

Baconian Method and Preaching in the Stone-Campbell Movement

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The influence of Francis Bacon in the fields of rhetoric and philosophy parallels Isaac Newton's achievements in the field of science. The Restoration Movement was greatly influenced by Bacon's methodologies of inductive inquiry, yet maintained a deductive approach to rhetoric. A deductive rhetoric in a religious heritage that is strongly rooted in a Baconian methodology appears to be contradictory. Why is there a prolepsis? This article explores the incongruity between the homiletical and hermeneutical practices in the Restoration Movement.

Throughout much church history, preaching generally followed a deductive form. Even though the biblical texts represent a wide variety of literary genres, most sermons forced the text into a limited number of forms. Preaching spoke about texts rather than letting those texts say things their own way.¹

Dwight Nelson surveys the most popular homiletic texts beginning with John Broadus in 1870 and demonstrates how nearly all post-NT era homiletics were patterned after the rhetoric of Aristotle.² With the exception of J. Fort Newton, he finds the dominant method advocated by these texts is clearly the deductive method.³

1. Don M. Wardlaw, *Preaching Biblically: Creating Sermons in the Shape of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983) 13.

2. Dwight K. Nelson, "A Comparison of Receptivity to the Deductive and Inductive Methods of Preaching in the Pioneer Memorial Church," D.Min. diss. (Andrews University, 1986) 77.

3. Nelson, "Comparison," 19-23. Other exceptions include Ozora Davis, *The Principles of Preaching* (Chicago: n.p., 1924); and David J. Randolph, *The Renewal of Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969). Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), sorted out the

In time, subsequent authors brought forth a host of texts advancing the cause of inductive preaching, dialogical preaching, and narrative preaching stating that the literary form of the text should have an influence on preaching strategies. It was a call for “Biblical Preaching.” Texts began to appear that proposed a process of sermon development sensitive to recent literary and rhetorical studies. These new trends called for biblical preaching based on the “relatively simple idea that the literary form and dynamics of a biblical text can and should be important factors in the preacher’s navigation of the distance between text and sermon.”⁴ Furthermore, preachers became increasingly aware of the trend to allow the experience of the audience to take precedence over content in this postmodern society.

Some denominations, however, have been reluctant to follow these new trends. A common factor in many of these denominations is their connection to a Baconian methodology. Yet, a deductive rhetoric in a religious heritage strongly rooted in a Baconian methodology appears to be contradictory. Why is there a prolepsis in homiletics among several religious traditions that are philosophically connected to Bacon’s methods of inquiry? This article explores the apparent incongruity between the prevailing deductive homiletical practice within the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement and its strong Baconian inductive philosophy.

BACONIAN INFLUENCE

Richard Hughes defines Baconianism as an eighteenth-century philosophical perspective based upon the assumption that human beings, by exercising their common sense, can know reality precisely as it is, with full confidence in the accuracy of the knowledge. In antebellum America, many Christians embraced the Baconian perspective, insisting that the scientific method could unlock even biblical truths

general categories of sermons from the standpoint of functional forms and organic shapes. The fifth (and last) of the organic types of sermon falls under the classification of “A Story Told.” He believed that not more than ten percent of sermons being preached in the middle and late 1950s could be listed in this category.

4. Thomas Long, *Preaching the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989) 11.

with scientific precision. Churches in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement are philosophically dependent upon Baconian rationalism and empiricism, Lockean epistemology, and Scottish Common Sense Realism.⁵

Most recent histories of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement have chronicled these connections.⁶ Dudrey comments, “It is said that the movement started with Thomas Campbell’s *Declaration and Address* (1809), which laid its philosophical basis, but it may be said almost as truly that its real basis was set down by John Locke’s *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689), which contains the essentials of the Restorationists’ platform.”⁷ Alexander Campbell credited Locke with creating the civil and religious liberty in America that made the Restoration Movement possible.⁸

In fact, it was Francis Bacon, more than Locke, who influenced the Restoration leaders. Their love affair with Bacon is best illustrated by the opening of Bacon College in 1836, five years *before* Alexander Campbell opened Bethany College. Walter Scott served as the first president. Ware records the inaugural address.

Our institution has been denominated “Bacon College,” in honor of Sir Francis Bacon, that illustrious reformer who contributed so much, by means of his ‘Inductive Philosophy’ to dispel the mystic science of Aristotle and his followers, to wrest from them the scepter which, for some two thousand years, they had swayed over the human mind and to dispel the

5. Richard T. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith: The Story of Churches of Christ in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 31.

6. Leonard C. Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 1988); Earl Irvin West, *The Search for the Ancient Order*, 3 vols. (Nashville: Gospel Advocate, 1974); Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981); Winfred E. Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History* (St. Louis: Christian Board, 1948); and David L. Little, “Inductive Hermeneutics and the Early Restoration Movement,” *SCJ* 3 (Spring 2000) 5-18.

7. Russ Dudrey, “Restorationist Hermeneutics among the Churches of Christ: Why Are We at an Impasse?” *ResQ* 30 (1988) 21.

8. Mark Noll, “Who Sets the Stage for Understanding Scripture?” *CT* (1980) 618, names Timothy Dwight, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Miller, Charles Hodge, and Charles Finney among others who owe their philosophical heritage to John Locke. Locke’s views of individual rights and freedoms are explored more fully in J.T. Moore, “Locke on Assent and Toleration,” *JR* 58 (1978) 30.

gloom of ignorance and superstition which prevailed almost universally during the “Middle Ages.”⁹

The Restoration Movement’s dependence upon Bacon is strongly connected to the Campbells. Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander studied at Glasgow University. Common Sense teachings dominated during this time. Professors filtered Francis Bacon and John Locke through the teachings of Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart. Reid retired from his professorship at Glasgow only a year before Thomas Campbell entered as a student. Reid and Stewart’s successors still actively taught at Glasgow and Edinburgh during Alexander Campbell’s student days.¹⁰

Bozeman argues that “both Reid and Stewart considered their entire philosophical program to be an enactment of the inductive plan of research set forth in Bacon’s *Novum Organum*.”¹¹ Bozeman summarizes four principles of “Baconianism” refracted through the lens of Scottish Realism as: (1) a “spirited enthusiasm for natural sciences”; (2) a “scrupulous empiricism” built upon the Realist’s confidence in the senses; (3) deep suspicion of abstract concepts, hypotheses, imaginations, and speculation, and insistence upon an inductive accumulation of “facts”; and (4) a celebration of “Lord Bacon” as the founder of the inductive method.¹²

Casey demonstrates Campbell’s dependence on George Jardine, a friend and student of Thomas Reid.¹³ While Campbell was a student at Glasgow, he kept careful class notes of Jardine’s lectures. Casey contends that Campbell was influenced by Reid’s and Jardine’s rejection of the syllogism as a means of reasoning. The syllogism was cited in these class notes as the source of necessary inference. Campbell saw the use of

9. Charles Crossfield Ware, *Barton Warren Stone: Pathfinder of Christian Union: A Story of His Life and Times* (St. Louis: Bethany, 1932) 287.

10. Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples of Christ*, 57.

11. Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science: The Baconian Ideal and Antebellum American Religious Thought* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1977) 7.

12. *Ibid.*, 4-21.

13. Michael Casey, “The Origins of the Hermeneutics of the Churches of Christ: Part Two—The Philosophical Background,” *ResQ* 31 (1989) 202-205.

sylogism as the method of the Protestants.¹⁴ Many see Locke and Bacon as the primary influences on Campbell, noting how he used the writings of Locke and Bacon eclectically to compile his interpretations and philosophical agendas.¹⁵ Reid's influence cannot be discounted. Although disputed by some historians, Reid corrected the flaws in Locke's philosophy that led to skepticism, idealism, or materialism.¹⁶ It is difficult to imagine Campbell reading Locke or Bacon except through the eyes of Thomas Reid.

Alexander Campbell followed Locke's insistence that the claims of the Christian religion are neither according to nor contrary to reason but "above reason."¹⁷ Locke wrote in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that faith "is the assent to any proposition, not thus made out by the deductions of reason; but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God, in some extraordinary way of communication. This way of discovering truths to men we call revelation."¹⁸ Campbell's view agrees with what Bozeman describes as "Protestant biblicism": "Divine revelation is not disclosed *a priori* to the naked reason, but is contained in the Scripture."¹⁹ Campbell agreed with Locke's idea that no one has innate ideas or *a priori* knowledge but all begin with a blank slate. What is knowable comes by way of sensation and reflection.²⁰

14. The term "Protestant" is consistently rejected by the early Restoration Movement. The followers of Campbell's reforms considered themselves "Christians only."

15. Casey, "Part Two," 193. Thomas H. Olbricht, "Rationalism of the Restoration," *ResQ* 11 (1968) 77-88, discusses the debate that takes place between Restoration scholars who generally agree that Campbell's psychology comes from Locke while his metaphysics comes from Reid. Olbricht disagrees, stating that in those matters in which Campbell's ideas are distinctive, they are those of Locke almost every time.

16. Samuel C. Pearson Jr., "Enlightenment Influence on Protestant Thought in Early National America," *Encounter* 38 (1977) 202; see also Noll, "Who Sets the Stage," 618.

17. Pearson, "Enlightenment," 197.

18. John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. John E. Yolton (London: Dent, 1968) 2:326. Locke's understanding of the relationship between faith and reason is developed by David C. Snyder, "Faith and Reason in Locke's Essay," *The Journal of History of Ideas* 47 (1986) 197-216.

19. Bozeman, *Protestants*, 128.

20. S. Morris Eames, *The Philosophy of Alexander Campbell* (Bethany, WV: Bethany College, 1966) 19.

John Witherspoon, an Edinburgh-trained minister, is credited as the first to bring Scottish Realism to America when he became president of the College of New Jersey in 1769.²¹ Realist texts were increasingly introduced into American colleges throughout the early nineteenth century.²² However, both the Campbells moved to America directly from Ireland, and no connection between their understandings of Reid and Stewart and the American experience can be established. Nevertheless, America was primed to respond to their preaching.

The Campbells applied the empirical method they learned from the Scottish philosophers to biblical exposition. The empirical method presumes that epistemological and ethical sense are common to all sensible people. By using the Common Sense method to examine the Bible, any student of the Word is endowed with the ability to arrive at objective, unprejudiced, and factual results. By viewing the Bible as a source book of facts, any reasoning person could understand Christianity as a logical system. Therefore, the Bible is seen as a constitution, a blueprint, and a pattern for the Church.²³ Thomas Campbell wrote, “The New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for the worship of the Old Testament Church, and the particular duties of its members.”²⁴ When Christians follow the pattern for the church found in the NT, then the first-century church can be restored today.

Locke desired to reduce religion to its essentials upon which all reasonable persons could agree. Locke hoped that Christians could learn to tolerate one another if they all agreed on the essentials. Allen

21. Leonard C. Allen, “Baconianism and the Bible in the Disciples of Christ: James S. Lamar and the *Organon of Scripture*,” *Church History* 55 (1986) 65.

22. Edward L. Hicks, “Rational Religion in the Ohio Western Reserve (1827–1830): Walter Scott and Restoration Appeal of Baptism for the Remission of Sin,” *ResQ* 34 (1992) 210.

23. Such terms as “blueprint,” “pattern,” and “constitution” are used throughout Restoration history to describe the Bible. However, the metaphor does not properly convey Bacon’s idea of reading the Bible as one would read Nature. A blueprint or map is not “facts,” but an interpretation of the “facts.”

24. Thomas Campbell, *The Declaration and Address* (1809; St. Louis: Messenger, 1979, reprint) 44.

and Hughes comment on the *Declaration and Address* noting that Campbell “identified the essentials of the Christian faith as consisting of whatever God commanded, ‘either in express terms or by approved precedent.’”²⁵ Unfortunately, the addition of biblical examples, which required human judgment and logical inference, as “approved precedents” proved to be a costly addition to Locke’s position, because all Christians could not agree on these matters. The Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement has been plagued with divisions due to the lack of toleration with those who logically deduce other conclusions.

Accordingly, Marsden notes how “Baconians” conceived God’s truth to be a single unified order.²⁶ Alexander Campbell understood all systems as having an “archetype” or general pattern. He used his knowledge of Bacon, Locke, Reid, and Stewart to put together a “Christian System” or a pattern of NT Christianity.²⁷ He believed the Scriptures possessed in themselves an absolute and necessary power to make themselves understood. In his *Christian System*, clarity of Scripture is emphasized.²⁸ He notes how God has given people the “natural faculties adequate for the task and a book capable of ready interpretation.”²⁹

Allen quotes Alexander Campbell as he demonstrated how he applied Bacon’s theories of inductive reasoning for science to a method to study Scripture:

Accepting Bacon’s definition of a “fact” as “something said” or “something done,” he asserted: “The Bible is a book of facts, not of opinions, theories, abstract generalities, nor of verbal definitions. It is a book of awful fact, grand and sublime beyond description. . . . The meaning of the Bible facts is the true biblical doctrine. . . . History has, we say, to do with facts—and religion springs from them.” In the same way that Bacon wanted to abolish the medieval scholastic theories of science and place science upon

25. Allen and Hughes, *Discovering*, 82.

26. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism in American Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980) 14.

27. Eames, *Philosophy*, 54-59.

28. Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System* (Nashville: McQuiddy, 1912) 3, 5.

29. Marsden traces the history of other Protestant groups who also base their ideas on *Scriptura Sola*, the perspicuity of Scripture, and the ability of every common person to readily interpret the Bible. Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples*, 43 quoted from Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) as an example of these views so prevalent in this culture.

an inductive basis, so Campbell wanted to abolish the dogmatic creeds and systems of religion and place Christianity upon an inductive basis.³⁰

Campbell followed Bacon's practice of heaping fact upon fact—Scripture upon Scripture—until a generalization resulted.³¹ In the Owen-Campbell debate, Campbell cites five of Bacon's aphorisms to guide his discussion. Since the "idea is in the word and the word is in the idea" Campbell emphasized grammatical studies and knowledge of the original languages.³² Since ideas and words are inseparable, "the Word of God in the Bible is the Word of God expressed by God, that is, the Word of God in the Bible is the way in which God reveals Himself."³³ Empirical study of God's Word, therefore, is the only way to know God.

Other influences also contributed to Campbell's hermeneutical methodology. Casey demonstrates Campbell's dependence upon Erasmus and Zwingli for his primitivist ideals.³⁴ The Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement became an ecclesiastical restoration or the restoring of the patterns of worship and polity.³⁵ Much of Campbell's grammatico-historical hermeneutics agrees with J.A. Ernesti and Moses Stuart.³⁶ Allen and Hughes state, "It is clear, then, that Campbell merged the restoration philosophy he had inherited from the Reformed and Puritan traditions with the Enlightenment approach he had inherited from the Age of Reason."³⁷

Consequently, Campbell's view of Scripture led him and others to a propositional truth theory. On the one hand he was not a literalist. He discouraged reducing figures of speech to factual meanings. The literary differences in the various genres of the Bible were written with "specific

30. Allen, "Baconianism," 70.

31. Eames, *Philosophy*, 19.

32. *Ibid.*, 24-25.

33. *Ibid.*, 24.

34. Michael Casey, "The Origin of the Hermeneutics of the Churches of Christ: Part One—The Reformed Tradition," *ResQ* 31 (1989) 75-91.

35. Olbricht, "Hermeneutics in the Churches of Christ," *ResQ* 37 (1995) 7.

36. *Ibid.*, 11-16.

37. Allen and Hughes, *Discovering*, 82.

intents, at specific times, with a specific kind of language.”³⁸ On the other hand, when Campbell proposed his methodology and inaugurated his “Christian System,” patternism tended to flatten the text. For example, in the *Christian System* under Campbell’s seven rules of interpretation, rule six states the interpreter should ascertain the point to be illustrated in the symbol, type, parable, or allegory.³⁹ Campbell’s reductionism encourages the preacher to ignore the form of a text while preaching deductive, propositional sermons. The Bible was seen as a collection of propositions that interpreters who followed Campbell would rearrange to fit their own homiletical forms and arguments.

From the above principles, Campbell obviously used deductive reasoning. When the Scriptures are silent regarding any particular point, Campbell “infers” or “deduces” a truth from clear generic laws and authoritative examples.⁴⁰ However, Campbell guarded against using these deductions in such a way that would divide Christians.

Although some might not see Robert Richardson’s (Alexander Campbell’s biographer) more mystic theology supporting a shift to a deductive rhetoric, Dudrey concludes that Richardson is the one who develops the doctrine of “necessary inference.” Richardson states, “Every proposition, then, for which there is not clear Scriptural evidence, is to be regarded as a matter of opinion; and every thing for which such evidence can be adduced, is a matter of faith— fact or truth to be believed.”⁴¹ Richardson concludes that deductions drawn from necessary inference are no longer opinions but binding doctrines intended by Scripture. The use of inference and deductive logic in the Restoration Movement increased from 1830-1850, which resulted in an unrecognized division by 1860 that manifested itself overtly shortly after the turn of the century. The Campbells and John Locke would have opposed this development, for they all advocated that inferences drawn from Scripture are matters of opinion and cannot be used as “tests of fellowship.”⁴²

38. *Ibid.*, 25.

39. Alexander Campbell, *Christian System*, 17.

40. Dudrey, “Restorationist,” 31.

41. *Ibid.*, 32.

42. *Ibid.*, 36; Casey, “Part Two,” 193.

Locke saw inference as a legitimate act of the rational faculty. He reasoned that people will see connections between ideas in a set of propositions and will draw new propositions from ones already laid down as true. But he noted that inferences are limited; for many make mistakes, draw false relationships, or begin with false starting points. Therefore, Alexander Campbell asserted only positive commands and approved examples could be used as doctrine but not inferences.⁴³ Although Campbell's methods would be extended by his followers to include necessary inference as binding, Campbell himself resisted this step.⁴⁴

Perhaps the most developed implementation of Bacon's methodology is found in J.S. Lamar's *Organon of Scripture*. Lamar's connection to the Campbells is easily recognizable.⁴⁵ Lamar attended Alexander Campbell's Bethany College in 1854.⁴⁶ Campbell gave Lamar's book a favorable review.⁴⁷

Lamar invokes "Lord Bacon" as the author of his theological method, by which he expects to establish facts of Scripture as "objects of precise and certain knowledge."⁴⁸ Theology needs to use the same method as science and establish the precise meaning of Scripture.⁴⁹ Lamar proposes to demonstrate that

the Scriptures admit of being studied and expounded upon the principles of the inductive method; and that, when thus interpreted they speak to us in a voice as certain and unmistakable as the language of nature heard in the experiments and observations of science.⁵⁰

When Christians give up theories and creeds and accept "Scriptural facts," then unity among Christians will occur and the Church will be restored to its primitive purity.⁵¹ Locke opposed a complete restoration

43. Casey, "Part Two," 197.

44. Michael Casey, "The Development of Necessary Inference in the Hermeneutics of Disciples of Christ/Churches of Christ," Ph.D. diss. (University of Pittsburgh, 1986).

45. Allen, "Baconianism," 68.

46. Garrison and DeGroot, *Disciples*, 285.

47. Allen, "Baconianism," 71.

48. J.S. Lamar, *The Organon of Scripture* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1860) 32.

49. *Ibid.*, 187-191.

50. *Ibid.*, 176; Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*, 145.

51. Lamar, *Organon of Scripture*, 26, 32.

of primitive Christianity in all its details, believing such a move was inherently divisive.⁵²

Lamar asserts he is not discovering a new method nor remodeling an old method but adopting a method used in science and applying it to Scripture.⁵³ He explains that much of the division in the religious world is the failure to settle on the right method of inquiry.⁵⁴ He offers four possible reasons why there are different interpretations among the Protestants, namely: (1) those who profess to draw their conclusions from the Bible are dishonest, or (2) the Bible itself is unintelligible, or (3) it teaches the contradictions which are professedly drawn from it, or (4) it is not interpreted according to the right method.⁵⁵

Due to the uncertainty of biblical interpretations of other Protestant groups, Lamar proposes a method to supply the church with the proper “materials or individual facts of revelation” to put together a blueprint and build “the great temple of truth.”⁵⁶ Lamar labels the other Protestant methods as either “mystic” or “dogmatic.”⁵⁷ The mystic method “professes to see more in natural and revealed phenomena than is recognizable by common sense.” Dogmatic methods are similar to Scholasticism of the Middle Ages “with its fondness for the subtleties of the Aristotelian logic and metaphysics.” He attacks Scholasticism as an “abuse of that which in itself is good—the art of reasoning.”⁵⁸ Although Luther opposed Scholasticism, Melanchthon revived it again. It was not until “Lord Bacon” that the Scholastic influence could now be curtailed.⁵⁹ Accordingly, Lamar associates the errors in Protestant methodologies to the “idola” of Bacon’s *Novum Organum*.⁶⁰

52. Allen and Hughes, *Discovering*, 79.

53. Lamar, *Organon of Scripture*, iii.

54. *Ibid.*, iv.

55. *Ibid.*, 28-29.

56. *Ibid.*, 39-43.

57. *Ibid.*, 48, 56, 81.

58. *Ibid.*, 117.

59. *Ibid.*, 131.

60. Francis Bacon, “From the *Novum Organum*,” in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, eds. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg (Boston: Bedford, 1990) 631-633.

Lamar denounces the dogmatic methods saying,

Let it be observed, then, that in so far as the rules and articles of faith which we now have under review claim to have scriptural warrant, they rest not upon the express words of the Bible, taken in their connection, but upon inferences and deductions from them. From premises often hastily adopted, and from texts often disjointed and misplaced, certain logical conclusions are drawn, and these conclusions are made fundamental, and are built upon as scriptural truth. They become the constitutional and elementary principles of the system, and, as the system is supposed to be pure Christianity, they are regarded as the cardinal principles of that system, and consequently the standards of all subsequent interpretation.⁶¹

He also denounces the “dogmatics” for not practicing the “right of private judgment” possessed by every individual who comes to read the Scriptures.⁶² He sarcastically concludes, “Here is the contrast: theoretically, ‘the Bible is the sole rule of faith,’—practically, ‘each church has certain standards’ besides the Bible; theoretically, it is ‘the right of every one to judge of that rule,’—practically, every one ‘is expected to adhere’ to some one of these ‘standards.’”⁶³

Subsequently, Lamar’s method cannot be separated from that of the “dogmatics” he chastised. Lamar reduces Scripture to one single point—the facts.⁶⁴ The same mind (God) gave people the “Book of Nature” and the “Book of Revelation.”⁶⁵ Both books record the facts. The Bible records the spiritual facts—the “phenomena of spiritual facts.”⁶⁶ These spiritual facts are verified by trusted witnesses.⁶⁷ When the interpreters investigate these facts, they must suspend as premature any preconceived notion of what might or what ought to be the order of God’s system on any proposed case.⁶⁸ Therefore, Scriptures will yield God’s will when the interpreter uses “sober judgment” and “common

61. Lamar, *Organon of Scripture*, 139.

62. *Ibid.*, 140-143.

63. *Ibid.*, 144.

64. *Ibid.*, 174-175.

65. *Ibid.*, 187, 189.

66. *Ibid.*, 192.

67. *Ibid.*, 193.

68. *Ibid.*, 203.

sense” just as would be used with other “literal texts,” for all doctrinal truth is taught in “literal and plain language.”⁶⁹

Lamar advocates that the Bible is clear and easily understood by all.⁷⁰ Due to the nature of the canon, the Bible is the only rule of religious faith and practice. The finality of the canon excludes all other canons, traditions, and philosophies.⁷¹ The Bible does not contradict itself and all the facts contained within its pages remain in harmony with one another, for the Bible is its own interpreter.⁷² Since the Bible is a source book for facts, the interpreter collects the materials, classifies the evidence, and draws general conclusions.⁷³

Lamar allows for the use of deduction.⁷⁴ He states, “Deduction proceeds upon the principle, that the necessary consequences of a truth must themselves be true.”⁷⁵ Therefore, deductions “enlarge the borders of truth” by going beyond what is “expressly mentioned.”⁷⁶ Consequently, Lamar develops a closed system able to dispute someone who disagrees with the conclusions that are drawn from inductive study.⁷⁷ In this discussion, a system of doctrine is implied to be binding on others.

Lamar understands deduction as a natural next step to induction. Lamar is convinced Bacon would have explained the necessity for a deductive rhetoric that explains inductive inquiry if only he had finished his “Great Instauration.”⁷⁸ The use by the Protestants of deduction that Lamar deplors as a dogmatic approach corresponds with the Baconian method he advocates as legitimate.

69. *Ibid.*, 101, 105.

70. *Ibid.*, 85, 105, 107.

71. *Ibid.*, 132.

72. *Ibid.*, 106.

73. *Ibid.*, 211, 216.

74. *Ibid.*, 177.

75. *Ibid.*, 266.

76. *Ibid.*, 269.

77. *Ibid.*, 263.

78. *Ibid.*, 180-181. Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*, 67, notes how deduction was used by other Protestants during this same time period: “Deductive reasoning must assume the truth of the premises with which it begins; it is merely a drawing out of implications already con-

Lamar continues with two useful purposes of deduction, namely, (1) to verify the conclusions or generalizations of induction and their inferred consequences and (2) to conduct the interpreter to new truth embraced in those conclusions. “Thus we go up and down the ladder; from particulars to generals, and from generals to particulars.”⁷⁹ Therefore, deduction is given the same authoritative weight as induction: “Again, having risen to the general truth, and verified it, every legitimate conclusion from it is also true. Thus deduction multiplies the truths reached by the opposite process.”⁸⁰

Bozeman notes Lamar’s mistaken assumption that he was the first to apply Bacon’s ideas to Scripture.⁸¹ Lamar had missed the mark by about three decades. Allen goes on to note how Lamar later saw the promise of Baconianism as “unfulfilled” and by 1901 was speaking of “intuition” and “inmost heart.”⁸² Lamar’s hopes were not realized, for the very presuppositions and abuses of deductions practiced by the Protestants affected the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement interpreters too.

Lamar’s indictment of other methodologies also incriminates the Restoration Movement. Olbricht states, “In most of their theologizing, however, my impression is that spokespersons in the Churches of Christ reason from Scripture in a deductive manner, arguing from one premise or hypothesis to another so as to arrive at a conclusion. In this regard the approach is much like that of science which, in practice, moves deductively from one hypothesis to another, rather than in a Baconian inductive manner.”⁸³ Lamar’s own words are not consistent with what he has advocated about deduction and serve as an indictment to “Baconians” everywhere.

tained in those premises. If deduction must begin with generalizations already formed, it cannot at the same time be a device for their formation. Induction, beginning with particular facts, refers then to general principles, or laws; these principles then become the premises for the additional procedure of deductive analysis.”

79. Lamar, *Organon of Scripture*, 181.

80. *Ibid.*, 182.

81. Bozeman, *Protestants in an Age of Science*, 144.

82. Allen, “Baconianism,” 79.

83. Thomas H. Olbricht, “Hermeneutics,” 22.

With Christ understood as the lawgiver for the church, a propositional view of Scripture developed over time. If Christ gave the church a “blueprint” (the Bible), then Christians are to construct Christianity accordingly. When one disagrees, then the label “heretic” or “liberal” is readily applied. This sectarian heritage fosters a fondness for debates (polemics against heretics). Many of these arguments are proceeded by simple explication of inferences understood to be arrived at by induction.⁸⁴ However, induction that treats all statements of Scripture alike, pulling them together or taking them apart regardless of context, so that a system can be imposed where none was explicitly before, controverts the spirit of Bacon, Locke, Campbell, and eventually Lamar.

A concordance can be taken off the shelf and all the passages on one subject gathered as facts. These facts can be compressed into one or more propositions. These propositions may be presented deductively as a coherent whole (topical preaching). For example, three isolated texts on the same subject can be reduced to a simple three-step plan for better living. Historical and literary context may often be ignored.

Likewise, although methodologically sounder, another preaching style shares the same capacity for abuse. Only one text is chosen for inductive examination. The interpreter reaches generalizations as to the meaning and intent. These generalizations may then be presented deductively as expository sermons. Often the form and function of the text is lost in this process, for it has been molded to fit a homiletical shape devised by the preacher. For example, a parable may be reduced to a single proposition (or three points and a poem) undermining the dynamic of the narrative. This distorted view of induction is what Olbricht describes as taking grapes and making grape juice.⁸⁵

Dudrey traces the development of deductive uses in the Restoration Movement, concluding that as early as the second generation a “Restorationist Scholasticism” evolved.⁸⁶ He continues, “Just as the Protestant Reformation in the 17th century lost many of the very real advances reforming Christendom under the 16th-century reformers

84. *Ibid.*, 21.

85. *Ibid.*, 19.

86. Dudrey, “Restorationist,” 37.

due to the scholasticizing and calcifying of Protestant orthodoxy,” so too has the Restoration Movement. By synthesizing, harmonizing, and systematizing Scripture into deductive and syllogistic logical canons, the Restoration Movement became “strict constructionists,” “dogmatists,” and upholders of “case law.”⁸⁷

The influence of the interpreter’s own cultural milieu upon his/her understanding of the biblical text cannot be escaped. Pre-understandings of the Bible will be echoed back to the interpreter. Different Protestant groups use the same inductive methods and arrive at various and often opposing doctrines. Pre-understandings of the text often determine the results of their investigations. Bacon opposed the *a priori* methods of the medieval Scholastics. Therefore, the irony of Bacon’s methods being used to create a new scholastic approach to the text should not be missed.⁸⁸

The scientific model of Bacon did not endure into the late nineteenth century, for those involved in the natural sciences realized these

87. Ibid. D.R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics: A Text-Book* (n.d.; Delight, AR: Gospel Light, n.d., reprint) 15, 83, 184ff., wrote shortly after Lamar. It is another example of a writer who has no perceptible difference in methodology or conclusions. He demonstrates a strong faith in inspiration’s finality, harmony, and clarity. Dungan seeks to find the God-given system or plan inherent in the biblical text (82). From the facts reported by reliable witnesses, miracles, and prophecies the interpreter is to draw conclusions. These facts cannot be judged but only apprehended. Deductions come after properly inducing the truth (84–85). He warns the interpreter to be careful of convictions that already exist before the start of the empirical study (87). However, Dungan thinks that by careful methods these presuppositions will either be confirmed or changed. He concludes that inference and approved precedents have legitimate roles to play in ascertaining facts and drawing conclusions (91, 95).

88. Another example of Baconianism developing into a positivist scholasticism is given by William S. Sailor, “Francis Bacon among the Theologians: Aspects of Dispensational Hermeneutics,” *EvanJ* 6 (1988) 75. Sailor demonstrates how dispensationalists apply “Baconianism” to their hermeneutical methods arriving at a literal and legalistic approach to Scripture that ignores the “language of ordinary discourse.” Dispensationalists—convinced that they were only taking the hard facts of Scripture, carefully arranging and classifying them, and thereby finding the clear patterns which the Scriptures revealed—demonstrate their loyalty to Baconian methods. In the effort to oppose what was considered extreme views of Scripture, many Evangelicals viewed virtually all Scripture the same regardless of its literary genre. The tendency to insist that different genres, terms, and phrases could be treated as isolated units of precise language will inevitably lead to fanciful and strained interpretations. Although dispensationalists arrive at different conclusions than Restorationists, similar abuse in methodology exists within the two groups.

methods led to a mechanistic, static, antithetical, fixed, and dogmatic system that did not match reality.⁸⁹ Noll identifies agnostic and materialistic “Darwinists” as the ones who hindered conservative Christians in accepting newer approaches to science.⁹⁰ He notes how this “commonsensical and literalistic approach to Scripture” ignores the Bible’s many literary devices and “divinely inspired authors of Scripture who lived in a world that knew neither Newton nor the modern fashion of historical precision.”⁹¹ As Newtonian physics passed from the scene, so did Baconian positivism.

DEDUCTIVE PREACHING

Much of the preaching in the nineteenth century reflects Locke’s view of rhetoric emphasizing “order and clearness” while dismissing the use of ornamental rhetoric intended to delight for it would only “mislead the judgment.”⁹² Preaching in the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement rhetorically mirrored its historical context. Similarly, the rhetoric of the early Restoration Movement harmonizes with the hermeneutical methodology described above.

It is easy to see that Campbell followed the Puritan rejection of ornamental style and emphasized the power of the Word. Archibald McLean noted that a Judge Riddle had commented on Campbell’s preaching and its effect, saying there was “no appeal to passion, no effect at pathos, no figures of rhetoric; but a warm, kindling, heated, glowing, manly argument, silencing the will, captivating the judgment, and satisfying the reason.”⁹³ Jorgenson affirms that deductive logic

89. Noll, “Who Sets the Stage,” 619.

90. *Ibid.*, 620.

91. *Ibid.*, 621.

92. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Theodore Dwight Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 36-37, discusses how deductive methods of Bacon subsequently influenced the preaching of the Puritans and their dependence upon Ramist logic. Preachers were to translate the Bible into doctrines and preach those facts propositionally.

93. Archibald McLean, *Alexander Campbell as a Preacher* (St. Louis: Christian Publications, 1908) 25. Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (Indianapolis: Religious Book Service, 1897), gives a longer account of Campbell’s preaching style noting that his eloquence and

dominated Campbell's style clearly seen in the Owen-Campbell debate where he openly advocates Bacon's methodology.⁹⁴

Campbell did not see the Bible as a book of theology but a technical blueprint or scientific manual laying out in precise factual detail the outlines of both primitive theology and the primitive church. Therefore, Campbell advised preachers when discussing biblical things to employ biblical language to convey the evident meaning of the biblical facts. To do otherwise, he warned, would open the door to disputation and division over human opinions. He believed there was a greater need for the essential unity of Christians than the purity of speech.

The emphasis on *reason* as the first order of business for Campbell is readily seen. Bacon's rhetoric, primarily the "illustration of tradition," is "to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will."⁹⁵ Imagination functions as an intermediary between the senses and reason, between the senses and the will, and between the reason and the will. Therefore, verbal techniques relocate facts to stir the imagination and thereby the will to influence actions.⁹⁶

C. Berryhill's dissertation notes the influence of George Campbell (no relation) of Aberdeen on Alexander Campbell's preaching.⁹⁷ Alexander adopted George Campbell's view that "sense, expression, and purpose" are natural for human understanding and acceptance. The use of words as signs, factual evidence, and testimony, as well as ideas on audience analysis and the speaker's sympathetic image, all developed by George Campbell, became tools for Alexander Campbell. Berryhill identifies four purposes of eloquence that Alexander Campbell borrowed from George Campbell, namely, to inform the understanding, to

figures of speech all came from other parts of the Bible. Campbell would not lower himself to use everyday analogies for illustrations (581-584).

94. Dale A. Jorgenson, *Theological and Aesthetic Roots in the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1989) 24.

95. Francis Bacon, "From the Advancement of Learning," in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings From Classical Times to the Present*, eds. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg (Boston: Bedford, 1990) 629.

96. Marc Cogan, "Rhetoric and Action in Francis Bacon," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 14 (1981) 229.

97. Carrisse Mickey Berryhill, "Sense, Expression, and Purpose: Alexander Campbell's Natural Philosophy of Rhetoric," Ph.D. diss. (Florida State University, 1982).

delight the imagination, to move the passions, or to persuade the will.⁹⁸ Each of these categories corresponds to one of the psychological functions of the mind and is dependent upon the one preceding it in the list given (G. Campbell is dependent upon Locke's splitting the person into psychological faculties). A sermon should proceed from informing to delighting to moving and finally to persuading: "A complete statement of the steps in the process would include the things said or done, the fact; knowledge by a witness of that fact; a report made by the witness of the fact; or testimony; confirmation of the report to make it credible; reliance on the testimony, or faith; emotional response to the thing said or done; action produced by emotional motivation."⁹⁹ A "preaching of the facts" methodology develops which emphasizes explanation: "Since evidence produces faith, the strength of the faith depends directly on the quality of the evidence."¹⁰⁰

This methodology led to sermons that persuaded by using reason to marshal the evidence for the argument that supported the testimony of Scripture. Therefore, the testimony must be clearly presented so that belief would occur. Only after the evidence and proofs were presented could the preacher encourage the audience by appealing to the emotions.¹⁰¹ The appeal to feelings is only proper after the audience is convinced by the facts.¹⁰² The rhetorical order of the distinct faculties in Campbell's model for discourse had to be maintained, he believed, to avoid the abuses so prevalent in revivalism. This emphasis led to a dominance of reason over feeling, expository lectures, and intensive Bible study among the Disciples.¹⁰³ Similarly, Roberts cites Casey's dissertation which traces Alexander Campbell's move from George Campbell's inductivist approach to argumentation to Richard Whately's use of deductive logic to create new beliefs and practices for churches.¹⁰⁴

98. Carrisse Mickey Berryhill, "Alexander Campbell's Natural Rhetoric of Evangelism," *ResQ* 30 (1980) 112.

99. *Ibid.*, 114-115.

100. *Ibid.*, 116.

101. *Ibid.*, 119.

102. *Ibid.*, 121.

103. *Ibid.*, 124.

104. R.L. Roberts, "Dissertations on Alexander Campbell," *ResQ* 39 (1988) 173.

Hicks discusses one of Alexander Campbell's contemporaries, Walter Scott.¹⁰⁵ Scott was one of the leading evangelists who preached in the initial stages of the Restoration Movement. Scott presented rational evidences from the Bible and asked the audience to make decisions purely on the biblical evidence. A proper understanding of the Bible would lead to a proper response because: "Once the truth was discovered it became the responsibility of the preacher to logically present the message and its attendant duty for the individual to either accept or reject."¹⁰⁶

Biblical interpreters discovered the pattern found in Scripture. Biblical preachers presented the pattern to the open minds of people. An inductive hermeneutic combined with a deductive rhetoric may appear to be contradictory; however, the success of such preaching was seen in the rapid growth of the Restoration Movement during the nineteenth century. The Enlightenment worldview of the American frontier readily understood and received the message presented whether or not it was internally consistent.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TODAY

The irony that a Baconian methodology for the study of Scripture would be employed to build a scholastic homiletic may seem incomprehensible but became so commonplace that it cannot be ignored. Today, however, the scholastic anachronism found in homiletics is slowly being reconciled with biblical studies and theology. One can only speculate whether or not the inductive approach in homiletics today would have corresponded with the inductive hermeneutic of the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, the verdict is not yet in whether or not newer modes of preaching will contain anachronisms themselves.¹⁰⁷

105. Hicks, "Rational Religion," 216.

106. *Ibid.*

107. For example, Craddock's methodology encourages preachers to reproduce the inductive journey they undertook in their exegesis in the sermon. The discovery of the message and function of the text can be rediscovered by the audience as they inductively hear the sermon. However, in recent years, Craddock has been tempered due to the changing culture. Craddock's homiletic proposals spoke to the Christian culture of the 1950s–1980s. But as American culture becomes more secular, recent proposals deriving from postliberalism are modifying Craddock's inductive proposals.

The New Homiletic is a paradigm shift responding to the so-called postmodern phenomenon.¹⁰⁸ It represents a radical shift away from the rationalistic and propositional logics of argumentation as the basis of sermon invention and arrangement. A variety of new compositional logics have been offered as alternatives (inductive, narrative, dialogic, story, imaging). They all appear to share two features: a common consensus that the old rationalistic paradigm is no longer effective and a serious attention to the creation of an affective experience for the sermon's audience.

A recent narrative analysis of homiletical practices described the existence of two discourse communities within Churches of Christ (A Cappella).¹⁰⁹ On the one hand, one community has a discourse that is rooted firmly in a positivist view of the world that emerged from the Enlightenment. They view the world as a static and contextually independent place. Out of their desire to maintain continuity with the historical religious identity of their Baconian roots, they underestimate and devalue the influence of those who appropriate new ways of dealing with an ever-changing context. Modernity's analytical tendency to objectivization and fragmentation approximates an ahistorical view of life and is inconsistent with a concept of what a community is and of human experience within it because it eliminates change, incompleteness, contingency, potentiality, memories, and intentions—in a word, historicity.

On the other hand, a growing mainstream allows the possibilities of contingency and multivalent meanings and perspectives. Their discourse reflects a postmodern¹¹⁰ worldview represented by the New

108. Postmodernism does not refer to a single theory or cultural phenomenon. Most advocates of a postmodern perspective are eclectic in their inclusion and exclusion of theories and practices. Multiple understandings and polyvalent meanings and experiences are appreciated as contributing to one's view of the world. Since no one definition of postmodernism would suffice, it is operationally defined in this study as a polar opposite of the modernism and positivism that emerged from the Enlightenment's search for the universals of human nature. The Enlightenment is primarily understood as an empiricism that involves the acceptance of sense perception as constituting reality. Postmodernism generally calls into question most, if not all, of the assumptions that have directed the inquiry of knowledge since the Enlightenment. Postmodernists are highly skeptical of the desirability of seeking closure, certainty, or control.

109. Tim Sensing, "Pedagogies of Preaching," Ph.D. diss. (University of North Carolina Greensboro, 1998).

110. Although postmodernism is not a friendly characterization, it is a word that allows multiple perspectives to be inclusively defined. Subsequently, narrative theology, phenomenology, post-

Homiletic. This new majority represent cultural constructivist perspectives. Consequently, they see neither the classroom nor the congregation as a place to receive a historical “ready-made” legacy needing and waiting to be transmitted and reproduced, but as a place of dialogue in which internal and external forces manage, adopt, and adapt meaning. A constructivist perspective no longer sees various contexts as silent and banal but as a dynamic dialogue partner and an ever-emerging product of human action and intervention.

The above analysis highlights some of the philosophical and rhetorical developments within the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement. Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith*, describes this development as a paradigm shift along socio-economic and political lines. He argues that older more traditional churches associated with poorer classes, agrarian rural culture, and lower educational achievement have consistently throughout the last two hundred years opposed the modernistic and progressive tendencies among urban churches that reflected changes in American society as a whole. Some churches crossed the tracks to mainstream social acceptability and shed the garb of their Enlightenment heritage. Other churches maintained their fidelity to both the lifestyle and thinking of their parentage. Educated preachers were ridiculed for their fancy clothes, educated words, and high life style.

As the mainstream of Stone-Campbell Restoration Churches came to mirror the landscape of popular American culture, conservatives grew in their resistance. Mainstream churches underwent significant acculturation being driven by many of the social agendas of the day. The shift that was taking place in the larger culture discredited the Enlightenment notion that the application of reason would somehow solve all the world's problems and usher in a golden age. The Jacksonian era had ended. Belief in Manifest Destiny was gone. Americans generally turned away from unquestioned faith in scientific objectivity and sought out instead the subjective dimensions of human life. As America shifted to a

structuralism, deconstruction, reader-response, liberation theology, and the various competing perspectives found in the New Homiletic all can find a home in a postmodern defined discourse. The designations of narrative or dialogic understanding of the world may find more affinity among Graduate Professors. A theological worldview of a postliberal hermeneutic, too, may be a designation that would find favor. However, each of these designations will bring about confusion in the way the terms theology, dialogue, and narrative are being defined elsewhere in this study.

postmodern and pluralistic perspective, so also, mainstream Stone-Campbell Restoration Churches changed. People found the traditional concerns of these churches inadequate and irrelevant to the world in which they lived. They seriously questioned every aspect of their tradition from the Baconian hermeneutic to the way church leaders formulated the Stone-Campbell vision.

Now in a culture skeptical of rationalism, many turn to subjective and relational ways of understanding the Bible and the Christian faith. As the pendulum swings, the tendency to move too far threatens. A move away from the dangers of rationalistic objectivity is a move toward a pietistic and experiential subjectivity. An overconfident reliance upon our ability to reason it all out cannot be replaced with an overconfidence that there is no reasonableness and objective place to stand. A paradigm shift has been taking place the last few years. A deductive rhetoric is fading into the background. To date, the paradigm shift is not complete nor the hermeneutical crisis resolved.⁵⁰



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