

Contents

<i>Foreword by Albert J. Meyer</i>	17
<i>Author's Preface</i>	19
<i>Introduction</i>	21

Chapter 1: The Bible and Slavery

Preview of the Debate	
I. The Pro-Slavery Case	31
Meet the Debaters	
Position in Brief	
Thesis 1: Slavery was divinely sanctioned among the patriarchs.	
Thesis 2: Slavery was incorporated into Israel's national constitution.	
Thesis 3: Slavery was recognized and approved by Jesus Christ and the apostles.	
Thesis 4: Slavery is a merciful institution.	
II. The Anti-Slavery Case	37
Meet the Debaters	
Position in Brief	
Thesis 1: The so-called slavery of the patriarchs in no way justifies the system of slavery in the USA.	
Thesis 2: God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt shows, once and for all, that God hates and condemns slavery.	
Thesis 3: Hebrew servitude in the time of Moses was voluntary, merciful, and of benefit to the servant; it was not slavery.	

- Thesis 4:** Israel's history and the prophetic oracles confirm that oppressive slavery did not exist in Israel; God would have roundly condemned it, had it existed.
- Thesis 5:** Neither Jesus nor the apostles approved of or condoned slavery.

III. The Pro-Slavery Rebuttal	46
IV. The Anti-Slavery Rebuttal	50
V. Supplement to Slavery Debate: Hermeneutical Alternatives	53
1. The Bible says both yes and no.	
2. Biblical teaching is to be applied to believers.	
3. The slaves' use of the Bible shows distinctive emphases.	
VI. Hermeneutical Commentary	58
1. "Literal" interpretation (a vice or a virtue?) needs clarification.	
2. The entire biblical witness must be considered with willingness to recognize diversity.	
3. Specific passages should not be used for "attendant features," but for their main emphases.	
4. Theological principles and basic moral imperatives should be given priority.	
5. Self-serving interests in biblical interpretation must be recognized and resisted.	
6. Interpreters must use a method that allows the text to speak its message.	
7. Interpreters must ask whom the text addresses and holds accountable.	

Chapter 2: The Bible and the Sabbath: Sabbath, Sabbath-Sunday, or Lord's Day?

Overview of the Problem

I. The Sabbath Position: The Seventh Day Holy	67
1. God ordained the Sabbath in creation.	
2. The Sabbath is an essential part of the moral law.	
3. Sabbath observance was important through Israel's history B.C.	
4. Jesus observed the Sabbath.	
5. The apostles practiced Sabbath observance.	
6. Rome changed the day.	

II. The Sabbath-Sunday Position: One Day in Seven Holy	73
1. God ordained the Sabbath in creation.	
2. The moral law commands Sabbath observance.	
3. The New Testament changed the day of the Sabbath.	
4. Patristic writings show the early church's observance of Sabbath-Sunday.	

III. The Lord's Day Position: Seven-Days-in-One Holy	78
Resumé of Position	
1. The Sabbath originated with Moses.	
2. The Sabbath's original purpose was ethical and humanitarian.	
3. Sabbath-keeping in Judaism deteriorated into legalism.	
4. Jesus broke Sabbath laws and fulfilled its moral purpose.	
5. Early Christians celebrated Jesus' work on the day of his victory, the first day of the week.	
6. Sabbath observance and first-day resurrection celebrations continued side by side in the early church.	
7. The promised rest of the Sabbath has begun in Christ; unbelief prevents entering.	
8. In later church history (mostly fourth century), Sabbath rest became part of Lord's day celebrations.	

Position Represented by

A. H. M. Riggle	80
B. Willy Rordorf	82
C. Paul K. Jewett	87
D. D. A. Carson, ed.	89

IV. Hermeneutical Commentary	90
A. Minor observations on the debate	
B. Major hermeneutical issues	
1. Tradition (church belief and practice) plays an important role in understanding Scripture.	
2. The historical method of Bible study is essential.	

Chapter 3: The Bible and War

I. Positions Supporting/Allowing Christian Participation in War	97
A. Traditional Position A	97
1. God commanded to fight and kill.	
2. God honored military leaders.	
3. Many New Testament sayings endorse war.	
4. The apostolic writings teach subjection to authority.	

5. Pacifists misinterpret the Scripture.	
6. The change from theocracy to church does not invalidate this position.	
B. Traditional Position B.	102
1. God as warrior is basic to Jewish and Christian theology.	
2. Christians must fulfill both kingdom and state obligations.	
3. Kingdom ethics cannot be absolutes in this fallen world.	
C. Theologies of Revolution and Liberation	106
1. Exodus: liberation from oppression is central to biblical thought.	
2. Justice: God's justice requires tearing down in order to build up (Jeremiah 1:10).	
3. Messianism: the messianic hope is defined chiefly as liberation and justice.	
4. Incarnation: Jesus' coming means liberation, justice, and humanization.	
5. Death/Resurrection: this paradigm, central to the Christian faith, stands for radical change and revolution.	
II. Pacifist/Nonresistant Position(s)	112
A. The Old Testament Witness	113
1. Warfare has its roots in humanity's fall	113
a (variant). Old Testament warfare expressed God's will for the people when kingdom and state were combined.	
b (variant). God allowed war as a concession to Israel's sin.	
c (variant). Israel's military warfare resulted from its failure to trust God as warrior.	
2. The Old Testament criticizes warfare and prepares for the New Testament teaching of nonresistant love and pacifism	115
a. OT shows examples of nonresistance.	
b. Patriarchal narratives are pacifist.	
c. The Reed Sea paradigm called Israel to "not fight".	
d. God fought <i>for</i> , not with, Israel.	
e. God fought also against Israel.	
f. Israel did not honor the death of "war heroes."	
g. The prophets criticized kingship and military power.	
h. Past victories were not used for war, but trust.	
i. The prophetic hope calls to peace.	
j. OT contains pacifist, universalist strands.	
k. Holy war culminated in "reverse fighting."	
l. OT contains the roots of the NT ethic.	
3. Since it prepares for the New, the Old Testament cannot be used for normative Christian ethics	117
B. The New Testament Evidence	118
1. Jesus' teachings (reflected in the apostles) are clearly pacifist	118
a. Nonresistance: overcome evil with good.	
b. Love the neighbor and the enemy.	
c. Jesus taught against the use of the sword.	
2. The nature of God's kingdom and Jesus' messiahship supports the pacifist/nonresistant position	122
a. Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom of God in the context of first-century politics shows Jesus' pacifist commitment.	
b. Jesus' temptations were political in nature.	
c. Peter's confession, a political manifesto, prompted Jesus' teaching on the pacifist way of the cross.	
d. The suffering servant-Son of Man-Messiah introduced a bold new pacifist picture for messianic thought.	
e. Jesus as conquering lamb demonstrated the new way.	
3. Christ's atonement calls for pacifist discipleship	127
a. Atonement means victory over the powers.	
b. Atonement means reconciling justification.	
c. Discipleship means identifying with/following/imitating Jesus Christ.	
4. The nature and mission of the church leads to pacifism	131
a. The church is the body of Christ's peace.	
b. The church's mission is peace.	
c. The church is separate from the state, but subordinate to it and called to witness to it.	
—Variants on the nature of witness	
5. Peace is the heart of the gospel	136
a. Peace permeates the New Testament.	
b. Peace is rooted in eschatology.	
III. Hermeneutical Commentary	138
A. Minor observations on the debate	
B. Major hermeneutical issues	
1. The relationship of the Old and New Testaments poses a difficult hermeneutical problem.	

2. Both diversity and unity in Scripture must be acknowledged.
3. A view of biblical authority must incorporate these hermeneutical problems.
4. The application of Jesus' ethic raises certain hermeneutical problems.

Chapter 4: The Bible and Women: Male and Female Role Relationships

I. The Genesis Narratives	152
A. Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1	152
1. Hierarchical interpreters speak.	
2. Liberationist interpreters speak.	
B. Genesis 2:18-25	154
1. Hierarchical interpreters speak.	
2. Liberationist interpreters speak.	
C. Genesis 3:16	156
1. Hierarchical interpreters speak.	
2. Liberationist interpreters speak.	
II. Women in Old Testament History	157
1. Hierarchical interpreters speak.	
2. Liberationist interpreters speak.	
III. Jesus and Women	160
1. Hierarchical interpreters speak.	
2. Liberationist interpreters speak.	
IV. Pauline Teaching and Practice	164
A. Galatians 3:28	164
1. Hierarchical interpreters speak.	
2. Liberationist interpreters speak.	
B. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; 14:34-36	166
1. Hierarchical interpreters speak.	
2. Liberationist interpreters speak.	
C. Romans 16	174
1. Hierarchical interpreters speak.	
2. Liberationist interpreters speak.	
D. Teaching in the Pastoral Epistles	178
1. Hierarchical interpreters speak.	
2. Liberationist interpreters speak.	
V. The Witness of the Gospels	182
Liberationist interpreters	
VI. Hermeneutical Commentary	183

1. The influence of the interpreter's bias must be acknowledged and assessed.
2. The text holds the interpreter accountable for his/her bias.
3. How shall the diversity of Scripture be evaluated?
4. How shall the divine and human dimensions of Scripture be understood?

Chapter 5: How Then Shall We Use and Interpret the Bible?

I. Hermeneutical Comparisons Between Case Issues	192
A. Slavery and Sabbath	
B. Slavery and War	
C. Sabbath and War	
D. Women and War	
E. Women and Sabbath	
F. Women and Slavery	
G. Hermeneutical Reflections	
II. The Use of the Bible for Social Issues	204
A. Six Alternative Views	
1. Jack T. Sanders: the New Testament has no useful social ethic for us.	
2. Rudolf Schnackenburg: the Bible has clear social ethical teachings but neither Jesus nor Paul changed social structures.	
3. John H. Yoder: biblical teaching speaks to social ethical issues and calls the church to prophetic witness.	
4. Birch and Rasmussen: the Bible influences social ethics through God's people in numerous ways.	
5. "FEST": the Bible stresses God's action and the church as the locus of the new order.	
6. Juan Luis Segundo: analysis of the social situation is a prerequisite for understanding the Bible's social ethic.	
B. Evaluative Response	
III. Model of Understandings for Biblical Interpretation	211
A. Sample Models	211
1. Pro-slavery model (1820): stresses the veracity and equal authority of all parts of Scripture.	
2. Grant R. Osborne: distinguishes between the cultural and the normative.	
3. William E. Hull: one must assess the distance between the text and the interpreter.	

4. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza: calls for assessment of the interpreter's biases and values.	
5. Peter Stuhlmacher: calls for consent to the text in the light of theological tradition and critical reflection.	
B. Proposed Components for a Model of Understandings.....	215
1. The community of faith is the proper context in which Scripture is to be understood.	
2. The view of biblical authority recognizes the significance of both <i>historical</i> revelation and <i>historical revelation</i> .	
3. The method of study must enable the interpreter to grasp and respond to the text's distinctive message.	
4. The method must include the assessment of the influences upon the interpreter.	
5. Interpretation includes reflection upon the significance of the distance between the text and the interpreter.	
6. The purpose of biblical interpretation is the edification of believers and the discovery of God's Word to humanity.	
7. Interpretation is validated through several important processes.	
8. God's Spirit plays a creative, illuminative role in biblical interpretation.	
IV. Proposed Method for Bible Study	224
A. <i>Listen</i> carefully from <i>within</i> the text	225
1. Hear; read the text, observing its distinctive structure.	
2. Become aware of the text's literary form, its type of literature, and its distinctive images.	
3. Read the text in several translations (or in its original language).	
B. <i>Learn</i> helpfully from <i>behind</i> the text	226
4. Define key words and assess the significance of the grammatical structure.	
5. Discover the literary context of the text and the text's function in the larger narrative.	
6. Identify the historical setting of the text, noting distinctive cultural, social, economic, and political perspectives.	
7. Put the message of the text into dialogue with or critique of (by) other biblical texts, considering the direction of biblical teaching, Old to New Testament,	

and the witness of Scripture to Jesus Christ, God's clearest revelation.	
8. Learn how the text has been understood by other people in diverse cultural and historical settings.	
C. <i>Live</i> freely from <i>in front</i> of the text	227
9. Engage in self-examination, assessing the influence of "Who am I?"	
10. Reflect upon the significance of the distance between the world of the text and your world.	
11. Meditate upon the text, opening yourself to its word and allowing it to dialogue with and critique your entire life/world—past, present, and future.	
12. Test the co-creative interpretive experience with other believers for confirmation, correction, and mutual edification.	
Conclusion: Summary of Learnings	229
<i>Appendices</i>	235
1. Biblical Interpretation in the Life of the Church (MC 1977 Statement)	235
2. Pacifist Answers to New Testament Problem Texts	250
3. Interpretive Commentary on Marriage Texts	256
4. The Wider Use of the Bible: Ephesians as a Model ..	270
<i>Notes</i>	277
<i>Bibliography</i>	334
<i>Index of Scriptures</i>	349
<i>Index of Persons</i>	357
<i>The Conrad Grebel Lectures</i>	365
<i>The Author</i>	367