Post-Reformation reformed dogmatics: 
the rise and development of reformed orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725

Muller, Richard A.

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The right of public interpretation of Scripture and of adjudging the truth of interpretation in public do not belong to all, but only to those who have been supplied with both the gifts and the calling to the task." The apostle Paul, moreover, identifies these gifts — the first is the gift of prophecy or teaching, and the second (which, the Synopsis carefully notes, is included in the first) is the gift of discretion and of the testing of spirits. Scripture testifies, moreover, in many places to this special calling — so that we need not doubt the presence of sound interpretation, grounded on the diligent reading and meditation on Scripture, in all ages of the church. Although it remains the case that all teaching must be measured against the biblical Word itself and the witness of the Spirit in and through Scripture, and that false teachers who distort the Word must be rejected on the basis of the Christian right to discern and adjudicate the spirit of teachers and their words. Authority, therefore, is always measured by the veracity of the interpretation.

7.3 The “Divers Senses” and the Unity of Scripture

A. The “Literal Sense” of Scripture and Its Breadth of Meaning, from the Reformation to Orthodoxy

1. The Reformers and the sensus literalis. The Reformation and its sometime ally, Renaissance humanism, brought new tools and new attitudes to the study of the text of Scripture. The changing patterns of hermeneutics characteristic of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the concentration on the Hebrew and Greek texts, and the emphasis on a single meaning, springing from study of the grammar and syntax of the original languages, fueled the fires of the Reformation — particularly its critique of doctrines that rested either on a problematic rendering in the Vulgate or on the allegorical, tropological, and anagogical meanings of the text. In addition, concentration on the original languages of the text created a more pronounced division between the canonical Old Testament and the Apocrypha than had been experienced when the Vulgate functioned as the primary foundation for exegesis. As the Reformation progressed, however, from rebellion and critique to institutional church and confessional orthodoxy, its theologians were forced, both by Roman Catholic polemic and by the burden of positive theological formulation, to deal with the problem of interpretive movement from exegesis to doctrine and preaching. Medieval exegesis was no longer possible nor desirable given the state of hermeneutics and of Protestant doctrine — but the question of the spiritual and churchly reading of the text of Scripture remained, indeed, was heightened in importance, in view of the increased distance between the text, now in Hebrew and Greek rather than churchly Latin, and the complex doctrinal formulae of traditional theological system. Whereas the Reformers rejected the Quadriga and many of the results of medieval exegesis, they did not reject hermeneutical devices like the movement from promise or shadow in

120. Synopsis purioris theologiae, V.xxxii-xxxiv, citing Romans 12:6 and 1 Cor. 14:3; Amyraut et al., Syntagma thesium theologicanim, Lix.39.
121. Synopsis purioris theologiae, V.xxxv-vi.
the Old Testament to fulfillment or reality in the New Testament, nor did they set aside a typological understanding of the relation of the Old to the New Covenant. It is important to recognize the continuity of this struggle with the late medieval and Reformation development. From Nicholas of Lyra onward there was, at least on the part of many exegetes, a movement away from the quadrivium toward a more grammatically controlled method. This movement was slow and fraught with difficulties, not the least of which was the precise determination of what was "literal." A case in point is the hermeneutic of the French humanist Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, argued in his Quincuplex Psalmorum of 1509. Lefèvre defined the "literal sense" as representing "the intention of the prophet and of the Holy Spirit speaking in him" or as the sense "that agrees with the Spirit and which the Holy Spirit shows forth." According to this definition, Lefèvre could argue that the literal meaning of the Psalter is "Christ the Lord," as is made clear by the apostolic interpretation of Psalms 1, 2, 17, 18, and 20.

The problem encountered by Lefèvre — which is, simply stated, the problem of finding the churchly and doctrinal significance of an ancient Israelite text while at the same time affirming a single literal meaning — was not confined to late medieval and humanist exegesis. It is a problem at the heart of the exegesis of the Reformers. Like Lefèvre, Martin Luther returned to the original languages, and also like Lefèvre, Luther found Christ in the Psalms. Indeed, Luther had no difficulty in claiming that the Psalter must be interpreted in terms of the New Testament fulfillment of prophecy and that, therefore, Christ's speech in the New Testament established Christ definitively as the speaker in the Psalter. Even in his later years, Luther retained this emphasis on a christological reading of the Old Testament and, in addition, retained a powerful affinity for the tropological reading of the text, as witnessed throughout his lectures on Genesis.
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In Calvin's exegetical works we do find an increased emphasis on literal, grammatical meaning and even on a genuinely historical reading of the Old Testament, at least in terms of Calvin's unwillingness to do christological exegesis. Lutheran exegetes of the day viewed Calvin's interpretations of the Old Testament as "Judaizing." Nonetheless, Calvin's interpretations evidence a continuing difficulty with the "literal sense" and with the precise identification of what is in fact "literal." Granting that the New Testament is understood as the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament and, therefore, as a final statement of the meaning of prophecy, there is little difficulty in accepting Calvin's assertions that his exegesis is literal and grammatical with reference to his commentaries on the gospels and epistles. There is, surely, a great deal of theological interpretation in Calvin's New Testament commentaries, but virtually nothing that could be viewed as allegorical. In his commentaries and lectures on the Old Testament, however, despite his unwillingness to christologize the text, Calvin does put what, from a modern, "critical" perspective, appears to be a considerable strain on the "letter" and the grammar of the text: prophecies of the Kingdom, for example, can refer equally well to the post-exilic reestablishment of Israel, to Christ's bringing of the kingdom in the preaching of the New Testament, to the establishment of true Christianity in Geneva, and to the consummation of the kingdom of God at the final judgment. Calvin then obliquely applies this critique of allegorism to medieval exegesis — and goes on to meet objections, such as the claim that "Scripture ... is fertile, and thus produces a variety of meanings." "I acknowledge," he responds,

127. Thus, Aegidius Hunnius, Calvinus Judaizans, hoc est judaicae glossae et corruptiones, quibus J. Calvinus scriptura sacra loca, testimonia de gloriosa trinitate (Wittenberg, 1593); on Calvin's literalism, see David L. Puckett, John Calvin's Exegesis of the Old Testament (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).
130. Calvin, Commentary on Galatians, 4:22, in loc. (CTS Galatians, p. 135).
that Scripture is a most rich and inexhaustible fountain of all wisdom; but I deny that its fertility consists in the various meanings which any man, at his pleasure, may assign. Let us know, then, that the true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; and let us embrace and abide by it resolutely.131

Were one to stop examining Calvin's argument at this point, he would appear to be an adamant opponent of all allegory and a strict advocate of a rather strict literal sense — and indeed he is, if it is recognized that the literal sense of a text may itself be an allegory or, indeed, an anagoge!

But what reply shall we make to Paul's assertion, that these things are allegorical? Paul certainly does not mean that Moses wrote the history for the purpose of being turned into an allegory, but points out in what way the history may be made to answer the present subject. This is done by observing a figurative representation of the Church there delineated. And a mystical interpretation of this sort (αὐθαγογιά) was not inconsistent with the true and literal meaning, when a comparison was drawn between the Church and the family of Abraham. As the house of Abraham was then a true Church, so it is beyond all doubt that the principal and most memorable events which happened in it are so many types to us. As in circumcision, in sacrifices, in the whole Levitical priesthood, there was an allegory, as there is an allegory at the present day in our sacraments, — so was there likewise in the house of Abraham; but this does not involve a departure from the literal meaning. In a word, Paul adduces the history, as containing a figurative representation of the two covenants in the two wives of Abraham, and of the two nations in his two sons. And Chrysostom, indeed, acknowledges that the word allegory points out the present application to be (κατάχορις) different from the natural meaning; which is perfectly true.132

Calvin finds allegories and even examples of anagoge in Scripture, particularly in the Old Testament. He also, certainly, found a moral or tropological sense in the text. He objected strenuously to the importation of invented allegories, but he also taught the careful interpretation of the allegories imbedded in the text as its literal sense, a literal sense different from the "natural meaning" of the words when not taken as an allegory or an anagoge.

2. The problem of the "letter" in the era of orthodoxy. This recognition of a certain degree of breadth in the literal sense of text carried over into Protestant orthodoxy — and debate over the nature of the literal sense remained an aspect of the movement of hermeneutics from the era of the Renaissance and Reformation toward the beginnings of modern critical exegesis in the eighteenth century. The Protestant orthodox early on addressed the problem of the various senses of Scripture with a view to showing the rootage of sound doctrine in a broadly defined literal sense and to manifesting the source of Roman Catholic abuses and errors in an allegorizing approach to Scripture. Whitaker's Disputation thus reflects both the Protestant view of the Reformed Orthodox Doctrine of Scripture

131. Calvin, Commentary on Galatians, 4:22, in loco (CTS Galatians, p. 135).
of the *quadriga* as a source and justification of error and the continuing debate over the nature of the literal sense. "We concede," he writes,

such things as allegory, anagogé, and tropology in scripture; but meanwhile we deny that there are many and various senses. We affirm that there is but one true, proper, and genuine sense of scripture, arising from the words rightly understood, which we call the literal: and we contend that allegories, tropologies, and anagogés are not various senses, but various collections from one sense, or various applications and accommoda-
tions of that one meaning.133

"Various collections" and "divers senses" can be identified in a text, but only when they arise directly from the literal grammatical meaning of the text: there is one genuine sense but there are various theological directions in which that sense points, particularly those directions indicated by the fulfillment of prophecy or by figures and types in the text. Words, the orthodox insist, can have only a single sense in any particular place — otherwise there is an ambiguity of meaning and ambiguity breeds errors in interpretation.134

In dealing with this problem of "divers senses of scripture" Leigh and others among the orthodox argue a basic distinction between the primary exegetical work related to translation and the subsequent work of exposition: "explication" or "the finding out of the meaning of any place, ... is more theological, the other (translation) being rather grammatical." Nevertheless, the explication of the meaning of Scripture attends closely to the grammatical and philological problems of the text as the only way to elicit theological implications:

The Scripture hath often two senses, one of which the latter Divines call Literal, Grammatical, or Historical, another mystical or Spiritual. The sense of the Scripture is that which God the Author of the Scripture intended in and by the Scriptures gives men to know and understand. The right expounding of Scripture consists in two things. 1. In giving the right sense. 2. In a right application of the same, 1 Cor. 14.3.135

Turretin similarly rejects the fourfold exegesis and states categorically that "Holy Scripture has only one true and genuine sense." Nonetheless, this one sense can either be "simple" or "composite," which is to say, either the historical sense of the text "which contains the declaration of one thing only, whether a precept, a doctrine, or a historical event" or a "mixed sense" such as is found in prophecy, where part of the sense lies

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134. Maccovius, *Loci communes*, cap. vii (pp. 50-51); cf. Pictet, *Theol. chr.*, Lxviii.2; and note the discussion of Benjamin Keach’s similar views of allegory in Harris, “Allegory to Analogy in the Interpretation of Scripture,” p. 11.

in the type and part in the antitype. The simple sense, moreover, itself is twofold, either "proper and grammatical" or "figurative or tropical." In the former case, the literal sense is indicated by the words themselves; in the latter it lies in what the words signify. In no case, however, is there more than one sense of the text, because these several levels of meaning belong to the single intention of the Spirit.

It is typical, therefore, for the Reformed orthodox to insist on a single, literal and grammatical meaning of the text of Scripture and to argue that no extrapolated allegorical, tropological or anagogical sense of the text can ever be a firm basis for theological formulation — no matter how edifying or spiritually invigorating it may appear to be. Nonetheless, the canonical character of the whole of Scripture and the assumption that the canon, as such, was inspired and the infallible rule of faith and practice, led back to the problem of the spiritual meaning of Scripture according to which the whole of the Bible belonged to the church for its doctrinal and practical edification. Symbolic meanings were not rejected, but the old scholastic maxim, *theologia symbolica non est argumentativa* was strictly applied, even in preaching:

Let [allegories] be used sparingly and soberly. Let them not be far fetched, but fitting to the matter in hand. They must be quickly dispatched. They are to be used for the instruction of the life, and not to prove any point of faith.

The Reformed made a strict distinction between allegories and figures that were intrinsic to the text and therefore its literal sense and allegories imposed from without by the imaginative expositor. As Keach made the point, "Parabolical theology is not argumentative: that is, any exposition or accommodation of them beyond their native scope, or wherein the interpretation disagrees with the analogy of faith, or where it is superstitiously wrested; this is like 'the wringing of the nose till it brings blood.'"

The identification of allegories or other figures like tropes or anagoge intrinsic to the text was, therefore, a fundamental aspect of the work of the exegete. Perkins' Genevan contemporary, Jean Diodati, could simply declare that, in "the art of expounding the holy Scriptures," the first or "definitive" step "gives the sense and meaning of the Text: to which head [divines] refer the Literal, Tropologicall or Morall, the Anagogicall, and the Allegorical sense."

Owen could indicate that it was characteristic of the Old Testament to speak in allegories and types as it adumbrated

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139. Keach, _Tropologia_, II, Of Parables, 6 (p. 240).
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The sense, moreover, itself is twofold, actual and tropical. In the former case, the sense of the text, because these were the mention of the Spirit. 137

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173-182, and note, Donald R.

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142. Keach, Tropologia, I.1.22 (pp. 192-193, 195).

143. Cf. Leigh, Treatise, I.x, pp. 171-175.
indicated centuries before. In the second place, the orthodox hermeneutic allows no gap between the "right sense" and the "right application" of the text: grammatical meaning and meanings pro nobis cannot be divorced — the reason being that there, in the text, is no past voice of God speaking to the past but the viva vox dei addressing the present.

The assumption that each text of Scripture has but one meaning relates directly to the orthodox Protestant doctrine of the clarity and self-evidencing light of the text. If Scripture is to be regarded as self-evidencing and self-authenticating — which is to say in no need of the authority of church or pope to guarantee its meaning — then its meaning must be clear and readily available. This could only be so if there were "only one meaning for every place in Scripture."\textsuperscript{144} Ames makes the connection between clarity and unity of meaning quite forcefully: "Otherwise the meaning of Scripture would not only be unclear and uncertain, but there would be no meaning at all — for anything which does not mean one thing surely means nothing."\textsuperscript{145}

The literal sense," Leigh continues is that which the letter itself, or the words taken in their genuine signification carry. And because the genuine signification of the words is that, in which the Author useth them, whether speaking properly or figuratively, therefore the literal sense is divided into plain and simple, and figurative which ariseth from the words translated from their natural signification into another, as where Christ saith John 10.16. \textit{I have other sheep which are not of this fold; whereby he understandeth other people besides the Jews.}\textsuperscript{146}

Leigh's central point is, after all, not very far from the definition of Aquinas — "the literal sense is that which the author intends, and the author of Scripture is God."\textsuperscript{147}

This definition applies even to the Song of Songs, which can be said to have a literal sense that is "mediate" rather than "immediate," insofar as its meaning arises "not immediately from the words, but mediatorily from the scope, that is, the intention of the Spirit, which is couched under the figures and allegories ... [and] ... is gathered from the whole complex expressions together." There is, therefore, a "two-fold literal sense of Scripture," first "proper and immediate" as in the statement that "Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter;" the second "figurative and mediate" as in Matthew 22:2 where the text reads, "a certain king made a marriage unto his son," where the text is part of a parable: the first statement is "fulfilled" in Solomon himself, the second in the "calling of the Jews and Gentiles unto fellowship" with the Son of God.\textsuperscript{148} Even so, the "mystical or spiritual sense" of the text must also be firmly grounded in the literal reading: "The mystical or spiritual sense is that in which the thing expressed

\textsuperscript{144} Ames, Marrow, i.xxxiv.2; cf. Maccovius, Loci communes, cap. vii (p. 50).
\textsuperscript{145} Ames, Marrow, i.xxxiv.2
\textsuperscript{146} Leigh, Treamt, lx (pp. 171-172), citing Sixtus Amama, "Est ille literalis sensus qui proxime per ipsa verba sive propria sive figurata sunt, significatur, vel ut Glassius, quem intendit proxime Spiritus Sanctus."
\textsuperscript{147} Aquinas, Summa theologiae, ia, q.1, a.10; and cf. the discussion above, 1.2.
\textsuperscript{148} Durham, Claus Cantici, p. 28.
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in the literal sense signifieth another thing in a mystery, for the shadowing out of which it was used by God." As an example Leigh states, "the waters of the Flood, with which the ark was upheld, signified Baptism, by which the church is saved under the New Covenant." This leads to the dictum, "Not the Letter," in the sense of the naked text, grammatically understood apart from issues of scope, "but the right sense and meaning of the Scripture is God's Word." By extension, then, the Scripture really has but one sense: "Verum sensus Scripturae est unicus, qui cum mente Spiritus S., circumstantiis loci, & analogia fidei convenit."151

B. Against Rome: The Unity of the True Sense of Scripture in Its Figures of Speech

1. The literal sense as, potentially, a figure. The definitions of the single literal sense of the text offered by the Reformed orthodox, therefore, refuse to locate the literal meaning of the text in a reductionistically grammatical reading that takes no cognizance of figures of speech in the text itself or that atomizes the text in such a way that the broader context or "circumstances" of the place, the larger analogy of faith, and the divine authorship are not taken into consideration. These definitions bring the orthodox into controversy with "the papists" who insist on so restricting the literal sense that further meanings — namely, "literal" meanings or the meanings associated with the quadriga — need to be grafted on to the text. The "papists" say the literal sense is that which is gathered immediately out of the words, the spiritual which hath another reference than to that which the words do properly signify. This last they divide into Allegorical, Tropological, Anagogical; they say that Scripture beside the literal sense, may have these also.152

After defining the threefold spiritual sense and, in some cases, citing the medieval rhyming definition,153 the Reformed pass on to criticism: there are three errors in the Roman pattern of interpretation: first, in the definition of the literal sense as "that which the words immediately present" which frequently in the Old Testament ignores the primarily figurative significance of the words; second, in the claim that there may be several literal senses of a text; and third, in the "division of the mystical sense into Allegorical, Tropological, Anagogical."154

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150. Leigh, Treatise, I.xi (p. 172, margin).
152. Leigh, Treatise, Ix (p. 172); also Rijssen, Summa, I.xxiii, controversia: "An omni in loco sint quattuor diversi sensus; literalis, allegoricus, anagogicus, tropologicus? Neg. cont. Pontif."
153. Turretin, Inst. theol. elencticae, II.xix.i; Leigh, Treatise, Ix (p. 172, margin): "Litera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria; Mora/is quid agas, quo tendas anagogia." Leigh also notes the association of the three spiritual senses with the three Christian virtues: allegorica - fides - credenda / tropologica - charitas - agenda / anagogica - spes - speranda (cf. pp. 172-173).
154. Leigh, Treatise, Ix (p. 173); Whitaker, Disputation, Vi (pp. 403-406).
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To the first claim, that the literal sense is that which the words directly or immediately provide in and of themselves, the Reformed orthodox reply that the definition is false — and, indeed, that the false definition becomes an excuse to develop allegories from texts that appear, in themselves, to be meaningless or absurd. For example, the prophetic statement in Psalm 91:13, “Thou shalt go upon the adder and the basilisk; the lion and the dragon thou shalt trample under foot?” either has no literal sense at all, or the literal sense of the text is something other than the words immediately provide, inasmuch as Christ, to whom the text ultimately refers, never trampled on adders, basilisks, lions, or dragons. Or, again, Christ’s command in Matt. 5:29-30, “If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out; if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off,” is absurd taken literally in terms of the superficial meaning of the words themselves. There is, however, no reason to allegorize the text in order to make it meaningful. Rather, the exegete must recognize that “the literal sense is not that which the words immediately suggest... but rather that which arises from the words themselves, whether they be taken strictly or figuratively.”

2. The unitary literal sense, including figures in the text. Given that the literal sense of a text may in fact be figurative, the Roman claim that there may be more than one literal sense must also be set aside:

We hold that there is but one true proper and genuine sense of Scripture viz. the literal or grammatical, whether it arise from the words properly taken, or figuratively understood, or both. For that there should be divers literal senses of one and the same place, is against the truth, the Text, and reason. ...The literal sense can then be but one in one place, though a man may draw sundry consequences, à contrariis, à similibus.

Once again, the principle offered in argument against allegorization looks almost as much to Thomas Aquinas’ insistence on the univocity of the literal sense as it does to the Reformers’ insistence on literal-grammatical exegesis. Aquinas had recognized the impossibility of drawing theological conclusions from the text if its meaning were equivocal — and Protestant scholasticism with its doctrine of sola scriptura and its concomitant rejection of tradition and the Church’s magisterium as equivalent norms of doctrine had even greater need of the principle than Aquinas. The Protestant

155. Whitaker, Disputation, Vii (pp. 404-405).
156. Whitaker, Disputation, Vii (p. 404).
157. Leigh, Treatise, Iix (pp. 173-174).

Thus, disregarding allegoric Citing the group, of course, to mean the text a group as a grounds, means of the text, “en the "my" interpretation, however, not appear, prefigure signs of be prefigurin: Pictet, a double intended in the text, must make the faith of faith. By the same, itself, par...
orthodox do not entirely reject the allegorical, tropological, and anagogical interpretations of the text: they exist as valid applications of or conclusions drawn from the literal sense.

So we conclude that those are not divers senses, but one sense diversely applied. The literal sense is the only sense of the place, because out of that sense only may an argument be framed. ... It is manifest that is always the sense of the Holy Ghost, which is drawn from the very words.

Thus, there are allegories in the text, according to the intention of the Spirit, but allegories of human invention, brought to the text from without, must be excluded.

Citing the medieval scholastic dictum, Leigh notes in favor of the literal sense as the ground of all meaning, "theologia symbolica non est argumentativa." This dictum, of course, applies only to human allegories and not to parabolic or spiritual implications of the text itself, placed thereby the divine hand. Thus, the sense mysticus can serve as a ground of doctrine, but only when it is the sense "offered by the Holy Spirit by means of the sacred writers," as distinct from the added sense, not inherent in the text, "employed by churchly writers either for the sake of illustration or for the delight of [God's] grace." Whereas the ecclesiastical sense has no absolutely normative value, the "mystical sense," as bestowed by the Spirit, is normative inasmuch as it is the interpretation of the figures placed into the text by God. This mystical sense, however, can always be understood from the larger context of Scripture, and it does not appear in all texts: thus we know from John 3:14 that the serpent in the wilderness prefigured Christ and from 1 Cor. 10:1-4 that the pillar of cloud and the red sea were signs of baptism and the food and drink given to Israel in the desert were spiritual, prefiguring the Lord's Supper.

Pictet also states a rule to be followed when a text of Scripture seems to present a double meaning and to have both a literal and a figurative or mystical aspect to its intended import:

in the interpretation of scripture, allegories are not to be sought everywhere, ... [we] must not hastily depart from the literal sense, but only when it is contrary to the analogy of faith, and offers an absurd meaning.

By the same token, figurative or typological meanings must be indicated by the text itself, particularly as identified through the anologia scripturarum in such references as

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160. Leigh, Trea.tise, Lix (pp. 174-175); cf. Whitaker, Disputation, Vii (p. 406); Turretin, Inst. theol. elencicae, li.xix.6.
162. Leigh, Trea.tise, p. 175.
164. Rijssen, Summa, li.xxv.
165. Turretin, Inst. theol. elencicae, li.xix.15.
166. Pictet, Theol chr. li.xviii.3; also Rijssen, Summa, li.xxv.
the bronze serpent or the high priest, Melchizedek. 167 Thus, more precisely, the text has a single, "simple" sense, resting on the words understood either "properly or improperly." Superficially absurd statements or statements that cannot be taken at their "literal" or face value are often figures in need of interpretation, but nonetheless still "simple" in meaning.168

Even so, it is a basic rule of interpretation that subjects and predicates must be suitable to one another. In cases where a biblical text juxtaposes a subject with an unsuitable predicate, the interpreter must inquire into the manner in which the predicate has been applied and by attending closely "to the nature of the thing" or subject come to a better understanding of the text: thus, Scripture will often attribute "human members to God" (such as a face, a mouth, arms, hands, and feet), or indicate that God descends, hears, sees, and so forth, even though it is clear that God, by nature, cannot have such attributes. Such sayings must be understood as containing anthropomorphisms or anthropopathisms. 169 Indeed, Wyttenbach comments, "oriental" usage was given to various kinds of improper predications (figura), literary exaggerations (hyperbole), and the attribution of personal characteristics to inanimate objects (prosopopoeia), an example of the latter device being "the heavens declare the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1).170

3. The mystical sense and the letter. The mystical sense of a text, which belongs to the literal reading on the basis of the scope and direction of the whole of Scripture, cannot itself be divided into a series of distinct senses: this would be a reversion to the quadriga. The extent to which these formulæ concerning the one sense of Scripture "diversely applied" or allowing "various inferences ... applications and accommodations" or concerning the "mystical sense" are evidences of the same difficulty in identifying the sensus literalis that had confronted Lefèvre and Luther barely a century before becomes clear the moment that we examine specific examples of these inferences, accommodations or instances of the sensus mysticus and analogia fidei. Whitaker can argue, for example that

the literal sense of the words, "The seed of the woman shall crush the serpent's head," is this, that Christ shall beat down Satan, and break and crush all his force and power; although the devil neither is a serpent, nor hath a head.171

Indeed, against the Roman patterns of allegorization, the Reformed argue that there are two distinct kinds of spiritual or allegorical readings of a text. On the one hand, some allegories are inventions of the interpreter, added on to the text and not rooted in it. On the other hand,

167. Pictet, Theol. chr., Lxviii.3.
169. Wyttenbach, Tentamen theologiae dogmatarum, II, §171.
171. Whitaker, Disputation, VII (p. 405).
is, more precisely, the text understood either "properly or metaphorically," that cannot be taken at face value, but nonetheless interpreted as containing "orientalisms" or "literary exaggerations" to inanimate objects or the heavens declare the glory of a text, which belongs to the whole of Scripture, and not just to the text and not rooted in the literal sense. Now the reason why sound arguments are always derived from the literal sense is this, because it is certain that that which is derived from the words themselves is ever the sense of the Holy Spirit; but we are not so certain of any mystical sense unless the Holy Spirit himself so teaches us.171

Thus, such texts as Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," and Exodus 12:46, "Thou shalt not break a bone of him," are not unclear in their historical context, but they also have a prophetic referent:

It is sufficiently plain that the former is to be understood of the people of Israel, and the latter of the paschal lamb. Who, now, would dare to transfer and accommodate these to Christ, if the Holy Spirit had not done it first, and declared to us his mind and intention? — namely that the Son in the former passage denotes not only the people of Israel, but Christ also; and the bone in the latter, is to be understood of Christ as well as of the paschal lamb. They who interpret these places merely of the people of Israel or the paschal lamb, bring only part of the meaning, not the whole: because the entire sense is to be understood of the sign and the thing itself together, and consists in the accommodation of the sign to the thing signified. Hereupon emerge not different senses, but one entire sense.172

The orthodox exegete, therefore, finds a reading similar to the double-literal sense of Lyra, but argues that it is a single, broad sense — a sense that allows both the immediate sense of the text in its ancient setting and the extended prophetic meaning relative to the fulfillment of God's promises. Thus, Poole can speak of the sense of Hosea 11:1 as identifying "the infancy of Israel" as the time of Egyptian sojourn, and the divine work leading Israel out of Egypt as the identification of the Israelites as "sons of God." Indeed, Poole expressly objects to an exclusively prophetic reading of the text on the basis of Matthew 2:15: the text refers both to Israel and to Christ — both are to be given their "proper share" in the meaning so that "the letter and the history is verified in both."174 In the case of the text from Exodus 12:46, the original commandment not to break a bone of the paschal lamb arose from the haste in which Israel departed Egypt, having not enough time to break the bones and taste the marrow, but its extended meaning points toward Christ as the paschal lamb and the literal fulfillment of the Exodus text, as reported in John 19:36.172

172. Whitaker, Disputation, V.i (p. 409). Note that this rule for the use of allegories, distinguishing those that are in the text and those imposed upon it is extended by seventeenth-century exegetes to the analysis of typologies, as in Keach, Tropologia, I.i (pp. 231-232); Samuel Mather, The Figures or Types of the Old Testament, by which Christ and the Heavenly Things of the Gospel were Preached and Shadowed unto the People of God of Old (Dublin, 1683), p. 53
173. Whitaker, Disputation, V.i (p. 409).
174. Poole, Commentary, Hos. 11:1, in loc. (II, p. 877); cf. Diodati, Pious Annotated, Hos.11:1, in loc., where only the root historical sense is given.
The term "mystical sense," then, is typically used by the Reformed orthodox to indicate an issue of prophecy and fulfillment of the Old Testament types of New Testament realities and, in the context of the concepts of the analogy of Scripture and the analogy of faith, does not indicate a departure from the sensus literalis, at least as understood by the Reformers and the orthodox. Other allegories or figures, not indicated directly by the Spirit in another text, such as the use of the story of David and Goliath to indicate Christ's victory over the devil or to point to the war in our members and the need to overcome our passions, these, comments Whitaker, are "true and may be fitly said: but it would be absurd to say that either the one or the other was the sense of the history." Such figurative readings are applications of the text made by the interpreter.

7.4 The Practice of Exegesis: Methods and Rules of Interpretation

As for the actual practice of exegesis — the approach to the text — we have from Whitaker a lengthy statement on the ascertainment of the "true sense" of the text. Given the representative character of Whitaker's treatise and the use of Whitaker's work as a point of reference for sound doctrine throughout the seventeenth century, the following discussion adopts it as an outline and references other theologians in the course of the discussion, both filling out Whitaker's argument from other late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources and manifesting the broad applicability of Whitaker's rules and categories of interpretation.

A. The Context of Interpretation and Interpreter

1. Respect for the sacred text: Christian devotion and prayer. As in the briefer discussion found in the Praefatiuncula, the hermeneutics of Zanchi's Prolegomena evidences a strong emphasis on Christ-centered piety. The first rule for reading and interpreting Scripture is that all such endeavors must be preceded by the invocation of Christ Jesus, who regenerates our souls and leads us to the right understanding of God's Word. Second, Zanchi argues, in clear reliance on Augustine's De doctrina christiana, interpretation must be undertaken in the fear of God, inasmuch as the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Even so, we must study the will of God as revealed in Scripture: the student of Scripture must pray for wisdom and, moreover, cultivate within himself a "gracious spirit" and address the text with a "humble heart." Whitaker, following out the line of patristic and medieval as well as early Protestant advice on approach to Scripture, indicates that "prayer is necessary" for understanding — as Origen had well argued, "we must not only apply study in order to learn the sacred word, but also supplicate God and entreat him night and day, that the lamb of the

176. Whitaker, Disputatio, VI (p. 406).
177. Zanchi, In Mosen ... Prolegomena, col. 16 (rules 1, 2 and 3); "Tenendum est scopus, in quem omnes scripturae tendunt: Hic est Jesus Christus. ... Est igitur semper in scripturis quaerendus in primis Christus: quoniam est substantia, ut vocant, omnium scripturarum."
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tripe of Juda may come, and, taking himself the sealed book, vouchsafe to open it."
A similar point, Whitaker continues, is made by Augustine and by Jerome. It is also
the case that the writers of Scripture themselves implore God for the gift of illumination: David often prayed for this in the Psalms, Christ himself tells us to ask
God, in order that divine gifts may be given to us (Matt. 7:7), and James writes that
"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God" (James 1:5).
Nor is the prayerful attitude to be separated from diligent examination of text: the
several elements of devotional study cohere — as Augustine said, "Reading inquires,
meditation finds, prayer asks, contemplation tastes. ... Reading is in the rind, meditation
in the marrow, prayer in the demand of desire, and contemplation in the delight of
the sweetness now acquired." Reading itself ought to follow a set of rules designed
to combine careful thought, attention to basic techniques of interpretation, and the
proper attitude of piety. Owen speaks of reading as "staid, sedate, and conservative,
with respect unto the end aimed at." Such careful and frequent reading will supply
the student of Scripture with "a general acquaintance with the nature and design of
the book of God" and a humble acquaintance with the "heavenly things" found in
the text. So too will the "efficacy of the divine truth" in Scripture have its impact on
the reader. Such reading will also safeguard the student of Scripture from "noxious
and corrupt" interpretations of difficult texts through a reverent knowledge of the
larger scope of the Bible and of other places in the text that enlighten the obscurities.
Zanchi had similarly counseled a frequent reading and hearing of Scripture for the
sake of drawing the attention of the reader to texts that state clearly those things left
obscure in other places.

2. The exegetical conversation: church, tradition, and trajectories of
understanding. Granting the origins of the Reformation understanding of the biblical
norm in the late medieval debate over Scripture and tradition, specifically in the
trajectory of understanding that Oberman identified as "Tradition I," Reformation-era
and Reformed orthodox exegetes came to the task of biblical interpretation not as
isolated scholars confronting the text armed only with the tools given to them by
Renaissance-era philology. They also assumed the importance of the voice of the
church, particularly in interpretive conversation, both positive and negative, with the
living exegetical tradition: exegetes were advised, in manuals of interpretation, to
consult commentaries in the older tradition, not as authorities in the Romanist sense
but as sound sources of advice and precedent. This conversation appears in the

179. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (pp. 467-468, first rule).
180. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 467), citing (Pseudo) Augustine, De scala paradisi, cap. 2.
182. Zanchi, In Mosen ... Prolegomena, cols. 16-17.
183. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 473, eighth rule); and note the discussion of recommended
commentators in Leigh, Body of Divinity, I.i-iv (pp. 50-65). Cf., e.g., A. N. S. Lane, "Did Calvin Use
Lippoman’s Catena in Genesim?" in Calvin Theological Journal, 31/2 (1996), pp. 404-419; idem, “The
Sources of Calvin’s Citations in his Genesis Commentary,” in A. N. S. Lane, ed., Interpreting the Bible:
referencing of sources, named and unnamed, from the patristic and medieval periods and from among contemporary commentators, in the commentaries of the Reformers and in the continuing recourse to established lines of interpretation that can be documented in the later Protestant interpretive tradition. By way of example, the Augustinian reading of various texts, from the Psalter to Romans 7 and 9 stands in the background of the Reformation and orthodox-era commentaries on those texts — and a theologian like Arminius mounted his revisionist reading of texts like Romans 7 with lengthy referencing of the fathers, the medieval exegetes, and the exegetes of the sixteenth century. There is also a referencing of the medieval tradition by Protestant exegetes, often identifiable only when a theme is examined or, as in the case of Calvin’s exegesis, when traditional distinctions are identified at the point in the biblical text that had served medieval interpreters as its source. It becomes incumbent on the exegete, as he examines numerous commentaries, histories, and other aids to interpretation, to be conscious of the proper ranking of such subordinate authorities, lest the authority of Scripture be set aside.

B. Approaching the Text Narrowly: Language, Grammar, Scope, and Circumstances

1. Mastery of the language of Scripture. Apart from his polemic against claims of obscurity in the basic message of the Gospel, Zanchi recognized that certain texts were difficult of interpretation and that obscurities did result from the use of figures by the writers of Scripture. He therefore also offered, in his Prolegomena to the Bible, a more extensive discussion of the actual method of interpretation, followed by a set of rules. Texts that are, in and of themselves, difficult of interpretation must be examined in their original texts after a careful study of the ancient languages. In addition, lexical and historical difficulties demand use of reliable commentators and study of ancient histories. Zanchi singles out Beza’s Annotationes as a reliable aid to the exegesis of the New Testament. Beyond the simple difficulties of the meaning of words lie problems of grammar and phraseology, which can also be surmounted through study.

Granting that the very words of the text have been chosen by the Spirit, it behooves the exegete to master the words themselves in the original languages. “We should consult the Hebrew text in the old Testament, the Greek in the new: we should approach the very fountain-heads of the scriptures, and not stay beside the derived

184. Steinmetz, Calvin in Context, pp. 110-121, 141-142, 150-152.
186. See Muller, Unaccommodated Calvin, pp. 54-58.
187. Roberts, Clavis Bibliorum, p. 35.
188. Zanchi, In Moxen ... Prolegomena, cols. 15-15.
189. Zanchi, In Moxen ... Prolegomena, col. 18.
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stream of versions." Ignorance of the original languages of the text has been a major source of error in interpretation and theology: indeed, without recourse to the originals, certain "mistakes" will be "unavoidable." Thus, Augustine "exhorts all students of theology to the study of these languages" — and the "otherwise superstitious" Council of Vienna in 1311 insisted on having professors of the biblical languages in all universities. The Reformers, too, had argued that the study of the original languages of Scripture was necessary for the sake of salvation. 192

The question of the proper means to identify the meaning of the words of Scripture was asked repeatedly by the Reformed writers of the seventeenth century, who both produced a wide variety of lexical tools and raised the more fundamental question of the identification of the meaning of the work in its textual context. In one of the more detailed discussions of method offered by a seventeenth-century exegete, Weemse argued that the first step in exegesis was the examination of the marginal and line readings of the text, followed by the correct pointing of the Hebrew: He is particularly concerned to offer rules for the use of the Masoretic marginal apparatus. When a marginal reading in one place appears as the line reading in another, Weemse argues, it may be used as a correct reading of the text: thus in 2 Samuel 23:30, the text identifies Bennaija as "a lively man" while the margin has "a strong man" — but in 1 Chron, 11:22, the marginal reading is "made a line reading," allowing us to read 2 Samuel 23:30 as "a lively strong man." So also, when the Holy Spirit has made an Old Testament marginal reading a line reading in a New Testament citation, the marginal reading may be accepted. In cases where the marginal readings do not oblige either of these two rules, but are not contrary to Scripture, "we may use them for illustration ... although wee may not make them line reading." There are, it must be noted, few important differences between the margin and the line — but the marginalia must be examined for the occasional illuminating difference and for the occasional contrary reading. "Where," therefore, Weemse adds, "the Masorite notes seem to impair the credit of the Text, there we are not to follow them." It is often the case that the Masoretes will seem to be more modest than the Text, and to put the Holy Ghost to school as it were, to teach him to speak. 2 King. 18:27. They shall drink their own pisses. but

190. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 468, second rule); Roberts, Clavis Bibliorum, pp. 34-35.
191. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 468).
193. E.g., Andrew Symson, Lexicon Anglo-Graeco-Latinum Novi Testamenti, or A complete alphabetical concordance of all the words contained in the New Testament, both English, Greek, and Latin: in three distinct tables: the I. English, II. Greek, III. Latin; whereby any word may be rendered into Greek and Latin; English and Latin; Greek and English; together with the several significations, etymons, derivations, force and emphasis, and divers acceptations in Scripture of each word (London: W. Godbid, 1658); Edmund Castell, Lexicon heptaglotton: Hebraicum, Chaldaicum, Syriacum, Samaritanum, Aethiopicum, Arabicum, conjugiitum, et Persicum, separatum (London: Thomas Roycroft, 1669).
in the marginall, they will put it in more modest terms, They shall drinke the water of their own feete: but, to the cleane, all things are cleane, Tit. 1.11. 196

Once these issues are resolved, then the exegete must take care of the right pointing of the text — recognizing that "the points in valor were from the beginning," but that the actual sigla present in the text were devised by the Masoretes. Weemse notes, from the Zohar, that one who reads the text without points is like a horseman without a bridle. The right pointing is to be decided from the reading and collation of the text in its proper context in Scripture.197

Even so, errors are both avoided and refuted by study of the languages:

For example, Luke 2:14, the Rhemists make out the freedom of the will from the Vulgate Latin version, which is this: Pax in terra hominibus bonae voluntatis. But they are easily refuted by the original: for in the Greek it is eudokia, which never denotes the free will of man, as the Rhemists absurdly explain it, but the gratuitous goodness of God toward men: and this, indeed, some of the papists themselves concede.198

Similarly, the Vulgate of Eph 2:10 reads Creati in Christo Jesu in operibus bonis, from which "some papists" conclude that justification is by our works but the original Greek "epi" does not indicate "in" but "ad," "for" or "toward."199 Other examples, as Whitaker attests at length, are easily adduced.

2. The grammatical and syntactical sense of the words: distinguishing "proper" from "figurative" and "modified" meanings. The meaning of the word in its actual use and context must also be noted: the exegete must understand whether the word is understood in its "proper" sense or in a "figurative and modified" sense.200 When the usage of a word contradicts "the common light of reason," like John 15:5 ("I am the vine, ye are the branches") the language ought to be taken figuratively.201

Figurative usages cannot be "expounded strictly," but themselves must be interpreted, given that the simple or "strict" sense of a figurative text is not at all what the author intended. Just such a problem of interpretation underlies the debate between the Reformed and the "papists" over the words of institution of the Lord's supper: Rome understands the words "this is my body" and "this is my blood of the new testament" strictly, assuming the presence of Christ's actual body in the place of bread and his

198. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 468); cf. Calvin, Commentary on Evangelists, Luke 2:14 in loc. (CTS Harmony, I, p. 121); Diocti, Pious and Learned Annotations, in loc.; Poole, Commentary, in loc. (III, p. 195): "the Vulgar Latin is most corrupt, that rendereth these words, peace to men of good will."
199. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 468); cf. Calvin, Commentaries on Ephesians, Eph. 2:10 in loc. (CTS Ephesians, p. 230); Poole, Commentary, in loc. (III, p. 667).
200. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 470, third rule).
201. Henry Ainsworth, The Orthodox Foundation of Religion, long since collected by that judicious and elegant man Mr. Henry Ainsworth, for the benefit of his private company: and now divulged for the publice good of all that desire to know that Cornerstone Christ Jesus Crucified, ed. Samuel White (London: R. C. for M. Sparke, 1641), p. 4.
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actual blood in the place of the wine, whereas the Reformed take them figuratively.\textsuperscript{202} The figurative character of the language is seen clearly when the whole text is examined: "he took the cup ... saying, 'Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." Poole notes a double figure in the text:

The cup here is put for the wine in the cup; and the meaning of these words, this is my blood of the new testament, must be, this wine is the sign of the new covenant. Why should they not as readily acknowledge a figure in these words, This is my body, I cannot understand; the pronoun this, in the Greek, is in the neuter gender, and applicable to the term cup, or to the term blood; but it is most reasonable to interpret it, This cup, that is, the wine in this cup, is the blood of the new covenant, or testament, that is, the blood by which the new covenant is confirmed and established.\textsuperscript{203}

Just as the "cup" is a figure for the wine in the cup, so is the wine a figure for the "blood of the new testament."

Attention to the words of the text and their various relationships also includes such issues as "the verity or falsehood," the "propriety," and the "spirituality" of a text: how the text affirms or negates a statement must be closely examined, with attention to the way in which the languages of the text form their arguments. For example, "when the Scripture affirms a thing earnestly," it uses "a double affirmation": "so they say, Amen, Amen; Matthew hath alethos, verely, Math. 5:26 and the other Evangelist kai, indeed, Mark 9:1, Luk. 9:27 this they did that they might be believed the more."\textsuperscript{204} Or, further, affirmations must be distinguished from hypothetical or conditional propositions. Thus, Matt. 11:21-22, "If the miracles which were wrought in thee, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they had repented long ago," does not indicate "some inclination to repentance in Tyre and Sidon to repentance,"\textsuperscript{205} Negatives also must be interpreted with care, inasmuch as they are often not simple negatives: "proverbial speeches deny a thing commonly, but not always," as in the case of the statement in Matt. 10:24, "the disciple is not above the master," David, after all "excelled all his teachers."\textsuperscript{206}

So also, close attention must be given to the "propriety or manner of speech in the Scripture:

1. When a speech is spoken metaphorikos, borrowing a word from one thing to another. 2. When it speaks enpathikos, by way of excellency. 3. When it speaks elappikos, suppressing something. 4. When it speaks euschemonos, when in modest terms, it utters uncommon things. 5. schleuasmos, ioculariter dictum, when by a taunte or mocke, it vilifies a thing. 6. When it speaks or utters a thing per euphemismos, buy a comly sort of speech. 7. When it utters a thing per metaschematikon, by representation of a

\textsuperscript{202} Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 470, third rule).
\textsuperscript{203} Poole, Commentary, Matt. 26: 27-28, in loc. (III, p. 127).
\textsuperscript{204} Weemse, Christian Synagogue, pp. 236-237.
\textsuperscript{205} Weemse, Christian Synagogue, p. 237.
\textsuperscript{206} Weemse, Christian Synagogue, p. 239.
thing. 8. When it speaks pathetikos, in passion. 9. When it speaks hyperdolikos, excessively. 10. Per estelismos, abjectly of a thing.207

The humanistic reading of texts in terms of rhetorical forms not only had considerable impact on Protestant exegesis, it also became one of the paths to the elicitation of right doctrine in the era of orthodoxy. Thus, the exegete must be attentive to anthropomorphisms and anthropathisms.208

3. The narrow “scope” of the book, chapter, or verse. An interpretive question arises, therefore, concerning figurative as distinct from strictly literal or literalistic readings of texts: which of the identifiable senses is in fact the “literal” sense of the text? Resolution of the problem arises through the recognition of the scope of the text, an issue that the orthodox raise both with reference to the immediate textual context and to the larger context of the book of Scripture in which it is found, or, indeed, in the context of the biblical message as a whole. The scope of specific passages or of the individual books of Scripture (as distinct from Christ or God’s covenant as the scope of the whole) should be noted as an aid to the interpretation of verses within the books.209 It was quite typical in both the Reformation and the era of orthodoxy for biblical interpreters to begin their commentaries with sections identified as argumenta or as analyses of the scope or focus and argumentative shape (methodus) of the whole book. The intention of such discussions was to offer a context of meaning, rooted in authorial intention, for particular portions, individual verses, and even phrases of the text — recognizing that the smaller portions of text become clear in meaning when the larger purpose of the book is understood.210

The “scope” of a book is its focus or, as one writer of the era puts it, the “drift or end” of the book that illuminates the “the whole frame, disposition, and chiefe Arguments handled in the book”: “as the Archer fixes his eye steadily on the mark, when he would shoot accurately; so still fix your thought on the Occasion and Scope of every Book, when you would peruse them understandingly.”211 A related point, subordinate to the scope, concerns attention to the “principal parts” of the book — preparatory to the examination of individual texts, the exegete ought to examine the book analytically in order to understand the method, arrangement, and coherence of the book.

208. Weemse, Christian Synagogue, pp. 243-244.
210. E.g., Johannes Piscator, Analysis logica omnium epistolarum Pauli ... una cum scholiis & observationibus locorum doctrinae (London: George Bishop, 1608), beginning each commentary with “argumentum seu summa, denique summae partes ... id est methodus totius epistolae”; Greenhill, Exposition of Ezekiel, begins his entire commentary with a chapter on “the antiquity, scope, and occasion of writing”; similarly, Jeremiah Burroughs, An Exposition of the Prophecy of Hosea, 4 vols. (London, 1643-1651; reissued in one volume, Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1865), pp. 3-6; cf. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (pp. 470-471, fourth rule).
211. Roberts, Clavis Bibliorum, pp. 45-46 (rule VI.6).
of the book: "Books look upon confusedly, are but darkly and confusedly apprehended." 212

The early orthodox exegetes, in particular, followed out this rule by scanning each book for its order and shape, in the cases of Piscator and Diodati, offering Ramistic analyses of the organization, thematic or narrative structure. 213

4. The "circumstances" and general context of the text. Here Whitaker comes to what must be considered the fundamental literal and grammatical procedure of Protestant exegesis: the right understanding of the actual use of a word in a particular text comes from consideration of "the occasion, scope, preceding and following context, and the other circumstances of [the] passage" or, otherwise stated, "the scope, end, matter, circumstances (that is, as Augustine says, the persons, place, and time), the antecedents and consequents of each passage" and "the series and connection of the text." 214

The exegete must be cognizant of issues of order, both of the books of the Bible as a canon and of the order and arrangement of each individual book — including the "titles, times, penmen, occasion, scope, and principal parts" of the book in question. Such information provides a sense of the "idea and character" of a biblical book and a "Recapitulation or Recollection of [its] chiefe Aime." Specifically, the title and the times of the book offer insight into the meaning of the whole and its parts as well as its connection or relationship with the surrounding history. 215

By way of example, the "Rhemists" argue that 1 Peter 4:8, "charity covers the multitude of sins," teaches a means of justification before God other than by faith: charity or love takes away sin. The "occasion, scope, and ... context" of the passage, however, indicate that the subject of the discourse is not justification before God but the "fraternal love which represses many occasions of offense," inasmuch as the apostle speaks, in the verse immediately preceding of "sincere love one towards another": thus the "context itself" indicates that the subject of the text is not justification before God but "the love wherewith we should embrace and respect our brethren." It is, moreover, the case that the words of Peter here reflect Proverbs 10:12, and that the conference of Scripture with Scripture also refutes the Rhemists' interpretation. 216

Examination of occasion and context also led the annotators of the Geneva Bible to recognize that the Pauline statement, "Everie man praying or prophecying having any thing on his head, dishonoreth his head" (1 Cor. 11:4) as reflecting a customary rather than an apodictic standard. The annotation reads, "This tradition was observed according to the time and place that all things might be done in comelines and
A similar annotation is found in the previous chapter with reference to the eating of meat previously dedicated for sacrifice: the text refers to a practice of the time. Nor was the importance of the historical context of these verses forgotten in the seventeenth century: Poole comments on the problem of covering the head in prayer and prophecy indicated by 1 Cor. 11:4 that “this and the following verses are to be interpreted from the customs of countries” and that the Christian practice of uncovering the head during prayer probably originated, as Lightfoot had argued, as an alternative to the Jewish custom of covering the head. Poole also notes the variety of customs in his own time and indicates that, even in the case of the following verses concerning the covering of a woman’s head, that the Pauline text so reflects a historical situation that it cannot provide a rule for contemporary practice. Indeed, it is incumbent on the exegete that he avail himself of “humane histories” in order to clarify the divine history.

C. Interpretation on the Broader Scale of the Canon

1. The comparison of passages in Scripture with similar passages. Granting the necessity of understanding the “series and connection” of a given text, not only the immediate but also the extended context of a passage needs to be recognized and “one place must be compared and collated with another; the obscurer places with the plainer and less obscure.” Thus, it is true that the Epistle of James states that Abraham was justified by his works (2:21): “the place,” comments Whitaker, “is obscure, and seems to favour the papists.” This obscurity is, however, cleared by comparison of the text with the fourth chapter of Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, where the apostle “expressly” declares that Abraham was not justified by the works that followed his call. We know this from the text for several reasons — first, since Paul says,

“Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness;” which every body knows how it came to pass after his call: secondly, because afterwards he proceeds to the example of David, whom all know to have been a Holy man, regenerated by the Spirit of God, and called by God. We must needs therefore confess that the term “justification” is taken in different senses, unless we choose to suppose that the apostles are at variance, and pronounce contradictory declarations. In James, therefore, to be justified means to be declared and shewn to be just, as Thomas Aquinas himself confesses upon that place; but, in Paul, to be justified denotes the same as to be absolved from all sins, and accounted righteous with God.

217. The Bible and Holy Scriptures conteynyng in the Olde and Newe Testament (Geneva, 1560), 1 Cor. 11:4 in loc., hereinafter cited as “Geneva Bible (1560).”
218. Geneva Bible (1560), 1 Cor. 10:25, in loc.
219. Poole, Commentary, 1 Cor. 11:14 in loc. (III, p. 577); cf. Lightfoot, Horae hebraicae et talmudicae, in loc. (IV, pp. 229-231).
220. Roberts, Clavis Bibliorum, p. 35.
221. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 471, fifth rule).
222. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (pp. 471-472); cf. Poole, Commentary, Jas. 2:21 in loc. (III, p. 887) for an exegesis of the text using the method noted by Whitaker. Poole concludes, like Whitaker,
This interpretive technique presumes, moreover, that the exegete have a mastery of the text, particularly a careful and "methodical" acquaintance with the whole text of Scripture for the sake of understanding the "contexture and coherence of one part with another."\(^{223}\) This comparison of one "place" in Scripture with another is the "surest" method of interpretation, given that it does not bring any authority other than Scripture to the explanation of the text.\(^{224}\)

2. Comparison of "dissimilar" passages. This "comparison of places," moreover, entails not only the comparison of "similar" but also the comparison of "dissimilar passages."\(^{225}\) Granting the fundamental attention paid by the exegete to strict and figurative meanings of texts and to the "occasion, scope, and context" of passages, the exegete will need to have a sense of which texts state similar issues and which treat of dissimilar topics: the comparison or "conference" of texts stands as an integral part of the logic of this exegetical method, sometimes resting on a similarity or dissimilarity discovered by the analysis of text and grammar, sometimes determining whether a text ought to be read strictly or figuratively on the basis of clear similarities or dissimilarities.

Seventeenth-century theologians and exegetes also recognized dangers and difficulties in the method. Scripture texts that appear to say opposite or differing things may, of course, be quite opposite to one another — but they may also simply refer to different subjects in similar ways and not be opposed at all, or they may refer to different aspects of the same subject. Thus, 2 Kings 2:11 tells that Elijah was taken up in a whirlwind, and Malachi 4:5 speaks of God sending Elijah before the Day of the Lord: these texts appear to be opposed, but they differ in actual reference, the first referring to the Old Testament prophet Elijah, the second to the New Testament Elijah, John the Baptist.\(^{226}\)

So also, in a correct use of analogy or collation, John 6:53 and John 4:14 are verbally somewhat dissimilar but theologically similar passages: the former, "Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," and the latter, "Whosoever shall drink of that water that I will give him, shall never thirst," one speaks of flesh and blood, the other of water, but both tell of the spiritual nourishment of believers by Christ. Rather than read the former text in a fleshly way, the interpreter ought to attend to an unlike passage, like the sixth precept of the Decalogue, "thou

"that Abraham's justification here was not the absolution of a sinner, but the solemn approbation of a believer: not a justifying him as ungodly, but a commending him for his godliness," i.e., not a contradiction of Paul in Romans 4. Also note Calvin, Commentary on James, in loc. (CTS, pp. 309-313), and cf. Calvin, Institutes, III.xvii.11-12 and the marginalia in Geneva Bible (1560), at James 2:14.


224. Cf. Henry Ainsworth, The Orthodox Foundation of Religion, long since collected by that judicious and elegant man Mr. Henry Ainsworth, for the benefit of his private company: and now divulged for the public good of all that desire to know that Cornerstone Christ Jesus Crucified, ed. Samuel White (London: R. C. for M. Sparke, 1641), p. 5.

225. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 472, sixth rule).

226. Roberts, Clavis Bibliorum, pp. 51-52 (rule VII.1-2).
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shall do no murder." Whitaker comments, "for if it be a crime, yea, an enormity, to slay a man, it is certainly a far deeper crime to eat and devour a man; hence Augustine concludes, de doct. christ. Lib. iii. c.16, that these words must be understood and explained figuratively, because they otherwise would command a flagitious crime." 227

On a related issue, Weemse cautions against allowing the marginal readings and references to govern the readings of lines of the text and warns that "from wrong Analogy or Collation of Scripture with Scripture, wrong Doctrine is gathered." By way of example, a traditional Jewish collation of 1 Kings 4:30, "Salomon was wiser than all those of the East," with Isaiah 2:26, "thou art full of the manners of the East," led to the erroneous assumption that Solomon was a magician. 228

3. The broader "scope" of the text. On the larger scale, the orthodox insist on encountering "the nature and design" of the whole "book of God." 229 In this sense, they frequently identify Christ as the scopus toward which all the Scriptures tend: Christ is the substance of the whole of Scripture. Similarly, echoing Augustine, we must look to the end of all the doctrine taught in Scripture, which is the love of God to which are conjoined faith and hope. 230 Similarly, the New Testament may be understood as the interpreter of the Old. On the broad scale of the whole of Scripture, the identification of Christ or covenant as the scope of the text stood in accord with the Reformed approach to the problem of the two testaments. From the time of Melanchthon and Calvin on into the seventeenth century, there is a consistent reference in Reformed biblical interpretation to the unity and distinction of the testaments — namely, that they are one in substance or promise and distinct or diverse in administration and in the specific manner of revelation. 231 Thus, some things are revealed partially, in the form of promises, figures, or types in the Old Testament that are revealed in the form of fulfillment, reality, or antitype in the New Testament. This distinction between the testaments explains differences in the life of God's people, the ceremonial law and its abrogation, the gradual revelation of the manner of salvation in Christ despite the grounding of the entire covenant of grace in him from the beginning, the more complete revelation of the love of God for all people in the New Testament, the partial revelation of the Trinity in the Old Testament and its full revelation in the New, and the clearer revelation of the last things in the Apocalypse as compared with the revelation of the end times in the Old Testament prophets. The unity of the whole, in and through its diversity, becomes clear, therefore, with attention to the scope of the text.

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227. Whitaker, Disputation, IX.5 (p. 472).
230. Zanchi, In Moses ... Prolegomena, col. 16: "Tenendum est scopus, in quem omnes scripturae tendunt: Hic est Iesus Christus. ... Est igitur semper in scripturis quaerendus in primis Christus: quoniam est substantia, ut vocant, omnium scripturarum."
231. Melanchthon, Loci communes (1543), x-xii; Calvin, Institutes, II.x-xii; cf. Witsius, De oeconomis foederum, III.i-iii; John Ball, A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace (London, 1645), II.i.
to the scope — and the relation of the scope to all of the parts in their diversity is manifest through attention to figures, types, and the relation of the testaments.\(^{232}\)

4. The analogy of faith and the analogy of Scripture. This kind of comparison or conference of texts rests, logically and hermeneutically, on an assumption of overarching harmony of meaning and message: beyond this “analogy of Scripture” strictly defined stands the analogy of faith, according to which the fundamental articles of faith enunciated in the basic catechetical topics of Creed, Lord’s Prayer, and Decalogue operate as interpretive safeguards upon the interpretation of particularly difficult texts. The negative interpretive use of the Decalogue as a key to understanding John 6:53, therefore, also represents an integral element of the method — a logical step granting the character of the *analogia fidei.*\(^{233}\)

In Zanchi’s view, as a preparation for all interpretation, the reader must know and understand all of the heads of doctrine stated in the Decalogue, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Apostles’ Creed. The Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, also, are of importance to interpretation. If all else fails, then the “testimonies and interpretations” of the best commentators ought to be consulted, particularly those of the “ancient and more pure Church.” This is not to say that an interpreter ought to fall back simplistically on the consensus of the ancient fathers. There is nothing in Scripture which cannot be understood either by means of these symbols or through a diligent use of the *analogia fidei.*\(^{234}\) Zanchi also notes the broader implications of the *analogia fidei*: Scripture does not contradict Scripture. Thus, if we wish to know whether Jacob or Abraham was justified by works, we must look not only to the book of Genesis and to the context of the passage, but also to the statements of Paul on this issue. Therefore, by way of summary, “the Scriptures are explained by the Scriptures, obscure places by clear.” All difficult places are explained in clear passages, with the result that nothing pertaining to our salvation remains obscure in Scripture.\(^{235}\)

At the most fundamental level, the analogy of faith and the use of a larger sense of the truths of theology as a rule serve to overcome difficulties caused for interpretation by the figures in the text: the analogy of faith identifies things signified by the figure. The Old Testament, for example, often speaks of God anthropomorphically, but we recognize the figures since we know as a fundamental truth that God is a spirit. If a word or phrase tells of a shameful act or wicked deed — as Augustine teaches — it is figurative if it seems to have no use or benefit, not figurative if, as stated, it has a use or benefit. Some of the figures of the Old Testament point to the advent of Christ and must be interpreted as adumbrations of Christian doctrine: thus, circumcision ought to be understood as literal and not figurative in its own time and context in

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232. Ball, *Treatise of the Covenant of Grace,* II.i (especially pp. 200-202); with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity, see *PRRD,* IV, 4.1 (A); 4.2 (A-B).
the Old Testament, but as figurative in and for the time of the New Testament, granting that it was given new significance in Christ. 236

The analogy of faith, moreover, was justified and safeguarded hermeneutically by the dogmatic recognition by the Protestant orthodox that the objective marks and attributes of the divinity of Scripture, for all that they could be rationally set forth, could not be proven rationally or empirically. Assurance of the divine authority of Scripture was given by faith — and faith, doctrinally considered, provided the bridge between the preliminary discussions in theological system (prolegomena and the doctrine of Scripture) and the doctrine of God. 237 The analogy of faith stands, therefore, as the hermeneutical parallel to the discussion of faith as principium cognoscendi internum.

This view of the role of faith — not only fides qua but also fides quae creditur — sets the stage for the Roman Catholic rejoinder that the tradition must be normative. Perkins noted the problem in his *Reformed Catholike* and offered the orthodox solution in which the analogy of faith is limited by definition to a broad sense of Scripture as a whole, but still corresponding roughly with the church’s theology, at least in its so-called fundamental articles: 238

Sundry places of Scripture bee doubtful, and every religion hath his severall expositions of them, as the Papists have theirs, and the Protestants theirs. Now then seeing there can be but one trueth, when question is of the interpretation of Scripture, recourse must bee had to the tradition of the Church, that the true sense may bee determined and the question ended. 239

Perkins replies,

It is not so: but in doubtfull places Scripture itselfe is sufficient to declare his owne meaning: first, by the analogy of faith, which is the summe of religion gathered out of the clearest places of Scripture: second, by the circumstance of the place, the nature and signification of the words: thirdly, by conference of place with place: ... Scripture itsefle is the text and the best glosse. And the Scripture is falsely tearemed the matter of strife, it being not so by itselfe, but by the abuse of men. 240

In this definition, the analogy of faith indicates not the interpretation of Scripture by means of the tradition of Christian doctrine, but an extended analogy of Scripture. It is important to note this, given the tendency of modern writers to identify the analogia fidei as a credal grid placed over the text. But the analogy is made from the text in question to the broader theological meaning of the whole of Scripture: it functions similarly to the broader meaning of *scopus* noted above. 241 The Protestant orthodox

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238. On fundamental articles, see PRRD, I, 9.1-9.2.
241. Cf. above, 3.5.
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were certain of the unity and coherence of the biblical message — and they were also
convinced of an intimate relationship between the various forms and levels of theology,
from the basic exegesis of the sacred page, to the exposition of its fundamental articles
in catechesis, to the more elaborate forms of positive, polemical, and scholastic
theology. The analogy of faith is connected, explicitly, with the identification of
fundamental articles of faith and, therefore, also with the doctrinal truths identified
for the whole church in basic catechesis:

Now the analogy of faith is nothing else but the constant sense of the general tenour
of scripture in those clear passages of scripture, where the meaning labours under no
obscurity; such as the articles of faith in the Creed, the contents of the Lord's Prayer,
the Decalogue, and the whole Catechism: for every part of the Catechism may be
confirmed by plain passages of scripture.

This "general tenour" of Scripture can, of course, be subject to rather broad application
and, as Reformed orthodox exegesis shows, include not only teachings elicited directly
from the text by exegesis but also doctrines drawn as logical conclusions from the text,
with the result that arguments based on the analogy of faith can appear somewhat
rationalizing.

Thus, Whitaker can offer as his primary example of the use of the analogy of faith
a refutation of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran doctrines of sacramental presence:

the papists elicit transubstantiation from the words, "This is my body," making the
meaning of them this, This bread is transformed into my body. The Lutherans adopt
another interpretation, namely, The body of Christ is under this bread; and hence infer
their doctrine of consubstantiation. Both expositions are at variance with the analogy
of faith.

The analogy of faith, in this case, begins by noting conclusions legitimately drawn from
the larger body of New Testament writings. There are three conclusions that weigh
against Roman Catholic and Lutheran views:

first, the analogy of faith teaches that Christ hath a body like to ours: now such a body
can neither lie hid under the accidents of bread, nor be along with the bread. Secondly,
the analogy of faith teaches that Christ is in heaven; therefore he is not in the bread
or with the bread. Thirdly, the analogy of faith teaches that Christ will come to
judgment from heaven, not from the pix.

The logic of biblical argument, here, follows the principle frequently enunciated in
Reformed prolegomena that mixed syllogisms using rational principles or rationally
known truths in the major and the biblical text in the minor are legitimate in theology:
in short, Christ's body must be like other human bodies. But the form of argument
also adds a nuance — because no part of the argument is framed by a purely rational truth. Rather, all portions of the argument come from the text of Scripture and the conclusion results from the collation of text.246

The theological meaning of the words, however, appears fully only from the analogy of Scripture, specifically, from the conference of the text with other similar texts, and from the subsequent examination of the linguistic forms in the text — the grammatical structures and the figures — on grounds provided by the analogy. In the first place, 1 Cor. 11:26 offers the apostle Paul's exposition of Christ's words, "This is my body" and "this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" as indicating an act of remembrance "showing forth the Lord's death till he come." Applying the analogy and examining the grammar and the figure, Poole can argue:

Christ's taking of the cup, and giving of thanks were actions of the same nature with those he used with a relation to the bread.... Let the papists and Lutherans say what they can, here must be two figures acknowledged in these words. The cup is put here for the wine in the cup; and the meaning of these words, this is my blood of the new testament, must be, this wine is the sign of the new covenant. Why they should not as readily acknowledge a figure in those words, This is my body, I cannot understand; the pronoun this, in the Greek, is in the neuter gender, and applicable to the term cup, or to the term blood; but it is most reasonable to interpret it, This cup, that is, the wine in this cup, is the blood of the new covenant, or testament, that is, the blood by which the new covenant is confirmed and established. Thus the blood of the new covenant signifies in several texts, Exod. xxiv.8; Zech ix.11; Heb. ix.20; x.29.247

The analogy of Scripture, understood in its larger sense, and read in the context of a hermeneutic of promise and fulfillment is evident in Poole's exegesis of the other texts noted in the preceding citation: by way of example, the exegesis of Zechariah 9:11, "as for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." These words, comments Poole, are "Christ's words" to the "Jewish church." It is, of course, historically the case that the edict of Cyrus had "sent the Jews home, but in this he was Christ's servant, and Christ was mindful of the covenant, and to perform this brought them up Out of the pit wherein is no water; Babylon, compared to a pit in which no water was, wherein the Jews must have perished, had not mercy from Christ visited them.248

The other Old Testament text cited in the exposition of the words of institution, Exodus 24:8, "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words," serves as an example of the way in which, under the principle of analogy and granting models of prophecy and fulfillment, type and antitype, resting on the unity and distinction of the testaments, the literally interpreted text can still...
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point in several directions. Poole notes that this sprinkling of blood on the people indicated both "their ratification of the covenant on their parts, and their secret willing of the effusion of their own blood if they did not keep it" and "their sprinkling of their consciences with the blood of Christ, and their obtaining redemption, justification, and access to God through it alone," the latter meaning being confirmed by reference to Hebrews 9:20, 22; 13:20 and Luke 22:20.249

5. Logic and interpretation: the drawing of good and necessary conclusions. In the era of orthodoxy, the issue of drawing conclusions from the text of Scripture in order to establish doctrinal points was debated by the Reformed against the Arminians and Socinians in particular who, in the estimation of the Reformed, refused to allow full use this interpretive device largely because it could establish orthodoxy against their teachings. The proper use of consequences assumes that,

Necessary consequences from the written Word of God do sufficiently and strongly prove the consequent or conclusion, if theoretical, to be a certain divine truth which ought to be believed, and, if practical, to be a necessary duty which we are obliged unto jure divino.250

Still, such argumentation must proceed with caution, so that the principle is "neither ... so far enlarged as to comprehend erroneous reasonings and consequences from Scripture ... [nor] so far contracted and strained as the Arminians would have it, who admit of no proofs from Scripture, but either plain explicit texts or consequences ... as neither are nor can be controverted by any man who is rationis compos.,,251 Such limitation would lead to the exclusion of various doctrines posed against Arians, Arminians, Socinians and papists.

The method itself, beyond the juxtaposition of one passage with another or of a biblical passage with a known truth, assumes that individual texts of Scripture can be examined in terms of the "causes ... effects, adjuncts, comparisons, [and] contraries" of the things taught in the passage. Thus, Hebrews 1:8, 10, "unto the Son he saith ... Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands," leads, by way of examining the issue of causes and effects, to the conclusion that Christ is truly God.252

Citing Cameron, Gillespie notes that this approach does not exalt human reason, given that it is not the mere strength of reason that grounds acceptance of the consequence: acceptance rests on the identification of the consequence as the truth of God. Moreover, the point is not that natural reason, arguing on the basis of sense or experience, has produced a truth: rather it is a "renewed and rectified reason ... captivated and subdued to the obedience of Christ, judging of divine things not by

249. Poole, Commentary, Ex. 24:28 in loc. (l. p. 171); cf. Willet, Hexapla in Exodum, pp. 466-467; Westminster Annotations, in loc.
251. Gillespie, Treatise of Miscellany Questions, XX (p. 100).
252. Ainsworth, Orthodox Foundation, p. 5.
human, but by divine rules, and standing to scriptural principles" that has testified to true doctrinal consequences.253

Rijssen offers a series of arguments to prove legitimate the use of logic to draw doctrinal consequences in matters of faith. First, he notes that such a logical procedure conforms to the known goals of Scripture itself: "the goal of Scripture (finit scripturae) is instruction, debate, correction, training, and perfection in righteousness, 2 Tim. 3:16" while Romans 15:4, where Paul’s correspondents are identified as “filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another” certainly implies the importance of drawing conclusions based on the fundamental instruction offered in the text.254 Furthermore, it is not the nature of human beings to be irrational blockheads — theirs is the desire and ability to "penetrate to the marrow and sense of the words."255 It is also the case that the wisdom of God is such that God fully understands the consequences of all that he says — and unlike human beings, must surely wish that people might understand his word to include all that can be legitimately gathered from his pronouncements! This is, moreover, the only way to test out and refute the consequences erroneously drawn from the text by heretics and papists.256 If more proof of the legitimacy of the practice is needed, one need only look to the example of Christ and the apostles: Christ, after all, refuted the Sadducees by proving the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead as a consequence of the doctrine of the covenant, the apostles consistently argue Jesus to be the Messiah by drawing conclusions from the Old Testament, and Paul also argued Christ’s resurrection from the text of a Psalm.257

This drawing of logical conclusions, like the comparison and collation of texts, involves both positive and negative proof, inasmuch as some articles of doctrine are positive, containing dogmas that are to be believed, and others are negative, containing rejections of error: "the former, which are the proper objects of faith, ought to be demonstrated clearly and certainly from Scripture; as for the latter, they can easily be shown to be false because no mention is made of them in Scripture."258 The burden of proof falls upon those who would affirm a theological article as biblical and true. Thus, "the adversaries" must prove their doctrines of the Mass and purgatory from the text of Scripture.259

The limited focus and application of the use of reason in drawing conclusions is seen from the objection that Rijssen notes: the fact that the disciples were unable to "bear" the entirety of the Lord’s teaching (John 16:12) does not prevent the use of what doctrine we possess or stand in the way of drawing logical conclusions from it.

254. Rijssen, Summa theol., II.xii, controversia, art. 1: "Natura hominis, qui non est truncus, sed creatura rationalis, adeo debet ad medullam & sensum verborum penetrare."
255. Rijssen, Summa theol., II.xii, controversia, art. 2: "Natura hominis, qui non est truncus, sed creatura rationalis, adeo debet ad medullam & sensum verborum penetrare."
256. Rijssen, Summa theol., II.xii, controversia, arg. 3-5.
258. Rijssen, Summa theol., II.xvii, controversia.
259. Rijssen, Summa theol., II.xvii, controversia.
Surely the Lord did not mean that new dogmas, different in substance from those he had previously taught, were to be revealed in the future, but only that a fuller declaration and more certain persuasion concerning the same doctrines would be made possible through the work of the Spirit. Nor is it acceptable to assume that there are many doctrines neither contained in or capable of being concluded from Scripture — granting that those put forth by the “papists,” such as the perpetual virginity of Mary, the local descent of Christ into hell, purgatory, and the Mass, are either unnecessary or false.

As the various examples of the technique make clear, we are dealing here with a rather differently nuanced issue than the problem of the use of philosophy and reason dealt with in the prolegomena to theology. The issue is not how to balance truths of revelation and truths of reason in an argument in such a way that the truth of revelation determines the outcome of the argument — rather, the issue is the collation and comparison of biblical texts for the sake of determining the meaning of one of them or of establishing a conclusion based on the collation and comparison itself. This interpretive technique does not import new concepts to the text but draws rational conclusions based entirely on a series of biblical texts. In short form, it is an exercise of the analogy of scripture, moving toward the clarification of the outlines of the analogy of faith.

Nor does the objection hold that such logical procedures make the faith inaccessible to the simple: “It must be allowed that a theologian has a more perfect knowledge of the consequences [of the application of logic], there is however no reason that the most ignorant of persons, entirely lacking in knowledge of logic and metaphysics, should not possess according to his capacity enough light of reason and natural logic to grasp natural consequences.” Reason and even some ratiocination play a necessary part in faith, even though reason is capable of error: faith, after all, implies some knowledge on the part of the believer, and faith itself is characteristic only of rational beings. “Reason does not err always and in all things; and if it occasionally falls into error, faith is in no way related to this — nor is all knowledge and certainty removed from the world and Pyrrhonism introduced.” As in the case of Protestant orthodox apologetics and the orthodox use of the proofs of God’s existence, the context of the remark is crucial to the understanding of its content: from the late sixteenth century to the close of the seventeenth, philosophical scepticism, as evidenced by a revival of interest in the thought of Sextus Empiricus and, to a certain extent, by Descartes’ search for a new method through doubt, led Protestant theology to the affirmation of the validity of rational judgment, within limits. If Rijssen’s statement that reason

260. Rijssen, Summa theol., Lxi, controversia 1, obj. 1.
261. Rijssen, Summa theol., Lxi, controversia 1, obj. 2.
262. Cf. PRRD, I, 8.3.
263. Rijssen, Summa theol., II.xii, controversia, obj.1 resp.
264. Rijssen, Summa theol., II.xii, controversia, obj. 1 & resp.
"occasionally falls into error," made at the transition between high orthodoxy and the eighteenth century, evidences a greater trust in the instrumental function of reason than can be found among the Reformers, the Reformers had not encountered the use of Pyrrhonist skepticism by Charron and others as a tool to force the acknowledgment of the Church's magisterial authority against the Protestant, biblical-exegetical, approach to faith and certitude. Such statements should, at very least, be placed into the context of the delimitation of the use of reason in his prolegomenon.266

6. Concluding assessment. The exegetical method described here is neither a medieval nor a modern method: it has deemphasized and discouraged frequent use of the various allegorical and spiritual approaches to the text, and it has concentrated meaning in the grammatical, literal, textual, and contextual understanding of a given passage, but it has not moved toward a primarily "historical" model in the modern sense of that term. In common with medieval models, it retains a strong sense of the churchly character of exegesis — and its emphases on the occasion, scope, and context of the passage are, accordingly, directed toward the specifically theological occasion, the dogmatic scope, the doctrinal context. The focus or center of gravity of the method, as represented by these textual-theological concerns, is clearly on the literal meaning, and usually on a "strict" or nonfigurative understanding of "literal," unless a figurative construction appears to be demanded by the occasion, scope, or context of a passage. Unlike modern exegesis and in continuity with the various patristic and medieval methods, however, this Protestant exegesis not only does not focus on the original historical situation of the text as its primary locus of meaning, it also assumes that the alteration of historical context between the time of the writing of the text and the time of the exegete — even when that alteration is noted as a part of the interpretive exercise — in no way stands as a barrier to the address of the Word in the text to the churchly readers, interpreters, and hearers of that Word.

We have not come very far, in the era of Reformed orthodox exegesis, from the marginal head of the Second Helvetic Confession, "the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God." Not only did this famous phrase imply a strict definition of Scripture as Word and a traditional theory of detailed, verbal inspiration, it also assumed — in continuity with medieval and later Reformed exegesis that (to borrow and abuse a phrase from modern hermeneutics) the "two horizons," the horizon of meaning of the text and the horizon of meaning of the exegete, were potentially one and the same.267 The point of exegesis was not to offer a totally new historical horizon of meaning but to offer a broader, clearer, and more precise vista upon the biblical-churchly horizon of the one community of faith. Or, to put the matter in an older

in volume three under the theme of the proofs of the existence of God.

266. Cf. Bijlkerk, Summa theol., I, vii; with the discussion in PRRD, 1, 2.6 (C); III, 2.2 (B.3); 3.2 (C.1); also note Henry G. Van Leeuwen, The Problem of Certainty in English Thought, 1630-1690 (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1963); and Richard H. Popkin and Arjo Vanderjagt, Scepticism and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993).

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language, the issue, for the Protestant orthodox, as for the medieval doctor and the sixteenth-century Reformer, remains the elucidation of sacra pagina for the sake of the declaration of doctrina and the formulation of sacra theologia. The distinction between the page and the theology is, moreover, not understood so much in historical and formal terms — as the movement from the Word as given to the various accepted forms of its proclamation and declaration.

This understanding of the underlying tenor of Protestant orthodox exegesis manifests, also, the intimate connection between the more textual and grammatical work done by the Protestant exegete, the element of older Protestant biblical interpretation sometimes viewed as "modern," and the doctrinal and logical work of the orthodox exegete typically seen as problematic and as not genuinely related to textual interpretation in histories of exegesis.268 Quite to the contrary, the drawing of logical conclusions from the text is an integral part of the method that serves the basic intention of the method — the intention to draw sacra doctrina and sacra theologia out of the sacra pagina. Indeed, the drawing of logical conclusions appears as one of the final hermeneutical steps in the method, closely related to the application of the analogia scripturae and the analogia fidei. (It is worth noting that these procedures share elements with the pre-critical approach identified in Congar’s characterization of medieval biblicism, where questions concerning a “non-scriptural doctrinal formulation” could be answered with a “scriptural reference that was at least equivalent or indirect”: tools of faith, logic, rhetoric, and philosophy are brought to bear to offer a biblical conclusion to question not specifically addressed by the text.)269

Just as in the prolegomena, so too in the doctrine of Scripture, Protestant orthodoxy treaded the narrow line between fideism and rationalism. The line was difficult to draw and, in the seventeenth century, the balance increasingly difficult to maintain, more difficult at least than it had been for the medieval scholastics, because of the relative independence of the exegete from the tradition and from the churchly magisterium — and more difficult also than it had been for the Reformers, because of the increasing tension caused for doctrinal theology by the diverse results of exegesis, particularly as done by Socinian and Deistic exegetes, and because of the stresses and strains placed on Protestant theological system by the forward movement of textual criticism. Nonetheless, the prominence of faith as an element in the doctrine of Scripture and of the analogia fidei in the discussion of interpretation brought about a confessional and churchly model for exegesis and maintained the spiritual and ecclesial reading of the text necessary to the existence of orthodox dogmatic system. Faith, both fides qua and fides quae, rather than reason remained the norm for interpretation even granting the powerful and necessary role played by the rationality of the individual Protestant exegete.


269. Congar, Tradition and Traditions, p. 87.
Whitaker's eighth means of interpretation, following the analogy of faith and subordinate to it, is consultation with other exegetes, specifically through the reading of commentaries. All such works are to be used with care, of course, inasmuch as they have no ultimate authority in themselves, but rest on the authority of Scripture and the exercise of reason. The specifically Protestant exegetical tradition, therefore, insofar as its rests on Scripture and the right use of reason, will have equal weight with the "authorities" of the past. (Significantly, the one element of the medieval *quaestio* that all but drops out of Protestant use of that method of exposition is the "sed contra," where the medieval doctor would offer an initial rebuttal from an "authority" prior to stating his own opinion: the Protestant exegetical method allows, indeed, recommends, recourse to the theological tradition, but it refuses to grant it the same authoritative status as it held in the older scholasticism.)

7.5 From Exposition to Doctrinal Statement

A. Patterns of Interpretation: The Identification and Elicitation of Doctrina

The exegesis, the larger framework of interpretation leading toward exposition, and the dogmatic methods advocated by Reformed orthodoxy were profoundly and organically interrelated. The assumption of the orthodox, much like that of the Reformers, was that exegesis functioned not as a disciplinary end in itself but as the ground and foundation for a path — a *methodus* — leading to theological formulation on all matters of doctrine and of practice. That formulation, moreover, could take the form of preaching, of catechesis, or of didactic, scholastic, or polemical theology.

1. Basic premises: instruction in faith, biblical interpretation, and catholicity.

Trelcatius offers a succinct statement of the early orthodox approach to the interpretation of Scripture that distinguishes between the importance of a basic knowledge of the truths of Scripture and the exegetical and theological study of the text: the former is "instruction," the latter, strictly speaking, "interpretation." Both instruction and interpretation are necessary. Instruction must take place for the sake of the communication and inculcation of the precepts contained in the Scriptures and for the sake of the offering of truths necessary to salvation to believers. It provides a general edification in the rules of life and doctrine. Interpretation follows on instruction — beginning with the Holy Spirit leading the reader in all truth toward Christian charity. It is noteworthy that the Protestant orthodox approach to interpretation assumes the testimony of the Spirit in and through the text and recognizes, as did the Reformers, the necessity for interpretation to take place in the context of belief and salvation and, indeed, for interpretation to arise out of the work of salvation itself. Trelcatius' point, echoing Zanchi, is not unlike that made by Augustine in his *De doctrina christiana* that the interpretation of Scripture proceeds from an initial fear of God, through meditation on the text, to faith and hope and,