

On Bubbles

Mr. Gary S. Dykes
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In a previous essay *On the Nature of Biblical Textual Criticism*, I mentioned "bubbles". By bubbles, is meant—the various theories and writings upon the subjects of Biblical textual criticism, and upon the Biblical text in general—articles which are basically useless or of no value as concerns the advancement of our corporate understanding of the Bible and its eternal truths.

Recently, I was asked to give some examples of just what I meant by "bubbles". Thus, this brief paper came into existence.

The list below, illustrates some of these "bubbles". Please keep in mind that just because a critic or writer is mentioned herein, does not imply that all of their efforts fall under my category of "pretty bubbles". Some of the items listed are not truly classified as materials stemming from "textual criticism", some are more related to theology, some to general Biblical criticism, some to textual history. Be that as it may, I consider the following to be materials which hinder and mislead spiritual growth, they are in my mind fanciful diversions, drifting about the auditoriums like many colorful bubbles, shiny baubles here today, gone tomorrow. "Bubbles" are:

- any work which tries to reconstruct a supposed common source (other than the Holy Spirit!) for any of the four traditional gospels.
- any work which claims that multiple authors composed the five books of Moses

- any work which claims that Paul did not write (or dictate) all of his standard 13 epistles.
- any works which claim that any of the typical 66 books of the Bible are not genuine, or any portions thereof.
- any works which claim canonicity for any works outside of the 66 books of the Bible (Gospel of Thomas, Enoch or Judas, et al).

NOW, WE CAN BE MORE SPECIFIC:

- from JSOT, issue 49, 1991. "Leviticus 15.18 Reconsidered: Chiasm, Spatial Structure and the Body". Richard Whitekettle. pages 31-45. A really dumb and fantastic article!
- *Josiah's Passover. Sociology and the Liberating Bible.* 1993, published by Orbis Books. Author, Shigeyuki Nakanose. A real abuse of common sense, and of a basic literal understanding, completely twists the meaning of the Biblical text
- *The Religion of Jesus the Jew.* 1993, published by SCM Press. Author, Geza Vermes. Seems to reduce Jesus to another common everyday rabbi.

- *Parables as Poetic Fictions. The Creative Voice of Jesus.* 1994. Published by Hendrickson. Author, Charles W. Hedrick. Semantics has gone to the birds in this wild fantasy!
- from *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*. Vol. xi, Number 3, 1990. "The Pilgrim Bible on A Feminist Journey". Author, Phyllis Trible. An exegesis which elevates the female.
- from *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 147, Oct.-Dec. 1990. *A Textual Problem in 1 Thessalonians 1:10: εκ της Οργης vs. απο της Οργης*. Author, Daniel B. Wallace. In Wallace's argument for απο he omits information which could/should have altered his stance. Like many neogrammarians, he overlooked the diachronic aspects of language study. (εκ was in the process of being altered to απο!).
- from the *Journal of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis*. June 1886. "On the Asaph-Psalms". Author, C. H. Toy. A typical liberal distortion of their dates and origins.
- from *Seminary Papers, SBL. Annual Meeting 1991*. "The Cup, The Bread, and the Salvific Effect of Jesus' Death in Luke-Acts". Pages 577-591. Author, Bart D. Ehrman. Ehrman's reasoning's for dismissing the longer text (Lk. 22:17-20) are not satisfactory, this is one of his poorest attempts to prove an "orthodox corruption".

- from JBL, vol. 76. 1957. "What is Kerygma? A Study of I Cor. 15:3-8 and Gal. 1:11-17". Makes zero contribution to anyone's understanding of the gospel, especially that one preached and revealed by the Apostle Paul!
- from *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 122, July-Sept. 1965. "The Gift of God". Author, Roy L. Aldrich. Aldrich seems unable to find passages in which faith is seen as a gift from God! (mail him a concordance!).
- from *Paul in His Hellenistic Context*. 1995. Published by Fortress Press. "Transferring A Ritual: Paul's Interpretation of Baptism in Romans 6". Pages 85-118. Author, Hans Dieter Betz. This man's belief system forces him to completely disregard the semantics of the Greek texts he illustrates and uses. Mixes up the various baptisms in the Bible.
- from the same publication as above: "Romans 7.7-25 as a Speech-in-Character (προσωποποιία)". Pages 180-202. Author, Stanley K. Stowers. A rather insane concept which forces Paul's text herein into a foreign rhetorical style; one which removes the very personal impact of the actual text!
- from JBL, vol. 100, 1981. "Myth and History in the Book of Revelation". Author, John M. Court.
- from JBL, vol. 62. 1943. "Deutero-Isaiah's Terminology for "Universal God"". Author, Julian Morgenstern.

- from *Biblical Theology Bulletin*. "Editorial dilemma: the interpolation of 1 Cor. 14:34-35 in the western manuscripts of D, G and 88". Author, D. W. Odell-Scott. Makes a common mistake of thinking that verses 34 and 35 contradict Paul's other teachings about women. 34 and 35 are about women in a special situation! Also bases some of his reasonings upon paralinguistic (speech acts) aspects.
- from JBL, vol. 94. 1975. "I Corinthians and Paul's Views Regarding Women". Author, Wm. O. Walker Jr. Walker seems to have a problem with this passage, so he suggests it is not truly Pauline! He was effectively answered by: (JBL, vol. 95. 1976), "The Non-Pauline Character of I Corinthians 11:2-16"? Author, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor. This terminated Walker's bubble.
- from *Journal of the Study of the New Testament*, 20, 1984. "Paul on Women in the Church: The Contradictions of Coiffure in I Corinthians 11.2-6". Author, Alan Padgett. Padgett creates a really wild scenario in this convolution, it appears that he "missed the boat" some time ago.

NOTE THESE PAPERS FROM A RECENT SBL CONFERENCE!

- Charles W. Hedrick, Southwest Missouri State University (Emeritus)
The Gospel of Mark and Realism in Western Narrative

- Bettina Fischer, University of Cape Town. *The Battle of the Kingdoms: Carnivalistic Versions of the World in the Gospel of Luke*
- Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest. *Feminist Rethinking of Paul*
- Thomas Staubli, University of Fribourg. *Maat-Imagery in Trito-Isaiah*
- Jean K. Kim, Moravian Theological Seminary. 'Greater Than These'; *The Healing Stories in John as a Struggle Against the Roman Empire (really!)*
- Norman C. Habel, Flinders University. *'Playing God or Playing Earth'? An Ecological reading of Genesis 1.26-28*
- James F. McGrath, Butler University. *Was Jesus Illegitimate? The Evidence of His Social Interactions*
- Troy W. Martin, Saint Xavier University. *Rethinking Rhetorical Situations in Pseudepigraphic Letters: Revisiting the Case of 1 Timothy and Titus*
- Adrien J. Bledstein, Independent Scholar. *"Against them, my son, be warned!" Reading Ecclesiastes as Satire Written by a Woman*

Finally, one last example: *Wuest's Word Studies: Galatians in the Greek New Testament*. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1944. Author, Kenneth S. Wuest. On pages 77f. in commenting upon the Greek text of Galatians 2:16, Wuest does not even mention the possibility that the "faith in Christ" could rather be a subjective genitive, the "faith of Christ". By only sharing the view that the genitive is of the objective sort, he denies his readers some real and important theological possibilities. Wuest is one of many respected scholars/teachers who do not give the full "story". Their biases are themselves, bubbles.

Not to be exempted, I myself, in bygone days, have also went off the deep end, and spouted some foolish theories or concepts. However, I try to pop all my past bubbles.

I hope that my samples above, give definition to my designation of many efforts as "bubbles", theories and pursuits which eventually generate a cynical vanity, which generate an empty faith and typically many misunderstandings. Some of the samples contain some elements of "textual criticism", all are critical expositions, and all are—in my estimation— valueless bubbles. However, I did get some use from them, did I not?