

## PERSPECTIVES ON BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION: A REVIEW ARTICLE

E. EARLE ELLIS\*

The recent two-volume *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* edited by Dr. John Hayes is a notable achievement and the most extensive English work of its kind in over a decade.<sup>1</sup> It enlists the support of some 400 contributors from Protestant (primarily), Roman and Orthodox Catholic (considerably), and Jewish confessions, who are largely American but include a good number from Canada, Great Britain, the European Continent, Israel, and Australia.

Among its most valuable features, the *Dictionary* offers numerous biographical sketches of individuals who have contributed to the interpretation of the Scripture in various times, places, and manners.<sup>2</sup> In these brief essays alone it offers readers an education about the course of historical developments in biblical studies, an education that is very substantial even if a few names raise an eyebrow and some are overlooked that another editor might have included.<sup>3</sup>

A second profitable feature and a major element of the work is the history of interpretation of each biblical book<sup>4</sup> and of the intertestamental Apocrypha. The emphasis on the patristic, Reformation or modern periods and on particular issues and representative figures vary with the interests of each contributor. But they are generally judicious choices, although the understandable focus on twentieth-century developments sometimes unduly shortens the discussion of earlier stages of interpretation.

The *Dictionary* also includes valuable pieces on ancillary disciplines, such as “Archeology and Biblical Studies” or “Assyriology and Biblical Studies.”<sup>5</sup> It has essays on some early Jewish and early Christian fictional,

\* Earle Ellis is research professor of theology emeritus and scholar in residence at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 22238, Fort Worth, TX 76122-0238.

<sup>1</sup> John H. Hayes, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> From Clement of Rome and Ignatius to W. D. Davies and W. G. Kümmel.

<sup>3</sup> I missed G. C. Aalders, O. T. Allis, Matthew Black, Edward Burton, Jean Carmignac, Hans Conzelmann, Patrick Fairbairn, F. L. Godet, R. K. Harrison, G. E. Ladd, J. P. Lange, Otto Michel, K. H. Rengstorf, A. T. Robertson, Georg Strecker, W. C. van Unnik, E. J. Young. See further, D. K. McKim, *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Some books are combined, such as 1–2 Samuel, 1–2 Kings, Ezra–Nehemiah, and some essays are dedicated to biblical segments, such as Pentateuch, Sermon on the Mount.

<sup>5</sup> Also, there are articles on Egyptology and Ugarit. Further, W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969).

pseudepigraphal, and other writings;<sup>6</sup> on ancient rabbinic interpretations of Scripture—the Targumim, Midrash, the Talmud; one essay on the Dead Sea Scrolls<sup>7</sup> and one on Islamic biblical interpretation in the Koran (essentially a dry hole).<sup>8</sup> It considers “Maps of the Biblical World” and “Dictionaries and Encyclopedias” and directs substantial attention to art, music, Western literature, lexicons, and to historical and literary issues in contemporary biblical interpretation, giving special treatments to the particular questions. These matters may perhaps be best addressed in a discussion of significant issues, of particular pieces of special interest, and of questions of method.

### I. OLD TESTAMENT ISSUES

Essays on the historical analysis of OT topics appear to be generally stronger than their NT counterparts. Many are largely devoted to a history of research in which the views of the contributor become evident only in the writers selected as representative, and they usually leave open-ended the current state of the art, with scholars of different viewpoints duly noted.<sup>9</sup>

The most significant pieces on Israel's history<sup>10</sup> give major attention to source criticism within the history of research, less to the themes or to the theology of the biblical material. Although their disregard is compensated somewhat by a general essay on OT,<sup>11</sup> they would have been strengthened by a greater consideration of the biblical writers' purpose and interpretation as viewed by the contributor and by other modern writers.

Most essays concentrate on the historical concerns of the modern period of mainstream research, that is, that the earlier historical books (Genesis–2 Kings) began as smaller written units or sources and, for most scholars, came into their present form only about the time of the exile or later.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>6</sup> E.g. Jubilees, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, II–IV Baruch, III–IV Maccabees, Sibylline Oracles.

<sup>7</sup> “Dead Sea Scrolls” 1.253–56, a good but unfortunately brief survey. There are no articles on particular DSS documents, even on those concerning biblical interpretation.

<sup>8</sup> “Quranic and Islamic Interpretation of Biblical Materials” 2.356–60. The good bibliography, along with its survey of selected literature, may be useful for Koranic scholars. Its bibliography lacks W. St. Clair-Tisdall, *The Original Sources of the Qur'an* (London: E. S. Gorham, 1905) and A. Geiger, *Judaism and Islam* (New York: S.P.C.K., 1970) (the ET). But see “Jesus, Quest of the Historical” 1.582.

<sup>9</sup> Exceptions are “Daniel, Book of,” and to some extent “Isaiah, Book of,” where the diversities of modern historical-critical scholarship are insufficiently recognized. For a more adequate survey see B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 316–38, 611–22.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. “Deuteronomistic History,” “Deuteronomy,” “Genesis, Book of” (good analysis from a Jewish perspective), “Chronicles, Books of,” “Ezra and Nehemiah, Books of,” “Kings, Books of,” “Leviticus, Book of” (especially wide-ranging survey), “Pentateuchal Criticism” (good summary of contemporary trends), “Samuel, Books of.” A bibliographical item to be added: A. R. Millard and D. J. Wiseman, eds., *Essays on Patriarchal Narratives* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983).

<sup>11</sup> “Theology, Old Testament” 2.562–68. From a different perspective, *NIDOTTE* and *TDOT* are concerned with the connotation of Hebrew terms.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. 2 Kgs 25:27. But see “Pentateuchal Criticism” 2.260–61 for recent breaks from this tradition. Cf. also W. H. Green, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1979

Some note criticisms of J. Wellhausen, an outstanding nineteenth-century representative of this approach, for imposing an evolutionary and, one might add, Hegelian<sup>13</sup> pattern in his reconstruction.<sup>14</sup> Others are concerned with Scandinavian and British schools' advocacy of a long-term oral transmission<sup>15</sup> and, quite different, with the claimed use of folklore.

If one grants a documentary process from the time of Moses<sup>16</sup> or shortly thereafter,<sup>17</sup> a key question still remains unresolved and largely unaddressed: the precise nature and process of the creation and transmission of the traditions and of the OT documents. Some pointers are offered, however, such as R. Brinker's and E. Robertson's thesis that, from the entry into Canaan, Pentateuchal traditions were preserved and transmitted in various sanctuaries and eventually in the temple; W. R. Smith's conception of inspired tradents and G. von Rad's suggestion of "levitical preaching as the primary medium through which these ancient liturgical traditions were shaped and transmitted and eventually recast in the Josianic era . . ." (1.288).<sup>18</sup> M. Noth's conjecture that a nameless individual in the exile composed a "Deuteronomistic History" (Deuteronomy–2 Kings) is less helpful for

---

[1895]); O. T. Allis, *The Five Books of Moses* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1949); G. C. Aalders, *A Short Introduction to the Pentateuch* (London: Tyndale, 1949) 157–58 ("final redaction" in the time of David); U. Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961); Y. Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); the discussion in G. J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 8–13 (date), 15–32 (theology); idem, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1987) xxv–xlv; idem, "Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm," in *The Face of Old Testament Studies* (ed. D. W. Baker and B. T. Arnold; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999) 116–44; B. K. Waltke, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 17–54.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. W. F. Albright, *History, Archaeology and Christian Humanism* (London: A & C Black, 1965) 136–40; H. J. Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments* (3d ed.; Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1982) 195, 258, 260–64; A. R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel* (2d ed.; Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1962) 1–2, although the contribution on "J. Wellhausen" 2.630 denies this.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. "Deuteronomy" 1.287–89; "Pentateuchal Criticism" 2.259. For further criticisms cf. Aalders, *Introduction* 19–29; E. E. Ellis, "Historical-Literary Criticism after Two Hundred Years," in *History and Interpretation in New Testament Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) 6.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. "Genesis, Book of" 1.440; "Pentateuchal Criticism" 2.259. Cf. "Folklore in Hebrew Bible" 1.402–6; "Form Criticism, Hebrew Bible" 1.411.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. "Pentateuchal Criticism" 2.258–61, for the debate and the literature. References to Moses' writing activity in the sources should be given their due weight: e.g. Exod 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Num 33:2; Deut 31:9, 22, 24; cf. Josh 8:32. See also the important work of S. B. Chapman, *The Law and the Prophets: A Study in Old Testament Canon Formation* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000) 275 who argues that the collection of the Pentateuch and of the Prophets developed simultaneously: "[I]t seems likely that from the very beginning there existed one scriptural corpus grouped around the age of Moses and another collection of holy writings treating the age of the prophets."

<sup>17</sup> Cf. A. R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel's Psalmody* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979) 110, who regards the Song of Deborah (Judg 5:1–31) "from beginning to end as the work of Deborah herself" (c. 1150 BC).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. "Deuteronomy" 1.287–88; "Kings, Books of" 2.26; "Pentateuchal Criticism" 2.259; R. Brinker, *The Influence of Sanctuaries in Early Israel* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1946) 238–63; E. Robertson, *The Pentateuchal Problem: Some New Aspects* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1945) = *BJRL* 29 (1945–46) 3–24. See Josephus, *Ant.* 4.303–4.

the question.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the suggestions of others that schools or circles or “the community” composed it remain undefined and vague.

The “Deuteronomistic History,” not to speak of the Pentateuch as such, raises a historical-literary problem by the presence of two equally striking phenomena, the elements of literary and theological unity of this corpus (cf. M. Noth)<sup>20</sup> and the equal elements of literary and theological variety.<sup>21</sup> It is a “salvation history”<sup>22</sup> that is complemented by the rewoven Chronicles and by the continuing history in Ezra and Nehemiah,<sup>23</sup> closely associated with “Ezra, the priest, the scribe (רֹסֵף, γραμματεὺς) of the law of the God of heaven,”<sup>24</sup> and with the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, and by the vision prophecies of Daniel.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. “Deuteronomistic History” 1.268–69. If there was such an individual, he may have been only updating earlier editions of the corpus.

<sup>20</sup> See “Deuteronomistic History” 1.268–73. For a structural analysis see also A. F. Campbell and M. A. O’Brien, *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 18, 23, *passim*. For criticisms of Noth’s hypothesis cf. T. Römer, ed., *The Future of Deuteronomistic History* (Leuven: University Press, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> The literary and, to some extent, the theological variations are specified in the essays on “Pentateuchal Criticism” 2.258–61, “Deuteronomistic History” 1.270–71, “Deuteronomy” 1.288–89, “Joshua, Book of” 1.627–28, “Judges, Book of” 1.640, “Samuel, Books of” 2.432–33, and “Kings, Books of” 2.26–27.

<sup>22</sup> Regrettably, the *Dictionary* has no article on Salvation History Interpretation, although a good number of its advocates are given biographical essays: e.g. John Bright, Oscar Cullmann, Leonard Goppelt, J. C. K. von Hofmann, Werner Kümmel, Gerhard von Rad, Geerhardus Vos. Further, see G. E. Ladd, *The Presence of the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974); idem, *A Theology of the New Testament* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); H. N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975).

It treats the matter briefly in “Authority of the Bible” 1.87–91. Further, on Cullmann, see W. Rordorf, “L’histoire du le ‘milieu du temps’ et l’eschatologie ou la dynamique du ‘déjà’ et du ‘pas encore,’” *Positions luthériennes* 48 (2000) 123–43. The “salvation history” hermeneutic stands in contrast to a mythological approach, which generally operates within the closed worldview of the Enlightenment. Cf. “Mythology and Biblical Studies” 2.188–95. But see E. E. Ellis, “The Historical Jesus and the Gospels” and “Reading the Gospels as History,” in *Christ and the Future in New Testament History* (2d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 2001) 3–7, 242–54; idem, “Presuppositions and Method,” in *The Making of the New Testament Documents* (2d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 2002) 3–10.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. “Chronicles, Books of” 1.184, sections of which are classified by von Rad as “levitical sermons”; “Ezra and Nehemiah, Books of” 1.375–82: “[The final] editor [of Ezra 1–6] worked directly from the firsthand sources, which were preserved in the Temple archives” (379). Cf. H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1985) xxiv–xxxvi.

<sup>24</sup> Ezra 7:12. The German *Schriftgelehrter*, i.e. Scripture scholar, catches the meaning of the term better than the English word “scribe.” To transmit the sacred traditions was as much a part of Ezra’s duties as “to teach [God’s] statutes and ordinances . . .” (Ezra 7:10). Cf. M. H. Floyd, “‘Write the Revelation’: Hab 2:2,” in *Writing and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (ed. E. Ben Zvi and M. H. Floyd; Atlanta: SBL, 2000) 103–43, for a critique of the false separation of prophet and scribe in modern biblical studies.

<sup>25</sup> “Daniel, Book of” 1.242–49, which recognizes the “salvation history” character of the book but, in accord with a worldview and presuppositions like Porphyry (*apud* Jerome), regards the prophecies to be from a second-century pseudo-Daniel because the author “shares the limitations of all human beings” and could not know future historical events. But see R. K. Harrison, “Daniel, Book of,” *ISBE* 1.859–66: extant form by c. 450 BC; J. G. Baldwin, *Daniel* (TOTC; Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1978) 19–59, 46: a c. 525–475 BC date “for the whole”; E. E. Ellis, “The Old Testament Canon in the Early Church,” in *The Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991) 3–50, 40–44; A. E. Steinmann, *Oracles of God* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1999) 44–50,

For those convinced of the divine authority of Scripture<sup>26</sup> and of a “salvation history” interpretation of it, as well as for those rightly committed to reading it in its completed canonical form,<sup>27</sup> both the origin and context of the transmission of the biblical traditions and books, and also the point at which they reach their definitive canonical form, are important questions. The OT, with the possible exception of the book of Esther, was read by mainstream Judaism as a completed canonical authority in “pre-Christian times,”<sup>28</sup> probably by the second century BC. A good argument can be made that it was created and, from its earliest traditions to its completion, transmitted by a cadre of sacred, that is, inspired, persons.<sup>29</sup>

Three classes of inspired persons are mentioned repeatedly in OT texts: the prophet<sup>30</sup> and prophetess,<sup>31</sup> the priest,<sup>32</sup> and the counselor.<sup>33</sup> Some

---

190–93. Cf. Jerome, “Prologue,” *Commentary on Daniel* (trans. and ed. G. M. Archer; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958) 15–16 (MPL 25, 491 § 617–18); Porphyry regarded the book as a forgery and “anything that [the author] may have conjectured beyond [the time of Antiochus IV] was false inasmuch as he would not have foreknown the future.”

<sup>26</sup> Cf. “Authority of the Bible” 1.87–91, for a survey of different schools of thought on this issue. See also “Galatians, Letter to the” 1.426–29; G. W. Bromiley, “Authority” in *ISBE* 1.365–71.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. “Canonical Criticism” 1.164–67.

<sup>28</sup> Rightly, “Canon of the Bible” 1.161–64, a good essay that is stronger for the OT than for the NT. Otherwise: “Textual Criticism, Hebrew Bible” 2.541–46. Cf. Ellis, “The Canon as a Hermeneutical Process,” in *Old Testament* 36–50. For rabbinic and other Jewish witnesses cf. Steinmann *Oracles* 33–85, 135–47; (H. L. Strack and) P. Billerbeck, “Der Kanon des Alten Testaments und seine Inspiration,” *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (4 vols.; München: Beck, 1922–28) 4.415–51. For the NT canon see E. E. Ellis, “New Directions in the History of Early Christianity,” in *Ancient History in a Modern University. FS E. A. Judge* (2 vols.; ed. T. W. Hillard *et al.*; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 2.71–92, 89–92 = *idem*, “Toward a History of Early Christianity,” in *Christ* 212–41: “In the light of this Jewish background in which only canonical Scripture could be read in synagogue, the reading of the New Testament Gospels and letters in the Christian synagogues implies that they had an inspired and normative, i.e. canonical, status for the congregations so using them” (p. 237). Cf. Matt 24:15 = Mark 13:14; Col 4:16; 1 Thess 5:27; Rev 1:3. See also D. M. Smith, “When Did the Gospels Become Scripture?” *JBL* 119 (2000) 3–20.

<sup>29</sup> I.e. those gifted to mediate a revelation of the person, the will and the purpose of God: e.g. Moses (Exod 4:12–16; Deut 18:18); the priests (Deut 31:9–13; Mal 2:7); Ahithophel (2 Sam 16:23). Somewhat differently, “Inspiration of the Bible” 1.543–45, a careful if limited inductive analysis which appears to follow Karl Barth’s view of Scripture as “witness” to revelation. See also Ellis, “The Role of the Prophet in the Quest for Truth,” in *Christ* 255–78. Still valuable is B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1999, 1948).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. “Prophecy and Prophets, Hebrew Bible” 2.310–17.

<sup>31</sup> Exod 15:20 (Miriam); Judg 5:1–31 (Deborah); 2 Kgs 22:14 (Hulda); Neh 6:14 (Noadiah). Cf. Isa 8:3; 1 Cor 11:5; 14:34–35; Rev 2:20; Johnson, *Psalmsody* 31–38, 109–29, 149.

<sup>32</sup> Within his own sphere he [the priest] was originally as much a medium of revelation as the prophet” (Johnson, *Cultic Prophet*, nn. 13, 8).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. 2 Sam 16:23 (Ahithophel); 1 Kgs 3:12; Prov 1:1 (Solomon); Ezra 7:25 (Ezra); Jer 18:18. Among the OT wisdom books “Proverbs, Book of” 2.320–23, gives attention to the theology, the concept of wisdom, and the book’s literary form; “Qohelet” 2.346–54, gives a thorough review of research but is a less persuasive (though traditional) interpretation: “the world as a whole lacks meaning and purpose.” See C. G. Bartholomew, *Reading Ecclesiastes: Old Testament Exegesis and Hermeneutical Theory* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1998).

individuals—Moses, Samuel, Elijah, perhaps Isaiah—performed the functions of both prophet and priest.<sup>34</sup> The prophet and priest are often associated, and prophets (and the king) often fulfill their role within the temple duties and worship.<sup>35</sup>

The sacred traditions and books of Israel witness by their received character that they, like the NT Gospel traditions and letters,<sup>36</sup> were created and transmitted by a special and accredited religious class.<sup>37</sup> They are not the products of jackleg preachers nor the folk traditions of an amorphous, preliterate society.<sup>38</sup> It is likely that the traditions and the later books were preserved by the priests in the sanctuaries<sup>39</sup> and later in the temple of Solomon and in the second temple.<sup>40</sup> Traditioned pieces and books of the writing prophets were probably also preserved and transmitted by the “sons”<sup>41</sup> and “companies”<sup>42</sup> of the prophets, “charismatic”<sup>43</sup> prophetic groups or schools who clustered around major prophetic figures and who composed, transmitted, and perhaps elaborated their teachings.<sup>44</sup> These gifted individuals, almost always unnamed, would have rewritten and updated the sacred documents as the parchment decayed and as the language changed.<sup>45</sup> For example, whether the Pentateuch came into substantially complete form by the united monarchy<sup>46</sup> or, as commonly thought, was assembled more slowly; whether the book of Isaiah is a “huge mosaic” summing up the works of Isaiah’s fifty-year ministry (c. 700 BC)<sup>47</sup> or, as commonly thought, is a three-

<sup>34</sup> E.g. Exod 4:10–17; 34:5–8; 1 Sam 3:19–20; 7:9; 10:8; 1 Kgs 18:36–39; cf. Isa 6:1–4.

<sup>35</sup> “Myth and Ritual School” 2.187–88, offers an excellent summary of the origin, developments and influence of this approach to OT studies.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ellis, “The Making of the Gospels,” “The Composition of the New Testament Epistles,” and “Traditions of the Johannine Mission,” in *Making* 2–27, 138–39, 143–237.

<sup>37</sup> There were probably also traditions of false prophets, priests, and wisdom teachers that were tested, sifted, and rejected by the temple authorities.

<sup>38</sup> See the qualifications made in “Folklore in Hebrew Bible” 1.402–6.

<sup>39</sup> See the *Dictionary* articles cited above, n. 18; 1 Sam 10:25.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. 2 Kgs 22:8–10; 23:2–3; Ezra 6:15–18; Neh 8:4–9; 9:3; Josephus, *Ant.* 3.38; 4.303–5, 61; *J.W.* 7.150; Steinmann, *Oracles* 111–13.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs 20:35; 2 Kgs 5:22; 6:1; 9:1.

<sup>42</sup> 1 Sam 10:5, 10; 19:20; 1 Kgs 18:4, 13; 2 Kgs 2:2–3.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. 1 Sam 10:1–11 for ecstatic manifestations, but “charismatic” = “gifted” is a broader conception. Cf. E. E. Ellis, “Spiritual Gifts in the Pauline Community,” in *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1978) 23–44; idem, “Charism and Order in Earliest Christianity,” in *Making* 28–32; idem, “The Spirit and the Gifts,” *Pauline Theology: Ministry and Society* (4th. ed.; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998) 26–52. See below, n. 53.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. Samuel (1 Sam 19:20), Elijah (2 Kgs 2:2–3), Elisha (2 Kgs 6:1), Jeremiah (Jer 36:4–32; cf. “Jeremiah, Book of” 1.564–74). A. F. Campbell, *Of Prophets and Kings* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1986), postulates a “Prophetic Record” preceding the Deuteronomistic History, “an early document, extending from 1 Sam 1:1 to 2 Kgs 10:28” (1, cf. 111–23), that was organized and transmitted by “northern prophetic circles” (p. 1) and was later incorporated into that History. See above n. 19.

<sup>45</sup> Such rewriting would have been especially widespread after Antiochus IV’s destruction of many Scriptures in c. 169 BC. Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament* 43–44.

<sup>46</sup> See above n. 12.

<sup>47</sup> J. A. Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1993) 31; cf. J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah* (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 1.23–28; 2.3–6.

stage or more composition within the Isaian school (c. 500 BC),<sup>48</sup> one would still have to reckon with an updating and some rewording by a number of tradents over a considerable period of time.

This conception of the growth of the OT, briefly addressed by a number of the *Dictionary* articles, explains the continuing preservation of the documents and their use in the worship of ancient Israel and of early Judaism. It shows why the Hebrew throughout the documents is relatively uniform. It is not because the whole corpus was created in the exilic/post-exilic period,<sup>49</sup> but because the prophetic consciousness of the tradents emboldened them to update and reword the texts in order to render their meaning more clearly to contemporary hearers. This prophetic consciousness continued to be manifested in the altered biblical texts of the “midrash pesher”<sup>50</sup> at Qumran and of the “peshered” citations and expositions of the prophets of messianic Judaism, that is, of the NT church.<sup>51</sup> But for mainstream Judaism it ceased already in the intertestamental period and defined the point at which the rabbis then sought to preserve the “archetype text.”<sup>52</sup> This view of the matter is supported by the first-century historian Josephus<sup>53</sup> and by a tradition in the Tosefta and in the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>54</sup> If true, it also shows the fallacy of dating a book’s origin from internal, literary features of the extant manuscript.

<sup>48</sup> Reflected but not argued in “Isaiah, Book of” 1.549–55. But see H. G. M. Williamson, *The Book Called Isaiah: Deutero-Isaiah’s Role in Composition and Redaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 6–8, 8–18, 240–44.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. the critique of P. R. Davies (*In Search of “Ancient Israel”* [Sheffield: JSOT, 1992]) and of T. L. Thompson (*Early History of the Israelite People* [Leiden: Brill, 1992]) by I. W. Provan, “Ideologies, Literary and Critical,” *JBL* 114 (1995) 585–606.

<sup>50</sup> “Midrash” 2.155–57, restricts itself largely to rabbinic writings but “Inner-biblical Interpretation,” 1.538–43, gives some attention to *pesher*. Cf. also E. E. Ellis, “Midrash Pesher,” in *Paul’s Use of the Old Testament* (5th ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991 [1957]) 139–48; idem, “A Note on Pauline Hermeneutics,” *NTS* 2 (1955–56) 127–33; K. Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew and its Use of the Old Testament* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968) 183–202; W. H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979); Ellis, “Midrash,” in *Old Testament* 91–101. But see M. P. Horgan, *Pesharim* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1979) 250–52.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Ellis, “The Formation of the New Testament Documents as the Enterprise of Prophets,” in *Making* 42–45; idem, “Prophecy as Exegesis,” in *Prophecy* 145–253.

<sup>52</sup> “Textual Criticism, Hebrew Bible” 2.541–46, treats some issues posed by the Qumran and other texts, but it gives most attention to modern textual criticism, whose concerns and goals are not all that different, however, from those of the ancient rabbis and of the Christian writers (e.g. Jerome) who interacted with them.

<sup>53</sup> Josephus, *Ap.* 1.41–43 (LCL): “From Artaxerxes to our own time the complete history has been written, but has not been deemed worthy of equal credit with the earlier records, because of the failure of the exact succession of the prophets. . . . Although such long ages have now passed, no one has ventured either to add, or to remove, or to alter one syllable [of them], . . . [but] to regard them as the decrees of God. . . .”

<sup>54</sup> *t. Sot.* 13:2 (13:3); *b. Sanh.* 11a, *Baraitha* (Socino): “Since the death of the last prophets: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachai, the Holy Spirit [of prophetic inspiration] departed from Israel. . . .” Cf. also *m. Pirque Abot* 1:1. On *Baraitha* cf. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud, Babli, Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (2 vols.; London: Luzac, 1903) 1.189.

Such (later) traditions do not give assured results, but they agree with earlier evidence for the origin and transmission of biblical traditions. The tradents, from the perspective of the first century AD, may be designated, broadly speaking, prophetic teachers or teaching prophets.<sup>55</sup> They also engaged in exposition (midrash) of earlier received Scriptures, both in the OT and in the NT.<sup>56</sup> Such persons were also thought by some later writers to be involved in the production of the Septuagint.<sup>57</sup> For the Targums the rabbis apparently regulated their production and use.<sup>58</sup>

## II. NEW TESTAMENT ISSUES

In German universities of the 1950s NT professors were classified by students as "rabbinitists"<sup>59</sup> or "Hellenists"<sup>60</sup> depending on whether they emphasized OT/Jewish or Greco-Roman backgrounds of early Christian thought. Many contributions to the *Dictionary* reflect the dominant "Hellenist" slant of the discipline, sometimes to the neglect of its Jewish backgrounds.<sup>61</sup>

1. *Gospels*. The useful essays on each of the four Gospels complement the "history of research" core with some attention to composition,<sup>62</sup> source,<sup>63</sup> and classical form criticism, themes that are elsewhere treated in discrete pieces. They also mention briefly recent sociological and/or non-historical literary approaches. The article on source criticism<sup>64</sup> is a thorough and, within its prescribed page limits, comprehensive treatment. That on

<sup>55</sup> By the first century the ancient streams of prophecy and wisdom had pretty much merged and are manifested by the priestly-oriented group at Qumran, the *maskilim* ("wise teachers"), and by the messianic-Jewish NT's *pneumatics*. Cf. Ellis, "'Wisdom' and 'Knowledge' in I Corinthians," in *Prophecy* 45–62.

<sup>56</sup> See "Inner-biblical Interpretation, Hebrew Bible" and "Inner-biblical Interpretation, New Testament" 1.538–43. Further, D. W. Gooding, *Relics of Ancient Exegesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976). This aspect is lacking in "Prophecy and Prophets, New Testament" 2.317–20.

<sup>57</sup> E.g. by Philo (*Vit. Mos.* 2.37–40 = 2.7) and some Christian writers, including Jerome; cf. Ellis, *Old Testament* 30. Cf. "Septuagint" 2.457–62, which also discusses subsequent translations, Origen's Hexapla and the Complutensian Polyglot. For the history of the Latin Bible see "Vulgate" 2.617–20.

<sup>58</sup> So, "Targumim" 2.531–34.

<sup>59</sup> E.g. Joachim Jeremias, Otto Michel, K. H. Rengstorf. Only Jeremias is given a biographical sketch 1.576–77.

<sup>60</sup> E.g. Rudolf Bultmann and his pupils, e.g. Günther Bornkamm, Hans Conzelmann, Ernst Fuchs, Ernst Käsemann, Philipp Vielhauer. Cf. 1.148–49, 422–23; 2.14–16, 609–11; only Conzelmann is not given a biographical sketch.

<sup>61</sup> See "John, Gospel of" 1.609–19, an article that is both wide-ranging and perceptive: ". . . this trend [toward a Hellenistic interpretation of John] has been dramatically reversed in the last third of [twentieth] century" (p. 616). See below, nn. 87, 134, and 138.

<sup>62</sup> Esp. "Matthew, Gospel of" 2.137–38; "Luke, Gospel of" 2.94. Further, Ellis, *Making* (n. 22) 11ff.; 290–91, 354 (Matthew); 251–52, 355, 395–96 (Luke).

<sup>63</sup> Esp. "Mark, Gospel of" 2.129: "Markan priority . . . is no longer . . . an assured result of Gospel criticism." Further, Ellis, *Making* 14–19, 354–55, 391–96.

<sup>64</sup> "Synoptic Problem" 2.517–24.

composition criticism<sup>65</sup> is a well written survey of the origin, the precursors,<sup>66</sup> the flowering, and an assessment of the discipline. But those on “Q” and on form criticism are less happy treatments of the topics.

In 1801 Herbert Marsh of Cambridge postulated a source-document of facts used by all three Synoptic Gospels and a second source “of precepts, parables and discourses” used only by Matthew and Luke in different copies.<sup>67</sup> Later writers identified the sources, respectively, as (proto-)Mark and Q. In recent decades a scholarly task force, whose project is traced and largely affirmed in the *Dictionary* essay,<sup>68</sup> has produced in imaginative ways the origin, scope, community, and theology of the “Q document.” It faces formidable problems,<sup>69</sup> however, that are unaddressed by the essay: (1) Despite 200 years of discussion it has never been established that Q was one document;<sup>70</sup> to infer this from the observation that “one-third of the [Q] sayings occur in the same relative order in Matthew and Luke” (II.343) is hardly adequate. (2) The extent of the hypothetical document Q is unknown; there were 16 different reconstructions in the early twentieth century and many more since then.<sup>71</sup> Neither they nor the *Dictionary* essay take sufficiently into account many passages found in all three Synoptic Gospels in which agreements (in content and omission) of Matthew and Luke against Mark reveal that a Q episode is also being employed (assuming the independence of Matthew and Luke). These passages include not only “sayings” and teachings but also narratives,<sup>72</sup> expositions (*midrashim*),<sup>73</sup>

<sup>65</sup> “Redaction Criticism, New Testament” 2.376–79.

<sup>66</sup> It mentions W. Wrede, J. Wellhausen, B. W. Bacon, E. Lohmeyer. Others include G. D. Kilpatrick, *The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946) 59–139; N. B. Stonehouse, *The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Guardian, 1944); idem, *The Witness of Luke to Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1951); A. Farrer, *A Study in St. Mark* (Westminster: Dacre, 1951); idem, *St. Matthew and St. Mark* (Westminster: Dacre, 1954).

<sup>67</sup> H. Marsh, “The Origin and Composition of our First Three Canonical Gospels,” an appendix to J. D. Michaelis, *Introduction to the New Testament* (4 vols.; London: F. & C. Rivington, 1823 [1799–1801]) III.ii.161–409.

<sup>68</sup> “Q (The Sayings Gospel)” 2.343–46. For a brief critique of this approach cf. P. Jenkins, *Hidden Gospels* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 54–81.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Ellis, “Source Criticism,” “The Making of Gospel Narratives,” “The Two Document Hypothesis,” in *Making* 14–19, 333–56, 391–93; idem, “Questions about Q and Pseudo-Thomas,” in *Christ* 7–12; idem, *The Gospel of Luke* (7th ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 21–24.

<sup>70</sup> I.e. “[w]hether all the ‘q’s add up to form a composite Q . . .” (D. Catchpole, *The Quest for Q*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark [1993] 59). The most detailed attempt was probably V. Taylor, “The Original Order of Q,” *New Testament Essays* (London: Epworth, 1970) 92–93, 95–118, who inferred the unity of Q from the common sequence of some Q episodes; but J. S. Kloppenborg, *The Formation of Q* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 68–69, shows how many of them do not have a common sequence.

<sup>71</sup> The most recent is *The Critical Edition of Q* (ed. J. M. Robinson *et al.*; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000). Cf. J. Moffatt, *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (3d ed.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1920) 197–202.

<sup>72</sup> Matt 3:1–17; 17:1–13; 21:1–17 and parallels. Cf. Ellis, “The Making of Narratives in the Synoptic Gospels,” in *Making* 333–56; idem, “The Historical Jesus and the Gospels,” in *Christ* 9.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. Matt 12:1–8; 21:33–46; 22:23–33; 22:41–46; 24:1–36 and parallels. Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament* 98, 136n, 127n, 103n; idem, *Prophecy* 157–58, 251–52.

miracles,<sup>74</sup> and dialogues.<sup>75</sup> (3) No attention is given to the possibility or probability that Q is to be explained as Matthew's and Luke's independent use of a number of common episodes or cycles of tradition.<sup>76</sup> (4) Many writings from the Q task force assume, without evidence, that the Q they reconstruct is the whole document and that, therefore, they can identify its theology and community of origin. Thus, they have created a hypothetical setting of a hypothetical community with a hypothetical theology of a hypothetical document Q. But what have such mental exercises to do with credible historical reconstruction? To my mind the ministry and the Gospel of Luke provide a much more reliable scenario for the formation of the Gospels.<sup>77</sup> When Luke was in Caesarea during Paul's imprisonment there (AD 58–60),<sup>78</sup> he collected materials for his own Gospel: (1) Mark or proto-Mark (published AD 55–58), which was being used there in congregations of the Petrine mission;<sup>79</sup> (2) (Matthean) Jesus traditions being used in the Jerusalem-based Jacobean mission (Q);<sup>80</sup> (3) Jesus traditions being used in the (still Palestinian-based) Johannine mission;<sup>81</sup> (4) other Jerusalem traditions.

The essay on form-criticism<sup>82</sup> encompasses both Gospels and letters. For the former it offers criticisms of the classical form criticism's *Sitz-im-Leben* and oral-transmission theories, shifts some genre categories, and discusses "Gospel" as a genre. For the letters<sup>83</sup> it refers to hymns, confessions, and diatribe forms.<sup>84</sup> Overall, it seeks to refocus the discipline in a rhetorical

<sup>74</sup> E.g. Matt 8:1–4, 8:14–17, 9:1–8, 9:18–26, 12:22–32 (healings); 8:23–27, 9:18–26, 14:13–21 (nature miracles) and parallels. Cf. Ellis, *Making* 338–39.

<sup>75</sup> E.g. Matt 13:10–12; 21:23–27 (12:46–50; 22:15–22) and parallels.

<sup>76</sup> So e.g. B. Reicke, *The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986) 60–65. See "Reicke, Bo Ivar" 2.380.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Ellis, "Luke-Acts: A Key to the History of Earliest Christianity" and "The Place of Luke-Acts in Early Christianity," in *Making* 251–52, 400–405. See also C. S. Rodd, "The End of the Theology of Q?" *ET* 113 (2001–2) 5–12.

<sup>78</sup> Acts 21:8 ("we"); 23:23–27:1.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Ellis, "The Date and Provenance of Mark's Gospel," in *The Four Gospels 1992. FS F. Neirynck* (3 vols.; ed. F. van Segbroeck *et al.*; Leuven: University Press, 1992) 2.801–15 = *Making* 357–76.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Ellis, *Making* 263–64, 288–93.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Ellis, "Traditions of the Johannine Mission," in *Making* 154–55, 162–64, 181–82.

<sup>82</sup> "Form Criticism, New Testament" 1.413–17.

<sup>83</sup> For a fuller treatment cf. Ellis, "The Making of the New Testament Letters," in *Making* 49–142; cf. 183–233.

<sup>84</sup> Following Bultmann, *Der Stil der paulinischen Predigt und die kynische-stoische Diatribe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984 [1910]), it confuses Paul's midrash, e.g. Rom 9:6–29, with the diatribe. Cf. Ellis, "Exegetical Patterns in 1 Corinthians and Romans," in *Prophecy* 213–20; R. Vincent, "Derash homiletico en Romanos 9–11," *Sales* 42 (1980) 751–88; V. P. Branick, "Source and Redaction Analysis of 1 Corinthians 1–3," *JBL* 101 (1982) 251–69; W. R. Stegner, "Rom 9:6–29—A Midrash," *JSNT* 22 (1984) 37–52. The proem and *yelammedenu* midrash probably have, *via* the rabbis, an ultimate background in Hellenistic rhetoric, but the patterns in the NT are more immediately related to Jewish midrash. Cf. Ellis, *Old Testament* 79n; *idem*, *Prophecy* 155, 218–19. Further, cf. D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (2d ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 151–57, 161; *idem*, "Alexandrian Methods of Interpretation and the Rabbis," in *Festschrift Hans Lewald* (ed. M. Gerwig *et al.*; Vaduz: Topos, 1978 [1953]) 27–44: "[The] whole Rabbinic system of exegesis initiated by Hillel about 30 B.C.E. and elaborated by the following generations was essentially Hellenistic . . ." (p. 44). See below, n. 134.

direction relying on Greco-Roman analogies. Unfortunately, for the origin, classification, and transmission of Gospel episodes the essay does not take us much beyond the 1920s, and it displays no awareness of the four-decade critique and reformation of the classical discipline.<sup>85</sup> This newer form criticism argues that the pupils of Jesus, a prophetic teacher,<sup>86</sup> were taught by him to summarize and carefully to transmit his word and work employing, with modifications, methods and a hermeneutic common to contemporary apocalyptic (Qumran) and rabbinic Judaism.<sup>87</sup> They continued to do so in the early years of the Jerusalem church and, with some further reworking, employed the traditions variously in the four allied apostolic missions and in their respective Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.<sup>88</sup>

The essay on the quest of the historical Jesus<sup>89</sup> contrasts Christian theists, who wrote lives of Jesus more in keeping with the picture in the Gospels and with the first-century Jewish context, with rationalists, who worked within an Enlightenment epistemology, a worldview closed to transcendence that offered a Jesus stripped of deity and of miracles, quite unlike the figure in the Gospels.<sup>90</sup> But it does not pursue the significance of this

<sup>85</sup> Summarized in Ellis, "Classical Form Criticism," in *Making* 19–27, cf. 30–39, 42–43, 334–35, 352ff. For an earlier critique cf. W. Manson, *Jesus the Messiah* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1943). See "Manson, William," 2.118.

<sup>86</sup> Without excluding higher predicates. Cf. M. Hengel, *The Charismatic Leader and his Followers* (2d ed.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996) 63–71.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. e.g. J. W. Doeve, *Jewish Hermeneutics in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1954); H. Riesenfeld, "The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings" (London: A. R. Mowbray, 1961), *The Gospel Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970) 1–29; B. Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998 [1961]); P. Sigal, *The Halakah of Jesus of Nazareth according to the Gospel of Matthew* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1986); E. E. Ellis, "New Directions in Form Criticism," in *Jesus Christus in Historie und Theologie. FS H. Conzelmann* (ed. G. Strecker; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1975) 299–315 = *Prophecy* 237–53; idem, "The Making of Narratives in the Synoptic Gospels," in *Jesus and the Oral Gospel Tradition* (ed. H. Wansbrough; Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) 301–24 = *Making* 333–56; idem, "Jesus' Method of [Biblical] Interpretation," in *Old Testament* 130–38; R. Riesner, *Jesus als Lehrer* (3d ed.; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1988); idem, "Jesus as Preacher and Teacher," in *Jesus*, ed. Wansbrough 185–210; C. A. Kimball, *Jesus' Exposition of the Old Testament in Luke's Gospel* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT, 1994). Further, cf. M. Bockmuehl, "Halakhah and Ethics in the Jesus Tradition," in *Early Christian Thought in its Jewish Context* (ed. J. Barclay and J. Sweet; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 264–78. Further, on Philonic Judaism cf. P. Borgen, *Bread from Heaven* (Leiden: Brill, 1965); idem, *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996) and the literature cited. See below, n. 134. Cf. also S. Byrskog, *Jesus the Only Teacher* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1994); idem, *Story as History—History as Story* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000) 101–7, 246–53, 281–99.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Ellis, *Making* 329–30.

<sup>89</sup> "Jesus, Quest of the Historical" 1.578–85. There is no essay on Jesus' approach to Scripture as presented in the Gospels. Cf. Ellis, "How Jesus Interpreted his Bible," in *History* 121–32.

<sup>90</sup> The essay stresses the latter, who apparently were influenced by earlier deists. Cf. "Deism" 1.262–64. Among theists one may add C. H. Dodd, *The Founder of Christianity* (London: Macmillan, 1971); A. Schlatter, *The History of the Christ* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997 [1923]); H. E. W. Turner, *Jesus, Master and Lord* (3d ed.; London: Mowbray, 1957). Cf. also B. Chilton and C. A. Evans, eds., *Authenticating the Words and Activities of Jesus* (2 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1999). Further, cf. Ellis, "The Historical Jesus and the Gospels," in *Christ* 3–19; idem, "The Synoptic Gospels and History," in Chilton and Evans, *Authenticating* 2.49–57. The *Dictionary* has biographical sketches on Dodd and Schlatter.

historical and theological chasm for the current cultural shift from Enlightenment modernism to relativist postmodernism (see below). The rationalist scholars supposed that they were reconstructing an “objective” historical Jesus but, as Günther Bornkamm observed, their results were almost wholly subjective:

[At the end of this research] stands the recognition of its own failure. . . . Why have these attempts failed? Perhaps only because it became alarmingly and terrifyingly evident how inevitably each author brought the spirit of his own age into his presentation of the figure of Jesus.<sup>91</sup>

What Bornkamm said of the “liberal” Jesus applied in varying degrees to subsequent reconstructions—such as the apocalyptic Jesus (J. Weiss, A. Schweitzer<sup>92</sup>), the church-created Messiah (W. Wrede), the existentialist rabbi (R. Bultmann),<sup>93</sup> the political revolutionary (S. G. F. Brandon), the Cynic-like philosopher (J. D. Crossan), and the Seminar Jesus (R. W. Funk). The last, as one reviewer observed, was not really a first-century Jew at all but rather a strange combination of “a kind of spiritual *enfant terrible* and troublemaker” who, at the same time, resembled a well-equipped politically correct American professor.<sup>94</sup> The diverse conclusions of the quests are inevitable since history, as written, is interpretation and the historical Jesus is, in the end, nothing more nor less than the particular historian’s Jesus. For historical and theological reasons the most reliable historians are the four evangelists and subsequent interpreters whose portraits of Jesus illumine, enhance, and elaborate theirs.

2. *Acts and letters.*<sup>95</sup> “Acts,”<sup>96</sup> although presenting a generally adequate history of research, is probably the essay most heavily determined by Christian Baur’s Hegelian reconstruction of early Christian history.<sup>97</sup> It follows

<sup>91</sup> G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Harper, 1960) 13. For “the difficulties of achieving historical knowledge [generally] that does not rewrite the past in the modern historian’s image” see, from a philosophical perspective, “Hermeneutics” 1.497–502.

<sup>92</sup> An English translation of the whole volume is now available: A. Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (London: SCM, 2000). Cf. “Schweitzer, Albert” 2.449–50; “Weiss, Johannes” 2.628–29.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. “Wrede, Friedrich Georg Eduard William” 2.659–61; “Bultmann, Rudolf Karl” 1.148–49.

<sup>94</sup> R. W. Funk *et al.*, eds., *The Five Gospels* (New York: Macmillan, 1993). See the review of O. Betz in *TLZ* 119 (1994) 990, 989. Cf. “Funk, Robert W.” 1.423–24.

<sup>95</sup> The distinction drawn by A. Deissmann (e.g. *Bible Studies* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1903] 3–59) between “letters” and “epistles” was oversimplified if not mistaken. Cf. “Deissmann, Adolf” 1.264–65. So were later attempts to identify a “letter” genre or form: “antiquity knows no binding rules for the composition of a letter” (P. L. Schmidt, “Epistolographie,” *Der Kleine Pauly*, ed. K. Ziegler; 5 vols.; Stuttgart: Druckmuller [1975] 2.324–77). The NT letters are, generally speaking, teaching pieces clothed in a letter-form that combines personal communication with theological counsel. Cf. Ellis, “The Literary Character of the Letters,” in *Making* 49–51; but see “Corinthians, First Letter of” 1.218–22.

<sup>96</sup> “Acts of the Apostles, Book of the” 1.4–13.

<sup>97</sup> Pace “Baur, Ferdinand Christian” 1.112, the influence of Georg Hegel was already present in F. C. Baur, “Die Christuspartei in der korinthischen Gemeinde,” *TZT* 1831: 4.61–206 = *idem*, *Ausgewählte Werke* (5 vols.; Stuttgart: Frommann, 1963–75) 1.1–46, 76, 145–46. Some have denied the Hegelian source of Baur’s paradigm and of his resulting historical reconstruction. But

most directly Hans Conzelmann's mid-twentieth-century three-step reconstruction, in which an original near-term expectation of the *parousia* of Jesus (thesis) faced the problem of delay (antithesis) and resolved it with a theology of salvation history (synthesis).<sup>98</sup> Thus, Acts represents "the church in its third generation" (I.11).<sup>99</sup> But does Georg Hegel's paradigm provide a reliable key? The intra-Christian apologetics and teaching in Acts, both of which the essay rightly recognizes but defines more doubtfully, can in my view best be ascribed to Paul's sometime co-worker Luke, writing in the early 60s.<sup>100</sup> And the correlation of Acts with Paul's epistles is best achieved, not by the traditional equation, Acts 15 = Galatians 2, but by the equation, Acts 11:29–30; 12:25 = Gal 2:1–10: Each presents Paul's *second* visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, initiated by a *revelation*, to help the *poor* and with *private* conversations but *no* general assembly.<sup>101</sup>

The essay on chronology<sup>102</sup> sketches and evaluates the history of research, focusing on the dates of the birth, ministry and crucifixion of Jesus (AD 30 or 33) and, in more detail, on the ministry of Paul.<sup>103</sup> For Paul it generally follows the reconstruction of John Knox,<sup>104</sup> who also wrote in the shadow of F. C. Baur,<sup>105</sup> and, virtually eliminating the book of Acts as a historical source, it presents (briefly) a Pauline chronology sought solely from Paul's letters. The problem involved in this approach is stated most incisively by W. D. Davies:<sup>106</sup> "it is difficult to exchange tradition with imagination

see Ellis, "Ferdinand Christian Baur and his School," in *Making* 440–45, cf. 382–87; idem, "Historical-Literary Criticism—After Two Hundred Years," "Dating the New Testament," and "The Origin and Composition of the Pastoral Epistles," in *History* 7–8, 18–22, 41–43, 66. The conjecture of a continuing opposition between Paul and Peter, integral to Baur's theory, apparently originated with T. D. Morgan, *The Moral Philosopher* (New York: Garland, 1977 [1737]) 50–80, 362ff. See "Galatians, Letter to the" 1.426.

<sup>98</sup> H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (London: Faber & Faber, 1960) 131–36; idem, "Luke's Place in the Development of Early Christianity," *Studies in Luke-Acts. FS P. Schubert* (ed. L. E. Keck and J. L. Martyn; Nashville: Abingdon, 1966) 306–7. Cf. Ellis, "Eschatology in Luke" and "Toward a History of Early Christianity," in *Christ* 117–18, 215–16; idem, "Dating the New Testament," in *History* 48.

<sup>99</sup> Similar, G. Strecker, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996) 438 (ET 417): "[Luke] attempted a synthesis between history and the eschaton. . . ."

<sup>100</sup> See the careful case made by C. J. Hemer, "The Authorship and Sources of Acts" and "The Date of Acts," in *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1989) 308–410. Cf. Ellis, "'The End of the Earth' (Acts 1:8)," in *History* 53–63.

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Hemer, *Acts* 183, 261–65; R. N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Dallas: Word, 1990) lxxxii–lxxxviii; Ellis, *Making* 255–60.

<sup>102</sup> Chronology, New Testament" 2.193–98.

<sup>103</sup> See also Ellis, "Fixed Points for Placing the New Testament Documents" and "The Relationship of the Four Apostolic Missions and the Dating of New Testament Writings," in *Making* 239–319.

<sup>104</sup> Esp. John Knox, *Chapters in a Life of Paul* (New York: Abingdon, 1950); idem, "Acts and the Pauline Letter Corpus," in *Studies in Luke-Acts* 286.

<sup>105</sup> This is evident in J. Knox, *Marcion and the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942) 81, 164, *passim*, where aspects of Baur's Hegelian reconstruction are recast in terms of Marcion vs. "conservative reactions" (pp. 166–67). See also Knox, "Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts* 286, and idem, *Chapters* (n. 104) 166, where he, like Baur, dated Luke-Acts well into the second century (AD 125 or 150). Cf. "Knox, John" 2.34–35.

<sup>106</sup> W. D. Davies, "Paul the Apostle," *Twentieth-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (2 vols.; ed. L. A. Loetscher; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1955) 2.854. Further, Ellis, *Making* 253–54.

(as we find it in Acts) for imagination (however reasonable) without tradition [as we find it in Dr. Knox's reconstruction]."

Theories of interpolations into certain letters<sup>107</sup> and of combinations of earlier letters or letter fragments into the present canonical document<sup>108</sup> are discussed in a number of essays. But apart from Romans<sup>109</sup> and perhaps Ephesians,<sup>110</sup> where textual evidence is present for the possibility of multiple editions, they lose all historical probability in the face of Kurt Aland's telling observation: "it appears to be quite impossible that an interpolator, who anywhere in the stream of tradition arbitrarily inserted three verses, could force under his spell the total textual tradition (which we today have before our eyes in a way quite different from any generation before us) . . . so that not even one contrary witness remained. . . ."<sup>111</sup> That is, either the letter was composed in multiple for congregations in different cities (Galatians) or, as Aland notes, copies were made immediately for neighboring congregations. In accord with custom and necessity the author retained a copy, and in all likelihood the congregation from which he wrote would also want a copy, so that a number of textual traditions were present virtually at the outset. Except for a possibly shorter Romans there is, as far as I know, no manuscript evidence for the theories. Otherwise, the literary phenomena are better understood, I think, by an interrupted process of writing (during travel) over some weeks or months (2 Corinthians)<sup>112</sup> or by the author's own inclusion or addition of non-authorial material as he composed the document.

All essays handle well the history of research, and Romans is particularly good. A number give attention to preformed traditions,<sup>113</sup> sometimes misnamed "prePauline,"<sup>114</sup> and to opponents, who are given a scatter of iden-

<sup>107</sup> Cf. "Corinthians, First Letter to the" 1.221: "it is probably better . . . to take the letter as a unity."

<sup>108</sup> "Corinthians, Second Letter to the" 1.224–25; "Galatians, Letter to the" 1.428 (O'Neill); "Philippians, Letter to the" 2.282; "Thessalonians, First and Second Letters of" 2.571; "Pastoral Letters" 2.245; "Peter, First Letter of" 2.270: two forms of the letter sent to two different audiences (C. F. D. Moule).

<sup>109</sup> E.g. Rom 1:7, 15 G; 14:23 A; 15:33 p46. Cf. T. W. Manson, "St. Paul's Letter to the Romans—and Others," in *Studies in the Gospels and Epistles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962) 225–41; "Romans, Letter to the" 2.417.

<sup>110</sup> 1:1 p46 a B. Cf. E. Best, "Recipients and Title of the Letter to the Ephesians," ANRW 2, 25, 4 [1987] 3247–79.

<sup>111</sup> K. Aland, "Neutestamentliche Textkritik und Exegese," in *Wissenschaft und Kirche. FS E. Lohse* (ed. K. Aland and S. Meurer; Bielefeld: Luther, 1989) 132–48. His remark concerns Romans, but it applies equally to all NT letters.

<sup>112</sup> Somewhat differently, C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987 [1973]) 244: "Paul had further news from Corinth . . . ; he could have decided to add [2 Corinthians 10–13 as] a supplement. . . . [But] more likely . . . he had already sent i–ix."

<sup>113</sup> "Ephesians, Letter to the" 1.338; "Philippians, Letter to the" 2.283; "Colossians, Letter to the" 1.209; "Pastoral Letters" 2.245–46; "Peter, First Letter of" 2.269–70; "Peter, Second Letter of" 2.271; "Revelation, Book of" 2.392–93 (sources). Cf. Ellis, *Making* 49–142, 183–233.

<sup>114</sup> Paul probably was converted within six to nine months after Jesus' death and resurrection (5 April 33) and published the earliest NT document (Galatians, AD 49). Cf. Ellis, *Making* 248–51, 256–60. Therefore, while many pieces—Jesus traditions, biblical expositions (midrashim), hymns, confessions, vice and virtue lists, congregational and household regulations—were used in the

tifications and backgrounds.<sup>115</sup> The preformed pieces are greater in number and variety than they recognize,<sup>116</sup> however, and the opponents are very likely one type,<sup>117</sup> who originated in the Judaizing segment of the ritually strict Hebraists = “the circumcision party” (cf. Acts 6:1; 11:2–3; 15:5). In the diaspora, at least, they constituted a counter-mission that promoted a Judaizing-gnosticizing ideology in opposition to the four allied missions of James, John, Paul, and Peter,<sup>118</sup> and, as J. B. Lightfoot argued, were the forerunners of a similar group opposed by Ignatius in the early second century.<sup>119</sup>

Preformed traditions, a number nonauthorial, make up a considerable percentage of many NT letters.<sup>120</sup> This and the input of secretaries<sup>121</sup> and co-senders and co-authors,<sup>122</sup> difficult matters to measure, place questions of authorship and dating in a new context that is not given the attention it deserves.<sup>123</sup> These phenomena have increasingly been identified, and they undermine, if they do not eviscerate, theories that one can evaluate or even determine authorship by internal criteria of, such as vocabulary, style, and

---

congregations of his and/or other apostolic missions before they were incorporated into his letters, few apart from Jesus traditions can be identified as pre-Pauline.

<sup>115</sup> “Corinthians, Second Letter to the” 1.225–26; “Galatians, Letter to the” 1.428; “Colossians, Letter to the” 1.208–9; “Thessalonians, First and Second Letters to the” 2.571; “Johannine Letters” 1.605–6.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Ellis, “The Making of the New Testament Letters” and “Traditions of the Johannine Mission,” in *Making* 49–142, 183–233.

<sup>117</sup> Rightly, W. Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972) 242–45, although his identification of them as Gnostics anticipates a later development and is anachronistic; D. Georgi, *The Opponents of Paul in Second Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986 [1964]) 174, although his characterization of them as a *Hellenistic Jewish* mission is doubtful (pp. 60, 315).

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Ellis, “The Opposition Common to the Missions,” in *Making* 314–18; idem, “Paul and his Opponents” and “The Circumcision Party and the Early Christian Mission,” in *Prophecy* 80–115, 116–28. See also “Gnostic Interpretation” 1.451–53, and below, n. 188.

<sup>119</sup> J. B. Lightfoot, “The Colossian Heresy” and “The Essenes,” *Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (2d ed.; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994 [1879]) 73–113, 349–419; idem, *The Apostolic Fathers* (3 vols. in 5; 2d ed.; London/New York: Macmillan, 1898) 2.i.373–88; Ellis, *Making* 316–17.

<sup>120</sup> As identified e.g. in the commentaries of M. Dibelius; in E. Lohmeyer, *Kurios Jesus* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1928); J. T. Sanders, *New Testament Christological Hymns* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); G. E. Cannon, *The Use of Traditional Materials in Colossians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983); E. E. Ellis, “Traditions in 1 Corinthians,” *NTS* 32 (1986) 481–502. They appear to comprise about 54% of Ephesians and over 40% of Colossians, 1 Timothy, Titus; further, Romans 27%, 1 Corinthians 17%, 2 Corinthians 11%, Galatians 32%, Philippians 7%, 1 Thessalonians 37%, 2 Thessalonians 24%, 2 Timothy 16%, Hebrews 37%, James 12%, 1 Peter 39%, 2 Peter 33% or 55%, Jude 72%. There are also a considerable number in 1 John and in Revelation. Cf. Ellis, “The Making of the New Testament Letters,” in *Making* 49–142, cf. 183–237.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. O. Roller, *Das Formular der Paulinischen Briefe* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933); E. R. Richards, *The Secretary in the Letters of Paul* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991); J. Murphy-O’Connor, *Paul the Letter Writer* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1995) 6–37; Ellis, “Twentieth-Century Literary Critical Developments,” in *Making* 325–29.

<sup>122</sup> E.g. E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981 [1947]) 9–14, 26–33, regarded Silas, rightly I think, as the co-author of 1–2 Thessalonians and of 1 Peter. Somewhat similar, L. Goppelt, *A Commentary on I Peter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 50–51.

<sup>123</sup> A number of essays do briefly address these issues. See above, n. 113.

theological expression. Scholars in the Baur tradition,<sup>124</sup> in particular, have used such criteria to identify as pseudepigrapha, such as six epistles ascribed to Paul<sup>125</sup> and the two ascribed to Peter. Such judgments, however, to have any historical-critical basis, must take fully into account the non-authorial influence or input into the letter. Theologically, they will also have to consider the implications of the pseudepigraphal theory for the NT canon, since in early Christianity apostolic pseudepigrapha inevitably had the taint of forgery and, when detected, were excluded from books approved for reading in church.<sup>126</sup> Critical studies, both of the authorship and of the dating of NT letters, can no longer draw conclusions purely on literary phenomena but will now need to give more weight to the ascriptions in the letters themselves and to the early patristic testimony.

The essay on NT theology<sup>127</sup> is good within its framework, but it is largely devoted to a line of research from J. P. Gabler through F. C. Baur and the "history of religions" school<sup>128</sup> to R. Bultmann and his pupils. Some attention should have been given to Adolf Harnack<sup>129</sup> and to Theodor Zahn,<sup>130</sup> the most brilliant stars in the many-spangled German biblical galaxy of their day, and to "the Cambridge three,"<sup>131</sup> pre-eminent in British biblical interpretation for almost a century. It comments briefly, however, on Oscar Cullmann<sup>132</sup> and on a few recent Anglo-American writers. One

<sup>124</sup> Specifically, Baur-Hilgenfeld. Hilgenfeld raised the number of "genuine" Pauline letters from four to seven (Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon), which became the standard for this tradition. Cf. "Hilgenfeld, Adolf" 1.503–4; Ellis, "The Views of the Baur Tradition," in *History* 18–22.

<sup>125</sup> I.e. Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus. The *Dictionary* essays generally lean against the genuineness of letters rejected by the Baur tradition; one excludes genuineness: "Peter, Second Letter of" 2.272. But see T. Zahn, *Introduction to the New Testament* (3 vols.; 3d ed.; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1987) 2.194–238, 262–93; J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1976) 169–99; Ellis, "Traditions in I and II Peter," in *Making* 120–33, cf. 293–303.

<sup>126</sup> E.g. 2 Peter by the Syrian church that thought it to be pseudonymous. The operative principle was stated by Serapion (<sup>H</sup>211; *apud* Eusebius, *HE* 6, 12, 3; cf. 3, 25, 4–7): "For we, brothers, receive both Peter and the other apostles as Christ. But pseudepigrapha in their name we reject, as men of experience, knowing that we did not receive such [from the tradition]." Cf. Ellis, "Pseudonymity and Canonicity of New Testament Documents," in *History* 17–29.

<sup>127</sup> "Theology, New Testament" 2.556–62. To its full bibliography one may add Ladd, *Theology*; Ridderbos, *Outline*; and Strecker, *Theologie*.

<sup>128</sup> See "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule" 2.383–87; esp. W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970 [1913]). But see the response of J. G. Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1921) and A. E. J. Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ* (London: Longmans, 1926). Cf. "Machen, John Gresham" 2.107–8; "Rawlinson, Alfred Edward John" 2.369–70.

<sup>129</sup> I.e. to his exegetical-theological pieces in *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1909) 133–65, *The Date of the Acts and of the Synoptic Gospels* (London: Putnam, 1911) 37–89, and *Kleine Schriften zur Alten Kirche* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1980) 1.346–73, 830–45; 2.134–90, 265–304, 510–27). See "Harnack, Karl Gustav Adolf von" 1.481–83.

<sup>130</sup> Esp. his commentaries. See "Zahn, Theodor" 2.666.

<sup>131</sup> See "Lightfoot, Joseph Barber" 2.76–77; "Westcott, Brooke Foss" 2.633; "Hort, Fenton John Anthony" 1.520. Further, Dodd (n. 90); Turner (n. 90).

<sup>132</sup> See also "Cullmann, Oscar" 1.234–36.

might wish that more consideration could have been afforded to the theology of each of the letters,<sup>133</sup> and especially to the Jewish parallels and backgrounds of, among others, Christology, eschatology, and anthropology.<sup>134</sup> The essays, limited in length, may not have been able to include such matters. But a number do address issues of ancient rhetoric and the social world in which the letters were written.<sup>135</sup>

Of the four major apostles of Jesus Christ—James, John, Paul, and Peter, from whose missions the whole NT originated,<sup>136</sup> a special essay is devoted only to Paul.<sup>137</sup> It offers a good history of the research viewed, however, largely within the framework of Continental writings, mainly the dominant wing of German scholarship.<sup>138</sup> It does give due attention to E. P. Sanders's view of Paul and the Law.<sup>139</sup>

### III. CONFESSIONAL AND HERMENEUTICAL TRADITIONS

For the patristic period the *Dictionary* has essays on allegorical and on typological-historical biblical interpretation,<sup>140</sup> and on the Gnostic cults'

<sup>133</sup> There are some references in "Hebrews, Letter to" 1.489–91; "Peter, First Letter of" 2.268–69; "Revelation, Book of" 2.391–92.

<sup>134</sup> As expounded e.g. in Doeve, "The Serviceableness of the Rabbinic Data for the Examination of the New Testament," in *Hermeneutics* 35–51; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (4th ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980 [1955]); D. Daube, *NT and Rabbinic Judaism*; R. P. Sheppard, *Man in Community: A Study of St. Paul's Application of Old Testament and Early Jewish Conceptions of Human Solidarity* (London: Epworth, 1958 = Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964); O. Betz, *Jesus Der Messias Israels; Der Herr der Kirche: Aufsätze zur biblischen Theologie* (2 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1987, 1990); Ellis, *Christ* passim; idem, "Typological Interpretation—and its Rivals," in *Old Testament* 139–57, cf. 106–9; S. Aaronson, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2001). Otherwise: P. S. Alexander, "Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament," *ZNTW* 74 (1983) 237–46; but see Ellis, *Old Testament* 96; idem, *Making* 78n.

<sup>135</sup> See "Rhetorical Criticism . . ." 2.396–402; "Sociology . . ." 2.483–92. Further, "Psychology and Biblical Studies" 2.337–41. On the social world E. A. Judge is, I think, the most knowledgeable; unfortunately his scattered writings have as yet not been published as collected essays.

<sup>136</sup> Each of which produced a Gospel. From the mission of James: Matthew, James, Jude; from that of John: John, 1–3 John, Revelation; from that of Paul: Luke-Acts, Romans, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews; from that of Peter: Mark, 1–2 Peter. Cf. Gal 2:9; Ellis, *Making* 329–30, passim.

<sup>137</sup> "Paul" 2.247–53.

<sup>138</sup> Further, see W. D. Davies, *Jewish and Pauline Studies* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); E. E. Ellis, "Paul: History of Criticism; Pauline Thought," *New Bible Dictionary* (3d ed.; ed. D. R. W. Wood et al.; Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 1996) 882–91; cf. E. E. Ellis, *Paul and his Recent Interpreters* (5th ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 17–34; Ridderbos, *Paul*; A. Schlatter, *The Theology of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998 [1923]).

<sup>139</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). But see T. R. Schreiner, *The Law and its Fulfillment* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993) 93–121; M. A. Elliott, *The Survivors of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), who argues, against Sanders, that Jewish intertestamental literature and later apocalyptic, with few exceptions, reflect not a national election of Israel but a "special election" (p. 186) of the faithful remnant.

<sup>140</sup> "Alexandrian School" 1.25–26; "Antiochene School" 1.38–40. Touching on these distinctives are essays devoted to individuals, e.g. "Origen" 2.225–26 and "Augustine of Hippo" 1.85–87, on the one hand and "Irenaeus of Lyons" 1.548, and "Theodore of Mopsuestia" 2.551–52, on the other. See also "Armenian Biblical Interpretation" 1.57–60; "Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation" 1.353–56.

use of the Bible.<sup>141</sup> It does not, however, address the diverse interpretive perspectives that arose in the Reformation, such as Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Anabaptist, and others. For the modern period it also lacks essays on Liberal Protestant,<sup>142</sup> Roman Catholic, and Pentecostal views, though it does include pieces on Eastern Orthodox and evangelical interpretation.<sup>143</sup> The former surveys the heritage of the Church fathers and the traditionalist and the modern periods and offers a number of constructive suggestions on the need to distinguish Scripture and Church. It is one of the few essays to include, rightly, the role of the Holy Spirit in the task of biblical interpretation.<sup>144</sup>

Evangelical interpretation, reflecting my own tradition and confessional commitments, is a theological perspective and movement and a practical emphasis within recent Protestantism. The *Dictionary* essay offers a good discussion of selected questions, though it may be supplemented by comment on its origins and present prospects. Evangelical thought has roots in the Reformation emphasis on the “evangel” or gospel, in the Great Awakening in colonial America associated with the names of Jonathan Edwards<sup>145</sup> and George Whitefield,<sup>146</sup> in the wider Methodist movement<sup>147</sup> and in the evangelical or “low church” wing of the Church of England associated with, among others, Charles Simeon (1759–1836).<sup>148</sup> Its contemporary form arose largely from effects flowing from the separation of InterVarsity from the Student Christian Movement at the University of Cambridge (1910–11)<sup>149</sup> and from the divisions in American Presbyterian<sup>150</sup> and (Northern) Baptist<sup>151</sup> denominations in the early twentieth century. Its theological re-

<sup>141</sup> See “Gnostic Interpretation” 1.451–53. See below, n. 188.

<sup>142</sup> It was, admittedly, a more cohesive perspective early in the last century. See “Fosdick, Harry Emerson” 1.417, and in opposition, “Machen, John Gresham” 2.167–68, and his *Christianity and Liberalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001 [1923]).

<sup>143</sup> “Orthodox Biblical Interpretation” 2.227–30; “Evangelical Biblical Interpretation” 1.357–61.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. also Ellis, “The Word of God Hidden and Revealed,” in *Christ 273–78*; idem, “Limitations [of Historical Method],” in *History* 14–16.

<sup>145</sup> See “Edwards, Jonathan” 1.317–18.

<sup>146</sup> See A. A. Dallimore, *George Whitefield* (2 vols.; 3d ed.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995).

<sup>147</sup> See “Wesley, John” 2.632–33.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. “Evangelicalism”; “Simeon, Charles”; “Whitefield, George,” *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3d ed.; ed. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 579–80, 1502, 1737–38.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. J. C. Pollock, *A Cambridge Movement* (London: Murray, 1953) 182: The issue “mainly turned upon what attitude was adopted toward Holy Scripture and how it was used in Christian witness.” Further, cf. O. Barclay, *Evangelicalism in Britain 1935–1995* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1997); T. Dudley-Smith, *John Stott: The Making of a Leader* and *John Stott: A Global Ministry* (2 vols.; Leicester: InterVarsity, 2001).

<sup>150</sup> For a history of the conflict cf. D. B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary 1812–1929* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996) 2.171–429; N. B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954); J. G. Hart, *Defending the Faith* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

<sup>151</sup> Consisting of separating groups, some of whom rejected a historical-critical analysis of Scripture, and others who used such study within the presupposition of biblical infallibility or inerrancy. Cf. H. L. McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman, 1987) 755–62.

sources at first consisted mainly of writings from British InterVarsity,<sup>152</sup> from the old Princeton school,<sup>153</sup> from Calvin Seminary and its Dutch antecedents,<sup>154</sup> and, for many students, the writings of C. S. Lewis.

A concentration on the infallibility of Scripture, on substitutionary atonement, and on evangelism elided other theological divisions. But with growth in numbers and diversity problems have increased.<sup>155</sup> They appear to concern chiefly the nature of biblical authority,<sup>156</sup> feminism, and egalitarianism generally,<sup>157</sup> and the sovereignty of God.<sup>158</sup> Whether or not evangelicalism will resolve the problems or move beyond them remains to be seen.

#### IV. METHOD

The essays discussed above, and the bibliography surveyed in them, mainly reflect a traditional historical-literary critical method in which a careful analysis and evaluation of historical data is sought in order to secure the meaning of the biblical writing and the intention of its author. For our time and place in history this method, with the right presuppositions,<sup>159</sup> has offered more, I believe, in explanation, clarification, and heuristic

<sup>152</sup> E.g. *The Tyndale Old Testament and New Testament Commentary Series* (London, 1950–); L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955); *New Bible Dictionary* (3d ed.; ed. J. D. Douglas et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996 [1962]). See the essay on “Bruce, Frederick Fyvie” 1.143–44.

<sup>153</sup> See the essays on “Alexander, Joseph Addison” 1.24–25; “Green, William Henry” 1.463–64; “Hodge, Charles” 1.511–12; “Machen, John Gresham” 2.107–8; “Vos, Geerhardus” 2.615–16; “Warfield, Benjamin Breckenridge” 2.622–23.

<sup>154</sup> E.g. Aalders, *Introduction*; L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (14th ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998 [1941]).

<sup>155</sup> Cf. M. J. Erickson, *The Evangelical Left* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997); I. H. Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 2000).

<sup>156</sup> J. B. Rogers and D. K. McKim, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979) contra J. D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) and Calhoun, *Princeton* 2.413–17; Robert P. Martin, “The Nature of the Bible’s Inspiration,” in *Accuracy of Translation: . . . with Special Reference to the New International Version* (2d ed.; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1997) 13–17; Erickson, *Left* 61–86. On so-called “fictional midrash” (Matthew 1–2) and apostolic pseudepigrapha cf. Ellis, *Old Testament* 93–95; idem, *History* 17–29; idem, *Making* 320–29.

<sup>157</sup> E.g. D. A. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998); G. G. Hull, *Equal to Serve* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998); R. C. and C. C. Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman. Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11–15* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992); J. Piper and W. Grudem, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991); V. S. Poythress and W. Grudem, *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2000).

<sup>158</sup> E.g. C. H. Pinnock et al., *The Openness of God. A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994). This view appears to be little different from the finite God of E. S. Brightman, *The Problem of God* (New York: Abingdon, 1930) 127–30. But see Erickson, “The Doctrine of God,” *Left* 87–107; N. L. Geisler and H. W. House, *The Battle for God* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001); E. E. Ellis, “God’s Sovereign Grace in Salvation and the Nature of Man’s Free Will,” *SWJT* 44 (2001–2) forthcoming, on the finite God of free-will theism.

<sup>159</sup> For me, Christian theism, a salvation-history hermeneutic, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the theological genre of Scripture as divine revelation.

probing of the biblical texts than any other.<sup>160</sup> Its results in the writings of, say, J. B. Lightfoot, Theodor Zahn or, with different theological presuppositions, Adolf Harnack<sup>161</sup> fully persuade me of that. Admittedly, it has suffered from rationalist aberrations and from pretensions to objectivity, and it has failed to fulfill its promise.<sup>162</sup> As a result, it has been abandoned by many contemporary biblical interpreters, including contributors of some essays to the *Dictionary*. But its failure is due, I think, more to mistaken assumptions about the nature of historical knowledge and about the competence of human reason than to the (in)adequacy of the method itself.

In the past two centuries history-writing has been viewed by many as a science that can “objectively” recreate the past “as it actually occurred.”<sup>163</sup> In fact it is quite subjective, as a number of historians observed early in the last century. The modern historian does not stick to the facts, Carl Becker wrote, “the facts stick to him, if he has any ideas to attract them.”<sup>164</sup> Everyone always has presuppositions that influence one’s understanding of history, as R. Bultmann<sup>165</sup> and from different perspectives Cornelius Van Til<sup>166</sup> and Bernard Lonergan<sup>167</sup> argued.

Postmodernism,<sup>168</sup> a concept easier to describe than to define,<sup>169</sup> popularized for biblical studies this insight, that is, that one brings one’s own presuppositions and concepts to the texts. But its proponents then often concluded that the reader inevitably “deconstructs,” that is, fits, the text to his presuppositions or interests with the result that it is relativized and has no certain nor objective meaning. Postmodernism’s virtue is in showing that all readings of a text are influenced by one’s presuppositions; its problem (or fallacy) is its assumption that all presuppositions are of equal value<sup>170</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Cf. Ellis, “The Necessity and Contribution of Historical Criticism,” in *History* 10–12, 16. Of course, method is never master of Scripture.

<sup>161</sup> See the bibliographies in the *Dictionary*’s biographical sketches.

<sup>162</sup> After two centuries of research, there is no abiding consensus among biblical interpreters about the reconstruction of events nor about the meaning of any substantive biblical passage.

<sup>163</sup> “Wie es eigentlich gewesen,” the misunderstood phrase of L. von Ranke, *Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1514* (3 vols.; 3d ed.; Leipzig: Dunker & Humblot 1885 [1824]) I.vii. It is not in the English translation, *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations 1494–1514* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1909).

<sup>164</sup> C. L. Becker, “Detachment and the Writing of History,” *The Atlantic Monthly* 106 (1910) 524–36, reprinted with other essays in 1958. Cf. also H. S. Commager, *The Nature and Study of History* (2d ed.; New York: Garland, 1984) 53–60; J. Kenyon, *The History Men* (2d ed.; London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993); Ellis, “The Subjectivity of Historical Knowledge,” in *History* 4–6.

<sup>165</sup> R. Bultmann, “Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?” in *Existence and Faith* (New York: Meridian, 1960) 289–96.

<sup>166</sup> Van Til’s insights were better than his syntax, so it is good to have a commentary on many of his writings: G. L. Bahnson, *Van Til’s Apologetic* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1998).

<sup>167</sup> B. Lonergan, “History and Historians,” *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972) 197–234.

<sup>168</sup> See “Post-Modern Biblical Interpretation” 2.305–9.

<sup>169</sup> Cf. A. Munslow, “Three Approaches to Historical Knowledge,” *Deconstructing History* (London: Routledge, 1997) 18–35; K. J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998); T. C. Oden, “So What Happens after Modernity?” in *The Challenge of Postmodernism* (ed. D. S. Dockery; Wheaton, IL: Victor, 2000) 392–406; M. J. Erickson, *Truth or Consequences: The Promise & Perils of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001).

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Bartholomew, *Ecclesiastes* 173–205.

and that no presuppositions or interpretations can accord with the intention of the author of the text.<sup>171</sup> It also appears to blur or to deny a distinction between an objective truth and the subjective human apprehension of that truth.

The topics of many essays in the *Dictionary* follow or include a non-historical literary approach to the biblical text that arises out of or has much in common with postmodernism.<sup>172</sup> They often assume or promote the view that the goal of interpretation is not to discover authorial intent, but to explicate the impact that the language of Scripture has on the reader or, in effect, to express, illuminate or confirm the attitude that the reader brings to the text.<sup>173</sup> Although at least one essay argues that some postmodern interpretation “does not really move away from the text and the author as the source of meaning,”<sup>174</sup> this approach appears to be quite similar to an allegorical hermeneutic found in early Judaism<sup>175</sup> and in the patristic<sup>176</sup> and medieval church. It also appears to have affinities with Gnostic interpretation and with the wordplay and the analysis of letters of the alphabet found in some rabbinic exegesis.<sup>177</sup> Thus it falls into the danger of treating the Bible like a computer: One draws out what one puts in.

For example, the three essays<sup>178</sup> on feminism are fully justified to call attention both to the misuse of the Bible to condone male (e.g. a husband's) abuse and also to overlooked contributions, to mischaracterizations, and to the essential importance of women in Scripture.<sup>179</sup> But feminists' use of the Bible to suggest a hermaphrodite origin of humanity (I.391)<sup>180</sup> or to promote

<sup>171</sup> For Scripture, this can be challenged theologically, but it is a high spiritual hurdle. If one, in a process of oscillation, allows Scripture to change one's presuppositions to become those of the Scripture, of its ultimate Author or of its discrete authors, then one may receive the truth (including the historical truth) that is present in the text. But it is a confessional truth, not a philosophical proof. Cf. Ellis, *Christ*. See below, n. 191.

<sup>172</sup> E.g. “Cultural Studies” 1.236–38 (in part); “Hispanic American Biblical Interpretation” 1.505–8; “Ideological Criticism” 1.534–37; “Intertextuality” 1.546–48; “Literary Theory, Literary Criticism and the Bible” 2.79–85; “Narrative Criticism” 2.201–4; “Psychoanalytic Interpretation” 2.335–37; “Semiotics” 2.454–56; “Social Scientific Criticism” 2.478–81; “Structuralism and Deconstruction” 2.509–14, but see A. C. Thiselton, “Structuralism and Biblical Studies: Method or Ideology?” *ET* 89 (1977–78) 329–35. Futher, cf. J. A. D. Weima, “Literary Criticism,” in *Interpreting the New Testament* (ed. D. A. Black and D. S. Dockery; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002) 150–69.

<sup>173</sup> E.g. “Feminist Interpretation” 1.388–98: “Feminist biblical interpretation involves readings and critiques of the Bible . . . developed to envision and implement the goals of feminism, . . .” (pp. 388–89).

<sup>174</sup> “Reader Response Criticism” 2.270–73, 272.

<sup>175</sup> Esp. “Philo of Alexandria” 2.283–86.

<sup>176</sup> “Alexandrian School” 1.25–26.

<sup>177</sup> I.e. “Gematria,” “Notarikon.” Cf. H. L. Strack and G. Stemmerger, “Rabbinical Hermeneutics,” *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991) 32–33. Cf. “Kabbalah” 2.1–7. See above, n. 141.

<sup>178</sup> “Muherista Biblical Interpretation” 2.169–70; “Womanist Biblical Interpretation” 2.655–58. See above, n. 173. Cf. “Stanton, Elizabeth Cady” 2.503–4; “Woman's Bible, The” 2.658–59.

<sup>179</sup> For ethnic questions, “Afrocentric Biblical Interpretation” 1.13–16, seeks and in part achieves this goal.

<sup>180</sup> See Ellis, “Paul and the Eschatological Woman” and “Hermaphroditism in Gal 3:28?” in *Pauline Theology* 53–86.

modern Western egalitarianism is more questionable. The Bible is a patriarchal book composed in a succession of patriarchal cultures. Even the kingdom of God in the NT is depicted in terms both of equality and of rank.<sup>181</sup> Feminism emerged in the nineteenth century and was rooted in and achieved its popularity from the *égalité* of the French Revolution, an ideology that became a part of the psyche of many Americans.<sup>182</sup> But is it justifiable to impose, by special pleading and strained proof-texting, this ideology on the Bible?

Equally, liberation theology<sup>183</sup> is right to underscore the biblical commands of love of neighbor and of personal concern and action on behalf of the poor.<sup>184</sup> But is it justifiable to put the Scriptures into the service of a (failed) Marxist egalitarian theory of “a classless society without private property” (II.69), a view that is totally absent from the Bible?<sup>185</sup>

The essay on homophile interpretation<sup>186</sup> presents arguments of various writers and offers some criticisms of them. But it overlooks part of the history. Such interpretations of Scripture and consequent conduct first appeared among Paul’s libertine converts, who confused Christian liberty with sexual license, among his opponents<sup>187</sup> and among later libertine Gnostics. Among the last, such conduct is attributed, for example, to the Barbelites: “Since they are not satiated with their promiscuous intercourse with women, [they] are inflamed toward one another, men with men, as it is written (Rom 1:27). . . . For these, who are utterly abandoned, congratulate each other, as if they had achieved the choicest distinction.” “Those among them who are called Levites do not have intercourse with women but with each other.”<sup>188</sup> But in Scripture—from Genesis to Revelation<sup>189</sup>—the copulation

<sup>181</sup> E.g. Matt 5:19; 20:20–23 par; 19:28; Luke 22:28–30; cf. 1 Cor 9:1–3 with 12:28.

<sup>182</sup> Which reminds me of a girl’s prayer at a University of Virginia students Bible study, “And, Lord, help us to remember that Jesus said, ‘All men are created equal.’” Cf. S. E. Finer, *The History of Government from the Earliest Times* (3 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 1.29: “A belief-system which envisions the cosmos as arranged in a hierarchy and humans a part of the cosmos will accept social inequality as natural. A belief-system which *per contra* starts with the unproven and unprovable axiom that ‘all men are created equal, etc.’ will not accept such inequality gladly, if at all”; C. S. Lewis, ‘Equality,’ in *Essay Collection* (London: HarperCollins, 2002) 666ff.; C. Hesse, *The Other Enlightenment: How French Women Became Modern* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>183</sup> Cf. “Liberation Theologies” 2.66–74; “Asian Biblical Interpretation” 1.70–77 (in part). Further, D. Tombs, “Latin American Liberation Theology Faces the Future,” in *Faith in the Millennium* (ed. S. E. Porter and M. A. Hayes; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 32–58.

<sup>184</sup> E.g. Lev 19:18; Luke 10:25–37, 27; Jas 1:9, 27; 2:1–8; 5:1–5.

<sup>185</sup> The sharing of goods in Acts (4:32–5:11; 6:1) was voluntary, partial and ecclesial. Cf. Ellis, “Ministry for the Coming Age” and “Pauline Christianity and the World Order,” in *Pauline Theology* 18–23, 151–59.

<sup>186</sup> “Gay/Lesbian Interpretation” 1.432–34.

<sup>187</sup> Ellis, “Paul and his Opponents,” in *Prophecy* 89–101, 108–9, 113–15; cf. 231–32; idem, *Making* 314–18.

<sup>188</sup> Epiphanius, *Panarion* 26, 11, 8; 26, 13, 1. Cf. W. Foerster, “Libertine Gnostics,” in *Gnosis* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1974) 1.323–24; F. Williams, ed. and tr., *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis* (3 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1994).

<sup>189</sup> Gen 9:21–27; 19:5–8; Lev 18:22–23; 20:13; Deut 23:17–18; Judg 19:16–26; 1 Kgs 14:24; Rom 1:26–27; 1 Cor 6:9–10; 1 Tim 1:9–10; Jude 7–8; Rev 22:15; perhaps, 2 Pet 2:6–8, 13–14. In the NT the practice is virtually always in vice lists.

of male with male (ἀρσενοκοίτης) is regarded not as a sexual fulfillment but as an aberration or bondage, indeed a sexual exploitation of another. One should have compassion for those caught in this addiction,<sup>190</sup> but to turn the Bible's no into a yes is quite a different matter.

These non-historical literary interpretations appear to give absolute priority to their ideological presuppositions, that is, egalitarianism and homosexuality, and to use the Bible as a foil to promote the ideology. Consequently, there is little likelihood that their biblical interpretations have any reality beyond the mind and the imagination of the particular reader. A historical approach to the biblical text also does not escape the presuppositions of the interpreter. But if it deliberately gives priority to the text and to the historical-literary context, it is better able, I think, to subordinate and to sublimate presuppositions to the Scripture.<sup>191</sup>

## V. CONCLUSION

The *Dictionary* properly allows the contributors to express their own views about the particular topic,<sup>192</sup> and it thus often offers differing views where topics overlap. But in three respects it apparently imposes an unfortunate uniformity. It regularly (with a few exceptions) uses secularist (BCE/CE) rather than Christian (BC/AD) dating symbols and the Jewish designation, Hebrew Bible, rather than the Christian designation, OT. Also, presumably in deference to feminist readers, it appears to exclude the traditional English generic use of the term "man"<sup>193</sup> and of masculine pronouns. Each of these usages rests on or reflects theological views or presuppositions. Academic freedom would be better served, I think, if each contributor were given stylistic liberty in these matters.

In sum, this *Dictionary* is a very important resource for pastors and rabbis, faculty and students, a resource that will put at their finger-tips an immense—yes, that is the word—amount of information on the Bible and on its interpreters, ancient and modern. As always, it should be supplemented by other similar works that can complement or contrast the interpretations detailed here. But I suspect that for most essays it will find few equals in the extremely well-informed histories of interpretation, the foundation on which any good contemporary expositions of Scripture must build.

<sup>190</sup> Cf. E. E. Ellis, "Homosexuality and the Church," *The Church Herald* 32 (27 June 1975) 6–7; J. Nicolosi, *Reparative Therapy of Male Homosexuality* (Northvale, NJ: J. Aronson, 1997); R. A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2001).

<sup>191</sup> As, in prayer, "the sublimation of petition in 'Thy will be done'" (W. R. Inge). See above, n. 171.

<sup>192</sup> In a few instances it appears that the editor has supplemented (and co-signed) the essay.

<sup>193</sup> The term "man," used in a generic sense of *homo sapiens*, includes the individual and the corporate, male and female, black and white, young and old. There is no other English word fully equivalent to it.