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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: DEFINITION AND PARAMETERS

Introduction

Historical criticism, though applied to the Bible in various ways through the centuries, did not develop as a biblical discipline until the early nineteenth century.¹ In the more than a century since its development, it has proven to be controversial and schismatic. On the one hand, some took the methodology, along with all of its naturalistic presuppositions, and proceeded to devastate the text of the Bible. Some, on the other hand, reacted by retreating into dogmatism and tradition. In between these two extremes, responsible biblical scholars continued to apply historical criticism to the biblical text, resulting in a wealth of material on which we continue to depend to this day.

Today, the historical critical method is an established biblical methodology.² Donald Hagner notes that Christianity and

¹The historical origins of the method will be dealt with in Chapter Three.

²Stephen Neill, The Interpretation of the New Testament: 1861-1961, (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 338. "First and foremost, the liberty of the scientific and critical approach has established itself almost beyond the possibility of cavil.... The so-called 'liberal' and the so-called 'conservative' of today differ in their results; in the definition of the methods to be employed there is hardly the shadow of a difference between them."

the New Testament must be understood historically or our understanding of them will be inadequate. "Because revelation comes to us in and through history, historical criticism is not an option but a necessity."³ Taking "criticism" to mean "the making of informed judgments," he concludes that "no one who attempts to interpret or explain the Bible in any way can avoid the 'critical' method."⁴

This paper will look at the historical-critical method, attempting to understand its origins and application to the biblical text. Chapter One will look at the definition and parameters of the method. Chapter Two will examine the history and development of the method. Chapter Three will look at the presuppositions involved in using the method. In Chapter Four its application to the gospels, Acts and the epistles will be illustrated. Finally, Chapter Five will appraise the use of the method in the context of the overall seminar model, Exegeting the New Testament.

Definition

George Eldon Ladd states in his book The New Testament and Criticism:

³Donald A. Hagner, "The New Testament, History, and the Historical-Critical Method," in New Testament Criticism and Interpretation, edited by David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 75.

⁴Ibid. In the note to this statement, located on p. 92, he notes that even if a person wanted to avoid criticism, choosing a translation of the Bible involves critical judgment. "The only alternative to the use of critical judgment is absolute silence."

It is the central thesis of this book that *the Bible is the Word of God given in the words of men in history*. As the words of men, its historical origins must be reconstructed so far as possible. This is the task of biblical criticism.⁵

Thus historical criticism attempts to take the earliest form of the text, as determined by textual criticism, and "determine the meaning of the text as it was intended by the human author moved long ago to compose it."⁶ Since the historical facts with which we work are often not complete, historical criticism many times deals with theories and probabilities rather than established facts.⁷

The text of the Bible may relate history as well as have its own history, thus we can speak of the "history *in* the text" as well as the "history *of* the text."⁸ The former refers to what

⁵George Eldon Ladd, The New Testament and Criticism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 12. Italics are Ladd's.

⁶Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, "Historical Criticism: Its Role in Biblical Interpretation and Church Life," Theological Studies 50 (1989): 251. See also James D. Smart, "The Theological Significance of Historical Criticism," in The Authoritative Word, ed. Donald K. McKim. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983), 230. Reprinted from James D. Smart, The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church: A Study in Hermeneutics, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), pp. 77-89; Augustine Stock, "The Limits of Historical-Critical Exegesis," Biblical Theology Bulletin 13 (1983): 29.

⁷Ladd, The New Testament and Criticism, 16. Ladd notes that this will create tension for many evangelicals who desire absolute answers. However, he says on p. 17 that "it is the author's hope that the reader may be helped to understand that the authority of the Bible as the Word of God is not dependent upon infallible certainty in all matters of history and criticism."

⁸John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 45.

the text itself tells us about history, while the latter refers to the history of the text itself.⁹ In critical commentaries the latter would be found in the introduction to the book, while the former in general would be dealt with passage by passage.¹⁰

Parameters

Historical criticism by definition deals with history and its reconstruction, therefore the basic question that needs to be dealt with here is, What is history? Stephen Neill notes that although Christianity is a completely historical religion, "there is no subject on which the theologians are less agreed than 'the meaning of history.'"¹¹ This becomes painfully clear when one examines the way in which the term is used in current scholarly discussion, and in particular as it relates to the historical Jesus.

James Barr, in the course of an evaluation of whether or not the historical-critical method is useful to theology or not, notes that whenever it is remarked, "Christianity is a historical religion," it is impossible to know exactly what is meant until

⁹Gordon D. Fee, New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), divides his historical part of the exegesis into three categories: (1) the "historical context in general" (p. 28); (2) the "historical-cultural background" (p. 32); and (3) the "historical context in particular" (p. 33).

¹⁰See Hayes-Holladay, Biblical Exegesis, 53-58, for an extensive bibliography of sources for historical background. Sources especially helpful for beginners are marked with an asterick. See also Fee, New Testament Exegesis, 137-150.

¹¹Neill, The Interpretation of the New Testament, 342.

the claim for which this is a basis is expressed. He delineates six possibilities stemming from orientations that are traditional Catholic (accept their tradition), academic or secular (treat the Bible like any other document), conservative or fundamentalist (accept Bible at face value), post-war theological, existentialist, and liberal Protestantism.¹²

He sees the basic weakness of the historical critical method in its narrow view of history. However, rather than abandoning the method, he suggests "that the true legitimation of historical and critical reading lies in the relation between scripture, tradition and the church."¹³ This broadening of the view of history reveals the layers of tradition, thus increasing the possibility of understanding the scripture theologically.

In German discussion the terms *Historie* and *Geschichte* are used, and are useful to organize the current discussion. *Historie* is generally seen as that which can be reconstructed by the historical-critical method; *Geschichte* is an event known by its impact on subsequent history.¹⁴ Martin Kähler saw the lib-

¹²James Barr, The Scope and Authority of the Bible, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1980), pp. 30-31.

¹³Ibid., 50.

¹⁴George E. Ladd, "The Problem of History," in Studia Evangelica, Vol. V, ed. F.L. Cross, (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1968), 91. Ladd notes that the modern distinction stems from Martin Kähler's Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche biblische Christus. The English translation is The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic Biblical Christ, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964). Ladd uses these terms as a useful way to organize his discussion of present trends in historical discussion. The following discussion comes from pages 91-100 of Ladd's article.

eral reconstruction of the life of Jesus as a Holzweg, thus the geschichtlichen Jesus is to be accepted as the historische Jesus.

Bultmann, on the other hand, while viewing Historie in the same way, sees no continuity between the historical Jesus and the kerygmatic Christ. The post-Bultmannians view Historie in the same way, though they are less skeptical about the extent to which the historical Jesus can be recovered. The resurrection is the event by which Historie is translated into Geschichte, thus there is continuity between the historical Jesus and kerygmatic Christ.

A different view is presented by Alan Richardson,¹⁵ who rejects the distinction between Historie and Geschichte, and argues for an understanding of history in which the resurrection can be established by ordinary historical methods. Belief in the resurrection of Jesus is necessitated for Richardson as it is the only adequate cause that can account for Easter faith of the disciples. History is a closed continuum, but historical enquiry must not rule out God as an historical cause.

A final view is the Heilsgeschichte of Oscar Cullmann,¹⁶ which designates a sequence of divine acts in the midst of history for the sake of our salvation. Cullmann accepts Kähler's distinction between Historie and Geschichte, as well as his view of the reconstructed historical Jesus as a Holzweg. He under-

¹⁵Alan Richardson, History Sacred and Profane, (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1964).

¹⁶Oscar Cullmann, Heils als Geschichte, (Tübingen, 1965).

stands Kähler to say that the historical Jesus can only be met in the Christ of faith and not the scientific modern life of Jesus. For Cullmann, history and theology cannot be divorced.

Clearly, the way that the exegete views history has consequences for his resultant interpretation of the text. The purely scientific historical-critical method by its own self-imposed limitations is unable to interpret redemptive history. Thus, while the method of historical criticism is valid, the biblical interpreter must recognize that God's intervention in history introduces a new dimension to the text.

CHAPTER TWO
HISTORY OF THE METHOD

Introduction

Evidence for the use of historical methodology in ancient times on biblical writings has been gathered by W.G. Kümmel,¹ and demonstrates clearly that while it may have been used on a small scale, its "insights were more dogmatically than historically motivated."² Origen (ca. 185-254) used style to show that Paul did not write the Letter to the Hebrews, yet did not come to any firm conclusions based on his findings.³ His student, Dionysius of Alexandria (bishop, ca. 247-65), used linguistic and stylistic differences to prove that Revelation and the Gospel of John were not written by the same author. However, his motivation was

¹Werner Georg Kümmel, The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of its Problems, translated by S. MacLean Gilmour and Howard Clark Kee, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 13-19. Kümmel's work is valuable in that he includes significant quotations of the relevant works to make his point.

²Edgar Krentz, The Historical Critical Method, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 6.

³Kümmel, New Testament, p. 15, cites Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, 6.25. 11-14: "But as for myself, if I were to state my own opinion, I should say that the thoughts are the apostle's, but that the style and composition belong to one who called to mind the apostle's teaching and, as it were, paraphrases what his master said. If any church, therefore, holds this epistle as Paul's, let it be commended for this also. For not without reason have the men of old time handed it down as Paul's. But who wrote the epistle, in truth God knows."

church politics. Jerome (ca. 340-420), drawing from Eusebius, catalogs the writings of several apostles that had been disputed by many Christians, yet omits mentioning Dionysius' rejection of Revelation, as its canonicity had never been challenged in the West.

The Church exercised rigid control over interpretation through the centuries that followed. It was not until the Renaissance that changes came that began to provide a foundation for the later development of historical methodology. In the following sections this development will be traced beginning from the Renaissance through the modern period.

Renaissance and Reformation

The foundations of the historical critical method can be traced back to the Renaissance, "especially to its emphasis on 'getting back to the sources' (*recursus ad fontes*)."⁴ Manuscripts began to be collected, and the printing press made information easily available on a larger scale. Humanists such as Erasmus applied the methodology used on other ancient literature to the Bible, which, coupled with his call for the use of reason in interpretation, passed on "historical thought and the

⁴Fitzmeyer, 246. Fitzmeyer refers to R.F. Collins, "Augustine of Hippo Precursor of Modern Biblical Scholarship," Louvain Studies 12 (1987): 131-51, to say that some patristic commentators may have used methods similar to historical criticism, but comments that "the mode of exposition was then largely literal and/or allegorical, sometimes preoccupied with what has been called the 'spiritual' sense of Scripture." See also Kümmel, New Testament, 13-19.

use of reason" as "legacies to the Reformation and later interpreters."⁵

In the Reformation, while the interpretation of Scripture did not change radically, Scripture was elevated above the pope and the church as the final source of revelation, with the result that the Bible became its own interpreter.⁶ This is illustrated clearly in a quote from Martin Luther's defense to the Diet of Worms (1521):

Since then your serene majesty and your lordships seeks a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.

I cannot do otherwise, here I stand, may God help me, Amen.⁷

Luther, by as early as 1517, had virtually abandoned the medieval tradition of the fourfold sense of Scripture in favor of an emphasis on the literal sense of the text. By 1519 he was advocating that the Bible should be its own interpreter. Luther "inevitably pointed the way to a scientific approach that would with full seriousness deal with the New Testament in its historical peculiarity."⁸

⁵Krentz, 8.

⁶Kümmel, New Testament, 20-21; Fitzmeyer, 246.

⁷Cited in Kümmel, New Testament, 20-21.

⁸Kümmel, New Testament, 23. Luther, having discovered that some writings were disputed early because of uncertainty as to

Various people further developed the method in this period of the Reformation. Matthaeus Flacius Illyricus rejected the multiple sense of Scripture in favor of the literal meaning in light of the context and purpose. Joachim Camerarius desired to explain New Testament writers in light of their own times, and used Greek and Latin classics as well as the grammatical sense of the words to aid him in exegesis. Hugo Grotius continued this practice, employing also Hellenistic-Jewish literature as well as the church fathers. John Lightfoot concluded that the New Testament could only be properly understood by understanding the language of the Jews of that time. "So it was that Grotius and Lightfoot set in motion the efforts of students of the history of religions to view the New Testament in the setting furnished by its historical environment."⁹

Huldreich Zwingli and John Calvin likewise stressed that the Bible is the single authority in the church. They differed from Luther in that, where Luther used a christological approach to decide between differing interpretations (even in the Old Testament), Calvin saw God as the authority of the Bible, which "led to a more rigid view of the literal sense and its application."¹⁰

apostolic authorship, went on to theologially criticize the books of Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation. He placed them at the end of the New Testament, and did not even place them in the table of contents. Ibid., 23-26.

⁹Kümmel, New Testament, 27-39.

¹⁰Krentz, pp. 9-10.

Post-Reformation Scientific Age

Another influence that paved the way for historical criticism was the change in world-view (heliocentric vs. geocentric) coming out of the Copernican revolution. Men like Kepler and Galileo, who supported Copernican theory and believed the Bible to be the "divine revelation of all truth," struggled to accommodate what they observed of natural phenomena and what the Scripture taught. "The issue which had emerged for them was nothing less than the question of the authority of the Bible and the nature of its claims to truth."¹¹ The authority of the Bible was diminished as science began to concern itself primarily with this world.¹²

History and philosophy followed a similar path, resulting in a questioning of historical and chronological data in the Bible, and an elevation of reason over Scripture. Orthodoxy's refusal to face the challenge of new knowledge by retreating into tradition resulted in the church being disregarded by devotees of

¹¹Victor P. Furnish, "The Historical Criticism of New Testament: A Survey of Origins," Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 56 (1974): 367. See Alan Richardson, The Bible in the Age of Science, (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1961), pp. 9-31, for a discussion of the scientific revolution as it relates to Christianity. He notes (p. 23) that "the seventeenth century men of science devoted as much care and attention to theological and biblical reflection as they did to the study of the objects of their scientific interest. The leading thinkers and experimenters of the first phase of the scientific revolution were not only unconscious of any opposition between their scientific attitude and their religious faith but were consciously concerned to express their religious conviction in their scientific work."

¹²Krentz, 11.

the new methodologies. Although some followers of Descartes tried to guard the Scriptures by positing two kinds of truth, others insisted that truth is one. Baruch Spinoza in 1670 wrote Tractatus Theologico-Politicus as a critique of religion, subsuming the former authority of religion under the superiority of reason. The church remained on the defensive, denouncing those who tried to find a place for reason in theology.¹³

In 1678 the French priest Richard Simon published the first of several books in which he applied criticism to the Bible. Carried out in the name of truth, his real goal was to counter the Protestant emphasis on the Bible as the only source of revelation by demonstrating the unreliability of the transmission of Scripture and consequently the need for the tradition of the Catholic Church. Although his dogmatic presuppositions prevented him from following through with conclusions, he was able to show that there was a Latin translation different from and earlier than the Vulgate.¹⁴

Effects of Deism and the Enlightenment

Deism, as ushered in by John Locke, began to apply pure reason to the Scriptures. In The Reasonableness of Christianity, as Delivered in the Scriptures (1695), Locke emphasized the New Testament's demand for faith, but says that this faith only remained pure in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles.

¹³Krentz, 12-15.

¹⁴Kümmel, New Testament, 40-46.

Elsewhere it has been diluted with alien ideas. Later he would call for a contextual interpretation of a passage as the author understood it.

The Bible in this time was treated with great freedom that brought on controversy. While many were able to use reason to defeat these controversies, the overall effect was to strengthen tendencies toward historical interpretation of the Scriptures.¹⁵

In France the combination of Deism and rationalism gave birth to the Enlightenment, in which reason was seen to reign supreme over all other authorities, including religion. While French intellectuals were anti-church, the German Aufklärung sought by means of reason to determine the eternal truths of the Bible. History was seen as a useful tool to find rational and timeless truth.

The work on the Bible done by Richard Simon served as a catalyst to further the work that was already in progress by the Anglican theologian John Mill. His work in turn stimulated further progress by the Swabian pietist Johann Albrecht Bengel, and his contemporary, Johann Jakob Wettstein of Basel. Although none of these men dared to alter the Textus Receptus, a clear move had been made in the direction of a historical examination of the New Testament.¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid., 51-58.

¹⁶Ibid., 47-51. Wettstein's text included textual variants and a selective apparatus printed immediately below the text itself, as well as a more extensive apparatus under the text

Truly scientific study of the Bible is indebted to Johann Salomo Semler, who among other accomplishments was able to distinguish different recensions of the text. He demanded that the text be considered based on its own grammatical structure and interpreted as a witness to its own time, rather than to the present day. Johann David Michaelis took Semler's approach and developed it into the science of New Testament introduction, initially basing his work on that of Richard Simon.¹⁷ Karl August Gottlob Keil set the standard for subsequent commentaries when he concluded that the task of the exegete was to establish facts without judging historicity or truth.¹⁸

Historical interest in the Bible resulted in a desire to investigate sources, which led to an abundance of theories. Johann Jakob Griesbach laid the foundation for synoptic studies by separating John's Gospel from the other three and printing a Greek synopsis. Several scholars began formulating various synoptic theories to explain the interrelationship of the synoptic gospels. Friedrich Schleiermacher and J.G. Eichhorn began to question the authenticity of the Pastoral Letters. This whole new type of approach was first comprehensively expressed in J.G.

offering parallel passages from classical and Jewish literature, enabling an understanding of the New Testament against its historical background. His textual apparatus employs the system of letters and numbers that is still in use today.

¹⁷Ibid., 62-73. Michaelis ascribed canonicity only to those writings that come from the apostles, and even this must be clarified by historical research.

¹⁸Krentz, 19; Kümmel, New Testament, 108-109.

Eichhorn's five-volume Einleitung in das Neue Testament.¹⁹

Historical interest in the New Testament led eventually to interest in the life of Jesus and its relation to the teaching of the apostles. Herrmann Samuel Reimarus quietly prepared a critique of Christianity using rationalist presuppositions in order to separate what was said *about* Jesus from what Jesus himself actually did and taught.²⁰ Reaction to Reimarus' work led to many lives of Jesus. However, the importance of Reimarus' work is that he "raised the problems that occupy New Testament scholarship to the present: Jesus as eschatological preacher, the messianic secret, the passion predictions and the surprise of the disciples at the resurrection, miracles, 'creative additions,' the differences between John and the Synoptics, etc."²¹

Johann Philipp Gabler, a student of Eichhorn, set forth the difference between dogmatic and biblical theology in 1787, emphasizing the need for a historical approach to the Bible. He

¹⁹Kümmel, New Testament, 74-87; Krentz, 19-20; Neill, 5-6. See also E. Earle Ellis, "Historical-Literary Criticism--After Two-Hundred Years: Origins, Aberrations, Contributions, Limitations," in Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy, 1987. J. Gregory, et al. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), p. 411, who notes that it was in Eichhorn's text that the term "higher criticism" was first applied to the study of Scripture, which later became known as historical-literary criticism or the historical-critical method.

²⁰His work was published by G.E. Lessing as Fragmente eines Ungenannten and is available today in English as Reimarus: Fragments, Lives of Jesus Series, trans. by Ralph S. Fraser, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970). Reimarus' identity was protected by Lessing until 1813, when Reimarus' son made it known.

²¹Krentz, 20-21.

also introduced the concept of myth, taken over from Christian Gottlob Heyne by Eichhorn and carried into New Testament studies by Gabler, as an explanation of the miraculous events recorded. Georg Lorenz Bauer applied historical science to his development of a biblical theology, employing methodology developed to deal with myth as a tool to discover the real meaning of didactic forms. He also added myth to hermeneutics, setting out characteristics by which to identify myths as a basic step to interpretation.²²

Nineteenth Century

The foundations of historical criticism were now all in place, and continued to develop in the nineteenth century. The 1838 publication of Schleiermacher's Hermeneutik²³ gave confidence and respectability to the use of historical methodology in Germany. Karl Lachmann broke away from the Textus Receptus by producing the first truly critical edition of the New Testament in 1831, with extensive apparatus and suggestions on method included in the second edition of 1842-1850. Lachmann was followed by Tregelles, then Tischendorf, then Westcott and Hort, thus making the availability of reliable texts a major legacy of the nineteenth century that we continue to benefit from today.²⁴

²²Kümmel, New Testament, 98-112.

²³F.D.D. Schleiermacher, Hermeneutik: Nach den Handschriften neu herausgegeben und eingeleitet, ed. M. Kimmerle. Heidelberg, 1959.

²⁴Krentz, 24-25; Neill, 68-76.

The nineteenth century also saw the development of Comparative Philology, resulting in a number of works having to do with the vocabulary of the Bible. In 1843 Liddell and Scott published the first edition of their Greek Lexicon, which is still a classic in its latest revision. In 1866-7 Hermann Cremer published a Biblical and theological dictionary of New Testament Greek. In 1867 Grimm's Greek-Latin Dictionary of the Books of the New Testament appeared. In Germany, Walter Bauer (1877-1960) continued in this work by devoting the greater part of his life to developing a dictionary of every Greek word in the New Testament with its nearest German equivalent, which was translated into English by Dr. Arndt. On a larger scale, Gerhard Kittel (1888-1948), consciously continuing the work of Cremer, edited his Theologisches Wörterbuch zum neuen Testament.²⁵

Critical commentaries began to appear in the nineteenth century. In Germany, Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer edited his Critical and Exegetical Commentary, a series of sixteen commentaries, between 1832 and 1852, which continued to be revised over the years. In England, Lightfoot, Wescott and Hort felt that a commentary should be more than just philological. They set out to write commentaries that were critical, linguistic, historical, exegetical, not aimed at edification, yet carried out 'from faith to faith' (Rom 1:17).²⁶ "By the end of the century The International Critical Commentary and the Handkommentar on Old and New

²⁵Neill, 81-86.

²⁶Neill, 86-94.

Testaments stood next to the Meyer series."²⁷

Between 1833 and 1842 several works appeared from two men which gave further stimulus to the historical investigation of the New Testament. David Friedrich Strauss in 1835 published Das Leben Jesu, kritisch bearbeitet, in which he examined the rationalist and the conservative interpretations of the Gospels. Finding both to be inadequate, he offered the "mythical" as a new interpretive principle. Though Strauss's methodology and conclusions were both radical and questionable, he forced New Testament scholarship to deal with the issues of source and method.²⁸

The second man was Ferdinand Christian Baur, one of Strauss's former teachers and professor at Tübingen from 1826 until the end of his life in 1860. Baur enthusiastically absorbed historical analysis employing critical source analysis from Georg Bartold Niebuhr's Römische Geschichte, and used this to put the New Testament into chronological order and write the history of the early church. Influenced by Hegel, Baur began with the letters of Paul and described the history of the early church as thesis (Judeo-Christianity, Peter and Matthew), antithesis (Pauline Christianity), and synthesis (early catholicism). Although most of Baur's solutions have not stood the test of time, his methodology was basically correct, and led to better

²⁷Krentz, 25.

²⁸Krentz, 25-26; Kümmel, New Testament, 120-126; Neill, 13-19.

use of the historical method in New Testament scholarship.²⁹

By the end of the nineteenth century in Germany, faith and historical investigation were separated. This is especially clear in Franz Overbeck, who denied that theology had anything to do with scientific investigation of the text.³⁰ Thus historical criticism ruled the continent by the end of the century, having been "radicalized to a strictly historical discipline, free, independent, and in no way responsible to the church."³¹

Biblical criticism in England developed differently than it did on the continent. Nothing of real significance happened until 1860, when Benjamin Jowett, who had studied in Germany in 1845-6 and was influenced by Hegelian philosophy, wrote an article for Essays and Reviews in which he set forth the question whether the Bible should be read as any other book or not.³² Since many in England were 'fundamentalists' at the time, the book was banned and legal proceedings were started against the writers. However, criticism had come to stay; fortunately, scholars such as Lightfoot, Westcott, Hort, S.R. Driver, William Sanday, and W. Robertson Smith, with their non-destructive use of historical criticism, demonstrated the benefits to be derived

²⁹Krentz, 26-27; Kümmel, New Testament, 127-133; Neill, 19-28.

³⁰Krentz, 28; Kümmel, New Testament, 199-204.

³¹Krentz, 29.

³²His essay, titled "On the Interpretation of Scripture," can be found in Benjamin Jowett, The Interpretation of Scripture and Other Essays, (London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1907).

from this approach to the Scriptures.³³

Twentieth Century

World War I radically changed the thinking of many people, as the optimism of the evolutionary doctrine "was suddenly and horrifyingly contradicted by the regression of great nations into barbarism."³⁴ In this climate Karl Barth discovered anew the voice of God, and called for interpretation to go beyond the historical time of the writer and address the current situation. Concerning John Calvin, Barth noted that although he may have been inferior to German scholarship with regard to historical methodology, his works were full of interpretation, which was lacking in modern commentaries. Barth had raised once again the question of the relation of faith to the historical method.³⁵

Rudolph Bultmann continued to maintain that the historical method was the only method for scientific research of the New Testament, but found the problem of preaching it to modern men to be the fact that it is couched in mythological language. Bultmann's answer is first to use historical criticism to demythologize the text, then to apply existentialist philosophy to its interpretation. He distinguished between the *historisch*, or the historic event, and the *geschichtlich*, or the event as it has significance. It is in the latter that God confronts man and

³³Neill, New Testament, 29-32; Krentz, 29.

³⁴Neill, 206.

³⁵Krentz, 30-31; Neill, 201-212; Kümmel, New Testament, 363-368.

calls him to self-understanding and authentic existence. Faith responds to that call, and is not dependent on historical knowledge.³⁶

Both of these men, while calling for the theological to be placed back into interpretation, have been criticized for placing a low value on history. Barth's supreme value is on the application of the text to modern times, while Bultmann "makes the conceptual world of the interpreter the criterion of truth in the Scriptures."³⁷

Although some continue to call for the abolition of the historical-critical method,³⁸ others are striving to criticize the method in a positive way in order to responsibly deal with the historical aspects of the New Testament. In this latter group, the chief spokesman in Germany is Peter Stuhlmacher, to whom we will turn our attention to try to assess the direction that historical criticism is taking today.³⁹

Stuhlmacher, following in the tradition of Adolf

³⁶Krentz, 31; Neill, 222-233; Kümmel, New Testament, 372-380.

³⁷Krentz, 31.

³⁸Walter Wink, The Bible in Human Transformation, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973). Chapter One of this work is, "The Bankruptcy of the Biblical Critical Paradigm." Also Gerhard Maier, The End of the Historical-Critical Method, (St. Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1977).

³⁹John Piper, "Historical Criticism in the Dock: Recent Developments in Germany," Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 23 (1980): 327, lists, in addition to Stuhlmacher, Martin Hengel, Stuhlmacher's colleague at Tübingen, Ferdinand Hahn in Munich, Jürgen Roloff in Erlangen, Edward Schweizer in Zurich, and Leonhard Goppelt, who died in 1973.

Schlatter, tries to strike a path between the radical critics and the fundamentalists. He sees the main problem of the historical-critical method as not allowing for the historical worth of the biblical text, but trying to find something behind what is presented. Thus he says, "Wir werden unserer Verpflichtung gegenüber den biblischen Texten angesichts der Tradition, in der wir stehen, und inmitten des Wahrheitsbewusstseins der Gegenwart dann am besten gerecht, wenn wir uns bemühen, *eine methodologisch und wirkungsgeschichtlich reflektierte Hermeneutik des Einverständnisses mit den biblischen Texten zu praktizieren.*"⁴⁰

To this end he proposes that the principles of Ernst Troeltsch (correlation, analogy, and criticism) be broadened to include the "Prinzip des 'Vernehmens'"⁴¹ Piper notes:

In conclusion, the hermeneutical position of Peter Stuhlmacher places before evangelicals who espouse the infallibility of Scripture two alternatives: With Gerhard Maier one can make one's starting point the unity and infallibility of Scripture and thus, on the basis of this presupposition, rule out the use of criticism... Or one can renounce this sort of epistemological fiat, which we deny to every other religion and to ourselves in every other area of life, and instead let our espousal of the total trustworthiness of the Bible stand or fall with the critical demonstration of its unity and truth.⁴²

⁴⁰Peter Stuhlmacher, Vom Verstehen des Neuen Testaments: Eine Hermeneutik, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 222. Italics are Stuhlmacher's.

⁴¹Stuhlmacher, Vom Verstehen des Neuen Testaments, 243-244.

⁴²Piper, 333.

CHAPTER THREE
PRESUPPOSITIONS

Introduction

Rudolf Bultmann wrote an essay in 1957 in which he asked the question, "Ist voraussetzungslose Exegese möglich?"¹ To this Bultmann answered unequivocally "yes" and "no." "Yes" in the sense of not presupposing the results of exegesis, which is demanded; "no" in the sense that each exegete approaches the text as an individual with ideas about the subject matter and the questions that he will put to it.

It is vital when setting out to do historical criticism of the biblical text to be aware of ones own presuppositions as well as those involved in the works being studied. Bultmann, for example, in the essay cited above, states that "the one presupposition that cannot be dismissed is *the historical method* of interrogating the text."² He mentions basic issues such as grammar, style, and historical background, followed by a histori-

¹Rudolf Bultmann, "Ist voraussetzungslose Exegese möglich?" Theologische Zeitschrift, 13 (1957): 409-417. This was translated into English by Schubert M. Ogden as "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" in Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann, trans. Schubert M. Ogden (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1960), 289-296.

²Bultmann, "Exegesis Without Presuppositions," 291.

cal presupposition which, in contradiction to his "yes" answer above, predetermines his results by limiting the possibilities.

This often cited passage is as follows:

The historical method includes the presupposition that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by the succession of cause and effect...

This closedness means that the continuum of historical happenings cannot be rent by the interference of supernatural, transcendent powers and that therefore there is no "miracle" in this sense of the word. Such a miracle would be an event whose cause did not lie within history...

It is in accordance with such a method as this that the science of history goes to work on all historical documents. And there cannot be any exceptions in the case of biblical texts if the latter are at all to be understood historically.³

What presuppositions are inherent to the doing of historical criticism and how are they to be applied in the case of the biblical text? The answers will be sought in this chapter.

Purely Historical Criticism

The basic principles of historical criticism as it is practiced were formulated by Ernst Troeltsch in an 1898 essay.⁴

Krentz summarizes them as follows:

- (1) The principle of criticism or methodological doubt, which implies that history only achieves probability. Religious tradition must also be subjected to criticism (pp. 731-732).
- (2) The principle of analogy makes criticism possible. Present experience and occurrence become the criteria of probability in the past. This 'almighty power' of analogy implies that all events are in principle similar (p. 732).

³Ibid., 291-292.

⁴Ernst Troeltsch, "Über historische und dogmatische Methode in der Theologie," in Gesammelte Schriften, Zweiter Band, 2d ed., (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1922), pp. 729-753.

(3) The principle of correlation (or mutual interdependence) implies that all historical phenomena are so interrelated that a change in one phenomenon necessitates a change in the causes leading to it and in the effects it has (p. 733). Historical explanation rests on this chain of cause and effect. The third principle rules out miracle and salvation history (pp. 740-742).⁵

Krentz follows with an assessment of the methods of current historiography, and the ways in which they modify these principles of Troeltsch. Contemporary historians stress that you cannot replace a doubtful account with a guess, but must say that it is not clear. History is seen to be a controllable discipline, able to be verified or corrected upon reexamination of the evidence. Thus Troeltsch's first principle (criticism) is acknowledged.

Historians likewise accept his second principle of analogy. This assumes meaningful assertions are possible because there is a kind of uniformity in man. If this is raised to the level of a universal principle which disallows some evidence, there are problems.

The third principle of correlation is accepted, but extreme complexity is introduced at the point of causation. Historicism is that view of history that does not allow a theological or transcendental cause. Taking natural science as its model, historicism desired explanations that could be generalized, bringing coherence and the possibility of absolute certainties. Its meticulous attention to detail has been a valuable

⁵Krentz, 55; see also Hagner, 83-84. The following discussion is summarized from Krentz, pages 56-63.

contribution that should not be lost.

However, the climate in science and history has changed somewhat in that certainties have been replaced by infinite probabilities, and laws have been replaced by hypotheses to be considered, refined, modified, or refuted. While this still does not mean that a theological interpretation of history is respectable or that analogy will admit miracles, some historians today would leave room for theology in historical interpretation.

Historical Criticism and Theology

Historical criticism is a method that will continue to be used in biblical interpretation, thus it is important to deal with the problems involved in its use. As Krentz notes:

Historical method is in its general axioms at best not hostile to theology, at worst a threat to the central message of the Scripture. Theology must either justify the use of historical criticism and define its nature or be willing to reformulate the Christian faith in terms of a positivist truth that historicism alone will validate.⁶

The key issue that must be dealt with is the attitude toward the supernatural. Donald Hagner advocates adding two new criteria to the approach of historical criticism. First, the supernatural should not be excluded from consideration just because it lies outside ordinary experience. This does not involve accepting every supernatural claim at face value--in fact, he argues that even more convincing evidence is demanded in the case of the supernatural. Other than this, historical judgment should be no different in dealing with the supernatural

⁶Krentz, 61.

than it is in dealing with other historical narratives.⁷

Secondly, he calls for "contextual appropriateness" when dealing with supernatural events. Though he admits that this is a subjective criterion, he notes that there is a difference between the miracles recorded in the New Testament Apocrypha and the New Testament itself. With this criterion it is appropriate to depend on ordinary causation when the evidence for the supernatural is not sufficiently compelling, as it does not call for the abandonment of critical acumen.⁸

In the closing paragraphs of his essay, Hagner summarizes his thoughts on the way to modify the historical-critical method. The limitations of the positivistic scientific model must be rejected, leaving open the possibility of divine causation. "When what is being studied is essentially demolished in the process, it is worth asking whether the right tool has been used."⁹

The historical-critical method "must pursue without restriction the explanation that best explains the phenomena under investigation."¹⁰ This means that the supernatural needs to be pursued in those cases where it is the best explanation, rather than resorting to ludicrous explanations because of an a priori exclusion of the supernatural.

⁷Hagner, 87.

⁸Ibid., 87-88.

⁹Ibid., 89.

¹⁰Ibid.

Historical witnesses must be tested "using the same criteria and having the same resultant confidence whether what is in view involves the natural or the supernatural."¹¹ Again, this calls for not excluding the supernatural without considering it as a valid witness. Finally, it "must consider the role of the community in the transmission of the tradition not simply as potentially negative but as potentially positive."¹²

Role of Faith

What is the role of faith in historical criticism? Is faith a prerequisite for understanding the text?

¹¹Ibid., 90.

¹²IBID.

CHAPTER FOUR

APPLICATION TO SELECTED NEW TESTAMENT GENRES

Introduction

Now that a basic understanding of the historical-critical method has been reached, it is important to examine the specific ways that it needs to be applied in the various New Testament genres. This chapter will briefly look at the application of historical criticism to three specific New Testament genres: Gospel, Acts, and the Epistles.

Gospels

It is in the application to the Gospels that historical criticism has been the most notorious. Albert Schweitzer, at the conclusion of his The Quest of the Historical Jesus, wrote, "Those who are fond of talking about negative theology can find their account here. There is nothing more negative than the result of the critical study of the Life of Jesus."¹³ Historical skepticism continued into the twentieth century in Rudolf Bultmann. Although a "new quest" was initiated by one of

¹³Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede, translated by W. Montgomery, (London: A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1926), 396.

Bultmann's students, Ernst Käsemann,¹⁴ it still operated under anti-supernatural presuppositions. More recently work is being done in establishing criteria for the authenticity of material presented in the gospels.¹⁵ Historical criticism must continue to deal with the issue of the historical Jesus.

Historical criticism must also identify the Sitz im Leben of a gospel pericope, and the historical origins of key words used in the gospels, such as "Son of God," "Son of Man," and "Messiah."¹⁶ It must continue to provide background information from the history and culture of New Testament times in order to enable the exegete to avoid eisogesis.

It is also important with regard to the gospels to keep their distinct nature in mind, which is different than the other genre of the New Testament. The gospel writers have more than likely organized existing oral pericopes, some of which may have been transmitted without their original historical context. Thus it is important to look at the passage in a synopsis to compare it with its parallels (if they exist), noting any changes in

¹⁴See James M. Robinson, A New Quest of the Historical Jesus. Studies in Biblical Theology, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1959) for a summary of this quest.

¹⁵See Robert H. Stein, "The 'Criteria' for Authenticity," in Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels, vol. 1, ed. R.T. France and David Wenham, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980): 225-263. See also Craig A. Evans, "Authenticity Criteria in Life of Jesus Research," Christian Scholars Review 19 (1989): 6-31.

¹⁶See Ladd, The New Testament and Criticism, 173-181, for illustrations of the importance of historical criticism in these matters.

vocabulary and placement in the overall context.¹⁷

Acts

In Acts it is important to examine *what* is being said in a particular pericope. In addition, note where it is taking place, what people are involved, and what kind of geographic, environmental, or cultural details are present.

Acts is also important in chronological matters, in particular for attempting to construct a chronology of Paul. It is the task of historical criticism to take Gallio's name, determine the probable date of his term, and work backward and forward from his Corinthian ministry to infer other dates.¹⁸

Epistles

It is important with the epistles to remember that they are occasional in nature, therefore the situation to which the letter was written needs to be understood. Fee suggests the following steps: (1) Read for details. Read through the section several times, trying to place yourself in the situation of the original recipients; (2) List everything that tells you about the audience and the situation to which the letter is responding; (3) List any key words or repeated phrases that indicate the subject matter, determining if there is anything in them that might shed light on the nature of the problem; (4) Try to write a paragraph

¹⁷See Fee, 35-40.

¹⁸Example is given in Krentz, 38.

expressing the situation.¹⁹

Conclusion

Although there are some historical concerns that are general in nature and thus apply to every book of the New Testament, the genre will often determine a specific historical approach. The occasional nature of the epistles demands a different approach than the gospels or the book of Acts. A parable demands a different approach than a narrative section. The responsible use of historical criticism can inform the exegesis of a text and prevent turning to eisogesis.

¹⁹Ibid., 33.

CHAPTER FIVE
APPRAISAL OF THE MODEL

Appraisal

This final chapter will seek to appraise the model for exegesis, Exegeting the New Testament, with regard to the place of historical criticism in the model. Historical criticism finds its primary input into the model at Pre-Steps A and B, and Step 5. Since the model as it stands is already quite good, the suggestions offered in this chapter will be understandably brief.

The first suggestion is in regard to bibliography. There is no section for historical criticism included in "For Further Research" (pp. 85-123). The bibliography in this paper could serve as a starting point, though it still needs to be classified in order to be more useful, and is far from complete. In addition, one book should be added to the list of indices on page three--Craig A. Evans, Life of Jesus Research: An Annotated Bibliography, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989). This book is recent, annotated, and may yield important bibliograpy when working with the gospels.

The second suggestion involves changing the wording slightly in two places. On page three, the very first paragraph, there should be some mention of the author's purpose, perhaps right after "the Sitz im Leben of both parties." Also, the

overall theme of the book is important. This may have been intended by the "etc." in the parenthetical list after "matters of the book as a whole." A good place for this would be as the first item in this parenthetical list.

The second place is on page twenty-nine, in the paragraph under "For Acts." Rather than beginning negatively by saying, "Do not search for Luke's agenda," it would be better to strike that portion of the sentence. Then rewrite the sentence slightly to say, "Examine the historical events themselves, what the characters are saying and doing, and the historical setting."

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to lay before us the method of historical criticism, its origins and development, and its application to the process of exegesis. Historical criticism is a tool that, when properly used, is an invaluable aid in understanding the text. Unfortunately, the radical excesses of the past have caused some to want to avoid any contact with the method, even to the point of longing for a return to "the good old days."²⁰

"Pure" historical criticism as it developed based upon the presuppositions of the scientific method coming out of the Enlightenment cannot be used with the biblical text. This does not mean that the method needs to be discarded. A faith that is

²⁰See, for example, David C. Steinmetz, "The Superiority of Pre-critical Exegesis," Theology Today 37 (1980): 27-38. He argues for a return to the way it was done in medieval times.

afraid to be examined is really no different than the dogmatism that was protested against in the Reformation. Therefore the methodology must recognize that, while the biblical text is a historical document and thus is open to examination based upon the use of historical criticism, it is also unique.

One question that still needs to be addressed is, How does faith relate to all of this? Some, like George Eldon Ladd, would argue that faith is necessary to a proper understanding of the biblical text.²¹ Others, like Peter Stuhlmacher, would say that faith is not a prerequisite, but that whether "one follows the historical interest in insight or the interest of faith in information, in both cases *Einverständnis* with the textual tradition of the Bible is preserved and the rule is kept that we do not have to practice a special hermeneutic of faith but rather a general hermeneutic that is appropriate to the Bible."²² In either case, it depends on how "faith" is defined. The apostle Paul wrote, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom 10:17, NASV).

²¹Ladd, The New Testament and Criticism, 193-194.

²²Piper, 331, citing pages 218-219 of the 1979 edition of Stuhlmacher's Vom Verstehen des Neuen Testaments.

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SOUTHWESTERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

A RESPONSE TO

ROBERT H. HEADRICK'S PAPER:

HISTORICAL CRITICISM

SUBMITTED TO DR. LORIN CRANFORD

42

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE SEMINAR

NEW TESTAMENT CRITICAL METHODOLOGY

651-771

BAE GIL LEE

OCTOBER 4, 1993

Robert Headrick has provided a good overview on "Historical Criticism." For the purpose of a response to this paper, stylistic errors in form and grammar at first are noticed, and then the content of this paper is evaluated.

FORM AND GRAMMAR

Justified right margin in the section of footnotes caused to allow more than one space between words. In the section of bibliography two spaces should not be provided between an author and the title of a book and the place of publication (or journal name).

Widow and/or orphan occur in the following pages (10, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 27, 28, 32, 33). Continued page numbers in footnotes and bibliography must be abbreviated (2.67). The publication date of a periodical should include not only year but also month (if available) (9.87). Abbreviations "pp" or "p" used to indicate "page(s)" should be deleted (3, n. 6; 5, n. 12; 8, n. 3; 11, n. 10; 12, n. 11; 16, n. 19; 25, n. 4; 34, line 13).

An emphasis mark of '___' should be changed to '____' in the following pages (1, n. 2; 2, line 6; 4, line 10; 9, line 15; 9, n. 4; 16, line 12; 18, line 22; 19, line 15; 23, line 14; 31, n. 15). The mark "... " to indicate skip of some materials must have one space between each period (1, n. 2; 23, line 20; 25, line 6, 11). An emphasis mark ('___') should be changed to "____" (25, line 30).

An article "the" is needed before "Scripture" (10, line

2, 3, 21; 12, line 15; 13, line 13). The letter "s" in "scripture" should be capitalized (5, line 13). The phrase "edited by" must be abbreviated as "ed" (2, n. 3).

One space must be given between the abbreviated letters of the author's names (1, n. 2; 5, n. 14; 8, 5; 9, n. 4; 15, line 18; 16, n. 20; 17, n. 23; 20, line 18; 31, n. 15; 37, line 30, 31; p. 38, line 11; 39, line 4, 35; 40, line 4, 34; 41, line 5, 13; 43, line 13; 44, line 19).

The following words should not be used in an academic research paper: "we" (1, line 11; 3, line 7; 11; 17, line 20; 22, line 16); "us" (3, line 13); "our" (1, line 15; 6, line 22; 22, line 16); "you" (26, line 10; 32, line 18); and "yourself" (32, line 17).

In footnotes a comma is not needed between the book's title and the place of publication (3, n. 3; 4, n. 9; 5, n. 12; 8, n. 2; 12, n. 11; 17, n. 23; 20, n. 32; 22, n. 38; 23, n. 40; 30, n. 13; 31, n. 14, 15; 34, line 18). A comma should not be placed between the editor's name and the place of publication (8, n. 1; 16, n. 20).

When a book is referred to in footnote, and then this same book is mentioned again, there is no need to include the title of this book, unless other books by a same author are cited (3, n. 7; 4, n. 10, 11; 6, n. 15, 16; 8, n. 3; 9, n. 4; 10, n. 6, 7, 8; p. 11, n. 9; 13, n. 14; 15, n. 8; 16, n. 19; 17, n. 22; 19, n. 28; 20, n. 29, 30; 21, n. 33, 35; 22, n. 36; 24, n. 2).

"Eusebius'" must be changed to "Eusebius's" (1, n. 3).

This kind of problem also appears in the following pages (9, line 4; 16, line 7, 8, n. 20).

Page 2. A comma is needed before "and" (line 13) and before the title of Ladd's book (line 19). Verb tense should be same (n. 4). Letters "g" in "gospels" and "e" in "epistles" must be capitalized (line 13). The phrase "edited by" must be abbreviated to "ed" (n. 3).

Page 3. A preposition "to" is needed before "determine" (line 4). A period is not needed after "Donald K. Mckim" (n. 6). A period placed after "230" must be changed to a comma, and then "Reprinted from" must be changed to "quoted in" (n. 6). "James D. Smart" which appears second time should be replaced by "idem" (n. 6).

Page 4. One of the phrase "or not" must be deleted (line 14-15). "Hayes-Holladay" should be changed to "Hayes and Holladay" (n. 10).

Page 5. A comma is not needed before "and" (line 15). The letter "Vol" for the abbreviation of a word "volume" needs to be changed to "vol", and the roman numeral "V" for a volume number must be changed to an Arabic number "5" (n. 14). The information about the publication of Martin Kahler's book must be provided (n. 14).

Page 6. Bultmann's full name must be spelled out, since this name is first used (line 4). An article "an" should be changed to "a" (line 19). The name of the publisher for Cullmann's book must be provided (n. 16).

Page 8. A phrase "translated by" must be abbreviated to "trans" (n. 1). One space is not needed between "6.25" and "11-14" (n. 3).

Page 9. The sentence which begins with "Humanists such as Erasmus" (line 17) is not clear. It can be divided into two sentences.

Page 10. A last letter "s" in "seeks" must be bracketed off as [s], since the verb tense in the original source itself is wrong (line 8). The method of citation is wrong, and the original source for quotation is needed (n. 8). An infinitive "to criticize" should not be separated by an adverb (n. 8). A comma is needed between "Jude" and "and" (n. 8).

Page 11. A comma is not needed between "New Testament" and "and" (n. 8).

Page 12. "and" should not be italicized (line 5). The source of a quotation must be placed right next to a pronoun "He" like "He (23)" (n. 11).

Page 13. "Scriptures" is needed to be a singular form "Scripture" (line 2, 20, 21; 14, line 8; line 13 for "truths"; 21, line 1). Same tense must be used in both "emphasized" (line 21) and "says" (line 22).

Page 15. An article "an" is not needed before "abundance" (line 13). A letter "g" in "gospels" should be capitalized (line 18; 31, line 4, 8, 12, 14; 33, line 7).

Page 16. A preposition "about" should not be italicized (line 6). The sentence "Reaction to Reimarus' work led to many

lives of Jesus" is not clear (line 7-8). A period after "1987" in the book's title should be removed, and then a comma must be placed outside of an underline (n. 19). A preposition "by" before "Ralph" is not needed (n. 20).

Page 17. A comma is not needed before "and" (line 11). A colon should be followed after "Heidelberg" (n. 23), and the name of publisher must be provided (n. 23).

Page 18. The full name of "Dr. Arndt" should be spelled out here (line 11). An article "the" is needed before "Old" (line 24). The author's name "Neill" should be replaced with "Ibid" (n. 26).

Page 19. A letter "c" in "church" should be capitalized (line 20). "Krentz" should be replaced with "Ibid" (n. 28).

Page 20. The phrase "the book was banned" is not clear (line 15-16).

Page 21. A comma is not needed before "and" (line 7). What does "it" designate? (line 17).

Page 22. An infinitive "to deal with" should not be divided by an adverb "responsibly" (line 13). A comma is not needed before the title of the article "The Bankruptcy of . . ." (n. 38). The place of publication must be followed by a colon (n. 38).

Page 23. The original source of Piper's note has a period in stead of a colon (line 17). The name "Stuhlmacher" and the title of his book should be deleted, and "Ibid" is needed (n. 41).

Page 24. A colon is needed after the phrase "yes" and "no" (line 6). The "ones" should be changed to the possessive form "one's" (line 12). Is the italicized phrase "the historical method" the writer's own emphasis or Bultmann's? (line 15). A comma is not needed between the name of a journal and a volume number (n. 1).

Page 25. A comma is needed before the phrase "and how are they" (line 18). A comma is not needed after "ed" (n. 4).

Page 26. A word "pages" should be deleted (n. 5).

Page 28. An article "an" must be deleted (line 21).

Page 29. "IBID" must be replaced with "Ibid" (n. 12).

Page 30. A page number "30" on a new chapter should be placed at the bottom of page. A new footnote number must be given for footnote 13 (n. 13). The phrase "translated by" should be abbreviated to "trans" (n. 13).

Page 31. A word "than" must be replaced with "from" (line 13; 33, line 8). A period after the title of a book must be replaced by a comma (n. 14).

Page 32. Is it necessary to have an italicized "what"? (line 3).

Page 33. The form of footnote 19 must be changed to "Fee, 33-34" (n. 19).

Page 34. A page number "34" on a new chapter should be placed at the bottom of page (line 1).

Page 35. Footnote number "20" must be designated as 1 (n. 20).

Page 38. The bibliographical construction for "Collinsworth" is wrong (line 19-24). Two sources must be separated. The name of publisher must be provided (line 27). The abbreviated word "trans" must be fully spelled out as "Translated by" (line 30). Page numbers should be placed right after the book's editors (line 30, 38). A comma in stead of a period must be placed after "1987" and outside of an underline (line 37). "ed" must be placed before "J. Gregory" (line 37).

Page 39. Page numbers "301-302" should be placed right after the names of editors (line 22; 41, line 13, 22, 32; 42, line 33; 44, line 32).

Page 42. An emphasis mark ('___') must be deleted (line 4).

Page 43. "ED" must be changed to "ed" (line 14). Two sources in line 25-30 must be separated. The bibliographic construction for "Strauss" is wrong (line 37-39).

Page 44. "9/2" should be spelled out as "9, n. 2" (line 9). "Sammtliche Werke 33-34" must be deleted (line 27).

Critique of Content

Headrick begins the study of historical criticism by saying "that Christianity and the New Testament must be understood historically or our understanding of them will be inadequate."²³ Since revelation came to man through history, historical criticism is without doubt "a necessity" for a proper understanding of the biblical text.²⁴

In Chapter one "Introduction: Definition and Parameters," the writer first attempts to define the "historical criticism," by explaining that its goal is "to take the earliest form of the text"²⁵ and to "determine the meaning of the text as it was intended by the human author moved long ago to compose it."²⁶ Yet he does not present the definition of the historical criticism, though it is assumed in this discussion. Peter Stuhlmacher defines the historical-critical approaches as "that procedure of historical scholarship developed in the wake of the enlightenment with whose help written historical traditions are methodologically analyzed and subjected to the modern judgement of

²³Robert H. Headrick, "Historical Criticism" (Ph.D seminar paper, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1993), 1-2.

²⁴Donald A. Hagner, "The New Testament, History, and the Historical-Critical Method," in New Testament Criticism and Interpretation, eds. David A. Black and David S. Dockery (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 75.

²⁵Headrick, 3.

²⁶Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Historical Criticism: Its Role in Biblical Interpretation and Church Life," Theological Studies 50 (1989): 251.

reason."²⁷ Historical criticism is not a uniform method but a set of many different approaches, which enable one to reconstruct the historical context of the text.

As a discussion of parameters the writer attempt to explain the meaning of "history" with the discussion of German terms *Historie* and *Geschichte*. He provides the views of four scholars: Martin Kähler, Rudolph Bultmann, Alan Richardson, and Oscar Cullmann.

For a full understanding on the parameters of historical criticism, however, one should realize that historical criticism deals with both "the history in the text" as well as "the history of the text."²⁸ Since historical-critic methods attempt to discover both the historical situation indicated in the text²⁹ as well as the situation of the author, historical critics must concern with "authorship of the book, date of its composition, historical circumstances, the authenticity of its contents, and its literary unit," including geography and socio-political situations.³⁰ This suggests that anything which will enable one

²⁷Peter Stuhlmacher, Historical Criticism and Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Toward a Hermeneutical Consent, trans. Roy Harrisville (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).

²⁸John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 42.

²⁹The claim that the biblical text provides "historical reference" has been greatly challenged and denied by many post-modern critics.

³⁰Bernard Ramm, Protestant Biblical Interpretation: A Textbook of Hermeneutics, 3d rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1970), 9.

to reconstruct historical context of the text comes within the category of the parameters of historical criticism.

In Chapter two "History of the Method," the writer surveys the development of historical-critical methods from the period of Renaissance and Reformation to that of twentieth century, recognizing the use of historical methodology in ancient times.

In the Reformation, Martin Luther emphasized the literal interpretation of the text. This view was further developed by Matthaeus Flacius, Joachim Camerarius, Hugo Grotius, John Lightfoot, Huldreich Zwingli, and John Calvin.

During the time of the Enlightenment, John Locke was influential in the development of biblical criticism. The foundation of scientific study of the Bible is established by Johann Semler, J. D. Michaelis, K. A. G. Keil, J. J. Griesbach, F. Schleiermacher, J. G. Eichhorn, H. S. Reimarus, J. P. Gabler, and G. L. Bauer.

In the nineteenth century, further development of historical criticism, according to the writer, was particularly made by Karl Lachmann, D. F. Strauss, and F. C. Baur. The work of Albert Schweitzer is mistakenly omitted from this discussion.

The twentieth century saw the works of Kahl Barth, Rudolph Bultmann, and Peter Stuhlmacher. In the early period of this century, historical-critical method began to use several approaches: source, form, redaction criticism, and comparative study of religions, etc.

In Chapter three "Presuppositions," the writer cites Bultmann's concept "that history is a unity in the sense of a closed continuum of effects in which individual events are connected by the succession of cause and effect. . . ." ³¹ Then he provides the three interrelated principles of Ernst Troeltsch: doubt, analogy, and correlation. Finally, his discussion comes to Donald Hagner's two criteria: (1) the exclusion of the supernatural should not be based on the lack of ordinary experience, and (2) "contextual appropriateness"--use of more convincing evidence for the supernatural. ³² Drawing from Hagner's suggestion, the writer concludes "that the supernatural needs to be pursued in those cases where it is *the best explanation*" (italics mine). ³³ What is *the best explanation* for the supernatural? How could the supernatural be best explained by the purely rational evidence that man perceives through human experience? *Only faith on divine cause will be the best explanation for the supernatural event.*

Historical criticism also presupposes that the Bible is a historical book. The historical and cultural gaps between the author and the interpreter can be bridged by historical study of the text. Historical criticism is often claimed to be objective

³¹R. Bultmann, "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?," in Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolph Bultmann, trans. Schubert M. Ogden (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1960), 291.

³²Hagner, 87-88.

³³Headrick, 28.

method. However, the possibility of pure objective approach is questioned, because the historical reconstruction is clearly influenced by subjectivism within the historian's own biases, which directly influence the selection of available sources and its interpretive process.

Headrick does not address about the tools and steps, which are necessary for historical critical study. Furthermore, he does not include a section for the evaluation of historical criticism by its own presuppositions and results, and in light of different approaches, which argues against the presuppositions of historical criticism.

It is important to note a issue regarding the author's intention. When historical critics view the determination of the author's intended meaning as the final purpose of historical criticism³⁴, they assume that the meaning of the text lies on the author's intention. E. D. Hirsch supports this assumption by distinguishing the meaning of the text found in the author's intention from its significance in a relationship between that meaning and an interpreter.³⁵ However, the presupposition that

³⁴Fitzmyer, 251.

³⁵E. D. Hirsch, Validity in Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University, 1967), 8. Some evangelical scholars, like J. I. Packer or Kevin J. Vanhoozer, affirm Hirsch's view. See J. I. Packer, "Infallible Scripture and the Role of Hermeneutics," in Scripture and Truth, eds. D. A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 321-56, 412-19; and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "A Lamp in the Labyrinth: the Hermeneutics of "Aesthetic" Theology," Trinity Journal 8 (Spring 1987): 25-56. A strong critique against Hirsch's view comes from Gary Madison. Madison criticizes Hirsch's attack on Gadamer and argues that Hirsch misuses the notion of validity, absolute or

the meaning of the text can be found only in the author's intended meaning, has been strongly challenged by scholars who advocate post-modern approaches. Paul Ricoeur insists that the author's intention is not the only source for valid interpretation, but he does not exclude entirely the author's intention.³⁶ Valid interpretation includes not only the search of the meaning of the text found in the author's intention, but also the application of that meaning to interpreter's situation. Christopher Tuckett correctly states: "One can never completely give up the historical approach to discover the meaning of a text, even when one's primary concern is to discern what contemporary significance these texts might have written the context of Christian commitment."³⁷ *What it meant and what it means now* should not be divorced in interpreting the text.

The possibility of the modification of historical-critical method can be recognized from this aspect.

objective meaning, and truth. See Chapter one "A Critique of Hirsch's Validity" in Gary Madison, The Hermeneutics of Post-Modernity: Figures and Themes (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 3-24; and Hans-Georg Gadamer, Philosophical Hermeneutics, trans. and ed. David E. Linge (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1976). For a full discussion on this issue, see Grant R. Osborne, The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1991), 366-415.

³⁶Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1979), 30.

³⁷Christopher Tuckett, Reading the NT: Methods of Interpretation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 4.

In Chapter four "Application to Selected New Testament Genres," the writer briefly discusses the application of the method to the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles.

The work of "Historical Criticism" ends with Chapter five "Appraisal of the Model."

Suggestion to "For Further Research"

Add to the section of "History of Interpretation":

Dockery, D. S. "New Testament Interpretation: A Historical Survey." In New Testament Criticism and Interpretation. eds. David A. Black and David S. Dockery, 41-69. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.

Neil, Stephen and Tom Wright. The Interpretation of the New Testament 1861-1986. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Create a section for "Historical Criticism":

Boring, E. "The Historical-Critical Method's Criteria of Authenticity: The Beatitudes in Q and Thomas as a Test Case." Semeia 44 (1988): 9-44.

Fitzmyer, J. A. "Historical Criticism: Its Role in Biblical Interpretation and Church Life." Theological Studies 50, no. 2 (1989): 244-59.

Furnish, V. "The Historical Criticism of the New Testament: A Survey of Origins." John Rylands Library Bulletin 56 (1974): 336-70.

Hagner, D. A. "The New Testament, History, and the Historical-Critical method." In New Testament Criticism & Interpretation, eds. David A. Black and David S. Dockery, 71-96. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.

Hahn, F. Historical Investigation and New Testament Faith. Translated by Robert Maddox. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.

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