







Definitions (cont.)

- Moving from what it *meant* to what it *means* (cf. Stendahl)
- The goal is to bring about an active and meaningful engagement between the interpreter and the text so that the interpreter's own "horizon" is reshaped and enlarged (Thistelson)
- "Study of the locus of meaning and the principles of interpretation" (Tate)

History of Hermeneutics

History

- Allegorizing and the Alexandrian School
- Typology and the Antiochene School
- Medieval "fourfold sense" of Scripture
 - Literal—E.g., Jesus was born in Bethlehem.
 - Allegorical—All of Scripture teaches the eternal generation and incarnation of Jesus Christ.
 - Moral—All of Scripture teaches the order of living.
 - Anagogical—All of Scripture teaches the mystical union of God and the soul.

Luther's Presuppositions

- The sole content of Scripture is Christ
 - What emphasizes Christ
 - Could produce a canon within the canon (e.g., "Red letter theology").
- Scripture authenticates itself
 - The church doesn't validate it.
 - The Scriptures validate the church.
- Scripture interprets itself
 - Perspecuity
 - Literal sense
- Christ is the Lord of Scripture.
 - Analogy of Scripture = the analogy of the Gospel.

Calvin's Hermeneutics

(Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk.1)

- Without knowledge of self there is no knowledge of God.
 - Subjective vs. Objective Knowledge
 - Anticipated the modern hermeneutical question about the relation of subjective and objective knowledge.
 - Kept the distinction without setting them against each other.
 - The Fall
 - Rebellion against truth
 - Requires the regenerative work of the Spirit for objective interpretation.

Calvin (cont.)

- Authority of Scripture comes from God.
 - Church and Scripture
 - Authority of Scripture does not come from the church.
 - The church is based upon, and created by, Scripture.
 - Spirit and Scripture
 - Avoid the "Enthusiasts'" error of "docetizing" Scripture and exegesis.
 - Avoid the Rationalists' error of "Arianizing" Scripture and exegesis.

Modern Hermeneutics

(Goldsworthy, 183-98)

- Carl Henry's three options
 - Fideism (e.g., Tertullian)
 - Empiricism (e.g., Thomism, evidentialism, and scepticism)
 - Presuppositionalism (Augustine, Anselm, Reformers)

Contemporary Evangelical Hermeneutics

Modern Evangelical adaptations of the hermeneutics of Luther and Calvin

Contemporary Evangelical Hermeneutics Summarized

- MEANING: The sole content of Scripture is Christ.
- AUTHORITY: Scripture is self-authenticating.
- MEANING: Scripture is clear and self-interpreting.

The sole content of Scripture is Christ
(*unity*)

- Every text in some way testifies to Christ.
- Interpretation cannot succeed without reference to the reality of the gospel.
- Theologies are...
 - Complimentary, not...
 - Contradictory

Scripture is self-authenticating
(*authority*)

- “The church can only recognize the canon and the authority of Scripture; it does not donate them” (Goldsworthy, 194).
- “It is an idolatrous assertion that allows the church to displace God as the effective author of Scripture” (194).

Scripture is clear and self-interpreting
(*meaning*)

- Perspicuity
 - Applies to Scripture as a whole.
 - Doesn't mean there are no *obscure* passages.
 - Doesn't eliminate the need for Spirit's illumination.
- Callahan's Principles (Goldsworthy, 197)
 - No necessary doctrine is obscure.
 - Scripture alone is the means of saving faith.
 - Scripture is its own interpreter.
 - Perspicuity is limited only by human sin and ignorance.
 - God, the author, can speak clearly and understandably.

Relation of Hermeneutics to Systematic Theology

Hermeneutical role of biblical theology

- We must develop a “theological hermeneutic” (Kevin Vanhoozer).
- Biblical theology the most difficult step in biblical interpretation, but it is also the most important for determining theological implications of the biblical message (Richard Muller).

Hermeneutical role of systematic theology

- Provides the framework for conceptualized faith in which each of us stands as we approach the Bible.
- Much of Christian dogma was formed in combat against heresy and error.
- Loyalties to systematic theology
 - Creedalism
 - Can blind you to good hermeneutics and good systematic theology.
 - Can provide useful perspective and control on ad hoc theologizing one text at a time.
 - Modern relaxation of denominational and doctrinal loyalties can be either a strength or a weakness.




