

HISTORICAL SURVEY OF HERMENEUTICS AND HOMILETICS:
A SUMMATIVE PAPER

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In the spring of 2011, I took a Doctor of Ministry course at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School entitled, “Hermeneutics and Homiletics.” One of the required readings was Dennis Johnson’s fine work, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from all the Scriptures*. Part one of this book, and particularly chapter four, provides an overview of the history of hermeneutics and homiletics which both aided my understanding of the subject and exposed a significant gap in my knowledge. Specifically, Johnson helped me to see how little I knew about the interpretation and proclamation of the Bible over the last twenty centuries, and how significant a bearing this history has on current issues and debates. Since my Doctor of Ministry concentration is preaching, I thought this gap unacceptable and thus requested an independent reading course which was eventually entitled, “Historical Survey of Hermeneutics and Homiletics.”

I set two objectives for the course. First, I aimed to develop a broad and general understanding of the history of the relationship between hermeneutics and homiletics in the Christian church. I have fulfilled this aim by reading a little over five-thousand pages of secondary material, and by building a basic mental framework which now needs to be clarified, strengthened, and built out. Indeed, over the last several months, I have exposed more gaps in my knowledge than I have filled, and I have raised more questions than I have answered. But alas, this is the nature of education, and part of the zest of life in Christ.

Second, I aimed to gain familiarity with the relevant literature in, and about, each historical epoch. In light of the fact that I have attempted to survey twenty centuries of history in just five months, I have made a decent start of this but I have a long way to go. With regard to primary sources, I have constructed a chart which lists the names of persons by era who have significantly influenced the development of hermeneutics and homiletics in one way or another. The chart is in its infancy and is far from completion, but my goal is to use it as a tool to compile a list of one or more primary works by each person relevant to the subject. Although the chart is embarrassingly incomplete, I have appended it to this paper to give you an idea of where I am in the process. With regard to secondary sources, I have begun to build a bibliography by era. It is also incomplete but my goal at this stage is to compile a list of works that I will actually read over the next few years. As I work through this list, era by era, I plan to build a more exhaustive bibliography which, I am sure, will be of benefit to me and to others.

The final step in this course is to provide the professor with a summative paper that (a) identifies and briefly describes the major epochs of the history of the relationship between hermeneutics and homiletics, (b) summarizes several major historical and philosophical insights I have gained in the course of this study, and (c) describes the impact this course has made on my life and ministry. While the paper will demonstrate that I have made significant advances in my understanding of this subject, it will also show that I am essentially a beginner who has much learning to do.

*Major Epochs in the History of Hermeneutics
and Homiletics*

Defining epochs is admittedly difficult, and somewhat artificial, because history is more like art than mathematics. Yet as time passes and we acquire the perspective it affords, we can trace movements, movers, ideas, and practices that set one generation (or series of generations) apart from others. As I have trod the path others have cut out, I have discerned seven major epochs in the history of hermeneutics and homiletics each of which needs further definition and subdivision, but which generally agree with the scholarly consensus. They are (1) the Old and New Testament era, (2) the early church, (3) the early middle ages, (4) the late middle ages, (5) the Reformation, (6) early modernism, and (7) late modernism and postmodernism. I will state my reasons for defining the boundaries as I have in the sections that follow.

The Old and New Testaments

Given the overwhelming scope of this course, I spent very little time studying this era of interpretation and proclamation. However, I wanted to include it as the first in a series of historical epochs because in the Bible God both reveals himself and reveals how to interpret what he has revealed. That is to say, as we pay careful attention to how later biblical authors interpreted and appropriated the writings of earlier biblical authors, we learn how to read the Bible in a way that is pleasing to God. God himself has provided us with a sketch of God-centered hermeneutics, not by means of a well-defined process but by means of the writings of inspired interpreters. Thus, as we prayerfully approach the Word of God over time, we can discern the difference between issues that are necessary for a right interpretation

and application of the will and wisdom of God, and issues that have a modicum of importance but are less than necessary.

Judging primarily from the words and works of Jesus, we see that the most important key to the interpretation of the Bible is Christ himself—not merely the idea of Christ but Christ himself. Indeed, the genesis of the Christocentric hermeneutic is the speech of Jesus who stated as a matter of fact that Abraham had seen his day, and that Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmists had written of him (John 5:46; 8:56; Luke 24:44). Jesus did not claim that everything written in the Hebrew Scriptures was directly about him, but in pondering what he said we must at least acknowledge that he, as the fulfillment of so many types and prophecies, is indeed the interpretive key to all of Scripture. The whole must be interpreted in light of its beginning and end, and Christ is the alpha and the omega (Rev 1:8; 21:6; 22:13). That is, he is the one through whom the Father created and sustains all things, through whom the Father reveals his glory and nature, through whom the Father has spoken and effected salvation for all who embrace Jesus as their all-sufficient Savior (Heb 1:1-4; 9:13-15). Jesus himself is, therefore, the key to rightly understanding the will, wisdom, and ways of God as articulated in the pages of Scripture.

The Apostles, then, as humble and studious followers, took their method of interpretation from Jesus and advanced it into the following generation (see, e.g., Acts 2:1-41; 9:22; 17:3; Hebrews). The Christocentric hermeneutic was neither their invention, nor that of the patristic authors, nor that of modern scholars like Dennis Johnson. It was the invention of Jesus who was and is and always will be the locus of life, revelation, and meaning. In sum, we may say that the basic hermeneutic of Christ and the Apostles was an

eschatological typology centered on the person of Christ (Dockery, 23-44; Goldsworthy, 21, 33, 58).

The Early Church (1st-5th Centuries)

Since my focus in this course is on both the interpretation and proclamation of the Bible, I have mainly defined the historical epochs in light of the men who were most influential in this dual regard. Therefore, I envision the early church era as commencing with the generation after the Apostles, most notably Clement of Rome, and concluding with the life and works of Augustine. To be sure, scholars define this epoch in various ways and most extend it beyond the life of Augustine, but there is near universal consensus that this man, like no other, both synthesized the previous centuries of development in hermeneutics and homiletics and set the course for the next seven centuries (see, e.g., Bray, 77; Hall, 7; Kannengiesser in McKim, 1-13). As Beryl Smalley succinctly put it, “St. Jerome gave the medieval scholar his text and his learned apparatus; St. Augustine told him what his aim should be” (Smalley, 23).

Several issues are unique to this period and help put into perspective what transpired during this time. First, the apostles died and thus left the early church to face questions of who would lead them and what their sources of authority would be. Second, the early church needed to distinguish themselves from Judaism without dividing themselves from the flow of salvation history that was part and parcel of Judaism. In other words, they were called by God to proclaim to the Jews the dissolution of the first covenant and the establishment of the second covenant in Christ, and also to hold out the hope of Christ to those whose own sacred texts prophesied his coming—for their good. This calling demanded

that the early church demonstrate and justify the relationship between the Old and New Testaments by showing how Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and prophecies and promises of God, how the God of the Jews is the God of the Christians, and how the Old Testament is authoritative for Christians while its laws are not binding upon them.

Third, the early church needed to distinguish itself from the pagan mystery religions and Hellenistic philosophies of the day, while at the same time holding out the hope of Christ to the Hellenistic world. By the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, they had to demonstrate the intellectual credibility and superiority of the gospel, the emotional appeal of the gospel, and the rationale for rejecting one's own culture and family to embrace this mysterious man who died and yet is dead no more. Fourth, the early church had to defend the gospel against opponents who rose up from within their ranks like Marcion who rejected the Old Testament and the God he thought it portrayed.

All of these crises forced the early church to think carefully about its sources of authority and how those sources spoke to its crises. Through the leadership of men like Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, the church ultimately agreed that the Scripture itself is the final authority over the doctrine and life of the church, and that the Scripture is defined as the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament and the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. While it is true that the canon was not formally adopted until the Council of Nicaea, it is also true that these sixty-six books made up the functional canon of the early church and guided her as she spoke the truth in love to the Jews, the Hellenistic world, and the heretics in her midst (see Dockery, 45-73, 95-97).

Furthermore, these crises forced the church to think carefully about its hermeneutical methods. They did not start from scratch in this regard but rather drew both on Jewish methods which tended to emphasize a literal approach to interpretation and on Greco-Roman methods which tended to emphasize an allegorical approach to interpretation. While some early church fathers made moderately successful attempts to break from the molds of these traditions and form a *via media*, these two streams of influence would serve to shape the history of hermeneutics and homiletics for centuries to come (Dockery, 15-16).

On the one hand, in Alexandria and under the influence of the prominent Jewish philosopher Philo, Clement of Alexandria and his brightest student, Origen, developed a Christianized version of the allegorical method. The early church largely agreed that there is both a literal sense and a spiritual sense to the Scripture, but Origen in particular took this idea to new heights, or depths depending on your point of view. In his “Homily on Leviticus” he writes,

I published three books [on Genesis] from the sayings of the holy Fathers concerning the letter and the spirit...For the Word came into the world by Mary, clad in flesh; and seeing was not understanding; all saw the flesh; knowledge of the divinity was given to a chosen few. So when the Word was shown to men through the lawgiver and the prophets, it was not shown without suitable vesture. There it is covered by the veil of flesh, here of the letter. The letter appears as flesh; but the spiritual sense within is known as divinity. This is what we find in studying Leviticus...Blessed are the eyes which see divine spirit through the letter’s veil (Homily in Leviticus, i. I, in Smalley, 1).

With this basic philosophy in mind, Origen sought with passion and intensity to understand the literal sense of Scripture and then press into the allegorical sense, that is, the superior sense. And while he argued that the two were inextricably bound to one another, the allegorical often outshone or even replaced the literal. It is difficult in so short a space to

communicate the vast influence this philosophy of interpretation had upon the Christian church, but as she often does, Smalley gets right to the point with but a few words: “To write a history of the Origenist influence on the west would be tantamount to writing a history of western exegesis” (Smalley, 14).

Be that as it may, Origen is, to my mind, an enigma, for on the one hand, he seems to have a high view of Scripture and thus takes every letter, word, and sentence very seriously. He memorized large portions of the Bible and pressed others to do the same, insisting that they could not rightly understand the Word of God unless their minds were saturated with the Word of God. He commends and promotes the Scripture with the passion of one who is profoundly persuaded. Yet on the other hand, he seems to have a low view of Scripture in that he argues that it is at times obscure and even laced with falsehoods, which means that it must be explained (or even excused) by means of allegory. This manner of thinking led him, for example, to deny the bodily resurrection of Christ and argue that, because of the mighty mercy of God in Christ, one day all would be saved, whether in this age or the one to come. I have had only the briefest exposure to his writings, but at times he seems embarrassed by the Bible and the God it portrays, and at times he grossly and tragically misinterprets its meaning (see Dockery, 82-97; Hall, 132-155; O’Keefe and Reno, 93-107).

There is so much more to say, but given the limitations of this paper I must move on to highlight a movement that rose up in Syrian Antioch, contra Origen or at least his methods. The Antiochene fathers were more influenced by Jewish exegesis, and to a lesser extent Aristotle, than by Philo, Plato, and Hellenistic allegorization. About one century

before Origen rose to prominence, Theophilus of Antioch developed a Christianized approach to hermeneutics that would pave the way for a sound response to him.

On the basis of that approach, Diodore of Antioch issued a penetrating critique of, and alternative to, the allegorical method in a key work entitled, *What is the Difference Between Contemplation [theoria] and Allegory?* In this work, Diodore rejects the excesses of Alexandria but not everything that came out of Alexandria. That is, his work was more corrective than divisive. Then, for example, in his introduction to the Psalms, he distinguished between *historia* (the historical background), *lexis* (the literal sense), *theoria* (the fuller sense that is discerned through careful exegesis, understanding of the *lexis*, and contemplation), and allegory. He rejected allegory as a valid method of interpretation because in actual practice the proponents thereof tended to divorce the allegorical sense from the literal sense and thus do violence to the text. He did, however, retain the spiritual sense (*theoria*) because, in agreement with the broad consensus of the church, he argued that there is indeed more to the Scripture than the plain meaning of the words. But this “more” is always inseparably united with the literal sense so that one may build upon the literal but one may not go beyond the literal.

One convenient way of summarizing the difference between these two schools of thought is this: whereas Alexandria looked at Scripture and saw two meanings, Antioch looked at Scripture and saw a double-meaning (Goldsworthy, 98). The former often tends toward flights of fancy, while the latter preserves the vital relationship between type and antitype without making mincemeat of the literal sense (see Bray, 105-107; Dockery, 103-128; Hall, 156-176).

Unfortunately, there were some at Antioch who pushed the literal sense too far and also made mincemeat of the Scripture and Christian theology. Most important among these is perhaps Nestorius whose Christology was rightly rejected as heresy, and whose shadow largely spoiled what otherwise would have been the lasting legacy of Antioch. But God is faithful, and he caused leading lights such as Athanasius, Jerome, and Augustine to rise up and correct the excesses of Alexandria as well. Augustine in particular, though he did not go as far as I would have liked in rejecting allegorization, popularized a modified approach to hermeneutics and homiletics that would guide the church for centuries to come.

Following the lead of John Cassian (Dockery, 158), Augustine argued for four senses of Scripture: the literal, the allegorical, the tropological (moral), and the anagogical (eschatological). For him, this meant that there is a fourfold meaning to every text that, on the foundation of the literal, expresses faith, love, and hope. He insisted on the importance of the literal, and though he sometimes strayed from his own principles and sadly misinterpreted this or that text, he was eminently more faithful to the text than Origen. His approach dominated the world of hermeneutics and homiletics throughout the middle ages, so much so that the entire era seems to be a series of footnotes on Augustine.

Reflecting on the era of the early church as a whole, Hall helpfully articulates four lessons we should learn from them: on the whole, they read the Bible holistically as one book in two testaments, they read the Bible Christologically as a singular message rooted in the person of Jesus, they read the Bible in community, and they read the Bible within the context of a life of prayer, worship, and spiritual formation (Hall, 191-200). We would indeed do well to humbly learn of them and follow their lead in these several ways.

Early Middle Ages (5th-13th Centuries)

I envision the era of the early middle ages commencing with the life and works of Augustine, and concluding with the life and works of Thomas Aquinas who was the leading light among the Scholastics. Indeed, after Augustine, there is little novel work until Aquinas, if there is any at all, for through his writings, and especially *On Christian Doctrine*, his hermeneutical method grew in prominence until it became the norm. This does not mean that every exegete in the early middle ages unthinkingly embraced Augustine, but it does mean that whatever smatterings of alternatives there were failed to gain a foothold.

In some ways, this was a good thing but it eventuated in a subtle and growing division between exegesis and spirituality so that the former was envisioned as proper to the literal sense of Scripture and the latter as proper to the spiritual senses of Scripture. “It follows that so long as this conception of Bible studies holds good, we shall have many commentaries containing little exegesis” (Smalley, 2). And for this era, this is indeed the case. In fact,

After the death of Remigius of Auxerre, about 908, there is no important commentary, and a dearth of even compilations, for about a century and a quarter. Holy abbots, as their biographers tell us, were still devoted to *lectio divina*, and we have unverifiable references to their study of Hebrew; they left very little written exegesis. The cathedral schools, which were improving their organization at this time, did as little for biblical studies as the monastic. It is a dramatic pause in the history of Bible studies and we should miss its significance if we explained it away as the demoralizing effect of war and Viking invasion. They certainly made scholarship difficult; but the real reason was a shift of interest. The Cluniac and other tenth-century religious reformers emphasized the liturgy at the expense of study (Smalley, 44-45).

This was a tragic development, but God is faithful. Among other lesser movements, the early twelfth century Victorines, led by Hugh, Richard, and Andrew of Saint

Victor in France, revived the discussion of hermeneutics and insisted that though the Bible does contain a literal sense and an allegorical (or spiritual) sense, the former is more important than, and is the foundation of, the latter. “Hugh patiently explains that the literal sense is not the *word*, but what it means; it may have a figurative meaning; and this belongs to the literal sense. To despise the literal sense is to despise the whole of sacred literature” (Smalley, 93). Hugh’s “great service to exegesis was to lay more stress on the literal interpretation *relatively* to the spiritual, and to develop the sources for it” (Smalley, 102).

With this revived articulation of what was essentially Antiochene hermeneutics (though Hugh would not have known or said that), also came a fusion of spirituality and scholarship. Previous to this time, a division had developed between monks who prayed and scholars who studied. Now, along with several other movements (or Orders, as they were called), the Victorines sought to combine robust spirituality with disciplined scholarship. They succeeded in this endeavor so that the following generation, led by the trifecta of Peter Comestor, Peter the Chanter, and Stephen Langton, spent their lives promoting and prospering this “novel” approach (Smalley, 196).

In this way, the Victorine program made practices such as *lectio divina* acceptable to Paris intellectuals who then pressed their approach into what was essentially an academic lecture course. This was truly novel in history of the west, and eventually gave rise to such leading lights as Anselm and Ralph of Laon who made the first concerted effort toward a systematic theology and provided the inspiration and impetus for Thomas Aquinas’s mammoth *Summa Theologica* (Smalley, 49, 196).

Movements like the Victorines, then, provided the impetus for the development of universities where the Bible, spirituality, and the natural world were approached in an increasingly intellectual manner. This development, called Scholasticism, was further fueled by historic movements that forced prominent scholars to flee from the east and settle in the west, bringing with them vital, ancient texts that had been all but lost to the west. Among these works were the writings of Aristotle which were banned and burned by the church, but which were eventually enshrined in the official teaching of the church via the writings of Aquinas. In Aristotle, Aquinas saw a model for envisioning the world and organizing truth that was, to his mind, superior to Plato. Aquinas did not reject Augustine (who admired Plato), but he astutely modified Augustine's approach.

Late Middle Ages (13th-15th Centuries)

I envision the late middle ages commencing with the life and work of Thomas Aquinas and concluding with the life and work of Martin Luther. It is beyond the scope of this paper, and the knowledge of this student, to adequately summarize and analyze the works and influence of Aquinas and his relationship to Augustine. I can say that Scholasticism eventuated in a novel and formal separation between hermeneutics and homiletics as the former increasingly became the purview of the academy and was thus increasingly approached as a science rather than a spiritual discipline. As for the Bible, "Before the twelfth century, the Bible had been a monastic text; now it became a professional text for clergy and their teachers" (Chris Ocker, in McKim, 20).

This unfortunate development combined with the development of natural theology, spelled disaster for the Scholastic movement, and to some extent for the church.

Without going into the details, the influence of Aristotle upon Aquinas led him to advance the already extant idea of the division between nature and grace such that, by means of general grace, the natural world and philosophy became valid sources of revelation right alongside the Word of God and theology. “Aquinas recognized that salvation was dependent upon revelation, but he also fixed the relationship of theology to natural philosophy” (Goldsworthy, 112). So this idea was not new with him, but it became entrenched by him.

One of the implications of this teaching was what Aquinas called the *analogia entis* (analogy of being) by which he and the Scholastics argued that the Creator and his creation, particularly humanity, are bound in an ontological union so that the knowledge of God, in some senses, does not require revelation. Because of the effects of sin, this knowledge must be aided by grace but, for Aquinas, human beings remain fundamentally united with God. This does not mean that we have no need of salvation through Christ, but it does mean that human thought has the potential of being a valid source for revelation (see Goldsworthy, 101-119).

In this way, the Catholic Church came to believe in, and promote, a “twofold way of grace and nature in virtue of revelation on the one side and of a ‘profound structural similarity between nature and supernature’ on the other, i.e., through the operation of a twofold alliance, the one set up by the participation of the creature in being and the other by the restitution effected in the reconciliation in Jesus Christ” (Jacques de Senarclens in Goldsworthy, 113).

This teaching formed an ideal launching pad for the Renaissance and the humanism that was endemic to it. The belief that humanity was not hopelessly fallen but

instead capable of being conduits of revelation gave rise to a spirit that may have seemed liberating and joy-producing, but was in fact a form of idolatry and rebellion (see Goldsworthy, 101-119). And this spirit did in fact relegate the Bible to a secondary place in western culture such as had not been seen since the days of Constantine. The veneer was there but the core was rotting.

Yet God is faithful, and along the way he sent many servants to seek his face, love his Word, and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ with joy, boldness, and good effect. Among them were the early Mendicant Friars, John Wycliffe, John Huss, and Girolamo Sirvonarola each of whom was used of God, in one way or another, to “punch holes in the darkness” (Larsen, 128; see also, 95-139; Brown, 3-31).

The Reformation (15th-16th Centuries)

I envision the era of the Reformation commencing with the life and works of Martin Luther and concluding sometime near the end of the Reformation! I say this tongue in cheek, however I must hasten to add that it is as difficult to mark the end of the Reformation as it is to explain the movement because in some profound ways the Reformation is still alive and well. *Semper Reformanda* was not just the cry of a generation but a vision of life in Christ that has persisted to this day, and all the more in light of the fact that the official teaching of the Catholic Church, though far removed from the days of Leo X, is yet a long way from a biblical soteriology and ecclesiology.

Having said that, Larsen envisions the century following the Reformation (chronologically defined) as “the ripening maturity of biblical preaching” (Larsen, 199-248). I find this description both accurate and helpful in that the seventeenth century presents us

not with novel developments but with maturing movements that have their roots in the Renaissance and late medieval period. Thus, I suppose that for now I will settle for roughly defining the limits of the Reformation from the day Martin Luther nailed his ninety-seven theses to the door of the church in Wittenberg to somewhere near the dawn of the seventeenth century.

The Reformation is an extraordinarily complex movement that exploded in the midst of an extraordinarily convulsive time of history. It is the result of an intricate nexus of historical factors such as the Great Schism and the Conciliatory Movement of the eleventh century; the growing secularization and corruption of the Roman Catholic Church; the burgeoning intellectual developments of the Renaissance and humanism; the various and serious doctrinal challenges that were confronting a church that could no longer suppress the ideas of its opponents; the decline of feudalism and the corollary destabilization of Europe and therefore the better part of the world; the technological advances that brought forth the printing press and modes of travel that allowed Europeans to venture out and encounter strange and foreign peoples along with their ideas and their gods; the Black Death which in the last forty years of the fourteenth century alone killed some 30-50% of the population of Europe so that the world's population is said to have decreased from about 450 million to 350 million people by A.D. 1400 (McManners, 326-329).

This web of historical phenomena (and more) gave rise to an era of reforming movements which came from top and bottom, rich and poor. There were in fact many "reformations" prior to *the* Reformation so that we must envision even the Catholic Counter-Reformation as part and parcel of a long history that reaches back beyond the life of Martin

Luther. There had been a very long struggle between those who knew and sought after God and longed for the church to fulfill her calling, and those who sought to use the church for personal or political purposes. The difference in the sixteenth century is that the rhetoric was applied, the talk became action, and the action became revolution—exactly why this is so and why this explosion occurred when it did is a bit of a mystery. Perhaps God had grown impatient with his unfaithful Bride.

With regard to the history of hermeneutics and homiletics, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli and other leading lights of the era were agreed in their rejection of the allegorical method and the mysticism that had developed because of it. “We would not be exaggerating greatly if we described the progress of biblical exegesis as the gradual abandonment of allegorical interpretation” (Silva, 52), and this progress gained massive momentum in the sixteenth century. Indeed, the Reformers passionately argued for the primacy of “the plain meaning of Scripture,” and its general perspicuity, which implied, among other things, that the common Christian could understand the Bible and should thus have it available in a language they could understand. Underneath this conviction was the belief in the priesthood of all believers who as such had a right to private interpretation in the context of Christian community.

Furthermore, the Reformers rejected Aquinas’s articulation of nature and grace, and thus blew the trumpet of grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone on the basis of Scripture alone. They believed, as did the early church, that the appropriate context for the interpretation, proclamation, and application of the Word

of God is the church, and in this way consciously dealt another blow to the remaining vestiges of Scholasticism and the more minor movements it spawned.

As Silva has aptly noted, “It is no exaggeration to say that the sixteenth-century Reformation was, at bottom, a hermeneutical revolution” (Silva, 77), and revolution is not too strong a word. By the grace and power of God, this generation of faithful believers turned the world upside-down mainly by returning to a more orthodox view of the Word of God which they then courageously applied to their social context in a number of ways. Surely, God had ripened the times for men and women such as these, and surely there have been those in every age who have been faithful to God and boldly stood for truth, and surely the heroes of the Reformation were hopelessly flawed and broken and made countless errors which were at times tragic and egregious. Yet we can and should celebrate the days in which God caused the various chains thrown upon his Word to be loosed again.

To get a feel for the careful position on Scripture carved out by some of the Reformers of this era, consider the following statement taken from *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, Chapter 1, Paragraph VII:

The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by His singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; so as, in all controversies of religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated in to the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship Him in an acceptable manner; and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.

This masterful statement clearly communicates that while the Reformers sought to make a clean break with the abuse of tradition, they did not desire to break with the tradition itself (Silva, 96). Rather, they reached back over time, to Antioch and Augustine, and affirmed a view and use of Scripture that has indeed caused the Word of God to dwell more plentifully among the peoples of the earth.

We should not be surprised that the return to a more biblical view of Scripture and its uses led to a renaissance of biblical preaching of which we are direct heirs. As Larsen has noted, the “Protestant Reformation... must be seen as one of the most fertile and forceful times of biblical preaching” because the “Reformers subscribed to a view of scriptural authority which made biblical preaching a necessity” (Larsen, 142). If the Bible is the living Word of God, and if God has commanded that Word to be proclaimed in all the world, then woe to the church if we do not preach the Word in season and out of season (2 Tim 4:1-5). To be sure, the church’s view of the Bible determines how the church will appropriate the Bible, and so we have need to give thanks to God for those faithful servants who have handed down to us a more orthodox view of the Bible.

Early Modernism (17th-18th Centuries)

As you might have guessed based on the introduction to the last section, at this point of history I forsake defining the epochs by certain leading figures either because I do not understand the times well enough to do so or because after the Reformation the world of hermeneutics and homiletics is less focused on the elite few and more on a number of people in a variety of social contexts. Whatever the case may be, I follow Bray in roughly defining

this era from the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648 to the French Revolution in 1789 (Bray, 225).

More properly, these dates mark the rough boundaries of “the age of reason” or the Enlightenment. With roots stretching back to the Renaissance and Francis Bacon, the Enlightenment is in many respects the birth-child of Rene Descartes. With Descartes, “Divine transcendence is dissolved in the immanence of the divine in the orderly reality of creation and reason. Descartes’ dictum, *cogito ergo sum* (‘I think, therefore I am’) expressed a starting point of complete subjectivity and autonomy. He thus turned on its head the dictum of Augustine, *cogito ergo Deus est* (‘I think, therefore God exists’).” (Goldsworthy, 122). In other words, one major implication of this terse dictum was that the locus of authority began to shift from divine revelation to human reason.

From this point of departure, the likes of Kant, Leibniz, Spinoza, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Lessing developed their thought. And though this may sound strange, initially the Enlightenment project was not so much a rejection of God as it was a desire to appropriate Christianity in a way that was sensible to “modern man.” Some early Enlightenment thinkers of course rejected God, but others simply sought to appeal to reason before faith, because reason was now on par with revelation. “Less positive was the drift among many of the Enlightenment’s leading lights to question increasingly the coherence, significance and moral stance of Christian doctrine and authority” (Hall, 21) so that the movement did eventually eschew traditional conceptions of God and formulations of doctrine, and increasingly the veracity and authority of the Bible itself. They “cast aside the necessity of a Christian framework for interpreting reality” (Hall, 23), and having done so concluded that reason is

superior to revelation (or at least prior to it), since revelation is a product of, and is received and evaluated by, reason. The Christianity that remained was little more than a moralistic philosophy with Bible verses appended, and was thus devoid of the true gospel, of life, and of power (Goldsworthy, 120-129).

In this cultural and intellectual milieu, the historical-critical hermeneutic arose and took root as the Bible became the subject of scholarly criticism as would any other historical (and human) work. The Bible and Christianity were thus attacked in the west as never before, and new forms of atheism arose, became acceptable and then fashionable, and to a degree took hold (see Buckley). “What is most striking and troubling in the Enlightenment perspective, though, is its naïve confidence that reason operates autonomously, largely free from the effects of personal disposition, social context, cultural back-ground and religious community” (Hall, 24). It was at root an arrogant, adolescent, and idolatrous movement wherein the Creator was exchanged for the creation.

Yet God is faithful. Amidst such fierce attacks, many arose from one country and then another to stand upon the Word of God, to proclaim and defend the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to spawn a variety of awakenings, the most famous of which is known as “The Great Awakening.” These faithful men and women, by and large, consciously stood on the shoulders of the Reformers in the bold confidence that the Word of God would stand the test of time and endure any attack that Satan and the forces of this world would cast upon it. If it survived the apathy and onslaught of the late middle ages, it would survive the naïve hubris of those who raged at God while he laughed at them and commended his Son (Psalm 2; see Larsen, 327-413).

Late Modernism and Postmodernism (19th-20th Centuries)

I envision this epoch commencing with the French Revolution and stretching to, rather than concluding with, our own day. Perhaps in one hundred years hence, scholars and thinkers will demarcate our times in more definite terms but for now it seems to me that we are yet living in the shadow of the collective depression that is widely known as postmodernism, and that is the inevitable result of Renaissance humanism and modernism.

Building on Cartesian and Hegelian philosophies, Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher developed the decidedly liberal notion of the religious consciousness. Following Descartes, he elevated the issue of the subjectivity of the reader in the process of interpretation to a previously unknown height, so that even the believing soul, when reading the Bible, is more guided by their conscious perception of God than God himself.

This was a crucial step in the long and complex history of modernism that began with the author and his (or her) intention, then shifted to the text itself (that is, to the authorial product) as the focus of interpretation, and then finally shifted to the reader and his or her perception of the text, the author, and meaning. The fruit of so much thinking about thinking, from Descartes to the present, has been an increased emphasis on the thinking and feeling subject and subjectivity so that postmodernism is, in essence, nothing more than the completion of the process from author to text to reader, that is, from God to self.

In seeking to escape from the circularity of the claim that the Bible is the Word of God because the Bible says it is the Word of God, modernistic thinkers found themselves hopelessly trapped in an alternative circularity. "If we seek to avoid the obvious circularity of this [former] approach by saying that we must test the Bible by certain

objectively neutral facts, then who determines what is neutral and which facts are applicable?” Once we admit that some form of circularity is inescapable, “then we see that it is a choice of two opposing circular arguments: one that assumes the ultimate authority of God and his word, and the other that assumes the ultimate authority of human reason” (Goldsworthy, 33).

Modernistic thinkers chose the ultimate authority of human reason, and they, along with the world at large, have paid a very high price for that choice. Although he envisions the world in very different terms than I do, I nevertheless agree with Richard Weaver when he quips, “Ideas have consequences” (Weaver, 1). And the idea that the hope of humanity is humanity has had the most profound and tragic consequences.

For it is not as though the present reality of postmodernism is merely an intellectual construct or an excuse for intellectuals to teach, write, or otherwise make a living. For centuries, common and uncommon people took the claims of modernism to heart and built their hopes on the rising industrial revolution, believing along with Herbert Spencer that together humanity would evolve into higher forms of social and psychological being. Even certain sincere Christians, like Walter Rauschenbusch, got caught up in this false hope and, with a consuming desire to relieve the suffering of the poor, developed theologies like the social gospel.

But with the advent of social progress came previously inconceivable forms of evil that, in many ways, reached their zenith during World War I and World War II. Imagine being one who had sincerely put your hope in the fundamental goodness and inevitable progress of humanity, an idea which seemed self-evidently true, only to observe the power

brokers of the world harnessing the genius of progress and the labor of millions for the violent and grotesque destruction of human beings, and this for nothing more than the increase of wealth and power.

The Great Wars of the early twentieth century dealt the fatal blow to the false hopes of modernism, so that the insanity of Nietzsche became strangely prophetic and Picasso's portrayal of Guernica seemed like a realist portrait of the modern mind. Modernism was shattered, and its proponents sunk into a deep, subjective depression that has yet to lift. Even the liberal Reinhold Niebuhr, who still clung to the social gospel after the Wars, significantly revised the terms of that gospel, asserting that Rauschenbusch had been too optimistic and had sadly underestimated the pervasiveness and power of evil in the human heart (see Niebuhr).

With modernism the subject became everything but with postmodernism the subject has been found to be hopelessly hopeless. And thus we come full circle to the opposing circularities: "we see that it is a choice of two opposing circular arguments: one that assumes the ultimate authority of God and his word, and the other that assumes the ultimate authority of human reason" (Goldsworthy, 33).

Although the west by and large chose the second path, there were, and are, many leading lights who, by grace through faith, chose instead the first path. Great expositors like Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, Dwight Moody, Martin Lloyd-Jones, J. Gresham Machen, P. T. Forsyth, A. W. Pink, C. S. Lewis, and countless other unnamed lights, have stood above the fray of western culture, on the shoulders of Christ, and enjoyed the rich and eternal heritage of the Puritans, the Reformers,

the Victorines, Athanasius, Jerome and Augustine, the Antiochenes, Polycarp, Irenaeus and Tertullian, the apostles, and Jesus himself. The unbelieving west has been trapped by false hope, but God is faithful and he has seen fit to surprise many by joy. Surely, until Christ returns the west has hope if they will only turn to Christ, and I pray that they will.

Conclusion

In this section of the paper, I have attempted to summarize the history of the last twenty centuries of hermeneutics and homiletics in the life of the church, and especially the western church. I hope I have said enough to demonstrate that I have taken this course seriously and that I have grown immensely from it, however, I will be the first to acknowledge that my summary has many serious gaps and, I am sure, gaffs. For instance, I have failed even to mention many significant names and movements, and I have essentially ignored the eastern church, various other international expressions of the body of Christ, and notable portions of the western church like the African American tradition. But as I mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the nature of education is such that with every advance in learning comes progress in understanding the extent of one's ignorance which can be depressing or exciting. As for me, I am eager to continue this journey and to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as I understand with more depth of insight how he has worked to glorify his great name, in his church, through the passage of time.

Seven Key Historical and Philosophical Insights

Given that I am on the precipice of exceeding the agreed upon bounds of this paper, in this section and the next I will only offer brief summaries of several key lessons I

have learned along the way. First, I have grown in the conviction that good hermeneutics and homiletics are integral to the qualitative and quantitative growth of the church. If the authors of the Second Helvetic Confession were right when they wrote, “The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God” (in Larsen, 19)—and I think they are—then the science and art of hermeneutics and homiletics become exceedingly important. They must be taken with the utmost seriousness, discipline, and joy.

Second, the history of hermeneutics and homiletics are vitally related to one another but they are not identical. Over the course of time, developments in one of these disciplines have affected but not defined the other. Preachers have preached as God led them to preach regardless of what intellectuals were debating and developing in the academy, and scholars have followed certain lines of inquiry at times with little or no regard to the life of the local church. Ideally, these two disciplines ought to be inextricably intertwined in the context of Christian community so that accurate interpretation provides a solid basis for passionate proclamation, and passionate proclamation inflames the desire for accurate interpretation. And more ultimately, as Larsen puts it, the hope is to see the day when, in truth, “Worship fulfills preaching, and preaching fuels worship” (Larsen, 33), where “worship” mainly refers to a way of life before Christ.

Third, Christ himself is the proper focal point for hermeneutics, homiletics, and all of life. When I was a child, I related to my father without having first to establish a hermeneutical basis for doing so. The relationship was actually there and was prior to my understanding of it. As understanding grew, my love for my father grew, but such understanding was not strictly necessary to the relationship. Thus, while it is acceptable, and

advisable, to give thought to hermeneutics and homiletics and other related disciplines, we must not forget that the process of interpretation and proclamation is fundamentally relational and not intellectual. The legitimation crisis that has all but paralyzed the west, is resolved in the person of Jesus, for “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Prov 1:7; see Habermas). Joyful and willing submission to Christ is the key to understanding, and Christ is the legitimation of that understanding, for he is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6; see also Col 2:8-10; 1 Cor 1:18-25; Goldsworthy, 35).

Fourth, history, tradition, and the study thereof matter for a number of reasons. Since the Reformation, Protestants have tended to overreact against church tradition and we must work to correct this tendency in our own practice and in our circles of influence (Hall, 12-15; 20-21; 35). Larsen is right when he says, “It is unimaginable that a preacher can practice his craft for a lifetime without historical references and context. Impatience or indifference to history is a regrettable oversight that will exact a loss on effectiveness and impact in preaching” (Larsen, 14-15).

Fifth, I have seen afresh that when biblical preaching prospers in the life of the church, the church prospers in the midst of the world. “When life has gone out of the preacher it is not long before it has gone out of the Church also. On the other hand, when there has been a revived message of life on the preacher’s lips there comes as a consequence a revived condition in the Church itself. The connection between these two things has been close, uniform, and constant” (Brown, 7). Or as P. T. Forsyth succinctly put it, “With its preaching Christianity stands or falls” (in Larsen, 31). Of course, there is more to good preaching than the preaching itself, but this holy act is a vital part of the prospering of the

church because the Word of God is a living Word and the preaching of it is one of the primary means by which it comes to life in a particular social context. The Word of God is a sharp two-edged sword, the Spirit of God is the power by which that sword is wielded, and the preaching of the Word is among the primary means by which that sword is actually wielded in the church and the world. And since this is so, we must seek to promote with all our might the preaching of the Word in the church and the world.

Sixth, although we may call certain persons heroes without committing a sin, there is in truth but one hero and his name is Jesus Christ. As the evangelist Juan Carlos Ortiz once said to me, “Charles, all God’s men are flawed men,” and this is true. The greatest leaders in Christian history were used of God in spite of their flaws and brokenness not because of their talents and perfection. It is probably accurate to say that there are in fact no great men of God; there are only men who have followed a great God.

Seventh, I have learned from men like Polycarp, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Diodore, Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, and J. Gresham Machen that we, as Christian leaders, must stand for truth in love, and we must be tough to stand for truth. Men such as these have endured countless hardships for the sake of Christ, and because they have endured by grace they stand with the “heroes” of Hebrews 11 and say, “God is faithful, so fix your eyes on Christ, rid yourself of every weight and encumbrance, and run your race with endurance for the joy that is set before you” (Heb 12:1-2).

The Impact on My Life and Ministry

I do not mean to be overly dramatic, but this course has served to tie together several strands of my life that have been developing over the last twenty years. Without

going into the details, the Lord has used the readings, along with extended times of prayer and some extenuating circumstances, to crystalize the focus of my ministry as a preaching Pastor, a co-leader of a church planting network, and an author. Specifically, he has confirmed to me that the primary calling on my life is to preach the Word with all of my heart, and to promote such preaching with all of my might.

Therefore, in the coming months and years, I plan to continue this journey of reading both primary and secondary sources with a view to growing as a man of God, a husband and father, a Pastor, and a leader. As I progress in this endeavor, I will then develop resources for the glory of Christ and the good of others as the Lord leads. For example, I plan to write a series of devotionals for our church's weekly newsletter, Sunday morning bulletin, blog and social media entitled, *Broken Heroes: Human Frailty and the Glory of Christ*. These devotionals will highlight leading historical figures, their impact on the life of the church, and one or more of their flaws, sufferings, or difficulties. The aim will be to demonstrate that Jesus is the only true hero in this life, but that in his mercy he uses imperfect men and women to glorify his name in the world.

Additionally, though I am at least one year away from commencing work on my dissertation, I hope to develop a project that will include at least the following elements. (1) A survey of five to ten preachers from various epochs of Christian history that will aim to summarize their life and ministry, along with their primary messages and methods. (2) An analysis of these messages and methods that would consummate in a list of things modern preachers should seek to emulate and avoid. (3) A summary report of several one- or two-day preaching workshops with practicing preachers wherein I would (a) present the historical

material in some appropriate and interactive manner, (b) facilitate a conversation on the messages and methods of various historic preachers and the reasons we should emulate or avoid them, (c) guide each preacher to develop a personalized learning plan that they can then share with supervisors, colleagues, mentors and friends in an effort to grow in their understanding and skill as a preacher, and (d) encourage each preacher to articulate one or more immediate applications from the workshop to their preaching ministries. This is only a rough idea and I have many hoops to jump through before it could become a reality, but the point of articulating it here is to say that this course has given shape to my vision of the remainder of my time at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, as well as my overall life in ministry.

On a more personal note, this course has served to renew my passion for communion with Christ and his people as an integral part of the practice and process of hermeneutics and homiletics. I wrote several chapters on this subject in a book entitled, *Preach the Word: Why I'm Passionate about Expository Preaching* (Handren, Part III), but the exposure I have had to such luminaries as John Chrysostom, Lancelot Andrewes, and George Muller has deepened my resolve to seek Christ and draw near to his people as I fulfill my calling in the church. As I mentioned in the last section, the practice and process of hermeneutics and homiletics are fundamentally relational not intellectual. They gain their passion and power as the preacher draws near to the one who has all passion and power.

Finally, the Lord has helped me to see with new eyes that my calling is to steward what he has entrusted to my care to the best of my ability, giving little thought to what he has given to, or withheld from, others. To be honest, at times this study was

depressing as questions of my relative value in the Body of Christ came to mind. I am embarrassed to admit that one day I actually thought to myself, “I am a Podunk Pastor from a Podunk town—I’m nobody and my life will amount to nothing.”

This fleshly outburst was just that, and by the grace that is in his heart, the Lord helped me to embrace the words of the Apostle Paul as my own: “By the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain” (1 Cor 15:10). Whether I am assigned to Podunk or Paris, to a slum or a palace, I have a place in the Kingdom of God and I labor for the glory of my Lord and Savior, my King and High Priest, Jesus Christ. My joy is found in communion with him and submission to his will, plain and simple. Indeed, contentment in Christ is the key to fruitfulness in Christ, regardless of the outward appearance or relative impressiveness of that fruit.

As I remembered what I have already learned time and again, I experienced a renewed joy in this course of study for I saw that, in truth, the likes of Polycarp, Augustine, Chrysostom, Hugh of St. Victor, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Spurgeon, Martin Lloyd-Jones, and John Piper are my brothers in Christ and together we are playing our parts to advance the Kingdom of God in the world. One day, we will stand together in the presence of the King where a host of unknown servants of Jesus will be first while those who have had a place of prominence in this age will be last. But this relative order will mean nothing to the throng of worshipers, for our joy will be in Christ and the glory he has gained in and through our lives. As a body of servants from every tribe, tongue and nation on this earth, we will be one with Christ and each another, and this will be more than enough for us. Indeed, together we will behold the face of him whom we have sought to understand and proclaim in this

world and his exceeding joy will be ours, in ever-increasing measure, forevermore—glory be to his great name (Psalm 16:11; John 17:24)!

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APPENDIX 1

CHART OF KEY PERSONS IN THE HISTORY OF
HERMENEUTICS AND HOMILETICS

The Testaments and the Early Church (1st-5th Centuries)	
Matthew (unknown)	
Mark (unknown)	
Luke (unknown)	
John (unknown)	
Paul (unknown)	
Peter (unknown)	
James (unknown)	
Jude (unknown)	
Author of Hebrews (unknown)	
Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C.-A.D. 50)	Not Christian but very influential in the history of Christian hermeneutics.
Clement of Rome (d. 99)	
Ignatius of Antioch (c. 25-c. 107)	
Polycarp (69-155)	
Justin Martyr (d. 156)	
Marcion (85-160)	
Valentinus (100-160)	
Melito of Sardis (d. 180)	
Theophilus of Antioch (c. 120-c. 185)	Laid the foundations of the Antiochene “School” some 100 years before the controversy with the Alexandrians arose.
Pantaenus (d. c. 200)	
Irenaeus (130-202)	
Clement of Alexandria (150-215)	
Tertullian (160-220)	
Montanus (2nd cent)	
Hippolytus (c 150-235)	
Origen (182-254)	
Cyprian of Carthage (d 258)	
Dionysius of Alexandria (230-265)	
Lucian of Antioch (240-312)	

Arius (256-336)	
Eusebius of Caesarea (c 263-c 340)	
Hilary of Poitiers (300-368)	
Athanasius (296-373)	
Basil of Caesarea (330-379)	
Gregory of Nazianzus (330-390)	
Diodore of Tarsus (d. 392)	
Gregory of Nyssa (335-394)	
Ambrose of Milan (337-397)	
Ambrosiaster (d. c. 397)	
Evagrius Ponticus (345-399)	
John Chrysostom (347-407)	<i>On the Priesthood</i>
Jerome (347-420)	
Theodore of Mopsuestia (350-428)	
Augustine (354-430)	
John Casian (360-435)	Wrote <i>Conlationes</i> as a supplement to <i>On Christian Doctrine</i> .
Tyconius (370-390)	
Pelagius (c 384-c 420)	
Cyril of Alexandria (378-444)	
Quodvultdeus (d. 450)	
Nestorius (386-451)	
Theodoret of Cyrus (393-457)	
Saint Patrick (389-461)	
Leo the Great (390-461)	
Early Middle Ages (5th-13th Centuries)	
Benedict of Nursia (480-547)	
Gregory the Great (540-604)	
Isidore of Seville (d. 636)	
Maximus the Confessor (580-662)	
Bede (672-735)	<i>The Ecclesiastical History of the English People</i>
Alcuin of York (735-804)	
Charlemagne (742-814)	Commissioned text-critical works, promoted monastic life, general cultural immersion of the Bible.
Claudius of Turin (780-827)	
John the Scot (fl. c. 847)	Ninth century commentator
Rabanus Maurus (780-856)	
Paschasius Radbertus (785-865)	Ninth century commentator
Haimo of Auxerre (d. c. 865/66)	
Heiric of Auxerre (841-876)	

Angelom of Luxeuil (d. c. 895)	
Christian of Stavelot (fl. ninth cent.)	
Remigius Auxerre (841-908)	
Fulbert of Chartres (d. 1028)	
Bruno of Chartres (fl. c. 1086)	
Manegold of Lautenbach (1030-1103)	
Anselm of Laon (1033-1109)	
Ralph of Laon (n. d.)	Brother of Anselm of Laon
Sigebert of Gembloux (1030-1112)	
Gilbert Crispin (1055-1117)	
Lambert (fl. c. 1080-1120)	
William of Champeaux (c. 1070-1121)	
Guibert of Nogent (1055-1124)	
Stephen Harding (d. 1134)	
Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141)	<i>De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei</i>
Peter Abailard (1079-1142)	
Nicholas Manjocoria (d. c. 1145)	
Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)	
Gilbert de la Porree (1070-1154)	
Peter the Venerable (1092-1156)	
Peter Lombard (1100-1160)	
Robert of Melun (1100-1167)	
Archard of St. Victor (c. 1100-1172)	
Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173)	
Andrew of St. Victor (c. 1110-1175)	
Peter Comester (d. 1178)	
Walter of St. Victor (d. c. 1180)	
Peter the Chanter (d. 1197)	
Herbert of Bosham (fl. twelfth cent.)	
Joachim of Fiore (1135-1202)	
Maimonides (1135-1204)	
Peter Waldo (1140-1218)	
St Dominic (1170-1221)	Established Dominican order
Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)	
Stephen Langton (1150-1228)	
Jordan of Saxony (1190-1237)	
Albert the Great (1193-1280)	
Philip the Chancellor (1160-1236)	
Alexander of Hales (1185-1245)	
Guerric of St Quentin (d. 1245)	
Thomas Vircelli (d. 1246)	
Richard Fishacre (1200-1248)	
William of Auvergne (1190-1249)	

Late Middle Ages (13th-15th Centuries)	
Robert Grosseteste (1168–1253)	
Hugh of St Cher (1200-1263)	
Thomas Docking (d. c. 1270)	
Bonaventure (1221-1274)	
Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)	
Hubert de Romanis (1200-1277)	<i>De Eruditione Paedicatorum</i>
Albertus Magnus (1193/1206-1280)	
Roger Bacon (1214-1294)	
Nicholas Gorran (1232–1295)	
John Duns Scotus (1266-1308)	
Dante Alighieri (1265-1321)	
Master Johannes Eckhart (1260-1328)	
Nicholas Trevet (1257-1334)	
William of Ockham (c. 1285-1347)	
Dominic Grima (d. 1347)	
Nicholas of Lyre (1270-1349)	
John Wycliffe (1328-1384)	
Jan Huss (1369-1415)	
John of Ragusa (1380-1443)	
Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457)	
Thomas Gascoigne (1404–1458)	
Thomas á Kempis (1380-1471)	
The Reformation	
John Colet (1416-1519)	
Ulrich Zwingli (1454-1531)	
Thomas Bilney (1495-1531)	
Thomas More (1478-1535)	
Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536)	
William Tyndale (1494-1536)	
Johann Eck (1486-1543)	
Martin Luther (1483-1546)	
Francis of Xavier (1506-1552)	
Hugh Latimer (1485-1555)	
Hugh Latimer (1487-1555)	
John Rogers (1500-1555)	
Nicholas Ridley (1500-1555)	
John Bradford (1510-1555)	
Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556)	

Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)	
Philipp Melanchton (1497-1560)	
Menno Simmons (1496-1561)	
John Calvin (1509-1564)	
Andreas Gerard/Andrew Hyperius (1511-1564)	<i>On the Meaning of Sacred Discourses</i>
Andreas Osiander (1498-1565)	
Miles Coverdale (1488-1568)	
John Knox (1505/13-1572)	
Peter Ramus (1515-1572)	
Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575)	
Bernard Gilpin (1517-1583)	
Henry Smith (1560-c. 1591)	
Richard Hooker (1553-1600)	
William Perkins (1558-1602)	
Theodore Beza (1519-1605)	
Jacob Arminius (1555-1609)	
Henry Smith (1560-1609/1613)	
Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626)	
Laurence Chaderton (1536-1640)	
Nathanael Culverwell (1619-1651)	Cambridge Platonists
John Smith (1618-1652)	Cambridge Platonists
Thomas Adams (1583-1653)	
Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)	
Benjamin Whichcote (1609-1683)	Cambridge Platonists
John Owen (1616-1683)	
Henry More (1614-1687)	Cambridge Platonists
Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688)	Cambridge Platonists
John Bunyan (1628-1688)	
Richard Baxter (1615-1691)	
Early Modernism (17th-18th Centuries)	
Andrew Melville (1545-1622)	
John Robinson (1575-1625)	
John Donne (1572-1631)	
George Herbert (1593-1633)	
Richard Sibbes (1577-1635)	
Thomas Hooker (1586-1647)	
Alexander Henderson (1583-1646)	
Thomas Shepard (1605-1649)	
John Cotton (1585-1652)	
Samuel Rutherford (1600-1661)	

Thomas Fuller (1608-1661)	
Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)	
Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667)	
Richard Mather (1596-1669)	
John Davenport (1597-1670)	
Thomas Manton (1620-1677)	
Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680)	
Stephen Charnock (1628-1680)	
John Owen (1616-1683)	
Jean Claude (1619-1687)	
John Bunyan (1628-1688)	
Richard Baxter (1615-1691)	
John Flavel (1630-1691)	
John Tollotson (1630-1694)	
Philip Henry (1631-1696)	
John Howe (1630-1705)	
Matthew Henry (1662-1714)	
Increase Mather (1639-1723)	
Cotton Mather (1663-1728)	
Thomas Biston (1676-1732)	
Isaac Watts (1674-1748)	
Philip Doddridge (1702-1751)	
Johann Lorenz Moshein (1693-1755)	
Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)	
Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700-1760)	
Griffith Jones (1683-1761)	
Gilbert Tennent (1703-1764)	
George Whitefield (1714-1770)	
Howell Harris (1714-1773)	
John Brown Haddington (1722-1787)	
John Wesley (1703-1791)	
Daniel Rowland (1713-1790)	
John Witherspoon (1723-1794)	
John Newton (1725-1807)	
Late Modernism and Postmodernism (19th-21st Centuries)	
Francis Asbury (1745-1816)	
Timothy Dwight (1752-1817)	
Henris Schartau (1757-1825)	
Andrew Thomson (1779-1831)	
Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)	
Lorenzo Dow (1777-1834)	

Edward Irving (1792-1834)	
Edward Griffin (1770-1837)	
Christmas Evans (1766-1838)	
Robert Haldane (1764-1842)	
Robert Murray McCheyne (1813-1843)	
Asahel Nettleton (1783-1844)	
Thomas Chalmers (1780-1847)	
Edward Bickersteth (1786-1850)	
James Haldane (1768-1851)	
Archibald Alexander (1772-1851)	
Claus Harms (1778-1855)	
John Angell James (1785-1859)	
Ewald Rudolph Stier (1800-1862)	
Lyman Beecher (1775-1863)	
Billy Bray (1794-1868)	
Friederich Krummacher (1796-1868)	
John Duncan (1796-1870)	
Gardiner Spring (1785-1872)	
Peter Cartwright (1785-1872)	
Thomas Binney (1798-1874)	
Charles Finney (1792-1875)	
Brownlow North (1810-1875)	
Horrace Bushnell (1802-1876)	
Friederich August Tholoch (1799-1877)	
Johan Tobias Beck (1804-1879)	
Matthew Simpson (1811-1884)	
Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887)	
Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)	
Theodor Christlieb (1833-1889)	
John Henry Newman (1801-1890)	
John Bonar (1803-1891)	
Andrew Bonar (1810-1892)	
Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892)	
Philip Schaff (1819-1893)	
Phillips Brooks (1835-1893)	
John Broadus (1827-1895)	
Robert William Dale (1829-1895)	
John Hall (1829-1898)	
Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899)	
Christoph Ernst Luthardt (1823-1902)	
Thomas Dewitt Talmage (1832-1902)	
Frederic William Farrar (1831-1903)	
Theodore Cuyler (1822-1909)	

Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910)	
Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)	