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A Definition and an Application of Some Hermeneutical Principles

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A DEFINITION AND AN APPLICATION OF
SOME HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES

A Research Project
Presented to
the Faculty of
Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Divinity

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study has been to research the area of Biblical hermeneutics in order to gain a historical perspective upon which the author could build his personal practical system of interpreting the Bible.

This study has been limited to Biblical hermeneutics from the larger area of general hermeneutics. It has further been limited to the major historical representatives and schools of thought and the major principles which have evolved from these, because of the vast amount of material which has been written on this subject. From these principles the writer has chosen the ones which he feels to be the most representative for valid Protestant conservative evangelical interpretation of the scriptures.

The plan of this paper was to start with a brief historical survey and then move to the principles which were the personally accepted Biblical hermeneutical principles of the author. These then were put to work investigating a selected passage of scripture. This passage was subjected to the principles which were found to be the most valid from the standpoint of comparative research. The interpretations are hoped to be more objective than they would have been before this study was made. Jowett states the goal of interpretation: "the

true use of interpretation is to get rid of interpretation and leave us alone in company with the author."¹

The word hermeneutics is derived from a Greek word which means to interpret or explain. The noun form means interpretation or explanation. From this point forward in the paper the word hermeneutics will be used only in connection with the scriptures. Therefore when "hermeneutics" is cited it should be thought of as "Biblical hermeneutics."²

James Smart has written a book entitled, The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church. In this book he explains that many Protestant ministers are content with keeping the people in the status quo position as regards the Bible. He says one reason for this is the lack of instruction to the seminarian as to how to bridge the gap from the original meaning to contemporary significance.³ Another charge is that Protestants let the interpretation replace scripture as their authority.⁴ Also stated is the problem that Biblical scholars are using post-critical presuppositions while ordinary church members

¹J. D. Wood, The Interpretation of the Bible (London: G. Duckworth and Co., Ltd., 1958), p. 141.

²A. B. Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1966), p. 3.

³J. D. Smart, The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 34.

⁴Ibid., p. 58.

are still using pre-critical views for interpretation.⁵ Another problem is the attitude of many church leaders which causes them to protect the Bible. They are afraid to let it stand on its own and let it bring its own defense.⁶ This quote from Smart will adequately explain the emphasis of his book.

The problem that we set out to investigate was the growing silence of the Scriptures in the life of the church and in the consciousness of Christian people. The argument, very briefly, has been (a) that the general growth of knowledge and of man's understanding of himself and his history which has taken place during the past two hundred years has created such a gap between the language and concepts of the Bible and the language and concepts of modern man that, unassisted, he cannot make adequate sense of what he reads; (b) that during these two hundred years Biblical scholars have faced with courage the complex problems that the text of Scripture furnishes for the modern mind and have amassed a wealth of knowledge that enables one to read any part of it intelligently, but, for various reasons, this knowledge has not in general been permitted to reach the membership of the church, so that to a large extent the Bible for them no longer belongs in the age in which they actually live; (c) that Biblical scholarship itself contributed to this process of alienation unintentionally in that, in its endeavor to be scientifically objective in its analysis of the literature and its reconstruction of the history and religion, it neglected the theological content of text which alone secures its relevance for succeeding ages; (d) that advances have been made in Biblical interpretation in the past fifty years to take more adequate account of both the historical and the theological content of the text, but this promising development has been hindered, particularly in America, by the suspicion among Biblical scholars that it undermines the scientific character of Biblical scholarship, so that again the tools of a more adequate interpretation are withheld from the church; (e) that what is most urgently needed is a reopening of the hermeneutical question by scholars, with the most thorough discussion of its every aspect, and the mediating of a more adequate hermeneutic to the membership of the church. All in all, the goal is for the preacher and people together to face honestly what is there before them in the

⁵Ibid., p. 77.

⁶Ibid., p. 129.

Scriptures, an openness to the problems of the literature and history bringing in its train an openness to the revolutionary word that awaits them in the text.⁷

In his final chapter, Smart suggests certain corrective measures.

He states that seminary education should be more concerned with this problem by making sure the students can make the scriptures live for the parishioners. Also he suggests a teaching ministry in which knowledge, rather than just a feeling of religion, is actually imparted. He then shows how scripture can work, if people will let it, by referring to Jeremiah, who told of the power of the Word of God "to root up, to pull down, to build and to plant."⁸

All of this has been said in order to show the need for correct interpretation and proper dissemination of the Word of God. The writer has chosen to write in this area in order to strengthen his own ability to preach the Word correctly and let it do its work as directed by the Holy Spirit.

⁷Ibid., pp. 141-142.

⁸Ibid., pp. 165-172.

CHAPTER II

PREREFORMATION HISTORICAL HERMENEUTICAL SURVEY

Old Testament and New Testament hermeneutics are considered together in the present-day. The Bible as a whole is treated under the same interpretive principles. There was a time when only the Old Testament existed and this is what will be discussed now.

Ezra was perhaps the first recognized interpreter of the Old Testament. He gave understanding to the people as reported in Nehemiah. The schools of Hillel and Shammai developed two different types of interpretive viewpoints. The school of Hillel was more lenient and flexible in its principles, while the school of Shammai stood for a strict interpretation. Later the Old Testament was interpreted in relation to the Midrashim, which were commentaries on the Old Testament, and the Mishnas, which were topical arrangements of the Old Testament. Still later the Jews found that by using allegorism, their faith was more easily defended. Philo was one who used allegorism to a large extent. The Jews, however, did for the most part look upon the Old Testament as their authoritative rule of faith and life.¹ The interpretations of the Old Testament by the Jews before Christ were not so

¹A. B. Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1966), pp. 21-29.

varied as the later views of it by the Christian fathers. Since the main thrust of this paper is the Christian view of the Bible, the discussion will now move to the early fathers.

During the first century era, New Testament hermeneutics was not in prominence as a discipline. It was not thought of to a large degree since the material of the New Testament scriptures was even then being written and collected. The church was too busy witnessing and, in fact surviving, to be worried about interpreting what they were living. During the second century a period of uncritical acceptance obtained in regard to the New Testament scriptures. Interpretation is needed only when something is obscure, and the New Testament writings were not thought to be obscure by the Christians of the first two centuries.²

One of the first recognized authorities in interpretation of the New Testament was Irenaeus (d. 202 A.D.). His purpose in using interpretation was to demonstrate the falsity of the gnostic heresy. His method was ostensibly to use correct exegesis of the perfect book. Irenaeus held that the scriptures were perfect. His exegesis was based on the centrality of Christ in the Old Testament and New Testament, which led Irenaeus to see the unity of scripture and the

²C. Elliot and W. J. Harsha, Biblical Hermeneutics (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Co., 1881), pp. 8-9.

progressive quality of revelation. Also he recognized the harmony of the scriptures and the ability of scripture to interpret itself. Irenaeus used typology and allegory to supplement literal interpretation mostly where these were somewhat evident in the scripture. Irenaeus conceived of tradition as an ally of the scriptures, while he never actually contrasted the two in an effort to show which was more authoritative.³

Irenaeus had some exceptional standards of interpretation for his day, and in fact is considered by many to be the best interpreter of his period. In spite of this he sometimes fell into the trap of faulty interpretation himself, yet judged others by his own high standards.⁴

Origen (182-251 A.D.) was another of the early church fathers who dealt with interpretation of the scripture. He was more concerned with instruction of Christians than defense of the faith against heresies.⁵ Origen followed Clement of Alexandria and used his three-fold sense of scripture in interpretation. Origen developed this system and propounded the literal, moral, and spiritual senses of the

³A. S. Wood, The Principles of Biblical Interpretation (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Pub. House, 1967), pp. 21-36.

⁴H. E. Dana and R. E. Glaze Jr., Interpreting the New Testament (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1961), p. 63.

⁵A. S. Wood, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

scriptures. The literal sense was not to be taken too seriously and was even to be disregarded in some cases. The moral sense also received little attention from Origen. The spiritual or mystical sense was the most important to him. In fact, Origen intimates that the literal sense is for the layman and the spiritual for the scholar or the more deeply spiritual person. The result, which posed problems for his adherents, was an unwarranted allegorical interpretation of many passages.⁶

Origen was not well enough acquainted with Hebrew to understand the fine points of the language. This is one reason why he did not interpret as well as he might otherwise have done.⁷

But again, as with Irenaeus, Origen did not live up to the best interpretation of scripture which his principles were capable of delivering.⁸

The next early interpreter to be discussed is Augustine (354-430 A.D.). The principles which he used are as follows: a genuine Christian experience is essential for proper interpretation; the literal-historical aspect of scripture must be kept in mind; more than one meaning is present in each passage; the numbers in the Bible

⁶B. Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1956), pp. 32-33.

⁷F. W. Farrar, History of Interpretation (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1886), pp. 196-198.

⁸Ramm, op. cit., p. 33.

are of allegorical significance; Christ is eminent in the Old Testament; exegesis and not eisegesis is to be sought; the true orthodox creed must be considered in interpretation as expressed through men's love for God; the context of the Bible and tradition must be consulted; no doctrine may be formulated upon insecure interpretations; the Holy Spirit does not replace the need for proper study and education; the obscure passages are to be in subjection to the clear ones; no scripture is out of harmony with any other while keeping the progressive quality of revelation in mind.⁹

These principles are good even in the light of present-day scholarship. The only problem which Augustine had in this connection concerned his affiliation with the church. He was a theologian who was trying to formulate doctrine and at times deviated from his principles of interpretation in order to make his theology fit together. One example of this is his interpretation of II Corinthians 3:6 which he thought validated allegorical interpretation by stating that the letter or literal interpretation kills.¹⁰

The period from Augustine up to the Reformation was lacking in any great advances in interpretation. The people of the Middle Ages were under great difficulties in many areas of life, which added to this stagnation. The Church had gained a vast amount of power and

⁹Ibid., pp. 36-37.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 35.

its tradition and authority were almost insurmountable. The clergy were often uneducated and the people had no chance for education. The process by which interpretive principles are formulated is through the exchange of ideas. This was almost impossible during this period because of the lack of the printing press and related communication processes. During the previous period these were not in existence either but this was overcome by the prominence of great centers of learning such as Alexandria, which permitted verbal exchange. Perhaps the greatest factor was the condemnation placed upon anyone who dared to deviate from the accepted position of the church.¹¹

¹¹Dana and Glaze, op. cit., pp. 78-80.

CHAPTER III

REFORMATION AND POST-REFORMATION HISTORICAL HERMENEUTICAL SURVEY

The Reformation reversed the trend of stagnation in the church. Luther (1483-1546) was the man who stood out as the spokesman for the anti-traditionalism group. His main purpose was to find the revealed truth of the Bible and put it before the people for their edification. In doing this he formulated some hermeneutical principles. These were as follows: the principle that the Bible is different from any other book and should be so regarded when interpreting it; the Bible is above everything else in establishing doctrine, including church tradition and authority; the Word should be interpreted in a literal sense except as related to Christological allegory; the interpreter should consult original languages, historical cultures, and context; the Bible is sufficient to interpret itself and clear enough for the ordinary man to understand the basis of his faith from it; Christ is the central figure and most important message of the scriptures; and there is differentiation in purpose between the law of the Old Testament and the gospel of the New Testament.¹

The importance of Luther's work was not so much the quality of scholarship or great new principles which he espoused but rather the

¹B. Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1956), pp. 53-57.

attitude which he engendered. He sought to remove the interpretation of the Bible from the corrupt and fallible "church" and put it into the infallible "hands" of the Holy Spirit as He would speak to each believer with the message of revelation out of the Word. Because of Luther's work others have been able to study the scriptures objectively without the interference of church tradition and then to publish their views for others to read without fear of ecclesiastical repercussions.

Another giant in this field was Calvin (1509-1564). He was a younger contemporary of Luther and lived a few years longer. His main emphases were the guidance of the Spirit in interpretation; the rejection of allegorical interpretation, the principle of scripture interpreting scripture as seen in good exegesis rather than in eisegesis, the founding of doctrines upon only very sound exegesis, and the careful avoidance of misinterpreting prophetic and Messianic passages.²

Bernard Ramm says about Calvin, "He showed caution and reserve in these matters, and stated that the exegete ought to investigate the historical settings of all prophetic and Messianic Scriptures."³ This is in contradiction to this statement by Dana and Glaze: "Most of Calvin's mistakes in exegesis were due to a failure to view the Bible

²Ibid., pp. 58-59.

³Ibid., p. 59.

in a proper historical perspective."⁴ Whatever the judgement of the reader upon this matter, it is still true that Calvin was one of the most logical exegetes and an influential Protestant leader.

Since the Reformation many new ideas have come into the hermeneutical field. The author will discuss a few of these in order to bring this brief historical survey up to the present-day.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries scholarship in the area of Biblical research in regard to texts, languages, and historical cultures was greatly increased. The impact of these findings upon hermeneutics was great. Rationalism as expressed by Hobbes and Spinoza affected interpretation by placing more emphasis upon the reason of man in making correct judgements. Also the recognition of literary forms such as Hebrew poetry aided the interpretation process. During the nineteenth century philosophical views came into prominence which resulted in the loss of the authority of the Bible for many scholars. This took place because of the rationalistic mood of the period which explained away miracles and the supernatural base of the Bible. God was denied and reason became the all-sufficient rule of life. Because of this frame of mind, many of the researchers into the Biblical studies area went astray and proposed theories which were the least worthy of being considered as good Biblical research. This was

⁴H. E. Dana and R. E. Glaze Jr., Interpreting the New Testament (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1961), p. 93.

because the principle of guidance by the Holy Spirit was being completely ignored by them in their anti-Christian presuppositions. There were, however, some good interpreters who produced some very good commentaries such as Alford, Lightfoot, Hort, Westcott, and Lange. The twentieth century has seen a continuation of the trends present in the nineteenth century. The German writers were the leaders while the Americans were content to be led. After a while scholars in America did search for interpretive ideas in the works of the English scholars mentioned above. Recently Americans have shown interest in better quality hermeneutics. The theological studies which are having a resurgence in a Biblical context are causing interpretation to be studied with an increased fervor.⁵

⁵ A. B. Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1966), pp. 43-53.

CHAPTER IV

HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLE OF LANGUAGE STUDY

The principle of proper language study is of utmost importance in Biblical interpretation. The Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. To be able to interpret in the best manner possible, one must know all he can about these languages. This includes many facets of language study. To this area the author now turns his attention.

As time passes, the language of an area changes very slowly, and over a long period of time the changes accumulate, which makes the language very much different from the original. Also there is the earlier problem of oral tradition, which involves the verbal passing of scriptures from generation to generation. The Hebrew and Aramaic portions of the scriptures were written down only in consonant forms. About 500 A.D. vowel points were inserted. Because of the long period in which only consonants were used and the length of time between the vowel insertions and the present, there are many uncertainties in this area. The Greek language likewise has changed since the writing of the New Testament. The present-day Greek is much different from Biblical Greek.¹ Besides these general areas, there

¹A. B. Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1966), pp. 114-115.

are many specific items in language study which must be understood in order to interpret as well as possible.

The forms of words are very important in language study. Since present-day interpreters are removed from all possibilities of speaking with the writers and even from speaking the pure language of that day, it is vital that the student know the correct meanings of the various forms.²

The interpreter of scripture must also know the root meanings of the words of the ancient languages. Many lexicons, dictionaries, and concordances are available for this purpose. These tools are for the interpreters who are not master scholars of the original languages, but wish to use the work of the master scholars in their own interpretations. The author of Interpreting the Bible, A. B. Mickelsen, gives five principles for this area of language study: know all the possible meanings, consider the best meaning for the context of the writer, consider the best meaning for the context of the reader, use etymology as a help rather than as a proof, and be careful of making distinctions in defining synonyms where the context does not so dictate.³

²Ibid., p. 116.

³Ibid., pp. 117-129.

Syntax is the relationship between words in sentences. This is one of the most complicated areas of work in translating the scriptures. The syntax of a highly inflected language such as Greek is more intricate than that of the English language. This enabled the Greek writers to be very precise in their statements. The interpreter should recognize this as a great help, although at first it may seem difficult to grasp the many varied distinctions made in Greek.

Not only do the three languages of the Biblical writers help interpreters, but also the cognate languages of the Bible composition period are a great help to scholars. These provide light upon the forms, usage, idioms, and meanings which would otherwise be unknown.

Exegesis is the process of finding out what the author meant by writing the words which he wrote. It is extracting the correct meaning from the written passages. This can not be done without the knowledge of language, as has been demonstrated in the above sections. Eisegesis is the process of inserting the interpreter's ideas into the original author's thought. This is one major pitfall for interpreters. Some do this without realizing it, but others do it intentionally. Whatever the reason, this should be avoided at all costs. From the above discussion it can be shown that if one wishes to make the best possible interpretation, he will study language thoroughly.

It is true that not all interpreters are able to become experts in language study or even study the original languages at all. It is

true, however, that doctrine should be formulated only upon the basis of sound exegetical study by men who have this ability. This is shown by a quote from Barrows in Companion to the Bible:

It is not indeed necessary that the great body of Christians, or even all preachers of the gospel should be able to read the Bible in the original languages. But it is a principle of Protestantism, the soundness of which has been confirmed by the experience of centuries, that there should always be in the churches a body of men able to go behind the current versions of Scripture to the original tongues from which these versions were executed. The commentator, at least, must not take his expositions at second hand; and a healthy tone of feeling in regard to the sacredness and supreme authority of the inspired word will always demand that there should be a goodly number of scholars scattered through the churches who can judge from the primitive sources of the correctness of his interpretations.⁴

Figurative language is one area to be studied for correct Biblical interpretation. In language there are many figures which need to be understood before one can understand the total message. A large number of these will be listed and explained.

A simile is a stated comparison between two things which are actually unrelated. Similes use the words "like" and "as" to make the comparison. In the Bible there are many similes which make the language more colorful and the message more powerful when properly understood. A metaphor is a comparison in direct language between

⁴E. P. Barrows, Companion to the Bible (New York: American Tract Society, 1867), pp. 524-525.

two things, which substitutes one for another. This comparison may be more difficult to detect since there is no special word present as in the simile.⁵

Metonymy is the process of using one word for another word which is closely associated with it. An example of this is the use Paul makes of circumcision and uncircumcision. Circumcision indicates the Jewish people and uncircumcision indicates the Gentile people. A synecdoche is a figure in which the whole is used to represent the part or the part is used to represent the whole. An example of this is in the books of Isaiah and Micah where swords and spears represent military weapons in general.⁶

Personification is a well-known figure of speech which attributes person-hood to a thing, quality, or idea. Apostrophe is the exclamatory language spoken to either a person or personification, either present or absent. This is used in recording the act of thinking out loud. An example of this is recorded in II Samuel 18:33 in which David is showing remorse at the death of his son Absalom.⁷

Ellipsis is a figure of speech which does not fully state the thought in complete grammatical construction but requires additional

⁵Mickelsen, op. cit., pp. 182-184. cf. M. C. Tenney, Galatians: the Charter of Christian Liberty (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1954), pp. 136-137.

⁶Mickelsen, op. cit., pp. 185-187.

⁷Ibid., pp. 187-189.

material to complete the thought. There are two types of this figure. The first is repetitional in which the missing thought is clearly understood from the context. The second is non-repetitional in which the missing thought is not clearly understood from the context. Examples are found in Romans 11:22 and Acts 18:6. Zeugma is a form of ellipsis. It demands verbs to clarify the meaning where they are left out. Aposiopesis involves not stating part of a sentence because of emotional reasons or for rhetorical results. An example of this is found in the New Testament where Jesus asked the authorities whether John's baptism was from God or men. The question could not be answered by them for fear of the outcome no matter how they answered. In Mark there is no final outcome to this incident, which makes the reader supply one. It is logical that there could have been a mob reaction if the wrong answer was given by the authorities. This then makes a dramatic style.⁸

Euphemism is using a soft, mild, or inoffensive word in place of another word which has the same meaning but sounds harder, harsher, or more offensive. An example of this in the Old Testament is found in Leviticus 18:6, in which unlawful sexual acts are euphemized by using delicate language. Litotes is a figure of speech which affirms something by denying the opposite. Meiosis is the understatement of something in order to emphasize it. Hyperbole, which is the opposite

⁸Ibid., pp. 189-191.

of meiosis, is the overstatement of something in order to emphasize it. Irony is a statement which is actually just opposite of the truth, in order to emphasize the truth.⁹

Pleonasm is the repetitive style of some authors. This is simply repeating an idea or a thought. This is not prevalent in English literature but can be seen in the scriptures. An example is found in Luke 22:11. Epanadiplosis is similar to pleonasm, but instead of repeating a thought or an idea, this denotes repeating an important word for emphasis. Climax involves listing a number of qualities, characteristics, or actions, each of which is used twice in sequence. The second one evolves from the first and builds upon it. This is a powerful way of saying some things. An example of this is found in Romans 5:3-5. Rhetorical questions are questions which do not need an answer, but are sometimes answered. In either case the answer is obvious from the context. A good example of this is in Romans 8:31-39.¹⁰

Riddles are figures of speech which are made obscure by the author for one reason or another. A secular riddle is one which does not involve a religious subject, while a sacred riddle does. Both types are created to try to stump the hearer in his understanding. A well-known secular riddle is found in Judges 14:14 and a sacred riddle

⁹Mickelsen, op. cit., pp. 192-195. cf. M. C. Tenney, Galatians: the Charter of Christian Liberty (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1954), pp. 136-137.

¹⁰Mickelsen, op. cit., pp. 195-197.

is found in Revelation 13:11-18. A fable is a longer story which is fictional and is told in order to teach a moral example. Many times the characters are personified animals or plants. One example is in Judges 9:8-15. Enigmatic sayings are obscure for three reasons. The first is the condition of the listeners. The second is the profoundness of the message. The third is the aspect of how the message was transmitted to the original speakers. These sayings are ones which can not be fully understood by the people for the above three reasons. It is easy to understand that some of the revelation of God has to be given in this kind of saying since God is so different from human beings.¹¹

Parables are actually extended similes. The parable, however, is limited to the natural realm for its basic material while the simile may be unrealistic and even imaginary in scope. The purposes of the parables are to teach the ones wishing to learn and to keep the truth out of the reach of the ones not wishing to learn. The parable is composed of four parts: the actual event or earthly thing upon which the parable is based; the spiritual truth which is to be taught by the parable; the analogy which relates the earthly part and spiritual part; the need for interpretation of the parable which explains it to contemporary men. The interpreter of parables needs to observe the following principles: interpret them in close relation

¹¹Ibid., pp. 199-211.

to Christ and His Kingdom; interpret them in the light of the culture of the particular area and era; interpret them with correct exegesis by looking for one central teaching, by looking for possible internal interpretation, and by comparison with other recorded accounts of the same parable.¹² Parables are well-known and well-liked vehicles of truth. They can throw much light upon an issue or can be misinterpreted and further cloud the issue. The interpreter will do well to spend much time in studying the parabolic teachings of Jesus.

Allegory is not to be confused with allegorizing. Mickelsen says concerning this:

Allegory, a very legitimate way of teaching truth, should not be confused with allegorizing, which takes a narrative that was not meant to teach truth by identification. By a point by point comparison, allegorizing makes the narrative convey ideas different from those intended by the original author.¹³ Thus allegorizing is an arbitrary way of handling any narrative.

An allegory is an extended metaphor. It is using in a figurative way any event or fact applied to another meaning. Allegories are distinguished by the following points: a plurality of main verbs and variety of tenses; direct comparison; figurative use of words; timeless truths as main emphases; imagery identified internally; factual

¹²B. Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1956), pp. 254-265. cf. Mickelsen, op. cit., pp. 212-230. M. S. Terry, Biblical Hermeneutics (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Pub. House, 1969), pp. 276-301.

¹³Mickelsen, op. cit., p. 231.

and non-factual experience mixed in order to show truths; explanation of relationship between image and reality and which truths are taught. Allegories are in both the Old and New Testaments with more in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. An example is in John 15:1-10.¹⁴ Because of the prevalent misunderstanding of allegories, the author will present another quote from Mickelsen.

By examining carefully the context, the interpreter can often determine who were the original hearers of the allegory, the reason the original speaker (writer) used the allegory, the meaning he assigned to each of the basic points of comparison, and finally, the role of the allegory in developing the total thought being presented. If the interpreter does not consider carefully the context, it is almost impossible to avoid bringing his own ideas into the allegorical imagery.¹⁵

If anything has been misunderstood in hermeneutics, certainly typology has been. Typology does not consist of a "bizarre, fanciful meaning" of something else, but is a correct and proper method of communication. When properly interpreted, it throws much light upon the revelation of God. Since there has been much misuse and misunderstanding of typology, the author will quote directly from Mickelsen in order to keep the meaning clear.

In typology the interpreter finds a correspondence in one or more respects between a person, event, or thing in the Old Testament and a person, event, or thing closer to or contemporaneous with a New Testament writer. It is this correspondence that determines the meaning in the Old Testament narrative that is stressed by a later speaker or writer. The correspondence is

¹⁴Mickelsen, op. cit., pp. 230-235. cf. Terry, op. cit., pp. 302-308.

¹⁵Mickelsen, op. cit., p. 232.

present because God controls history, and this control of God over history is axiomatic with the New Testament writers. It is God who causes earlier individuals, groups, experiences, institutions, etc., to embody characteristics which later he will cause to reappear.¹⁶

The antetype or type is the person, event, or thing which is in the Old Testament. The antitype is the corresponding person, event, or thing in the New Testament. Some people consider typology to be involved only where explicitly stated in the New Testament. Others consider it to be present in many passages not directly stated as such. Still others consider it to be very rare indeed if present at all. The position of this writer is in agreement with Terry as reaffirmed by Ramm. Their position is as follows: using only Biblically affirmed types is too limited; Biblically affirmed types are to be used as examples for further types discovered; belief in unfulfilled prophecy is similar to belief in types unaffirmed; implications from the book of Hebrews indicate further types are discoverable upon investigation; parts of a type may be used as typical since the whole type is typical; to narrow the usage of types too much is as bad as misusing them by expanding their usage too much. Some examples are: the lifting up of the serpent as the antetype and the lifting up of Christ as the antitype; the passover as the antetype and the redemption of Christ as the antitype; incense as the antetype and prayer as the antitype.¹⁷

¹⁶Ibid., p. 237.

¹⁷Ramm, op. cit., pp. 196-213. cf. Terry, op. cit., pp. 334-346. Mickelsen, op. cit., pp. 236-264.

An example of the incorrect usage of typology can be seen in the book This Means That by W. Wilson. In his book Wilson describes a nut as typical of a Christian, as follows:

NUTS Song of Sol. 6:11 describes the children of God. They live in heavenly places, not down in the swamps. They are of many colors, like the various races. They have a sweet and good heart. Some have thin shells and some hard. They are of various shapes and sizes according to the way they have grown in grace. There is much about them to be thrown away but much to be kept that is sweet and valuable.¹⁸

Symbolic language is suggestive of meaning but does not state it explicitly. This type of language, therefore, leaves room for either too little or too much meaning being drawn from it. The symbol is an actual object which is used to teach a lesson or expose a truth. The connection between the object and the lesson or truth as it relates to God's message for today is what the interpreter tries to discover. Several kinds of symbols are as follows: external miraculous symbols, visional symbols, material symbols, emblematic numbers, emblematic names, emblematic colors, emblematic metals, emblematic jewels, emblematic actions, and emblematic ordinances. Miracles such as the pillars of cloud and fire were symbols which demonstrated God's ability to supersede nature. Visions incorporate symbols in themselves such as ordinary objects but represent something different from the ordinary meaning of the object. Material symbols, such as blood, are ones that are physically accessible to humans. The symbol

¹⁸W. Wilson, This Means That (Kansas City, Missouri: The W. and M. Publications, 1943), p. 159.

of blood represents life. Numbers may have symbolic meaning, but this meaning can be perceived only by inductive study. Names may be used symbolically to indicate transference of certain qualities from one thing to another. An example of this is found in Revelation 11:8 where Jerusalem is called "Sodom" and "Egypt". Ancient colors were not so varied as ours are today. Only a few major colors were identified by name. In Revelation the colored horses symbolize various ideas. Again in Revelation precious metals and jewels are used to symbolize the inexpressible greatness of the Christian's life after death. Actions also are sometimes of symbolical significance. The eating of scrolls by Ezekiel and John indicated that the message became a part of them and indicated as well the sweetness or bitterness of the message. The emblematic ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper are symbolic of the change inside men. They are not magical in saving people but are sacred symbols which indicate inward spiritual conditions. Mickelsen gives six principles for interpreting symbols: check the qualities of the literal object in the symbol; use the context in determining the reason for symbolical language; use the context in explaining the connection between symbol and truth taught; be sure to interpret in the light of historical culture; look for the same symbol used in other places; meditate upon the results of investigation.¹⁹

¹⁹Mickelsen, op. cit., pp. 265-279.

Poetical language is difficult to interpret if it is not recognized as such. The widely accepted translation of the Bible, the King James version, fails to make clear what language is poetical and what is not. The Revised Standard version is one which does make clear where the poetry is located. Most of the poetry in the Bible is in the Old Testament. Therefore it is in the Hebrew tongue. With this introduction, poetical language will now be discussed.

The Hebrew poetry can not be translated into English with exactly the same form and style since the two languages are so different. Hebrew poetry consists in balance of thought, while most English poetry consists in balance of sound. Parallelism is a quality of Hebrew poetry which is important to understand. "The poet follows one assertion by another line of thought parallel to the first. A verse then consists of at least two parts in which the second part is parallel to the first."²⁰ Some of the kinds of complete parallelism are synonymous, antithetic, synthetic, emblematic, stairlike, and introverted. Incomplete parallelism may be with or without compensation. This has to do with whether or not the thought has a counterpart in its corresponding line.²¹

Although a full knowledge of Hebrew is needed to understand completely Hebrew poetry, Mickelsen says the following:

²⁰Ibid., p. 324.

²¹Ibid., pp. 323-328. cf. Terry, op. cit., pp. 96-103.

A student with even one year of Hebrew can enter into many of these elements and feel first hand the force fullness of Hebrew poetry. Even the person who reads only English translations, however, will profit from knowing something about the nature and structure of such poetry.²²

Stanzas or strophes are divisions of thought which are made by the translators. These may be close to the original groupings of lines or they may not. In other words, translators can not be completely sure of the original arrangements. These are helpful in understanding the poetry. In addition to these, some word arrangements are helpful in translating poetry. Anacrusis is starting a line with a word which comes before the metre. This technique is used for emphasis. An acrostic is beginning each line or set of lines with sequential letters of the alphabet. This technique tends to give style and movement to poetry. Assonance is the quality of words sounding alike. This is a common technique which makes poetry pleasant and appealing. Also alliteration, the beginning of different words with the same letter, is used in Hebrew poetry.²³ All of these are helpful when known by the person interpreting the poetry.

Milton Terry says in his book Biblical Hermeneutics:

The least we can do is to make prominent in our translations the measured forms of the original. So far as it may be done without too great violence to the idioms of our own tongue, we should preserve the same order of words, emphatic forms of statement, and abrupt transitions. In these respects Hebrew poetry is probably more capable of exact translation than that of any other

²²Mickelsen, op. cit., p. 328.

²³Ibid., pp. 328-330.

language. For there is no rhyme, no metric scale, to be translated. Two things it is essential to preserve--the spirit and the form, and both of these are of such a nature as to make it possible to reproduce them to a great extent in almost any other language.²⁴

²⁴Terry, op. cit., p. 94.

CHAPTER V

SOME MORE IMPORTANT HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES

The principle of language study permeates every other principle of interpretation and has therefore been covered first and more thoroughly. The author now turns to principles of hermeneutics which are not as detailed as the principle of language study. These principles will be identified and explained adequately so that the reader will be able to use them in his own personal interpretation of the scriptures.

The principle of the accommodation of revelation is basic to hermeneutics. It is explained as follows:

We may affirm, a priori, the necessity of accommodation in revelation. The necessity arises from the definition already given of the object of revelation, which is to give to man such knowledge of God as is necessary to his regeneration and salvation. But in order to do this, the Infinite must condescend to adapt it to the understanding of the finite. Consequently, it is not the truth as it exists in its fullness and exactness in the Divine mind, that God imparts to the human mind, but intelligible, saving truth, truth proportionate to our faculties and our needs, truth clothed in a form fitted to bring it within the grasp of the understanding. The employment of human language is an incontestable accommodation, for language made to express human ideas is necessarily incapable of rendering exactly the infinite nature and counsels of God.¹

In addition to the obvious necessity of using human language in revelation, it should be noted that many other items also are involved.

¹C. Elliot and W. J. Harsha, Biblical Hermeneutics (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Co., 1881), p. 268.

The Bible was written in human surroundings and by human beings. God wanted to make contact with humans on their level so He had to use thought relationships which they could comprehend, such as anthropomorphisms, which are the attributing of human characteristics to nonhuman entities. An example is the fact that God does not actually have hands, feet, arms, or eyes, but these expressions are used in order to make the revelation capable of being understood by man. The people living in the period of Old Testament revelation were ignorant, poor, and needy to an extent which probably no contemporary man could imagine. Since God wanted to help them, He had to meet them on their own level. The people of the Old Testament revelation period were Hebrews. They did not have the same mental framework as the metaphysically speculative and philosophically deductive Western mind. This must be kept in mind as the Western man interprets the scriptures. Also the literary constructions were accommodated to the Jews for whom the Old Testament was initially written. The New Testament was less in need of the above type of accommodation because of the background which was derived from the influence of the Old Testament. Also the very reason for revelation demands accommodation. It is intended primarily to change the heart of men rather than to teach theology on the basis of logic. God's love was the reason for revelation and this presupposes His making this revelation available to the people who need it. The ramifications of this principle can be seen to be many and varied. The proper use of it is essential, but misusing it is

equally disastrous to interpretation. Some have used this principle in the "content" of scripture as well as in the "form" of scripture. If this is done, the Bible will become only a historical record of the moral and religious teachings for that time period.² Although the author agrees with the accommodation of revelation in form, he can not agree with the accommodation of revelation in content.

The principle of progressive revelation coincides with the accommodation of revelation. Because revelation had to be accommodated in form to the original receivers, it is logical that as time passed and man's knowledge accumulated, God was able to show man more and more of His redemptive plan. This does not mean that God changed in any way, but rather that man changed and was capable of receiving more of the complete plan of God. This progressive quality of revelation is indicated in Galatians 4:4 where it is shown that Christ was sent "in the fullness of time." Also the first two verses of the book of Hebrews make plain the progressive quality of revelation as through the prophets and later through the Son.³ An example of this is the teaching of Christ upon divorce. He shows the Jews that God's intention for all time was one marriage per person which would end only in death. The divorce clause was given by Moses, not because it was what

²Ibid., pp. 266-270. cf. B. Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation (Boston: W. A. Wilde Co., 1956), pp. 109-111.

³Ramm, op. cit., pp. 111-114. cf. R. Traina, Methodical Bible Study (New York: The Biblical Seminary in New York, 1957), pp. 156-158.

God intended for men, but because of the hardness of the hearts of men. Ramm sums up progressive revelation as follows:

Progressive revelation in no manner qualifies the doctrine of inspiration, and it in no way implies that the Old Testament is less inspired. It states simply that the fullness of revelation is in the New Testament. This does not mean that there is no clear Old Testament teaching nor that its predictions are nullified. On the other hand, the heart of Christian theology is found in the New Testament which contains the clearer revelation of God. Christian theology and ethics must take their primary rootage in the New Testament revelation.⁴

The principle of using the best text available is a necessary principle for proper interpretation. This process is called textual or lower criticism. Since it is obvious that none of the autographs, original scriptural manuscripts, are extant, the interpreter must decide which text he will use for interpreting. The first thing to be done is to collect all the available manuscripts. Next the interpreter investigates and evaluates these. Then he must decide upon a system of actually determining the text of the scriptures. One good approach, when the evidence of the manuscripts is not decisive, is to use the reading which fits the context. If this is not able to be decided from either the context or the manuscripts, then the reading which is unusual should be used. This is done because the probability is high that a copyist may have changed the reading for clarification or harmonization in the context.⁵

⁴Ibid., pp. 113-114.

⁵R. Traina, Methodical Bible Study (New York: The Biblical Seminary in New York, 1957), p. 161. cf. Ramm, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

Since this process is impossible for most ordinary interpreters, the author suggests comparing the textual criticism of the master scholars and deciding upon the most correct text from this comparison. The present-day scriptures are remarkable pure, as shown by Ramm:

After the most careful scrutiny by scholars of the Old and New Testament texts, it is now evident that the Old and New Testaments are the best preserved texts from antiquity. The number of really important textual variations of the New Testament that cannot be settled with our present information is very small, and the new manuscripts available from the various caves around the Dead Sea show the remarkable purity of our present Old Testament text.⁶

The principle of the unity of scripture refers to the fact that truth runs through all of scripture and definitely relates the Old and New Testaments. Christ said in Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." The process of hermeneutics is not possible if scriptural meaning is not limited to one sense. If many senses are allowed, then no principles can be followed, since principles work only if they are universal in scope. Also if many senses are allowed, the true sense will be obscured.⁷ This principle is related to progressive revelation in that the truth of God is revealed a little at a time through the Bible. This revealed truth provides the material for the unity of the word.

⁶Ramm, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

⁷Ibid., pp. 124-125.

The principle of preference for the clearest interpretation is important in the actual work of interpreting. There are places in the Bible where two or more meanings seem possible in the light of grammar and other language study. The clearest meaning, the one which is more easily understandable, should be used. Also associated with this principle is the fact that the interpreter should use clear passages to interpret the obscure and not the obscure to interpret the clear. The general tenor of scripture is a great help in deciding upon which interpretation to accept. All of the teachings essential to salvation are clearly taught in many passages. The passages which are not easily interpreted are not the ones upon which basic Christian teachings depend.⁸

An example of this principle is found in Ramm's book, Protestant Biblical Interpretation:

According to Colossians 1:6 and Romans 10:18, the gospel (in the span of Paul's life) was preached in all the world. There are two interpretations possible: (a) we may take the word "world" literally and insist that all the world was evangelized at that juncture in history, or (b) we may take the world in its popular sense of "the then known world."⁹

Bernard Ramm also says, "Nor can we approve of the notion that it takes more spirituality to believe an extreme interpretation."¹⁰

⁸Ibid., pp. 120-128.

⁹Ibid., p. 121.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 122.

The principle of contextual interpretation is a basic one to any interpretation in either the original tongue or vernacular. There is the literary context, including cross references. There is the historical context of the passage and of the writer, including the cultural context. These will now be discussed as they relate to hermeneutics.

Barrows states:

With reference to a given passage, the context has been loosely defined to be that which immediately precedes and follows. More accurately, it is the series of statements, arguments, and illustrations connected with the passage whose meaning is sought, including all the various connections of thought. The sober interpreter then, must have constant reference to the context as well for the signification of particular terms as for the general sense of the passage under consideration. To interpret without regard to the context is to interpret at random; to interpret contrary to the context is to teach falsehood for truth.¹¹

The actual material written immediately before and after the passage being interpreted is significant in explaining the passage. Also the material in the entire chapter and book helps to form a background for understanding the sense of the passage. The Bible itself is the context in which is set every passage which one might wish to interpret.¹²

Therefore the interpreter must have some knowledge of the Bible as a whole, the book as a whole, and the chapter as a whole before he can properly interpret any individual passage.

¹¹E. P. Barrows, Companion to the Bible (New York: American Tract Society, 1867), p. 531.

¹²Ramm, op. cit., pp. 136-137.

The more specific context of linguistic cross references is an interesting one. The real verbal cross reference and the apparent verbal cross reference are distinguished by Ramm as follows:

An apparent cross reference is a reference which contains the same word or expression used in the passage being interpreted, but the relationship is that of pure verbal coincidence and nothing is gained by comparison. One writer may use such words as sacrifice, fat, wood, or save in such a way as to be of no interpretive help for their occurrences in other passages. An uncritical listing of word-occurrences can lead an interpreter to some silly mistakes and superficial generalizations.

A real cross reference is a reference in which the words used in one instance aid in the understanding of the same word used in another instance. A study of the word soul, or spirit, or expressions such as son of man or flesh may lead to some very helpful conclusions.¹³

Conceptual cross references are ones which do not necessarily contain the same words but do contain the same concepts or ideas. These enable the interpreter to find many passages on one topic which can explain the thought of the original passage much more clearly. Also there are parallel cross references which contain the same recorded happening or teaching as does the passage under investigation. These then can be compared and contrasted, not only concerning the written material, but also concerning the differences in the writers and their circumstances.¹⁴

The historical context of any Biblical passage is very helpful in interpretation. The geography of an area aids one in understanding

¹³Ibid., p. 140.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 140-141.

the reasons for historical patterns of travel, habitation, employment, and general life patterns. An example of this is the geographical location of Palestine which was in a central position in the trade routes and military campaigns. Also a knowledge of the geography of the country of Palestine itself is helpful in explaining the movements of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament. This knowledge also helps one understand the Old Testament military activities. The politics of any particular period in Biblical history is equally important in the understanding of many passages. An example of this is how an understanding of the politics of the Romans at the time of Christ's birth affected His birth place and subsequent young life.¹⁵

Also the history of the writer must be considered. The writer's own background will emerge in his style, language, idioms, and choice of material included. Before one can determine what the message of a passage is, he must know what influenced the writer himself. The history of an area includes the culture of that region, since this changes with time. The Bible covers a large number of years yet is involved with essentially a small area geographically. The interpreter must study the culture of Abraham's period, Moses' period, the period of the judges, the kings, the prophets, the intertestamental period, and the New Testament period. All of these periods have cultural

¹⁵A. B. Mickelsen, Interpreting the Bible (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1966), pp. 159-169.

distinctives which vary, some to a lesser and some to a greater degree. An example of this is found in the parables of Christ which require historical cultural knowledge in order to interpret them correctly. Also the religions of the Biblical period are very important in interpreting the Bible. Last, but not least, is the actual history of events which took place in the Biblical period. These include most of the above statements but also cover a great deal more material than is specifically mentioned.¹⁶ All of the countries, tribes, peoples, cities, towns, and areas have their own historical records, which are only partially known at best. The more an interpreter can become acquainted with the general atmosphere and specific events of Biblical history, the better he can interpret the Word of God.

The principle of induction is essential to good interpretation. This principle holds the interpreter to finding the meaning of a passage from that passage, rather than just reaffirming his personal position by twisting the passage to fit it. This is simply being honest and objective in one's treatment of the scripture.¹⁷ If the interpretation found by this method does not agree with the position of the interpreter, he should check his position rather than changing the truth found inductively. An example of this is found in the book,

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ramm, op. cit., pp. 119-120.

Life in the Son, by Robert Shank. Mr. Shank started out to make a study of the doctrine of the perseverance of saints. He was an adherent of the doctrine before his writing. After his writing was complete, he had to admit that, according to his research, the Bible did not confirm this doctrine. A quote from W. W. Adams who wrote the introduction to Mr. Shank's book is helpful in this area:

Again, Mr. Shank's book gives me new faith and confidence in evangelical Christianity. New Testament Christianity possesses its own correctives and remedial resources. They are found in the Bible. In time, the Bible corrects most of the false, incomplete, and unbalanced interpretations of its content.¹⁸

The principle of the analogy of faith is based upon the harmony and unity of scripture. This principle advocates the use of scripture to interpret scripture. Also included is the thought that doctrine must be based upon collected and collated scripture rather than upon individual passages throughout the Bible. Three specific warnings concerning this principle are voiced by Ramm: progressive revelation must not be forgotten in this principle; individual writers' differences must be kept in view; literature contemporary with the Bible composition period should still be consulted. Another serious warning is that scripture must dictate to dogma rather than dogma dictating to scripture.¹⁹ A quotation from Ramm will adequately conclude the treatment of this principle:

¹⁸R. Shank, Life in the Son (Springfield, Missouri: Westcott Pub., 1961), p. xiii.

¹⁹Ramm, op. cit., pp. 125-128.

In actual practice the analogy of faith expresses itself in several corollary maxims: e.g., the obscure passage must always give way to the clear one; no doctrine may be founded on one verse or a few miscellaneous verses; points of doctrine not settled by specific reference may be settled by "the general tenor of Scripture"; doctrines are more secure as they are taught in much Scripture or which are taught in several different parts of the Scripture; if two doctrines are clearly taught which apparently contradict, accept both of them (e.g., predestination and free will, and, depravity and responsibility); and passages marked by brevity of treatment should be expounded in light of passages of greater length which deal with a common matter.²⁰

The principle of checking with various sources is essential to good interpretation. Any individual interpreter necessarily has weaknesses and imperfections. No one is perfect or produces perfect interpretation. One's interpretations should be checked with secular studies if the particular passage is related to a secular field. One should check his findings with established doctrine. This is true since established doctrine has been formulated over many years and by many minds. Also one should check his results with the best commentaries of all ages and the best contemporary interpreters.²¹ Although induction is urged at first, checking is essential before one comes to a final conclusion.

The principle of ignorance follows closely the checking principle. This principle simply acknowledges the fact that there are some aspects of the revelation of God which are not made plain to men

²⁰Ibid., pp. 127-128.

²¹Ibid., pp. 118-119.

in history and also various aspects which will not be discovered by the single interpreter. People are human and can not fully understand the mysteries of the life after death or, in fact, many things in the history of mankind itself.²² It is true that with experience an interpreter will be better qualified to find the correct meaning, but it should always be remembered that people are not able to unlock all of the treasures of the Word of God. In short, the interpreter should not be reluctant to admit, "I do not know." This is expressed in the scripture itself in I Corinthians 13:12.

The principle of recognizing the difference between interpretation and application is important. The interpretation of any given passage is singular. The applications or illustrations drawn from that passage may be many, yet the interpretation is one. This is important for one to keep in mind when preaching or teaching. One may find a passage which seems to fit perfectly the situation one is in, yet the passage may actually not be related to it at all except in illustrative form. If the interpreter uses a passage for illustration or application other than the original meaning intended, this should be made very clear to the listeners.²³ An example of this is given by Ramm as follows:

For example, John the Baptist said, "He must increase, and I must decrease," (John 3:30). The strict interpretation of the passage is that John must decrease in popularity with the people

²²Ibid., pp. 115-117.

²³Ibid., pp. 117-118.

as our Lord increases in popularity. Only very cautiously may we apply this to our lives, i.e., our plans, programs, and self interests must give way in consecration to Christ. If this application is given as an interpretation, then the one true meaning of the text is lost.²⁴

The principle of proper practical use of the scriptures is discussed next. The Bible is intended to be God's revelation of Himself and His salvation for man. This book then is not exclusively for the scholar but for all men as expressed in John 3:16. The Bible is intended to be a practical guide for Christian living. If Christians fail to use it as such, they are missing a great help. The Bible as a guide contains principles by which men can live. It does not list every single action men can or can not do.²⁵ An example of this is found in Mickelsen:

Sometimes Christians want specific commands on various kinds of recreation or amusement. What does the Bible say about skin-diving? Of course, the answer is nothing! But the principles of time or money involved, the aftereffects on the Christian's interest in the things of God, the help or hindrance in testifying for God, the effect on physical and emotional well-being--all of these principles and others which could be enumerated should not make it difficult for each individual Christian to decide for himself. One person might find that skin-diving took too much time, so he would not engage in the sport. Another might find that the exhilaration from the sport enabled him to function in a more efficient way for God.²⁶

²⁴Ibid., p. 117.

²⁵Ibid., p. 167.

²⁶Mickelsen, op. cit., pp. 362-363.

Another practical use made of the Bible is the use of the promises found in it. The person who says that every promise in the "book" is his is not a good interpreter. Some promises are universal, but some are particular. Some promises are general, but some are personal. Some promises are for the present time, but some have been fulfilled and a further fulfillment is no longer to be expected.²⁷ The good interpreter must investigate these promises and stand by his findings, whether they give him the answer he was hoping for or not.

The devotional use of the Bible is essential for the Christian life. The principles enumerated above do not prevent or replace the need for the devotional use of the Bible. There is a mystical experience in which the God of the universe can speak to the heart of man through the written message in the scriptures. The Bible is a different book; it is not like any other in this fact. God does want men to study the scriptures, learn the scriptures, and make the scriptures a part of their lives. But God also wants to speak to men through the scriptures in the mystical sense described above. Mickelsen has written a section which aptly explains this:

God does speak through the Scriptures to men today. When an individual reads a scriptural passage, he must take full account of the differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, between that pertaining only to the people to whom the passage first came and that which is pertinent to all peoples despite different geographical and temporal settings. Yet an individual's

²⁷Ramm, op. cit., pp. 173-176.

awareness of these things should be overshadowed by his sense of the reality and nearness of God.²⁸

The principle of the guidance of the Holy Spirit concludes this section. If one follows all of the intellectual disciplines described in this study and yet ignores this one, he is incapable of full, correct interpretation. The Holy Spirit is the one who inspired the writers to write what was written. He then can, and must, unlock these truths for the present-day interpreter. The man who is indwelt with the Holy Spirit is not guaranteed to be correct in all of his interpretations, but without the Holy Spirit, some truths will never be seen. Two quotations from Mickelsen explain this principle very clearly:

Some Christians fear that an emphasis upon such principles ignores the illumination of the Holy Spirit. This fear has some foundation. Many have approached the Bible in a mechanical, rationalistic fashion. Fleeing from the extreme of mystical pietism, they have rushed into the error of regarding man's intellect as self-sufficient. They have thought that man, strictly by his own intellectual efforts, could search out and make known the true and deep meanings of Scripture. On the opposite side, there have been some sincere people who have thought that the witness of the Spirit in the heart of the believer enables him automatically to know the correct meaning of every phrase, or verse, or passage. True, the illumination of the Spirit is essential, but such illumination can be hindered by wrong approaches to the Scripture.²⁹

In forming good habits of interpretation, we must constantly depend on the Holy Spirit. This does not mean that the Holy Spirit will point out our interpretive faults whether we are concerned about them or not. But a dependence on the Holy Spirit and an

²⁸Mickelsen, op. cit., p. 358.

²⁹Ibid., p. 4.

openness to his reproof will help our faltering will power. He will help us to discipline our thinking, to carry out the task of interpretation in a way that is honoring to God.³⁰

³⁰Ibid., p. 378.

CHAPTER VI

HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES APPLIED TO JOHN 2:1-11

The passage which was used as an example for application of the preceding principles was John 2:1-11. In this passage the word wine was used five times. The purpose of investigating this passage was to discover whether or not the wine was fermented.

The first principle used was that of correct language study. The Greek text of the New Testament as well as the vernacular English version was used. From the Greek text it was noted that the word oinos was used for wine in each occurrence. The word is used in its genitive singular form in the first occurrence. The word is used in its accusative singular form in the last four occurrences. The root meaning of the word oinos is fermented juice of the grape.¹ Studying the syntax shows the first occurrence to be part of a genitive absolute construction. The last four occurrences are accusative direct-object constructions.

The principle of textual criticism was used by selecting the choice of many experts. The Greek text used is the one published by the United Bible Societies in 1967. The English text used is the American

¹W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Pub. House, 1957), pp. 564-565. Cf. many other scholarly lexicons and dictionaries. This one is used as a representative of the many fine works.

Standard version published by Thomas Nelson and Sons in 1901. These were accepted as the best available to the author. The Greek words used for study in this section are not in question in reference to textual criticism.

The principle of progressive revelation was used to see if the attitude toward wine on the part of man has changed, and, if so, whether this was due to progressive revelation.

The principle of the unity of scripture was used in that the author sought to find the truth concerning the wine controversy as expressed throughout the whole Bible.

The principle of the clearest interpretation was used in that the literal meaning of fermented grape juice was accepted.

The principle of the general tenor of scripture was used in that other scriptural passages were consulted before a final conclusion was reached.

The principle of contextual interpretation was used in that the various context situations were investigated. These included a selection of cross references, historical, religious, writer's, cultural, and reader's contexts.

The principle of induction was used in that the author did not know what the outcome of the research would be. The author approached the subject of the wine with many acquired ideas but sought as well as possible to put these aside and let the Word speak for itself.

The principle of checking with other sources was used by checking commentaries, dictionaries, and lexicons of various kinds.

The principle of ignorance was used by admitting that the conclusions drawn are not sufficiently complete to close the subject from further investigation.

The principle of the guidance of the Holy Spirit was used by asking the Holy Spirit to help the author gain as correct an understanding as possible from the research done in this area.

The actual study of the passage is presented now. Apparently the wine mentioned in this passage was fermented grape juice. The original language provides for no other interpretation at this point in the investigation. The English version used the word wine and caused a question to be raised. Is the wine which is made today very similar to the wine of Christ's day, or is it very different? From the Greek, English, word-form, root-meaning, and syntactical aspects, this could not be discovered.

The author next turned to the contextual principle for aid in interpreting this passage. Since there were no parallel cross references for this passage in the synoptic gospels or elsewhere, the author used the real verbal cross references in the New Testament as well as the apparent ones in Revelation. Conceptual cross references to this in the Old Testament are many and varied so not all of the individual occurrences are cited, but at least one instance of each different word

is given. Since conceptual cross references in the New Testament were limited, many of these have been discussed.

The cross references will be discussed in the order in which they appear in the New Testament. The first is a real verbal cross reference and appears in Matthew 9:17. This passage contains the word oinos three times. It also contains the word askos four times. The word askos is translated wine skin or skin.² This passage is an illustration by Christ concerning His life and word. The interesting thing about this passage is the apparent fermentation which would cause the pressure that would break the skins. If it had been only unfermented grape juice, there would not have been sufficient pressure to break the skins. Since the word for wine is the same as used in John 2, this apparent fermentation applies to the word in John 2.

The second is a conceptual cross reference which is found in Matthew 11:19. The word oinopotēs is used in reference to Christ. This was what Christ said the people called Him. This word is translated drunkard or wine drinker.³ From this reference the word also would tend to signify a fermented or alcoholic drink.

The third is a conceptual cross reference found in Matthew 21:33. The word lēnos is translated winepress.⁴ This is part of a parable

²Ibid., p. 116.

³Ibid., p. 564.

⁴Ibid., p. 474.

which Christ spoke. This reference does not actually contribute to the knowledge about the fermentation or lack of it in the wine of the Biblical period.

The fourth is an apparent cross reference found in Matthew 27:34. The word oinos is used as part of the liquid given to Christ while He was on the cross. It is recorded that He would not drink it. This also does not tell whether or not the wine was fermented.

The fifth reference is a real verbal cross reference. It is found in Mark 2:22. This is a parallel reference to the one in Matthew 9:17. It contains the same words in question, with the same implications. The wine is probably fermented wine since the bursting of the old wine skins is to be expected.

The sixth is found in Mark 12:1 and is a conceptual cross reference. The word used is hupolēnios and is translated vat or trough.⁵ This is a parallel reference to Matthew 21:33. This passage does not aid in settling the question at hand.

The seventh reference, a conceptual one, is found in Mark 14:25. The words here are genēmatos tēs ampelou. These are translated fruit of the vine.⁶ This indicates a liquid from the grape but does not shed light upon the question raised herein.

⁵Ibid., p. 853.

⁶Ibid., pp. 154 and 46.

The eighth reference is an apparent cross reference found in Mark 15:23. This is the same word as used in John 2. This does not tell whether the wine was fermented or not. The passage in Matthew 27:34 is parallel to this one.

The ninth passage is a real verbal cross reference found in Luke 1:15. This is part of the announcement by the angel to Zacharias concerning the birth of John the Baptist. It is stated that John the Baptist would not drink wine nor strong drink. The word wine here is also oinos. The word sikera is included in this prohibition and means strong drink, probably a type of beer.⁷ This prohibition was part of the Nazarite vow which John the Baptist took.⁸ The scriptural requirements for Nazarites are recorded in Numbers 6:1-21. Luke 1:15 does not prove conclusively whether the wine was alcoholic or not, but it would tend to support the idea of fermented juice.

The tenth passage is located in Luke 5:37-38. This is a real verbal cross reference. It is also a parallel cross reference of Matthew 9:17 and Mark 2:22. This passage also reaffirms the concept of fermentation of the wine because of the possibility of bursting skins.

The eleventh reference is found in Luke 7:33-34. This passage is a real verbal cross reference, and is a parallel reference to

⁷Ibid., pp. 757-758.

⁸A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1930), II, p. 10.

Matthew 11:19. This reference uses the words wine and winebibber.

This would tend to support the alcoholic content of wine.

The twelfth reference is found in Luke 10:34. This is a real verbal cross reference. It has ideas inherent which will be discussed under the checking principle rather than expressed here.

The thirteenth passage is an apparent cross reference found in John 4:46. This is a reference made directly to the time when Jesus made the water into wine. It does not help settle the question of the fermentation or lack of it present in the wine.

The fourteenth passage is found in Acts 2:13 and is an apparent cross reference. The word gleukos is used in this passage and is translated sweet new wine.⁹ The implications here are that this wine was intoxicating. This, however, is a different word and is used only once in the New Testament. Therefore no conclusions about oinos can be drawn from this passage.

The fifteenth passage is found in Romans 14:21 and is an apparent cross reference. This passage states that it is good not to drink wine. The purpose for this is that the brother may not stumble. From this context the alcoholic content is not made clear, but it is evident that the wine mentioned here should not be drunk if it hinders a fellow Christian.

⁹Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., p. 161.

The sixteenth reference is found in Ephesians 5:18. This is a real verbal cross reference. This passage implies that oinos is intoxicating since one could become drunken with it.¹⁰ This verse implies also that wine is intoxicating, since the word asōtia describes the effects of wine. This word is translated debauchery, dissipation, and profligacy.¹¹

The seventeenth reference is found in I Timothy 3:3. This is a real verbal cross reference. The word used here is paroinos and is translated drunkard or addicted to wine.¹² The word is formed from oinos and the preposition para which means beside. Thus a drunkard is one who would be beside wine much of the time. This seems to denote the fact that the wine was alcoholic.

The eighteenth reference is found in I Timothy 3:8. This is a real verbal cross reference. The admonition given here is not to drink too much wine. Apparently drinking some wine was all right as long as not too much was drunk. If the wine was not fermented, this probably would not have been stressed. This reference seems to indicate that wine was intoxicating.

The nineteenth reference is a real verbal cross reference and is found in I Timothy 5:23. This passage seems to indicate that

¹⁰Ibid., p. 500.

¹¹Ibid., p. 119.

¹²Ibid., p. 634.

Timothy has been drinking water, but Paul urges him to use a little wine for medicinal purposes. This tends to show that the wine would help stomach trouble, and probably indicates fermented juice. Also the qualifying word "little" tends to suggest that there needed to be definite limits placed upon the amount consumed. Unfermented grape juice would probably not be so qualified.

The twentieth reference is a real verbal cross reference found in Titus 1:7. This is also a parallel reference to I Timothy 3:3. This passage suggests the idea that the wine was intoxicating.

The twenty-first reference is a real verbal cross reference found in Titus 2:3. This passage speaks of wine as something which can enslave a person. The warning here makes plain that one is not to be enslaved to wine. This passage definitely suggests an addictive drink such as fermented grape juice rather than unfermented grape juice.

The twenty-second reference is a conceptual cross reference and is found in I Peter 4:3. The word oinophlugia is translated drunkenness.¹³ This is included in a list of things which were done by the Gentiles before they were saved. This implies that drunkenness was prohibited and also that the drunkenness came from oinos.

There are nine apparent and conceptual cross references in the book of Revelation. These are found in 6:6; 14:8; 14:10; 14:19-20;

¹³Ibid., p. 565.

16:19; 17:2; 18:3; 18:13; and 19:15. Most of the references in this book are in symbolic or figurative language. It is shown that the product of God's wrath will be given to the ones who have not repented. This usage also suggests that the nations fell as one effect of figuratively drinking wine. In Isaiah 24:20 the shaking of the earth is described as a drunken man staggering and falling. This tends to suggest that the wine known then was alcoholic.

The word cup is used in the New Testament and refers to a cup of liquid. This liquid was probably alcoholic wine, but the language allows for other interpretations.¹⁴

From the contextual cross references in the New Testament, it appears that the oinos was fermented juice. The next area to be discussed will be the Old Testament references to wine.

The contextual principle of interpretation also refers to the Old Testament. The first cross references to be considered from the Old Testament are found in Isaiah 27:2 and Daniel 5:1. The words chemer and chamar are used respectively in these two passages. They are from the same root and convey the meaning of boiling, foaming, and fermenting.¹⁵ These indicate that the wine was fermented. Both are

¹⁴Robertson, op. cit., II, p. 267. cf. Robertson, op. cit., I, p. 382.

¹⁵S. P. Tregelles, Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1969), p. 289.

translated wine in the English version. In the Septuagint, the word used is ampelos and means vineyard.

The next Old Testament cross reference is found in Genesis 9:21. The word yayin is translated wine and conveys the idea of bubbling up or fermenting.¹⁶ This word is used the most of any in the Old Testament to signify wine. It is used more than 140 times. This word indicates the intoxicating quality in wine. In the Septuagint the word used is oinos and means wine.

Another Old Testament cross reference is found in Deuteronomy 16:13. The word yegeb is translated winepress.¹⁷ The word does not help in deciding the alcoholic content of the wine. In the Septuagint, the word used is lēnos and means winepress.

Another Old Testament cross reference is found in Proverbs 23:30. The word mimsak is translated mixed wine or wine mixed with spices.¹⁸ From the context it appears that this mixed wine caused many troubles. It would appear to be fermented wine. In the Septuagint, the word used is oinos and means wine.

Another Old Testament cross reference is found in Isaiah 1:22. The word sobe is translated sucking up or absorbing.¹⁹ This apparently

¹⁶Ibid., p. 347.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 362.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 480 and 489.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 576.

referred to the wine which was sucked up by the drunkard. In the Septuagint, the word used is oinos and means wine.

Also in the Old Testament this cross reference is found in Hosea 3:1. The word enab is translated a ripe round grape or grape cake, also a cluster of grapes.²⁰ This does not aid in determining the fermentation or lack of it in the wine. In the Septuagint the word used refers to cakes of dried grapes.

Another Old Testament cross reference is found in Joel 1:5. The word asis is translated new wine.²¹ The context tends to indicate an intoxicating liquid. In the Septuagint, oinos is used here and is translated wine.

Also from the Old Testament this cross reference is found in Numbers 28:7. The word shekar is translated strong drink and intoxicating liquor.²² This definitely states that the strong drink is intoxicating. In the English translation, however, the word is translated strong drink instead of wine. In the Septuagint, the word sikera is used and means strong drink.

Another Old Testament cross reference is found in Isaiah 25:6. The word shemarim is translated dregs of wine. Apparently this wine

²⁰Ibid., p. 641. cf. Robert Young, Young's Analytical Concordance (Marshallton, Delaware: The National Foundation for Christian Education, 1969), p. 1058.

²¹Ibid., p. 645.

²²Ibid., p. 823.

was the oldest and best.²³ Probably this wine was alcoholic because of its age. In the Septuagint, the word oinos is used and means wine.

The next Old Testament cross reference used is found in Judges 9:13. The word tirosh is translated new wine. Also included is the idea of intoxication and the affecting of the brain.²⁴ In the Septuagint, the word oinos is used and means wine.

Another Old Testament cross reference is found in Judges 6:11. The word gath is translated winepress or trough.²⁵ In the Septuagint, the word lēnos is used and means winepress. No help is gained from this passage.

The twelfth Old Testament cross reference is found in Isaiah 63:3. The word purah is translated winepress.²⁶ In the Septuagint, the word is not used in that verse although the idea is given in other words.

The above literary cross references have shown that the English word wine has many Greek and Hebrew equivalents. From this part of the study alone, it would seem that the wine mentioned in the Old and New Testaments was fermented wine. The strength of the wine and many other factors have not yet been discovered, but it is quite conclusive that the wine spoken of in John 2:9 was fermented wine.

²³Ibid., p. 838.

²⁴Ibid., p. 863.

²⁵Ibid., p. 183.

²⁶Ibid., p. 670.

The principle of the historical, religious, writer's, and cultural contexts are studied together. In these areas it is necessary to use sources other than the scriptures. The history of Palestine reveals a rural society in which the grape vine played a large part. The grapes were harvested and were squeezed after removing the best ones to be dried for raisin cakes. The juice was then probably made into intoxicating wine²⁷ or prepared to remain grape juice the entire year. This process is given by Cato and referred to by the Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary as follows:

Means for preserving grape-juice were well known; Cato, De Agri Cultura CXX has this recipe: "If you wish to have must (grape-juice) all year, put grape-juice in an amphora and seal the cork with pitch; sink it in a fishpond. After 30 days take it out. It will be grape-juice for a whole year."²⁸

It is evident that without refrigeration, either the juice had to be prepared to remain unfermented if possible or it would ferment by itself. From the warnings throughout the Old and New Testaments, it is evident that there was fermented wine; however, the word trux for unfermented juice is not used in the New Testament.

The religious context shows that the first part of the grape juice produced was given as an offering to the Lord.²⁹ Also wine was

²⁷J. Hastings (ed.), A Dictionary of the Bible (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1899), II, pp. 31-34.

²⁸M. C. Tenney (ed.), Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Pub. House, 1968), p. 895.

²⁹Hastings, op. cit., p. 33.

the drink offering which was used daily. However, wine was not commanded to be used at the paschal feast but was anyway. This wine was mixed with water.³⁰

The writer's context was that of the Jewish citizen of Palestine of the first century after the birth of Christ. He was not concerned with the wine question as much as with the miracle which happened. He did not explain the fermentation or lack of it in the wine since the readers would be well acquainted with this information.

The culture of that day in Palestine was a rural culture with many vineyards, orchards, and grain fields. The vineyards were very important to the people and provided much to the economy. Fermented wine was part of the culture since refrigeration was not in existence. From the cultural viewpoint, fermented wine is indicated.

The context of the reader of the Bible must be considered also. Perhaps the wine which is prevalent in his day may be very different from the wine spoken of in the Bible. The reader should make an effort to see how his personal environment affects his knowledge of the scriptures.

The principle of progressive revelation indicates that God has always been against the excessive use of fermented wine, but perhaps

³⁰M. F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1957), p. 1169.

today, since man knows that alcohol does affect the brain and other organs in a detrimental way, God expects man to refrain from using it as a beverage at all.

The principle of the unity of scripture is revealed in the constant warnings against excessive use of alcoholic beverages.

The principle of the clearest interpretation of scripture enjoins the writer to accept the fact that the wine of the New Testament era was in fact fermented in some degree or other.

The general tenor of scripture would indicate that fermented wine should be used very cautiously if used at all. The New Testament rule given in capsule form in Romans 14:21 is as follows: "It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." From this passage the impact upon John 2:9 is that Christians should not be concerned about what the wine was like in John's day, but whether Christ today wants each one personally to use wine or not.

The checking principle is involved in the other principles as can be seen above. In checking particularly on the question at hand, the author found these views expressed. Robertson thinks that the wine offered to Christ was refused because of the narcotic effect it had. He said the gall may have been added by the soldiers to make it taste bad, but probably the drink prepared by the women contained wine and myrrh to act as a pain killer.³¹ Robertson suggests that the use of

³¹Robertson, op. cit., I, p. 231.

oil and wine in the wounds of the one helped by the Samaritan was in effect a medication, the wine being used as an antiseptic. This would indicate fermented juice.³² Robertson says that the wine mentioned in Acts 2:13 was very intoxicating since the effects of the Holy Spirit, so visible, could not have come from just plain juice.³³ Unger disagrees with Robertson and says that the wine of Acts 2:13 was probably juice which was not fermented. The other usages of wine are agreed by Unger to be intoxicating.³⁴ The dictionary of Hastings states that the wine was probably fermented. This source does, however, admit that no place in the Bible does the process of fermented wine making occur.³⁵ The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary agrees that many Biblical passages refer to fermented wine, but adds that grape juice could be processed to remain fresh all year, as referred to before. Also it adds that the disciples drank only unfermented grape juice.³⁶ No clear proof for this statement is given. Adam Clarke does not state that the wine was fermented, but suggests that the people did not drink enough to become drunk. He says that the context does not indicate that the people were drunk, but only that the

³²Ibid., II, p. 153.

³³Ibid., III, p. 25.

³⁴Unger, op. cit., pp. 1167-1169.

³⁵Hastings, op. cit., pp. 31-34.

³⁶Tenney, op. cit., pp. 894-895.

custom was to save the worst wine until last. He defines the good wine as "perfectly pure and highly nutritive."³⁷ Barclay says that the wine of that era was actually served mixed with water rather than full strength. He says that two parts wine and three parts water were mixed to make the usual drink. Also the fact that drunkenness was not prevalent in the area at the time is reported by Barclay.³⁸

In the opinion of the author, the wine spoken of in John 2:9 was probably fermented wine. It was probably served with water, as indicated above. This practice of drinking wine was probably a cultural necessity. The alcoholic content was probably very low because of the dilution with water. Even with the cultural necessity for fermented wine, the Bible warns constantly of the danger of excessive use. The great New Testament teachings upon this subject are condensed in Romans 14:21. The Bible reader of today should consider all of these facts and then decide for himself whether or not to use alcoholic beverages. The author does not use alcoholic beverages and can see from this study that he should not.

³⁷R. Earle (ed.), Commentary on the Holy Bible (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 902.

³⁸W. Barclay, The Gospel of John (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), I, p. 82.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study began with the problem of the interpretation of the scriptures which was present before and during the time of Christ. This pertained to the Old Testament scriptures. Soon after the New Testament was written, this problem also became involved with it. Some of the important men involved in this problem covered herein are Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. The periods covered are the Middle Ages, the Reformation, and the post-Reformation.

The author then turned to the principle of language study. General language study was discussed. Next, figurative language was discussed and many figures were defined and explained. Symbolic and poetical language concluded this section.

The writer then defined and explained several hermeneutical principles. Among these were principles dealing with revelation, textual criticism, unity of scripture, context, induction, checking other sources, interpretation and application, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The next section contains an application of several of the principles to John 2:1-11. This section is a practical example of the use which can be made of interpretive principles. The question considered was that of the alcoholic content or lack of it in the wine

mentioned in John 2:1-11. The findings revealed that the wine was probably fermented, but this was seen to be a cultural necessity.

This study has shown the author that research is very valuable in obtaining truth. The principles of Biblical interpretation which were discovered by the author have already changed his perspective of scripture. The writer realizes that these are not all of the principles which can be known, but intends to use these as a foundation upon which to build other principles. The question of the fermentation of wine was of great interest to the author, since he had heard adherents of both sides of the issue speak very forcefully upon it. The author thinks that a course in hermeneutics should be incorporated as part of the requirements for a seminary degree in order that each graduate may be able to use interpretive principles in his ministry.

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APPENDIX

A check sheet for determining which principles of interpretation apply to any given passage before studying that passage.

General Language

Hebrew
Aramaic
Greek
Cognate
Vernacular
Grammar

Figurative Language

Simile
Metaphor
Metonymy
Synecdoche
Personification
Apostrophe
Ellipsis
Zeugma
Aposiopesis
Euphemism
Litotes
Meiosis
Hyperbole
Irony
Pleonasm
Epanadiplosis
Climax
Rhetorical question
Riddle
Fable
Enigmatic saying
Parable
Allegory
Type

Symbolic Language

External miraculous symbol
Visional symbol
Material symbol
Emblematic number
Emblematic name
Emblematic color
Emblematic metal
Emblematic jewel
Emblematic action
Emblematic ordinance

Poetical Language

Hebrew Poetry
Accommodation of Revelation
Progressive Revelation
Textual Criticism
Unity of Scripture
Clearest Interpretation
Context

Literary context
Historical context
Writer's context

Induction

Analogy of Faith
Checking
Ignorance
Interpretation vs. Application
Practical Use
Promises
Guidance of the Holy Spirit