13:24-30,36-43).
 - 2. In Jesus’ handling of these parables we see a central idea or lesson identified, with details emphasized as they relate to the central idea.

- a. For example, the central concept in the parable of the sower is that God's word will meet with varying receptions in different people.
 - b. The details illustrate these:
 - (1) The person who fails to understand,
 - (2) The enthusiast who soon loses his courage,
 - (3) The person whose ability to respond is choked by worldly cares and riches,
 - (4) The person who hears, responds and becomes a productive member of God's kingdom.
3. The focal point of the parable of the tares is that within the kingdom regenerate men and imitators will exist side by side throughout this age, but God's final judgment is sure.
- a. Thus, if any inferences can be drawn from Christ's interpretations of His own parables, they are that there is a central focal point of teaching in Christ's parables and the details have significance as they relate to that focal teaching.
 - b. The details are not to be given meaning independent of the main teaching of the parable.
- H. Having identified the spiritual lesson of the parable, try stating it in a declarative sentence using literal language.
- 1. Now check your interpretation of the parable with the direct teaching of the remote context – that is, everything else the Bible teaches on that subject.
 - 2. Always interpret figurative language in the light of plain speech.
 - 3. No point of doctrine, that is not elsewhere clearly affirmed, may be derived from an incidental parabolic reference.
 - a. In the story of the wicked husbandmen (Mt 21:33ff for instance) the Jewish rejection of Christ is portrayed.

- b. After sending numerous servants (the prophets) to collect his fruits, the Householder (God) sent His Son, saying, "They will reverence my Son."
- c. It would be a great perversion of truth to suggest this statement implies Jehovah was surprised by the Jewish rejection of Christ and yet this is the exact position of dispensational premillennialists who assert God's plan to establish the kingdom was frustrated by Israel's crucifixion of Jesus.
- d. Nor can the fact the king in the parable of the unmerciful servant (Mt 18:23ff) gratuitously forgave the indebted servant be used as a basis for the doctrine of "unconditional salvation."
- e. Such would be a gross abuse of that narrative.

CONCLUSION.

- A. There is much more that could be said about the nature and interpretation of the beautiful parables of Jesus Christ.
- B. Entire books have been written regarding them.
- C. We have an obligation, as children of God, to study and learn His holy word.
 - 1. This is the first duty of a Christian because no others can be properly discharged until we have to some extent studied and understood the Bible.
 - 2. Then we must put into practice what we have learned.
 - 3. The purpose of all true hermeneutics is not simply the understanding, but ultimately the **practice** of God's will.
 - 4. And finally, we have the obligation of teaching the truth to those who do not know it.
 - 5. Let us be true to God's word in our understanding, our practice and our preaching.

CHAPTER XIII FABLES, RIDDLES AND ENIGMAS

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Westerners speak forcefully, plainly and directly as a rule.
1. We are not given to poetic or symbolic language in our everyday speech.
 2. Consequently we often find the Old Testament difficult to interpret for it is filled with the rich imagery and powerful symbolism of the Semitic people.
 3. The images in the Old Testament come from a number of sources but are drawn principally from the physical features of the Near East; the customs and habits of the people (cf. Jer 2:13; Isa 5:1-2; 40:26); and Israelite or pagan worship.
- B. The New Testament, too, although written in the more precise Greek language and more closely akin to the thought patterns of modern Westerners, still has imagery and use of figures unfamiliar to our minds.
- C. Fables, riddles and other enigmas are not popular forms of communication in our world today as they were in the ancient biblical world.
1. They occur in our literature only as forms for amusing children while perhaps conveying to them some moral principle.
 2. They involve a test of wit!
 3. For instance, "What has eyes but cannot see?" A potato!
 4. "What kind of fruit is red when it is green?" A blackberry!
 5. It is no wonder fables, riddles and other enigmas were common forms of teaching truth in Bible times and that Scripture includes them to teach us today.
- D. Fables, riddles and enigmas are sometimes confused in our minds because the Bible does not clearly delineate between them.
1. A riddle and an enigma are related, but are not the same.
 2. The primary object of the riddle is to puzzle the hearer.

3. Enigmas are puzzles which are difficult to understand usually because of a lack of information on the part of the interpreter.
4. A fable is simply a fictitious story which is told to convey a single point.
5. It is usually easily understood.

I. **FABLES.**

- A. Milton Terry regards the fable as the lowest of all figures in dignity and aim.
 1. It consists essentially in this, that individuals of the brute creation, and of animate and inanimate nature, are introduced into the imagery as if possessed with reason and speech and are represented as acting and talking contrary to the laws of their being.
 2. There is a conspicuous element of unreality about the whole machinery of fables and, yet, the moral intended to be set forth is usually so obvious no difficulty is felt in understanding it.
- B. Fables and parables are often confused in the minds of Bible students.
 1. Many regard them as synonymous.
 2. This is a mistake and can result in serious misunderstanding of the biblical text.
 3. Whereas fables are fictitious stories using animals and inanimate objects as actors to speak and perform in a way they cannot possibly do in real life in order to set forth some useful truth or precept, parables are always based on reality.
 4. The actors in parables never do anything which they cannot actually do.
 5. The setting of parables is always in the real world.
 - a. For example, the parable of the sower in Matthew 13 conveys a truth based upon the common practice in Palestine of broadcasting seed by hand in the plowed field.
 - b. It is possible that such a sower was within sight of Jesus and the multitude as He taught this parable by the shores of Galilee.

- C. The word “fable” occurs in the New Testament in the ASV and KJV in five places (1 Tim 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim 4:4; Titus 1:14; 2 Pet 1:16).
1. It is used in these instances by the apostles Paul and Peter to indicate false teaching coming into the church.
 2. The particular nature of the false teaching designated by the word “fable” is difficult to determine.
 3. It may have reference to Gnostic tales or legends based upon, but certainly not a part of, Old Testament accounts or it may refer to tales from the Apocrypha.
 - a. Whatever its nature, it is condemned by the inspired apostles.
 - b. The word translated as “fable” is the Greek word *muthos* from which we get our English word “myth.”
 - c. It would perhaps best be rendered as “myth” in these passages.
- D. Technically speaking, there are only two illustrations in the Bible which can be strictly classified as fables.
1. The first is of Jotham recorded in Judges chapter nine.
 - a. After judging Israel for forty years the great man of faith, Gideon, had died.
 - b. Gideon had left behind seventy sons born of his many wives and one son, Abimelech, born of his concubine in Shechem.
 - c. Abimelech persuaded the Shechemites to follow him and make him ruler to fill the place left vacant by his father.
 - d. To insure there would be no rival claimants, Abimelech had all of Gideon’s other sons murdered.
 - e. Only Jotham, the youngest, managed to escape.
 2. Jotham stood on top of Mt. Gerizim and spoke to the men of Shechem below.

- a. They were likely encamped in the natural amphitheater between Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal where a speaker atop either mountain could be easily heard (cf. Deut 27:11-13; Josh 8:30-35).
 - b. Jotham told of the trees of the forest seeking a king to reign over them.
 - c. The olive tree, highly valued as a source of oil which was made from its fruit, was first approached.
 - d. The olive tree declined the offer to become king for he felt his bearing oil was more important.
 - e. Next, the trees approached the fruitful fig tree to request he be their king, but he declined stating he could not leave his fruit just to be promoted over the other trees.
 - f. After this, the trees approached the vine with the request that he be their king.
 - g. The vine also declined, not desiring to leave his production of wine to serve as king.
 - h. Last of all, the trees approached the worthless bramble bush and asked him to be their king.
 - i. He accepted immediately and boastfully proclaimed that if all did not follow him, fire would come forth from him and destroy the mighty cedars of Lebanon.
3. D. R. Dungan says the meaning of the fable is “those least competent and worthy are most ready to assume responsibilities and take command.”
- E. The second and last fable found in the Bible is recorded in 2 Kings 14:7-14 and 2 Chronicles 25:5-24.
1. Amaziah, king of Judah, had hired an army of mercenaries from Israel to assist his army in a war against Edom.
 2. A prophet of God warned Amaziah not to use the Israelites because God was not with them.
 3. Therefore, the king sent the Israelites home.

4. Angered by their rejection, the Israelite mercenaries injured the people of Judah, fighting against many cities and spoiling them.
5. When Amaziah had returned from the war against Edom as a victor, he resolved to settle things with the Israelites.
6. Consequently he sent a message to King Jehoash challenging him to battle.
7. Jehoash replied with a fable:

“The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon and trod down the thistle. Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites; and thine heart liftest thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldst thou meddle to thine hurt, that thou shouldst fall, even thou and Judah with thee” (2 Chron 25:18-19).

- a. Amaziah did not heed the warning of Jehoash’s fable.
 - b. He made war on Israel and was soundly defeated.
 - c. The meaning of Jehoash’s fable is that Amaziah’s pride of heart was causing him to attempt that which was far beyond his capabilities.
 - d. History proved this to be a correct evaluation.
- F. When interpreting fables one must not attempt to draw more from the fable than it was designed to convey.
1. The historical situation which brought forth the fable will help greatly in understanding its meaning.
 2. Is one point, or several, being made?
 3. How did the fable influence those who heard it?
 4. What is the application to modern man?

II. RIDDLES.

- A. Riddles differ from fables in purpose.

1. They are designed to leave the hearer “guessing.”
 2. They test the mental agility of the one who would solve them.
 3. The nature of riddles is seen in the Hebrew word translated “riddle.”
 - a. It comes from a root meaning “to twist; to tie a knot.”
 - b. It refers to any dark or obscure saying which requires unusual skill to interpret.
 - c. A riddle is a concise saying which is intentionally formulated to tax the ingenuity of the hearer, or reader, when he tries to explain it.
- B. A good example of a riddle is found in Judges 14:14, “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.”
1. The background of the riddle is essential to its interpretation.
 2. Samson, son of Manoah and his wife, was born as a result of a prophecy.
 3. He was a Nazarite from his birth.
 4. God was going to use him to deliver Israel from Philistine oppression (Jdgs 13).
 5. Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman in Timnath.
 - a. In spite of his parents’ opposition to the proposed marriage, Samson persisted and the marriage was arranged.
 - b. As Samson made his way down to Timnath a lion attacked him and he killed the lion with his bare hands, leaving its carcass by the roadside.
 - c. Later, when Samson made another journey to Timnath, this time for the wedding, he found a swarm of bees had used the lion’s carcass for a hive and had made honey in it.
 - d. He ate of the honey and gave it also to his parents who ate of it, but knew not its source.

6. During the festivities leading up to the actual wedding, Samson proposed the riddle to his thirty Philistine companions.
 - a. If they could solve it during the seven days of the festivities, Samson would give them thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments.
 - b. If they could not solve the riddle then they were to give him thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments.
 - c. When the Philistines had not solved the riddle by the seventh day of the feast they approached Samson's Philistine bride-to-be.
 - d. They threatened to burn her and her family with fire if she did not entice Samson to reveal the answer.

“And Samson’s wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me...And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle unto the children of her people. And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down. What is sweeter than honey? And what is stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle” (Jdgs 14:16-18).

- C. There are three simple rules for interpreting riddles:
 1. Consider the reason for the riddle.
 2. Consider the content of the riddle.
 3. Consider the outcome of the riddle.
 4. In the Bible the context in which the riddle is found will either give the meaning or provide the clues by which the meaning can be ascertained.

III. ENIGMAS.

- A. It is hard to distinguish between riddles and enigmas because they have long been used interchangeably.

- B. However, a riddle is an intricate saying dealing with earthly things.
- C. It is designed to tax human ingenuity and shrewdness.
- D. Enigmas, however, are best used for mystic sayings which are used to hide as well as to enhance some profound thought.
1. Bullinger defines an enigma as “a dark or obscure saying, a puzzling statement or action, a statement of which the meaning has to be searched for in order to be discovered.”
 2. The Greek word from which enigma comes is *ainigma*.
 3. It occurs in the New Testament only in 1 Corinthians 13:12 where it is translated “darkly.”
- E. Herodotus records an example of an enigma presented by the king of Scythia when his land was being invaded by the Persians.
1. The enigma was in the form of a gift sent by him to Darius Hystaspes, the Persian king who had invaded his land.
 2. The gift consisted of a bird, a mouse, a frog and five arrows.
 3. Gobryas, one of Darius’ generals, interpreted the enigma as follows:

Unless the Persians could fly through the air like birds, or hide themselves in the earth like mice, or swim through the water like frogs, they would not return to their own country, but would be slain by many arrows of the Scythians.
- F. In the Old Testament it is said the queen of Sheba “came to prove him (Solomon) with hard questions” (1 Kgs 10:1).
1. The word for “hard questions” may be rendered as “enigmas.”
 2. In the New Testament a number of the sayings of Jesus may be thought of as enigmas.
 3. John uses a Greek word *paroimia* four times.
 4. It is “a dark saying, a figure of speech in which high and profound truths are expressed, but not in a straightforward way.”

5. An example of this is the statement of Jesus before His arrest and subsequent crucifixion: “These things have I spoken to you in proverbs (*paroimia*—dark sayings), but the time cometh when I shall no more speak to you in proverbs (*paroimia*—dark sayings), but I shall shew you plainly of the Father” (Jn 16:25).
- G. Another statement of our Lord which may be classified as an enigma in His explanation to the disciples when they returned to Jacob’s well with food and found Him no longer hungry.
1. “I have meat to eat that ye know not of,” He told them.
 2. They thought only of physical food and assumed someone else had brought Jesus something to eat.
 3. He had to explain His meaning to them: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work” (Jn 4:32-34).
- H. Mickelsen suggests the following rules for interpreting enigmas:
1. Check lexicons for the meaning of words and consider the grammar of the statement.
 2. Consider the context of the statement.
 3. Watch for shifts from the literal to the figurative.
 4. Check reliable commentaries.
 5. Write down in your own words the meaning of the enigmas.

CONCLUSION.

- A. The Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of God.
- B. However it has been revealed to man in human language and, therefore, uses the various figures of speech common to such language.
- C. In order for one rightly to interpret the word of God and make application to himself, he must understand such figures as fables, riddles and enigmas in the Bible.

CHAPTER XIV SIMILES

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Words should be understood in a literal sense unless the context demands a figurative application.
1. Occasionally someone will demand to know why it should be this way.
 2. What is wrong with understanding everything in a figurative sense unless the context demands a literal construction?
- B. The nature of rational argument imposes the rules for understanding human language.
1. In the nature of things words should convey their apparent meaning and when figures are used the sentence construction must strongly suggest that this is the case.
 2. Otherwise language loses its power to communicate.
 3. Cryptograms cannot be understood without a key to decode the message.
 4. If words convey something other than their obvious, usual and normal meaning, they baffle and confuse the reader, or listener, and serve no good purpose.
- C. It is obvious words can be used in narrative or poetic form.
1. Narrative can be history, law, fiction or non-fiction.
 2. Whether history, legislation, parable, prose, poetry or any other literary form it is still true words must have a definition understood by **both** sender and receiver.
 3. We understand an idea given in rhyme in the same way as an idea given in prose or ordinary narrative usage.
 4. Understanding the meaning of the message is the same no matter what the literary form may be.
 5. The idea we must have a set of rules to understand narrative, another to understand history, another to understand prophecy and another to un-

derstand poetry is without basis, although one should be aware of their individual peculiarities and similarities.

- D. It is critical to the art of communication for the language conveying thought to be clearly understood by all concerned.
1. A dictionary first gives the literal meaning of words, because the literal meaning is the expected meaning and then it goes on to explain figurative usage.
 2. Paul wrote,

“So also ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be know what is spoken? For ye will be speaking into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and no kind is without signification. If then I know not he meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh will be a barbarian unto me” (1 Cor 14:9-11).
- E. Intellectual snobs who attempt to speak or write in the most complicated murky manner possible in a vain attempt to flaunt their imagined superiority defeat themselves.
1. “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to naught” (1 Cor 1:19).
 2. God made foolish the wisdom of the world “that no flesh should glory before God” (1 Cor 1:20).
- F. The Bible is appealing because it is understandable.
1. The original manuscripts of the New Testament were in the language of the common people, not classical or diplomatic tongue.
 2. The obvious reason for this is God wanted His gospel to be preached to every creature in all the world and for the average person to understand it.
- G. Not every statement in the Bible is literal.
1. Some Bible expressions are figurative.
 2. We must resolve the question of when the Bible is speaking literally and when it is speaking figuratively.

3. It is risky to make literal language figurative, or to make figurative teaching literal.
4. Such confusion results in a garbled message and that may result in eternal loss (Mt 16:5-12).
5. The rational approach is to regard each word as literal unless the text, context or intent of the writer require a figurative understanding.
6. This is the intelligent way to proceed for the same reason the dictionary gives first, and often exclusively, the literal meaning of words.
7. This is the normal, natural, straightforward and therefore common sense, procedure.
8. E. W. Bullinger says:

“When the literal application of the words is contrary to ordinary plain human experience, or to the nature of the things themselves, then we are compelled to regard the application as figurative, though the words themselves still retain their literal meaning: otherwise the application would lose all its point” (*Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, Baker Book House).

I. SIMILE.

- A. A simile is a figure of speech.
 1. It is similar to metaphor.
 2. Both simile and metaphor compare something to another thing.
 3. The metaphor is **implied**, the simile is stated explicitly, and that is about the only difference between the two.
 - a. When Jesus called Herod a **fox** he was using a metaphor (Lk 13:32).
 - b. Herod was obviously not a four-legged, hairy, bushy-tailed animal, but he was, **in some ways**, a fox.
 - c. We think of the fox as sly and crafty. Herod was guileful and tricky, therefore the comparison.
 - d. Since the likeness is implied and not stipulated, the statement is metaphorical.

- B. A simile is an **explicit comparison** and uses “as, so or like.”
1. The word “simile” is related to the word “similar.”
 2. It means “a likeness.”
 3. It is “a figure of speech in which one thing is likened to another, dissimilar thing.”
 4. The word “similitude” means “a simile, parable or allegory.”
 5. Examples include: a heart as big as a whale; her tears flowed like wine; his tongue was sharp like a sharp sword; he sleeps like a log; her cheeks are like roses.
 6. The use of logical connectors (**as**, **so** or **like**) make the simile one of the easiest figures to identify.
- C. The word simile does not occur in our common English translations of the Bible.
1. The word “similitude” is in the King James Version ten or eleven times.
 2. In the American Standard Version the same word is translated “form” or “likeness.”
 3. The simile provokes thought and assists memory.
 4. Leland Ryken, in discussing why writers use metaphor and simile, wrote:

“There are several advantages. One is the vividness and concreteness of the appeal to the reader’s imagination. Because metaphor and simile are distinctive ways of speaking, they achieve freshness of expression and overcome the cliché effect of ordinary discourse. Metaphor and simile possess arresting strangeness that both captures a reader’s initial attention and makes a statement memorable. They also have another built-in tendency that accords well with a lyric poet’s intention: they force a reader to ponder or mediate on a statement” (*Words of Delight: A Literary Introduction To The Bible*; Baker Book House).

II. BIBLE SIMILES.

A. Perhaps the best way for us to understand and appreciate the power and beauty of this figure is to consider some **Bible similes**:

1. “He shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water” (Psa 1:3).
 - a. A tree planted by abundant water is stable, enduring, beautiful and fruitful.
 - b. The man who studies and thinks about God’s word is like a well watered tree.
 - c. The word “like” in the quotation alerts us to the fact the writer is using a simile.
2. “The wicked are...like the chaff which the wind driveth away” (Psa 1:4).
 - a. The striking contrast between the light, flimsy and easily blown about husks when separated from corn or wheat and a sturdy, towering, prosperous tree is weighty.
 - b. The comparison is forceful and noteworthy.
 - c. The lesson is stunning!
3. “O Jehovah, thou wilt compass him with favor as with a shield” (Psa 5:12).
 - a. A shield defends, guards and saves those who make a proper use of it.
 - b. To call Jehovah a shield and a buckler is to exalt His mercy and affirm His providence.
 - c. The simile of a shield appeals vividly to those who face the arrows of enemies.
 - d. The righteous find grace and safety in Jehovah and no external enemy can separate them from the love of God.
4. “Keep me as the apple of the eye” (Psa 17:8).

- a. The center of the eye is tender and protected because vision is dear.
 - b. To be kept by the power of God, as one keeps the darling of his eye, is a very great safeguard.
5. “They were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd” (Mt 9:36).
- a. Shepherdless sheep are vulnerable indeed.
 - b. The lamb lacks protective armor and is exposed to the ravaging wolf.
 - c. The man without God is like the defenseless sheep.
 - d. Life not centered in God is rootless and stupid.
 - e. It is “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, but signifying nothing.”

III. SIMILE AND REALITY.

- A. At times simile is **the entity** and not a figure.
- 1. “The people were as murmurers, speaking evil in the ears of Jehovah” (Num 11:1).
 - 2. It was not that the people were *like* murmurers, but they actually *were* murmurers.
 - 3. “Jerusalem, that art builded as a city that is compact together” (Psa 122:3).
 - a. Jerusalem was “compact together.”
 - b. The comparison is between a consolidated city and one actually unified.
 - 4. “The princes of Judah are like them that remove the landmark” (Hos 5:10).
 - a. The rulers of the Jews did in fact remove the landmarks and change the boundaries and, therefore, were like other people who did the same.

- b. The “other” were excessively wicked and so were the “princes of Judah”
 - c. If the chosen people of God could understand the treachery of others who did not recognize survey lines, they should be convicted of **their** disloyalty.
5. “And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet” (Mt 14:5).
 6. He **was** a prophet!
 7. “His sweat was as it were great drops of blood” (Lk 22:44).
 - a. It **was** blood.
 - b. Various commentaries describe the rare medical phenomenon of “hematidrosis” or “bloody sweat.”
 - c. Under great emotional stress tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat.
 8. “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).
 - a. He **was** the only begotten of the Father.
 - b. His glory therefore **was** the glory of God’s only begotten.

IV. “AS” AND “SO.”

- A. The word “as” may be followed by the word “so” to **reinforce** the comparison and make it **distinct**.
 1. “And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the creditor, so with the debtor; as with the taker of interest, so with the giver of interest to him” (Isa 24:2).
 2. “Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned” (Rom 5:12).

- a. Adam transgressed the command of God and, therefore, died a physical death.
 - b. His sin separates the human family from the tree of life and, consequently, all must die a physical death.
 - c. “As” sin entered “so” death passes to all men. Sin affects all. Death affects all.
5. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up” (Jn 3:14).
- a. The uplifted serpent saved the people who looked in faith to the symbol.
 - b. In the same way those who look to Jesus (that is, who faithfully follow and obey Him) shall be saved.
6. “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ” (1 Cor 12:12).
- a. This “as and so” simile provides another lesson that appeals to **eye** and **ear**.
 - b. The various members of the physical body must cooperate in order for the body to function as designed by its maker.
 - c. In this same way the body of Christ, which is His church, must be united in purpose and work, with each member of the spiritual body making its contribution to the general good of the church.
 - d. The body is greater than any individual member.
 - e. The members of the body must be willing, without tinge of jealousy, to function as talent and need may require in their proper place.
 - f. The body must have both eye and ear, both head and feet.
 - g. This beautiful lesson teaches cooperation, unity, mutual support, spiritual maturity, self-sacrifice and love.

7. These examples help us to understand the **purpose** and **power** of a properly used simile.
 - a. The simile is not difficult to recognize because it always uses “so,” or “as,” or “like,” or a combination of “as and so.”
 - b. It can indelibly impress a great truth on the mind.
 - c. The figure of speech is to be thoughtfully considered and its application carefully noted.
 - d. The simile, therefore, requires meditation and reflection. “Blessed is the man... whose delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night.”
8. Edward Strunk wrote, “The simile is a common device and a useful one, but similes coming in rapid fire, one right on top of another, are more distracting than illuminating.
9. “The reader needs time to catch his breath: he can’t be expected to compare everything with something else and no relief in sight” (*The Elements of Style*, The Macmillan Company, pp. 66-67).

V. GUIDELINES.

- A. **Identify** the literal or physical reference that forms the foundation of the comparison for the ones first hearing or reading it.
 1. Be specific, not vague.
 2. Be detailed, not superficial.
 3. Take time to let the literal situation (which resists immediate assimilation) sink in. No two things will be alike in **every** respect!
- B. **Interpret** what the comparison **means** by:
 1. Discovering the nature of the similarity between the two halves of the comparison. Note if the point of comparison is explicitly mentioned in the verse or immediate context. Most similes explicitly give it, but some are only **implicit**.
 2. Some references include:
 - a. Similes of Quality.

- b. Similes of Actions – Jdgs 7:12; Psa 59:6; 92:12; 133:2-3; Prov 10:26; Isa 9:18; Jer 17:6; Mt 17:20; 25:32-33; Lk 17:24; 1 Pet 2:2.
 - 3. Make a transfer of meaning(s) to the topic or experience the author or speaker is talking about by analyzing how many correspondences can appropriately be drawn between that situation and the real subject (contextually) of the author.
 - a. Why did the writer/speaker feel the need to employ simile in this particular place?
 - b. How does the simile enable the reader/hearer to grasp better the idea that is being presented?
- C. **Do not assume** the quality mentioned by simile in one passage will automatically be the same as in another!
- 1. Sometimes a good quality and a bad quality will give opposite similes.
 - 2. Compare the use of “dew” in Hosea 6:4 and 14:5.
 - 3. Compare the use of “dove” in Psalm 55:6; Isaiah 59:11; Jeremiah 48:28; Hosea 7:11.
- D. **Parallel passages** (if there are any) can be used cautiously, remembering that an object or action may have different meanings in different similes as mentioned above:
- 1. Compare “lamb” (**amnos**) used of a sacrificial lamb emphasizing Jesus’ perfection in 1 Peter 1:19 with–
 - 2. “Lamb” (**aren**) in Luke 10:3, where it speaks of the harmless nature of the animal in contrast to “wolves,” is NOT linked to sacrifice.
- E. **Thank God** for his beautiful, wonderful and powerful teaching through similes throughout His holy word!

CHAPTER XV

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND INTERPRET THE METAPHOR

INTRODUCTION.

- A. J. J. Turner reports a sixteenth century incident of gross misinterpretation of the Scriptures by a group of zealous religious folk.
 - 1. They dressed in children's clothing, went to the marketplace and played children's games. All of this being done, they explained, in obedience to the Lord's command, "to become as little children."
 - 2. Enough said.
- B. The Roman Church has long taught the absurd doctrine of transubstantiation which holds that the Lord's words "This is my body" describe the bread of the Lord's Supper as the actual physical body of Christ.
 - 1. Regarding this error E. W. Bullinger says,

"No perversion of language has been fraught with greater calamity to the human race. Tens of thousands have suffered martyrdom at the hands of Rome rather than believe the 'blasphemous fable' forced into these words. The exquisite tortures of the Inquisition were invented to coerce the consciences of men and compel them to accept this lie!"
 - 2. The common ground here is a failure to recognize figurative language in the Bible.

I. HOW TO RECOGNIZE A METAPHOR.

- A. J. W. Monser says a metaphor is "a similitude...(which) rests its claim for genuineness on its **ability to produce the likeness** of the thing under contemplation. Thus a drop of dew may be called a pearl, a flower, a star or a gross corpulent man a hog."
- B. Metaphors involve a comparison between two dissimilar components which, nevertheless, bear some point of similarity.
 - 1. A figurative meaning is intended by the writer but his intention is accomplished without any **explicit** words of acknowledgment.
 - 2. This omission distinguishes the metaphor from the simile.

- C. With these thoughts in mind consider some examples from everyday speech.
- D. We say that the book's binding is a **spine**, a photograph is a **snapshot**, the financial loss was a **dirty deal**, the insulting remark was a **cut** and the words of praise were a **boost**.
- E. The metaphor does not normally pose any real difficulty of either recognition or basic interpretation.
1. The word "metaphor" is from the compound Greek word *metaphora*, the parts of which are *meta*, meaning beyond or over and *pherein* meaning to carry.
 2. The metaphor therefore involves "a transference, or carrying over or across."
 3. The meaning of a word which is used metaphorically may be transferred or carried over from one thing to another by the use of some form of the verb "is."
 - a. For example, "The words of praise **were** a boost."
 - b. Here "were" links "praise" with "boost."
- F. The metaphor is similar to the simile and hypocatastasis.
- G. The metaphor may be classified with the simile as figures of speech which are used to make comparisons between dissimilar things yet have some point of similarity.
1. The simile differs from the metaphor in that it is an expressed comparison, while the metaphor forms an implied comparison.
 2. The simile's comparison feature is indicated by employment of the words "like" or "as" which expressly acknowledge the intended figurative use.
 3. Where the simile reports that the man's tie is **like** a rainbow and his voice **as** thunder, the metaphor declares that his tie **is** a rainbow and his voice **is** thunder.
 4. The figurative meaning of the simile is more obvious because of the explanatory words, but the absence of those words with the metaphor contribute to a greater arousal of the mind.

- H. Hypocatastasis is a figure of speech involving comparison and closely related to the simile and metaphor.
1. The compound word is from the Greek words: *hypo* meaning underneath, *kata* meaning down and *stasis* meaning a stationing.
 2. Literally then, “a stationing down underneath.”
 3. Hypocatastasis names but one word and **stations the other word down underneath** or **implies** the other component rather than stating it.
 - a. For example, one may say to another, “You are like a beast.”
 - b. This would be *simile*, tamely stating a fact.
 - c. If, however, he said, “You are a beast!” that would be *metaphor*.
 - d. But, if he said simply, “Beast!” that would be *hypocatastasis*.

II. HOW TO INTERPRET A METAPHOR.

- A. Consider the immediate, then remote contexts.
1. The rule of contextual interpretation applies, of course, to literal language as well as figurative, but in the case of figurative language the context is examined with a special eye for an explanation of the figure in question.
 2. This is an important early step because the meaning intended behind the use of figures in the Bible is often given right in the text or context.
 3. Careful study of the text, context and parallel passages will almost always bring out the figures’ meanings.
 4. The identification and interpretation of Bible figures by the Bible itself is a rule and not an exception.
 5. The truths imbedded in the Bible are frequently revealed very near the place where they appear.

6. In interpreting the metaphor, the verses immediately preceding and following the verse in which the metaphor is used should be given **first** and **thorough** attention.
 7. Consulting the works of men may help the student get at the Divine Author's meaning, but they may also suggest false notions.
- B. Do not be misled by seemingly parallel metaphors.
1. The use of the same word as a figure does not imply that the same point of similarity is intended.
 - a. Consider the word "lion" used of both Christ and Satan (1 Pet 5:8; Rev 5:5).
 - b. In cases like the following careful attention is required.
 - c. The concept of God's word as a sword, found in Hebrews 4 and Ephesians 6, is an example of a verbal, but not a real, parallel.
 - d. Hebrews 4 speaks of the Bible's function as a divider which differentiates between those who are truly obedient to its message and those who profess obedience but inwardly remain disobedient.
 - e. In Ephesians 6 Paul also speaks of the Bible-as-a-sword, but in this instance refers to it as a defensive weapon to be used against the temptations of Satan (v. 11).
 2. The student is to find **real** parallels, that is, those passages which address the same concept, or incident, even though different terminology is used.
- C. Ponder the literal picture.
1. Even if the comparison facet of a figure is acknowledged in the Bible context the full meaning may not be automatically appreciated.
 2. There is an initial need to understand the literal meaning of a term which is intended to be taken figuratively.

- a. In Jesus' warning about the leaven of the Pharisees it is not enough to know He meant the Pharisees' doctrine was figuratively compared to leaven.
 - b. The reader must also know something about leaven to find the point or points of similarity the Lord has in mind.
 - c. This literal meaning is a first step in interpreting the figurative expression.
 - d. It is the literal meaning of the leaven, called doctrine; or the sword, called the word of God; or the roaring lion, called the devil, which first strike an impression upon the mind.
 - e. Working from that picture of the literal meaning the reader then seeks the point of similarity in the comparison and the figurative meaning which is intended by the author.
 - f. For example the resemblance of a light to God's word in Psalm 119:105 informs us the latter will provide the means for a clear and safe spiritual direction just as the former does for physical guidance.
3. To insure this literal focus is attained one must consider the meaning of the original words of the text.
 4. Furthermore, given the evolution of word meanings over time, the historical background, involving manners, government, culture and many other factors should be considered.
 5. The task is to learn what the writer and his initial audience understood by his use of a word.
- D. Discover, do not create, point(s) of comparison.
1. The task is to see in just what regards the two components are compared to one another.
 2. Clinton Lockhart notes in this connection that in "approaching a comparison of two objects the mind naturally contemplates **very few** similitudes or analogies."
 3. Further, he says, "This is especially true in brief figures, such as similes and metaphors..."

4. J. Robertson McQuilkin echoes this thought saying, “It is important to remember that ordinarily **only one** point of comparison is intended.”
5. To say something is a figure of speech does not imply the meaning of the phrase is ambiguous.
6. Figures of speech **convey a single intended meaning** just as other speech does.

CHAPTER XVI

PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING ALLEGORIES

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Figures of speech are designed to draw pictures in our mind by way of providing contrasts, emphasis or clarification.
- B. The most common figurative language consists of figures of comparison.

I. ALLEGORIES.

- A. Allegories are described as extended metaphors.
- B. Clinton Lockhart writes: "An allegory is a fictitious narration to illustrate truth. Its nature is similar to that of a metaphor; but its imagery is extended to many details and analogies, so that it is often defined as an extended metaphor."
- C. Knowing the technical name for each type of figure is not as important as being able to discern the developing thought and the intent of the writer in any given passage.
 - 1. This is especially true when we deal with allegories.
 - 2. Allegorizing was prominent in Greek thought at least 500 years before the time of Christ.
 - 3. Allegorizing was common in the church from the time of Origen (A.D. 200) until nearly the time of Luther (A.D. 1500).
 - 4. During this time bizarre doctrines came from allegorizing Scripture.
 - a. Origen studied Genesis 24:15-21 about Rebekah's drawing water for Abraham's servant and allegorized it to mean: "We must come to the well of Scripture to meet Christ."
 - b. One preacher in the fifth century looked at the slaughter by Herod of the two years and younger with the three year olds presumably escaping as teaching that those who hold the "Trinitarian faith will be saved, whereas Binitarians and Unitarians will undoubtedly perish."

- c. Augustine saw the death and resurrection of Christ when he read of the Psalmist lying down, sleeping and arising in Psalm 3:5.

II. APPLICABLE PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING ALLEGORIES.

- A. The first principle is recognizing literal and figurative language.
 1. The literal interpretation of figurative language caused confusion in Jesus' day.
 2. In John 2:19-21 Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (v. 19).
 - a. The Jews took him literally to mean the physical temple, "But he spake of the temple of His body" (v. 21).
 - b. Again, in John 6:51-52 Jesus said, "I am the living bread... and the bread that I will give is my flesh."
 - c. The Jews asked, "How can this man give his flesh to eat?"
 - d. Later in that same chapter we hear Christ say, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him" (Jn 6:56).
 - e. Jesus was not speaking literally.
- B. A text should be taken as literal unless the context states otherwise or when the literal meaning involves an impossibility.
- C. After we have determined language to be figurative we must note the **details** or **features** of the allegory and note the interpretation given for any of the features.
 1. It is good to make a list.
 2. For example in John 10 we find the allegory of the Good Shepherd.
 3. Our list may look something like this:

FEATURES

INTERPRETATION

| | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| SHEPHERD | JESUS |
| SHEEP | NO MENTION |
| GATE KEEPER | NO MENTION |
| FOLD | NO MENTION |
| DOOR | JESUS |
| ROBBER | THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE JESUS |
| STRANGER | NO MENTION |
| WOLF | NO MENTION |
| HIRELING | NO MENTION |

- D. In areas not specifically made known we would do well to proceed with caution, much like Paul would address God's Providence.
- E. In Philemon Paul says, "For **perhaps** he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him forever."
- F. Now let us notice some rules for interpreting allegories.
1. It is important to know who are the original hearers (or recipients). Do not divorce the passage from local context or historical narrative.
 2. Try to understand **why** the speaker or writer used the allegory in the first place. What is the book and sectional theme?
 3. Look for the basic points of comparison stressed by the original speaker or writer.
 - a. Identify the details or features.
 - b. Note the inspired interpretation given for any of the features (making a list may be helpful).
 4. State simply (or briefly explain) why these truths are essential for us today. Go for the **principle**.
 5. Consider other features, seeing if a likely meaning can be derived for them from other passages. The symbolism of the Bible is many times (though not exclusively) quite consistent.
 6. Do not feel a need to identify **all** the features. Do not make forced or fanciful ones.

CHAPTER XVII METONYMY

INTRODUCTION.

- A. There is probably nothing more common in language than figures of speech.
 - 1. Bullinger, in his monumental work *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, gives by name, and in order, two hundred and seventeen figures of speech with all their variations.
 - 2. A figure denotes some form a word, or sentence, takes that is different from its ordinary form.
 - 3. This is always for the purpose of giving additional force, more life, intensified feeling and greater emphasis.
- B. Figurative language was certainly not adopted by God to deceive people, or to obscure truth.
 - 1. We may be sure its purpose is to present God's will more plainly.
 - 2. Figurative language is used sometimes to express ideas more forcefully than could be done otherwise.
 - 3. Figurative language also invites further inquiry in order to learn its meaning and this means the teaching will be longer remembered and better understood.
 - 4. Figures add freshness and power to writing.

I. METONYMY.

- A. It is from a Greek compound word, *metonymia*, from *meta* (change) and *onoma* (a name or noun).
 - 1. Metonymy is a figure by which one name, or noun, is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation.
 - 2. Bullinger lists **four types** of metonymy: "Of the Cause, of the Effect, of the Subject and of the Adjunct."
- B. We will better understand metonymy if we give a sample or two of each.

1. You have metonymy of the **cause** when the cause is put for the effect.
 - a. Take for example 1 Thessalonians 5:19, “Quench not the Spirit.”
 - b. The Spirit is the cause of prophesying, which is mentioned in the next verse.
 - c. The effect of the working of the Holy Spirit is prophecy, but a metonymy is used where the cause is put for the effect.
 - d. “Quench not prophecy, this work of the Spirit” is what is meant.
 - e. But, to give power, the cause is put for the effect.
2. Metonymy of the **effect** is just the opposite.
 - a. Mark 9:17 and 25 speak of a dumb spirit.
 - b. The effect is put for the cause.
 - c. The spirit is the cause and inability to speak is the effect.
 - d. The effect is put for the cause and we get “dumb spirit.”
 - e. Luke 11:14 says, “And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb.”
 - f. In other words, it produced the effect of muteness so when the effect is put for the cause you call it a dumb spirit.
3. There is also metonymy of the **subject**.
 - a. Here the subject is put for the circumstance pertaining to it.
 - b. Some insist we can only have one vessel in the communion because **cup**, when it is mentioned, is singular.
 - c. “After all,” they say, “Paul said, ‘In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.’”

- d. Here **cup** is put for the contents, the subject for that pertaining to it.
 - e. We have often pointed out one does not drink a literal cup.
4. The fourth metonymy is called metonymy of the **adjunct**.
- a. It is the opposite of that just mentioned.
 - b. Here some circumstance pertaining to the subject is put for the subject itself.
 - c. Instead of the cup put for the contents, i.e., “drink the cup,” you have the **contents** put for the container.
 - d. In Luke 21:4 you have, “All these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God.”
 - e. They didn’t literally cast into the offerings; they cast into the receptacle which held the offerings.
 - f. By this figure of speech **leprosy** is said to be cleansed when we mean the leper is cleansed (Mk 1:42); Paul preached that the Gentiles should turn away from **vanities** (Acts 14:15) when it is meant they should turn from idols which are really vain, and Christ is said to be made a curse (Gal 3:13) when the Holy Spirit really literally means Jesus is **as** one cursed under the law.
5. So, in metonymy one noun or name is used for another.
- a. We say quench not the Spirit when His work is really meant.
 - b. We say dumb spirit when we literally would say the spirit which causes dumbness.
 - c. We say we drink the cup or cast into the offerings when we literally mean we drink the contents and cast into the receptacle.

II. HOW IS METONYMY DIFFERENT FROM OTHER FIGURES?

- A. Metonymy is grouped with about fifteen figures, all of which involve change affecting the meaning of words rather than change affecting the arrangement and order of words or the application of words.

- B. However, it is even more closely related to a **synecdoche**.
1. Bullinger says, "The difference between Metonymy and Synecdoche lies in this; that in Metonymy, the exchange is made between two related nouns; while in Synecdoche, the exchange is made between two associated ideas."
 2. Sterrett groups Metonymy and Synecdoche as "two figures of speech where one word is substituted for another which is related to it. A is mentioned, but B is meant."
- C. There are figures of **comparison** such as similes, allegories and types.
1. However, metonymy is not a figure of comparison, but a figure of **association**.
 2. Figures of association are different from figures of comparison in the following ways: in figures of comparison unlike things are compared, whereas in figures of association the name of one object or concept is used for that of another to which it is related.

III. TIPS ON HOW TO IDENTIFY FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

- A. It is important before interpreting a figurative expression to identify the kind of figure being used.
- B. Earle West points out that words are to be assumed to be used in their normal, literal sense unless good evidence requires us to take it as figurative.
1. He notices we must take it as figurative if the literal meaning involves an impossibility, a contradiction or if it is contrary to known fact.
 2. He points out that we must look for figurative language more in poetry and prophecy than in the historical books.
- C. The clearest and most complete list is from Dungan.
1. He gives ten rules to keep in mind.
 2. Let us simply list them in our own words:
 - a. Accept the author's own interpretation.

- b. The interpretation should agree with the general and special scope of the passage.
- c. Compare the figurative with literal accounts of the same things.
- d. Notice the resemblance of things compared.
- e. Use facts of history.
- f. An inspired interpretation is the correct one.
- g. Do not demand too many points of analogy.
- h. Remember, figures are not always used with the same meaning.
- i. Parables may explain parables.
- j. The type and the antitype are frequently both in view at the same time.

IV. TIPS ON HOW TO IDENTIFY METONYMY.

- A. See if there is a simple change of name where something is called by a different name to which it bears some association.
- B. If it says one thing **is** another it is more properly a metaphor.
- C. If the exchange is between associated **ideas** rather than just nouns or names it is a synecdoche.
- D. Make sure it is a figure of a **name** or a **noun** rather than a thought.
- E. See if the figure is founded on **relationship** rather than resemblance.
- F. Apply this checklist - see if it is a figure where:
 - 1. The person is put for the thing done.
 - 2. The instrument for the thing effected.
 - 3. The action is put for the thing produced by it.

4. The material is used for the thing made from it.
5. The action or effect for the person producing it.
6. The thing effected for the instrument effecting it.
7. The effect for the thing or action causing it.
8. The subject receiving for the thing received.
9. The container for the contents.
10. The possessor for the thing possessed.
11. The object for that which pertains to it.
12. The thing signified for the sign.
13. The adjunct for the subject.
14. The contents for the container.
15. The time for the things done or existing in that time.
16. The appearance of a thing for its nature.
17. The action for the object of it.
18. The sign for the thing signified.
19. The name of a person, for the person himself or the thing itself.

V. IDENTIFYING METONYMY IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

- A. The English language is full of rich figures.
 1. They give color and force; they give emphasis and make us think.
 2. We say, "Ten Downing Street has no comment," when we mean the British Prime Minister has no statement to make.
 3. "Don't be a Jonah," when we mean do not act as he acted.

4. Usually because we are in the same country, with a common language, sharing a common culture, we have little difficulty understanding common metonymy.
 - a. We usually do not know we are hearing a metonymy or another figure, but we understand the thought just the same.
 - b. However, when one is a novice in the Bible he can miss a figure.
 - c. This is because it was originally in a different language, culture and country.

B. Old Testament illustrations.

1. In metonymy of the cause, the cause is put for the effect, the person is put for the action or the instrument for the effect.
2. In such a case the Spirit is often put for His gifts, works and operations.
 - a. In 2 Kings 2:9 Elisha asks Elijah whether he might receive a double portion of the power Elijah had.
 - b. He says, "Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me."
 - c. He used Spirit for miraculous gifts and powers of the Spirit, the cause (the Spirit), put for the effect (ability to do miracles).
3. In metonymy of the effect, the effect is put for the cause, the opposite of the above.
 - a. In 2 Kings 4:40 some son of the prophets put wild gourds in the common stew and someone cried, "There is death in the pot."
 - b. The cause was the gourds, but the effect was death if you ate it.
 - c. To save time and give force he says, "There is death in the pot," the effect for the cause.
4. In metonymy of the subject, the subject under consideration is put for the adjunct (some circumstances pertaining to the subject).

- a. In Isaiah 38:18 we read, “The grave cannot praise thee.”
 - b. He literally means people buried in the grave no longer give praise on earth.
 - c. The subject, grave, is put for that which pertains to the grave.
5. Metonymy of the adjunct is the opposite.
- a. Some circumstances pertaining to some subject is put for the subject itself.
 - b. Jacob says, “Then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave” (Gen 42:38).
 - c. Grey hairs are put for Jacob himself in his old age, the adjunct for the subject, a circumstance is put for some subject under discussion.

C. New Testament illustrations.

- 1. Let us go back and view these four types of metonymy using New Testament examples.
- 2. Remember, metonymy of the **cause** is when the cause is put for the effect.
 - a. In John 6:63 Jesus says His words are spirit and life, “The words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”
 - b. They are Spirit (given by the operation of the Spirit of God) and life (they give life).
 - c. The cause is put for the effect in both cases.
- 3. In the opposite case, metonymy of the **effect**, Jesus says, “I am the resurrection (the One who makes the resurrection possible) and the life” (the giver of life). The effect is put for the cause.
- 4. In metonymy of the **subject** Cornelius “feared God with all his house.”

- a. The subject, house, is put for those individuals who in some way pertain to the house.
 - b. The subject is put for the adjunct.
 - c. As we have seen, cup is put for the contents (Lk 22:17,20), land or earth or city is put for the inhabitants or people that pertain to it (Gen 6:11; 11:1; Mt 5:13; Mk 1:33).
5. Again, in metonymy of the **adjunct** a circumstance is put for the subject.
- a. Light, which pertains to fire, is put for the subject (fire).
 - b. So we read that Peter “warmed himself at the light” (Mk 14:54).
 - c. Jesus said do what the scribes and Pharisees say for they “sit in Moses’ seat.”
 - d. In other words, they are public teachers of the law Moses gave.

D. Summary.

- 1. In metonymy look for a **name** which may have been changed.
- 2. Ask these type of questions:
 - a. Is a person, instrument, thing or action put for the thing done or produced by it?
 - b. Is an action or effect substituted for the person or instrument or cause of the action?
 - c. Is some item, subject or container put for the thing received, the contents or something which in some way pertains to it?
 - d. Finally, are the contents or appearance of a thing, action, sign or name put for the container, the nature of a thing, the object of the action, the thing signified or the person himself?

CONCLUSION.

- A. Most of what we said comes naturally, as we simply read the Bible.
- B. We usually understand the Bible as it is written.
- C. Occasionally we deal, however, with a difficult passage, or try to use an important Scripture, in a doctrinal dispute.
- D. To understand figures in general, and metonymy in particular, may help carry the day.

CHAPTER XVIII

RECOGNIZING AND INTERPRETING SYNECDOCHES

INTRODUCTION.

- A. The synecdoche is one of the most frequently occurring figures in the Bible.
1. "Synecdoche" is actually a compound Greek term transliterated into English.
 2. It means "to receive jointly or in association with" (from *sun*, together with, and *ekdoche*, receiving from).
 3. In this figure one word or idea receives something from, and is exchanged for, another associated word or idea.
 4. Bullinger defines this figure as one "by which one word receives something from another which is internally associated with it by the connection of two ideas."
- B. Perhaps the most common uses of this phenomenon in the Bible are those in which a **part** is made to stand for the **whole** or **vice versa**.
- C. We employ this figure in everyday speech without even realizing it.
1. When you are lifting a heavy box and say to someone, "Give me a hand," you are not asking for applause, a handshake or for him to cut off his hand and present it to you as a gift.
 2. You are asking for the involvement of his entire body in helping you.
 3. The hand (a part) stands for the body (the whole).
 4. A rancher may say he has fifty head of cattle, but he does not mean that he does not have the remainder of their bodies.
 5. The head (a part) represents the entire body.

I. TYPES OF SYNECDOCHES IN THE BIBLE.

- A. For the most part authors who have written on Biblical figures of speech list some four synecdochic occurrences.

- B. The four major classes are (1) the genus is put for the species, (2) the species is put for the genus, (3) the whole is put for the part and (4) the part is put for the whole.
- C. Terry adds two others: (1) The singular is put for the plural and (2) the plural is put for the singular.
- D. Leigh has some additional classifications that are helpful: (1) An individual is put for a class, (2) a class is put for an individual, (3) the abstract is put for the concrete and (4) the concrete is put for the abstract.
- E. Synecdoche is a figure of speech by which a more inclusive term is used for a less inclusive term or vice versa.

II. RULES FOR RECOGNIZING AND INTERPRETING SYNECDOCHES.

- A. However, there are clues that will be helpful in identifying synecdochic language.
 - 1. Bear in mind the definition of synecdoche – a less inclusive term is used for the more inclusive term or vice versa - or a part is put for the whole or vice versa.
 - 2. Look for definite factors in the context that might exclude the figure from being a synecdoche.
 - a. Some figures of speech are plainly identified by textual statements or clues (e.g., parable, allegory, simile, irony, *et al.*).
 - b. In Galatians 4:21-31 Paul used Sarah and Hagar and their respective sons to teach a spiritual truth, obviously using a figure of some kind.
 - c. Is it a synecdoche?
 - d. It is not, and one need never have even heard of a synecdoche to **exclude** it, because in verse 24 Paul identified his figure as an allegory.
 - 3. By definition, synecdoche will often involve numbers (e.g., a larger number may be put for a smaller one and vice versa; an indefinite number may be put for a definite one and vice versa).

- a. Psalm 110 says, "For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."
 - b. All the cattle (and all else on earth) belongs to God, yet there are more than one thousand hills on earth.
 - c. One thousand is therefore to be recognized and understood as a numerical synecdoche which stands for a much larger, indefinite number.
4. Often synecdoches involve such words as "hour," "day," "month" or "year."
- a. Just as numbers in general were handled loosely by those of old, so were periods and designations of time.
 - b. Remember, this was not done with intent to deceive, nor did it deceive the original hearers or readers.
 - c. Luke's record of Paul's sojourn in Ephesus placed him there only two years and three months (Acts 19:8-10).
 - d. However, when Paul addressed the Ephesian elders he stated that he had been with them three years (Acts 20:31).
 - e. The longer period was used by Paul to refer to the shorter and only a part of the third year was counted a full year. Such is the nature of synecdoche.
5. Also, by definition, synecdoches will often involve terms that seem to express universality (e.g., "all," "every," "none," "not any," "the whole," *et al.*), when actually (and sometimes obviously) this is not intended.
- a. In Exodus 9:6 Moses said, "And all the cattle of Egypt died" from the plague of murrain.
 - b. However, the Egyptians still had beasts which were afflicted with boils (vv. 9-10) and they still had cattle which were destroyed by hail (v. 19).
 - c. Either Moses grievously contradicted himself in the space of a few verses or he used "all" in a figurative sense.

- d. The listing of particular animals to be affected by the murrain is given in verse 3.
 - e. Obviously, “all” does not mean “every individual,” but “all kinds” of cattle.
 - f. Thus, we have a synecdoche in which a universal term is used to refer to various particulars.
6. Terms that seem to refer to eternal duration are often synecdoches (e.g., “forever,” “eternity,” “everlasting,” *et al.*).
- a. When Moses gave instruction to the Hebrews concerning their slaves, included was the piercing of the ear of the slave, thus binding him to his master’s service “forever” (Ex 21:6).
 - b. Here an expression of unending time is used for a shorter period, obviously lasting throughout the life of the slave, but only as long as he lived.
 - c. God promised Abram to give Canaan to his seed “forever” (Gen 13:15).
 - d. For failure to recognize the synecdoche here, dispensationalists argue that God still owes that land to the Jews and they have the right to take it and hold it by force.
 - e. However, “forever” in this passage was conditioned upon the faithfulness of Israel; and their duration as God’s people must be understood figuratively (cf. Deut 4:25ff; Josh 23:14ff; *et al.*).
7. The cardinal rule for interpreting any and all figurative language is **passages stated in literal terms must always govern those stated in figures.**
8. In other words no interpretation of figurative language can be correct if it contradicts passages stated literally.

III. SOME SIGNIFICANT SYNECDOCHES.

- A. The controversy has raged for centuries over the exact day of the crucifixion of the Lord.

1. The statements indicate this terrible event occurred on Friday (Mk 15:42-43; Lk 23:50-54; Jn 19:31).
2. The Scriptures also plainly teach His resurrection occurred early on the first day of the week following His death (Mt 28:1ff; Mk 16:2ff; Lk 24:1ff; Jn 20:1ff).
3. In spite of the clarity of these statements, it is argued by some that the Lord's own words cannot be harmonized with a Friday crucifixion and a Sunday resurrection.
 - a. The words of the Lord to which they refer are His prophecy that He would be in the tomb "three days and three nights" (Mt 12:40).
 - b. They point out that part of Friday, Friday night, all day Saturday, Saturday night and a small part of Sunday equals only parts of three days and only two nights.
 - c. At times brethren are bothered by what they perceive to be an incongruity in these matters.
4. However, if we demand that the Lord's language literally requires three days and three nights, then not only did these words of His contradict what happened, they also contradicted His words spoken at other times.
5. On one occasion He said He would be raised on "the third day" (Mt 16:21; Lk 9:22), on another He said He would be raised "in three days" (Jn 2:19), and on yet another, that His resurrection would be "after three days" (Mk 8:31).
6. All of the apparent difficulties are removed by simply recognizing the "three days and three nights" statement as a **synecdoche of time** in which that phrase actually referred to only a **part** of that time.
 - a. This type of synecdoche had so long been in use by the Jews it was ingrained in their thought processes.
 - b. Indeed, a thousand years before the Lord used "three days" and "the third day" interchangeably, Rehoboam had done the very same thing in speaking to Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:5, 12)!

- B. The “believing world” is divided and confused on what the Bible teaches about when, or at what point, in one’s progression toward God one is saved.
- C. The only point on which there seems to be almost fanatical and universal agreement among so many is that baptism is **not** necessary to salvation.
- D. They point to such passages as John 3:16; 8:24; Acts 16:31; Romans 5:1 and similar statements which declare that men are saved by faith in Christ and say, “See there, faith is all that is mentioned, therefore faith is all that is necessary!”
- E. Each of the passages which teach salvation by faith is a synecdoche in which **belief** or **faith** in Christ (a part) is put for **all** of man’s necessary response to the sacrifice and gospel of Christ.
 - 1. If this is not the case, there is no possible way to harmonize the many passages that mention various other conditions of pardon.
 - 2. It is worthy of note that some other condition (besides faith) is sometimes stated as the act on our part that brings salvation.
 - a. For example, in Acts 17:30, Paul said, God “...now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”
 - b. If one took this statement as literal, absolute and exclusive he would mistake Paul for teaching that the only thing necessary in order to be saved is to repent.
 - c. However, understanding it as a synecdoche, it is clear that Paul made repentance (a part) to stand for all that God requires men to do to be saved by Christ through the gospel.
 - 3. The same thing is true of baptism.
 - a. It was not Peter’s intent to teach that all one must do to be saved is to be baptized when he wrote, “...even baptism doth also now save us” (2 Pet 3:21).
 - b. However, by the same blind “reasoning” employed by the “faith only” errorists concerning Acts 16:31, one could teach “salvation by baptism only” from these words of the apostle!

4. What we have here is another synecdoche in which baptism (a part) is made to stand for its scriptural precedents (the whole of what the Lord requires of us in order to be forgiven of our sins).

CONCLUSION.

- A. The synecdoche is one of the most common figures used by the inspired writers.
- B. Learning to recognize and correctly interpret synecdochisms is, therefore, necessary if we would be faithful and accurate in our conclusions.

CHAPTER XIX IRONY, SARCASM AND SATIRE

INTRODUCTION.

- A. To discuss irony, sarcasm and satire is a serious responsibility.
- B. However, to know **when** and **how** to use these three figures of speech imposes a much more weighty responsibility.
- C. To know when to use a metaphor, or simile is much more simple.
- D. It is true there is a proper place for these three figures of speech and the Bible so teaches.

I. IRONY.

- A. *Webster's New Twentieth Century Unabridged Dictionary* defines irony as, "A method of humorous or sarcastic expression in which the intended meaning of the words used is the direct opposite of their usual sense; as, the speaker was using irony when he said that the stupid plan was, 'very clever.'"
 - 1. Elijah's language to the Baal worshipers (1 Kgs 18:27) is an example of most effective irony.
 - 2. Another example is Job 12:1: "True it is that ye are the people, and with you wisdom will die!"
 - 3. In 1 Corinthians 4:8 Paul indulges in the following ironical vein: "Already ye are filled; already ye are become rich; without us ye have reigned; and I would indeed that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you."
 - 4. The discourse, already in verse 7, roused to a lively pitch, becomes now bitterly ironical, heaping stroke on stroke, even as the proud Corinthians, with their partisan conduct, needed an admonition (*ῥοῦΟεῖα*, ver. 14) to teach them humility.
- B. From the Greek *eironeia*, dissimulation; as a figure, it means to dissemble in speech – to say one thing, while another is meant.
- C. "A kind of ridicule which exposes the errors or faults of others by seeming to adopt, approve or defend them; apparent assent to a proposition given,

with such a tone, or under such circumstance, that opposite opinions or feelings are implied.”

D. Irony can be detected by a statement made by the author: he sometimes says certain things were said in mockery.

1. It is sometimes apparent from the tone, or accent or the manner of the speaker.
2. Sometimes it will be recognized by the character of the address: if the speaker has been dealing in that kind of dissimulation for the purpose of ridicule, it will be the easier detected.
3. The extravagance of praise, when we know both the subject and the author, will enable us to note the intent.
4. When the language was used orally, and has been printed, there may be nothing in the form of words to denote it was an ironical speech; but if we can get the opinion of those who were present it will assist us; for they would be able to discover in the tone or the accent what has been lost to us by distance and time.

E. The Scriptures contain many examples of irony, but, with the rules given for its detection, I will cite a few.

1. “And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, ‘Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked’” (1 Kgs 18:27).
2. “And when he was come to the king, the king said unto him, ‘Micaiah, shall we go to Ramothgilead to battle, or shall we forbear?’ And he answered him, ‘Go up, and prosper; and the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.’ And the king said unto him, ‘How many times shall I adjure thee that thou speak unto me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?’ And he said, ‘I saw all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace.’ And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, ‘Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?’” (1 Kgs 22:15-18).
 - a. There is nothing in the form of this address that would enable us to discern the irony in it.

- b. But Ahab knew the man and perhaps detected, in the tone and accent of the speech, the ironical undercurrent.
- 3. “No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you” (Job 22:2).
 - a. These men supposed they possessed wisdom, but they did not.
 - b. It was necessary the patriarch deal in rugged language to bring them to their senses.
- 4. “Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress” (Judg 10:14).
- 5. “Already are ye filled, already ye are become rich, ye have reigned without us: yea and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. For, I think, God hath set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye have glory, but we have dishonor. Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and we toil, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things, even until now” (1 Cor 4: 8-13).
- 6. The wisdom that this church supposed they possessed, but did not possess, made it necessary that the apostle should deal in rugged language to bring them to their senses.

II. **SARCASM.**

- A. *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Unabridged Dictionary* defines sarcasm as, “A taunting, sneering cutting, or caustic remark; a gibe or jeer, generally ironical.”
 - 1. The difference between irony and sarcasm is largely a matter of degree.
 - 2. There are cases in the Bible in which irony has passed into sarcasm.

- B. This is from the Greek *sarkasnos*, from *sarkadzein*, to tear flesh like dogs; to bite the lips in rage; to speak bitterly; to sneer.
1. It is so related to irony it is quite common for them to be regarded as the same.
 2. It differs, however, from the usual form of irony in its severity and evident spitefulness.
 3. It is only used for the purpose of reproof and condemnation and when the soul is too angry to secrete its bitterness.
 4. It is used to condemn some action by seeming to order it or decide the claims of those who are condemned.
 - a. “And they plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon his head and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him, and mocked him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’” (Mt 27:9).
 - b. “In like manner also the chief priests mocking him among themselves with the scribes said, ‘He saved others; himself he cannot save, Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe’” (Mk 15:31-32).
- C. The Savior uses sarcasm in His fierce condemnation of the self-righteousness of the Jews.
1. They were punctilious in the payment of tithing on mint and dill and rue; they were strict in keeping the traditions of the fathers, but had little respect for the authority of God Himself.
 2. “And he said unto them, ‘Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition’” (Mk 7:9).

III. SATIRE.

- A. *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Unabridged Dictionary* says, “A literary work in which vices, follies, stupidities, abuses, etc. are held up to ridicule and contempt.”
- B. There is more satire in the Bible than one would guess from standard discussions.

- C. Many a passage in the Bible would make a great deal more sense to us if we simply added satire to our lexicon of literary terms.
- D. Satire is the exposure, through ridicule or rebuke, of human vice or folly.
1. An object of attack is the essential ingredient.
 2. Satire may appear in any literary genre (such as narrative, lyric or parable) and it may be either a minor part of a work or the main content of an entire work.
 3. Although satire usually has one main object of attack, satiric works often make a number of jabs in various directions, a feature that has been called “satiric ripples.”
- E. In any literary satire there are four main elements that require the reader’s attention.
1. The first is the object(s) of attack.
 - a. The object of attack might be a single thing.
 - b. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31) attacks love of money and the callous unconcern that it encourages and the book of Jonah exposes the type of Jewish ethno-centrism that tried to make God’s mercy the exclusive property of the Jews.
 2. Another thing to note about the object of attack is that it can be either a historical particular or a universal vice.
 - a. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Lk 18:9-14), for example, is specifically an attack on the self-righteousness of the Pharisees.
 - b. The parable of the rich fool (Lk 12:13-21) is not about a specific category of materialistic people but about covetous greed in general.
- F. The second thing to note in a satire is the satiric vehicle.
1. Story is one of the commonest satiric vehicles, as in the story of Jonah, or the satiric parables of Jesus.

2. In the absence of a full-fledged story there can be brief snatches of action, as when Amos recounts the immoral actions of which Israel is guilty (Amos 2:6-12) or when Isaiah briefly narrates how idol worshipers first have a goldsmith make an image and then fall down before the lifeless statue (Isa 46:5-7).
3. The portrait technique, or character sketch, is a standard form with satirists.
4. Typical specimens are Ezekiel's satiric portrait of the prince of Tyre (Ezek 28:1-19) or Isaiah's portrait of the haughty women of Jerusalem, who can be seen

**“Walking along with outstretched necks,
flirting with their eyes,
tripping along with mincing steps
with ornaments jingling on their ankles”**
(Isa 3:16).

5. At the more informal end of the spectrum we find an array of cruder satiric weapons.
 - a. One is direct vituperation or denunciation: “Hear this word, you cows of Bashan...,” shouts Amos to the wealthy women of Israel (4:1).
 - b. The “woe formula” is equally direct. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees...,” Jesus repeatedly says in Matthew 23.
 - c. A satiric vehicle can be as brief and simple as a derogatory epithet or title (“you blind guides,” Jesus calls the Pharisees in Mt 23:16,23) or an uncomplimentary metaphor or simile, as when Jesus compares the Pharisees to whitewashed tombs that are outwardly beautiful but inwardly filled with repulsive decay (Mt 23:27-28).

G. Thirdly, satire always has a prevailing tone.

1. There are two possibilities which literary scholars have named after two Roman satirists.
2. “Horatian” satire is gently urbane, smiling, subtle.
 - a. It aims to correct folly or vice by gentle laughter, on the premise that it can be laughed out of existence.

- b. Examples of the “soft sell” approach to satire include the story of Jonah, the pouting prophet; Isaiah’s rollicking story of the steps by which a pagan fashions an idol out of wood and uses part of the very same piece of wood to build a fire (Isa 44:9-17); and Jesus’ hilarious portrait of the Pharisees who “strain out a gnat but swallow a camel” (Mt 23:24).
 - 3. The other type of satire, traditionally known as “Juvenalian” satire, is biting, bitter and angry in tone.
 - a. It does not try to laugh vice out of existence, but instead attempts to lash it out of existence.
 - b. It points with contempt and moral indignation at the corruptness and evil of people and institutions.
 - c. Most satire in the Bible is of this type and it includes a large quantity of scorn (as distinct from humorous laughter).
- H. Finally, satire always has a stated or implied satiric norm – a standard by which the object of attack is being criticized.
- 1. The satiric norm is the positive model offered to the reader as an alternative to the negative picture that always dominates a satiric work.
 - 2. In the story of Jonah, for example, the universal mercy of God extended to the repentant city of Nineveh is a positive foil to the misguided nationalism of Jonah.
 - 3. In the Sermon on the Mount each of Jesus’ satiric charges against the Pharisees is accompanied by a positive command (Mt 6:1-14).
- I. Where can we find this type of satire in the Bible?
- 1. Virtually everywhere.
 - 2. Books such as Jonah and Amos are wholly satiric.
 - 3. Other books are heavily satiric; for example, the Book of Job holds up the orthodox “comforters” to rebuke and the Book of Ecclesiastes is a prolonged satiric attack against a society that is much like our own - acquisitive, materialistic, hedonistic, secular.

4. Many of Jesus' parables are satiric (e.g. the rich man and Lazarus, and the Pharisee and the publican).
 5. There is a satiric thread in biblical narrative whenever a character's flaws are prominently displayed (for example, Jacob's greed, Haman's pride and the Pharisees' antagonism to Jesus in the gospels).
 6. Satire can show up in lyric poetry, as in taunt songs directed against the worshipers of idols, or the portraits of the speaker's enemies in the psalms of lament.
 7. Many biblical proverbs have a satiric edge ("Like a gold ring in a pig's snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion" - Prov 11:22).
 8. And the discourses of Jesus in the gospels are often satiric.
- J. The largest category of satire in the Bible is prophetic writing.
1. The two major types of prophetic oracle (pronouncement) are the oracle of judgment and the oracle of salvation.
 2. The best literary approach to the oracle of judgment is satire.
 3. These passages always have a discernible object of attack, a standard by which the judgment is rendered and a vehicle of attack (at its simplest, it consists of a prediction of calamity in which the prophet pictures in vivid and specific detail a reversal of present conditions).
 4. Such satiric oracles of judgment pervade the prophetic books of the Bible; typical specimens are Isaiah 5, Ezekiel 28:1-19 and Ezekiel 34.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Much of the Bible's truth and wisdom have been enshrined in the form of satire.
- B. By framing truth as an attack on vice or folly, biblical satire drives its point home with an electric charge.
- C. Despite the negative approach of the satirist (who is always busy attacking someone or something) a positive norm emerges from biblical satire because it includes a foil to the evil that is attacked.

- D. That foil is usually the character or law of God.
1. Satire is an unsettling genre.
 2. Its aim is to induce discomfort with the way things are, which explains why there is so much of it in the Bible.
- E. The reader's task with satire is fourfold: to **identify the object(s) of attack, the satiric vehicle, the tone and the norm or standard by which things are criticized.**

CHAPTER XX

THE HYPERBOLE IN BIBLE INTERPRETATION

I. HYPERBOLE - ITS MEANING.

- A. Hyperbole comes from the Greek, *hyper*, above, over, beyond; and *bole*, to throw.
 - 1. Thus, the combination of these two words would mean to throw beyond, or to excess.
 - 2. From the *Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary* comes this meaning:

When you see a picture larger than life; when it is a deliberate exaggeration beyond reality, then you should know that you are dealing with the hyperbole.
 - 3. It is not a falsehood but a figure of speech given for emphasis.
 - 4. It differs from a falsehood by having no intention to deceive and, if it is properly composed, it furnishes no occasion to deceive an intelligent reader.
- B. Hyperbole is a rhetorical figure which consists in exaggeration or magnifying an object beyond reality. It has its natural origin in the tendency of youthful and imaginative minds to portray facts in the liveliest colors.

II. HOW TO INTERPRET THE HYPERBOLE.

- A. There needs to be no rule for the interpretation of the hyperbole except to keep before the mind the purpose of the author and the language will interpret itself.
- B. It is simply an intensification not used with any intent to misrepresent the facts in the case.
- C. Of course to make these statements literal will find the Bible guilty of many falsehoods; but when we treat such figures in the Scriptures as we treat them elsewhere there is no danger of failing to comprehend them.

III. THE HYPERBOLE IN EVERY DAY LIFE.

- A. The use of hyperbole is so much ingrained in our language that all of us use it a million times in a day!

1. That sentence is an example of hyperbole.
 2. An old saying in the country was: "Grandpa could argue with a sign post until the letters fell off."
 3. We all "hyperbolize."
- B. Many pitfalls await the Bible student who does not recognize figures of hyperbole.
1. Hyperbole, conscious exaggeration, is common in our own speech.
 2. We say, laughingly, "I could kill you for that remark," when we really mean we are mildly annoyed by what was said.
 3. If a person says, "Man, after a day like this, I'm dead," we know he means, "I'm tired."
- C. Accordingly, the Bible is filled with hyperboles.
- D. Some places where the use of hyperbole is employed in Scripture.
1. Genesis 13:16 – "And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."
 2. Genesis 41:49 – "And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number."
 3. Deuteronomy 1:28 – "This people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven...."
 4. Psalm 6:6-7 – "I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim, I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of my grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies."
 5. 2 Samuel 1:23 – "Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions."
 6. John 12:19 – "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, 'Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him.'"

7. Jude 23 – “And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”
8. In Jeremiah 9:1 the prophet cried for God’s people. He wished his head were waters and his eyes were a fountain of tears and he said, he could weep “day and night” for the people.
9. David used the same language in Psalm 42:3. “My tears have been my food day and night.”

David could not live on tears as his food!

E. There are other instances in the Bible where the hyperbole is used for emphasis and, unless the reader is aware of it, can be led to misunderstand.

1. There is that scene of the harvest of the earth when the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth and the winepress was trodden without the city.
2. Blood came out of the winepress and it was up to the bridles in the horses’ mouths.
3. The river of blood was some 200 miles long!
4. Surely, no one would contend this is literal (although, there are some!).
5. Common sense tells us it is the use of figures of speech that give emphasis to a scene.
6. Thus, the hyperbole is employed to heighten the imagery of that which the writer wants to emphasize.

IV. DIFFICULT PASSAGES AND THE HYPERBOLE.

A. F. F. Bruce, in *The Hard Saying of Jesus*, treats the use of hyperbole and the figurative language.

1. He notes how some thought the introduction of William Tyndale’s *English New Testament* might cause the simple reader difficulties, especially when it mentions the “plucking out of eyes,” or the “cutting off of a hand or foot” to please God.

2. "...the attempt to restrict its circulation was defended on the ground the simple reader might mistakenly take such language literally and 'pluck out his eyes, and so the whole realm will be full of blind men, to the great decay of the nation and the manifest loss of the King's grace; and thus by reading of the Holy Scriptures will the whole realm come into confusion."

3. Hugh Latimer, who preached a sermon to dispel such an idea, is quoted by Bruce:

"If we paint a fox preaching in a friar's hood, nobody imagines that a fox is meant, but that craft and hypocrisy are described which so often are found disguised in that garb."

B. Let us note just a few examples. Note Matthew 5:29 and Luke 14:26.

"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body be cast into hell."

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

1. These passages have posed problems down through the ages.
2. Yet, if we understand our Lord is leading us to the center of the problem lying behind the sin itself and see it is the heart that leads, then we can see what Jesus is saying is we should remove that which is causing us the problem.
3. Do not allow it to cause us to sin.
4. Even blind people sin.
5. In another place Jesus used the eye as the "light of the body" (Mt 6:22) and said the eye could be evil (v. 23)!
 - a. The eye is used in such a way to show the intent of the heart whence the evil starts (Mt 15:19).
 - b. Perhaps the RSV treats this better, as it reads: "If your right eye causes you to sin...."

6. The other passage talks about **hating** one's parents, brothers, wife, children, yea and one's own life.
 - a. It simply means we are not to allow *anything* to come between us and God.
 - b. We "hate" in the sense of **loving less**.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Remember the hyperbole does not pretend to be factual.
- B. Like the expression used in Colossians 1:23 where Paul said the gospel had been preached to **every creature** under heaven, hyperbole is used to express a deep emotion.
 1. It is used for emphasis.
 2. So, in the passages above, our Lord is not talking about mutilating the body. In fact, other passages teach the opposite (1 Cor 6:19-20; 3:17).
 3. He is only speaking of self-control or self-discipline.

CHAPTER XXI

RECOGNIZING AND INTERPRETING APOSTROPHE

INTRODUCTION.

- A. “You mean you don’t believe the Bible is literally true?”
 - 1. Has anyone ever made this statement (leveled this accusation) to you in a Bible study?
 - 2. The first thing we must recognize is the Bible does contain figurative language. Now this many seem to be a matter self-evident.
- B. When someone makes the accusation, “You don’t believe the Bible is **literally** true,” they are, by implication, denying the existence of figurative language in the Bible.

I. APOSTROPHE DEFINED.

- A. The English word **apostrophe** is derived from a Greek word that means, “a turning away from.”
- B. The dictionary defines apostrophe as: “words addressed to a person or thing, whether absent or present, generally in an exclamatory digression in a speech or literary writing.”
- C. A good, short definition of apostrophe is given by Leland Ryken: “An apostrophe is a direct address to someone or something absent as though it were present.”

II. RECOGNIZING APOSTROPHE.

- A. Recognizing apostrophe is not always as easy as the definition would lead one to believe.
 - 1. For one thing, apostrophe is sometimes difficult to differentiate from personification and the two are often confused.
 - 2. Personification is the figure of speech whereby non-human entities (e.g. rocks, trees, animals) are spoken of as if they had human characteristics.
 - 3. The difference between apostrophe and personification is that while non-human objects may be given human qualities in both apostro-

phe and personification, only in apostrophe are these objects **actually addressed** by the speaker.

- a. An example of personification is found in Numbers 16:32 where the Bible says, “the earth opened her mouth and swallowed” Korah and the other opposers of Moses.
 - b. Notice the earth is never actually addressed, but is described as having the human characteristics of a mouth.
 - c. If Moses had said, “Oh earth! Open thy mouth and swallow my opposers,” then we would have an apostrophe, as the earth would have actually been addressed.
- B. Apostrophe is not limited to speakers addressing inanimate objects or people not physically present.
1. It is also considered an apostrophe when the speaker turns from his main thought to address another audience.
 2. These apostrophes often appear as emotional outbursts and seem almost parenthetical within the context of the discourse.
 3. Often apostrophes burst forth with no warning, as if the power of the idea took over the thought processes of the speaker.

III. EXAMPLES OF APOSTROPHE: OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. It should not surprise us to learn the Psalms, one of the greatest examples of Hebrew poetry, contain this figure of speech.
1. In fact, Psalm 148 is probably the supreme example of apostrophe in the entire Bible.
 2. One writer said Psalm 148 “from start to finish is a catalog of apostrophes.”
 3. In this great example of apostrophe the Psalmist is urging us to praise Jehovah by invoking the whole creation to praise Him.

4. Note verses 2-3:

“Praise ye him, all his angels:
Praise he him, all his host:
Praise ye him, sun and moon:
Praise him, all ye stars of light.”

5. This is but a short sampling of the many facets of creation, both animate and inanimate, commanded to praise Jehovah in this Psalm.

B. Apostrophe in the Bible is not limited to poetry.

1. The prophets used this device extensively when they wished to call particular attention to their words.
2. When Jeremiah wanted the attention of the Philistines concerning their coming judgment he said:

“O thou sword of Jehovah, how long will it be ere thou be quiet?
Put up thyself into they scabbard; rest, and be still” (Jer 47:6-7).

3. In 1 Kings 13:2 the Bible says the young prophet “cried against the altar by the word of Jehovah, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith Jehovah.”
 - a. Though the altar was merely an inanimate object, incapable of disobeying God, it represented the sinful worship of the people, thus it is addressed.
 - b. One cannot doubt the effectiveness of the prophet’s words for, after hearing them, Jeroboam, the king, “put forth his hand from the altar, saying, ‘Lay hold on him.’”
 - c. Surely the drama of addressing the altar made for a **more effective** dialogue than had the prophet simply said, “God is not pleased with your worship activities.”

C. Apostrophe is often used in times of great emotional distress.

1. Consider the pitiful cries of David after learning of the death of his son, Absalom: “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son” (2 Sam 18:33).

2. The passion is undeniable.
 3. It is almost as if the speaker is oblivious to the fact there may be other people present.
 4. He seems to be talking to himself.
 5. The great love David possessed for Jonathan is well known.
 - a. It comes as no surprise David reacted with great passion upon learning of Jonathan's death and expressed himself in apostrophe: "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women" (2 Sam 1:26).
 - b. Again, we see the emotion of the moment has carried the speaker away, so he actually speaks to his dead loved one.
- D. Apostrophe is sometimes used as an almost parenthetical statement when the speaker suddenly leaves off speaking to his main audience and addresses another.
1. In the Bible we have many examples where the speaker suddenly addresses God in this fashion.
 2. In Nehemiah chapter 4 Nehemiah has been describing, to his literary audience, the efforts put forth by the enemies of those Jews returning from captivity to rebuild the walls of the city of Jerusalem.
 - a. Suddenly Nehemiah turns from his literary audience to address God, when he says, "Hear, O our God; for we are despised; and turn back their reproach upon their own head" (Neh 4:4).
 - b. Notice also Nehemiah 6:9: "for they all would have made us afraid, saying, 'Their hands shall be weakened from their work, that it be not done.' But now, O God, strengthen thou my hands."
 - c. Notice how Nehemiah suddenly bursts forth in a plea for strength from God in the midst of a discourse in which he has been describing the intimidation tactics of the returning Jewish exiles' enemies.

IV. BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF APOSTROPHE: NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. Apostrophe is not as prevalent in the New Testament as in the Old.
1. One reason for this is there are no New Testament books of poetry.
 2. Nevertheless, in times of great excitement or grief, New Testament characters still burst forth in apostrophes.
 3. Paul, as he wrote on the subject of life after death, could no longer contain himself and stated: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor 15:55).
 4. The excitement is obvious and the apostrophe is almost like a climax to a very impassioned statement.
- B. Jesus, grieved over His being rejected by the Jews, **explodes into apostrophe** when He addresses the city of Jerusalem and says:
- "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Mt 23:37-39).
- C. Our Lord's sorrow is obvious and it seems that only the literary device of apostrophe was able to express the depth of pain He felt.

V. DEALING WITH APOSTROPHE.

- A. First, be aware of the places where apostrophe is often found.
1. If you are reading in one of the books of **poetry** (Job, Psa, Prov, Eccl, SoS), there is a high probability you will run across some apostrophe.
 2. If you are reading a portion of the Bible where **emotions are running high**, apostrophe may be used.
- B. Second, realize apostrophe is the language of the heart.
1. When apostrophe is utilized someone is either speaking to or from the heart.

2. This being the case, do not try to force the expressed sentiments of emotion into the strict language of the intellect.
 3. This does not mean “abandon your brains,” but do not literalize the thoughts of the heart.
 4. If we were to take Jeremiah’s speaking to a sword literally we would have to question the sanity of the speaker.
- C. Third, take note that certain words are often preludes to apostrophe.
- D. Exclamatory words (Awake, Praise, O) many times indicate emotion and excitement which is the prime element for apostrophe.

CONCLUSION.

- A. How boring literature would be without figures of speech!
1. Learn to recognize these figures.
 2. This does not mean that it is imperative that one be able to assign the proper technical term to each figure (e.g. apostrophe, metonymy, personification, etc.).
 3. But one should be capable of recognizing something as a figure of speech.
- B. Learn to appreciate figurative language.
1. Appreciate the emotional turmoil the speaker is going through when he resorts to apostrophe and try to **identify** with those feelings.
 2. You will be a better servant of our wonderful God if you do!

CHAPTER XXII RECOGNIZING AND INTERPRETING PERSONIFICATION

I. PERSONIFICATION: THE TERM DEFINED.

- A. What is “personification?”
1. We immediately see in it the word “person,” and then know that it is a figure of speech making use of something relating to “a person” or to “persons.”
 2. The dictionary states the meaning as: “To typify; embody, to think of or represent (a thing) as a person.”
 3. While the idea in personification is there, Webster seems a little broad in stating things are represented “as a person.”
- B. It is narrowed by this: “Personification is a figure in which animate attributes are ascribed to inanimate things.”
1. Things, then, presented as though they had attributes **of** a person and not always seen in behavior, or action, **as** a person.
 2. While not fitting the definition of personification in the absolute, there is also a category wherein animate things are seen as possessing traits of a person – traits the animate thing cannot exhibit.

II. EVERYDAY ILLUSTRATIONS.

- A. Let us illustrate personification in the forms within the easy understanding of all.
1. Of the test paper the teacher censures the student with, “This paper says to me that you did not prepare!”
 - a. The paper, though, said nothing.
 - b. What was on/not on the paper allowed the conclusion of the teacher to be drawn.
 2. Noting what rested in her sink the woman was heard to say, “I’ve a sink full of dishes begging to be washed.”
 - a. In fact, the dishes said nothing and couldn’t say anything.

- b. Her work, and the fact it needs doing, caused her to state it in that form.
- B. These are sufficient to remind us that in our own language, and in all languages, personification is used and it is no surprise **God** does the same.
- C. We are enriched, thereby, as we are in all types of literature and use of language in the Bible.

III. PERSONIFICATION IN CATEGORY.

- A. Things of the heavens.
 - 1. The heavens “hearing” or giving ear (Deut 32:1).
 - a. Here, Moses’ song is offered with the request that both earth and the heavens give ear to the expression.
 - b. It is simply the utterance of Moses, but so significant that he wills that the message resound forth throughout the universe!
 - c. The heavens are pictured as “hearing.”
 - 2. The stars seen as “singing” and “fighting.”
 - a. God answers Job as to the time of His creative work and upon heavens and earth being created, “the morning stars sang together” (Job 38:7).
 - b. Aside from claims the stars emit a noise, the personification enters in when they are said to be “singing.”
 - c. Again, in Judges 5:20, in description of the battle there recalled, we’re told “the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.”
 - (1) Aiding in the conflict, and against Sisera, were the stars and the brightness thereof served Israel well.
 - (2) Hence, the stars were said to “fight.”
 - 3. The sun said to “look, know and be ashamed.”

- a. In Song of Solomon 1:6, one under the sun – and thus one on earth – is said to have the sun to “look” upon him.
- b. David, in praise of God’s might and power, speaks of great provisions God has made, even to the setting of the heavenly bodies and the ordaining of the laws of nature by which their work is performed.
- c. He mentioned the moon for season and “the sun knoweth his going down” (Psa 104:19).
- d. In fact, the sun does not acquire and retain knowledge, but it is thus pictured in that the place and work of the sun is fixed and it therein abides.
- e. It will follow the plan of God and, therefore, is said to “know” its functioning.
- f. In addition, the sun is seen as being “ashamed” (Isa 24:23).
 - (1) The light in the Savior overshadows these heavenly bodies.
 - (2) Christ, with a spiritual brilliance overshadowing the sun, causes the sun to be “ashamed” – to “lower its head” (to use other personification).

B. Earth and its locales, features.

- 1. The earth itself pictured as “hearing” (as seen in Deut 32:1) and as having a “mouth.”
 - a. The testimony given to God concerning the sinful deed of Cain, with his brother’s blood spilled upon the ground, was to the effect that the earth “open her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood” (Gen 4:10-11).
 - b. This reference to the “mouth” has to do with the blood spilled and seeping into the ground.
 - c. We find the “mouth” of the earth in connection with the earth opened up in swallowing Korah and others doomed in Israel due to sinfulness (Num 16:30-32).

- d. The earth is seen to “open her mouth and swallow.”
 - e. She consumed the sinful!
2. The land is seen as “crying.”
- a. In Job 31 when this good man argues in behalf of his own integrity he offers those things wherein, if a legitimate charge were made, he would be at fault.
 - b. In verse 38 it is “if my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complained.”
 - c. The land he worked (the furrows) here is offered to give its testimony.
 - d. If investigation should prove the land was his only by crookedness and sinfulness, the land would “cry out” against his insistence upon his integrity.
 - e. Land cannot speak nor weep but, through personification, the land thus can “cry out.”
3. Mountains, hills and trees given speech and movement.
- a. In Psalm 114:4,6 there is such reference, as David writes in celebration of the power of God and especially noting that power in the deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt.
 - b. In verse 4 “the mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs” and the language is repeated in verse 6.
 - c. The presence and the work of God is celebrated with the urging that the “hills be joyful together” in Psalm 98:8.
 - d. Isaiah 55:12 refers to the joy that comes from those who hear and abide by the word of the Lord: “the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing!”
 - e. Using personification there is the description of trees acting only as something **animate**.
- (1) In the passage just noted, Isaiah 55:12, the fullness of it has not only the hills breaking forth in song, but “all the **trees** of the field shall clap their hands!”

- (2) In Isaiah 14:8 the fir trees are seen to “rejoice” and then to “speak” as there is celebration of the destruction to come upon Babylon as retribution for evils done to the people of God.
- f. Very clearly, mountains and hills do not rise and make a move across a landscape to settle in another place.
- g. These act through personification!
- 4. The wilderness and the desert are said to know emotion.
 - a. In the restoration of Israel the change from desolation to abundant fruitage.
 - b. In Isaiah 35:2 abundant blossom is noted, but also that the desert will rejoice with joy and singing!
 - c. It is personification, for with all the sounds in nature and peculiar to certain environments – night, desert, mountain, at streamside, etc. – there will not be the actual feeling of rejoicing in the nature of these and none will break forth in song!
- 5. Bodies of waters are said to know, to speak and to use themselves as would man.
 - a. It is in Isaiah 23:4 the prophet of God speaks of desolation to come to Phoenicia with both Tyre and Sidon (Zidon) addressed, these being the principal cities of the land.
 - b. In our text Zidon is addressed by the sea and both cities were very much tied to the sea and its commercial traffic.
 - c. The sea is said to “speak,” promising (in the desolation to come) to be active no longer and to still the flow of humanity that came to and went forth from, Zidon, making its native population to swell.
 - d. The sea’s waves indeed roar, but there is conveyed no message to man as to God’s promised desolation.
 - e. Such is the communicative use of personification.

- C. Animals given features they do not, cannot, possess.
1. Once again, under the figure of personification, we find the animals given features and making use of features beyond them.
 2. The fowls of the air being queried and giving answer.
 - a. In Job 12:7 there is the knowledge of God's power and one can gain lessons by observing the earth and the creatures of earth.
 - b. In some of these the point of learning by observation is clearly set forth, similar to Solomon's exhortation that man go to the ant and learn her ways (Prov 6:6).
 - c. But here, regarding the fowls of the air, the wording is "they shall tell thee" and the point is, upon man's asking.
 - d. Clearly, it is still learning by observation and study, but personification is here in that the fowls are "asked," and they "tell" man that which he needs to learn.
 - e. Fowls of the air have their sounds and are sometimes melodious, but they do not converse with man, actually giving him instruction.
 3. A beast is said to laugh at man.
 - a. It is in Job 41 where much is said of the leviathan, with exact identity clouded, but not at all interfering with the message.
 - b. Among many statements made of the creature, Job is told by God the leviathan "laughs" at man's efforts to impress him with a spear (v. 29).
 - c. It is declaring a spear is a puny instrument to use on a large beast and would have little chance of doing damage to him.
 - d. Whatever sound the animal would make and whatever instinctive noise it would make at the approach of man, it most certainly would not be weighing the situation and then the circumstances literally striking him as being funny and thus causing "laughter."

- e. Thus, the Bible pictures animals as possessing traits found in humans, but **not** in animals.
 - f. By comparison, God is so much greater than any beast He has created.
 - g. If man cannot go up against the mere beast, then how shall he regard God Almighty (Job 41:10-11)?
- D. Members of the physical body taking action belonging to another member:
1. One member's function (seeing) could not be taken care of by another's function (hearing) – 1 Cor 12:16-17.
 2. But, by means of personification, one member is said to function in a way completely contrary to the normal.
 3. Hands are said to have knowledge.
 - a. Similarly, as captives in Babylon remembering Jerusalem and thinking of the awful prospect of forgetting Jerusalem, David said if such were to take place then "let my right hand forget her cunning" (Psa 137:5-6).
 - b. In these two instances the hands said to have the ability to know and to forget.
 4. Eyes are pictured as having pity (Deut 13:8) and as giving witness to one (Job 29:11).
 - a. Of a truth, what the eyes behold can stir up within one a feeling of compassion.
 - b. But it is not the nature of the eye to feel emotions, nor to give any testimony in any matter.
 5. The tongue is said to walk through the earth (Psa 73:9) and to be glad (Acts 2:26).
 - a. It is obvious the tongue possesses no ability to be mobile, except in its ordinary functions wherein it is fixed in the mouth.
 - b. It does not get up and walk!

- c. What is clear here is David says (in context in Psa 73) that in the wicked speaking against heaven, the message is conveyed throughout the world!
 - 6. Then, feet and bones are said to speak.
 - a. The wicked man is seen by Solomon as “speaking with his feet” (Prov 6:13) and David says “all my bones shall say, Lord who is like unto thee?” (Psa 35:10).
 - b. Solomon says the wicked conveys a message by his feet – where his feet take him and (in v. 18) those feet take him into **mischief**.
- E. Virtues and traits of character are given movement.
- 1. What is felt may result in some kind of movement or action, but the disposition itself cannot take action, except in personification.
 - 2. Wisdom is said to build a house (Prov 9:1).
 - a. One with wisdom can construct something, indeed, but wisdom itself does not enter into construction.
 - b. Here, the course that is wise has been constructed by God and provided for us.
 - c. Men are wise to follow this course!
 - 3. Again, wisdom is said to cry out, to call (Prov 1:20), to speak (v. 21).
 - a. The virtue, value and benefit of it is made to be appealing, and God urges this upon man, and in that sense does wisdom call.
 - b. It “calls” as the gospel “calls” in making known its makeup or content.
 - 4. Righteousness and peace are said to have kissed each other.
 - a. We find this is Psalm 85:10 where David gives a picture of the blissful environment of man at one with God.

- b. All godly virtues are intertwined in the man's character, blended together in his very being, with the virtues then said to "kiss" one another!
- F. Finally, a miscellaneous collection.
- 1. Blood having a voice (Gen 4:10); Abel's blood has the message that Cain had killed him.
 - 2. Arrows drunk with blood (Deut 32:42); in battle, the arrows being used, finding their targets with much success, and thus the spilling of blood – "drunk with blood."
 - 3. Sin lying at a door (Gen 4:7); Cain's non-acceptance with God due to his sin; it was present, it was known, it was obvious and it was in plain sight: "Lying at the door."
 - 4. Gates lamenting and mourning (Isa 3:26); destruction upon a city and with the death of its inhabitants; and with none to pass through and enter the gates are seen as being in "mourning."
 - 5. Chariots raging (Jer 46:9); in judgment against Gentile nations, God pictures their horses coming up and their chariots "raging" – being madly thrown against.

CONCLUSION.

- A. In examining personification we have seen how the Bible is enriched by the use of this figure of speech.
- B. There is enhancement given the impressiveness, beauty, glamour and majesty of the Bible in personification and truths are all the more indelibly impressed upon us as we research what is involved in the Bible's use of such picturesque figures.

CHAPTER XXIII INTERROGATION

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Almost from the opening pages of the Bible God uses interrogation.
 - 1. For instance, when the first human pair sinned, the record says they heard God approaching in the garden and hid themselves.
 - 2. Then “Jehovah God called unto the man, and said unto him, Where art Thou?” (Gen 3:9).
- B. The interrogation continued when Adam explained his fear of nakedness.
 - 1. God said, “Who told thee that thou wast naked?”
 - 2. Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?” (Gen 3:11).
- C. Adam tried to “pass the buck” to Eve.
 - 1. So the Lord approached her, saying, “What is this that thou hast done?” (Gen 3:13).
 - 2. This series of questions was presented to fix responsibility, and is typical of the kinds of questions in Scripture.

I. INTERROGATION IN SCRIPTURE.

- A. I have identified at least four kinds of interrogation, though several subsets could likely be found in each category.
- B. These are:
 - 1. Rhetorical questions implying an affirmative answer.
 - 2. Rhetorical questions implying a negative answer.
 - 3. Questions which are posed concerning a spiritual condition.
 - 4. Questions which are posed relative to a physical condition or blessing.

- C. Rhetorical questions implying an affirmative answer.
1. The rhetorical question has a built-in answer.
 2. It only **seems** to leave the decision up to the reader, but it is worded in such a way that only one answer is possible.
 3. For instance it would be extremely difficult to answer “yes” to the following question: “Would you recommend a teacher who doesn’t care whether his students succeed or fail?”
 4. There are several rhetorical questions in the Bible which imply only an affirmative answer.
 - a. For example in Jeremiah 23:29, the prophet speaks on behalf of the Lord: “Is not my word like fire?” None would think of answering this question in the negative.
 - b. Again, “Wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling?” (Psa 56:13-14).
 - c. This question implies the response, “Yes, He will.”
- D. Rhetorical questions implying a negative answer.
1. These types of questions seem to be more numerous probably because humans tend to think in a negative way more often than in a positive way.
 2. For instance in 1 Corinthians 12:29-30, Paul is attempting to show the relative insignificance of spiritual gifts compared to faith, hope and love.
 - a. He asks: “Are all apostles? Are all Prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?”
 - b. Paul is not asking these questions for the purpose of obtaining information, but rather for the purpose of teaching emphatically that not every Christian possessed miraculous gifts, and not every Christian who possessed a gift of the Spirit had more than one gift.
 - c. Every implied answer to these questions is “no!”

3. In Romans 10:13-15 Paul makes a statement and then asks a series of questions to demonstrate the importance of human agency in the process of salvation.
 - a. He says: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?"
 - b. The intended answer in every case is "they cannot."
- E. Questions which are posed concerning a spiritual condition.
1. There are examples of a "negative" spiritual condition.
 2. For instance in one of the first questions of the Bible, God asks fallen Adam, "Where art thou?" (Gen 3:9).
 - a. Clearly, the Lord was not asking for information.
 - b. The question was instead intended to help Adam see his true spiritual condition before God.
 - c. He had fallen, having lost fellowship and communion with God, and desperately needed to face up to his situation!
 3. Abram lied to Pharaoh about his wife Sarai and, because of it, Pharaoh was punished by the Lord.
 4. Since Abram was responsible, Pharaoh attempted to get him to face up to the consequences of his action by asking, "What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?" (Gen 12:18).
 5. There are also questions asked relative to a spiritual condition which are "positive" in nature.
 - a. They may be positive in that they posit a beneficial answer.
 - b. For instance, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom 7:24), has only one very positive answer: Christ!

- c. When Isaiah was brought into the very presence of Jehovah, and subsequently cleansed of sins, the following question was asked: “Who shall I send, and who will go for us?” (Isa 6:8a).
- d. A grateful Isaiah answered, “Here am I, send me” (Isa 6:8b).
- e. These questions may be positive because they suggest a joyful solution.
- f. For example when Jehovah promises that, through David, He will establish His spiritual throne, David asks: “Is this the manner of man, O Lord God?” (2 Sam 7:19).
- g. He saw the blessing would potentially embrace all of humanity, and he rejoices in this fact!

F. Questions which are posed relative to the physical condition or blessing.

- 1. There will be only one example used here because it will be sufficient to make the point.
- 2. In Romans Paul argued “the just shall live by faith.
- 3. But, in order to convince men to approach God by faith, he had to first demonstrate their need.
 - a. He did this by proving the Gentiles were in sin and, therefore, subject to God’s wrath (Rom 1:18-32).
 - b. Then he turned his attention to the only other segment of humanity, viz., the Jews.
 - c. He proved also that the Jews were in sin and subject to the wrath of God (Rom 2:1-3:19).
 - d. The Jews would not/could not take this indictment without objection.
 - e. Their supposed superiority over the rest of mankind was at stake!
- 4. So, Paul framed their **objections** in the form of two questions (Rom 3:1,9) which he then answered.

- a. The second question addressed the superiority issue.
- b. “What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we before laid to the charge both of Jews and Greeks, that they are all under sin” (Rom 3:9).
- c. They were not spiritually superior to the Gentiles since they too had violated God’s righteous law.
- d. Thus, **both** Jew and Gentile needed salvation!
- e. The first question addressed a physical situation.
- f. They asked, in effect, “Why bother, if we are in no better circumstances than the Gentiles?”
- g. The question, found in Romans 3:1, is answered in Romans 3:2 and 9:1-5, which I reproduce below: “What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what is the profit of circumcision?”

Much every way: first of all, that they were intrusted with the oracles of God.

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren’s sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”

- h. Paul answered their question (which had spiritual implications to be sure) by pointing them to the numerous physical blessings they had enjoyed as a result of their long standing relationship with God.
- i. These blessings were mainly physical in nature, but were due to their spiritual relationship!

II. COMMON FALLACIES IN QUESTIONING.

- A. There are at least two fallacies committed by those who would employ the technique of interrogation for their own purposes.
1. **The ambiguous question.** This fallacy is not usually listed in logic texts, but it is a fallacy nevertheless.
 - a. The problem here is that the question is not complicated or complex, but it is not unquestionably precise either.
 - b. Questions that are strictly precise may be answered either true or false – yes or no!
 - c. Unfortunately, there are many questions asked which are not quite so precise.
 - d. Two examples will suffice.
 - (1) The question, “Must one be a member of the church to be saved,” is an ambiguous question, for it is properly answered “yes and no.”
 - (2) The question is answered “yes” when one thinks of the fact that all the saved are added to the church (Acts 2:41-42) and that no saved person is not in the church of the Lord.
 - (3) Moreover, when one understands that reconciliation unto God is in the church (Eph 2:11-16) then the question is similarly answered.
 - (4) At the same time many have understood that question to be saying the church has something to do with salvation when, in reality, the church (and membership therein) is a **result** of salvation!
 - (5) Another question that is similar is, “Can one be taught wrong and be baptized right?”
 - (6) The answer to this question depends on another, namely, “Taught wrong about **what?**”
 - (7) One cannot be taught wrong about what to do to be saved, or become a member of the church.

- (8) In other words, one cannot be taught baptism is not essential unto salvation and, at the same time, be baptized unto the remission of sins (Acts 2:38)!
- (9) On the other hand, who among us has not disposed of some error or grown through some wrong beliefs, in his Christian life?
- (10) If one must be taught accurately about **everything** (without exception) before he can be “baptized right,” then our circle of brethren has suddenly become exceedingly small and **you** may not be included.

2. **The complex question.**

- a. Another common fallacy is the fallacy of the complex question.
- b. This fallacy is committed when a single question that is really two (or more) questions is asked and the single answer is then applied to both questions.
- c. Every complex question presumes the existence of a certain condition (which is what differentiates this fallacy from the preceding one).
- d. The well known examples of this fallacy are: “Have you stopped beating your wife?” or “Have you ceased your evil ways?”
- e. Let me introduce a couple of additional examples.
 - (1) Someone might ask a student, “Have you stopped cheating on exams?”
 - (2) Suppose he answered, “Yes”?
 - (3) Since he answered “Yes,” the querist says, “It follows that you have cheated in the past.”
 - (4) Suppose he answered, “No,” instead?
 - (5) The querist continues his badgering.

- (6) “Since you answered ‘No’ to my question, it follows that you are continuing to cheat on exams.”
- (7) The hidden question which is unstated, but which nevertheless is implied in the question above is, “Did you cheat on exams in the past?”

III. CAN INTERROGATIVE STATEMENTS BE BINDING?

- A. In fact, interrogative statements **are** binding in two very unusual ways; (1) with reference to implicit truths; and (2) with reference to implicit commands.
- B. Interrogative statements are binding with reference to implicit truths.
 1. Whenever a statement claims a thing is or is not the case, that statement is either true or false!
 2. One such example is, “The moon is made of green cheese.”
 3. Another example is, “Jesus the Christ is the Son of God.”
 4. The first statement is false but the second is true!
 - a. Now, all men are obligated to assent to the truth.
 - b. If they do not their beliefs are erroneous and they are wrong!
 - c. But, it would be grievous error to teach these declarative statements are **commandments** (imperatives) to be obeyed.
 5. Remember also the series of questions in Job 38 as Jehovah speaks to Job out of the whirlwind.
 - a. Think, for instance, of verse 4 where God asks: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?”
 - b. The implied truth in this question is: “I was present at the creation and, therefore, I know how it was done and for what purpose; you, Job, were not present at the creation!”
 - c. Again, this is truth to be believed, not commands to be obeyed.
- C. Interrogative statements are binding with reference to implicit commands.

1. As an example of this consider Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?"
2. Suppose one grants the oft heard idea that the documents of the New Testament were produced as the need for them became evident (i.e., they were "occasional documents").
3. If this is true (and there is no disputing this point) then the Romans may well have had no other inspired communication to read.
 - a. Now, they had been made to understand the grace of God was more than adequate to cover human sin.
 - b. In fact, the more sin became apparent, the more grace was given. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly" (Rom 5:20).
 - c. Some apparently reasoned, "If greater amounts of sin brought even greater amounts of grace, then we would do all a favor by continuing to sin, for God's grace would be manifest all the more if we did so."
 - d. Paul's response was given in the form of a question which **implied** a negative command: "You must not continue to practice sin, for you have died to (i.e., been separated from) sin!"
 - e. This implicit command is binding whether or not one ever had another word from God addressing the same subject.
 - f. So, interrogative statements can be binding as implicit commands, as well as implicit truths!

IV. SOME SIMPLE RULES FOR INTERPRETING INTERROGATIVE STATEMENTS.

- A. First, one should ask whether the question is for the purpose of **giving** information, or for **gaining** information.
- B. Second, if the question is asked for the purpose of gaining information, is it merely rhetorical (thus, containing its own answer), or is it nonrhetorical?

- C. Third, if it is non-rhetorical, then is it addressing a spiritual condition or a physical condition (recognizing here, of course, that there may be **some** overlapping between giving and gaining information)?
- D. Fourth, if the question is asked for the purpose of giving information, then the querist is not asking for information but, rather, implying some necessary response on the part of the one being questioned.
- E. Finally, one must then distinguish between those responses which are necessary unto salvation, and those which are not.

CONCLUSION.

- A. The figure of speech known as “interrogation” is an interesting study.
- B. There are at least four types of questions in the Bible (with apologies to Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, who lists many more).
- C. There are at least two senses in which questions may be binding: (1) with reference to implicit truths; and (2) with reference to implicit commands.

CHAPTER XXIV ANTHROPOMORPHISM AND ANTHROPOPATHISM

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Understanding the message requires one understand both **what** the message is and **how one can know** this is actually the message intended.
- B. Understanding the function of **anthropomorphism** and **anthropopathism** will help us understand precisely the limitlessness of God's nature.

I. USES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. Anthropomorphism is a figurative way of describing God in human form.
- B. When God called Israel out of Egypt the world, at that time, was excessively religious.
 - 1. Religion was everywhere and on every tongue.
 - 2. The Babylonians had their gods, the Canaanites had theirs and the Egyptians had still others.
 - a. When tribes fought battles they asked their gods to win the victory for them.
 - b. When a nation was defeated they would find more powerful gods.
 - c. Images of gods were abundant.
- C. Israel's God was not to be considered as just another god (Ex 20:1-3); no images were to be made (Ex 20:4-7); His name was to be honored above all names (Ex 20:7); the day He rested from creating was to be a holy day (Ex 20:12); everyone must honor those who created them, fathers and mothers (Ex 20:12); everyone must honor the life given and taken by God (Ex 20:13); everyone must honor the marriage relationship which creates life (Ex 20:14); everyone must honor the possessions which sustain life (Ex 20:15); everyone must honor the word of life, for words in court could take a life (Ex 20:6); and everyone must honor the household of one who lives beside them (Ex 20:17).
- D. The God of the Hebrews was a jealous God and when His name was spoken it must be spoken with reverence and respect.

1. God defeated the Egyptian gods when He forced Pharaoh to release his people (Ex 7:1-36).
 2. All these signs were that “they may know that I am the Lord God” (Ex 5:2; 6:7; 7:5,17; 8:10,22; 9:14,29-30; 11:7; 14:4,18; 16:6-8,12; 18:11).
 3. Therefore, when studying anthropomorphism and anthropopathism in the Old Testament one must keep in mind God is not being spoken of as a created being as were the gods created by pagans, but as The Creator of Heaven and Earth.
- E. Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament. “Thus says the LORD, The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: ‘Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; and concerning the work of My hands, you command Me. I have made the earth, and created man on it. *It was I – My hands that stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded*” (Isa 45:11-12).
1. As a man works with his hands, so God is said to work with His hands.
 2. Solomon after looking at the work of his hands wrote, “Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun” (Eccl 2:11).
 3. God, on the other hand, “saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Gen 1:31).

II. GOD’S POWERFUL HAND.

- A. God exercises his authority over everything.
- B. God’s hand sends judgment (Ex 7:5; Psa 138:7; Isa 5:25; 9:12,17,21; 14:27; 31:3; Jer 6:12; Ezek 16:27; 25:7; Zeph 1:4; 2:13); His hand may be upon a prophet (1 Kgs 18:46; 2 Kgs 3:15; Ezek 1:3; 8:1; 33:22) or against a people (Ex 7:4-5; 32:11; Ezek 35:3; 44:12; Amos 1:8).

III. GOD’S POWERFUL EYES.

- A. Man can see only a short distance but God can see all men and judge the intent of their hearts (Psa 11:4; Job 34:21; Isa 1:16).

- B. God can see what His enemies are doing (2 Kgs 19:16) and He spies out the evil and the good in the children of men (Ex 24:17; Deut 13:18; 1 Sam 26:24; 1 Kgs 15:5,11; 16:25; 22:43; 2 Chron 16:19; 29:6-8; Amos 9:8; Zech 4:10).

IV. THE ARM OF THE LORD.

- A. As a man's arm is his strength to give and take away, so the Lord's arm has unrivaled power.
- B. God delivered Israel out of their enemies' grasp (Ex 6:6; 15:16; Deut 4:34; 5:16; 7:19; 11:2; 26:8) and commanded them to obey His voice.
- C. Literally, anthropomorphism means "man's feeling."
 - 1. God is said to have some type of human emotional response.
 - 2. God must have some similarities to mankind since He created him in His image.
 - 3. We know God thinks and has some kinds of emotional responses, but they are not the product of any physical processes that compare to mankind.
 - 4. In this sense, therefore, we may say God does not think like we do.
 - 5. Language is not adequate to describe God because our language assumes physical categories, limitations and the meager thought processes of the human mind.
- D. With this in mind, consider the list of figures below.
 - 1. Rejoicing.
 - a. Moses warned the Israelites that the same pleasure God had in making them prosper He would also have in seeing them be destroyed if they forsake His teachings (Deut 28:58-63).
 - b. God is said to greatly rejoice when Israel is restored to Him like when a young man marries his true love; He will have great pleasure and delight over her return (Isa 62:1-5).
 - c. In return God will rejoice with His people and He will never stop doing good to them (Jer 32:36-41).

2. Sorrow and grief.
 - a. When mankind's thoughts were only on evil continually, God was grieved He made man (Gen 6:6).
 - b. When Israel continued to fall away during the period of the Judges it grieved God His children were miserable (Jud 10:15-16).
 - c. David sings how many times God was frustrated with the Israelites during their wilderness wanderings (Psa 78:40).
 - d. Isaiah exclaims how deep were the wounds of His children's rebellion (Isa 63:10).
 - e. Just a casual reading of the prophets reveals God's deep hurt over Israel's rebellion.
3. Anger, vengeance and hatred.
 - a. When Moses gave excuses to God the record reads:

“So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said: ‘Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart’” (Ex 4:14).
 - b. Deuteronomy is full of examples of God's anger and wrath.

V. USES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. In many ways the New Testament is full of Old Testament anthropomorphism.
 1. Quotations from the Old testament bring with them Hebrew thought in Greek form.
 2. God delighted to send Jesus (Mt 12:18-21), God's arm shattered His enemies (Lk 1:51) and when Jesus died on the cross He committed His spirit into God's hands (cf. Psa 31:5-6; Lk 23:46).

3. God's hand was powerful; no one can pluck believers out of God's hand (Jn 10:28-29), God stretched out His hand to heal (Acts 4:30) and God's hand brings punishment (Acts 13:11).
4. God's presence is signified by His face (Mt 18:10), His throne (Acts 9:48-50, 55-57; 2 Thess 1:9), God's finger cast out demons (Lk 11:20) and God's ears listened to the cries of men (Jas 5:4; 1 Jn 5:15).

B. Anthropopathism in the New Testament.

1. In the gospels Jesus taught a great deal about God in His parables.
2. In a very real sense the parables reveal the deep feelings God has for His children.
 - a. The frustration of a landowner (Lk 13:6-9) in finding no fruit on his fig tree; the great anger of a king (Lk 14:15-24) in being embarrassed because no one wanted to come to his feast; the generosity and divine retribution of not forgiving as God forgives (Mt 18:21-35).
 - b. The parable of the wicked tenants (Mt 21:33-44; Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19) demonstrates the deep emotional hurt and violent revenge felt by a vineyard owner as he is cheated by those who he leased out his vineyard to.
 - c. The obvious intention of the parable is to reveal God's deep hurt and sure revenge over this act of cruelty.
3. God's love and care is also seen in Jesus' parables.
 - a. The lost sheep (Mt 18:10-14; Lk 15:1-7), the lost son (Lk 15:11-32), the friend at midnight (Lk 11:5-13) and the persistent widow (Lk 18:1-8) all show God's love and concern.
 - b. In many ways Jesus was a walking anthropomorphism and a anthropopathism.
 - c. If you saw Jesus you saw the Father.
 - d. When Jesus had compassion on the lost, the sick and the maimed God had compassion on them as well.
 - e. Jesus did what God would have done if God were there.

- f. Jesus was deity!
- g. Jesus was man!

CONCLUSION.

- A. Strictly speaking, anthropomorphism is a figurative way of describing God in human shapes and forms.
- B. One should not assume God has hands, feet, eyes and ears; nor should one lower God's attributes to mankind's level.
- C. God is completely beyond precise description in human terms and, because He is, to speak about Him we must use our limited earthen words to describe the One Almighty God.

CHAPTER XXV

HOW ARE THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS BINDING?

INTRODUCTION.

- A. An overview of religious history from Adam to Christ, as recorded in the Bible, will enable us to better understand the purpose and use of events before the cross, and bring the events after the cross into sharper focus.
- B. In this study we will consider:
 - 1. How the various periods blend into each other in the march of sacred annals,
 - 2. Durable principles given before the time of Jesus,
 - 3. The value of examples and types in the Old Testament as a key to interpretation of the New Testament, and
 - 4. The nomenclature of Old Testament prophetic language in order for a better understanding of the New Testament.

I. ADAM TO MOSES.

- A. The patriarchal age began with Adam and continues to the present.
 - 1. The word “patriarch” is an anglicized Greek word that appears only four times in the original text of the Bible.
 - 2. Being a Greek word it occurs only in the New Testament.
 - 3. The word means “the founder of a tribe, a progenitor.”
 - 4. It denotes a father, or the head of a family.
- B. The expression “Patriarchal Dispensation” is not in the Scriptures.
 - 1. The term signifies a time of father rule.
 - 2. The rule of the father in the family started when Jehovah said to Eve, “Thy desire shall be unto thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen 3:16).

3. Under the reign of Jesus “the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church” (Eph 5:25).
 4. Jehovah God appointed man to be the head of the family from Eden to the second coming.
- C. The expression “patriarchal dispensation” is sometimes used to identify a period of time when the head of the family functioned as both ruler and priest.
1. The head of the family, under this arrangement, was the eldest son and not necessarily the oldest male member of the tribe.
 2. He had full responsibility for governing the family and officiating at the altar.
- D. In the Christian age it continues to be true the father in the home directs the affairs of the home, including its spiritual development.
1. The father is to nurture his children “in the chastening and admonition of the Lord” (Eph 6:4).
 2. The husband is to cherish “and love his own wife even as himself” (Eph 5:33).
 3. In the ideal condition the father directs the material and spiritual fortunes of his family, and this is true in every period of time, from the creation of the earth to its annihilation.
 - a. Every age is patriarchal in this sense.
 - b. It is a mistake to talk of the end of the patriarchal age.
 - c. It has not ended.
 - d. It will not end until Christ “shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.”
- E. At the end of the first thousand years of the world’s history “the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5).
1. There was no possibility of reform and, therefore, it became necessary for God to destroy everything in which there was the breath of life.

2. A universal flood washed the earth and made it clean.
3. Noah, his wife, Shem, Ham, Japheth and their wives survived the flood.
 - a. All the other human flesh died in the world wide disaster.
 - b. Sin brought destruction because “the wages of sin is death.”
4. The lesson of God’s hatred and punishment of sin did not last.
 - a. Soon the people of earth again plunged themselves into idolatry and decadence.
 - b. God determined to select a righteous man and make of him a great nation.
 - c. Abraham was picked out because of his faith. God promised Abraham, “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Gen 22:18).
 - d. Later the Law of Moses was given “because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise had been made” (Gal 3:19).
5. The promise continued through Abraham’s son, and his grandson, Israel.
6. Israel had twelve sons and each one of them was the head of a tribe.
 - a. The sons of Abraham became slaves in Egypt.
 - b. Israel, down in Egypt, became steeped in idolatry. Sin, therefore, was rampant among them.
 - c. In view of the promise to Abraham the time had come for Jehovah to deliver Israel.
 - d. He called Moses to bring the tribes of Israel out of the iron furnace of Egypt.

II. THE LAW OF MOSES.

- A. Moses, by the mighty and uplifted hand of God, defeated Pharaoh and his host and brought the chosen people out of bondage.
 - 1. Jehovah brought the children of Abraham, now numbering more than two million people, to Mount Sinai, gave them a law and a nation was born.
 - 2. The law God gave to the people at Sinai is known as the “Law of Moses” because it was given to the people through the mediation of Moses.
 - a. The Law of Moses was added to the promise to Abraham because of transgressions (Gal 3:19).
 - b. It was a middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile (Eph 2:15-16); it was a hedge of separation and a wall of safety (Isa 5:5).
- B. The giving of the Law of Moses to the nation of Israel at Sinai did not cut Gentile nations off from God.
 - 1. They could continue to serve and worship God under the provisions existing before the Law of Moses was given.
 - 2. I. B. Grubbs commented, “The context clearly shows that the passage refers to a possible keeping of the law as a condition of possible justification.”
- C. God made the covenant at Sinai exclusively with the twelve tribes of Israel.

“In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they unto the wilderness of Sinai. And when they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, ‘Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the chil-

dren of Israel.’ And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Jehovah commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, ‘All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do.’ And Moses reported the words of the people unto Jehovah” (Ex 19:1-8).

1. God made no suggestion the Sinai covenant was world inclusive and age embracing, but confined it to Jacob and the children of Israel.
2. The covenant God made with Israel at Sinai was never intended for Gentiles.
3. Paul said Gentiles “have not the law (of Moses)...” (Rom 2:14).
4. The Law of Moses separated between Jew and Gentile and, therefore, included the Jew and excluded the Gentile.

III. LAW OF MOSES ABOLISHED.

- A. When the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai served its purpose it was annulled.

“Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands; that ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in the flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the two one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh: for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph 2:11-18).

1. Jesus “broke down the middle wall of partition...abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances” in order to unite Jew and Gentile in one body.”
2. Paul wrote that God:

“...made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written, and engraven on stones, came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look stedfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face; which glory was passing away: how shall not rather the ministration of the spirit be with glory? For if the ministration of condemnation hath glory, much rather doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For verily that which hath been made glorious hath not been made glorious in this respect, by reason of the glory that surpasseth. For if that which passeth away was with glory, much more that which remaineth is in glory. Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech, and are not as Moses, who put a veil upon his face, that the children of Israel should not look stedfastly on the end of that which was passing away” (2 Cor 3:6-13).

“For finding fault with them, he saith, ‘Behold, the days come,’ saith the Lord, ‘That I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt; For they continued not in my covenant, And I regarded them not,’ saith the Lord. ‘For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ saith the Lord; ‘I will put my laws into their mind, And on their heart also will I write them: And I will be to them a God, And they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, And every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know me, From the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And their sins will I remember no more.’ In that he saith, A new covenant he hath made the first old. But that which is becoming old and waxeth aged is nigh unto vanishing away” (Heb 8:8-13).

“He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second” (Heb 10:9).

- B. The Law of Moses was added “till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made” (Gal 3:19).
1. “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal 3:16).
 2. The evidence is overwhelming.
 3. Moses’ law was to continue “till” the coming of the Christ.

4. The Law of Moses is an abrogated law.

IV. LESSONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. The first covenant ceased, ended, was done away with, was abolished, was annulled and passed away, but that does **not** mean it is without purpose or continuing merit.
 1. The lessons flowing to us from the Old Testament are important and necessary.
 2. Paul told Timothy,

“But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:14-16).

 - a. What “sacred writings” had Timothy known since babyhood?
 - b. Not the New Testament because it had not been written when Timothy was a child.
 - c. The only sacred writings Timothy knew from his youth were the writings of Moses and the prophets.
 - d. Paul says such writings made Timothy wise unto salvation.
 - e. “Every Scripture” that is God-breathed is profitable.
 - f. The Old Testament is “inspired of God” in the same way the New Testament is the very word of God.
 - g. The Old Testament is therefore profitable.
- B. We must not discount the Old Testament, nor conclude it has no lessons for us.
- C. The Law of Moses, Paul says, “is become our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal 3:24).

V. ETERNAL PRINCIPLES.

- A. The Old Testament contains some principles that are eternal.
1. God said to Adam, "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen 3:17-19).
 2. Jehovah said to mother Eve, "I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen 3:16).
 - a. The principles of earning food by hard labor and bearing children in birth pangs has never been repealed.
 - b. The rule that the physical body of man is made of dust and is to return to dust is eternal.
 - c. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. For in the image of God made he man" (Gen 9:6).
 - d. There are some principles in the Old Testament that have not ceased.
 - e. The Law of Moses, with its priesthood, animal sacrifices and temple services is no more, but ageless rules never end.

VI. TYPES, ANTITYPES AND EXAMPLES.

- A. The space for an extensive examination of Old Testament types and New Testament antitypes is not available.
1. Enough will be given to show what is meant by them.
 2. Adam, the first man, was a **type** of Christ. "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come" (Rom 5:14). "So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that

which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven” (1 Cor 15:45-47).

- B. The Law of Moses was a **type** of the gospel. “For the law having a shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things, can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh” (Heb 10:1).
- C. The unblemished lamb in the Jewish Passover was a type of Jesus who is our Passover. “Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ” (1 Cor 5:7).
- D. The application of types is a fertile field for questionable speculation in the absence of an inspired interpreter.
 - 1. The best rule to follow is to make nothing a type for a New Testament antitype unless a Bible writer affirms the type and the antitype.
 - 2. The same may be said for the examples given in the Old Testament as **shadows** of New Testament substance.
 - a. It is safe to follow the lead of an inspired writer but dangerous to launch out on uncharted territory.
 - b. It is proper to cite the crossing of the Red Sea as the shadow of the substance of baptism (1 Cor 10:2); or the wilderness wanderings as an example of the disciple’s earthly sojourn (1 Cor 10:5-11); and the promised land of Canaan as a shadow of heaven (Heb 4:8-9).
 - c. Bible authors support these illustrations and it is safe to follow their lead, but it is dangerous speculation to find an example, or a shadow where a Bible writer does not lead the way. (Cf. *The Allegorical Method of Clement, Origen, Philo and Swedenborg, et al.*)

VI. PROPHETIC IMAGERY.

- A. Old Testament imagery often explains New Testament application and figurative language in the New Testament is often clarified by the same type language in the Old Testament.

1. The “abomination of desolation” spoken of by the prophet Daniel is identified by the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:15 and Luke 21:20.
 2. The colorful verbiage of the book of Revelation is explained by the light of the books of Ezekiel, Daniel and other Old Testament prophetic writings.
 3. Gog and Magog, in Revelation 20:8, would remain forever a mystery were it not for Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39.
 4. The teaching of Matthew 24:29 about a darkened sun and moon, falling stars and shaking heaven, would be difficult of understanding were it not for such passages as Isaiah 13:1,10; Ezekiel 32:2,7 and Joel 2:28-32.
- B. The vivid words of the prophets concerning the end of a system described in the imagery of darkness, heaven rolled up like a scroll, the stars of the sky falling to the earth and as a fig tree casting her unripe figs, help us to understand the same type language in the New Testament which connotes the fall of an empire and the end of a system.

VIII. THE OLD TESTAMENT EXPLAINS THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, to understand and appreciate the teaching of the books of Romans, Hebrews and Galatians without Old Testament history and background.
1. For instance Paul’s argument in Galatians chapter 4 about Sarah, Isaac, Hagar, Ishmael and the two covenants would be an unsolvable riddle if the Old Testament background was unknown.
 2. Magnificent lessons about the **nature of God, man and sin** would be lost if we did not have a working knowledge of Old Testament history.
 3. The wise sayings of Proverbs and the moving poetry of the Psalms would be lost to us and we would be impoverished if we did not study the Old Testament.
- B. Principles of right conduct and high standards of morality are emphasized in the books of the Old Testament.
1. The general ethics of the Old Testament may be restated in the New Testament, but much of the force of it, reason for it and back-

ground of it would be gone if we did not know the writings of Moses and the prophets.

2. To affirm the abolishment of the Law of Moses and the termination of the form of worship of Adam, Abel and Abraham does not require the conclusion that there is nothing to learn from history.
 3. General rudiments of right conduct are given in the Old Testament that never pass away.
 4. The principles of the sin of substitution in worship taught to us by the example of Cain, that obedience is better than sacrifice taught by Saul's treatment of Amalek; the utter folly of trying to run from God as seen in the life of Jonah and many other basic lessons in proper behavior are in the Old Testament.
- C. "But before faith came, we were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. So that the law is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith is come, we are **no longer under a tutor**. For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal 3:23-27).

CHAPTER XXVI THE NEW TESTAMENT IS THE PATTERN FOR MEN TODAY

INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Hebrew epistle begins with these words: “God having of old times spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds” (Heb 1:1-2).
- B. This passage affirms:
 - 1. That God is,
 - 2. That God has spoken and
 - 3. That He has spoken unto us in His Son.
- C. It is significant God has seen fit to communicate with men through **speaking** – words are signs of ideas – and God has revealed Himself to us “not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth” (1 Cor 2:13).
- D. Because the world in its wisdom knew not God, it pleased God through “the foolishness of the preaching” or “the things preached” (footnote, ASV) to save them that believe (1 Cor 1:21).
- E. Therefore, God has not been made known through human wisdom, but **by revelation**.

I. **WHAT THE PATTERN IS NOT.**

- A. The Old Testament is not the specific pattern for men today.
 - 1. The Old Testament is inspired of God (2 Tim 3:16-17) and it is necessary for our learning and our admonition (Rom 15:4; 1 Cor 10:11), but it was designed as the tutor to bring us unto Christ that we might be justified by faith.
 - 2. “But after that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Gal 3: 24-25)
- B. There is a difference between the law and the gospel.

1. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16), but those who would be justified by the law are fallen from grace (Gal 5:4).
 2. Therefore, the animal sacrifices, Sabbath observance, instrumental music and other practices under the law do not constitute the pattern for us today.
- C. We are not guided by human feelings or experiences.
1. Heavy emphasis is being laid today upon the value of experience.
 2. Some believe experience is the way to verify religious truth.
 3. Such a view rejects the concept of an objective standard of truth such as the Bible because all truth, in this view, comes from within.
 - a. Much of the emotionalism which now characterizes religious thinking, such as the claims for tongue speaking, is attributable to this emphasis upon feelings and experiences.
 - b. It should be obvious, however, feelings alone cannot verify a religious experience as truth.
 - c. We merely act with feelings to what we **believe** is true; the feelings themselves do not determine whether any matter is, or is not, true.
 4. When the brethren of Joseph brought the coat of many colors to their father, Jacob fully believed Joseph was dead – “an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces” (Gen 37:33).
 - a. He mourned “for his son many days,” and he “refused to be comforted.”
 - b. His feelings were the same as though Joseph had really been dead; his grief could not have been more genuine if Joseph had actually been torn by an evil beast and devoured.
 - c. But, in fact, Joseph was **not dead at all** but had been sold into slavery by his brethren!

- d. The feelings of Jacob could not ascertain what was true; his feelings merely reacted upon what he **believed** was true.
 - e. So today if one says he is saved because he “feels” he is saved, his feelings are simply the reaction to his belief that he is saved, but they do not of themselves prove whether he is saved or not!
 - f. Thus we see the need of an objective standard beyond our own feelings and experiences.
- D. The pattern is not determined by the thinking of the majority.
- 1. We are told many good people of equal intelligence and sincerity do not agree, therefore we cannot insist one way is right to the exclusion of other views.
 - 2. Let us remember, however, it was the thinking of the majority which crucified Jesus and, further, Paul was both intelligent and sincere when he persecuted the church in all good conscience (Acts 23:1).
 - 3. Nevertheless he said he was “a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious,” although he did it ignorantly in unbelief (1 Tim 1:13).

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN.

- A. First: There is a pattern.
- 1. God has not left us at sea without a rudder.
 - 2. The New Testament was not merely “human correspondence between, or among, various human beings.”
 - 3. Paul said, “If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord” (1 Cor 14:37).
 - 4. It has been suggested the New Testament writers never perceived or intended that their writings would become a guide for men throughout succeeding generations, but the statement of Paul contradicts that assertion.
 - a. He affirmed the things which he wrote “are the commandment of the Lord.”

- b. He also stated, “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema...For I make known to you, brethren, as touching the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal 1:8,11-12).
 - c. It is clear Paul and the other inspired writers did not consider what they wrote mere human correspondence, but they claimed it was God-given and confirmed by miracles (2 Cor 12:12).
- B. Second: The pattern is God-given.
 - 1. The claims of the New Testament writers demonstrate they did not regard their letters simply as human correspondence.
 - 2. Paul declared every Scripture is “inspired of God” (2 Tim 3:16-17).
 - 3. Peter announced, “men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21).
 - 4. Peter also said, “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet 1:16).
 - 5. The New Testament writers were not only eyewitnesses of his majesty, but they confirmed their message by miraculous power from the Holy Spirit.
 - a. As Nicodemus said to Jesus, “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him” (Jn 3:2).
 - b. Paul said, “our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit” (1 Thess 1:5).
 - c. When Paul wanted to challenge the false teachers in the church at Corinth he said, “But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will; and I will know, not the word of them that are puffed up, but the power” (1 Cor 4:16).

- d. The apostle could confirm his message unto them by miraculous power, but he knew the false teachers were as clouds without rain.
- C. Third: The New Testament pattern is authoritative and final.
- 1. In writing to the church at Thessalonica Paul plainly pointed to the time when Christ shall come “in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus” (2 Thess 1:7-9).
 - 2. The gospel of Christ is truly not a matter with which to trifle.
 - a. Jesus became the author of eternal salvation unto all them “that obey him” (Heb 5:9).
 - b. We shall not escape if we neglect so great a salvation (Heb 2:3).
 - c. The faith has been “once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).
 - d. Finally, it is by the gospel of Christ that we shall someday be judged (Rom 2:16).
 - 3. The New Testament writers would scarcely have tied their message to the great day of judgment had they not realized and contended the New Testament is the pattern for men throughout this dispensation.
 - 4. “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my saying, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jn 12:48).

CHAPTER XXVII

HOW TO DO WORD STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

INTRODUCTION.

- A. The basic building blocks of the Bible are words.
 - 1. They are the fundamental units of which it is composed.
 - 2. The level of one's skill in Bible study will be partly determined by one's capability to work with individual words.
 - 3. The greater interest a Christian has in word study the greater will be his interest in Bible study.

- B. Word study can serve two functions.
 - 1. First, by arriving at a full precise definition of a particular word it will be possible to come to a better understanding of any passage where it occurs.
 - 2. Second, the words of the Bible symbolize the idea or subjects of the Bible.
 - 3. Therefore, by studying each occurrence of a particular word in the New Testament it will be possible to trace the biblical teaching on that subject or idea.

- C. It is almost impossible to do detailed and comprehensive word study without the proper tools, i.e., books.
 - 1. Good books for Bible study are frequently expensive.
 - 2. But, in our affluent society, how many Christians spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars on hunting, fishing, boats, extra vehicles, some other hobby or recreation?
 - a. These things have no bearing on the knowledge of God.
 - (1) They may detract from it.
 - (2) Most such things will wear out in a few years.
 - (3) But properly bound Bible study books, if not abused, should last a lifetime.

- (4) They need little or no maintenance.
- (5) They may help reveal a soul saving truth.
- (6) Every Christian should buy some basic Bible study tools and then increase his library as his budget allows.

I. IN DEFINING A WORD THE BIBLE STUDENT MUST REMEMBER SOME BASIC FACTS.

- A. First, any single word may have two or more distinct meanings.
 - 1. This is true of Greek as well as English.
 - 2. The English word “grace” has ten or more definitions in the English dictionary.
 - 3. The Greek word *angellos* from which we get “angel” may have reference to either a supernatural being or a human messenger.
 - 4. *Arche* may mean “beginning,” “source” or “ruler”.
 - 5. Arndt-Gingrich’s Greek lexicon lists three meanings for *ouranos* (heaven) and eight meanings for *pneuma* (spirit).
 - 6. Strange conclusions indeed would be forthcoming if a student assumed the same word always means the same thing.
- B. Second, words often have connotations as well as denotations.
 - 1. Each word has its overtones or its special flavor.
 - 2. A full definition would seek to convey these connotations.
- C. Consulting a dictionary would usually be a first step in defining a word.
 - 1. However, as a student looks at an English word in the New Testament, he must remember that behind it lies Greek.
 - 2. It is his job to define with precision the Greek.
 - a. How often has someone turned to the English dictionary for a definition of the word “baptize” and found “sprinkle, pour or immerse?”

- b. Fortunately it is not necessary to depend on an English dictionary.
 - c. There are Greek dictionaries and other Greek tools available which are especially prepared for English-only students. Other Greek tools, though not specially so designed, can still be used.
- D. The famous *Greek-English Lexicon* by Thayer has been published by Baker Book House with each word numbered to correspond to the numbering system in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*.
- E. The unequalled *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* by Arndt and Gingrich can also be used by the English-only student.
 - 1. All he needs is *An Index to the Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich Greek Lexicon* by John R. Alsop.
 - 2. Following the instructions given in the introduction the student can find the page, page quadrant and even the section and subsection where the word definition is given.
- F. In reading the definitions the student not knowing the Greek will have to ignore Greek forms.
 - 1. But the definitions in these lexicons are given in English.
 - 2. Students should obtain both of these lexicons.
 - 3. If he knows Greek the student will also want to buy Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* and Moulton and Milligan's *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*.
 - 4. Also under the heading of dictionaries is W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* which can be used by anyone.
 - 5. Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* is less accessible to the English-only student.
 - a. However, if the abridged volume is purchased it can yield much information on word definition for the student not acquainted with the Greek.

- b. Every student of Greek who is interested in word study should buy this volume.
- G. Other word tools are available. Occasionally useful are A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament* and M. R. Vincent's *Word Studies in the New Testament*.
- H. Kenneth Wuest's *Wuest's Word Studies* is recommended by many.
- I. Of help, if he happens to discuss a particular word, is R. C. Trench's *Synonyms of the New Testament*.
- J. Of real interest is William Barclay's *New Testament Words*, but again he discusses only a limited number. In some editions of this book Barclay gives an index to the word discussions in his *Daily Study Bible*.

II. ONE OF THE MOST VALUABLE TECHNIQUES FOR WORD DEFINITION IS THE USE OF VARIOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS.

- A. Compare the translations as they deal with the same word.
- B. Determine if the translators are giving a synonymous meaning to the word or a different meaning.
- C. Be alert to subtle shades of meaning and connotation.
- D. If the translators differ in expressing the meaning of a word the student will have to determine which meaning is correct.
 - 1. This will be decided by observing context and parallel passages.
 - 2. Often the different words used will not be opposed in meaning, but will simply be expressing the richness of the Greek original.
 - 3. As an example, observe the following translations of *semnos* in 1 Timothy 3:8, "grave" (KJV), "serious" (RSV), "dignity" (NASB), "worthy of respect" (NIV), "high principle" (NEB), "good character" (TEV) and "honorable" (Berkley).
 - 4. Without knowing a word of Greek the student has access to seven scholarly opinions on the meaning of *semnos*.
 - 5. He is limited only by the number of versions available to him.
 - 6. Clearly *semnos* is a complex word with various connotations.

7. The multiple translations help the student to get the flavor and the overtones of the word.
8. It is a mistake to assume every Greek word has its exact counterpart in English.
9. It will often take several English words to guide one into the central thought of a New Testament word.

III. SOME WORD BOOKS WILL BE OF VALUE IN POINTING OUT AND ORGANIZING THE DOCTRINAL CONNECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF A WORD AS IT IS FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. Among works already mentioned, most helpful for this are Kittel's *Dictionary* and Barclay's *New Testament Words*.
- B. Also helpful are J. J. VonAllmen's *A Companion to the Bible* and Alan Richardson's *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*.
- C. Without listing them, Bible encyclopedias, especially the larger ones, will discuss most important Bible words.
- D. Although all of these tools can be used to great advantage the most important of all the word study tools is the concordance.

IV. The Concordance.

- A. The basic word study aid for the New Testament is the concordance.
 1. It is, in fact, the basic tool of all Bible study.
 2. In a large book an index is essential if one is to easily locate and study particular ideas or themes.
 3. The Bible is a very large book, but a complete concordance of its words is a very good index of its ideas and themes.
- B. The versions, lexicons and other word books are helpful in arriving at the definition of a particular word.
 1. However, a concordance is even more valuable.
 2. This is true because word meaning is always and everywhere determined by usage.

- a. A concordance is a guide to word usage.
 - b. The concordance will allow a student to make his own informed definition.
 - c. It frees him from total reliance upon the studies of other men.
- C. The proper concordance for word definition in the New Testament is a Greek concordance.
- 1. One would be hard pressed to come up with a precise definition of the word “bless” using an English concordance.
 - 2. About half the English occurrences represent one Greek word and the other occurrences a different and distinct Greek word.
 - a. The most useful tool for the student not knowing Greek in this case is G. B. Wigram’s *The Englishman’s Greek Concordance*.
 - b. The student of Greek can use the *Concordance to the Greek Testament* by Moulton and Geden.
 - c. In order to define a word with a concordance every occurrence of the word must be considered.
 - d. The student must observe how the word is used.
 - e. He must notice whether synonyms of the word occur in the context.
 - (1) The words “filthiness,” “silly talk,” and “levity” in Ephesians 5:4 are used not because they are different, but because they are similar.
 - (2) Together they bring out the thing Paul is forbidding.
 - (3) That is, “silly talk” and “levity” are both better understood in connection with “filthiness.”
 - f. Antonyms in the context are also useful for exposing the meaning of a word.

- g. For example, “holiness” in 2 Corinthians 7:1 is better understood when it is seen as contrasted with the earlier phrase in the verse, “filthiness of the flesh and spirit.”
- D. If a student reads each passage as though the word under study were missing he may discover some special shade of meaning.
1. He should ask what similar word, or phrase, he can put in its place which retains the sense of the whole sentence and its consistency with the context.
 2. He should test his hypothesis in other passages.
 3. After examination of several passages the usage of a word should usually point toward a clear definition.
- E. A picture of the doctrinal connections of a word can also be constructed by means of a concordance.
1. Through examining the passages containing the word “hope” it would be possible to list the objects of hope such as salvation (1 Thess 5:8), the coming of the Lord (Titus 2:13), the resurrection (Acts 26:6-8), life eternal (Titus 3:7), sharing God’s glory (Rom 5:2) and righteousness (Gal 5:5). Further revealed would be the fruits of hope in a Christian’s life such as steadfastness (1 Thess 5:7-8) and joy (1 Thess 4:13; Rom 12:12). The basis of hope could be identified as Christ and His resurrection (Col 1:27; 1 Tim 1:1; 1 Thess 4:13-14).
 2. A technique for organizing the different connections of a New Testament word is the construction of a chart.
 3. The following chart lists all the occurrences of the word *gehenna* (hell).
 - a. The chart is constructed by listing in the horizontal column the main words in each verse which are associated with *gehenna*.
 - b. When they repeat or a similar idea repeats in other verses it is noted in the same vertical column.
 - c. As is evident from the chart a word will often occur only once.

- d. The ideas that repeat are obviously key ideas to associate with the word under study.

THE GREEK WORD “HELL” OR “GEHENNA”

| | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Mt 5:22 | FIRE | | | |
| Mt 5:29 | CAST INTO | WHOLE BODY | OFFEND | |
| Mt 5:30 | CAST INTO | WHOLE BODY | | |
| Mt 10:28 | | SOUL AND BODY | FEAR: DESTROY | |
| Mt 18:9 | CAST INTO FIRE | | LIFE | |
| Mt 23:15 | | | CHILD OF | |
| Mt 23:33 | JUDGMENT ESCAPE | | | |
| Mk 9:43 | FIRE | LIFE | UNQUENCH- ABLE | |
| Mk 9:45-46 | CAST INTO | | LIFE | |
| Mk 9:47-48 | CAST INTO FIRE | | | KINGDOM WORM |
| Lk 12:5 | CAST INTO | | FEAR | |
| Jas 3:6 | FIRE | | | |

From this chart several things seem clear about *gehenna*:

1. *Gehenna* is spoken of as a place of fire.
2. People will not go there willingly, but will be cast into it.
3. It is a place of ruin of the whole person.
4. It is a place to be feared.
5. Sin will send one there.
6. The opposite of *gehenna* is eternal life or the kingdom of God.

F. The chart helps to get the emphasis.

1. It helps avoid overlooking important details.

2. The chart will often help make clear what the grammar leaves ambiguous.
 3. It is best not to force the text to answer some question, but merely to speak; however, a variation on the chart places at the top of the vertical columns such headings as “who”, “when”, “where”, “how” or some other question of interest regarding the word.
- G. True exegesis of the New Testament includes the study of such matters as backgrounds, contexts, grammar, parallels. This must not be limited to word study alone.
1. However, practice and experience in using the various word tools and techniques will enable the Bible student to make fine distinctions, see subtle emphasis, avoid definition errors and do other things with words and the text that would otherwise be impossible for him.
 2. No effort or expense should be spared in seeking to understand the words of the New Testament because “they are spirit, and they are life” (Jn 6:63).

CHAPTER XXVIII KNOW THE CANONICAL, BOOK AND SECTIONAL CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION.

- A. If there is a God and if He has the attributes of God described in the Bible, then God is capable of communicating to mankind and is capable of making His communication understandable by mankind.
- B. Since Jehovah has communicated to mankind, it is incumbent upon us to diligently seek Him and His teachings through the Bible!
- C. I will be dealing with the subject of context and, more specifically, the canonical, book and sectional contexts.

I. CANONICAL CONTEXT.

- A. The word “canon” in the first century meant a “measuring rod” or “reed” and later came to be used in a technical sense.
 - 1. In this technical sense it is a “standard” or “rule.”
 - 2. It also carries the idea of a list or index, so when it is applied to the Scriptures it refers to that list of books which is accepted as having divine authorship and authority.
- B. The first observation we make when we look at this list of Scripture is there is an Old and a New Testament.
 - 1. This is where we need to heed Paul’s admonition to the young man Timothy, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15).
 - 2. In order to do this we must answer certain questions – who is doing the writing (who is the human writer)? – who is it written to? – what subjects are discussed? – what questions are answered or raised? – what is the geographical setting of the book?
 - 3. With these questions, and others like them, we can now proceed to look at each testament.
- C. The Old Testament.

1. This section of Scripture tells of the creation of the world, the creation of man, his fall into sin and God's working out of His promise to bring His Savior into the world.
2. This is done by following the descent of man from Adam through Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David.
3. God Himself closed the Old Testament by being silent for 400 years, not speaking to any man either directly or through visions or dreams.
4. No more Scripture is written in the Hebrew language.
5. The Law of Moses was given to the Jews, nobody else (Ex 31:13,17; Deut 5; Neh 9:13-14, etc.).
 - a. Yet the Old Testament focuses on these people because God had promised to bless all mankind through them (Gen 12:3; Gal 3:8).
 - b. They were the keepers of the Oracles of God (Scripture) and were the people through whom the Messiah came.
 - c. The Law was a tutor to bring the Jewish nation, and any Gentiles who submitted themselves to it, to Christ (Gal 3:24).
6. But now the Messiah (Christ) has come and fulfilled that law (Col 2:14) taking it out of the way by nailing it to His cross.
 - a. So, what good is the Old Testament to us today?
 - b. It is written for our admonition (1 Cor 10:11) and is good to make us wise for salvation (2 Tim 3:15).
 - c. In other words, we can look back into its pages and see God's providential working out of His promise to bless the world through His Christ (Gal 3:16-19).
 - d. We see promises and prophecies issued and fulfilled in those times which give us confidence in the fulfillment of prophecies recorded in the New Testament as well as confidence God will still fulfill His promises.
7. Along with this we learn of God's attributes and attitudes.

- a. Understanding God's basic attitude toward worship, intoxication, hypocrisy and a host of other subjects helps us to have a clearer understanding of His eternal principles which have not changed in this age.
 - b. However, there is a very serious caution to be given at this point – never, never attempt to prove a specific New Testament doctrine by the Old Testament!
 - c. We can know basic principles or attributes of God by going to the Old Testament, but that, in itself, proves principles only and does not bind specific practices or specific commands on us today.
8. It should also be pointed out that all of the rules of interpretation (hermeneutics) applying to the New Testament apply to the Old Testament as well.

D. The New Testament.

- 1. God did not leave man without law or direction when His Son fulfilled the Law and took it out of the way.
- 2. We are now, in this age, to hear Him, not the Law and the Prophets of the Old Covenant (Mt 17:5; Heb 1:1-2).
 - a. Jesus Himself verified this when He declared that, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."
 - b. Now we can clearly understand that both of the old economies, Jewish and Gentile, are done away.
 - c. It is only after this has been clearly settled that we can proceed to look at a particular writing, whether it be a verse, section or an entire book.

II. BOOK CONTEXT.

A. The book itself.

- 1. It makes no difference as to what size the passage when it comes to the proper procedure in interpretation.

2. Regardless of whether it is a single verse, a paragraph, an argument, a section or chapter, or even a whole book you are dealing with, you must begin with the entire book itself.
- B. Inspect the book: The very first thing you need to do is read the entire book quickly, straight through without stopping.
1. Do not try to understand every word or phrase on this first reading.
 2. Your object here is to become acquainted with it as a whole, as if it were a letter you received in today's mail.
 - a. Do you normally pick certain passages, in advance, out of your letters to analyze?
 - b. Of course not!
 - c. You read it in its entirety first in order to know what the entire message was.
 - d. Treat the books of the Bible in the same way.
 3. As you make this first reading there are questions you should be asking – what is the book about **as a whole**? – what is being **said in detail** and how? – does the **writer** identify himself? – his **audience**?
 - a. Add your own questions to this list and keep them in mind as you are reading.
 - b. Make markings in the book!!
- C. Analyze the book: What is the book (epistle) about?
1. You have already read the book through once; now classify it according to kind and subject matter: is it **history, poetry, prophecy, biography, law, praise** or perhaps a **combination** of these?
 2. Write, in your own words, what the book is about.
 - a. Do this in the least possible words.
 - b. The next step is to **outline it** including all of its divisions.
 3. You will have to make a decision as to what pattern you will use.

- a. For instance, you may outline by argument or chronology or any other natural pattern you recognize.
 - b. Genesis is a good example; outlines by “beginnings” or “major characters” are popular.
 - c. Beware, do not follow the chapter and verse divisions! They are not a part of the original autographs but were added centuries later.
 - d. Many times these divisions are arbitrary and can hide the true structure (outline) of the book.
4. Define, separately from your outline, the **problem** or problems the writer has tried to solve.
- D. Interpret its contents: I will only give suggestions here.
- 1. You must come to “terms” with the writer by interpreting his **key words**.
 - 2. These may be words that are repeated several times in the book or placed in a setting that is critical to the understanding of his entire work.
 - 3. Grasp the writer’s **leading propositions** by dealing with his most important **sentences**.
 - a. Again, you should already know his arguments and know how they fit into the flow of his main proposition.
 - b. Determine how he has solved each problem.
 - 4. Has the writer told us his purpose in writing?
 - a. Sometimes he has, and other times we must search for it.
 - b. A classic example of the author’s declaration is in John 20:31, “...These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that believing you may have life in his name,” or Ecclesiastes 12:13, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.”

- c. We must interpret the entire book keeping his stated purpose in mind.
 - 5. If the writer's reason for writing is obscure to us, the parts, which are vitally related to it, and to each other, cannot be clear to us either!
 - a. Our obligation is to find the thread of thought which runs, like a life-giving stream, through every part of the book.
 - b. The theme, whether stated or not, together with all of the segments within a book, must also be recognized as an unfolding of the mind of the true author, God!
- E. Other books by the same writer.
- 1. Before going into more detail with our present book we need to step back and see what else this writer has written.
 - 2. If he has other writings, has he addressed any of the same themes or problems that he has in the present work we are interpreting?
 - 3. Scripture modifies Scripture.
- F. Books by other writers.
- 1. We need to know the content of other books by other writers containing passages dealing with the same theme as in the book we are interpreting.
 - 2. The other writers' passages may deal with similar facts, subjects or doctrines as our passage(s) though their words, phrases and clauses may be different.
 - 3. Scripture modifies Scripture.
 - 4. When we study any reference or parallel from another book of the Bible we must understand the purpose of the other book and the way the writer unfolds his thought.
 - 5. Only after we have done this can we assess the value of that passage in shedding light on our current study.
 - 6. When studying these other passages we will generally discover that one passage is more explicit or definite than the other.

7. Clinton Lockhart addressed this by saying:

“In such cases the indefinite passage will generally be the one to be interpreted; and the explicit passage will furnish the key to the interpretation. If they relate to the same thing and are not clearly contradictory, any light from one passage will be useful in understanding the other” (Lockhart, p. 147).

8. Again, Lockhart comes to the point:

“Among the writers of the Bible there is not one whose veracity can be assailed. So far as these writers are known to us, they were men of strict moral character, ...in no case should a forced or unreasonable method of reconciling discrepancies be adopted. But, logically, if the truthfulness of such records be questioned, the assailant is required to prove that reconciliation is impossible; while the defender of their credit needs not to prove any particular explanation correct, but simply show that harmony is possible” (*Ibid.*, p. 143).

- a. We must always remember to let the light of the entire Bible shine on a verse in order to get its meaning (exegesis).
- b. To reverse this process and interpret the entire Bible by means of one verse (eisegesis) is to violate the rules of interpretation!
- c. Many have violated the Scripture this way to their own destruction (2 Pet 3:15-16).

III. SECTIONAL CONTEXT.

- A. What we are talking about here is identifying segments for study.
 1. A section of Scripture covering a subject may be a very short (a few verses) or it could be a whole chapter, a series of chapters or the entire book.
 2. In any case it should be handled as a unit.
- B. The following general breakdown is suggested for 1 Corinthians:

Salutation: 1:1-9

Information from Chloe: 1:10-6:20

Information from the church's letter: 7:1-16:9
Conclusion: 16:10-24.

C. Chapter section.

1. A segment for study is about the length of an average chapter.
2. And, if it is a true unit of study, it is intended to communicate **one central truth**.
3. With that in mind let's break down the larger section we are working with.
4. The following is further suggested:

Party strife—1:10-3:23

Defense of his ministry—4:1-21

Dealing with sin in the camp—5:1-13

Dealing with lawsuits—6:1-11

Dealing with fornication—6:12-20

- a. Did you notice the breakdowns did not follow our chapter designations in every case?
 - b. Another caution is in order here. Do not impose our preconceived ideas on any text.
 - c. Do not force your outlining to **"fit"** what you believe!
 - d. When this happens at any stage of interpretation it is called "proof-texting."
 - e. Proof-texting is laziness, dishonest and damning.
5. What I have said is this – find the Holy Spirit's flow of thought through the writer and identify the specific subjects he is dealing with and see how it fits into the theme of the entire book.

D. Paragraph section.

1. To find a paragraph section can be confusing because of the uniform way in which the KJV makes every verse a paragraph.
2. When we enter this portion of our work, we need to have beside us one or more of the following: ASV, NKJV, NAS, *The Textus Receptus*

tus (underlying the KJV) or *The Greek N.T.* edited by Aland, Black, Martini, Metzger and Wikgren.

3. These show paragraphs by indentation, the verse number in bold print or both.
 4. The ASV also indicated major subject changes with a double space between verses or chapters.
- E. The principle feature of a paragraph is a **unifying theme**.
1. These themes are often indicated at the beginning of the paragraph by rhetorical questions; sudden changes in subject matter; a vocative form of address; a repeated term, phrase, clause or sentence.
 2. Or, sometimes, it can be identified by a change in time or location.
 3. It must be remembered, also, a paragraph may be a part of an argument or line of thinking developed throughout the whole section or book.
 4. Now look at your paragraphs again.
 - a. What is each one trying to say?
 - b. Remember, the paragraph is used to express or develop a **single idea**.
 - c. With very few exceptions it will deal with a single topic or a series of events relating to one person in the same location and time setting.
 - d. You must find out how the propositions in the paragraphs are related to each other and how they support the section and the book they are contained in.

CONCLUSION.

- A. The process of interpretation (exegesis) we have discussed is to begin with the canonical context, go to the book context and then move on to the sectional context.
- B. This process will continue down through the sentence into the phrases and ultimately to the individual words.

- C. Having done this we reverse our trail and work our way back out to the canonical context making sure along the way we are not violating any contexts.
- D. Now, reread the whole book again, in one setting, after all the work is done!
- E. Be sure all your work fits smoothly together and you have no obvious omissions or errors.

CHAPTER XXIX

KNOW THE IMMEDIATE AND REMOTE CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION.

- A. There is no easier way to mistake preference and prejudice for what the Bible teaches than to refuse to be aware of, and evaluate, our procedure for interpreting the Bible.
- B. Proper Bible interpretation is not something mysterious and beyond our ability to use with confidence.

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT IN BIBLE INTERPRETATION.

- A. Surely the most “common sense” principle of Bible interpretation is the principle of using the context of a Bible statement to ascertain the meaning of that statement.
 - 1. And, yet, it is a principle often neglected.
 - 2. It is not enough that we know what the words **mean** in terms of a dictionary definition.
 - 3. We must determine what **this** author means by the word in this sentence.
 - a. You do not know what an author means by a word until he uses it in a sentence.
 - b. Often a word can have multiple meanings, even though there is usually a unifying factor present in each of them.
- B. Never neglect this principle: the context must control!
 - 1. The only way we will ever know what is meant by a statement in Scripture is by examining the context carefully, methodically, logically and exhaustively.
 - 2. Even though the study of grammar and individual words is a prerequisite in determining an intended meaning, the true meaning can be gained only by studying the words, phrases, verses or sections in their settings and in relation to what comes before and what follows. This is called the context principle.

3. Considerable violence is done to the intended meaning of a writer or speaker by quoting his words out of their original context.
- C. Context is the key to proper Bible interpretation.
1. First, try to determine whether the word has one or many meanings.
 2. If it has many, try to see how they are related.
 3. Finally, note the places where the word is used in one sense or another and see if the context gives you any clue to the reason for the shift in meaning.
 - a. This will enable you to follow the word in its change of meanings with the same flexibility that characterizes the author's usage.
 - b. You have to discover the meaning of a word you do not understand by using the meanings of all the other words in the context that you do understand.
 4. Not only must we look to the context for the meaning of words, it is important to realize the way they are used is what gives them their meaning.
 - a. Words do not derive their meanings from the dictionary or lexicon.
 - b. On the contrary, the lexicographers have deduced their meanings from the way the best native speakers and writers have used those words.
 - c. Usage determines meaning.
 - d. Usage is context.
 5. Context is the key to the proper interpretation of not only words, but of statements, of paragraphs or sections, of the various books of the Bible and of the Bible itself.

II. THE PROCESS OF BIBLE INTERPRETATION.

- A. The process begins by looking at an explicit statement.

1. We must establish what the words of the Greek or Hebrew text are and we must examine what variations exist in manuscripts and determine by the best evidence the original wording of the statement.
 2. This has largely been done for us in the printed texts of Hebrew and Greek, but it is sometimes useful to examine the variations.
 3. These are generally so minor in nature they can often be disregarded.
 - a. We must then determine by lexicon and grammar the best translation into English (or whatever our native tongue may be, since few of us are able to work the whole way in the original language).
 - b. If we are unable to work with the original text at all, we should not despair.
 - c. Most of the benefit of careful Bible study can still be gleaned by working from a good translation or preferably several good translations.
 - d. We might use a good interlinear literal translation along with the New King James, NASV (updated) and ESV.
- B. Having carefully examined the meaning of the explicit statement itself, we must look at the **immediate context**.
1. This means the verses, or perhaps paragraphs, immediately before and immediately after the explicit statement we are studying.
 2. The next step is to examine the **remote context**.
 - a. This includes a look at the entire section of the book in which the statement is found.
 - b. It means we must examine the topic of the statement as it is treated in the entire book in which it is found, in other books written by the same writer and how the other writers of the Bible have treated the same subject.
 - c. In other words, the remote context is everything else the Bible has to say on the subject.

3. We must not neglect the **historical** and **cultural** context in which the statement was written.
- C. Having gathered all of this evidence, we must then **reason about it correctly**.
1. Every time we draw a conclusion, whether intermediate or final, whether tentative or permanent, we have **used or misused reason**.
 - a. Our evidence may be good.
 - b. It may be exhaustive.
 - c. But if we put it together wrong our conclusions will be false.
 - d. All of us have the ability to reason well, and we often do it well, although informally.
 - e. But the more we know about logic, formal and informal, the surer our conclusions will be and the greater our ability to explain and defend them.
- D. Having determined what the explicit statement of Scripture **says**, along with having determined by examination of immediate, remote and historical/cultural context – and by correct reasoning – what the explicit statement **means**, we are ready to examine what the explicit statement **implies**.
1. What are we able to properly deduce from the statement?
 2. What does it teach us?
 3. What applications and modifications should we make in our belief, or conduct, in light of our Bible study?
 - a. We must not neglect this step.
 - b. After all our purpose in Bible study is not merely intellectual, but spiritual.

III. THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT.

- A. Remember, these are the verses just before and just after the statement, or verse, under consideration.

1. Do not be misled by chapter divisions.
 2. They are man-made and although often convenient, can be misleading.
 3. For instance, many have concluded from Romans 12:19-21, “Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire unto his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” and similar statements in the Sermon on the Mount, that such things as capital punishment, serving as a policeman, or as a soldier were prohibited.
 - a. They should not have stopped at the division of Romans 12 from Romans 13.
 - b. In the next four verses we learn the ruler or government serves as the minister of God in executing vengeance against evildoers and bears not the sword in vain.
 - c. Yes, vengeance belongs to God, but the government is God’s agent in executing His physical vengeance in this life.
 - d. There is no sin involved in being a minister of God.
 - e. There is a difference between personal vengeance and the vengeance of the state against evildoers (which is in accord with God’s will).
- B. The immediate context serves to show in Acts 8 how widely the spiritual gifts were distributed by Peter and John upon the Samaritans.
1. Follow the emphasized pronouns:

“But when **they** believed Philip preaching the good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **they** were baptized, both men and women. And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed. Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto **them** Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for **them**, that **they** might receive the Ho-

ly Spirit; for as yet it was fallen upon none of **them**: only **they** had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on **them**, and **they** received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:12-17 ASV).

2. Can anyone conclude other than that all those of Samaria who had been baptized received the gifts of the Spirit?
- C. The careful consideration of the immediate context is the most powerful tool the Bible student has, and it is one of the easiest to use.
1. It is not difficult to determine the proper immediate context and how it bears on the individual statement.
 2. Although it is not difficult to determine the immediate context, the **proper use of it** requires patience, persistence and close examination.

IV. THE REMOTE CONTEXT.

- A. The remote context is, first of all, the **rest of the book** in which the statement being studied is found.
1. You should read and reread and reread again the entire book.
 2. There is no better way to get an overview of the purpose, plan and theme of the book.
 3. There is no better way to become familiar with the writer’s vocabulary and style of argumentation.
 4. Try to follow the line of thought all the way through the book.
 5. If there are digressions, or asides, note where they begin and end and how they fit the writer’s purpose.
 6. Note the words and topics that recur.
 7. You might even try to outline the book.
 8. Note how and where the statement in its context fits into the book.
 9. Be on the lookout for the author’s interpretation of his own explicit statements.

- B. The remote context also includes all the books written by the same writer.
- C. Finally, the remote context means everything the entire Bible has to say on the subject.
 - 1. One cannot know the exact teaching of the Bible on a subject until one has examined everything the Bible has to say about it.
 - 2. This is many times a lengthy process, but it should be an exciting journey of discovery and insight into the 66 canonical books.
 - 3. Understanding the Bible is not a task of a few hours but of a lifetime.
- D. It is invaluable in connecting all the Bible has to say on a subject to have a good general knowledge of the Bible.
 - 1. The more we know and are able to remember, and use, about the Bible, the easier our task will be.
 - 2. Sometimes there are parallel passages in Scripture, especially in the gospel records, that will shed light on the passage under consideration.
 - a. For instance Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14 both speak of the “abomination of desolation standing in the holy place” (or where he ought not) as the prime sign of the destruction of Jerusalem.
 - b. Matthew adds that it was spoken of by Daniel.
 - c. When we turn to Daniel 9:27 it is still not entirely clear what is meant.
 - d. But when we turn to the parallel passage in Luke we learn that the abomination of desolation was “Jerusalem compassed with armies” (Lk 21:20).
- E. In determining what the Bible has to say on a subject, we must remember many words have various meanings, and, in fact, may be used in various ways even in the same context.
 - 1. For example “death” is a word that can be very confusing because it is used in many different ways.

2. In a brief passage between Colossians 2:12 and 3:5 the word is used in four different ways.
 3. It refers (1) to the physical death of Christ; (2) to the fact that people are “dead” before they become Christians; (3) to people “dying” as they become Christians; and (4) to the idea that those who have “died” are now to “put the death” the deeds of the body.
 4. And that is just a beginning.
- F. The proper use of various concordances can help us discover where various topics are found in Scripture.
1. *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* contains every word in the King James Version and where to find it.
 2. It also identifies from what Greek or Hebrew word it was translated.
 3. *The Englishman’s Greek Concordance* and *The Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance* do the reverse.
 - a. They identify the Greek and Hebrew words used in Scripture, where they are found and the English words used to translate them.
 - b. By looking up the various passages containing the word or subject under consideration, we are generally able to discover every passage in the Bible bearing on a particular topic.
 - c. By discovering what is taught in those passages, and how it complements what is taught elsewhere, we come to a clear understanding of that Bible subject or doctrine.
 4. These concordances will also help us identify different words in the original languages translated by the same English word and, therefore, not apparent by reading our English Bibles.
 - a. For instance in John 21:15-19 the word “new” is used to translate two different Greek words that have similar but distinct meanings.
 - b. The words **neos** and **kainos** are both translated “new.”
 - c. **Neos** means “brand new, never having existed before.”

- d. Whereas, **kainos** means a new aspect to something.
- e. Therefore, when Christ said, “A new commandment I give to you” in John 13:34, **kainos** was used.
- f. It was not a brand new commandment, but a new aspect of one already given.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Not only is the guideline of context the most obvious and simplest of the guidelines but, when violated, its consequences are far reaching.
- B. That is because the person who carelessly ignores the context when preparing a sermon or lesson plan has disobeyed the injunction: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15).

CHAPTER XXX PARADOX

- A. Our Lord said many unusual things. This is to be expected if it is true that He is deity incarnate – God in the flesh as the Bible teaches – but still, some of His sayings puzzle us at times.
- B. Among other things He said:
- “But many that are first shall be last; and the last first” (Mk 10:31; Mt19:30; cf. Lk 13:30; Mt 20:16); “Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God” (Lk 9:60); “For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s sake shall save it” (Mk 8:35); “for he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath” (Mk 4:25; Mt 13:12 *et al*).
- C. Among others in the Bible the apostle Paul says similar things like:
- “By glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor 6:8-10).
- D. What are we to make of these unusual statements which strike us as involving some absurdity or inconsistency?
1. I have even had some persons attempt to use these and similar Bible statements in an attempt to “prove” that it is all right for them to be inconsistent and contradictory because, after all, Jesus Himself was at times inconsistent and self contradictory!!
 - a. This would mean Jesus lied (Titus 1:2; Heb 6:18)!
 - b. Could it really be the one who claimed to be “The Way, The Truth and The Life” (Jn 14:6) told untruths, fabrications and falsehoods?
 2. The Old Testament characters foreshadowed the New Testament puzzling statements so they are found throughout the entire Bible.
- E. Closely related to and in the same basic category of figures of speech like irony, sarcasm and satire, is another powerful figure involving reversal of meaning: **the paradox**.

1. Lockhart writes that this class of figures with apparently inconsistent elements serve to arrest the attention of the reader – that the mind of said reader naturally takes pleasure in finding the solution.
 2. Such figures are usually very forcible; and the more absurd they appear, if easily solved by the reader, the greater is the emphasis placed upon the thought to be conveyed.
- F. A paradox is an apparent contradiction; it goes “counter” to what people think.
1. A paradox at first seems absurd but then turns out to **contain a valid point**;
 2. “When peace breaks out” is a paradoxical phrase.
 3. We usually speak of war, rather than peace, as “breaking out,” but on second thought we may agree the arrival of genuine peace would be as momentous as the outbreak of open war.
- I. A **paradox** is a statement **apparently absurd for emphasis**.
- A. It is calculated to seize attention and to emphasize the truth or fact it contains.
 - B. It is a leading feature of New Testament discourse and consists of an apparent contradiction on the surface which, upon analysis, can be seen to express a truth.
 1. Our Lord knows paradox “always imposes on the reader the obligation to **resolve** the apparent contradiction.”
 2. For example, the proverb that states “the mercy of the wicked is cruel” (Prov 12:10 RSV) means “even the best acts of wicked people harm other creatures” in that, in contrast to the righteous person, the wicked man’s disposition involves him in acts of deference to animals which he owns only from evil motivations (e.g. self-interest in his property).
- II. The apparent absurdity involved in Jesus’ statement, “But many that are first shall be last; and the last first,” is resolved in recognizing that he is speaking of TWO different aspects and times.
- A. Mark 10:31 is teaching from the immediate context (vs. 28-30) that many that are **first** so far as the possession of **material** things are concerned in

this present life will (because it is hard “for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!” – 10:24) be lost in hell, whereas many who are **last** so far as owning this life’s physical commodities will be saved eternally in heaven.

B. The Lord’s teaching is nowhere better exhibited than in the teaching about the Rich Man and Lazarus as recounted in Luke 6:19-25.

1. Jesus is **not** saying the” first shall be last and the last shall be first” in precisely the same time frame and in precisely the same respect.
2. This crucial point explains every paradox, including 1 John 2:19: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us.”
3. They became Christians in the same way as others who continue faithful but they apostatized from the truth because, in time, they obviously lost their attitude of obedience as in Matthew 13:20-21; 1 Timothy 1:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:19, contrary to Once-Saved-Always-Saved advocates (cf. Gal 5:4; Heb 3:12).

C. In Matthew 10:29 He said: “He that finds his life shall lose it; He that loses his life for my sake shall find it.” As Warren states:

1. The paradoxes must be noted: (1) the one who **finds** his life shall **lose** it and (2) the one who **loses** his life shall **find** it.
2. How can one hold that **both** of these statements are true?
3. By recognizing they are **deliberately paradoxical** they are made to **seem** – at first “glance” – to be contradictory of one another, but Jesus uses this language to catch men’s attention, to arouse their thoughts and to challenge them to plumb the depths of the matter (all with a view toward leading men to properly respond to Him that they might be saved).
4. What is the point to this paradox? Many people seem to be convinced that preserving their own lives is the greatest privilege – even their greatest responsibility.
 - a. They hold that while, as a general rule, they may act in an unselfish way, they also hold that “when the chips are down” one will – even **must** – do **anything** to save his own life.

- b. This view amounts to saying “Everyone should look out for ‘number one.’”
 - c. **But Jesus taught that pleasing oneself is not the first obligation of any person.** He taught that men must love God (and obey Him) above all else (Mt 22:37; cf. Deut 6:5).
 - d. The second commandment is to love one’s neighbor as himself.
 - D. **The person who puts earthly “happiness” – physical pleasure (and freedom from pain and suffering) above all else will never really find it.**
 - 1. Men are to **find** themselves in the highest sense by **forgetting** themselves in their **remembrance** of the Lord.
 - 2. Only the man who **loses** his life in true faithfulness to Christ can truly **find** it.
- III. One should similarly handle other paradoxes in Scripture, whether by the Lord or by others.
- A. In such passages as Mark 4:25 and Matthew 13:12 (cf. the same words found in Mt 25:29 in the parable of the talents and Lk 19:26 in the parable of the pounds) the surface absurdity appears in the suggestion to take something away from a person who has nothing, but the meaning involves the idea of taking away the little that he might have in another place and another time than this earthly existence.
 - B. To paraphrase the meaning we can truly say, “For he that hath used his talents and opportunities to glorify the Lord by obedience to Him in this life, to him shall be given the crown of life and wonderful blessings **spiritually** after the judgment: and he that hath not similarly built up his ‘spiritual bank account,’ from him shall be taken away (by the Lord in judgment) even that which he hath (which is really NOTHING spiritually speaking), namely his physical delights.”
 - C. The immediate context and especially the “bottom line” explanation by Christ explain the apparent incongruity (cf. Mt 25:30; Lk 19:27; Mk 4:22 in reference to judgment).
 - D. In fact, the Lord even uses another paradoxical statement in Matthew 10:34-39 to further explain and drill into our brains WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN THIS LIFE:

“Think not that I came to send peace on the earth” (but He did come to do just this insofar as peace with God is concerned): “I came not to send peace, but a sword” (and then He explains the paradox). “For I came to set” (if need be) “a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: and” (for My sake and the gospel’s sake sometimes) “a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” And now we get to the real point or teaching He wishes to impress upon us. “He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” (And not that you are not to love them at all!) “And he that doth not take up his cross and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me.” (“We must obey God rather than men” – Acts 5:29.) Whenever there is any conflict between the two **NO MATTER WHO THEY ARE AND NO MATTER HOW CLOSE THE EMOTIONAL OR GENETIC TIES, THE LORD COMES FIRST!**

- E. All of this is true even to the point of letting “the **dead** (spiritually) bury their own (physically) dead” for nothing more can be done for a person who has perished, but the one great and crucial job for the Christian is to go and “publish abroad the kingdom of God” to the living by proclaiming the unsearchable riches of the gospel of Jesus our Savior (Mk 16:15; Mt 28:18-20).
- F. If your parents are dead their fate is sealed in reference to heaven or hell but we, the living, must obey the plan of salvation and then teach it to the teeming millions still able to hear it and obey it (Heb 9:27; 2 Cor 6:2)!
- G. In Thomas B. Warren’s wonderful book dealing with the Biblical paradox concerning *Jesus – The Lamb Who Is A Lion* he explains:
 - 1. To be sure, “Lamb” is one concept and “Lion” is another, yet, it is true that the two together – viewed as comprising a single (multi-faceted) concept – is also accurate.
 - 2. The basic proposition is that Jesus Christ is the “Lamb-Lion” who reveals: **Himself** God, God’s will, and man by the use of various **paradoxes** understands (those things which may **seem** to be contradictory, but are not).
 - 3. Just what does the book of Revelation mean when it refers to Jesus Christ as “the Lamb” and then as “the Lion”?

- a. In the book of Revelation Jesus is presented as the “Lamb-Lion” who sacrificed His own life (that men might be saved) and was given **all authority** as the **Lion** (Mt 28:18-20).
- b. He is **loving** and **forgiving** to the truly **penitent** who humbly **obey** Him (Heb 5:8-9), but he will be **severe** in the judgment to all who **reject** Him (Mt 25:46; Mk 16:15-16; 2 Thess 1:7-9; Rom 11:22-23; *et al.*).
- c. In revealing Jesus as the “Lamb-Lion” (Rev 5:5-14; 1:4-8; 1:12-18; 11:15; 13:8; 17:14-17; 19:11-16; 20:10-15; 21:9; 22:12-16) the book of Revelation enables men to know God, and to know themselves better.

IV. GUIDELINES.

- A. Recognize the difference between a logical contradiction and a paradox, realizing and believing that God’s word, set forth by the Holy Spirit, contains no logical contradictions (but it may **contain** or **record** some by errorists or the uninspired).
- B. Since a paradox is a conscious exaggeration by the writer or the speaker to gain effect, determine from the context exactly what he is seeking to emphasize to the first auditors or readers – how would a reversal of meaning or apparent absurdity (contradiction) serve to intensify his point?
- C. Is **antithetical parallelism** being used in the verse whereby the “poet” is contrasting one idea with another? Use this feature of comparison to ascertain the design of the paradoxical statements/phrases.
- D. If the paradox is derived from passages remote from one another you will have to determine the contextual meaning in **each place** in order to determine the nature of the contrasting (but not inconsistent) point.
- E. Remember that no proposition can be both true and false **in precisely the same respects.**
 - 1. What is it that makes one sentence, or phrase, in the paradox “**NOT IN THE SAME RESPECT**”?
 - 2. Determine the frame of reference of the one from the other.
 - 3. Is it geography or place? Time? Priority? God’s viewpoint versus mere man’s (2 Cor 6:8-10)? Physical versus spiritual? Different aspects of personality?

- F. The appropriateness of the Bible's use of paradox is not for us to **ethically** evaluate.
1. God put it into the Bible by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and we have no moral right to judge Deity!
 2. Our job is simply to determine the **two different "levels"** for each paradoxical phrase or statement in order to learn the meaning for the original recipients so that we can make proper application to us today.
- G. Determine and/or corroborate the truthfulness of the two involved phrases or statements from other related verses (remote context) as in using Luke 16:19-25 in relationship to Mark 10:28-30.

CHAPTER XXXI EUPHEMISM, LITOTES AND PLEONASM

INTRODUCTION.

- A. In this study we are concerned with the figures called EUPHEMISM, LITOTES and PLEONASM.
- B. A better understanding of each will enhance our understanding of the message conveyed by the word of God.

I. EUPEHMISM.

- A. This figure of speech is a form of **understatement**.
 - 1. It is “a substitution of a mild, vague or roundabout expression for a harsh, blunt or direct one.”
 - 2. It is employed to replace an expression, or stand for an idea, that may be otherwise deemed offensive.
 - 3. It is not that vulgarity is to be understood, but a matter of delicate and sensitive nature is contemplated in the text.
 - 4. The expression “euphemism” literally means “good speaking” and reflects the idea of exchanging what is pleasant and agreeable for what is unpleasant and disagreeable.
 - 5. Through it, modest terminology is substituted for the indelicate.
- B. Old Testament examples.
 - 1. Euphemism is used in passages of death, as in Genesis 15:15, where Abram is informed by God, “Thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.”
 - 2. Elsewhere we read of certain ones being “gathered unto their fathers,” i.e. through death.
 - 3. Relative to bodily functions euphemism is frequently used in the Old Testament.
 - a. Hence the record says King Saul went into a cave “to cover his feet.”

- b. This is an expression used to indicate having a bowel movement.
 - 4. The expression “to uncover nakedness” (cf. Lev. 18:6ff.) stands for the idea of cohabitation and sometimes involved the thought of contracting marriage with another.
 - 5. Another common euphemism meaning “to have sexual relations” is the employment of the word “know” as in Genesis 4:1 where it is said that “Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain...” (cf. Mt1:25).
- C. The New Testament, likewise, employs euphemistic language in handling delicate matters.
 - 1. It uses the term “know” to describe sexual intercourse (Mt 1:25).
 - 2. It also speaks of it as a “joining” (cf. 1 Cor 6:16).
 - 3. Pregnancy is understood in the expression used of Mary in Luke 2:5 which says she was “great with child.”
 - 4. Matthew 8:11 utilizes euphemism in the prophecy of Christ that, “Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven.”
 - a. The reference is to the bringing in of the Gentiles by preaching the gospel and their subsequent entrance into the Church, which is the Kingdom (cf. Rom 1:13-17; Mt 16:18-19).
 - b. By euphemism the Lord condemned those who rejected Him in declaring, “But wisdom is justified of her children” (Mt 11:19; Lk 7:35).
 - 5. The word “sleep” frequently stands euphemistically for “death” (Lk 11:11; *et. al.*).
- D. Identifying euphemism is sometimes complicated by complex imagery where two or more figures of speech are used in tandem.
 - 1. First, begin with the immediate context.

- a. Often the connection is apparent from the verses immediately surrounding the expression in question.
 - b. For example, in Genesis 4:1 it follows logically that the word “know” is used of sexual intercourse by the reference to the act of conception and birth.
 - c. Likewise the use of “he went in unto” Hagar in Genesis 16:4 is euphemistic for copulation because the text says “she conceived.”
2. Second, concern yourself with the remote context: examining passages that may either parallel the text in question or deal with the same subject matter, especially those texts utilizing the same expression(s).
 3. Third, remember the images used in Scriptures are drawn from the social, ethnic and cultural background of the people who **originally** employed or heard them.

II. LITOTES.

- A. The figure of speech called “litotes” is “an ironical understatement, expressing an affirmative by the negative of its contrary.”
 1. It uses a negative construction to set forth an affirmative truth.
 2. It states something by denying its opposite.
 3. In it one thing is diminished (lowered) to increase the other.
 4. By this means litotes are to be contrasted with hyperbole, which emphasizes a thing by exaggeration.
- B. Numerous Old Testament passages make use of litotes.
 1. In Genesis 18:27 Abraham speaks of himself as “but dust and ashes” in comparison to and in contrast with God, who is his Creator.
 2. It stresses the importance, power and majesty of God.
 3. In Numbers 13:33 the faithless spies refer to themselves and the Hebrew people “as grasshoppers” as opposed to “the people of the land,” viz. Canaan.

4. David speaks of himself as “a dead dog” and “a flea” as opposed to King Saul and, thus, intimates the king is of greater importance than to concern himself with the likes of the son of Jesse.
5. The Psalmist speaks of himself in this vogue, “I am a worm, and no man!” (Psa 22:6).
6. The Prophet Isaiah emphasized the meekness of Christ by way of litotes when he wrote, “A bruised reed will he not break and a dimly burning wick will he not quench” (Isa 42:3).

C. The New Testament also employs litotes.

1. Acts 1:15 reads in part, “...but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.”
2. With these words Christ informs the apostles they would shortly receive Holy Spirit baptism, a promise fulfilled about 10 days later in Acts 2:1-4.
3. The expression “no small stir” is used by Luke to describe the immense turmoil and confusion occasioned by the miraculous release of Peter from Herod’s prison in Acts 12:18, and also of the commotion at Ephesus surrounding the preaching of Paul in Acts 19:23.
4. The phrase “no small gain” in 19:24 emphasizes the financial profit enjoyed by the Ephesian craftsman Demetrius through his silver replicas of the temple of Artemis.
5. Acts 21:39 contains Paul’s description of himself as “a citizen of no mean city.”
6. Thus, he asserts the greatness and influence of Tarsus, his hometown.

D. As with euphemism, both the immediate and remote contexts must be considered.

1. In the classic form of litotes it must be remembered, one is concerned with the use of negation for the purpose of affirmation.
2. Hence, terms involved in negation may be indicative of this figure.

3. Such words as “not” and “no” particularly are employed in these constructions.

III. PLEONASM.

- A. This term is derived from the Greek *pleon* meaning “more” and contemplates a particular form of redundancy.
 1. It involves the use of what would appear to be a superfluity of words in repetition.
 2. It is a common device among certain language groups and occurs more frequently in ancient texts.
 3. The primary purpose is emphasis and, while this structure may appear needless in our English translations, it serves as a forceful means of expression in the original tongue.
- B. The Hebrew idiom often employs two nouns together, one of which appears to be redundant, in order to emphasize the significance of the other noun.
 1. The affirmation by Israel following the contest on Mt. Carmel that “The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God” (1 Kgs 18:39) constitutes one example of pleonasm and emphasizes their recognition of the greatness and power of Jehovah due to His triumph over the Canaanite deity Baal.
 2. Jeremiah 10:10 for special emphasis upon the authority and sovereignty of God says of Jehovah, “But the Lord is the true God, He is the living God, and an everlasting king...”
 3. The Hebrews and other Oriental peoples have frequently used such body parts as the face, hands, mouth, eyes and ears in pleonasm for stress.
 - a. Thus, Genesis 1:2 speaks of “the darkness” that “was upon the face of the deep” in the beginning of the creation.
 - b. Genesis 11:8 records the scattering of the human race from Babel “upon the face of all the earth.”
- C. The koine (common) Greek bears numerous pleonasm.

1. Acts 3:19 speaks of the times of refreshing that would come “from the presence (**lit.** face) of the Lord.”
 2. Acts 17:26 affirms God made man “for to dwell upon all the face of the earth.”
 3. Jesus speaks of Himself upon death as being “in the heart of the earth” (Mt 12:40).
 4. John exhorts, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Rev 2:7; *et.al.*).
 5. By this he emphasizes the need for attentiveness in heeding the message of the Apocalypse.
 6. Of John the Baptizer it is written he “confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ” (Jn 1:20).
 7. This stresses the firmness of his confession and thus enhances the depiction of this great man of God as one of conviction.
- D. Admonitions concerning a thorough examination of both the immediate and remote contexts still apply.
1. The final determining factor in identification is the appearance of redundancy.
 2. If a text, phrase or expression **seems** to bear redundant or unnecessary language for the purpose of stress, while the basic grammatical structure is sufficient for the sense of it, then pleonasm exists.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Let us apply ourselves to a more diligent study of God’s word being mindful of the rich meaning and great beauty to be received and enjoyed in the sundry figures of speech used by its writers.
- B. They add vitality and force that literal prose is often unable to convey.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE “NEW HERMENEUTIC” – A REVIEW AND RESPONSE

INTRODUCTION.

- A. What is the “New Hermeneutic”?
1. Its philosophical and theological roots lie deep within the soil of denominational theology, specifically “new-orthodox” theology.
 2. Outside the context of churches of Christ, the term “new hermeneutic” refers to an approach to biblical interpretation formulated largely by Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling.
 3. Fuchs and Ebeling were extending the work of Hans-George Gadamer while building upon the ideas of Rudolf Bultmann.
 4. Bultmann’s hermeneutical theories emerged out of the existentialism of Martin Heidegger and Soren Kierkegaard, the phenomenology of Wilhelm Dilthey and the epistemology of Friedrich Schleiermacher.
- B. The “new hermeneutic” as it exists within churches of Christ bears some affinity with the “new hermeneutic” of neo-orthodoxy, but more in terms of philosophical foundation than in actual particulars.
1. Those at the forefront of the discussion within churches of Christ are extremely vague when it comes to identifying precisely the “new hermeneutic.”
 2. One proponent admitted the “ramifications of this new model...have not been worked out systematically.”
 3. The primary concern of those clamoring for a “new hermeneutic” appears to be the dismantling of the “old hermeneutic.”
 4. Much of their effort has been spent criticizing what is deemed to be the shortcomings of the hermeneutical practices of the past, specifically the “command, example, necessary inference” triad.
 5. Little energy has been expended on their part in proposing a legitimate alternative (because there isn’t one).
- C. The “new hermeneutic” is not the result of simple Bible study and a search for truth.

1. Rather, it is born out of a reactionary attempt to express dissatisfaction with the status quo and thus to undermine the past.
2. If a new hermeneutic is needed today in order to understand the Bible and live the Christian life, then the members of the church who have preceded us have died without understanding the Bible.
3. If, on the other hand, those using the “old hermeneutic” were able to understand the Bible enough to be saved, then what need do we have for a “new hermeneutic”?
4. Are we being told that though the Bible has been around for 2,000 years, we’re just now getting around to learning how to interpret it?

I. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE “NEW HERMENEUTIC.”

- A. Several specific concepts are common among those who are advocating a new hermeneutic.
 1. For the most part these concepts address **abuses** of some practitioners of hermeneutics among churches of Christ and, therefore, do not actually discredit previous hermeneutical principles.
 2. What are they saying?
- B. The “form” of Scripture.
 1. They are saying the “old hermeneutic” has not been sensitive to the “form” of Scripture.
 2. Two things are meant by “form.”
 - a. First, they say inadequate attention has been given to the genre, or type, of literature found in the Bible (e.g., poetry, epistle, parable, apocalyptic) with the accompanying assumption this inattention has led to a misinterpretation of the Bible.
 - b. In response it is significant both Dungan and Lockhart, who wrote the definitive textbooks on hermeneutics within the Restoration Movement, both note the peculiarities and characteristics of literary genre in biblical literature.
 - c. The criticism is, therefore, an overstatement of the case.

- d. Besides, the impact of genre upon interpretation can be minimal – depending upon the genre.
 - (1) For example, interpretation of the book of Revelation is certainly heavily dependent upon one’s acquaintance with the characteristics of apocalyptic material.
 - (2) However, the gospels and the epistles of the New Testament, whence the common man derives an understanding of the specifics of Christianity, are easily comprehended without being familiar with the complex genre categories developed by theologians.
3. Secondly, “form” refers to the claim our interpretation has been adversely affected by our insistence upon viewing the Bible as a blueprint, pattern, kingdom constitution, legal brief, law or code book.
- a. They say we have misconstrued the nature of the Bible by treating it as “propositional.”
 - b. They say we should have been conceiving of the Bible in an epistolary fashion as a “love letter.”
 - c. In other words, the Bible is not so much the legislation of God as it is an expression of His love.
 - d. But, to argue that the New Testament is to be interpreted as a “love letter” is misleading and disastrous.
 - (1) It is true God is love.
 - (2) However, these documents are not “love letters” in the sense set forth by those advocating the “new hermeneutic.”
 - (3) Whoever wrote a love letter on circumcision, dis-fellowshipping a fornicator or eating meats sacrificed to idols?
 - (4) Where the “love letter” metaphor breaks down is precisely in the area it is designed to undermine, i.e., that the New Testament is also, if not primarily, in-

tended to be instructive by showing how human beings are to respond to God's love.

- (5) In this sense, the New Testament is **law, absolute** and **binding** in a way that a love letter can never be.
- e. To denigrate the notion the Bible consists of "propositional" truth is equally unfortunate.
 - (1) To hold the Bible is "propositional" is to say the explicit statements of the Bible affirm something either is or is not the case.
 - (2) The reality of this contention is self evident.
 - (3) One need only open the Bible and point to any statement to see this.
 - (4) If the Bible does not consist of propositional truth, then it says nothing to anyone at all.
4. Where does one suppose the emphasis within churches of Christ upon the Bible as the law of a kingdom arose?
 - a. Obviously from the Bible itself!
 - b. How many New Testament books depict relationships to God, and fellow Christians, in terms of the kingdom/king/law metaphor?
 - c. All but three of the twenty-seven books!
 - d. The New Testament is replete with allusions to reigning, ruling and judging as well as the authority, majesty, throne, law and lordship of Christ.
 - e. It is clear God intended for readers of the New Testament to get the idea Christianity is to be conceived of as the relationship between a king and his kingdom!
5. To denigrate an emphasis upon the Bible as a "pattern" is likewise unfortunate.

- a. All brethren have meant by the use of the word “pattern” is that human beings are obligated to go to the Bible and learn what God wants them to know and practice.
- b. If the Bible is not a “pattern” in this sense, then the Bible is completely irrelevant when it comes to how people choose to live life.
- c. Accordingly, no one should question anyone else regardless of what anyone believes or practices.

II. LOGIC, HUMAN REASONING AND IMPLICATION.

- A. They are saying the “old hermeneutic” is “rationalistic,” “forensic,” and too dependent upon logic, human reason and inference.
- B. To quote one writer: “I believe it is extremely dangerous to elevate human reasoning to the level of God’s command” and “There is no doctrine more potentially dangerous...than elevating necessary inference and approved examples to the status of God’s commands.”
 - 1. Is this conclusion one its author arrived at by means of human reasoning?
 - 2. Is this a necessary inference which he has drawn from the Bible?
 - 3. Where is the biblical command which sanctions his viewpoint?
 - 4. In fact, all of the writing and speaking which is done in behalf of the “new hermeneutic” is the product of human reasoning.
 - 5. These fellows **do** what they **condemn!**
 - 6. Their entire case rests upon what they conceive to be logical argumentation, deduction and implication.
 - 7. Yet, these are the very qualities which they say cause the “old hermeneutic” to be irreparably flawed.
- C. Everyone reasons from the Bible.
 - 1. The solution is not to condemn human reasoning.
 - 2. The solution is to promote correct human reasoning.

3. The Bible itself repeatedly exhorts readers to use sound reasoning and rational thought in handling its contents (Isa 1:18; 1 Thess 5:21; 1 Jn 4:1; Acts 17:3; 18:26; 26:25).
 4. Jesus Himself expected readers to heed the implications of God's explicit statements.
- D. There is no less confusion in the religious world over what the Bible says explicitly than over what it says implicitly.
1. Even if one could consistently ignore what the Bible teaches by implication, "Christendom" would still be hopelessly divided on what the Bible teaches explicitly.
 2. After all, there are many other reasons for belief and practice than hermeneutical principles.
- E. The Campbells recognized this point.
1. Their warnings against "necessary inference" were not directed against the proper discernment of what the explicit statements of the Bible imply.
 2. Rather, they were decrying the unwarranted and prejudicial inferences characteristic of the denominational religions of the day.
 3. Parallel to this situation would be Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisee's practice of "extending" Scripture to fit their own inclinations and propensity for binding strictures upon others (e.g., Mt 15:1-9).
- F. Some are saying we are victims of "rationalism" and our heavy reliance upon logic is due to our Restoration roots.
1. They say the Campbells were heavily influenced by the British Empiricists and the "common sense" realists.
 2. They say our stress on logic hails back to Locke and Bacon.
 3. The issue is not whether any link exists between Locke, Campbell and ourselves.
 4. The issue is to what extent any of us accurately reflect the Bible's own requirements pertaining to the use of reason.

5. We are to reason correctly about the explicit statements of the Bible; not because of what Aristotle, Locke or Campbell said, but because of what God Himself said in Scripture.
 6. If Campbell and Locke stressed the need for proper reasoning in studying the Bible then they were in tune with God on that point.
 7. The “new hermeneutic” advocates assume if a link exists between Locke and Campbell, it automatically follows that a hermeneutic which stresses reason and induction is wrong.
 - a. That is a false assumption.
 - b. Jesus’ own hermeneutic relied heavily on induction.
 - c. Is it possible the parallels between Locke and Campbell, or between the Westminster Confession and the Campbells’ beliefs, were due to their mutual assessment of Scripture rather than due to the dependence of one upon the other?
- G. The advocates of the “new hermeneutic” possess the same presupposition as the Darwinian evolutionist.
1. The evolutionist draws clever tangents and links between the species and fossils in order to argue for the influence of the past upon the present and to say current biological forms owe their origins to previous forms (e.g., mammals came from reptiles that came from fish that came from slime).
 2. So these “new hermeneutic” historicists presume to identify the sources of present religious beliefs in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in order to say we ought to abandon those beliefs.
 3. But, like the evolutionist, their assumption is wrong.
 4. The links are irrelevant.
- H. What **does matter** is can human beings in any historical period go to Scripture and, without a lot of “scholarly expertise,” ascertain how God would have them to conduct themselves?
1. Are our historical circumstances and conditioning really so strong that a simple man’s honest appraisal of Scripture will inevitably be skewed?

2. The Bible was given by God to mankind for the very purpose of revealing to sincere, honest hearts how to be saved and stay saved.
 3. God expects each individual to use the reasoning powers of his divinely created mind to comprehend the Bible.
 4. The fact Locke or Campbell stressed rationality hardly nullifies that truth.
- I. Whence does this fear of logic arise?
1. Aversion to logic throughout history has been closely associated with a desire to be relieved of the confining nature of God's word.
 2. The "new hermeneutic" is rooted in subjectivity and relativism in its approach to Scripture.
 3. It seeks to give man more say in his religious pursuits, while attributing such subjective inclination to the Holy Spirit.
 4. It is not coincidental the "new hermeneutic" advocates frequently speak of "freedom" and "unity."
 - a. They speak of the need for dispensing with the old skins to make room for the new wine.
 - b. They speak of the need for a hermeneutic that will cause Scripture to be "more relevant," help "in getting closer to God and each other," be "more palatable to an age that denigrates authoritarianism," and be able to "relate to people where they live" without being "insensitive and impersonal."
 5. They say we need a hermeneutic that starts with God not Scripture, that focuses on the actions of God rather than the rules of logic, and results that seek the "heart of God" and "God's desires" – not just the "instructions of God."
 6. They say we should focus on content, not outer forms and emphasize meaning and motive rather than "doing acts correctly."
 7. They say we should approach interpretation, not as "rational animals," but as "story telling animals."
- J. These contrasts are not biblical.

1. They are similar to the false bifurcations of “grace versus works,” “Christ versus the church” and “the man versus the plan.”
2. The Bible teaches we get close to God **with** rules and **through** rules.
3. We cannot love Jesus without His law (Jn 14:15).
4. We must give attention to content **and** forms, meaning/motive **and** actions.
5. We come to know God **through** proper logic, reasoning and interpretation.
6. If the “story telling” is not rational, who will comprehend what is being taught?

K. God has always required essentially two facets of response to His will: the right action with the right attitude.

1. Notice the following chart of Scriptures:

| PASSAGE | ATTITUDE | ACTION |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Jn 4:24 | spirit | truth |
| Josh 24:14 | sincerity | truth |
| Ecc 12:13 | fear God | keep commands |
| Acts 10:35 | fear Him | work righteousness |
| Jas 2:17 | faith | works |
| 1 Jn 3:18 | word & tongue | deed & truth |
| Deut 10:12-13 | fear/love – heart | walk in His ways |
| Rom 1:9 | with my spirit | in the gospel |

2. To emphasize one dimension of obedience over the other is to hamper one’s acceptance by God.
3. Bible history is replete with instances of those who possessed one without the other and were unacceptable to God.
 - a. The Pharisees (Mt 23:3), Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:24) and the people of Amos’ day (Amos 5:21-24) engaged in the external forms, but were unacceptable because of their insincerity.

- b. Paul (Acts 22:3; 23:1), Cornelius (Acts 10:1-2) and Uzzah (2 Sam 6:6) all demonstrated genuine motives, but were unacceptable to God because of their failure to observe the right **forms**.
- c. The “new hermeneutic” seeks to minimize external forms in deference to internal mind set.
- d. Significantly, the disdain for logic is accompanied by a call for more emotion in religious practice.

III. HISTORICAL CONTEXT.

- A. They say previous hermeneutical principles have failed to take into account historical context in the interpretation of Scripture.
- B. They describe the “old hermeneutic” as “rationalistic, inductive, formal” and the “new hermeneutic” as “grammatical/historical/contextual.”
- C. This charge is equally false and unfounded.
 - 1. Members of churches of Christ in general have approached their study of each book of the Bible with a “who, what, where, when, to whom, why” methodology. Dungan and Lockhart, as well as standard commentaries affiliated with churches of Christ, stress the importance of context – whether historical, lexical, syntactical, contextual or analogical.
 - 2. The fact that some writers may have missed a point on a passage here or there is hardly adequate justification for (1) abandoning the only legitimate hermeneutical principles in exchange for what is now being advocated, or (2) proposing contextual analysis as a “new hermeneutic,” when our brethren have been engaging in historical/contextual interpretation all along.

IV. “ATOMISTIC” INTERPRETATION AND A “FLAT” BIBLE.

- A. They say the “old hermeneutic” approaches the Bible “atomistically” and treats the Scriptures as if they were “flat.”
- B. By “atomistic” they mean we should treat each biblical document separately on its own merits without introducing passages from other books and contexts into the book we are trying to interpret.

C. They say we must not piece Scriptures together from all over the Bible in order to make an argument.

1. To do so is to be guilty of the “unpardonable sin” of “proof-texting.”

2. Consider the following statement:

“Part of my problem with the way we use our hermeneutic to establish examples is we’re demanding that the New Testament Christians read the Bible and argue when they didn’t have a collected canon to use. They couldn’t have pulled Acts 16:2 (sic) and Acts 20:7 together. They didn’t have a collected canon. But we do that and say we’re restoring New Testament Christianity using an argument they couldn’t have put together...this is not the way the early Christian even could have argued from Scripture.”

D. Critical of what he calls “hardline patternistic formalism” one speaker centered his attention on the question of the canon:

“We have approached the area of hermeneutics with the idea that the early church had a complete set of documents which we know as the New Testament and that they searched those Scriptures to determine God’s pattern in church organization, structure and practice. I submit to you that is an incorrect assumption.”

1. His point is since the canon was not completed until *circa* 400 A.D., early Christians could not have made use of written Scripture as we do, drawing Scriptures together from different books to form conclusions.

2. Yet, such a position misconstrues the nature of canonization.

3. Canonization was **based** upon and **dependent** upon widespread recognition of inspiration and use of the New Testament books.

a. The criteria by which some books were later questioned are evidence those books were generally accessible to the churches across the empire.

b. The Scriptures were copied and circulated among the churches long before formal canonization.

c. In fact, impetus for the multiplication of copies of the New Testament documents existed virtually from the moment they came from the pen of the inspired writer.

- E. Even in the first century, within the New Testament itself, evidence suggests accessibility to New Testament truth in written form was well underway.
1. Paul specifically told the Colossians to see that the epistle written to them was circulated (Col 4:16).
 2. When Peter wrote his second epistle, “epistles” (plural) of Paul were already being referred to as among the “Scriptures” which were available for the “unlearned” to twist (2 Pet 3:16).
 3. When Paul wrote his first epistle to Timothy, the gospel of Luke was already “Scripture” (1 Tim 5:18).
 4. Dating questions aside, very few years separated the writing of the two books.
- F. Consider the parallel situation that exists with the Old Testament.
1. Early Jews did not have access to all the Old Testament.
 2. Yet, Jesus and the writers of the New Testament gleaned passages from various locations in the Old Testament canon in precisely the same fashion we do from the New Testament.
 3. Jesus treated the Old Testament canon as a totality – a complete body of Scripture.
 4. He was guilty of the same charge being leveled against the church today.
 5. He “atomized” Scripture as did virtually all of the writers of the New Testament!
- G. Surely we recognize the church was in a state of infancy for the very reason that New Testament truth was in the process of being revealed (1 Cor 13:8-12; Eph 4:13-16).
1. The early Christians had access to a sufficient amount of God’s will through **oral** sources.
 2. The apostles would have been able to convey massive amounts of New Testament truth in light of all the teaching we are told they did (e.g., Acts 2:40,42; 5:42; 20:20,27,31).

3. Early Christians would have pieced together oral teaching as authority for faith and practice in the same way we draw together written passages.
- H. However, the fact they lived during a period when the New Testament was incomplete in no way disproves the need for us to approach the New Testament as a completed body of truth.
1. Such reasoning is analogous to those who say they do not have to be baptized since the thief on the cross was not baptized.
 2. Our situation does not compare with those who lived in a premature spiritual state.
 3. We do not live during a period of progressive revelation.
 4. We have the completed corpus of inspired material from God and are required to take the whole and interpret it accordingly.
- I. It would seem the advocates of the “new hermeneutic” have not grasped the implications of their position as it relates to the doctrine of inspiration.
1. They are adamant in their insistence that each book of the Bible is to be examined on its own merits with no intrusion of material from any other book.
 2. They speak of the New Testament being “a collection of letters” as if the books of the Bible were just casually and haphazardly thrown together into a single volume.
 3. They speak as if they do not consider the sixty-six books of the Bible to be interrelated or intentionally bound together as a single body of truth – God’s complete and total revelation to man.
 4. Yet the biblical view of inspiration necessitates that, though the biblical documents were written by some forty individuals over a period of about 1600 years, the Bible actually has only one author – the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The Bible, therefore, is intended by God to be taken as a single entity in order to grasp His will for humanity.
 - b. Likewise, God intends for us to perceive the Scriptures as **verbally** inspired.

- c. This standard, classic view of inspiration was largely unquestioned until theological Liberalism and its progeny, neo-orthodoxy, exerted their influence.
- d. To see where the “new hermeneutic” view point is logically headed in this regard, consider the following statements of one who still considers himself to be a member of churches Christ:

“We cannot equate the authority of the Bible with the authority of God as we can the authority of Christ and God, for the Bible is an earthen vessel. God is perfect, infallible, and infinite. The Bible as a human product is not. ...If the Bible was brought to us by an angel directly from heaven, having been dictated word-for-word by God himself, so that its contents would be nothing less and nothing more than the actual words of God, then we could equate the authority of the Bible and the authority of God. But the Bible is clearly not that kind of book.”

- J. When we are told our hermeneutic presupposes a “flat” Bible, they mean we should recognize not all facts or truths presented in the Bible are of equal importance.
 - 1. For example, whether you use an instrument in worship or partake of the Lord’s Supper every Sunday is far less important than whether you evangelize or pray.
 - 2. It is certainly possible for some within churches of Christ to overemphasize one truth to the neglect of a truth of greater significance.
 - a. The Pharisees did so.
 - b. However, the clear teaching of Jesus is “these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone” (Mt 23:23).
 - c. In other words, there is no excuse for “straining out the gnat” while “swallowing the camel.” But neither is it acceptable to God to strain out the camel while swallowing the gnat.
 - d. If we love God and our fellowman, we will give meticulous attention to **all** God desires us to do (cf. Acts 20:27).

3. Besides, what we humans sometimes consider to be an insignificant matter, God considers to be of paramount importance (Lk 16:15; cf. Jer 10:23; 1 Cor 1:20).
 - a. Adam and Eve were expelled permanently from Eden for eating the fruit from one tree (Gen 3).
 - b. Nadab and Abihu were destroyed for incorporating foreign fire in their incense offering (Lev 10:1-2).
 - c. Moses was excluded from entrance into Canaan because of his one mistake at Kadesh (Num 20:7-12).
 - d. Saul was deposed as king for sparing the lives of one man and a few animals out of an entire nation (1 Sam 15).
 - e. Uzzah was struck dead for merely reaching out and steadying the ark (2 Sam 6:6-7).
 - f. Uzziah was rejected by God because he entered the temple to burn incense (2 Chron 26).
4. These incidents are no more “technical” nor “trivial” than New Testament regulations pertaining to vocal, verbal music in worship (Eph 5:19), unleavened bread and fruit of the vine at the Lord’s Table every Sunday (Mt 26:26-29; Acts 20:7) and kingdom initiation by immersion in water (Jn 3:5; 1 Pet 3:21).
5. We would be wise to be extremely cautious in dispensing with certain biblical stipulations under the pretense of stressing supposed “weighty” matters.

V. PRESUPPOSITIONS AND CULTURAL CONDITIONS.

- A. They say the “old hermeneutic” fails to take into consideration the interpreter is “shaped” by his own presuppositions.
- B. They say the interpreter has been inevitably, if not invariably, influenced by cultural, historical, social and religious conditioning.
- C. Have the advocates of the “new hermeneutic” been similarly affected?
 1. What makes **their** interpretations of the Bible immune to such conditioning?

2. What gives them the ability to rise above their presuppositions while leaving the rest the others doomed to conditioned interpretation?
 3. What cultural, historical, social and religious conditioning informs their thinking?
 4. What are their “philosophic assumptions” which have shaped **them**?
- D. Of course, this claim comes directly from the advocates of the “new hermeneutic” in denominational theology.
1. Rudolf Bultmann and others make much of this point, leaving the impression that knowledge of objective truth is unattainable.
 2. As Liefeld noted:

“Underneath much of the discussion is the idea that we cannot ever arrive at the true meaning of a text because our own ‘horizon’ prevents us from achieving an undistorted perception of the ‘horizon’ of the biblical writer.”

 - a. Not only is such an assumption in direct conflict with Jesus’ own assessment of the situation (e.g., Jn 8:32) the position is self contradictory and, therefore, false.
 - b. Certainly we should be aware of our own personal bias and limitations when we approach the text.
 - c. But God clearly communicated with us in such a way that we can come to a knowledge of what He would have us to believe and do (Heb 11:6; Jn 8:24; 12:48).
 - d. Carson was correct when he stated: “... such absolute relativism is not only unnecessary, but also self contradictory; for the authors of such views expect us to understand the meaning of their articles!”
- E. Strikingly, advocates of the “new hermeneutic” take issue with the approach to the biblical texts that perceives the purpose of the Bible and biblical interpretation to inform humans how to please God.
1. Yet, the biblical writers themselves (including Jesus) repeatedly speak of man’s **entire** earthly responsibility to consist of ascertain-

ing God's will for their lives from His revelation in order to then **do** what His will requires! (e.g., Eccl 12:13; Jn 8:32; 2 Tim 2:15; Jn 12:48; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess 5:21; Mt 24:34-40; Deut 30; Mic 6:8; *et.al.*).

2. It would no doubt be enlightening for one of the "new hermeneutic" spokesmen to tell us precisely what **they** conceive to be the purpose of Scripture.

F. Situated throughout the writings of those who promote the "new hermeneutic" is evidence they view truth to be relative, subjective and unattainable.

1. They appear to be infected with the presuppositions of Liberal and Neo-orthodox theology as well as Existentialist and Romantic philosophy.
2. Concerning religious knowledge, we are told "proof for such knowledge is beyond the borders of human proof tools" and that our "command/obedience metaphor" has created "a false sense of epistemological certainty."
 - a. I suppose when Jesus said, "You shall know the truth" (Jn 8:32) He was guilty of creating in His disciples "a false sense of epistemological certainty!"
 - b. Such religious agnosticism is further seen in the continual assertion that "replication" or "restoration" of the New Testament is an "illusion."

G. They speak disparagingly of the assumption all reasonable people can see the Bible alike.

1. They say we must be content to live with "merely provisional answers."
2. They speak of the need for any "system of hermeneutics" to be "temporary and not permanent" and that we have reached a point where "interpretation of the Scripture must be repositioned so as to provide more help" for personal and social concerns.
3. Numerous biblical texts affirm, however, that truth is objective, absolute and attainable (e.g., Prov 23:23; Jn 3:2).

- a. Knowledge must **precede** faith (Rom 10:17; 4:20-21; Jn 10:24-25,38).
 - b. Faith is accepting and acting upon what one **knows** to be God's will (Heb 11:6).
 - c. Paul declared God desires "all men" to come to the **knowledge** of the truth (1 Tim 2:4).
 - d. If some fail to do so it is not because truth is relative or unattainable.
 - e. Other factors are at fault including the absence of "an honest and good heart" (Lk 8:15) and "love of the truth" (2 Thess 2:10).
- H. Neither truth nor man's fundamental ability to apprehend truth change.
- 1. Alternative approaches to interpretation are superfluous.
 - 2. When God said, "Do not steal," our interpretation of the meaning of that statement is the same as the interpretation by those who originally received the statement.
 - 3. The only need for a "new hermeneutic" lies in man's unwillingness to accept the authentic meaning intended by God.
 - 4. We do not need a "new" interpretation of God's words.
 - 5. We simply need to reinstate a devoted determination to comply with what we already understand the Bible to teach.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Our desire for a "new hermeneutic" reveals far more about the condition of our hearts than it does about our ability to grasp God's originally intended meanings.
- B. The "new hermeneutic" is part and parcel of the spiritual temperament which has permeated our society and the church.
- C. It is an attempt to provide sophisticated sanction to the perennial human inclination to restructure and redesign religious belief and practice to suit self (Gen 3:6; Ex 17:2; Num 21:5; Jdgs 21:25; 1 Sam 8:19-20; 1 Sam 13:12; Jer 6:16; *et. at*).

- D. It is an attempt to do what one wants to do while maintaining a sense of religiosity (Gen 4:3; Lev 10:1; 1 Sam 15:13,20; 2 Chron 26:16).
- E. The “hermeneutic” which has been operative generally among churches of Christ, as well as the “theological foundation” which undergirds this “hermeneutic,” are neither erroneous nor outdated.
1. Both are deeply embedded in the Scriptures themselves.
 2. Churches of Christ in general have perceived accurately God’s will from God’s book.
 3. Some Christians choose to follow that will while others do not.
 4. So it has been throughout human history.
 5. All efforts to originate some “new truth” or some alternative approach to simple Bible teaching have ultimately fallen by the way and been buried beneath the innovations of later generations.
 6. Concerning the “new hermeneutic” of our day: “this too will pass.”
- F. If the interpretive enterprise is as elusive, enigmatic and entangled as the so-called “scholars” represent it to be, then the average member of the church, let alone nonmember, does not have a chance to understand God’s word and make it to heaven.
- G. We seem to have reached a point in the history of the church where some have been “educated beyond their intelligence.”

CHAPTER XXXIII
JESUS' USE OF THE BIBLE
TEXT: JOHN 14:6

INTRODUCTION.

- A. What do people mean by statements like, "That's just your interpretation"?
 - 1. Many mean: "You have your view, and I have mine."
 - 2. "Who is to say mine is wrong and yours is right?"
 - 3. "We should not condemn each other's views."
 - 4. "We should allow one another to hold different views."
 - 5. "I'm okay, you're okay."

- B. We live in a "pluralistic society."
 - 1. "Pluralism" simply means differing, and even conflicting views are permitted to co-exist.
 - 2. Truth is viewed as subjective and relative by many.
 - 3. This discussion is further muddled because, on any religious moral question, there are knowledgeable, sincere experts on both sides.
 - 4. The general mind set is - since truth is elusive, no one should be judgmental of anyone else; no one should be so arrogant as to insist a particular view is the only correct one.

- C. Without considering the Bible it should be obvious this position is self contradictory and unacceptable.
 - 1. Why?
 - 2. Because those espousing it insist they are right.
 - 3. They are dogmatic in their insistence no one should ever be dogmatic.
 - 4. They hold as certain truth that there are no certain truths.
 - 5. Therefore, they are forced to deny their view to hold their view!

- D. Humans reason in religion in a way differing from the way they reason in other areas.
1. For example, when we visit the doctor we tell him our symptoms and expect to be understood.
 2. We expect him to gather the data and properly interpret that evidence drawing the correct conclusions about our sickness.
 3. He writes a prescription which we take to the pharmacist expecting him to interpret properly.
 4. We take the medication home, read the label, fully expecting to understand the directions.
 5. We do that all day every day in many areas of life.
- E. We give ourselves credit for having the ability to operate sensibly communicating with others intelligibly.
1. We turn around and imply God, who created our minds, is incapable of making His will known in an understandable fashion.
 2. When we come to the Bible, we insist we cannot be sure what God's will is; we can not be dogmatic on doctrine; we must allow differing opinions on what is right and wrong.
 3. Who can believe it?
- F. God has given man written revelation knowing it can be correctly understood.
1. That means for every word in the Bible there is a meaning God originally intended to convey.
 2. That is what Peter meant when he said, "No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation" (2 Pet 1:20).
 3. He meant men did not decide what to include in inspired material – God did.
 4. God has given every responsible human being the task of discerning that one correct interpretation.
 5. There is only one to any given passage – the right one, God's!

I. JESUS' OWN METHOD.

- A. We call Jesus of Nazareth the Christ and so He is.
- B. He is the way, and the only way to the Father (Jn 14:6).
- C. When you see Him you see the Father (Jn 14:9).
- D. If you accept these facts concerning Jesus, you should also accept His approach to the Scriptures.
- E. Let's return to the New Testament and to Jesus Himself.
 - 1. Let us examine the approach Jesus took to interpreting the Bible.
 - 2. Let us discover His attitude toward God's word.
 - 3. Let us consider how He used the Bible to face those determined to deter Him from doing God's will.
 - 4. Then let us "go and do likewise."
 - a. Let His approach to the Bible be ours.
 - b. Let His attitude toward it be our attitude.
- F. The Lord's personal interpretative activity can be viewed in terms of:
 - 1. His attitude toward the Bible, and
 - 2. His use of the Bible.

II. JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD THE BIBLE.

- A. The Lord considered Scripture divinely inspired through human instrumentality.
 - 1. He attributed David's words in Psalm 110:1 to the Holy Spirit (Mk 12:36).
 - a. He treated Daniel's prophecy in Daniel 9:27 as an inspired prophecy that would surely come to pass (Mt 24:15). "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken

of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand).”

- b. On the day He visited the synagogue in Nazareth and read aloud from Isaiah 61 He said the passage was being fulfilled in their hearing (Lk 4:21).
 - c. He held that the Bible’s affirmation Elijah would precede the Messiah’s coming (Mal 4:5) was precisely what had happened (Mk 9:11-13).
2. At His arrest He asked Peter a question confirming His belief in the inspiration of the Bible: “but how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Mt 26:54).
- a. He attributed the selection of Judas to the fulfillment of Psalm 41:9 (Jn 13:18).
 - b. He was so sure of the inspiration of the Old Testament that at His death He quoted Psalm 22:1 (Mt 27:46). “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”
 - c. Jesus recognized the Bible as originating in God’s mind in heaven.
 - d. To Jesus, the Son of God, the Bible was inspired.
3. Jesus conception of inspiration included what we call “verbal” and “plenary” components.
- a. That is “...The Biblical writers...were preserved from the errors that appear in other books and thus the resulting book, the Bible, is in all its parts the very Word of God, completely true in what it says regarding matters of fact and completely authoritative in its commands” (J. Gresham Machen).
 - b. Jesus consistently demonstrated this understanding of the nature of Scripture.
 - (1) He received and used the predictive elements of Old Testament Scripture and He acknowledged the credibility of the teaching and historical sections too.

- (2) Daniel's historicity (Mk 13:14); Jonah's fish experience (Mt 12:40); divine creation of Adam and Eve (Mt 19:4); the reality of Noah and the flood (Lk 17:26-27); Lot and the destruction of Sodom along with the fate of his wife (Lk 17:29,32); the widow, famine and drought of Elijah's day (Lk 4:25-26); the leprous Naaman (Lk 4:27) all attest Jesus viewed Scripture as inspired in all its parts.
- c. Old Testament inspiration for Jesus was also verbal.
- (1) "...the divine superintendence...extended to the verbal expression of the thoughts of the sacred writers, as well as to the thoughts themselves... Hence, in all the affirmations of Scripture of every kind there is no more error in the words of the original autographs than in the thought they were chosen to express" (Hodge and Warfield).
 - (2) Jesus clearly embraced this understanding.
 - (3) He based His powerful defense of the resurrection of the dead on the tense of the grammar of Exodus 3:6.
 - (a) If God was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at the moment He was speaking to Moses, though Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead, they must be existing beyond the grave (Mt 22:32).
 - (b) The entire argument depends on God having worded His statement to convey contemporaneity – continuing existence.
- d. When Jesus challenged the Pharisees to clarify the identity of the Messiah, He focused upon David's single use of the term "Lord" in Psalm 110:1 – "If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" (Mt 22:45); his whole point depends on verbal inspiration.
4. Jesus' allusion to the "jot and tittle" was a tacit statement of belief in verbal inspiration (Mt 5:18).

- a. “This indicates that not only the thought conveyed by Scripture, but also the individual words themselves, as valid vehicles of those thoughts, are possessed of infallible truth and will surely find their fulfillment and realization” (Archer).
 - b. The Scriptures not only contain, but are, the word of God, hence all their elements and affirmations are without error.
 - c. Jesus considered the Bible to be the plenary, verbally inspired word of the very God.
- B. On the basis of this divine origin, Jesus viewed the Bible as authoritative and binding on men.
- 1. When He described Abraham’s talk with the rich man in torment (hades), He quoted Abraham’s remark, “they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Lk 16:29).
 - 2. In doing so He showed high regard for the authority of the Bible as the ultimate spiritual guide.
 - 3. To Jesus the Bible was the ground of belief.
 - a. He declared, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken” (Lk 24:25).
 - b. He told the Jews, “You search the Scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life...had you believed Moses, you would have believed in Me: for he wrote of Me. But if you believe not his writings how shall you believe My words?” (Jn 5:39,46-47).
 - c. Jesus asserted the Old Testament bore authoritative divine witness to Himself and, in doing this, He bore witness to the authority to the Bible itself.
 - 4. Perhaps the most striking proof Jesus viewed the Bible as authoritative is where He ascribes legal authority to all Scripture – a view held by the people (Jn 12:34).
 - a. By maintaining the “Scriptures cannot be broken” (Jn 10:34-35) Jesus was asserting its authority cannot be annulled, denied or withstood.
 - b. The Bible’s authority is final and irrevocable.

- c. It governs all of life and will be fulfilled come what may.
 - d. Jesus' uniform attitude toward the Bible is one of absolute trust and confidence in its authority.
- C. Jesus viewed Scripture as propositional, absolute and objective.
1. Phrases like "it is written," "God said," "through the prophets," and "Scripture says" show Jesus and His apostles esteemed the Old Testament as divine and regarded its precepts absolute truth.
 2. As a boy of twelve, Jesus' handling of Scripture as an objective body of truth was evident when He astounded the doctors of the law with "his understanding and answers" (Lk 2:47).
 - a. This characteristic continued all His early life.
 - b. He contradicted His adversaries by declaring the source of religious error, their ignorance of the Bible (Mt 21:16; 22:29). "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God."
 3. The propositional nature of Scripture is seen in Christ's frequent use of isolate Old Testament statements to prove His assertions.
 - a. He used Psalm 110:1 to prove His lordship (Mk 12:36), "for David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."
 - b. He proved His death and resurrection were imminent by referring to Psalm 118:22 (Mk 12:10-22; cf. Acts 4:11).
 4. Older preachers opposed denominational error by teaching, defending and debating biblical truth.
 - a. They fully understood truth is objective – not subjective.
 - b. In a day when many "scholars" are ridiculing this behavior, "scholars" should realize older preachers were only emulating Jesus!
 - c. No one is a scholar unless he thinks and acts like the Lord.

III. JESUS' USE OF SCRIPTURE.

- A. At least three observations emerge from an examination of the Lord's handling of Scripture.
- B. He relied on the Bible heavily.
 - 1. Jesus quoted from the Old Testament frequently.
 - 2. He constantly stressed to His disciples the permeation of life by the written words of God (e.g., Lk 24:27).
 - 3. He consistently argued the certainty of the Bible's fulfillment in the world (e.g., Lk 24:44-46).
 - 4. He had a sense of the unity of history and a grasp of its wide sweep (e.g., Lk 11:50-51).
 - 5. It is time we got back to emulating Jesus' extensive reliance on Scripture.
- C. Jesus demonstrated remarkable rationality in His penetrating use of logic and sound argumentation.
 - 1. His first recorded responsible activity was a logical dialogue between Himself at age twelve and Jewish theologians.
 - 2. His logical prowess was apparent to the doctors and His parents (Lk 2:45-51).
 - 3. Immediately after His baptism Jesus faced Satan in the desert.
 - a. The devil posed three arguments, urging Christ to act on the basis of faulty reasoning.
 - b. Notice carefully the sequence of the disputation with special attention to the Lord's use of logic to prevail.
 - 4. Matthew 4:1-11: argument #1:
 - a. Satan: "If you're the Christ, then make these stones into bread."
 - b. Jesus offers authoritative Scripture – Deuteronomy 8:3 – as evidence to contradict Satan's conclusion:

“Man shall not live by bread alone but by God’s words.”

- c. In other words, satisfying the legitimate need of hunger must never take precedence over the need to obey God and attend to spiritual needs first.

5. Argument #2:

- a. Satan: “If you’re God’s Son, then throw yourself off this pinnacle.” This time Satan offers Scripture – Psalm 91:11-12 – as evidence to justify his proposal.
- b. Jesus counters with additional Scripture – Deuteronomy 6:16 – which demonstrates Satan’s misapplication of Psalm 91 to the current situation.
 - (1) “It is again written, ‘thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.’”
 - (2) In other words Psalm 91, though intended to convey the care and concern God manifests for the faithful, was not intended to apply to deliberately placing yourself in danger to force God to come to the rescue.
 - (3) God will take care of me, yes.
 - (4) But if I purposely walk in front of a train to see if God will prevent my injury – I’ll be struck.
 - (5) The only logical response to this challenge is the one Jesus gave: “Don’t tempt God! Don’t put Him to the test since it indicates your own lack of faith.”

6. Argument #3:

- a. Satan: “If you fall down and worship me, then I will give you all these kingdoms and glory.”
- b. Jesus again marshals scriptural proof showing the falsity of Satan’s position while reaffirming truth.

“Get away from me, Satan! For it is written, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’”

- c. In other words, based on Deuteronomy 6:13, it would be sinful to worship Satan or anyone else. God alone is worthy of worship.
- 7. To summarize this interchange Jesus used direct statements, accounts of action or examples and implication.
 - a. His allusion to the behavior of the Israelites, His use of direct statements from Deuteronomy and His applications to the situation based on the implication of the passages – all represent a method of interpretation analogous to the one generally operative among churches of Christ.
 - b. Brethren followed this method because Jesus did.
- 8. These examples are not isolated instances.
- 9. Jesus was so sensible that when hard-hearted Jews declared Him mad, others countered: “These are not the words of one who has a demon” (Jn 10:21).
 - a. The Lord consistently provided evidence to substantiate His claims (Jn 10:24-26,36-38).
 - b. No honest person can question Jesus’ consistent use of correct reasoning – logic.
 - c. He is the master logician who created our minds to operate rationally.
- D. Jesus made extensive use of implication.
 - 1. Many modern scholars are uncomfortable with Jesus’ use of what has been called “necessary inference.”
 - a. Some have called for an abandonment of implication in interpreting the Bible.
 - b. This is foolish in light of Jesus’ use of implication.
 - 2. Note a few additional instances of Jesus’ use of implication.
 - a. In Matthew 4:1-11 every case of the Lord’s use of the Old Testament to counter Satan requires proper reasoning to draw conclusions implied by the Lord’s statements.

- b. In Matthew 12:1-9 Jesus implied if the Pharisees accepted David, who violated Old Testament law, they should have no problem accepting His disciples who did not violate it.
 - c. In Matthew 22:41-45 in response to Jesus' question, the Pharisees identified the Christ as David's son, alluding to 2 Samuel 7:11-17.
 - (1) Jesus cited Psalm 110:1 to encourage the Pharisees to fit two distinct concepts together by reasoning correctly about them inferring what they implied.
 - (2) Psalm 110:1 in its original context refers to supremacy of the Messiah over the world; but here Jesus focused on an implication of the passage – that the Messiah would be both physically descended from David and yet Lord over David (Mt 1; Lk 3:23-38).
 - (3) He implied His Jewish hearers were refusing to recognize His lordship over them.
 - (4) By rejecting Him they were rejecting David's Lord – the Son of God.
3. Many other examples could be cited.
- a. In any case it is evident Jesus demonstrated several important interpretative principles in His personal use of the Bible.
 - b. He approached Scripture with the abiding conviction that it is the authoritative, absolute, propositional, plenary, verbally inspired word of God.
 - c. In handling Scripture Jesus heavily relied on extensive quotation of the Bible, proper reasoning and the use of implication.

CONCLUSION.

- A. Let us do as Jesus did.
- B. WWJD – What Would Jesus Do?