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Literary Models in Biblical Hermeneutics

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LITERARY MODELS IN BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

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Robert Russell Drake

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LITERARY MODELS IN BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

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INTRODUCTION

The problem of biblical interpretation is the relationship between the text and the interpreter.[1] The stance that the exegete is to take when he comes to the Christian Scripture is complicated by the nature of the material. It apparently bears a twofold character which can be illustrated in the expression "the Word of God, written."

On the one hand, this expression implies that the text is unique. Unlike other documents, it has a divine origin as the "inspired" Word from the Lord of the church. On the other hand, it is the Word of God, written by men. In so far as it is written, it is a document susceptible to the principles of interpretation common to other documents. In traditional language this is akin to saying that the text, in some sense, has both a transcendent origin and an immanent origin.[2] The text is both unique and objectively available for all men to examine. The problem for interpretive methodology is how to deal successfully with both of these perspectives.

In this paper we will examine, in survey fashion, the hermeneu-

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[1] This division between interpreter, text, and author is used because it not only covers every dimension of the hermeneutical situation but lends itself to the current discussions of the post-Bultmannians to be discussed later.

[2] "While the former [transcendence] holds God to be above man and his world, the latter holds that God or the divine is within human experience or within the world." John A. Hutchison, "Transcendence" in ed., Marvin Halverson, Handbook of Christian Theology, (New York, 1958), pp. 363-4. Once again, the use of these terms with respect to the Bible will allow a continuity with later discussions.

tical programs formulated by supernatural orthodoxy, [1] the natural

religion school, [2] and the attempts to find an alternative to these

in the post-Enlightenment period of the nineteenth and twentieth cen-

turies. A preliminary overview is in order to map out the direction

of the discussion and to suggest a common uncritical assumption held

by all major programs, viz, the use of non-biblical literary models for

interpreting the immanent character of the Scripture.

In orthodoxy, there was a tendency to emphasize the transcend-

ent origin of the text as the dominant principle for exegesis. The

acceptance of divine authorship allowed the biblical literature to be

treated as a unity. If "ultimately" there was one author, then a con-

tinuity of ideas could be assumed in the many writers.

With the emergence of the historical-critical method, the

dominant principle was shifted to the immanent. A rationalistic stance

denied orthodoxy's appeal to a God able to intervene in history. No

longer could one speak of a unified system of doctrine such as "the

theology of the Bible." The authors of the various books were individ-

uals with conflicting thoughts of their own. It would be more appro-

priate to speak of "the theology of Paul" and "the theology of John".

Thus, the shift from the divine to the human brought with it a shift

from the unity of biblical teaching to its diversity. If unity was to

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[1] "Orthodoxy" has reference to the Protestant interpretation of
the Bible which accepted the possibility of divine intervention into
history. This intervention included the miraculous activity of God on
behalf of his people and the communication of "information" to his
"inspired" writers.

[2] The natural religion school denied the miraculous intervention
of God preferring a rational description of the world in terms of un-
breakable laws derived from science.

be found, a redefinition of the nature of the transcendent was needed in terms of universal, ethical truths.

But just as orthodoxy did not adequately deal with the immanent diversity of the biblical text, so the rationalists did not deal adequately with the uniqueness of the text as the professed, revelatory Word of God. In so far as orthodoxy was concerned about a program of interpretation which would yield what God had to say to His church, it sought to reproduce or "explain" what the Bible said. In so far as rationalism became dominated by a substitute program of how to make the immanently interpreted text relevant to the "modern man," it abandoned any thorough programmatic attempt to reproduce the biblical content. In a parlance which became popular at the beginning of the twentieth century, rationalism sought to "understand" the text rather than "explain" it.[1]

What was common to both schools of thought was the methodological assumption that the Bible was to be interpreted as any other historical document. What makes orthodoxy appear characteristically different from the rationalistic school was the nature of the non-biblical literature with which the text was being compared. The two schools disagreed over the nature of the comparison not only because they were working on differing world views, but because they were operating differently off the models which were chosen to represent the other extra-biblical documents. Both schools were interested in

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[1] "Understanding and "explanation" belong to a distinction made by Wilhelm Dilthey and adopted by some theologians. Descriptive methods were said to explain the literary content but another method was needed in order to understand the "soul" of the writer. See James M. Robinson's "Hermeneutics Since Barth," in The New Hermeneutic, (New York, 1964), p. 20.

the "simplicity" or clarity of the text and both were seeking, in some sense, a descriptive or neutral approach to the Bible.

In 1835 with his publication of Leben Jesu, David Strauss thought, in true Hegelian fashion, that he had arrived at a proper synthesis between the supernaturalistic approach and the rationalist turned naturalist approach as exemplified in H.E.G. Paulus. What Strauss saw as common to both schools was the acceptance of the reliability of the eyewitness accounts we are supposed to find in the text. After the fashion of Reimarus, Strauss rejected the eyewitness theory. But whereas Reimarus held that the text was then reduced to a deception on the part of the disciples who wrote it, Strauss appealed to the idea of mythology.

Our contention is that Strauss did not provide a synthesis between the two approaches, both of which seemed from the standpoint of nineteenth century "modern man" as doomed to programmatic failure. Although attention was immediately paid to Strauss's view of mythology and the weakness of his position to account for its origin and application to the historical Jesus, the real weakness we shall contend is that Strauss did not correctly identify the nature of the common element between orthodoxy and rationalism. Surely, the eyewitness viewpoint was important, but he missed an even more controlling influence when he failed to examine non-biblical literary models used as sources for hermeneutical principles. In fact, the neo-Kantian liberalism which rejected Strauss, also failed to perceive the basic problem of literary paradigms and was thus doomed to repeat the program of the old natural religion school of rationalism.

The synthesis Strauss sought had to wait for the twentieth

century when Rudolf Bultmann would definitively challenge what had characterized biblical interpretation from the high point of seventeenth century scholasticism to the end of the nineteenth century exegetical works of Ethical Idealism. Bultmann rejected the model of classical literature as the paradigm for immanent interpretation.

Strauss' inability to find the synthesis illustrates a point for all exegetical programs of the Bible: when the interpreter seeks a neutral hermeneutical program by treating the text as he would other historical documents, he is actually reshaping the biblical text after the non-biblical literary models from which the principles were derived. In the history of biblical criticism, the application of these apparently "general principles" has resulted in a failure to "explain" the contents of the biblical literature and in a redefinition of the transcendent uniqueness of the text.

Having begun with the humanities and altered the nature of the biblical transcendent, eventually the new transcendent must, in turn, reinterpret the humanities. Orthodoxy had adopted the "canons of humanism" for its philological method. Nineteenth century criticism adopted the historical-critical method of the so-called "new humanism." Sensing the need for a "general hermeneutic" which will be applicable to all the humanities, the post-Bultmannian New Hermeneutic of Fuchs and Ebeling has begun with a redefinition of the transcendent and seeks to use this as a model for reinterpreting the nature of the humanities.

After examining the consequences of a starting point in the humanities, we will want to explore a variation of the re-evaluation of the liberal arts suggested by the New Hermeneutic.

I. HUMANISM: THE REINTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT

A. The Hermeneutical Situation of Orthodox Protestantism

1. The Interpreter

Strauss, like a good many of the nineteenth century critics, belonged to the tradition of Lutheran theology.[1] The supernaturalism he was rejecting had developed a precise formulation of doctrine by emphasizing what we have called the transcendent origin of the text.

A common ground was assumed between the interpreter and the biblical writer. First, both lived in a world created by God. Orthodoxy gave expression to this belief in its "supernaturalism." The same God who created the world could intervene into its so-called natural processes. Miracles such as the resurrection of the dead were then possible.

It is this supernatural intervention which also provided a common program for the interpreter and writer. Both were concerned with the redemptive work of Christ and the righteous life of the church which was supposed to follow.

In opposition to the sacerdotalism of the Roman Church, Protestantism laid claim to the immediate nature of God's grace to the believer without the mediation of an institution.[2] This immediacy was

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[1] Jaroslav Pelikan in From Luther to Kierkegaard, (St. Louis, 1950), locates the contributions of significant theologians within the Lutheran tradition.

[2] B.B. Warfield, The Plan of Salvation, (Grand Rapids), pp. 18f.

also present in the individual believer's approach to the Scripture. Rather than depending on the authoritative interpretations of the Church as institution, each man was allowed access to the text. It was a revelation from God of what God wanted each man to know for his salvation. Hence, its message was clear and simple.[1] Interpretation took place within the context of a monologue between God and His people.[2]

2. The Text

Orthodoxy had a program which would reject the fourfold method of interpretation used by the Roman Church[3] and would allow for biblical simplicity of meaning. On the one hand, justice was done to the transcendent origin of the text by claiming the principle of Sola Scriptura or the "analogy of Scripture."[4] This expression stressed the unified

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[1] John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. by Henry Beveridge, (Grand Rapids, 1962), I,7,i.

[2] The selection of the word "monologue" will contrast with the later positions of "dialogue" between the text and the interpreter.

[3] The fourfold method consisted of the etymological or literal meaning, the allegorical or worldly symbolic meaning. The anagogical or other worldly meaning, and the tropological or moral meaning. The first two categories were applied to both Scripture and secular literature. A description of its application is given by William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism: A Short History, (New York, 1957), p. 147: "...allegorical and etymological meanings were naturally present in poetic texts and deserved explication. For here grammar was allied as a method to view which we have already noted in ancient philosophers, in Church fathers as exegetes of the Scriptures, and in medieval theologians, the view according to which the created world in its radiant order and hierarchy is God's symbolic book. The world is the shell or cover (cortex) of an inner meaning (nucleus), the veil over a hidden meaning, the entrance to such a meaning, the lower symbol of a higher meaning."

[4] John Murray, "Introduction" in Calvin's Institutes. A current exposition of the term for biblical preaching has been given by Sidney Greidanus in Sola Scriptura, (Kampen, 1970).

whole of the Bible which had to be taken into consideration during interpretation. Exegeting "Scripture by Scripture" provided a unity so that clear sections could be used to explain the more nebulous. However, it also meant that even the clear passages could not be treated apart from their context in the whole of Scripture. In a pointed sense, interpretation was theologically oriented.

On the other hand, this analogy of Scripture was influenced by the immanent approach. As the struggles between the Protestant variations such as the Lutheran and the Reformed intensified, the Scriptures were treated primarily for their doctrinal interest.[1] The necessity of providing textual support for different dogmatic positions has been popularly referred to as the "proof text" method.[2]

We have a prime example of this approach in Philip Melancthon, the systematizer of Martin Luther's theology. As it was necessary for Melancthon to put Luther's scattered pronouncements into an organized form, he borrowed the rhetorical structure of classification from Cicero called loci.[3] We may summarize this method as a topical arrangement of material around a central theme or unifying idea. It was necessary for the Lutheran church to know what its namesake had to say about Christology so one looked for the data, the scattered pronouncements, and

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[1] Albert Schweitzer, Paul and His Interpreters, (New York, 1912), p. 2.

[2] Ibid.

[3] See Pelikan, p. 32, for the selection of the loci method as a reaction by Lutheranism to Aristotelian philosophy.

organized them around the locus of the person of Christ.[1] Likewise, the debate over the sacraments provided a _locus_, a central theme or topic for organization. The result goes beyond the _Sentences_ of Peter Lombard and gives the church the first thorough approach to a "systematic theology"[2] born out of theological rhetoric.

Melancthon also applied the same _loci_ method to the biblical text.[2] The apparent topical arrangement of Paul's letter to the Romans seemed to easily lend itself to this kind of treatment. More than just a method for organizing theology, it became a method for exegesis.

This _loci_ method which gives birth to systematic theology and continues to flourish in the church, was itself born out of the classical model of rhetoric. Melancthon was not the only theologian of the day trained in the classics.[3] What characterized the work of Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin was their grounding in the classical literature. In fact, Zwingli was able to arrive at essentially the same central teaching of justification by faith alone, independently from Luther's influence because of his classical education.[4] What opened the text for them was the philological study of the Greek New Testament.[5] Biblical ex-

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[1] A.C. McGiffert, _Protestant Thought Before Kant_, (New York, 1962), p. 142. McGiffert also mentions that Reformed theology had by this time a rival organization of Scripture in Calvin's _Institutes_. Pelikan refers to the different approaches called "analytic" and "synthetic" as used by the Reformed and Lutheran churches respectively, p. 62f.

[2] Pelikan, p. 29.

[3] Pelikan, p. 32.

[4] John T. McNeil, _The History and Character of Calvinism_, (New York, 1967), pp. 30f.

[5] Pelikan, p. 30.

egesis was the application of the "canons of humanism."[1]

Rhetoric and philology respectively shaped theology and the exegesis of the Scripture. The text was actually interpreted as other historical documents.[2] But the other documents were classical literature. That is, the principles for philological study were derived from the classics and then treated as general rules applicable to all literature including the Scripture. In today's jargon, we would say they provided the tools for a descriptive methodology.[3] It was a strong immanent program but it took its toll in two ways.

First, the text itself and the writers of the text were shaped by the classics. Just as Melancthon saw in the _Romans_ epistle a "rhetorocal" structure, so orthodoxy in general assumed that behind the epistles lay a systematic theology. Just as the classical writers were rationally oriented, so it was assumed that Paul could be understood by organizing his letters. Just as the classical writers worked with what we may call a logical system, so it was assumed that Paul too had a theology which was logically shaped.[4] The work of exegesis and biblical interpretation led directly then into systematic theology or dogmatic interest. The union between Paul's thought and the thought of the later church would

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[1] Richard P. McKeun, "Renaissance and Method," in _Studies in the History of Ideas_, III (New York, 1935), pp. 71f.

[2] Robert M. Grant, _A Short History of the Interpretation of the Bible_, (New York, 1948), p. 131. Grant emphasizes Luther's concern for the grammatical-historical approach.

[3] George Ladd, "The Search for Perspective," _Interpretation_, XXV (January, 1971), p. 48: "However, we would agree with Stendahl that the first task of biblical theology is historical and descriptive: to expound the theology found in the Bible."

[4] See Pelikan, p. 33 for the reintroduction of Aristotelianism into Lutheran theology.

be found in the notion of system or rhetorical structure of organization.
If one denied that behind Paul's writings there was such a system, the
alternative was not a structure of a different character, but a denial
of structure altogether. In that case, since a common task could not be
found, theology became the work of the church. If Paul as biblical
writer was not aware of the total scheme, at least the church could be.
From the unorganized data of the biblical text could come the structure
created by the organizing church.

The appeal to logical structure meant that all the biblical
writers were engaged in providing evidence for the same system. The
result was a general "leveling" process. Emphasizing the continuity
and unity of Scripture because of its single divine authorship, the
immanent origin of the text became subsumed beneath the transcendent.
The use of classical philology did not adequately provide for discovering
differences among the writers.

Secondly, to what extent is there a parallel between the produc-
tive or creative imagination of the classical writers and the biblical
writers? Having depended on the formal structural similarity of theol-
ogy and exegesis, that is, the similarity in the ways both think, the
door has been opened for an identification of the classical imagination
with the imagination of the biblical writers. This second step was taken
by the natural religion school. The comparison was already being made by
the seventeenth century mythographers.[1]

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[1] Mythography studies the origin and interpretation of ancient
myths.

3. The Writer

For orthodoxy, the union between the transcendent and the immanent origins of the text was found in a doctrine of revelation with inspired writers as its recipient. We need not argue that those engaged in mythography in the seventeenth century were necessarily orthodox in this respect. But the nature of their work with the ancient Greek myths left them open to the charge of studying heresy with benefit.[1]

The myths then had to be justified to the Christian public in much the same way they were justified in ancient Greece itself. In book II (378d) of The Republic, for example, Plato taught that the immoral tales of mythology were actually allegories which the young were not capable of understanding. Euhemerus lent his mane to a type of allegorical interpretation which treated some myths as fanciful descriptions of actual, historical events.[2] Behind the labors of the mythological Hercules, one could expect to find the historical Hercules. The actual deeds of this man had been so celebrated by poetic flattery that it was difficult to distinguish the fact from the fiction.[3]

What would allow for such moralizings or historical quests?

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[1] A. Zwerdling, "Mythographers and the Romantic Revival of Greek Myth," PMLA, LXXIX (September, 1964), pp. 447f.

[2] Wimsatt and Brooks, p. 78.

[3] Zwerdling, p. 448. The different ways in which mythology could be interpreted can be found in Jean Seznec's The Survival of the Pagan Gods, (New York). The methods applied by the seventeenth century mythographers were simply updated versions of the medieval interpretations. It is Seznec's thesis that the ancient myths were able to survive the Middle Ages and become available for the renaissance writers only because their literal meanings were supplemented with "higher truths."

These types of exegeses operated with a particular view of poetic imag-
ination.[1] Mythology was the product of the poet. If we are to understand
what the mythology was "really" saying, we would have to understand the
creative, imaginative powers of the poetic author. It was the poet who
covered the historical events with embellishments. It was the poet who
wrote an apparently immoral tale with a deeper meaning. His sources for
imaginative expression were either moral or historical truths. His work
was essentially one of illustration or decoration of what could be arrived
at by rational processes. In fact, the work of the poet's imagination
assumes the rational discovery or the moral principle or historical event.
Myth was poetic, and behind the poetic was a rational view of the world.

The method of exegeting Greek myths as the embellishments of
historical events, was adopted by some orthodox mythographers as an apol-
ogetical device.[2] If it could be shown that the myths were poetic dis-
tortions of the actual happenings recorded in the Old Testament, then
the faith will be vindicated. The biblical tales became the archetypal
sources for the Greek imagination.[3]

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[1] See David Daiches' Critical Approaches to Literature, (New
York, 1956), p. 24. By "poetic imagination" we will not limit ourselves
to metrical verse. We will use poetry as literary critics do to stand
for the whole of imaginative orcreative literature. Literary criticism
will concern us in so far as it deals with theories about the nature of
art and theories about what constitutes the task of the artist. The
nature of poetic imagination will then depend upon the nature of poetry
as such.

[2] Albert J. Kuhn, "English Deism and the Development of Romantic
Mythological Syncretism," PMLA, LXXI (December, 1956), p. 1097. Kuhn
says: "Syncretic mythology in the Romantic period had its principle
roots in the seventeenth century Christian apologetics; but its char-
acter and form were determined primarily by English deism."

[3] Kuhn, p. 1101.

B. The Hermeneutical Situation of the Natural Religion School

1. The Interpreter

What carries over from orthodoxy to the natural religion school
is the _loci_ methodology for theology and exegesis. What does not last is
the dogmatic program of supernaturalism. Gradually a new "dogmatism"
is formed and a new program for interpreting the Scripture as historically
relevant replaces the program of listening to the transcendent words in
the immanent words.

It would be difficult to discover the roots of the natural religion
school. We do know that after fighting on the battle fields and from
the lecterns, literature appeared pleading for religious tolerance.[1] It
may be helpful to use this generalization as a lead into the first stage
of the natural religion school.

In the seventeenth century, famous for its orthodox scholasticism,
we also find a movement trying to unify Christianity. Let us call this
first stage "rationalistic supernaturalism."[2] Surely, it was said, there
must be some things which believers may agree upon. As reasonable men,
they should be able to search out the common doctrines.

Of course, we cannot abstract this tendency from the rationalistic
direction of philosophy. In Germany, we have the system of Leibnitz and
Wolff, and in England we dind the empirical tradition developing from
Hobbes and Bacon.

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[1] Wilhelm Windelband, _A History of Philosophy_, II., (New York, 1958), p. 486.

[2] McGiffert, p. 189.

John Tillotson, John Locke, and Samuel Clarke all agreed that not only could Christians unite over common truths, but Christianity as it is recorded in the Bible and defended by the church could be reconciled with the products of natural philosophy. For Christianity, this means that reason may distinguish between what is essential to the faith and what is non-essential. Surely, faith in Jesus Christ as the Messiah and repentence to lead a righteous life are basic as over against the non-essential doctrinal trappings of dogmatic or systematic theology. With respect to Christianity and philosophy, we may say that the Bible as revelation supplements the truths we can arrive at by way of reason alone.[1] In traditional language, this could be called the difference between special revelation as over against general revelation. For these men, the general revelation could yield a natural theology abstracted by reason, but there were some things which were "above reason" and could not be arrived at without the aid of revelation.

During the second stage of natural religion, John Tindal, Thomas Chubbs, and Thomas Morgan developed a form of Deism.[2] They believed that Christianity and philosophy could be brought closer together by claiming that what was essential to the faith was that which was derived from reason alone.[3] Instead of using reason to supplement biblical revelation,

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[1] Mc Giffert p. 206. "He (Locke) recognized that there was much in traditional Christianity contrary to sound reason, and he therefore examined the Scriptures in considerable detail to discover the essence of Christianity as taught by Christ and His apostles."

[2] Windelband, p. 488. "...Toland is their leader in so far as he first undertook to strip Christianity, that is, the universal truths of reason, of all mysteries, and reduce it, as regards the knowledge which it contains, to the truths of the natural light, that is, to a philosophical theory of the world."

[3] Mc Giffert, p. 212.

reason now became the criterion by which Scripture was judged to be reve-
lation. Rationalistic supernaturalism had tried to produce evidence for
revelation in the recorded miracles and in the fulfillment of prophecy.
If the essential nature of the faith was derived from reason, however,
then the whole of Christian dogmatics could easily be lost to the non-
essential.

There were interesting apologetical reactions to this approach.
Joseph Butler challenged the criticism of Scripture by comparing it to
the "book" of nature. Since there were apparent "flaws" in the so-called
rational structure of things, why could not one overlook the difficulties
found in Scripture? Taking a totally different approach, William Law
denied any criterion such as reason which could be used to judge whether
a text was revelation. Instead, he appealed to the self-testifying
authority of the record, itself.[1] It was the criticism of Hume, however,
which agreed with Butler's comparison between nature and Scripture, and
decided to abandon both in the name of skepticism.

Deism had a famous representative in France with Voltaire. His
position, however, was more of a negative attack on the clergy than a
positive program of biblical explanation.

In Germany, we find Reimarus and Lessing equally individual in
their development of Deistic themes. Most influential for later theology
is Immanuel Kant.

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[1] McGiffert, p. 231.

2. The Text

We can best summarize the approach of rationalistic Deism by looking at its discontinuity with the biblical text and then its continuity. Because it began with a naturalistic view of the world and in the name of reason, rejected any special revelation, a gap was created between the biblical text and its interpreter. The writer stood in a world of divine intervention. The interpreter belonged to the law boundaries of the Machine. If one took the rationalistic stance, he separated himself from the world view of the biblical writers.

But the very rationalism which tore them asunder was called upon to unite the interpreter with Jesus, himself, by reinterpreting the nature of the transcendent. According to rationalism, the text was actually a misunderstanding of who Jesus was. He had an affinity with modern man, for He was the great representative of the natural religion school. Jesus called all men to recognize the truth which was before their eyes in nature. Jesus perceived the universal truths and acted upon them, thus becoming the prime exemplar for ethical action.[1] Just as the interpreter had to peer behind the poetic embellishments of Old Testament mythology to find the abstracted universals, so the reader must understand the allegorical character of Jesus and the text.

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[1] McGiffert, p. 214. Tindal is quoted as saying: "The only difference between morality and religion is that the former is acting according to the reason of things considered in themselves, while the latter is acting according to the same reason of things considered as the will of God."

3. The Writer

Morgan illustrated his position in universal truths with the approach he took to the problem of mythology.[1] Whereas orthodoxy had tried to locate the biblical stories as archetypes, Morgan reduced these stories to myth alongside the Greek accounts. This syncretistic approach created the inclusive category of myth in general. Finding historical archetypes was not the only way to deal with myth. One could also claim as the ancients themselves had done, that myths were but allegories of moral and philosophical truths. An affinity could be found between the classical rationalism which used the poetic as illustrative and modern Deistic rationalism. Instead of treating myth as the poetic account of historical events, it was treated as a poetic account of ethical truths. Greek mythology and biblical mythology together could, through critical eyes of reason, yield certain general truths which are common to all men. This was also the program of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who formulated his famous five points of Deism.[2]

However, a reservation had to be introduced. On one hand, one may say that what is important are the universal truths of reason and history is merely contingent truth. This would allow an identification of biblical and Greek mythology. But on the other hand, one could not say that there was no historical Jesus. Christianity would then be inseparable from the religions of the world which concentrate on pure

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[1] Kuhn, pp. 1101f.

[2] Kuhn, pp. 1101f. McGiffert lists the five principles from Lord Herbert's De Religione Gentilium, (1663) "...that there is one supreme God, that He ought to be worshipped, that virtue is the principal part of worship, that we ought to repent of our sins, and that there are rewards and punishments, both now and hereafter." (p. 212).

fictions. The historical Jesus was needed as the exemplar, the concrete possibility that such an ethical life could be realized by all men.

This then is the program of the natural religion school. Jesus was relevant for man in the rational world by being the example of the new transcendent realm of universal truths "revealed" through the natural light of reason. The method of discontinuity and continuity was based on the controlling assumption of affinity between the imagination of the pre-classical myth makers and biblical writers. When appeal is made to myth in general, Scripture is treated as other historical documents in a truly immanent fashion. But the transcendent is no longer unique, so its claim to special status is ignored. Concentration on "understanding" the text from a modern stance, no constructive program is formulated for an "explanation" or "description" of biblical theology.

Arthur O. Lovejoy has shown the parallelism between this eight-eenth century age of deism and the developments in classical literary theory.[1] Both of them were rooted, he claims, in the same rationalistic milieu of the Enlightenment. We have suggested how this comparison could be expanded. Having adopted the classical philology common to orthodoxy, the natural religion school then went on to adopt the classical view of poetic or creative imagination and further subsume the Bible under the classical image. That is, from orthodoxy came the comparison between classical literature and biblical literature, and from the natural religion school came the comparison between the classical theory of poetic imagination and biblical imagination. Having abandoned the doctrine of divine inspiration for Scripture against the

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[1] "The Parallel of Deism and Classicism," Modern Philology, XXIX (February, 1932), pp. 281-99.

backdrop of supernaturalism, the only apparent category left for an immanent origin of the Bible was poetry. Not being able to compete with the truths of science and natural philosophy, Scripture became poetic truth. Such theories of poetic truth rightly belong to literary criticism and in this case a classical view.

From orthodoxy, the _loci_ method carried over into the nineteenth century biblical criticism. From the natural religion school, the program of universal truths carried over though the mediation of Kant to become specifically a transcendent, ethical principle. The distinction continued between what was essential in the text, that is, what was acceptable to rationalism, and what was non-essential because it was unacceptable.

We may note that this parallelism between the biblical mentality and the poetic imagination forced biblical exegesis into an anthropological discussion of the idea of revelation and inspiration. It is true that orthodoxy's doctrine of inspiration emphasized the subjective character of revelation, but the kind of description given to it by the natural religion school altered its basic intention. Revelation and inspiration became biblical ways of saying "poetic inspiration" or creativity.

But if one begins with this view of revelation as poetic inspiration, then one misses the impact of the large number of instances for which revelation is not concerned with the subjective self-disclosure of the writer, but rather an objective, cosmic, historical, and even physical self-disclosure of God. If the _Parousia_ of Christ is not the paradigm for Paul's view of revelation, it is at least significant

enough to make us hesitate in identifying his own "theory" of revela-
tion with a totally internal and subjective view. What underlies Paul's
own subjective self-disclosure is the objective revelation which will
take place in the End Times.[1]   In fact, the revelatory character of this
outstanding climactic event of the Old Testament Day of the Lord becomes
the revelation and manifestation and showing forth and making known of
the Lord, himself. In so far as Christ has become as the first phase
of that Day, He reveals God. In so far as Paul receives the Spirit of
that cosmic event, then he is able to interpret its meaning to the
church.

Both Paul and Peter are working with a contrast between the
Foundation of the world and the End of the world.[2]   What underlies their
usage of the words "reveal," "manifest," and "make known in showing" is
that what was God's secret or mystery was hidden from the Foundation of
the world but in the End Times will be revealed.[3]   At the consummation
God will unveil Himself. But the End Times have begun with the resur-
rection of Christ as He was the image of the Father. Paul, living in
the End Times, has received the Spirit to proclaim the nature of God's
hidden mystery and therefore interpret the work of Christ and make
known the plan of God.[4]

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[1] Cf. I Corinthians 1:7; and Colossians 3:4.

[2] I Peter 1:5; 20.

[3] Cf. Romans 2:5; 16:26; and Colossians 1:26.

[4] Cf. Ephesians 3:4-12; and Titus 1:3.

II. THE NEW HUMANISM: THE REINTERPRETATION OF THE TEXT

A. The Hermeneutical Situation of Nineteenth Century Criticism

    1. The Interpreter

Rationalism had taken two forms throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In Germany, it followed the Platonic emphasis on mathematics in the philosophy of Leibnitze and his disciple Wolff. In England, it was empirically rooted in the scientific tradition. Applied to the philosophical problems of epistemology, these two approaches appeared to be antithetical.

German rationalism began with the a priori knowledge in the mind. By way of the ontological argument for the existence of the Good God, some rationalists could guarantee the identical structure of the mind and the world. [1] Empiricism claimed it could guarantee that identity by avoiding the a priori categories and letting experience write upon the tabula rasa of the mind.

Hume's skepticism of the empirical tradition challenged Kant to awaken from his dogmatic slumbers and attempt the revolutionary synthesis of these two streams of thought for epistemology.

It is not what he synthesizes which attracts our attention in biblical interpretation, but rather the nature of the synthesis itself. This framework was directly related to the classical program of rationalism and supernaturalism as well as to the schools of criticism which

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[1] See Albert G. Ramsperger's "Early Modern Rationalism" in History of Philosophical Systems, ed. V. Ferm, (New Jersey, 1965), pp. 240-52.

were to follow him into the nineteenth century. Kant provided a philosophical framework for the reinterpretation of the nature of the transcendent.

Earlier, we mentioned that in trying to do justice to the transcendent and the immanent characteristics of the biblical text, the older philology with its loci method unconsciously structured the Sola Scriptura after its own image. With the coming shift to the historical-critical method, the usurping of the transcendent would be complete. The question to be examined is, to what extent can one intelligibly speak of the transcendent? Will it be, as the eighteenth century rationalists had said, the realm of universal truths? A new philosophical framework was needed to allow for both a throughly immanent critique of the text, and yet at the same time, preserve its uniqueness as the Word of God.

To this end we need to know of Kant's distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal realms. The first was the area of science. It elaborates the presuppositions of Newtonian science as it was concerned with description and explanation of the physical world. This phenomenal realm was also called the ectypal realm. It begins with the multiplicity of experience and through a network of theoretical connections based on cause and effect approximates the One or the Whole. Whenever this ectypal kind of reasoning sought to incorporate the Whole and see the unity of nature, the result was antinomy.

The categories of phenomenal or ectypal reasoning did not apply to the realm of the noumenal or the archetypal. Since the notion of cause and effect and connective laws were located in the mind as structuring categories of our experience, it may be the case that man

is actually free in his moral actions. The archetypal is the area of
man's freedom of will but it is also the area of ultimate unity.

We can see that in so far as the study of philology as science
is applied to the text of the Scripture, it examines that aspect of
the text which is open to phenomenological investigation. The tran-
scendent is actually the archetypal which is approached through Kant's
ethics of the categorical imperative. Having translated the transcendent
into the noumenal, he made room for "faith" beside knowledge. But
this gave the transcendent an anthropological character in so far as
it manifested itself in man's life as moral duty.

Kant applied this phenomenal-noumenal structure to the task of
theology and exegesis.[1] A twofold distinction was made between the
philological approach to the text and the philosophical. The first
recovered what the text had to say. (Not only did Kant stand in the
natural religion school, but the idea of philology which he used was
strictly the eighteenth century rationalistic approach. For Kant, it
was merely the critical study of ancient texts and languages. The
philological revolution which was in the air had not effected him.)[2]

The philosophical approach to the text attempted to discover
what the text "meant." The stance was that of the modern rational-
istic man who was unable to accept the biblical world view of super-

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[1] In his Introduction to Schweitzer's The Quest of the Historical
Jesus, (New York, 1968 Edition), James M. Robinson discusses Kant's
distinction between philology and philosophy. He also mentions that in
the beginning of the twentieth century, Hans Windisch saw criticism as
having carried out Kant's program. See p. xvii.

[2] H. Holborn, "History and the Study of the Classics," Journal
of the History of Ideas, XIV (January, 1953), p. 43: "Kant defined
philology in a very typical eighteenth century fashion as the critical
knowledge of books and languages."

naturalism, but yet seeks to know whether the Bible has any meaning for him. Instead of the monologue which orthodoxy had envisioned between the text and the believer, Kant saw a dialogue between text and interpreter. Philologically one read what the text said, but philosophically, what it said could be used as a vehicle to modern man in his own situation. The text then became a receptacle, or in his own terms, the vehicle for the presuppositions of the reader.[1]

The Kantian program stayed with the Biblical criticism of the nineteenth century. It was the central accusation of Albert Schweitzer, as he studied the critical lives of Jesus and theologies of Paul, that without exception Jesus and Paul had been re-created in the images of the interpreters. A corollary to this critique is the failure to construct a descriptive New Testament Theology.[2]

2. The Text

Toward the end of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, a change was taking place in the character of philological studies. This change can be seen illustrated in the work of the mythographers. Instead of using their studies in an apologetical fashion, the scholars sought

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[1] Karl Barth, Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl, (New York, 1959), pp. 155f.

[2] Schweitzer, Paul and His Interpreters, p. 237. About Pauline studies Schweitzer says: "Writers went to work with an almost inconceivable absence of plan, and wanted to offer solutions before they had made clear to themselves the scope of the problem. Instead of seeking a definite diagnosis, they treated the symptom separately, with whatever means happen to come to hand."

objectivity in the so-called "dictionary" approach.[1]   Instead of taking their stance within the church, they appealed to a neutral or descriptive method to avoid value judgments about their mythological subject matter. This objectivity prepared the way for what we would consider to be the more truly "scientific."

Mythography was only part of the total picture. The study of the classics as a whole was changing. The widely used "canons of human- ism" was becoming the "new philology."[2]   It was no longer adequate in dealing with ancient texts to limit the scope of philology to the crit- ical examination of language and text.

Gibbon had studied the fall of the Roman empire by searching for the original sources of the event. Impressed by this method, Niebuhr imitated it for the study of political movements.[3]   But the subject matter was not to be limited to political history alone. Philologists were impressed by the need to see the ancient texts in the total con- text of the cultural situation and began to employ the source critical approach to reconstruct the environment of the documents they studied.[4] The older philology of grammar and rhetoric was in the process of be- coming the new philology of historical criticism.

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[1] Zwerdling, pp. 452f. Mythographers compiled reference works which merely listed the tales.

[2] Holborn, p. 43: "Ranke and most other German historians of the first half of the nineteenth century were trained in classics and the methods of criticism and interpretation which the scholars of the classics had developed from the foundation of research in modern and medieval history."

[3] Holborn, p. 42.

[4] Holborn, p. 43. F.A. Wolff is mentioned as one who called for the study of background materials in interpreting classical literature.

When philology was limited to something roughly parallel to "textual criticism,"[1] orthodoxy heartily absorbed it as essential to its hermeneutical program. Philology was the neutral or descriptive or explanatory science applicable to all documents irrespective of origin. But now the new philology of historical criticism looked into the very origin of the text as part of its explanatory program. It examined the situational context from which the ideas and form of the text arose.

If historical criticism was indeed interested in looking into the cultural milieu, then it might be expected that the distinction between classical and biblical literature would be seen. The new philology provided a tool for exposing the discontinuity between the two kinds of writing.

But on the other hand, since the method was formulated in its efforts to understand the classical milieu and its documents, this new approach to an immanent methodology would assume that biblical literature could be understood and analyzed in the same fashion. Could it be that the model for the historical-critical study of the biblical text was the historical-critical study of the classics?

The goal of the new philology was the production of a new humanism which would be broader than the classicism of the past and include universal history.[2] The method was moving philology beyond

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[1] Textual criticism has two major functions. External criticism reconstructs the best possible text using extant manuscripts. Internal criticism is a literary analysis which determines the best reading on the basis of its coherence with the author's ideas expressed elsewhere. See Bruce M. Metzger, The Text of the New Testament, (New York, 1964).

[2] See Holburn, pp. 40f.

the classical model to incorporate all literature not only as possible
objects of study but as contributions to the new idea of humanism.
Rather than draw values from classical antiquity alone and universalize
from these values, the historical method would provide for a true
universalism of subject matter.

The older philology was assumed to work descriptively alongside
the confessional statement that Scripture was divine in origin. We
have already seen that there can be no carefully mapped out area for
the transcendent and the immanent. They are different ways by which the
whole text was viewed. The philologically immanent approach encroached
upon the transcendent, however, and using the classical model of lit-
erature it structured the biblical text and its theologies. That older
philology which found expression in the loci approach never was a neutral
or descriptive method in itself.

How much more so is this the case with the new philology? The
need for general hermeneutics is broadened beyond the classics to incor-
porate all literature. It is a radically immanent concern which encroached
upon the transcendent just as surely as did the older philology.

How to preserve the transcendent and speak intelligibly of the
Word of God, was supposedly supplied by Kant's theory of the noumenal.
But what could be said about the imagination of the biblical writers?
If criticism followed Kant, it would make sense to continue an allegorical
version. But with the new humanism of the historical method, criticism
could no longer use the classical imagination as a paradigm for all
cultures. A new understanding of imagination in general was needed.

The tension which remained in nineteenth century criticism was
the effect to synthesize the Kantian transcendent with the new view of

imagination required by the historical method.

3. The Writer

a. Schleiermacher

The need for a new understanding of the writer's imagination was met by Friedrich Schleiermacher. He accepted the historical method and hence felt compelled to reformulate the doctrine of revelation.[1] The problem, suggested above, was how to combine this new view with the Kantian transcendent.

The first thing Schleiermacher is noted for is the emphasis he gives to the nature of Christianity as a positive historical religion.[2] This is important against the background of the natural religion school which focused on the abstract universal truths common to all religions. Christianity and Christ in particular, served as the paradigm of those truths. Schleiermacher called attention to the contribution made by Jesus in the history of religion and centered on his individuality rather than his generality as Manhood par excellance.

His second contribution is related to the romanticism in his thought. Just as he accepted the new philology of historical criticism, so he separated himself from the rationalistic and classical view of poetic imagination. The roots for understanding his interpretation of revelation lay in this shift from the classical to the romantic.

It used to be that the labels "classical" and "romantic" were set up as antithetical. This opposition seemed to suggest a dependence

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[1] Alan Richardson, The Bible in the Age of Science, (London, 1961), pp. 79f.

[2] Richardson, p. 81.

upon a model derived from physics to explain historical causation.[1]

Today we see the romantic as the next stage in an evolution or process.

The seeds of the romantic movement were already present in the eighteenth

century period of neo-classicism. If we try to define the relation-

ship between classicism and romanticism as the contrasts between di-

dactic and hedonistic or cognitive and emotional, it will always seem

that they are but half of the total picture. Taken together they would

yield a comprehensive theory of literary criticism.

When we indicate that there is a definite tension between the

labels of "classical" and "romantic," we are referring to their views

of creative imagination. For example, Gilbert Highet points out the

romantic use of Greek mythology and thereby establishes a continuity

between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. What will be empha-

sized in our discussion is the discontinuity between the centuries over

the nature of Greek myth. The same tales were used by both schools

but their significance had changed. To discover the nature of this

new significance, we may follow the suggestion of Morse Peckham. At

the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth,

a "cultural convergence" was taking place in the humanities.[2]

The apparent inadequacy of Rationalism to deal with real life

plus the shock of the French Revolution, reduced the Machine-like world

of the Enlightenment to a "wasteland." On this wasteland, the arts and

philosophy were trying to build by seeking a new orientation.

Peckham feels it is useless to attempt a reduction to Kant as

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[1] Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition, (Oxford, 1949), pp. 355f.

[2] Morse Peckham, Beyond the Tragic Vision, (New York, 1962), p. 160.

the primary influence. The whole of the humanities was going through
a transition. It could be summarized as the shift away from the ex-
ternal world as the source of value and meaning to a new foundation in
the self. Kant was but the philosophical articulation of this common
re-orientation.

This new understanding of the sources of value was to combine
with the new conceptions of folk-poetry and myth. Douglas Bush points
out,

> Herder widened and deepened the conception of the improvising
> bard Homer by linking it with his general theory of _Volkslieder_.
> Not only were saga, _Marchen_, and myth, all products of the folk-
> mind confron ed with nature, but poetry, myth, and religion were,
> if not quite identical, at any rate closely related.[1]

This re-orientation in the source of value and in the very
nature of imaginative literature can be brought out in the contrast
between the neo-classical and the so-called romantics.

> In the neo-classic age in England, as we have seen, mythology had
> been atrophied through being cut off from religion and "truth".
> The Augustan Deists had found in nature a revelation of God, but
> they had in general failed to re-create the mythological imagin-
> ation, though some direct or indirect disciples of Shaftesbury...
> did have a "primitive" vision of a mythological world. Now in
> Germany, mythology of all kinds gained a new depth and inwardness
> when it was seen as not only a primitive but a permanently fruit-
> ful phase in the religious evolution of humanity...Thus about 1800
> a set of widely various but related impulses, from advancing Greek
> scholarship to a new primitivistic conception of the imagination,
> of myth, of nature, and of religion, these made not only possible
> but inevitable, a revival of poetry inspired by a rich mythological
> symbolism.[2]

Among the German romantics who grew out of the Storm and Stress
period, Schleiermacher plays an important role with his perception of

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[1] _Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry_,
(Cambridge, 1937), p. 47.

[2] Bush, pp. 47, 49.

the universe. His ideas spread among his friends to influence Schelling

and Schlegel on poetry and Hardenburg on religion. Oskar Wazel shows us

how Schleiermacher's ideas were applied.

> ...Schelling held in 1801 that no work of an artist could rival the absolute work of art, the universe. Here Schleiermacher's religious adoration of the universe was used to fathom poetry. Poetry of poetry depends upon the relation to the universe, to the infinite. All poetry, therefore, is allegorical, or better still according to our usage, symbolic. By means of an image, poetry reveals the infinite...Poetry and the poetic were very closely bound up with the mood of yearning. Yearning aims at something higher, at the infinite. That striving after the infinite which was peculiar to the rational-minded romanticist was reflected in poetry. Thus poetry became analogous to love in the romantic sense. In it a man approached infinity; in poetry the absolute became experience to him; in nothing finite, considered from Schleiermacher's point of view, was the infinite more immediately present than in poetry. At this point in romantic thought there was indicated most impressively that, and why, life and thought, nature and philosophy had to become poetry for the romanticist.[1]

Later, Hardenburg tried to lead Schleiermacher's position into

a new religion and develop a new mythology. Others confused the religious

and the aesthetic which Schleiermacher had tried to keep separate.

This romantic school to which Schleiermacher belonged had its

roots in the Storm and Stress period led by Herder, Schiller, and Goethe.

Herder, supposedly came into contact with Kant when the philosopher was

awakening from his famous slumbers into a variation of skepticism. This

depreciation of the pure reason is what led Herder into irrationalism.

When Kant recovered from his period of doubt and incorporated empiricism

into his philosophy, reason was secured but his influence on Herder had

ceased. The fully awakened Kant was studied by the romantics such as

Schlegel and thus they never sought the irrationalism of the Storm and

Stress.

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[1] German Romanticism, (New York, 1932), pp. 72, 74.

Herder's position at this point was similar to Rousseau's
for both held that the careful examination of the emotions by the
reason could only lead to the loss of the emotional in analysis.[1]
The romantics, on the other hand, having learned the importance of
reflection from Kant, were able to excell in two areas of emotional
reflection, viz., art and religion.

Although Schleiermacher had his influence on the German
romantic school's formulation of poetic theory, he did not propose to
reduce religion to aesthetics. Both the aesthetic and the religious
were treated as emotional responses. Both were objectifications of
emotion through the use of symbolism. The rational could not grasp
reality but it could reflect upon the emotional intuition which could
grasp it.

In religion, this intuitive grasp of reality was Schleiermacher's
reinterpretation of revelation.[2] Instead of discovering the archetypal
perspective of Kant by means of the categorical imperative, Schleiermacher
appealed to the use of "religious experience."

Religion, for Schleiermacher, is the perception of the universe.
First, man must see that the infinite is manifested in the finite and
separate out that notion of infinity. Then he must grasp the presence
of infinity in specific finite things, such as man himself. Man is
"religious" when he discovers the infinite which is within him. The
expression of that infinite manifestation is found in the conscience.
Through his own ethical task dictated by the conscience, man wills the
infinite will as he wills ethically. As he acts, the infinite will is

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[1] Wazel, p. 12.

[2] Richardson, pp. 82f.

carried out in the finite world.

The doctrines of Christianity are then the objectifications of this religious experience or revelation. An analysis of Christian dogma will reflect the emotional basis or foundation in the affections. The grasp of the infinite results in the religious feeling of dependence.

> If thus the direct inward expression of the feeling of absolute dependence is the consciousness of God, and that feeling, whenever it attains to a certain clearness, is accompanied by such an expression, but is also combined with, and related to, a sensible self-consciousness: then the God-consciousness which in this way has arisen will, in all its particular formulations, carry with it such determinations as belong to the realm of the antithesis in which the sensible self-consciousness moves. And this is the source of all those anthropomorphic elements which are inevitable in this realm in utterances about God...[1]

Christ becomes the archetypal image of humanity.[2] By union through intuition with this image, we are reconciled to the humanity from which we feel ourselves estranged. With religious experience as the essence of dogma, we can then use it as a criterion to test the doctrines. The dogma is true in so far as it is an objectification of this intuitive awareness.

Whereas Schleiermacher was using this apparent psychologism to become aware of what was beyond his reason to grasp, Karl Barth sees Ludwig Feuerbach as "reversing" this methodology.[3] Both Schleiermacher and Feuerbach were engaged in interpretation. But whereas Schleiermacher centered on the affections in hope of dealing with what was basically

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[1] Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, I, (New York: Harper Torchbook Edition, 1963), p. 25.

[2] See Richardson, p. 82.

[3] See Karl Barth, "Introduction" in Ludwig Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity, (New York: Harper Torchbook Edition, 1957), p. xx.

external to him, Feuerbach removed the objective reality and reduced these symbols to predicates about man. Instead of being responsive affections from without, religious language became projections from within. They are counter claims and what else can be said? Schelling called Feuerbach's philosophy, one of a bad conscience.

To avoid this kind of reductionism, Schleiermacher either needed to make religious symbolism irreducible symbolism which could be only explicated in terms of other symbols (Schlegel's "poetry of poetry?") or provide a framework for interpretation which could do justice to both the anthropological and the transcendent.

In so far as theology reorganized itself around the criterion of Schleiermacher's religious experience, he casts his shadow over the remaining nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Essentially, however, Schleiermacher was alone in his union of romantic symbolism with historical criticism. The romanticism which supported his view of revelation and hence biblical creative imagination was not incorporated into the theological interpretations. For a true heir to his position, biblical criticism had to wait until the twentieth century.

b. Strauss

What made it possible for David Strauss to conceive of himself as a synthesis between rationalism and supernaturalism was the Hegelian philosophy which formed the framework for his thinking.[1] He read Hegel but he heard both Schleiermacher and F.C. Baur lecture at the University

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[1] Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, p. 80.

of Berlin. It was Baur's historical-critical examination of the origin
of Christianity combined with Hegel's idea of the Welt-Geist which en-
abled Strauss to construct his Leben Jesu.[1]

Baur himself had been under the influence of Schleiermacher but
soon found an affiliation with the Hegelian philosophy. It allowed
Baur to examine the historical origin of the Christian faith by work-
ing with the triadic view of historical development. Fichte and Hegel
had seen the advancement of history as a clash of ideas which were
resolved in syntheses only to meet new oppositions. Baur found that
conflict for church history in Paul's letter to the Galatians where the
apostle to the Gentiles speaks of withstanding Peter to his face.[2]
Could it be, Baur reasoned, that Peter, the representative of the primitive
Jewish element of Christianity, was seeking to uphold the identity of the
Jews through the observance of the Old Testament law, but Paul, the
missionary to the Gentiles was preaching universalism and freedom due to
the nature of his mission field? On the basis of Hegelian history, this
must be the case.

The book of Acts, on the other hand, reveals no ideational conflict.
Even the dispute mentioned in Galatians is not recorded. When this is
offered as counter evidence to the conflict theory, it is only because the
opponent of Hegelianism has failed to grasp the triadic movement. If
Peter's primitive Judaism is the thesis and Paul, the missionary to the

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[1] Stephen Neil, The Interpretation of the New Testament, 1861-
1961, (New York, 1966), p. 19. In a note, Neil cites W.G. Kummel's
information that Baur was influenced by Niebuhr's history of Rome.

[2] The main biblical texts were Galatians 2:11f and I Corinthians
1:12. Neil outlines Baur's position and then gives a history of the
English reaction to Baur's translated work in 1860 (pp. 23f).

Greeks, is the antithesis, it must be that the book of Acts is a second century document testifying to unity in the guise of a peace proposal. It is an unhistorical work, or better, a work slanted by the purpose of the writer. It is written with a particular Tendenz to smooth the conflict. Thus, far from being counter evidence, Acts becomes the unity which was arrived at in the synthesis of the Old Catholic Church.

Since, on this interpretation, Paul has been identified with the Gentiles or Greek mission field, who will object to saying that Paul represents Hellenistic Christianity as over against the primitive Jewish interpretation? Who will object to interpreting Paul's contrast between spirit and flesh after the formal similarity to the Greek contrast of body and soul?[1] Who will object that the real meaning of "spirit" in Paul's writings is more than the Greek notion and is actually an imperfect attempt to arrive at Hegel's World Spirit? The Greek nature of Paul's thought became an assumption of nineteenth century criticism, but Baur's translation of Paulinism into Hegelianism was a minority opinion.[2]

We need to notice that Baur used the new philology but in terms of the triadic structure of Hegelian philosophy. We need to notice that the Greek origin for Paulinism was not derived from a careful study of the text but rather was dictated by the Hegelian framework for a philosophy of ideational origins. Under the leadership of the historical-critical method, a variation of the classical model made a direct entrance. Pauline theology does not merely bear a formal similarity to Greek ideas.

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[1] Schweitzer, Paul and His Interpreters, p. 15.

[2] Ibid., p. 20.

They are identical.

This was the background for the work of Strauss. As he interpreted the action and reaction of orthodoxy and rationalism, he identified a common assumption for both schools. Unlike Baur, both schools were assuming that the text was reliable information based on the accounts of eyewitnesses.[1] (Even Schleiermacher, who accepted a historical methodology, assumed the basic reliability of John's Gospel.)[2] Rationalism had separated the text with its supernaturalism from the interpreter. In the name of a program of universal truths, it was forced to separate the historical Jesus from the textual account. Trying to support this distinction by showing how the Gospel writers misinterpreted the natural phenomena, only led to the implication from Paulus, that the writers were naive beyond believability.[3]

This impasse could only be overcome by following the lead of Baur and coming to a completely different view of the text as a whole. The very nature of the literature itself had to be questioned. A new interpretation of the imagination of the writers was needed. Strauss said that interpretation was mythology.

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[1] Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, p. 78.

[2] Ibid., p. 66.

[3] Daniel P. Fuller, Easter Faith and History, (Grand Rapids, 1965), p. 39: "This rationalistic procedure, however, obviously failed to make Jesus an example to be imitated. It pictured Him as an impostor who deliberately deluded His disciples into thinking He was a supernatural person. Hence, in Paulus the full implications of Rationalism became evident. What man should know about God and what duty required of man found no support whatsoever in the Jesus of history...According to Rationalism, therefore, man could find in history no support for building a system of ethics. Instead, he must look away from history and concentrate his attention upon the categorical imperative of his own soul."

With this interpretive principle, Strauss moved both forward and backward at the same time. In so far as he appealed to a thorough going re-evaluation of the whole text as mythology, he anticipated the theological discussions of the twentieth century. Even though F.C. Baur dominated the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, the stature of Strauss was to become the more influential in the long run.

But Strauss' view of mythology was also a step backward. It was a return to the older view of poetic imagination which we have called the classical. His position was not the same as Schleiermacher's romantic intuitive grasp of the archetypal infinite. The mythological idea Strauss adopted had been applied to the Gospels before, but never so thoroughly.[1]

Myth had been applied to the Old Testament before but since it was assumed to be isolated from Christology, the Old Testament did not effect the rationalistic program. When Strauss used myth, he was adopting the method used in Old Testament studies by Eichhorn and Gabler. Behind their method lay the work of an eighteenth century classical philologist named Christian Heyne. Behind Heyne, was the philosophy of Lessing.[2]

Heyne's area was classical mythology. He tried to formulate a theory to account for the creative imagination of the ancient poets. In classical fashion, behind the poetic was the rational. Lessing had taught him that primitive man stood as unenlightened but that the human

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[1] Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, p. 78. Heretofore, myth had formed the "two lofty gateways" of the virgin birth and the resurrection, between which one found the "narrow and crooked streets of the naturalistic explanation."

[2] Robinson, "Introduction" to The Quest of the Historical Jesus, p. xiii. The discussion is based, at this point, on Christian Hartlich and Walter Sachs, The Origin of the Concept of Myth in Modern Biblical Research, (1952).

race was in the process of education. Primitive men, such as the Greek poets, could not capably interpret their environment in rational categories of abstraction. Their thought was concrete and filled with images. The myths were thus allegorical, for instance, of the natural processes of the world.

In the hands of Strauss, this classical idea of mythological language could be used not against the backdrop of the Deistic rationalism he was rejecting, but rather against the Hegelian rationalism. Rationalism and classicism go hand in hand. When the primitive Christians came into contact with the uniqueness of Jesus and felt the power of His personality over their lives, they searched for an explanation. Being primitive and incapable of abstraction, they selected from their own frames of reference the poetic way of saying Hegel's union of the absolute Spirit and the finite man. They could not think the abstract "Godmanhood" so instead thought the concrete "Son of God."[1]

The alternatives were laid at the feet of the nineteenth century critics. Romanticism as a movement appeared to be dying. If critics chose the classical view of poetics, they would have to assume as a supporting and interpreting structure the Hegelian system. They fled from Hegelianism but mainly from mythology, only to embed themselves deeper into the classical position. With it they returned to the most sophisticated pre-Hegelian rationalism they knew, viz., Kantianism.

The synthesis between supernaturalism and rationalism was never really achieved and yet it was rejected. Failing to criticize the roots of the alternatives and discover the foundation laid in literary theory,

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[1] The Quest of the Historical Jesus, p. 79.

the post- Strauss peroid became a methodological confusion.

In rejecting the framework of Hegel, critics listened to Albrecht Ritschl. He had withstood the Hegelian history of Baur in 1850 by rejecting the notion of conflict in the early church with a Catholic synthesis.[1] Instead, the church was to be understood as an evolving history. Process was maintained but evolution replaced the triadic logic.

It is Ritschl's program of ethical idealism which structures the remaining critics of the nineteenth century who stand outside the post-Baur Ultra-Tubingens. Picking up the thread of the positive historical religion given by Schleiermacher, Ritschl placed it within the evolution of history and saw the unfolding of the kingdom of God, or in his terms, the moral integration of humanity.[2] Schleiermacher's interpretation of revelation as a romantic approach to religious experience, is then placed in the framework of a rationalistic ethical idealism. Dogma is not the objectification of the intuitive grasp of the archetypal whole. Rather, it is the objectification of value judgments.[3] There is no question of metaphysics. The biblical judgments have nothing to do with existence.

Since the program for the relevancy of Jesus to the modern man is located in His life as the ethical example, criticism must reject the thoroughly mythical approach and apply the historical-critical method

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[1] Paul and His Interpreters, p. 16.

[2] Richardson, p. 65. Details to Schleiermacher and Ritschl may be found in H.R. Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology: Schleiermacher to Barth. (New York, 1937).

[3] Richardson, pp. 85-6.

to recapture the actual Jesus of history. Because Strauss was not willing to side with romanticism in his view of poetics, he could offer no positive program of the relevancy of Jesus outside the Hegelian fortress.[1] As criticism turned away from Schleiermacher and Strauss, a new view of imagination would be needed which would allow for the historical method against the backdrop of a Kantian transcendent.

To save the ethical exemplar, Lachmann suggested the two source theory of the Gospels.[2] Not everything needed to be called "fanciful". One could still discover a historical foundation for the Gospel records. What has become known as the "synoptic problem" pointed to the parallel passages in the first three Gospels. Mark appears to be the simplest form while Matthew and Luke appear to expand these simplicities. Mark was probably then an earlier written source used by the others. Since there were other parallel passages in Matthew and Luke dealing with the "sayings" of Jesus which were not found in Mark, the same formula of simplicity and complexity was used to posit an uncanonical "source" Q.

The last half of the nineteenth century then bore these cross currents. From orthodoxy, the critics still applied the loci method, particulary when dealing with the theology of Paul. This method maintained its corresponding influence on the structure of the text and the text and the doctrinal disposition of the writer and interpreter. From the older rationalism of the natural religion school, the program of ethics was supported against the background of the ethical idealism of

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[1] The Quest of the Historical Jesus, p. 88. Even within his Hegelianism, Strauss did not offer a connection of ideas in the Gospels.

[2] Ibid., p. 88.

neo-Kantianism. The New Testament writers were assumed to be classical in their attempts to say what was basically rational.

From the new philology, however, historical criticism was refined into a source criticism searching for primitive documents in the Gospels and borrowed cultural ideas in Pauline studies. The inability to find coherent thinking in either the Gospels or epistles led to a source criticism of Pauline literature and the intrusion of cultural ideas into the Gospels.

From Romanticism, the basic imaginative position of Schleiermacher's religious experience was carried over but changed into a rational approach of psychological motivation to fit the neo-Kantian philosophy. The key to Paul, for example, was said to be in his traumatic experience on the road to Damascus.[1]

c. Schweitzer

In his historical surveys of Gospel and Pauline criticism, Albert Schweitzer challenged the dogmatic stance of Kantian ethical Idealism. The focus of biblical criticism had necessarily been directed to the anthropological character of the system of thought produced by a writer such as Paul. The programatic interest in ethics dictated what was to be considered as essential in the apostle's theology. When the tension was seen between the forensic principle and the principle of transformation unto completion, the transformation principle was considered to be basic, because it was ethical.[2] The

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[1] Paul and His Interpreters, pp. 38-40.

[2] Ibid., pp. 38f.

forensic notion of justification by faith was only an earlier phase
of his ethical thinking to be replaced in his later development by the
transformation of santification. The cosmic and physical notion of
redemption which surely appears in the letters, was subsummed beneath
the ethical interest and treated as either the earlier phases of his
thought or as illustrative of his ethical premise.

Rather than make Paul palatable to the modern man, Schweitzer
sought to discover the true nature of the apostle's thought.[1] If a
program for uncovering what the text actually said, was to be success-
ful, the consequences would include a loss of relevancy for the reader.
Schweitzer found the key for his studies in the cosmic interpretation
which he called the eschatological. He then traced this idea through
both the Gospels and Paul to find the structure criticism had missed.

To re-create the Pauline theology, Schweitzer believed, atten-
tion should be given to the apostle's view of the consummation at the
return of Christ.[2] He criticized the critics for not bothering to
arrange Paul's statements about the Coming into a coherent pattern.[3]

Apparently, criticism had not been interested in the relation
of events at the second coming. Much of what Schweitzer then went on
to construct sounds vaguely familiar to anyone with an aquaintance
with the second coming time charts of orthodox pre-millenialism.

Instead of merely reproducing unrelated doctrines as the
nineteenth century critics had done, Schweitzer insisted that the

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[1] James M. Robinson, The New Quest of the Historical Jesus,
(London, 1959), p. 34.

[2] Paul and His Interpreters, p. 238. Structural significance
is given by Schweitzer to the ressurection of Christ and His Parousia.

[3] Ibid., p. 224.

work of description was not completed until one could perceive the
inner connection or logic of Paul's ideas.[1]

Everling had shown Paul's mind to be controlled by cosmological
interests.[2] Schweitzer then fixed his attention on the delay of the
Parousia as explanatory for the adjustments in the Pauline system. The
presence of the spirit in the church was not to be compared to the Greek
parallels. It was rather to be understood in the eschatological sense
as the presence of the Holy Spirit as the earnest or downpayment of the
Spiritual blessing which was yet to come. Schweitzer appealed to the
work of Herman Gunkel on the nature of the "spirit" in Pauline studies.
By simply examining the Pauline usage of the term, Gunkel had shown the
discontinuity between the apostle's thought and Greek philosophy.[3]

With this eschatological interest, Schweitzer found Paul's mind
to be controlled by a mystical union with the Spirit as represented in
the Christian sacraments. In opposition to the Religiongeschichtlich
Schule, Schweitzer argued that the sacraments could not be derivative
of the Greek mystery religions.[4] For such parallels with Greek thought,
he held, one would have to check the writings of John, not Paul.

The church history of the renowned Adolf Harnack was appealed to
by Schweitzer as evidence for the non-Hellenistic character of Paul's
theology. If the apostle had synthesized his thought with Greek phil-

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[1] Ibid., p. 169. E.E. Ellis notes Schweitzer's development of
the eschatological connection in New Testament thought from Kabisch and
Ludemann. See Paul and His Recent Interpreters, (Grand Rapids, 1961),
p. 25.

[2] Ibid., p. 57.

[3] Ibid., pp. 78f.

[4] Ibid., pp. 181f.

osophy then why was he rejected by the theology of the Greek Church?[1]

Schweitzer may have abandoned the relevancy of the New Testament for the modern man but not for Schweitzer. It just so happened that he was a mystic and so were Jesus and Paul. At least for Schweitzer the text continued to be significant.

Why was Schweitzer not accepted? This is not to ask why his study was not accepted. The work of Schweitzer and Wrede was initiative of the whole eschatological school of interpretation which we call the "history of redemption." Rather, we ask, why did not modern theology become mystical? (Perhaps some would argue that it did to some extent.)

Our contention is that Schweitzer saw many things clearly but not the full impact of literary theory on the critics.[2] The programs which were established from the seventeenth century on were closely connected with the theories of poetic imagination which were used to achieve an immanent hermeneutic. When Schweitzer separated himself from this tradition, he was alone. His mystical stance to interpret the transcendent meant that the theology of Paul could not be explicated for the modern reader. Schweitzer recaptured a unique character to the text but lost the immanent contact with the critical interpreters. Mysticism has no philosophical framework other than its own intuitions by which religious language can be translated into non-mystical language.

It may be that mysticism and romanticism are related as Wazel

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[1] Ibid., pp. 81f.

[2] Schweitzer makes use of terms such as "philology" and "literary criticism" but they both refer to the text itself and do not lead to aesthetic implications. On the other hand, Schweitzer is an example of how philology itself was moving to historical criticism. Semler, for example, a noted historical critic, is the one who "takes the first steps upon the road of literary hypothesis;" Paul and His Interpreters, p. 7.

says they are.[1]   If so, then Schweitzer's interpretation of the biblical writer is in the tradition of Schleiermacher. But Schleiermacher could at least explicate the intuitive objectifications of religious experience in terms of an emotional psychology. Schweitzer is his silent heir.

B. The Hermeneutical Situation of Rudolf Bultmann.

1. Interpreter

The mystical silence of Schweitzer had to be overcome if the text was to be both explained and understood by the modern man. The stance of nineteenth century critics in a rationalistic philosophy had produced a tension between the transcendent and the immanent. If the transcendent was defined in Kantian terms, then the writer had to be classical. But the examination of the text required a writer who was not classical. Romanticism or mysticism seemed to do a better job characterizing the biblical imagination. But if the writers were like romantics, then what could be said about the transcendent which could be universally relevant to all men at all periods in history? It is difficult to explicate romantic insight.

A new approach was needed. To deal adequately with the nature of the biblical imagination, a new definition of the transcendent was needed. A new philosophical framework was needed which would allow for explication without a reduction to rationalism and classicism.

Such a philosophy was apparently available in existentialism. This philosophy would hopefully allow criticism an alternative to the

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[1]   *German Romanticism*, pp. 6f. Around 1700, Shaftsbury is said to have revived Plotinus.

Kantian transcendent, to continue a thoroughly immanent historical
method, and do justice to the romantic tradition of biblical imagination.

According to Paul Tillich, the philosophy of experiencing
existence began with the 1841-2 lectures given by Schelling to an
audience which included Kierkegaard, Bakunin, and Burckhardt.[1] Schelling could trace the roots of his "positive philosophy" to the work
of Pascal, Jacobi, Haman, and Boheme.

The approach was replaced by the neo-Kantian idealism or naturalistic empiricism but reappeared in the 1880's as the Philosophy of
Life in the works of Nietzche and Dilthey. The impact of Dilthey on
contemporary theology in the Bultmannian tradition is undeniable.

In a third stage of Existence Philosophy, Tillich groups together thinkers like Husserl, Heidegger, and Jaspers.

We do not find discussions by Tillich, Bultmann, or Reinhold
Niebuhr on the influence of romanticism as a method of symbolism or an
approach to the "ultimate" in their own works. All three clearly react
to the rationalism of the older liberalism but do not elaborate on the
nature of the alternative choice. For Bultmann, romanticism was important for suggesting historical relativity.[2] Niebuhr sees it as
emphasizing the individual as over against the universal essence.[3]
Both Tillich and Niebuhr discuss romanticism largely from the perspective of the nation in Hegel and Marx.

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[1] Theology and Culture, (New York, 1964), pp. 27f.

[2] History and Eschatology, (New York, 1955), p. 83.

[3] Nature and Destiny of Man, I (New York, 1941), pp. 33f.

Their lack of identification with romanticism may be due to their dialectical framework. This framework which separates them is, nonetheless, rooted in romanticism as Tillich indicates when he discusses the nature of the existential thinker.

The Existential thinker seeks special forms of expression because personal existence cannot be expressed in terms of objective experience. So Schelling uses the traditional religious symbols, Kierkegaard uses paradox, irony, and the pseudonym, Nietzche the oracle, Bergson images and fluid concepts, Heidegger a mixture of psychological and ontological terms, Jaspers uses what he calls "ciphers," and the Religious Socialists use concepts oscillating between immanence and transcendence. They all wrestle with the problem of personal or non-objective thinking and its experiences. This is the calamity of the Existential thinker.[1]

Like Schelling, Tillich uses religious symbols. If we look at his view of religious language and compare it to the criticism offered by the Idealist Brand Blanshard, we can more easily grasp the relationship to romanticism.

Tillich describes the nature of religious language.

Religious symbols need no justification if their meaning is understood. For their meaning is that they are the language of religion and the only way in which religion can express itself directly. Indirectly, and reflectively religion can also express itself in theological, philosophical, and artistic terms. But its direct self expression is the symbol and the united group of symbols which we call myths.[2]

Religious symbolism is then divided by Tillich into primary and secondary kinds. The primary "point directly to the referent"[3] although it remains to be seen what the referent is. This pointing language includes symbols as attributes of the highest being, divine

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[1] Theology of Culture, p. 91.

[2] "The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols," in Sidney Hook ed., Religious Language and Truth, (New York, 1961), p. 3.

[3] Ibid., p. 8.

actions, and divine incarnations.

Secondary are supporting symbols, like water, light, oil, or poetic symbols in which a primary religious symbol is artistically resymbolized, or metaphoric expressions as they appear in parables or are used in poetry.[1]

When Blanshard examines the full range of Tillich's discussion of religious symbolism, he concludes that the theologian is using symbol in two different senses.[2] On the one hand it is a pointer as it directs our thinking to something which is beyond our comprehension. But, on the other hand, symbol is also expressive of a state of mind. To Blanshard, this dual function of symbolism places any discussion of it into a realm so broad and vague that nothing profitable could follow.

Blanshard's major criticism, however, is his conviction that Tillich is basically a rationalist. Blanchard cannot perceive what the value of symbolism is and what the significant difference between him and Tillich is. After all, he says, what is the difference between someone who guides his life by reason without revelation and someone who guides his life by revelation but appeals to reason as his criterion for the selection of that revelation? Because he can see no difference, Blanshard accuses Tillich of rationalism.

This is not a fatal criticism of Tillich's position of the existential use of symbolism. It is true that Tillich is in the rationalistic tradition even though his theology is a reaction to the older neo-Kantian liberalism. The rationalism he shares with Blanshard, however, is their common stance in the post-Enlightenment period. The romantics, for example,

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[1] Ibid., p. 8.

[2] "Symbolism," in Religious Language and Truth, pp. 50-51.

[3] Ibid., p. 54.

would not have considered themselves "rationalists," but they did not

return to supernaturalism because of their acceptance of Enlightenment

principles. Just as they were Enlightened romantics, so Blanshard is

an Enlightened idealist, and Tillich is an Enlightened existentialist.

The difference which Blanshard did not perceive in his article is the

shift in the nature of the transcendent which existentialism intro-

duced.[1] The difference between the rationalism of idealism and exis-

tentialism is brought out by Robert Knudsen.

> The ordinary, rationalistic idea of myth is that it is a relic of
> pre-scientific understanding, which has been replaced by the re-
> sponsible disciplines of science and philosophy. To the rational-
> ist everything not verifiable in terms of scientific technique or
> amenable to reason is the result of feeling or fantasy and is mere
> poetic expression, inadmissible as knowledge...If genuine meaning
> is found in myth, the rationalist holds that this meaning is amen-
> able to rational statement, which can supplant the mythical form
> in which it has been transplanted.
> This idea of myth which the thinkers we are studying [Tillich,
> Reinhold Niebuhr, and Berdyaev] hold to be a product of the En-
> lightenment, is neither the "classic" view of myth as represented
> by Plato, nor the view held by many modern thinkers...According to
> them [Tillich, Niebuhr, and Berdyaev], the source, the depths, the
> end, and therefore the unity of being cannot be grasped by reason
> and expressed in rational terms. These can only be expressed in
> the imaginative form of mythical thinking.[2]

As Bultmann follows this existential shift in the meaning of

transcendence, he is the apparent synthesis of supernaturalism and

rationalism which Strauss tried to accomplish.

2. The Text

With Bultmann, the _loci_ approach was abandoned completely as a

structure for exegesis. Full attention was given to the new philology

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[1] Robert Knudsen, "Bultmann," in P.E. Hughes ed., _Creative
Minds in Contemporary Theology_, (Grand Rapids, 1966), p. 137.

[2] "Symbol and Myth," (Master's thesis, Library School, Union
Theological Seminary, 1952), pp. 15-16.

Historical criticism indicated that there was no need to discover
eyewitness or apostolic authors for the text. Rather, the problem of
origin could be pushed back behind what was written to the flexibility
of the oral tradition. Applying the latest developments in Old Test-
ament research with Formgeschichte, Bultmann was able to utilize a
fully immanent hermeneutical program. He used this "literary-his-
torical" method in order to overcome the dilemma of ethics and escha-
tology introduced by Schweitzer and Wrede.[1]

After discussing initial attempts to go beyond the source
theory, Bultmann says:

> It is at this point that we hope by means of the form-historical
> approach to make some further progress. This begins with the ob-
> servation that, especially in primitive literature, literary ex-
> pression (oral or written) makes use of more or less fixed forms,
> which have their own laws of style. In the Old Testament we have
> long been accustomed to recognize this feature and to apply the
> form-historical method. The forms of psalm, prayer, prophetic
> address, fable, story, and historical narrative have been recog-
> nized and their stylistic laws have been described. Is it possible
> to identify similar literary forms in the Synoptic tradition?[2]

A completely new view of the whole text could be presented.
It was no longer essential to a program of ethics to strain at the
sources in order to produce a historical Jesus as exemplar. Bultmann
could even agree with Schweitzer that the synoptic texts and the theol-
ogy of Paul were rooted in an eschatological theology of cosmic, phys-
ical redemption. Rid of dogmatic interest, Bultmann could carry out
a program of reconstructing New Testament Theology.

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[1] "The Study of the Synoptic Gospels" in Rudolf Bultmann and
Karl Kundsin, Form Criticism, (New York, Harper Torchbook edition, 1934),
pp. 11f.

[2] Ibid., pp. 28-29. See also Martin Dibelius, From Tradition
to Gospel, (1919).

In so far as Bultmann stands in the post-Enlightenment tradition, he assumes a gap between the text and the interpreter. The historical-critical method appears to operate negatively as it also yields gaps between the historical Jesus (if any) and the text. Then too, within the text, we find different interpretations of Jesus. The reader is isolated from the text and the text is isolated from Jesus. We do not agree with the text and the textual writers do not agree with each other.[1]

As Bultmann applies the historical method, the result seems to be diversity. There is a positive side, however, where the diverse pieces of biblical criticism are brought together using the philosophical framework of Heidegger's existentialism. Abandoning the program of the older liberalism, Bultmann's affinity is not with the historical Jesus but with the text as the interpretation of Jesus. As applications of the historical method seem to push the historical Jesus further away from our grasp, Bultmann is not alarmed. The importance lies not in the event itself but in the interpretation of the event.

The link between biblical writers and modern man is in the new view of symbolism which grew from the romantic function of poetry. Modern man as symbolizer understands the primitive as myth maker.

3. The Writer

Dialectical theology can use the romantic symbolism but with an important difference. Schleiermacher's divination was rooted in religious experience as he sought the noumenal realm which had been

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[1] Rudolf Bultmann, New Testament Theology, (New York, 1955), pp. 237f.

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closed by the Kantian Philosophy. Morse Peckham has called this
kind of approach "symmetrical." One starts, as Kant did, with the
self as the creator of an instrument which will penetrate to the
noumena. One assumes there is value in the noumenal realm to be
gained by analogy to the self.

Romantic thought took a turn, according to Peckham, to an
"asymmetrical"[2] position as represented by Thomas Carlyle. The self
was then the only thing of value. It had to impose its value and
meaning on the world. Poetry was the instrument of this effort.
Instead of finding the noumenal realm, poetry became the noumenal
realm in itself.

Without the existential framework, it appears that Bultmann
would have been forced into one of these positions. (Perhaps Karl
Barth is to be understood with Carlyle when the reconciling work of
Christ alone has significance. God is anthropomorphized and man is
historically relativized. In this way we could understand Bultmann's
criticism that Barth tries to retain myth with demythologizing.[3])
Having rejected neo-Kantian liberalism, Bultmann is not seeking the
transcendent noumena. Having rejected Barth, he is not seeking an
autonomous mythology of the Christ. His work includes a positive pro-

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See Rudolf Ott, The Idea of the Holy, 2nd ed. (New York,
1958), pp. 145-50.

2
Peckham, p. 186.

3
Robinson, "Hermeneutics Since Barth," in The New Hermeneutic,
p. 29.

gram for explicating the biblical symbolism or demythologizing it.

The question will be, can a way be found to unlock the meaning of

symbolism and explain it without returning to the older liberalism?

John Macquarrie reminds us of the nature of mythology when he

seeks to explain the "disclosure of being" without reference to a

metaphysical noumenal realm.

> They are not, that is to say, mythological symbols intended to
> teach a philosophy of cosmic origins or a theistic world-view.
> Their teaching goes far beyond any metaphysical doctrine of a First
> Cause, which like science, would belong to the sphere of theoretical
> understanding. The biblical accounts of the creation are to be
> understood existentially. They are vehicles for the communication
> of the existential understanding of the living God - saving know-
> ledge of God, if we may so speak - which belonged to the sacred
> writers and was disclosed or revealed to them in the experience of
> faith. [2]

This interpretation of mythology cannot appeal to the Idealism

of the older liberalism not to the Realism of a scientific understand-

ing. On the one hand, there is the realm of timeless principles or

eternal truths. If we interpreted Jesus in terms of these principles,

we would lose his individuality as a "once for all event." [3] On the other

hand, there is the level of ordinary history where individual facts are

studied in terms of pure objectivity. Both approaches are said to fail

in achieving the true selfhood of man. They both approach the event

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[1] "New Testament and Mythology," in Hans Werner Bartsch ed.,
Kerygma and Myth, (New York: Harper Torchbook edition, 1953), p. 3:
"We are therefore bound to ask whether, when we preach the Gospel today,
we expect our converts to accept not only the Gospel message, but also
the mythical view of the world in which it is set. If not, does the
New Testament embody a truth which is quite independent of its mythical
setting? If it does, theology must undertake the task of stripping the
Kerygma from its mythical framework, of "demythologizing it."

[2] _An Existentialist Theology_, (New York, 1955), p. 64.

[3] Robert Knudsen, "Bultmann," pp. 139f.

from the standpoint of generality.

Reversing the distinction made by Martin Kahler between the
Jesus of the historian's methodology and the Jesus of the Gospel his-
tory, Bultmann says that the Jesus of the Gospels is unreliable.[1]
Kahler had said the Jesus of the historian was unreliable. For Bult-
mann, Gospel history gives us not ordinary time (Realism) nor timeless
truths (Idealism) but "decision time." Man is faced with the alternative
of his natural existence in "sin" or an openness to the future possibil-
ity of his true self in "salvation." These alternatives are presented
to the church in preaching. Here the recurring, paradoxical contem-
poraneity of Christ's death and resurrection are presented. The death
and the resurrection are a blending of the historical and the non-his-
torical. Together they form the husk which must be separated from the
kernal meaning of existential or decision truth.[2] The biblical writer
and interpreter meet in their common concern for self-understanding.

Bultmann has been opposed by orthodoxy over the origin and
application of myth to Jesus. The span of time available appears to be
so short as to make a mythological association with Jesus improbable.

Perhaps a more telling criticism is one which comes from within
existential philosophy itself. In a written dialogue with Bultmann, Karl
Jaspers correctly, we think, draws the options between orthodoxy and
"liberalism."[3] Jaspers's own position is that mythology is irreducible.

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[1] George Ladd, "The Search for Perspective," Interpretation,
XXV (January, 1971), pp. 51f.

[2] Bultman, "New Testament Mythology," pp. 8f.

[3] "Myth and Religion," in Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann,
Myth and Christianity, (New York, 1958), p. 37.

His view sounds familiar as he says,

> The myth tells a story and expresses intuitive insights rather
> than universal concepts. The myth is historical, both in the form
> of its thinking and in its content. It is not a cloak or disguise
> put over a general idea, which can be better and more directly
> grasped intellectually...The myth is a carrier of meanings which
> can be expressed only in the language of myth. The mythical figures
> are symbols which, by their very nature, are untranslatable into
> other language.[1]

In so far then as Bultmann seeks to translate the language of
myth into rational language, Jaspers charges that he has either re-
turned to liberalism or to orthodoxy. We could interpret Jaspers as
saying that Bultmann has not accomplished a synthesis or escaped the
dilemma which Strauss struggled to overcome with his own view of myth-
ology. According to Jaspers, Bultmann "has not discovered a new form for
the language of faith, although he thinks that his existentialist inter-
pretation provides a new method for the true acquisition of faith."[2]

The heart of Jaspers's criticism stems from his own stance within
existentialism. Bultmann has sought an immanent interpretation through
the means of Heidegger's philosophy. Whereas Heidegger does not devel-
op a Christian approach, Bultmann offers a counter claim by introducing
divine revelation.

Surely, we recognize the dogmatic tone of Jaspers's criticism
(as did Bultmann)[3] but the point remains. Having taken his stance in
an immanent interpretation, Bultmann fails to work adequately with his
position. "Occasionally he seems to be giving a new form to the old

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[1] Ibid., pp. 15, 16.

[2] Ibid., p. 49.

[3] "The Case for Demythologizing," in Myth and Christianity, pp.
57f.

theological rationalism; at other times, to be re-founding orthodoxy."[1]
That orthodoxy, Jaspers sees as the Pauline-Lutheran doctrine of rad-
ical sinfulness. Bultmann holds it as a universal judgment about all
men and Jaspers simply disagrees.[2]

If Jaspers is right, does it mean that the view of imagination
which seems to do justice to the writer of the text cannot be "expli-
cated" and reduced? Must it stand, as the romantics themselves used it
in their poetry? But if the symbols are irreducible, then where is the
communication of these symbols to the world?

It appears as if the options are these: 1) return to some form
of liberalism with the classicism that goes with it, 2) leave the symbols
untouched and therefore irrelevant to modern man, or 3) penetrate deeper
into a dialectical interpretation such as the "lingual event" of the
post-Bultmannian New Hermeneeutic.

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[1] "Myth and Religion," p. 40.

[2] Ibid., p. 50.

III. THE NEW HUMANITIES

A. The New Hermeneutic

1. The Interpreter

If we say that gaining models for the literary structure of the biblical text and the imagination of the writer has failed in the past, and if we feel an appropriate pessimism about the future of such programs, then perhaps we shall explore the alternative. Instead of deriving our models and methods from the literature of the humanities, why not draw them from the biblical text itself? Assuming for the moment that such a statement makes sense, our need for common principles would mean that the humanities would have to be interpreted as Scripture is interpreted.

The New Hermeneutic of Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling represents one attempt at making this alternative intelligible. For them, however, it does not mean that philological methodologies are drawn from the biblical text and then applied to other areas. Immanent methods will continue to be applied to the Bible in an effort to disclose the human origin and connection of its ideas. Instead, their work will involve a reinterpretation of the humanities from the standpoint of the biblical idea of transcendence.[1]

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[1] James M. Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth," in The New Hermeneutic, p. 69: "One of the most significant aspects of this new theology is that it stands within the context of a new assessment of the nature of the liberal arts in general." Robinson points to Hans Jonas and Hans-Georg Gadamer as forerunners of this new orientation for the humanities.

There is a definite sense in which we may speak of the post-Bultmannian period.[1] The New Hermeneutic is located in this period but is a continuation of Bultmann's dialectical program. The nature of the transcendent is borrowed from the existential philosophy of the so-called "Later Heidegger."[2]

We may well ask ourselves in what sense is this a reinterpretaion of the humanities if the historical method remains the same and the very definition of the transcendent is but an attempted perfection of the Bultmannian stance? The answer probably lies in the nature of the "general hermeneutic" they are seeking. It is an attempt to provide a comprehensive method for both theology and the humanities as an implication from the dialectical position. How can we argue, for instance, that Scripture is to be interpreted existentially and yet the literature of the other humanities is not treated in the same way? Why do we limit ourselves to the New Testament for our hermeneutical exercises? No special place can be given the Bible without at once reintroducing a dogmatic program on the part of the interpreter.

The suggestion is then made that both biblical literature and the literature of philosophy, history, and the arts must be grasped existentially.[3] If the humanities need an existential reinterpretation, does this mean that all non-scientific literature necessarily becomes "revelatory" or "disclosures of being?"

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[1] Robinson, The New Quest of the Historical Jesus, pp. 10f.

[2] See Robinson's essay "The German Discussion of the Later Heidegger," in James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb Jr., ed., The Later Heidegger and Theology, (New York, 1963), pp. 3-76.

[3] Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth," pp. 69f.

The New Hermeneutic is moving in a direction prepared for it by the history of biblical studies. Something apparently has to give way. But as we have mapped out this survey, the problem has not been primarily one of "hermeneutic" but rather "hermeneutics."[1] The very point we have singled out as the problem area, viz., the assumed similarity between the biblical text and the humanities, is presupposed by the New Hermeneutic. The difficulties which result from this presupposition are then resolved in terms of the transcendent and not the immanent.

Originally, according to James M. Robinson, "hermeneutics" had three different senses.[2] It could mean the language or speech itself, a translation of that language into another language, or a commentary on that language. The reason for "hermeneutics" arose from needed clarification in normal communications and the need to solve problems in authoritative literatures. The three things "hermeneutics" dealt with were the language of the text, the historical setting in order to understand the original meaning, and a literary analysis of rhetoric or style.[3] With the rise of the historical method, liberalism became critical and orthodoxy continued the stylistic analysis.

The first move to the New Hermeneutic came early in the twentieth century with the distinction between "explanation" and "understanding."[4] Traditional hermeneutics could arrive at the explanation of the text, but to understand it was an epistemological problem.

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[1] Hermeneutic refers to understanding and hermeneutics refers to explanation.

[2] Ibid., pp. 6f.

[3] Ibid., pp. 12f.

[4] Ibid., pp. 19f.

Using Wilhelm Dilthey's notion of Verstehen, the general question was posed, "how is understanding possible?"

The debate between Karl Barth and Adolf Harnack was an early example of the problem.[1] As a neo-Kantian liberal, Harnack held that the language of biblical mythology or symbolism indicated the defective nature of language's ability to communicate.[2] Barth, on the other hand, initiated the contemporary discussions of interpretation by denying that defectiveness. When Bultmann made use of Dilthey's distinction between explanation and understanding in his program of demythologizing (or "content criticism") he was assuming the defective character of language. It is in this sense that Bultmann could be accused of never having fully left the older liberal tradition.

The New Hermeneutic wants to focus attention on the very nature of language itself, and overcome the defective assumption. The problem then is not with the mythological language only, but with all language. Meaning in objectified forms tends to lead away from itself. Thus, Bultmann's hermeneutic lead away from the language of myth to the pre-understanding of the writer.[3] There was an inherent tension in his demythologizing program. When Bultmann say's, "Myth is not intended to be interpreted cosmologically, but rather anthropologically, or better still, existentially,"[4] the very forms which this existential understanding take, lead the reader away from the existential to the objectified

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[1] Ibid., pp. 25f.

[2] Ibid., pp. 31f. Karl Barth acknowledges the "inadequacy" of language but not its "defectiveness."

[3] Ibid., p. 37.

[4] "New Testament Mythology," p. 12.

cosmological form. For example, when the writers say that Jesus was resurrected form the dead, Bultmann interprets this as language about the internal renewal of the writers themselves. But by objectifying the meaning in myth, they lead the reader away from the subjective motivation to the objective form of physical resurrection in time-space.

The New Hermeneutic, therefore, wants to begin with this inherent problem of symbolism. A philosophical structure was provided by the thought of the Later Heidegger.

Bultmann was concerned with myth and the existential self understanding. This self understanding was the "pre-understanding" which had to be subordinated as the text was interpreted. Fuchs and Ebeling, however, are concerned with language itself as the subject matter.[1] Self understanding is the goal of the interpretation for as we interpret the text, the text interprets our self understanding. The text interprets itself by what it has to say about us. The focal point is not explanation or understanding. It is language itself. Language speaks.

Bultmann's _kerygma_ is dropped as introducing a separation between Jesus' word and the word of the church. We cannot dismiss the historical Jesus and His spoken word without a loss to the very center of the Christian faith itself. The way in which the historical Jesus is retained without returning to the older liberalism and its classicism is through the dialectical "language event." Jesus' word and the word of the church belong together. There is meaning in the

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[1] Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth," p. 68.

recurring event of language itself. Theology is "hermeneutic" as it
translates what the Bible has to say into the word for today.

> Hence, the text is there for the sake of the event of interpretation, which is the text's origin and future. For the word that
> once happened and in happening became the text must again become
> word with the help of the text and thus happen as interpreting
> word. What happens in the word event can thus be called interpretation, since it is the essence of the word to clarify what is
> obscure, to bring light into darkness, and thus, if it is the word
> that concerns every man absolutely, to name the reality of man's
> being as what it truly is.[1]

The difference between this post-Bultmannian program of "hermeneutic" and the traditional attempts at "hermeneutics" is brought out
by Oscar Cullmann's idea of an interpretive program.

> first, before all evaluation, all judging, perhaps even prior to
> all "being addressed" in my "understanding of existence," prior to
> all believing, simply to be obedient to what the men of the new
> covenant want to communicate to me as revelation, even if it is
> quite foreign to me. I am aware that I thereby stand in contradiction to a "hermeneutical" trend widely prevalent today.[2]

Robinson feels that Cullmann has not adequately responded to
the Bultmannian tradition for Bultmann too was interested in this descriptive level.[3] For Bultmann, however, it was not enough. A positive
program of reinterpretation was needed to make the text relevant.

The New Hermeneutic has seen that the humanities cannot be separated from the interpretation of biblical literature for interpretation
takes its stance within the humanities. But we would hold their solution
of an existential re-evaluation fails to meet the center of the problem.
Traditional hermeneutics and Cullmann's position may fall short in

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[1] Ibid., p. 68.

[2] Ibid., p. 41. Robinson's translation is more "existential"
than Floyd Filson's. Cf. Christ and Time, (Philadelphia, Revised Edition,
1964), p. 14.

[3] Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth," p. 66.

grasping the meaning of the text or describing the text, but the problem is not that hermeneutics does not go far enough in its program. The problem is that it goes too far. The New Hermeneutic has not dealt with the central problem.

One even senses a frustration in Fuchs and Ebeling over the ability to reproduce the biblical contents. By taking our stance in the post-Enlightenment rationalism, we are constantly reminded of our differences with the biblical writers. The method of the New Hermeneutic in effect offers a way for the reader to skip over the problematic nature of the biblical contents. When Fuchs tells of the early influences in his thought, he remebers a professor whose interpretation of John's Gospel was filled with his own personal experiences.[1] Schlatter interacted with the text and introduced his own ideas by way of exposition. A detailed descriptive method is unnecessary, for the stance of the interpreter is always present. The interpretation of the text becomes a dialogue between cultural contexts.

It is no wonder that the primary concern of Fuchs and Ebeling is systematic theology and not biblical theology.[2] In systematics, the church is seeking to communicate its message to the world. Such communication is made possible by the common ground a "general hermeneutic" provides to all the humanities.

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[1] "The New Testament and the Hermeneutical Problem," in The New Hermeneutic, pp. 11f.

[2] Robinson, "Hermeneutic Since Barth," p. 66.

2. The Text

Norman Perrin says that Fuchs is more a mystic than he is an exegete.[1] Trying to understand him is impossible. But Perrin notes there is a clarifying voice on the scene in the person of Amos Wilder. In fact, growing out of the New Hermeneutic and the New Quest of the historical Jesus, an approach to the Gospel parables has been developed by Wilder, Robert Funk, and Dan O. Via, Jr. Wilder had apparently initiated a new course for parable studies when in 1964 he wrote The Language of the Gospel: Early Christian Rhetoric. This book has introduced into the exegetical world a direct relationship between biblical criticism and literary criticism.

At first, this appears to be nothing new if we are thinking that literary criticism is literary analysis. The use of figures of speech belongs to the traditional program of hermeneutics. But when we notice that Amos Wilder's brother is the famed author of Our Town, Thornton Wilder,[2] then we will be sensitive to the new direction criticism is taking. Literary criticism is becoming not only textual analysis, but artistic analysis.

In the hands of Dan Via, the parables are divided into the comic and the tragic.[3] They are understood through the application of principles used to penetrate the meaning of art objects. The parables are studied for their "creative literary art" and "the effectiveness of

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[1] Norman Perrin, "The Modern Interpretation of the Parables of Jesus and the Problem of Hermeneutic," Interpretation, XXV (April, 1971), p. 135.

[2] Amos Wilder, "The Word as Address and Meaning," in The New Hermeneutic, p. 203.

[3] Perrin, p. 142.

that artistry."[1]   The parable of the Unjust Steward is treated as "a miniature of what has come to be known as the picaresque mode."[2]

This approach can be seen as an outgrowth of the New Hermeneutic for it sees the parables apart from their historical context and treats them as artistic objects. It is in this sense that the existential understanding of Fuchs can be understood. Now we know what it means for language itself to speak to the reader.

The historical-critical method is assumed, says Perrin, but it may not always be relevant.

It may be true, for example, that many of the parables of Jesus were originally weapons of controversy directed against groups of opponents as Jeremias has claimed. But does that mean that they must always be interpreted in that particular historical context? The answer this time is in the negative; but then at this point we have reached a limit of historical criticism by observing that an aesthetic object created in one situation for one purpose can take on a life and vitality of its own as it moves into other situations, and this is certainly true of the parables of Jesus.[3]

On the basis of this approach, the parables of Jesus are treated in the same way one treats Waiting for Godot.[4]   The once mystical understanding of Fuchs now becomes the interpretation every reader of the novel can appreciate. Jesus is imparting to his followers "his vision ...by the power of metaphor..."[5]

Both Perrin and Robinson see this new twist as a neo-liberalism.[6]

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[1] Perrin, p. 138.

[2] Perrin, p. 143.

[3] Perrin, p. 145.

[4] Perrin, p. 143.

[5] Perrin, p. 144.

[6] Perrin, p. 146.

3. The Writer

Amos Wilder is not ready, however, to accept the existential framework of Fuchs and Ebeling. Located in the American tradition of empiricism, he feels existentialism centers too much on Man as Will and ignores the meaningful content of what is communicated.[1] Man, he claims, is noetic as well as conative.[2] Instead of existential symbolism, Wilder prefers to follow the lead of symbolic studies made by Cassirir, Langer, and others by placing man within a cultural context.[3] The term he uses in this connection is "creation."[4]

B. The Hermeneutical Situation of Twentieth Century Orthodoxy

1. The Interpreter

The reason Oscar Cullman has disagreed with Bultmann does not lie soley in an academic and theoretical difference over exegetical procedures. Cullmann feels that Bultmann has not understood the text to which he is trying to existentially relate. The existentialist, he charges, has not seen that eschatological history is indispensible to understanding the New Testament mind. When Bultmann purports to remove the so-called "kernal" of eschatology, Cullmann feels he has not kept dogmatic interests separate from exegetical studies. This reminds one of Schweitzer's criticism.

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[1] Wilder, p. 204.

[2] Wilder, p. 202.

[3] Wilder, p. 216.

[4] Wilder, p. 217.

Cullmann says:

Modern Protestant Theology has a tendency to bring together the
New Testament scholar and the dogmatic theologian. This happened
in the existentially oriented exegesis. Indeed, a more active con-
versation between them is salutary. But I find the manner of a-
malgamating them on the basis of a certain "hermeneutics" dangerous
for exegesis...In this connection I would like to refer to the
acceptance of CHRIST AND TIME on the part of "nontheologians," such
as historians, philosophers, etc. I found already in connection
with my other books that such scholars are apparently more ready to
accept the seemingly strange aspects of revelation than many theol-
ogians; they are readier to consider the texts without immediately
rejecting the "strange."[1]

Can we say that Cullmann has approached the text as a historian?
How would this be possible in light of the accusation we have made about
the source of interpretive models? Would this not mean that Cullmann
has borrowed principles from the supposedly neutral humanity of history
and imposed them on the text?

This has the marks of a strawman. Cullmann is seeking to follow
Schweitzer's lead. His work does not reflect on hypotheses for the or-
igins of biblical ideas but rather seeks to explain the connection of
ideas. These ideas find their coherence not in terms of a super-
imposed logical model but rather from a historical or eschatological
structure. Cullmann knows this the same way Schweitzer knew it. He
looked at the text.[2]

When Cullmann warns theologians to withhold their dogmatic
evaluations until the text is explained, he is pleading for a neutral
or descriptive method which must come first. We might say that before

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[1] Christ and Time, p. 13.

[2] Such a response is not as ridiculous as it first seems when
we remember Schweitzer's report that Gunkel was the first one to closely
examine the actual text to see Paul's usage of the term "spirit."

one can tell whether or not he agrees or disagrees with the text, one
must know what the text is saying. The fact that "nontheologians" appar-
ently agree with this approach means Cullmann has found acceptance in the
humanities. What the humanities will do with his work, however, is an-
other question.

Our concern is whether Cullmann's descriptive method can, in fact,
reproduce the contents of the biblical literature in a thorough going
fashion. It may be the case that Cullmann becomes limited in the same
way Schweitzer was. Seeing many things clearly about the text, they,
nevertheless, do not share the world view of the biblical writers as an
interpretive principle. This may lead them away from the central thrust
of the New Testament theology.

Perhaps the very goal "New Testament theology" is the problem.
Perhaps, a new leveling process has begun by using the diversity of the
writers to the extent that each produces his own theology. Dogmatic
theology is then seen as the encompassing view point of unity which
relates the material.

If we seek to fully take our stance in a descriptive method free
of evaluation, and apply the methods of criticism, will we be driven to
posit the unity of the New Testament literature? According to the New
Hermeneutic, the unity comes from dogmatic interest. Once we have
abandoned the doctrine of divine origin through "inspiration" is there
a need to seek New Testament unity in exegesis?

Cullmann has said that the unity was in terms of a common view
of history as eschatological. While this is true, it does not go far
enough. It may be that there are other themes under which the historical
is to be subsumed.

We will suggest below that the unity of a New Testament theology which will influence our methods of interpretation, will be rooted in Pauline theology as the "systematic theology" of the New Testament.[1] If so, then we will have to alter our traditional understanding of dogmatics at this point. Paul as theologians will mean that the theology of the church should find its structure and the structure for New Testament thought in his work. It means that the other writers of the New Testament both feed into his system as contributers and help provide elaborations of his thought.

The way this unity can be mantained is through returning to a presuppositional stance of unity through the Spirated origin of the text. It will mean the end of "leveling" the text and it will mean a union of church theology and biblical theology.

In addition to Paul as theologian, we will want to point to the controlling motifs in his thought. Eschatological history is the structure for the work of Christ, but Paul does not stop there. He places this history within his most inclusive category, viz., creation.

If the interpreter assumed this same stance within creation, the text could still be interpreted as other documents; but instead of taking the models from classical literature, they would come from the Bible. In other words, our rationalistic orientation shapes out philosophies of history and methods of philology with a supposed universality to them. This is not a creational approach and will not seek to capture, for example, Paul's view of history. This does not mean the oft repeated

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[1] For a full elaboration of this position, see Richard Gaffin's review article on Herman Ridderbos' Paulus in "Paul as Theologian," The Westminster Theological Journal, XXX (May, 1968), pp. 204-32.

eschatological nature of history only. In our parlance today, we would need Paul's view of "event" itself. Whether or not Paul's view of historical events should be normative for all historical interpretation cannot be answered here. We may only note the difficulty in using non-creationally based methods to understand the works of one who believes in creation. We may find ourselves, as Cullmann was suggesting, treating something in the text as metaphorical. If we look for the "higher" or "deeper" meanings behind the metaphor, we may then have shifted the understanding of the writer.

The New Hermeneutic has indicated the need for a new understanding of the humanities. But instead of interpreting them existentially, the biblical exegete should place this one context within the broader creational context. However, Langdon Gilkey gives us a sample of the modern view of creation.

> In Chapter 2 we said that the idea of creation was a "religious rather than a scientific or metaphysical idea, because it provided an answer to one of the fundamental religious questions of man's life, namely, the question of the ultimate meaning of his life as a contingent, temporal being set in the wider context of nature and of history.[1]

2. The Text

Calvin already knew what Schweitzer is given credit for having discovered, viz., that redemption in the New Testament has a creational setting. It has cosmic significance. It is objective. Creation is not a metaphor projected from within a naturalism. The "fall" into sin and the curse of the ground are cosmic, so cosmic that redemption

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[1] *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, (New York, 1959), p. 79.

too must have a physical and objective side in the resurrection of the body and the restoration of the groaning creation itself.

If we use the distinction between naturalism and supernaturalism within the Christian circles, we should not define the naturalism after the fashion of Deism and then posit supernaturalism as the divine intervention into the law structure. Rather, we should do what Paul does and speak of the one context of creation which is cosmically disturbed by sin. Those after Adam form Paul's view of the "natural." They are the "earthy" who are without the knowledge of God.

We can perhaps speak to the problem of reproducing the New Testament theology and this problem of supernaturalism if we look to 1 Corinthians 15: 44-45. Geerhardus Vos, John Murray, Harry Baor, and Richard Gaffin,[1] have all worked on this text in interesting ways. Why they are grouped together lies in their hermeneutical principle of creation. Each develops the text in his own way.

The ultimate comparison Paul makes of Christ, outside his Sonship, is the contrast with Adam. In 1 Corinthians 15, that contrast begins as the natural against the "spiritual" reminding us of 1 Corinthians 2. But soon the contrast works itself not to man after the fall into sin but to man before that fall. Adam as he is natural man by virtue of his creation out of the dust is contrasted to Christ as He is the

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[1] Geerhardus Vos, The Pauline Eschatology, (Grand Rapids, 1961). This book was originally published in 1930 but Vos's basic idea on the Spirit and Eschatology can be traced to his article "The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit," in Biblical and Theological Studies, by members of the faculty at Princeton Theological Seminary, (1912), pp. 208-259. John Murray, Principles of Christian Conduct, (Grand Rapids, 1957). Harry Baor, Pentecost and the Missionary Witness. A thorough discussion is given by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., "Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Pauline Soteriology," (Doctoral dissertation, Library School, Westminster Theological Seminary, 1970), pp. 104-130.

Spiritual man by virtue of His resurrection. As Christ, in His resur-
rection, is created out of the heavenly substance, He becomes the Life-
Giving Spirit. Paul argues, as there is the one, so there is the other.
The natural/Spiritual is being pushed back to Paul's interpretation of
what we may call the original destiny of man. Only Vos, to be followed
in elaboration by Gaffin, explores this strange ultimate comparison be-
tween the first man by creation and the last man by resurrection.[1]

Here is a suggestion of what these men see. The context is
creation. Man was created whole and good. Yet, as the traditional
formulations say, he was to be "confirmed in his righteousness." Hence,
the test of the tree of "the knowledge of Good and Evil." This theol-
ogical interpretation of the so-called confirmation in righteousness is
what Paul sees as the bestowal of the Spirit. The Spiritual man was to
dwell on the earth of God's creation. Adam was not to live his life as
only the man of creation but also the man of the Spirit. (Notice how
Abraham Kuyper finds it necessary to first deal with the creational
possibility of Adam's successful completion of the "probation.")[2]

What characterizes this creational approach is the seriousness of
treating Adam and his race as a legitimate option in not sinning against
God. The pre-fall state is considered normal and against this must be
contrasted the abnormal consequences which followed. The significance of
what we are saying about having to re-think our conceptual framwork comes
with this distinction between the normal and the present abnormal condition.
For Paul, the creation is groaning for its redemption just as the Jews or

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[1] See the extended footnote in The Pauline Eschatology, pp. 169-
70.

[2] Principles of Sacred Theology, (Grand Rapids, 1965), pp. 275f.

Isrealites groaned for their redemption from Egypt.[1] It is not character-
istic of our present methodologies to theorize on the basis of the abnor-
mality of the cosmos.

Here we may allude to what we mean by Paul as systematic theolo-
gian. The thrust of Paul's contrast in I Corinthians 15 between creation
and resurrection is that He __became__ the promise. Christ so received the
Spirit that He became the Spirit. Paul provides more explicit contexts for
our theological thought than the other writers; yet they describe the
same subject matter. Peter's description of Christ inheriting the promise
of the Father is parallel to Paul's exegesis of Genesis with Christ as the
Life-Giving Spirit.[2] Whereas Peter makes us think of a packaged present,
the "gift," Paul stresses the union of the Spiritual blessing with the
Lord of the church.

Notice for instance how Paul's mind works. His mission is to
the Gentiles. This has provided much speculation on the part of theol-
ogians as to a synthesis in Paul's mind with the Greek philosophies of
the day. Baur, for instance, had contrasted Paul's Hellenistic freedom
and universalism with that of Hebraic legalism. It is assumed that Paul
as missionary to the Greeks must find his roots for communication in the
Greek cultural context which molds his theology.

Instead, let us consider Paul's appeal to the promise of Abraham
prior to the existence of the line of Isreal as a supra-Hebraic reference
point. Paul has found a principle of faith which will include both the
subsequent Jews and the Gentiles. No one will disagree with us on this.

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[1] Romans 8:22.

[2] Acts 2:33.

The nature of his missionary activity demands that he appeal to a context which will include them both. If God be one in methodology for dealing with mankind in the Judgment, then a common context is needed.

But this need for a supra-Hebraic context does not end with Abraham. It stretches back to a creational context. Not able to appeal directly to the Jewish law as the standard of morality when arguing with the Gentiles, Paul appeals to creation. Too often, studies in Pauline theology have stopped short of this reference point. It seems to critics to be enough to center on Paul and the Greeks without examining his foundation. Paul's movement to creation is demanded in order to gain a perspective by which to view all men. He does not stop with Abraham, but moves back to Adam to include all men in sin. He is allowed to argue then, in Romans 1, about the condition of all men. The appeal to the promise to Abraham only covers the possibility of salvation to all. A foundation is needed to explain why man is in need of such salvation. Creation then becomes his ultimate reference point, exactly because he must deal with the Greeks. We have seen how he pushes his thought back behind the use of Adam as the ground for sin, to include Adam as the ground for the promise which was extended to Abraham.

To dispense with creation as a metaphor searching to express something other than its "objectification" is to lose the cosmic and physical view of salvation underlying Pauline thought. Schweitzer had pushed the cosmic in the direction of the End Times, but ignored its significance as the very beginning of Paul's position. We are suggesting that it is this beginning which makes the apostle's thought cohere. Schweitzer, then, did not provide for the fulness of Pauline perspective, for he allowed mysticism to bridge the gap between the apostle and the interpreter, irre-

gardless of their differing interpretations on the nature of the physical.

We may now offer a suggestion for the interpretation of Pauline theology in particular. The eschatological or history of redemption approach is not broad enough in its present form to understand Paul if it abstracts that history from his view of creation.

Focus has been placed on the death and resurrection of Christ as the model for the life of the believer. As the believer stands between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the Church, his existence is controlled and interpreted by his identification with the death and resurrection, and his daily renewal. Cullmann has identified this as the "already," and the "not yet." The believer has forensically entered into the union with the death and resurrection of Christ. He has been raised with Christ and is justified. Yet he is not righteous in the outer man so he goes through the transformation process to completion at the second coming.

Just as Paul uses this model of the work of Christ for interpreting the life of the believer, so he uses models to interpret the work of Christ. The chief models are probably Moses, Abraham, and Adam. In His death and resurrection, these models converge to produce an interpretation which deals respectively with a new law covenent, the inheritance of the promise, and a new cosmic order of Spiritual existence. None of which can be separated from each other for their common denominator is the gift or blessing of the Spirit in the resurrection of Christ.

The Mosaic context makes His death necessary but it also shapes Paul's view of the resurrected Christ as a new law giver, one who administers the Spiritual gifts to His people. Likewise, in His resurrection, Christ is the Seed of Abraham in that He inherits the promise to Abraham of the Spirit which He administers as the new Moses.

And again, in His resurrection, as He receives the promise of the Father, He is constituted the new Adam. He is the man composed out of heavenly substance who inaugerates the new order of existence.

3. The Writer

The problem of speaking about what is not in creation is a real one. But can we equate theological language proper with Christological language? Since the context is creation, Paul is able to speak of the work of God, and God is able to reveal himself. It does not follow from the symbolic reference to the creator that therefore, the language Paul or other writers use to describe the work of Christ is metaphorical or symbolic in the same sense. Language about the resurrection from the dead is not the same as language about what is beyond our experience. They do not have common roots in symbolic imagination. Instead of referring to Paul as theologian, perhaps it would have been better referring to him as historian. He is not offering us a systematic theology, in our modern use of the expression, on the nature of the ontological trinity. Rather, he is interpreting the historical event of the resurrection of Christ as the initiation of the End Times.

The problem seems to reduce itself to this: we do not agree with Jesus and Paul and therefore, we cannot understand them. Our world view has established pigeon holes to deal with people who talk about the acts of God and heavenly redeemers. Today, we sophisticatedly call it poetic imagination or mythology. We then apply our methods of poetic analysis in order to grasp what the text is saying.

Whoever wrote the text, however, does not agree with us. We say "mythology," and develop a psychological framework by which we handle

the text. But whoever is writing indicates that he is separating himself from the poetic imagination we have developed.

Second Peter 1:16 says that they did not follow after cunningly devised fables when they made known the power and coming of the Lord, but rather they were eyewitnesses. It is no secret that this letter has had a difficult time with critics on the question of canonicity and date. But the point remains that the writer is separating his position from what we would call or label a "creative imagination."

Acts 14, provides us with another contrast. Again, the date of Acts is questioned, but again the point is that "Luke" gives us a comparisonbetween the kind of mentality described by "poetic imagination" and the message which was being preached by the apostles. In order to formulate a clear "theology of Lukan literature," one must take this into consideration. Luke's theology does not appear to be rooted in "religious experience." Not only does the beginning of Acts have a literal interpretation of the works of Christ issuing from Christ himself, before the so-called "kerygmatic" event of preaching, but in the 14th chapter this message is contrasted to paganism.

When the Greeks see something they cannot understand, such as the miracle which Paul performs on the lame man, they immediately mythologize and attribute it to the incarnation of the pantheon. But Paul gives them a different account of the incarnation as rooted in the creator God.

How foolish, we may say, that Luke did not realize he was doing the same thing. The incarnation of Luke's Christ was different from the metaphorical interpretations of the barbarians. Luke did not believe he was doing the same thing.

Again, in Mark 9, after the transfiguration of Christ, Jesus

tells His disciples not to spread an account of what they had seen until after the Son of Man be risen from the dead. Having been fed on a steady diet of parables and chastized repeatedly for their dullness in understanding, the disciples proceeded to engage in a "literary analysis" of the symbol which had been used. What could it mean that one be raised from the dead? The point is ironic. The writer of Mark is telling us that the disciples were wrong. It was not a parable this time. It was not a literary device.

The thrust of these examples is this: a poetic model does not fit the text. We cannot go to the biblical materials with our sophisticated world view and accuse them of a primitivism which could not see the usage of poetic imagination. Parables, fables, mythologies are all referred to, yet they are repudiated. If we are going to develop an analysis of the New Testament literature, we will have to meet the writers on their own ground.

CONCLUSION

We cannot avoid placing biblical criticism within the context of the humanities. Yet when we do so, a tendency arises to mold the biblical text after the image of non-biblical models. The immanent methods tend to influence our idea of what the transcendent should be. Linked to this is the change which takes place regarding the imagination of the writer.

There are two approaches we could take to this situation. On the one hand, we could regard it pessimistically and say that the relativized text can never be known by any generation. What passes for knowledge, at this point, is merely our subjective use of the material.

On the other hand, we could appeal to creation as the ultimate reference point. We could use the different cultural contexts we find in the on-going study of the humanities. Surely, we do not want a non-historical text with truths that transcend our cultural contexts nor do we want a conpletely relativized text which cannot be objectively known. A rigid, non-historical monologue and a relativistic dialogue both distort the interpretive situation.

If the church places the humanities within the context of creation, then the development and revision of conceptual tools as well as the needs of the church in new and differing situations around the world, may provide contexts which enlarge our understanding. Any formulation of hermeneutics must take the cultural stance of the interpreter into account. It is the controlling factor.

Rather than elaborate abstract principles, it would be better

to point to a concrete example of a biblical exegete. The best we can find is Geerhardus Vos, late Professor of Biblical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. When contemporary theology sought to abandon a dogmatic program, such as Schweitzer recommended, more attention was given to the cultural context of the interpreter in hope of a thoroughly descriptive method. Vos, however, accomplished Schweitzer's goal by staying within a dogmatic tradition and its program. This suggests to us that the enemy wes wrongly identified. The problem was not with dogmatics but with the nature of literary criticism.

In contrast, we should notice what Vos achieved within the orbit of Reformed dogmatics. His work is unlike much orthodox literature in that he does not operate on the defensive. He does not let the non-orthodox camp define the nature of the problems and then select what is helpful and reject the rest. His work is not the second hand use of ideas borrowed from the critical tradition. In Vos, orthodoxy took the offensive.

In 1912, the same year as Schweitzer's Paul and His Interpreters, Vos published his article, "The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit." It established him as an unread forerunner of later discussions. In 1930, when Schweitzer fully elaborated his version of Paul in The Pauline Mysticism, a series of earlier articles were published by Vow under the title, The Pauline Eschatology. While Schweitzer was pleading for a descriptive approach apart from the dogmatic stance of the church, Vos was quietly reproaching the contents of Paul's thought in an unprecedented fashion.

Of course, Vos did not write in a critical vacuum. Our con-

tention, however, would have to be that Vos was able to go beyond the movements of criticism precisely because of his roots in the tradition.

In so far as Vos was a Reformed theologian he was not without a bias or a pre-exegetical evaluation of the significance of the text. In our day, when most discussions of presuppositions are directed to the philosophical stances of the interpreters, it is worth noting the impact of the Reformed and Lutheran traditions. We noticed in the beginning how many nineteenth century critics belonged to the Lutheran school. We may now add the names of Schweitzer, Cullmann, Bultmann, Fuchs, and Ebeling. (It is Heinrich Ott's Reformed stance which makes him disagree with Bultmann and the New Hermeneutic.)

Strange as it may sound then, Vos was involved in "Reformed exegesis." An examination of his collection of articles on the Old Testament, Biblical Theology, will show how he assumed the Reformed tradition of systematics at every point. Yet the work is unlike Jonathan Edwards' The History of Redemption, for Vos does not use the history as a foil for introducing a fully developed dogma associated with the loci method.

Closely linked with this traditional stance in Reformed theology is the allegiance Vos had to the products of that loci method. It would be incorrect to assume that this method was a distortion of the Bible so drastic that everyone who used it was in ignorance of the text's meaning. Before commenting on the historical weakness of the method, Edmund Clowney says:

> The old "proof text" approach has been much caricatured; its use by men who knew and loved the Scripture never even approximated the calculated perversion practiced by some modern cults. The West-

minster divines, for example, were too familiar with their Bibles and with the exegetical labors or John Calvin to ignore the context when they were required to furnish Scriptural "proofs."[1]

The question then comes, how could Vos both assume the products of this method and yet work on a biblical interpretation which went constructively beyond it?

First, the Reformed tradition furnished Vos with unifying motifs for the development of his work, for example, creation, the people of God, and the kingdom of God.

Secondly, Vos had formulated the relationship between systematics and biblical theology.

> There is no difference in that one would be more closely bound to the Scriptures than the other. In this they are wholly alike. Nor does the difference lie in this that the one transforms the biblical material, whereas the other would leave it unmodified. Both equally make the truth deposited in the Bible undergo a transformation: but the difference arises from the fact that the principle by which the transformation is effected differs in each case. In Biblical Theology this principle is one of historical, in Systematic Theology it is one of logical construction. Biblical Theology draws a <u>line</u> of development. Systematic Theology draws a <u>circle</u>. Still it should be remembered, that on the line of historical progress there is at several points already a beginning of correlation among elements of truth in which the beginnings of the systematizing process can be discerned.[2]

By the time Vos structured the Pauline eschatology, the apostle was playing the dual role of interpreter of redemptive history and systematic theologian.

The hermeneutical situation of author, text, and reader is developed on the Vos-Gaffin scheme to view the text as itself interpretation. In light of the eschatological character of redemption,

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[1] <u>Preaching and Biblical Theology</u>, (Grand Rapids, 1961), p. 17.

[2] <u>Biblical Theology</u>, (Grand Rapids, 1948), pp. 24-25.

the interpretation of the text and the reader are historically
qualified in their common program and stance. They share a common
program as they interpret the redemptive work of Christ and His on-
going ministry in the church as the Life-Giving Spirit. They share
a common stance, despite the differences in cultural context, as the
reader stands with Paul between the resurrection of Christ and the
resurrection of the church.

Our immanent programs should take this continuity with Paul
into consideration. We are both exegetes. Our activity should be
an imitation of his. We would suggest that to learn exegesis one
should imitate an exegete such as Vos. But Vos, in so far as he be-
comes familiar with the text, initates Paul himself. The hermeneu-
tical guide-lines we use grow out of this familiarity.

The goal is not simply what Schweitzer would have called "to
define" Pauline thought. Our imitation of Paul is a reproduction but
it is also an expansion where we too are "doing" theology. The reader
cannot remain detached and explicate Paul without identifying himself
with the apostle's program and stance. The nature of the church comes
into consideration for at least the Pauline epistles are church oriented
literature.[1]

This leads us to the discontinuity between the reader and the
text. A distinction is made between the activity of the biblical writer
and his reader due to the character of the text as "canon" or authority.

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[1] John writes with an evangelical purpose which may make a
difference in our methodological treatment of him (20:31). It is in-
terinting that although a separation has been maintained between the
character of John and the Synoptics, the latter are also supposed to
share John's "kerygmatic" intent.

Its uniqueness as the transcendent Word is contained in this foundational role for the church. In fact, the dual character of the text may be pushed back to the dual character of the writer. He is the man with the office, a gift of the Spirit. The reader and the writer may both be interpreters, but the work of the church is to build upon the foundation and subordinate herself to its authority.

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