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THE CURRENT CRISIS IN EXEGESIS AND THE APOSTOLIC USE OF DEUTERONOMY 25:4 IN 1 CORINTHIANS 9:8-10*

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The most important contribution our generation could make to the whole curriculum of divinity would be to face up to the current crisis in Biblical exegesis. At the present moment the crisis has shown very little regard for our traditional ecclesiastical categories, for it has spread like the plague from liberal to evangelical scholars/preachers alike. The only factors that will differ are the symptoms of the crisis. The sad fact remains.

I. REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

A. *The Failure to Distinguish Meaning and Significance*

As E. D. Hirsch analyzed one aspect of this problem,[1] a decadent "subjectivism" had cast off all literary constraints and thereby ruled out the possibility of a common and determinate object of knowledge. For Hirsch, this "post-Kantian relativism"[2] that "all 'knowledge' is relative"[3] had produced "cognitive atheists"[4] who adhered to no common authority or to any shared principles, but who freely degraded knowledge and value, subverted the goal of objective knowledge and threatened the very arena of scholarship with their interpretive solipsism.

In Hirsch's judgment:

> *Meaning* is that which is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent. *Significance,* on the other hand, names a relationship between that meaning and a person, or a conception or a situation.[5]

With this we agree. The theoretical eye of this storm has now been identified. Unfortunately, even Hirsch has undermined his own fine

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[1]E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); *idem, The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University Press, 1976).

[2]Hirsch, *Aims*, p. 4.

[3]Ibid., p. 36.

[4]Ibid., pp. 4, 36, 49.

[5]Hirsch, *Validity*, p. 8.

analysis of the normative power of the author's intention as found in the text by allowing the interpreter to frequently usurp the right of the author to say first what he meant to say.[6] Instead of arguing that the "meaning" is always a return to the text as it was meant to be understood by the author, he has most recently enlarged "meaning" to "simply meaning-for-an-interpreter" and comprising "constructions where authorial will is partly or totally disregarded." [7]

While we applaud Hirsch for his earlier distinction between "meaning" and "significance," which if employed will save us from interpretive anarchy and subjectivistic relativism, we must not follow his most recent concession and thereby abandon the principle that "meaning" is a return to what the author intended to say by his use of words in a particular text.

B. *The Failure to Let the Bible Transform Humanity*

While dismissing objective controls in the area of meaning, most contemporary theologians have gone to extreme lengths to avoid subjectivity in another area. In the words of Jay G. Williams:

> In the [scholars'] attempts to avoid the apparently futile, sectarian quarrels of the past and arrive at certainties, [they] have attempted to rid themselves of those subjective and communal biases which divided Christian scholars and to adopt a more scientific and detached attitude [of source and form criticism].[8]

But alas, commented Williams, "scarcely a word is said about the meaning of the text. It lies before the reader like an inert, dissected corpse." [9]

Even more startling was the iconoclastic frankness of Walter Wink. In his view historical criticism of the Bible was, above everything else, an evangelistic tool to convert students from fundamentalism to liberal theology.

> There can be little quarrel that the historical significance of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis (which no one today accepts as then formulated) was its usefulness as a method for destroying the conservative view of Biblical origins and inspiration, thereby destroying the entire ideology.[10]

Far more fundamentally than revivalism, biblical criticism shook, shat-

[6]For a telling criticism of this flaw in Hirsch (kindly pointed out to me by Ms. D. Roethlisberger, professor of English at Trinity College, Deerfield, Illinois) see W. E. Cain, "Authority, 'Cognitive Atheism,' and the Aims of Interpretation: The Literary Theory of E. D. Hirsch," *College English* 39 (1977) 333-345. He refers to a similar criticism found in S. Suleiman, "Interpreting Ironies," *Diacritics* 6 (1976) 15-21.

[7]Hirsch, *Aims*, pp. 79-80; see the previous seeds of dissolution in his *Validity*, pp. 24, 25, 122-123.

[8]J. G. Williams, "Exegesis-Eisegesis: Is There a Difference?", *TToday* 30 (1973-74) 226.

[9]Ibid., p. 224.

[10]W. Wink, *The Bible in Human Transformation: Toward a New Paradigm for Biblical Study* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973) 12.

tered, and reconstituted generation after generation of students, and became their point of entree unto the "modern world"! [11]

However, this drive for objectivity and scientific detachment in the form of Biblical criticism, commented Wink, had "gone to seed" and was now "bankrupt" and a "dead letter":

> Simply but quite precisely put, the historical-critical approach to biblical study had become bankrupt. Not dead: the critical tools have a potential usefulness, if they can only be brought under new management. But on the whole, the American scholarly scene is one of frenetic decadence. . . . Most scholars no longer address the lived experience of actual people in the churches or society.[12]

Williams and Wink were not the only voices to raise this cry. O. C. Edwards, Jr., tacitly agreed:

> It has been assumed for many years in the theological seminaries of all the major denominations that responsible interpretation of the Bible is interpretation that uses the historical-critical method. Without wishing to deny that axiom completely, I do wish to propose that today the historical-critical method is in trouble. The particular kind of trouble is . . . a failure of [the liberal scholar's] nerve.[13]

Lest we receive the impression that these criticisms are novel and without precedence in the preceding decades, let it be noted that early voices in neo-orthodox theology had made the same analysis. J. N. Sanders concluded in 1941:

> The application of the methods of historical criticism to the N.T. . . . is proving to be inadequate to achieve the aim which the N.T. scholar sets before himself—namely, that of understanding and expounding the N.T. This does not mean [he hastened to add] that historical criticism is without value. Its value is real, but it is only the preliminary [task] to the real exposition of Scripture, . . . which may be said to be achieved when one hears in the language of one's own time the message which one is convinced was meant by the author of one's text.[14]

Naturally, evangelicals will have no part of a destructive historical criticism that demands a philosophical and theological grid or *Vorverständnis* that cheerfully imbibes the flat-world spirit of modernity while it scales down the textual claims of the Bible to sizes more to the liking of twentieth-century secular man. However, the employment of all the tools of higher criticism cannot be an optional luxury—even for the evangelical. We cannot afford to be opposed to legitimate source criticism;

[11]Ibid., p. 15.

[12]W. Wink, "How I Have Been Snagged by the Seat of My Pants While Reading the Bible," *Christian Century* 24 (1975) 816.

[13]O. C. Edwards, Jr., "Historical-Critical Method's Failure of Nerve and a Prescription for a Tonic: A Review of Some Recent Literature," *ATR* 59 (1977) 116.

[14]J. N. Sanders, "The Problem of Exegesis," *Theology* 43 (1941) 325. Notice that the last part of his quotation reflects the situation almost forty years ago, before the autonomy of a text from its author was announced!

on the contrary, our complaint has always been with *hypothetical* sources that exist solely in the imaginations of literary reconstructionists. Certainly Chronicles, for example, has sixty or seventy references to actual sources such as *The Vision of Iddo the Seer, The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel,* and so forth. And Luke plainly tells us that he freely consulted sources in Luke 1:1-4.

Accordingly, evangelicals are likewise involved in the same exegetical crisis, even if it is not of the exact shape as it is for Wink, Sanders and Edwards. All of these background studies on date, authorship, audience, times and sources, along with a careful parsing and translation of the original languages, while necessary and important and the first order of business for the interpreter, still leave much to be desired. But what is the missing element that has eluded evangelicals and liberals alike?

C. *The Failure to Articulate the Theology of the Bible*

In reaction to a literary criticism that had occupied itself with everything except the finished literary product of the Biblical text, one alternative has been to supplement historical criticism with theological exegesis. In the early view of Sanders, the key problem for exegesis was one of discovering "some scientific method of bridging the chasm [between the men of the first and twentieth centuries]." [15] In a moment of candor he conceded that historical criticism was too "purely phenomenological," too "closely akin in method and outlook to the natural sciences," and therefore a "fundamentally alien technique" for the study of rational beings, especially since it viewed all things "as the product of natural causes." It left out "the question of truth or relevance" of the Biblical teachings. How could such academic detachment, marveled Sanders, "bring men to a decision between accepting the Gospel or rejecting it?" [16]

George M. Landes was even more emphatic: "Any exegesis which refuses to expound the theological dimensions in [the Scriptures] overlooks their *d'etre.*" [17] For Landes, "no theological interpretation of a text is finished until it has been brought into relation with the entire theological witness of the Bible to the issues at stake in that text." [18]

While we agree that theological exegesis is the missing part of the agenda on most exegetical guides that normally take the exegete through an enormous mass of data in higher and lower criticism, we still do not believe we have been given any steps by which we might truly vali-

[15]Ibid., p. 329.

[16]Ibid., pp. 330-331.

[17]G. M. Landes, "Biblical Exegesis in Crisis: What is the Exegetical Task in a Theological Context?", *USQR* 26 (1970) 276.

[18]Ibid., p. 280. In B. S. Childs' terminology, this is called "canonical exegesis"; see his *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 99-114. See also Childs' most recent discussion, "The Canonical Shape of The Prophetic Literature," *Int* 32 (1978) 46-55.

date what the writer's theology of that passage was when he wrote it under the inspiration of God. Landes' use of the words "theological witness" handicaps the truth-asserting force of that theology in favor of its experiential force. Furthermore, by failing to consider the theology of each textual unit in its diachronic setting (i.e., by failing to limit one's consideration of those theological themes raised by the text's key words, phrases, quotes or allusions to those Scriptures that had appeared already and were known to the writer and audience of the book under consideration for exegesis) that exegesis opens itself to the charge of subjectivism, for once again meaning is tied to something other than the words as the writer of that text intended those words to be understood. In the hands of the friends of Scripture, this method prematurely imported meaning and overladed earlier texts with the subsequent progress of revelation—even when the subjects had been correctly matched. But in the hands of the careless scholar, the whole procedure was a travesty on any fair hermeneutic.

D. *The Failure to Locate the Present Normativeness of the Bible*

The burning question of the hour, then, is this: In whose hands does the final court of appeal rest for deciding normative theology for contemporary readers of Scripture? Even for hypothetical-source critics and historical reconstructionists of the mild variety, such as the Jesuit scholar Norbert Lohfink, the agony of identifying where this final court of appeal resides, given the acceptance of the Wellhausenian hypothesis, is apparent. At first he conjectures that inspiration must now be restricted to the "final redactor." Thus "even though [this final author] possibly did not make a single alteration" in the earlier composition that he reused, this text will now assume the new meaning, which meaning may also be said to be "inerrant." [19] However, he quickly shifted the grounds for what was normative to that which the "whole Bible" taught. In his judgment:

> The Bible is inerrant only as a unity and as a whole . . . to . . . the degree to which within the whole pattern of the meaning of the Scripture [the individual parts] contribute to the formation of its total statement. In this sense it is both possible and obligatory to say that every statement of the Bible is inerrant.[20]
>
> Scripture is only inerrant when it is read as a unity, and when individual statements are critically related to the whole.[21]

Lohfink makes it abundantly clear that Joshua, for example, could "hardly have destroyed" [22] the cities of Jericho and Ai as Joshua

[19]N. Lohfink, *The Christian Meaning of the Old Testament* (tr. R. A. Wilson; London: Burns and Oates, 1969) 32.

[20]Ibid., p. 40.

[21]Ibid., p. 46.

[22]Ibid., p. 47.

6-8 claims, yet he also argues that that text is inerrant! And if you ask, with amazement, "How so? ", Lohfink has an answer:

> Over and above the establishing of the original sense of an utterance, one must erect a further process of exegesis, which goes on to give the total statement of the scripture. Only at this point do we enter the region where the scripture is God's word to us, and where it is therefore inerrant.[23]

But has Lohfink solved our problem? How do we validate that teaching that constitutes the whole? It cannot be that which the sacred writers or the inspired "final authors" or "redactors" or even the single books themselves taught; it can only be what is taught in the whole of the Bible, Lohfink assures us.[24]

But what is it that is in the whole or unity of Scripture that is not also in the individual books or in the grammar and syntax of the sacred writings? Lohfink, trapped by his own logic, turns like some evangelicals also do (for entirely different reasons, at least for this present generation) to a *sensus plenior* or "fuller sense" that goes beyond the consciousness of the original author.[25]

This theory, however, which would make the inspired writer the mere instrument of God while God, the principal author, is viewed as meaning more than the human author did—both using the very same words—misuses the old scholastic analogy of instrumental causality, according to Bruce Vawter's brillant analysis.

> If this fuller or deeper meaning was reserved by God to Himself and did not enter into the writer's purview at all, do we not postulate a Biblical word effected outside the control of the human author's will and judgment . . . and therefore not produced through a truly *human* instrumentality? If, as in the scholastic definitions, Scripture is the *conscriptio* of God and man, does not the acceptance of a *sensus plenior* deprive this alleged scriptural sense of one of its essential elements, to the extent that logically it cannot be called scriptural at all? [26]

Vawter slams the door shut on that type of *sensus plenior.* God's mean-

[23]Ibid., p. 49.

[24]Ibid., p. 39.

[25]Ibid., p. 43. P. B. Payne, "The Fallacy of Equating Meaning with the Author's Intention," *JETS* 20 (1977) 243-252, confuses the issue by (1) including what is properly termed "significance" in his enlarged definition of "meaning" (pp. 244-246), (2) insisting that since writers did not know the "full import" of their own words, they must not be made the final court of appeal for exegesis (p. 248)—a confusion of the larger topic of subject matter with a legitimate and adequate contribution to that subject by an author—and (3) identifying the wrong antecedent for the clause "to which the Spirit of Christ . . . was pointing" in 1 Pet 1:10-12 (p. 249). The prophet's search was not "that which the Spirit was revealing through them"—a most unsure word of prophecy!—but rather "the time" when these things should happen. To prove this, I would urge the syntax of v 11 and ask Payne to identify "not themselves alone" to whom it was *revealed* that they were serving when they also served *us*!

[26]B. Vawter, *Biblical Inspiration* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972) 115. See my own analysis of some related problems in "The Fallacy of Equating Meaning With the Reader's Understanding," *Trinity Journal* 6 (1977) 190-193; also my forthcoming article, "The Single Meaning of Scripture," in *Evangelical Roots: In Memoriam of Wilbur Smith* (ed. K. S. Kantzer; Nashville: Nelson, 1978), for a discussion of the key Biblical passages urged against our view.

ing, on that view, no matter whatever else it is, cannot be equated with Scripture. The words of Scripture will act as little more (if that) than a catalyst in speeding up our reaction to meeting with God and directly receiving our own new revelations.

But a more sophisticated contention avoids the dilemma just posed by announcing that language has a life of its own, independent of its user. In its extreme form this view announces that a literary work of art is totally autonomous of its author and must be understood apart from the intentions of the writer or the circumstances of its origin. In a more modified form, David J. A. Clines states:

> Once it is recognized that the text does not exist as a carrier of information, but has a life of its own, it becomes impossible to talk about *the* meaning of a text, as if it had only *one* proper meaning. . . . Meaning is seen to reside not in the text, but in what the text becomes for the reader. . . . Thus the original author's meaning, which is what is generally meant by *the* meaning of a text, is by no means the only meaning a text may legitimately have (or rather create). We cannot even be sure that a literary text (or any work of art) "originally"— whatever that was—meant one thing and one thing only to its author; even the author may have had multiple meanings in mind. . . . [Therefore] . . . it is not a matter of being quite wrong or even quite right: there are only more and less appropriate interpretations . . . according to how well the world of the [literary piece] comes to expression in the new situation.[27]

Of course the most effective answer to this suggested solution is to use its own hermeneutic on its own writings and to claim some of the very things such interpreters wish to fight as part of the meaning we are receiving from their pens. It is strange how this hermeneutical circle wishes to be temporarily broken and excused from its own position long enough to be understood on the grounds of the position it attacks—namely, that what these new interpreters write has a single meaning exactly as they meant it and as indicated by the use of the words they selected!

But more to the point of the matter: What is this but a surreptitious way of returning to the "four senses" of Scripture as practiced by many of the patristic and medieval exegetes? Let the merits of the Alexandrian school be weighted by the best practices of the Antiochian school to settle this debate. Whether the argument takes the form of linguistic analysis—with its stress on the fact that language has a force and meaning of its own even apart from man as its user—or a Whiteheadian process form of understanding language—where language is important "not [for] its presentation of certain truths as logical relationships, but for its capacity to elicit in the reader a number of 'lures for feeling' "[28]—the bottom line will still be: Which meaning? Which use

[27]D. J. A. Clines, *I, He, We, and They: A Literary Approach to Isaiah 53 (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series, I*; Sheffield: JSOT Sheffield, 1976) 59-61. See also his "Notes for an Old Testament Hermeneutic," *Theology, News and Notes* (March, 1975) 8-10.

[28]B. A. Woodbridge, "Process Hermeneutic: An Approach to Biblical Texts," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1977 Seminar Papers* (ed. P. J. Achtemeier; Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1977) 80.

of language? Which lure and personally interesting feature of the text is the valid one and therefore normative and divinely authoritative for our generation?

These questions immediately spoil everything for some. It brings them back to precisely those questions that the modern ethos had hoped to escape. Admittedly, those propositions identified with the text's meaning as indicated by the author's use of linguistic symbols will need to be the source for making any normative decisions. Barry Woodbridge, however, will weakly complain that such a retrogression constitutes "what Toynbee foresaw as the idolatry of worshiping the past." [29]

We cannot agree. The exegetical question will remain regardless of what our personal preferences are. What is true? What is normative? Should the descriptively true simply be equated with that which is normative and significant for our generation? And can we evangelicals claim that we have escaped our own crisis in exegesis? For is not the current evangelical crisis—commonly referred to as "the battle for the Bible"—at its roots actually one involving just these issues?

Evangelicals have tried, with varying degrees of success, to face up to the chasm that lies between the B. C. or first-century A. D. setting of the Biblical text and the problem of developing a method for appropriating those same texts so that contemporary men and women could also respond to them. Unfortunately, some evangelicals have also explored and, in some cases, sadly adopted some or all of the methods already examined above and found wanting.

Still others have attempted to base their novel methods for identifying secondary or deeper meanings in the practice of the NT writers' quotations of the OT. Paul's alleged allegorical interpretation of the OT has been one favorite way of bridging this chasm. Paul Jewett, for one, argues for an allegorical interpretation of Scripture. In his view, the allegorical understanding of the text will supply something

> more than the ordinary grammatico-historical exegesis of the Old Testament will yield. We do not say that [this conclusion] is reached apart from such exegesis, much less in contradiction to it; but we would emphasize that the attitude of the interpreter to the question of the unity of Scripture determines to a large extent his hermeneutical methods, especially in the area of allegorical or typical interpretation.[30]

But whether that allegorical interpretation is bound to the literal meaning of that text and to the truth-intention of the author of that original text seems to be optional for Jewett.[31]

It would appear that when judged by these standards the oft-repeated judgment of Cardinal Newman would be the consensus of

[29]Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[30]P. Jewett, "Concerning the Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture," *WTJ* 17 (1954) 15. See also M. W. Bloomfield, "Allegory as Interpretation," *New Literary History* 3 (1971-72) 301-317; G. W. Olsen, "Allegory, Typology and Symbol: the *Sensus Spiritualis*," *Communio* 4 (1977) 161-179.

[31]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

many evangelicals as well: "It may be almost laid down as an historical fact, that the mystical interpretation and orthodoxy will stand or fall together." [32] That thesis we seriously doubt. In fact, there may be enough evidence to suggest just the opposite conclusion.

II. AN EVANGELICAL SOLUTION: 1 CORINTHIANS 9:8-10

In an attempt to bring partial relief to the exegetical crisis as defined here, we propose to examine Paul's use of the Mosaic civil law from Deut 25:4 ("you shall not muzzle the ox that threshes") in 1 Cor 9:8-10 to determine how Paul used the OT with a new but related application of a divinely authorized principle.

A. *The Problem of Past Particularity and Present Significance*

Of course, careful students of the Scripture have long since recognized that older Biblical texts were applied to subsequent generations of listeners by the prophets and apostles. For example, Hos 12:3-4 clearly refers to the Jacob-and-Esau struggle at birth in Gen 25:26 and to Jacob's contest with the angel of God in Gen 32:24 ff. and boldly concludes: "[Jacob] met God at Bethel and there God spoke with *us*" (Hos 12:4). Some modern versions are so surprised by the final pronoun "us"—in light of the one thousand intervening years—that they arbitrarily emend the text to "*him.*" The same first person plural pronoun again appears in Heb 6:18 even though the promise and oath spoken of there were not—or so it would appear on a careless reading—directed to "*us*" but instead were announced to Abraham in Gen 12 and 22! Likewise, Paul assigns the significance of "what was written in former days" in the OT as being for "*our* instruction" so that "*we* might have hope" (Rom 15:4).[33]

In a similar manner, Paul clearly asserts in 1 Cor 9:8-10 that the instruction prohibiting the muzzling of oxen when they are threshing was addressed to the Corinthian Church and thus also to "*us.*" How, then, was Paul able to facilely jump the very chasm that has created in a large measure the current exegetical crisis? That is our question here.

B. *The Various Estimates of Paul's Method in 1 Cor 9:8-10*

Usually Paul is credited with accomplishing his exegetical feat by departing from the literal sense of Deut 25:4 and using one of three aberrant methods of exegesis.

1. *Allegory.* A good number of scholars like W. Arndt [34] have

[32] J. H. Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Doctrine* (Baltimore: Penguin, repr. 1974) 340.

[33] See also Rom 4:23 ff.; 1 Cor 10:11; Matt 15:7; 22:31; Mark 7:6; Acts 4:11; Heb 10:15; 12:15-17. See P. Fairbairn, "The Historical Element in God's Revelation," in *Classical Evangelical Essays in OT Interpretation* (ed. W. C. Kaiser, Jr.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972) 72-79.

[34] W. Arndt, "The Meaning of I Cor 9:9, 10," *CTM* 3 (1932) 329-335.

concluded that Paul's argument was an allegorical or mystical understanding of Deuteronomy which, while not violating the literal meaning, was not dependent on it either. Thus this text, and Gal 4:21-31,[35] are usually considered to be the two prime examples of the Pauline use of allegory.

According to A. T. Hanson, an allegory in this situation would mean either "interpreting a text in a sense which completely ignores its original meaning, or in a sense whose connection with its original meaning is purely arbitrary."[36] In Hanson's view Paul may be acquitted of deliberately designing an allegorical use of the OT, for the literal meaning of Deut 25:4 has not completely disappeared. 1 Cor 9:8-9 is only "formally" an example of allegory, but "not consciously" constructed to be so.[37]

Richard Longenecker, however, takes a harder line. Paul, in his opinion, "seems to leave the primary meaning of the injunction in Deut 25:4 . . . and interprets the Old Testament allegorically."[38] For him the point hinges on the word *pantōs* ("it is written *pantōs* for our sakes"). If *pantōs* is to be translated "altogether" or "entirely," then Paul ruled out the literal meaning. But if the word is to be translated "certainly" or "undoubtedly," then Paul merely claims a second meaning is to be found alongside the literal meaning of Deut 25:4. More on this later.

Adolf Deissmann was caustic in his espousing this position:

> With Philo, as also with Paul, allegorical exegesis . . . was more a sign of freedom than of bondage, though it led both of them to great violence of interpretation.
>
> [Among the] instances of such violence [is] . . . the application of the words about the ox, which was not to be muzzled while threshing, to the Apostles. Paul . . . speaks in these strangely unpractical and feeble words as a man from the city, who does not regard animals.[39]

[35]For a good discussion of this text by my colleague see R. J. Kepple, "An Analysis of Antiochene Exegesis of Galatians 4:24-26," *WTJ* 39 (1977) 239-249.

[36]T. Hanson, *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974) 159. H. A. Wolfson, *Philo* (Cambridge: 1947), 1. 134, defined it this way: "The allegorical method essentially means the interpretation of a text in terms of something else, irrespective of what that something else is." P. Jewett, however, cautions that it must be in terms of "something else" which has organic or analogical relationships, "Allegorical," p. 11. Jewett rejects Philo's allegories because he interpreted Scripture by analogy with Greek philosophy, and this disregarded the unity of Scripture and was therefore an illegitimate type of allegorical interpretation.

[37]Ibid., p. 166.

[38]R. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975) 126. H. A. W. Meyer also argued that "the apostle *sets aside* the actual *historical sense* of that prohibition . . . in behalf of an allegorical sense, which . . . is not but an *application* made 'a minori ad majus'. . . . But this need not surprise us, considering the freedom used in the typico-allegorical method of interpreting Scripture, which regarded such an application as the *reference* of the utterance in question designed by God, and which from *this* standpoint did not take the historical sense into account along with the other at all" (*A Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Corinthians* [New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884] 201).

[39]A. Deissmann, *Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History* (tr. W. E. Wilson; New York: Harper, 1957) 102-103.

Notice that Deissmann did not hesitate to charge Paul with a grossly erroneous use of the Old Testament Scriptures because of his alleged allegorical interpretations.

2. *Rabbinic Type of Argument.* The Anchor Bible took another stance. For Orr and Walther, Paul here employed "the Rabbinic principle of argument from the lesser to the greater (*qal wa ḥomer*)" and thus his "citation is much less precise than modern hermeneutical standards allow." [40] Most of these examples from the Talmud are analogical applications of this law, which must have gained great popularity if one may judge from the number of its occurrences in this literature and from Paul's use of it again in 1 Tim 5:18.[41] Nevertheless, C. K. Barrett concluded that Paul's argument was not of a *minori ad majus* (*qal wāḥōmer*) sort.[42]

3. *Hellenistic Jewish Exegesis.* A third school of opinion is exhibited by Hans Conzelmann. Paul, he explained, expounded "according to the Hellenistic Jewish principle that God's concern is with higher things" so that the literal sense has been abandoned because it expressed something unworthy of God.[43] The detailed prescriptions of the law may therefore be treated allegorically.

4. *Literal Theological Exegesis.* In spite of all the assurances to the contrary, it will be our contention here that Paul has neither abandoned the literal meaning nor taken liberties with the Mosaic legislation in order to obtain divine authorization for ministerial honoraria. No one has seen this better than F. Godet.[44] He pointed to the total context of Deut 24-25: the command to restore the poor man his garment (24:10-13), to pay the poor laborer his wages on the same day (24:14-15), to leave the corners of the fields for widows and strangers to glean (24:19-22), and so forth. The whole Deuteronomic context, he argued, showed that Moses' concern was not for oxen alone but to develop gentleness and gratitude in their owners. "It was the duties of *moral beings* to one another that God wished to impress" on mankind.[45] With convincing logic and excellent methodology, Godet explained:

> Paul does not, therefore, in the least suppress the historical and natural meaning of the precept.... He recognizes it fully, and it is precisely by starting from this sense that he rises to a higher applica-

[40]W. Orr and J. A. Walther, *I Corinthians* (AB; Garden City: Doubleday, 1976) 241, 238.

[41]For an easily accessible digest and discussion of most of these rabbinic references see Hanson, *Studies*, pp. 163-165.

[42]C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper, 1968) 206.

[43]H. Conzelmann, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (tr. J. W. Leitch; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 155 and n. 38.

[44]F. Godet, *Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (tr. A. Cusin; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 2. 11.

[45]Ibid.

> tion.... Far from arbitrarily allegorizing, he applies, by a well-founded *a fortiori*, to a higher relation what God had prescribed with reference to a lower relation.... The precept has not its full sense except when applied to a reasonable being....
>
> It is difficult to suppress a smile when listening to the declamations of our moderns against the allegorizing mania of the Apostle Paul.... Paul does not in the least allegorize.... From the literal and natural meaning of the precept he disentangles a profound truth, a law of humanity and equity.[46]

Calvin is even more insistent:

> We must not make the mistake of thinking that Paul means to explain that commandment allegorically; for some empty-headed creatures make this an excuse for turning everything into allegory, so that they change dogs into men, trees into angels, and convert the whole of Scripture into an amusing game.
>
> But what Paul actually means is quite simple: though the Lord commands consideration for the oxen, He does so, not for the sake of the oxen, but rather out of regard for men, for whose benefit even the oxen were created. Therefore that humane treatment of oxen ought to be an incentive, moving us to treat each other with consideration and fairness.[47]

What, then, about the oxen? "Does God care for [them]?" (1 Cor 9:9b).[48] What would appear at first to be a flat Pauline denial of God's care for oxen is, as Arthur P. Stanley correctly observed,

> one of the many instances where the lesson which is regarded as subordinate is denied altogether as in Hos. vi. 6, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," and Ezek. xx. 25, "gave them statutes which were not good." [49]

Thus it was not so much for animals as it was for men that God had spoken, but both were definitely involved in God's directive. This should solve the *pantōs* problem.[50]

[46]Ibid., pp. 13, 16.

[47]J. Calvin, *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (tr. J. W. Fraser; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 187-188. See also *The Works of St. Chrysostom* in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* XII; First Series (ed. P. Schaff; New York: Christian Literature, 1889) 120-121.

[48]G. M. Lee, "Studies in Texts: I Cor 9:9-10," *Theology* 71 (1968) 122-123, is worried about a possible callousness on God's part for oxen. But Philo referred to Deut 25:4 as an example of the law's concern for animals (*De Virtutibus*, 146). Yet in *De Offerentibus*, 251, Philo says God speaks only on behalf of creatures with reason and sense. Again in *De Specialibus Legibus* I, 26, he comments, "For you will find all this elaborate detail indicates indirectly (*antittomenan*) the improvement of your morals. For the law is not concerned with irrational creatures, but with those who possess mind and reason" [!]. The citation and translation is from A. T. Hanson, *Studies*, p. 164.

[49]A. P. Stanley, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Corinthians* (4th ed.; London: John Murray, 1876) 142. We might also add the further examples of Jer 7:21; Hos 6:6; Matt 9:13; 12:7; cf. 1 Pet 1:12, "not for themselves, but for you [the prophets] were ministering." E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, repr. 1968) 24, argues (along with Rückert and Tholuck) that there is the figure of speech called ellipsis here involving the omission of the word "only" ("is God concerned [only] about oxen?") as perhaps also in Luke 14:12.

[50]R. Jamieson, A. F. Fausset and D. Brown, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n. d.), 2. 278, follow Grotius and translate *pantōs* "mainly" or "especially." It certainly conveys the sense in this context.

But did Paul give Deut 25:4 a meaning the words did not possess? The solution to that question is to be found in Paul's answer to his own query: "Is not [God] speaking simply[51] (*pantōs*) for our sakes?" (1 Cor 9:10). "Yes (*gar*)," Paul continued, "it was written for our sakes." And then comes the crucial word in the translation: the Greek word *hoti*.

Three different ways of rendering this word have been suggested: (1) in a declarative or explicative sense, giving the substance of the Deuteronomy command in different words (H. A. W. Meyer, C. F. Kling); (2) in a recitative sense, introducing a quotation from a non-canonical source (Rückert, Weiss, Conzelmann); or (3) in a causal sense, giving the reason why God gave this figurative command (Godet, Calvin, Alford, Hodge, Stanley).

Since Paul's reference to "it is written" (especially with the affirmative *gar*, "yes") can only be to the preceding quotation from Deuteronomy, the notion that he is introducing a quote from an apocryphal book is ruled out immediately. Likewise the declarative or explicative sense will not fit; his purpose is not to give the contents of the Mosaic command. Deuteronomy had nothing specifically to say about oxen plowing or that the ox that threshes is the same one that had plowed those very fields. Paul wants to give the reason *why* he said that law was written for our sakes. The meaning of the command is a principle for all men: The workman, be he man or animal, is to be rewarded for his labor. And to whom is the command directed? Only to men.

What, then, is Paul's reasoning? It is not that plowing and threshing are two parallel works each worthy of reward. Rather it is that the one who has been on the job working (or, in Paul's continuing agricultural metaphor, plowing in hope) ought to be the one who is there when the recompense for that labor is passed out (i. e., at the threshing of the harvest thus yielded).

Paul has not given a different meaning or a secondary and hidden sense to the Mosaic command. He has expertly taken from its temporary wrapping a permanent principle, as Moses intended.

C. *The Modern Use of Scripture*

Thus both the literal meaning and the theological significance of Deut 25:4 were preserved by the apostle without resorting to any of our contemporary substitutes. This text may serve then as a graphic illustration as to how we too may begin to bridge that notorious chasm between the B. C. text and the A. D. needs of men and end the exegetical crisis in our day.

Paul argues his case for the rights of pastoral support on four separate levels: (1) the level of illustration from experience: the soldier, vinegrower and herdsman—1 Cor 9:7; (2) the level of the authority of Scripture: Deut 25:4 (cf. 1 Tim 5:18 in subsequent usage)—vv 8-11;

[51]C. K. Barrett's happy rendering of *pantōs*, *Commentary*, p. 205.

(3) the level of illustration from current practice in the Church and in pagan religions—vv 12-13; and (4) the authoritative teachings of Jesus—v 14.

Paul grounds his argument in the authority derived from Scripture and the teaching of Jesus. His reading of the text was not done at the expense of the literal meaning. However, neither was he so taken with materials on animal husbandry and background studies that he had no message for the contemporary situation.

How then did Paul make any legitimate connection between the Mosaic requirement of rewarding the labors of oxen and urging that the Corinthians supply material rewards to the missionary or preacher in their midst? Does Scripture have a "hidden meaning," known only to God, which eludes the original authors and most readers? If it has, then whatever else that "hidden meaning" is, it is not Scripture as we have already argued above. And our concern, like the apostle's, must be with what God has communicated by means of the truth intentions of his human authors. To allow a "pastoral meaning" that may mean something in addition to the grammatical-syntactical-theological meaning (as does I. Howard Marshall [52]) or an "exegesis" that approaches the text from a separate level of understanding than the grammatical-historical meaning (as David Kelsey did [53]) is likewise unwarranted and ultimately devoid of the authority it seeks.

Without consuming more time with the history of the discussion, we affirm that the connection between rewarding oxen and pastors is textually derived and is to be found in E. D. Hirsch's earlier distinction between "meaning" and "significance."

The textual connection is simple: Moses spoke primarily for the benefit of the rational beings who owned the oxen. The whole immediate context of Deut 24-25 as well as its larger setting was but a series of precedent-setting examples in the realm of civil law that illustrated the rightful divine demands that the moral law made on men. While it is remarkable that Paul did not appeal directly to Deut 24:15—"You shall give the hired servant his wages on the day he earns them"—nevertheless the wisdom of embarrassing God's reluctant people to give to preachers who served them well what they would have given to dumb animals is apparent. Furthermore, the illustration suited his other examples from the sphere of agriculture in v 7 very well.

"Meaning" is clearly distinguished from "significance" in Paul, yet they are not so distinctive as not to be in touch with one another. For the first, Paul establishes the principle that God spoke to men (not oxen) primarily for their moral growth in attitudes of fairness and generosity. "Meaning" here is specifically limited to the text and that

[52]I. H. Marshall: "I would be prepared to accept a 'pastoral' interpretation of John 4, even if it were not in the author's mind.... It could be that in scripture too there was a meaning different from that intended by the author," *JETS* 17 (1974) 67-73, esp. p. 72.

[53]D. H. Kelsey, *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 199-201.

which Moses meant by his use of these words. Only in this case will Paul's citation gain any status of authority in persuading men.

"Significance," in E. D. Hirsch's terms, names a relationship between that meaning and a person, a concept, or a situation. Consequently Paul does proceed to name one specific area where a relationship between that meaning and the persons under consideration exists—namely, the fair remuneration of preachers. In this case, the relationship was made on the basis of its contextual setting and its antecedent theology. The examples given by Moses in Deuteronomy were not meant to be an exhaustive listing or even ends in themselves; they were only illustrations that were to serve as incentives to fairness and generosity. And rational beings did not exist for the benefit of nonrational creatures, but vice versa: Earlier Mosaic teaching in the creation account had already determined that animals were created for man's benefit. Neither was the mere performance of the civil law or even the ceremonial law the object of God's commandment, but rather the moral law which was the embodiment of the nature and being of God. All of these arguments can be established exegetically in a diachronic Biblical theology of the OT [54] but for our purposes here will be just stated.

Paul arrived at this unique application of his text by first preserving Moses' right to say what he intended to say by his own words before he established any new relationships of the same principle. Paul did *not* (1) allegorize (Hanson, Longenecker), (2) establish typico-allegorical counterparts for the OT (H. A. W. Meyer), (3) contend only for what loosely belonged to the whole of Scripture as his inerrant grounds (Lohfink), (4) try to draw on the entire theological corpus of Scripture as "witness" (Sanders, Lohfink), or (5) claim that he had God's meaning (a *sensus plenior* or new hermeneutic) that was over and above or in addition to whatever the original meaning might have been.

Christian ministers had the right to expect that their hearers and congregations would support them and provide for their material needs much as soldiers receive pay, the vineyard planters eat the fruit from their vines, and shepherds enjoy the milk supplied by their herds. For "does not the law say the same thing? [Wasn't] it written in the law of Moses?" (1 Cor. 9:8b-9a). If the principle that all workers have a right to be paid for their services (be they animal or human) is what is written, and that is what Moses meant, then that is what God meant. The issue was settled. New relationships where the identical principle could be established for the same reasons were all that was left for the interpreter to do. And these relationships were to be established along the same contextual and theological lines as they had been in the original passage quoted. Accordingly, so must modern exe-

[54]See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming, April, 1978). See the fine discussion of the patristic use of *skopos* (by which they meant the unifying theological purpose for each Biblical book) in A. E. Johnson, "The Methods and Presuppositions of Patristic Exegesis in the Formation of Christian Personality," *Dialog* 16 (1977) 186-190.

getes operate if we are going to end the current crisis in exegesis.

Again, we insist on asking, in whose hands does the final court of appeal rest for deciding normative theology for contemporary readers? There can be only one legitimate answer if communication is to continue and if men are going to be able to declare the Word of God with authority: in the original writers' hands, in their single meaning and principle for each text, in their contextual settings, in the theology that informs their writings and in the faithful naming of new relationships between that original meaning and contemporary persons, conceptions and situations.