METHODICAL
BIBLE STUDY

A New Approach to Hermeneutics

by

ROBERT A. TRAINA, S.T.M., PH.D.
DEAN
ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

"... He who has ears to hear, let him hear."
(Mark 4:9)

Copyright, 1952, by Robert A. Traina

Order copies from:
Dr. Robert A. Traina
Asbury Theological Seminary
Wilmore, Kentucky 40390

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
CHAPTER ONE

Observation

Since the beginning of an inductive process involves noting the particulars, it is logical that the initial step of methodical Bible study should be that of observation.

I. DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF OBSERVATION

Observation is "the act or faculty of . . . taking notice; the act or result of considering or marking attentively." Dr. H. T. Kuist defines it as "the art of seeing things as they really are." He also suggests that it entails seeing "impartially, intensely, and fearlessly."

It should be emphasized that truly to observe is to be mentally aware of what one sees. Observation transcends pure physical sight; it involves perception. Thus, for example, one may see a particular term used in the preceding sentence, namely, "perception." But unless one is conscious that this term has certain peculiar connotations and that an attempt must be made to discover them, one has not really observed its presence. Observation, then, is essentially awareness.

In view of its meaning, the general function of observation is to enable one to become saturated with the particulars of a passage so that one is thoroughly conscious of their existence and of the need for their explanation. Observe-
tion is the means by which the data of a passage become part of the mentality of the student. It supplies the raw materials upon which the mind may operate in the interpretive process.

II. REQUISITES OF OBSERVATION—SOME RELEVANT QUOTATIONS

A. The Will To Observe

This, then, is the bare chart of our coming journey; but everything depends upon the traveller's own eyes, and the disposition which he brings to this task of exploration. 'Seek and ye shall find,' is as true in history as in religion.3

Unwilled observation is soon satiated and goes to sleep. Willed observation, vision with executive force behind it, is full of discernment, and is continually making discoveries which keep the mind alert and interested. Get a will behind the eye, and the eye becomes a searchlight, the familiar is made to disclose undreamed treasure.4

B. Exactness in Observation

Sir William Osler, the eminent physician, always sought to impress upon young medical students the importance of observing details. While stressing this point in a lecture before a student group he indicated a bottle on his desk. 'This bottle contains a sample for analysis,' he announced. 'It's possible by testing it to determine the disease from which the patient suffers.' Suiting actions to words, he dipped a finger into the fluid and then into his mouth. 'Now,' he continued, 'I am going to pass this bottle around. Each of you taste the contents as I did and see if you can diagnose the case.' As the bottle was passed from row to row, each student gingerly poked his finger in and bravely sampled the contents. Osler then retrieved the bottle. 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'Now you will understand what I mean when I speak about details. Had you been observant you would have seen that I put my index finger into the bottle but my middle finger into my mouth.'5

C. Persistence in Observation

Peering into the mists of gray
That shroud the surface of the bay,
Nothing I see except a veil
Of fog surrounding every sail.
Then suddenly against a cape
A vast and silent form takes shape,
A great ship lies against the shore
Where nothing has appeared before.

Who sees a truth must often gaze
Into a fog for many days;
It may seem very sure to him
Nothing is there but mist-clouds dim.
Then, suddenly, his eyes will see
A shape where nothing used to be.
Discoveries are missed each day
By men who turn too soon away.

Clarence Edward Flynn6

III. ANALYSIS OF OBSERVATION

The four main constituents of any Biblical passage are: terms; the relations and interrelations between terms, or structure; the general literary form or forms; and the atmosphere. These are therefore the concern of the observing eye.7
A. Observation of Terms

1. Definition of a Term

A term is a given word as it is used in a given context. It therefore has only one meaning, whereas the same word may have several. For instance, the word “trunk” may mean the main stem of a tree, the main body of anything, the proboscis of an elephant, or a box or chest. Though in all these cases the same word is used, “trunk” is one term when it signifies the main stem of a tree and another when it denotes the proboscis of an elephant.

2. Kinds of Terms

a. Routine and Non-routine Terms

The term is the basic component of literary communication, and as such every term should be noted by the careful observer. However, if the process of observation is to be efficient, especially from the standpoint of recording what one sees, a distinction needs to be made between those terms which are routine and those which are not routine.

In the former category may be placed those banal terms whose meaning is immediately obvious and which are not very significant for understanding a passage. For example, although occasionally an article will have unusual significance, most of the articles used belong in this category. It would therefore be a waste of time to make a careful record of the presence of every article in every sentence. On the other hand, there are terms which should be especially noted and should be recorded because they will require more particular consideration. These are the terms which are non-routine, and they fall into three classes: first, those which are difficult to understand; second, the crucial terms of a passage and those which, though not crucial, are nevertheless significant for understanding the statements of a passage; and third, those terms which otherwise express profound concepts. The terms “transfigured” and “appeared” in Mark 9:2, 4 might be considered non-routine.8

It should be emphasized that this distinction between routine and non-routine terms is not intended to discourage careful and thorough observation. Rather it is meant to develop discretion; and the more one’s discretionary powers are developed, the more one will see terms which will need special consideration. Thus it will eventuate in more incisive and therefore more thorough observation.

b. Literal and Figurative Terms

Those terms are literal which should be interpreted according to the letter and which are meant to convey their primary or usual meaning. The term “tree” in Genesis 1:12 is literal. Figurative terms are those which are symbolic and which express a secondary idea distinct from their original meaning. The term “tree” in Romans 11:24 belongs in the figurative category.9

Frequently one will be able to determine whether a term is literal or figurative immediately upon seeing it. At times, however, this cannot be done until the second or interpretive step has been at least partially completed. In any case it is very important that one be aware of this distinction and that one use it properly if valid interpretation is to occur.10

3. Identity and Inflections of Terms

The various terms of a passage may be identified by the use of the following grammatical categories: nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, and articles. The observer should be able to utilize these categories and he should be aware of their functions.

To the ability to identify terms should be added the ability to note their inflections. An inflection is a change of form undergone by terms to indicate their case, gender, number,
tense, person, mood, voice, etc. Inflections are especially significant in relation to nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives.  

Exercise

Observe every term of Mark 10:13-52 and Romans 6. Try to determine whether each term is routine or non-routine, literal or figurative. Note any significant inflections. Attempt to indicate why the non-routine terms will need special consideration.

B. Observation of Relations and Interrelations Between Terms—Structure

1. Definition of Structure and Various Structural Units

As we have already noted, the basic component of literary expression is the term. But in order to communicate ideas, terms must be related and interrelated in accordance with certain mental, linguistic, and literary patterns. These relations form what is known as "structure." Thus in a general sense structure involves all of the relations and interrelations which bind terms into a literary unit, from the minutest to the broadest, from the least significant to the most significant. In a more restricted sense "structure" may be used to denote the framework or skeleton of a passage, that is, its more essential relations. "Structure" will be used in both the general and restricted senses in the forthcoming discussion.

The various structural units may be defined as follows:

- **phrase** — a group of two or more terms constituting a partial unit of thought and expression
- **clause** — a group of terms, including a subject and verb and sometimes one or more phrases, constituting a partial (or whole) unit of thought and expression

2. Importance of Structure

In one of his books, Henry O. Taylor states: "... art is not spontaneous, but carefully intended; no babbling of a child, but a mutual fitting of form and content, in which efficient unison the artist's intellect has worked." One of the chief aspects of the "form" to which Taylor refers is literary structure. By the preceding statement Taylor thus emphasizes the great importance of structure for the accomplishment of the artist's purpose, as well as the importance of the awareness of structure on the part of the observer if he is to comprehend this purpose. There is no doubt, then, that the discovery of structure is "one of the crucial points where conditions of growth have to be carefully maintained and fostered." The reader is therefore urged to aim at becoming *structure-conscious*, for if he does so he will find many passages unfolding before his eyes which he otherwise could not understand.
3. Types of Structure

Any given passage of Biblical literature may contain various kinds of structural factors. These may be classified in terms of two main categories: first, the comparative ease of their discovery, and second, their relative importance.

a. Surface and Subsurface Structure

There are some structural elements which are explicit and are therefore immediately apparent to the trained observer. We shall refer to these as "surface structure," since, as the name implies, they lie on the exterior of a passage. Romans 1:18-32 affords an excellent example of surface structure, for the "therefore" of 1:24 immediately indicates that the passage is constructed in terms of cause and effect.

On the other hand, some structural factors are more implicit and consequently may not be observed as readily as those which are expressed. These will be referred to as "subsurface structure." The contrasts implied between David and Amnon in II Samuel 11-13 and between Judah and Joseph in Genesis 38-39 are good illustrations of this kind of structure.

Certain facts should be noted in connection with the distinction between surface and subsurface structure.

First, it does not necessarily involve the difference between the less profound and the more profound, but rather is primarily concerned with the more obvious and the less obvious.

Second, not all passages have both explicit and implicit structure. In the study of some units, if one observes their surface structure and delves thoroughly into its meaning, one will arrive at the author's message. However, the observer should always be on the lookout for those structural elements which lie on the interior of a passage. He should never conclude that because he has noted some exterior rela-

b. Primary and Secondary Structure

A further differentiation should be made on the basis of the relative importance of structural elements within a given passage. It should be recognized that some connections are primary and that others are secondary or subordinate. In certain instances one may need to await at least a partial completion of interpretation to make such a distinction, but at least the observer should be aware of it and should attempt to utilize it insofar as is possible in the initial step of study. For it is important that primary emphasis be given to primary relations, and that secondary structural elements be conceived as subservient to these primary relations if the author's stress is to be ascertained.

4. Specific Laws of Structure

The structural laws about to be set forth indicate the concrete means used by any artist in arranging his work, whether he be a musician, a painter, or an author. In all these cases the means are essentially one. For what is art but the expression of the mind of the artist; and since mind is one, all the arts are one. All one needs to do, therefore, is to observe the composition of various artistic productions and by so doing discover the means used by artists in effecting the structural unity of their works. As a result of such an inductive approach, one will have valid grounds for looking for these laws in Scriptural literature, which is great art, and using them for its interpretation.
Frequently the forthcoming structural relations are conceived as convenient inventions which are imposed upon Biblical literature in order to prove a point. It should therefore be crystal clear at the outset that the laws to be stated are laws of logic; they reflect the mental processes of men as they think and as they express themselves in whatever medium they may choose to employ. Therefore, the observer does not apply them to a work of art; he simply discovers them and thereby ascertains the message of the artist. For the same relations which provide the universal means of communication also afford the universal avenues for interpretation.

a. Structural Relations Within Phrases and Clauses, Between Clauses, and Between Sentences—Within Paragraphs

It would seem logical to consider the sentence as the fundamental structural unit and therefore to limit our discussion at this point to an examination of the relations within sentences. However, since sentences are frequently determined by rather arbitrary means, especially in translating the Scriptural text, and since the relations between clauses within a sentence are often identical to those between sentences, the paragraph will be used as the basic structural unit rather than the sentence. The relations between sentences will therefore be surveyed together with the relations within sentences.

Structure as related to clauses and sentences is called "syntax." Webster defines "syntax" as "... the due arrangement of word forms to show their mutual relations in a sentence." We will now enumerate these syntactical relations in conjunction with the similar relations which exist between sentences. Together they will be termed "paragraphical relations." The following list will not be exhaustive but will rather indicate some of the more important connections.

OBSERVATION

1. Presentation of Paragraphical Relations

(a) The relation of subject to verb. The subject may be a noun, pronoun, infinitive, gerund, or dependent clause.

(b) The relation of verb to predicate, which may involve a direct object, an indirect object, a predicate noun, a predicate adjective or adjectival clause, or an adverb or adverbial clause.

(c) The relation of modifier to modified includes adjectives, participles, adverbs, articles, demonstrative pronouns, prepositional phrases, and adjectival and adverbial clauses.

(d) The relation of preposition to object.

(e) The relation of pronoun to antecedent.

(f) The relation of independent (coordinate) clauses to each other in compound sentences and the relation of dependent (subordinate) and independent clauses in complex sentences. Some of the various kinds of independent and dependent clauses may be described by the following names: relative, subordinate causal, local, subordinate comparative, temporal, purpose, result, conditional, concessive, substantival, indirect discourse, coordinate causal, and coordinate comparative.

The relations between the different types of clauses are indicated for the most part by coordinate and subordinate connectives, the chief of which will now be mentioned. Some of them will be expressed by prepositional phrases which serve as connectives. They will be placed under four classes and Biblical references will be given for them. The categories are as follows: temporal or chronological, local or geographical, logical, and emphatic.
METHODICAL BIBLE STUDY

Temporal or Chronological connectives
after (Revelation 11:11)
as (Acts 16:16)
before (John 8:58)
now (Luke 16:25)
then (I Corinthians 15:6)
until (Mark 14:25)
when (John 11:31)
while (Mark 14:43)

Local or Geographical connectives
where (Hebrews 6:20)

Logical connectives
Reason—because (Romans 1:25)
for (Romans 1:11)
since (Romans 1:28)
Result—so (Romans 9:16)
then (Galatians 2:21)
therefore (I Corinthians 10:12)
thus (I Corinthians 8:12)
Purpose—in order that (Romans 4:16)
data that (Romans 5:21)
Contrast—although (Romans 1:21)
but (Romans 2:8)
much more (Romans 5:15)
nevertheless (I Corinthians 10:5)
otherwise (I Corinthians 14:16)
yet (Romans 5:14)
Comparison—also (II Corinthians 1:11)
as (Romans 9:25)
as—so (Romans 5:18)
just as—so (Romans 11:30-31)
likewise (Romans 1:27)
so also (Romans 4:6)
Series of Facts— (Romans 2:19)
first of all (I Timothy 2:1)
last of all (I Corinthians 15:8)

OBSERVATION

Several facts should be noted in regard to these relations between clauses and sentences.
First, the four categories employed are not mutually exclusive. For example, a temporal connective may also imply a logical relation. Moreover, some of the same connectives may be found in more than one category.

Second, many of these same relations are operative within clauses as well as between clauses. The use of similes and metaphors, for instance, involves comparison. For an excellent illustration of this see the parables of Matthew 13.

Third, sometimes clauses and sentences are related implicitly rather than explicitly. Therefore, the mere absence of expressed connections does not mean that they are unrelated. At times one may need to infer relations from a study of the thoughts expressed or from the comparative positions of the clauses or sentences in question. Note, for example, Hebrews 8:5.

(2) Illustrations of Paragraphical Relations

In order to clarify the significance of the various paragraphical relations, they will now be illustrated in two ways: first, by investigating the relations within a sentence taken from a logical type of literature, the Epistle to the Romans; and second, by noting some of the main connections in a paragraph taken from a narrative type of literature, the Gospel by Mark.
(a) Relations in Romans 1:18

Romans 1:18 reads: "... the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth." The subject of the sentence is "wrath." The article "the" and the prepositional phrase "of God" both modify "wrath," the latter denoting the possessor of the wrath and therefore its source. The main verb of the sentence is the verb "is revealed." The prepositional phrases "from heaven" and "against all ungodliness and wickedness" both modify the verb, the former further indicating the source and the latter the objects of the action expressed by the verb, as well as the reason for that action. The adjective "all" modifies the nouns "ungodliness" and "wickedness," which are related by the conjunction "and." The prepositional phrase "of men" also modifies the same two nouns and indicates, together with the adjectival, dependent, relative clause "who by their wickedness suppress the truth," the possessors of the qualities denoted by the nouns. In the dependent clause the relative pronoun "who" is the subject, the main verb is "suppress," and the direct object is the noun "truth." "Truth" is qualified by the definite article "the." The prepositional phrase "by their wickedness" modifies the verb "suppress," showing the means by which the action of the verb is realized as well as its cause. The entire clause indicates the expression of "ungodliness and wickedness" and therefore denotes the cause for the revelation of the wrath of God.29

(b) Relations in Mark 9:2-8

1) "Jesus took with him Peter and James and John." (v. 2)—Peter, James, and John are the direct objects of the verb "took." Jesus took three disciples with him instead of the twelve, and he took these particular three.30

2) "apart by themselves" (v. 2)—This is a good example of a pleonasm. The prepositional phrase "by themselves" strengthens the adverb "apart." They both modify the verb "led." The question arises as to whether the author had any specific purpose in so utilizing the principle of redundancy.

3) "before them" (v. 2)—This prepositional phrase modifies the verb "transfigured" and suggests the place of the transfiguration, that is, in their presence. The antecedent of the pronoun "them" is the group of three disciples.

4) "and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them." (v. 3)—The predicate participle "glistening" modifies the subject "garments." The adverb "intensely" modifies the adjective "white" and both terms define the noun "garments." The "as" is a comparative connective introducing a comparative subordinate clause. The comparison is between the glistening, intensely white quality of Jesus' garments and the clause "no fuller on earth could bleach them." In effect, "no" modifies the entire clause and not only its subject. The prepositional phrase "on earth" qualifies the subject "fuller" and implies that the event is the work of a "heavenly fuller."

5) "And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses" (v. 4)—The prepositional phrase "to them" is an indirect object of the verb "appeared" and suggests to whom the appearance was made. Since the pronoun "them" is plural, it indicates that the disciples were aware of the appearance of Elijah with Moses. In the expression "Elijah with Moses," Elijah is mentioned first although chronologically Moses
preceded him. The preposition "with" is used to relate Elijah and Moses instead of other possible connectives.

6) "and they were talking to Jesus" (v. 4)—Elijah and Moses are the antecedents of the pronoun "they," thus indicating that they were both speaking to Jesus. "To Jesus" is the indirect object of "talking." Elijah and Moses were talking to Jesus, not to the disciples.

7) "And Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is well that we are here: let us make three booths, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.'" (v. 5)—The adverbial subordinate clause "that we are here" modifies the main clause "it is well" and especially the predicate adjective "well." The subject of the statement "let us make three booths" is in the first person and it is plural. The object of the verb "make" is "booths," which, interestingly enough, is modified by the adjective "three." The apposition "one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah" qualifies the "three booths," indicating for whom they should be built. In this statement Moses is mentioned before Elijah.

8) "For he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid." (v. 6)—Here are two coordinate causal clauses explaining the reasons for the facts stated. The first clause, "For he did not know what to say," gives the cause for the statement of Peter in v. 5, especially the latter part concerning the booths. The second clause, "for they were exceedingly afraid," explains the reason for the first clause of v. 6, that is, for Peter's not knowing what to say. The subject of the second clause is plural, whereas the subject of the first is singular.

9) "And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.'" (v. 7)—The pronoun "them" is the direct object of the verb "overshadowed." A question arises as to the antecedent of this pronoun. The voice came out of the same cloud which overshadowed them. The statement made by the voice is given, although the voice is not identified, since it is preceded by the indefinite article "a." The subject of the statement is the demonstrative pronoun "this," which refers to Jesus. Both the pronoun "my" and the adjective "beloved" qualify the predicate noun "Son." The exhortation "listen to him" follows the statement of the fact, "This is my beloved Son." A relation is probably implied by this order. The factual statement seems to be the cause, the exhortation the effect: "Because this is my beloved Son, listen to him."

10) "And suddenly looking around they no longer saw any one with them but Jesus only." (v. 8)—The adverb "suddenly" may modify either the participle "looking" or the verb "saw," or both. The subject of the sentence is the pronoun "they," referring to the disciples. Note the connective "but" and the relation it suggests between "any one" and Jesus. Note also the succession of terms emphasizing the same factor: "no longer," "any one," "but," "only."

Here are some facts which should be kept in mind regarding this illustration from Mark 9.

First, the preceding observations are made solely on the
basis of the English translation in order to demonstrate the firsthand study of the vernacular.

Second, there is room for a difference of opinion as to the analysis of some of the relations. This fact, however, is not of great consequence. It is the process which is of primary importance.

Third, this illustration is not meant to be duplicated in the observation of the paragraphal relations of every passage. It rather represents an analysis which demonstrates how grammatical relations are utilized to convey facts and how an awareness of them may lead to an awareness of the facts they communicate.

Fourth, not all of the relations indicated are of great significance. Nor should one always be interested in noting only those things which seem to have immediate and outstanding import. For often an observation which seems to lack much significance at first glance becomes very important in the long run. The process of observation should generally resemble the absorbing process of the sponge when it is exposed to a liquid. The observer should not place limitations on his perception which will hinder his receptivity. It is true that the observational procedure should be discriminating in certain ways, as was suggested in the discussion of routine and non-routine terms; but no hindrances should be imposed on the eyes which will hamper thorough observation.

Fifth, in some instances, such as the final statement under 4), the writer indulged slightly in the second step of the inductive process, namely, interpretation. This was done primarily to indicate the significance of some of the observations. Apart from this it should be remembered that at times observation and interpretation are almost inseparable. As was noted heretofore, there is often an interplay between the different steps which cannot and should not be totally avoided. Nevertheless, it is important that one always be able to distinguish between the various steps when called upon to do so. For if there is ever a blurring of the process to the extent that the various phases of study become indistinguishable, then eisegesis will inevitably result.

If one is able to note the paragraphal relations set forth in the preceding pages, one's chances for thorough observation and consequently for accurate and incisive interpretation will be greatly enhanced. This does not imply that at all times one must make a detailed analysis of these relations. For example, one may observe the fact that "Jesus took with him Peter and James and John" without being conscious that "Jesus" is the subject of the clause, that the verb is "took," and that the prepositional phrase "with him" modifies the verb, and that "Peter," "James," and "John" are the direct objects of the verb, connected to each other by the conjunction "and." Nevertheless, one should always be aware that such relations are operative within clauses and sentences, and that it is through them that facts and their relations to one another are communicated. Furthermore, one should be capable of making a minute analysis when necessary; for there will arise occasions, especially in the study of the argumentative type of literature, when such a conscious analysis is imperative for proper observation. This is true, for example, in one's observation of Romans 1:1-7.

Exercise

Observe the paragraphal connections in several chapters of the epistles of the New Testament. Note especially the relations indicated by connectives, prepositional phrases, and dependent clauses. Look also for those relations which are implicit rather than explicit. Classify the connections you find in view of the preceding discussion. Attempt to indicate the significance of your discoveries for interpretation.

b. Structural Relations Between Paragraphs, Segments, Subsections, Sections, Divisions, and Books

The preceding pages have been concerned with those rela-
tions which are grammatical in nature. We now move to those broader structural elements which are more literal than purely grammatical. This is not meant to imply that the two are mutually exclusive; for it will be found that many of the paragraphical or grammatical relations, such as contrast and comparison, will be utilized to make possible literary structure. Moreover, some of the broader structural relations will be indicated by grammatical means, such as the "therefore" of Romans 12:1. However, in a real sense literary structure transcends grammatical structure; for it is possible to compose sentences in paragraph form without at the same time arranging a work with literary unity.33

There follows a list of the main literary relations which operate to make possible the framework of Biblical books together with definitions and illustrations of them. Some of the connections already mentioned will be restated because of their significance for literary structure and in order further to elucidate them.

(1) Comparison—the association of like things. The unity of Hebrews 5:1-10 is based on the use of this law. Note the "so also" in v. 5.

(2) Contrast—the association of opposites. Romans 4 utilizes contrast.

(3) Repetition—the reiteration of the same terms, phrases, clauses, etc. In Leviticus the term "holy" is repeated many times.

(4) Continuity—the repeated use of similar terms, phrases, clauses, etc. In the law of repetition the recurring factors are exactly the same, whereas in continuity they are merely more or less alike. The series of parables in Luke 15 is an example of the latter.

(5) Continuation—the extended treatment of a particular aspect; the carrying through to its completion of an idea or series of events. This law is sometimes related to that of continuity, but it involves extension rather than recurrence. One of the relations between Genesis 13-14 and Genesis 18-19 is that of continuation.34

(6) Climax—the arrangement of material in such a way as to progress from the lesser to the greater and ultimately to the greatest. The book of Exodus is arranged climactically, with the high point coming in 40:34-35.

(7) Cruciality—the utilization of the principle of the pivot. The subject matter is arranged so that it turns around or upon some one factor. 1 Samuel uses the law of cruciality, with chapters 11-12 forming the pivotal point which changes the direction of the history recorded there.

(8) Interchange—the exchanging or alternation of certain elements. Interchange is often employed to strengthen contrasts or comparisons. The opening chapters of 1 Samuel contain alternating contrasts between Hannah and her son Samuel, and Eli and his sons. Luke also uses interchange in chapters 1-2.

(9) Particularization and Generalization—the movement from the general to the particular, and from the particular to the general. Matthew 1:1-18 is an example of particularization, and James 2 an example of generalization.

(10) Causation and Substantiation—the progression from cause to effect and from effect to cause. Romans 1:18-32 is an excellent illustration of causation, and Romans 8:18-30 of substantiation.

(11) Instrumentation—the setting forth of the means to an end as well as the end itself. Instrumentation thus involves the factor of purpose. The Gospel by John, in view of the author's statement in 20:30-31, exemplifies this law. The signs recorded in the book are a means to an end, namely, belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, in order to make possible eternal life.
In connection with this law, one should be aware that simply because one aspect of a passage is labeled "means," it does not follow that it is less significant than that labeled "end." Often instruments are no less dispensable than their purposes. Also, it should be noted that there is a similarity between the law of instrumentation and the preceding law, since means often have a causal relation to their purpose.

Explanation or Analysis—the presentation of an idea or event followed by its interpretation. Mark 4 contains an example of this law. It is closely related to particularization.

Preparation or Introduction—the inclusion of the background or setting for events or ideas. Thereby the reader is prepared to understand that which follows by that which precedes. This kind of composition is frequently utilized in narrative literature. For example, Genesis 2:4-25 provides the situation in which the events of Genesis 3 occur.

Summarization—the employment of an abridgement or compendium either preceding or following a unit of material. Joshua 12 exemplifies this kind of structure.

Interrogation—the employment of a question or problem followed by its answer. Romans 6-7 affords an illustration of this type of arrangement.

Harmony—the effecting of unity by means of agreement. Included in this concept is the law of consistency. The law of harmony is not so much a law of composition as a law of truth. However, since truth is communicated through structural relations, the two are ultimately inseparable. Illustrations of this law are found in the harmony between the disease and its remedy and the promise and its fulfilment. See, for example, the agreement between Romans 1:18-3:20 and Romans 3:21ff.

The following facts should be remembered concerning these structural relations.
First, it should be noted that these laws are closely interrelated. For instance, contrast is sometimes effected through interchange: repetition and continuity are two forms of the same basic law; particularization and summarization have much in common with each other. It is evident, then, that there is no clear-cut line of distinction between them. In fact, they are often used in combination with one another.
Second, because structural laws are often used in combinations, it will sometimes be difficult to ascertain which law or laws are primary and which are subordinate in a given passage. In some cases a decision in this matter will depend on the makeup of the unit itself. It should also be remembered that there are some relations which by their very nature are subservient to others. For example, the law of interchange is inherently subordinate, since something must be interchanged, and what is interchanged is more basic than the interchange itself. Interchange is therefore employed for the purpose of strengthening some other structural relation, such as contrast, comparison, or causation.
Third, attention should be called to the fact that the preceding list is not all inclusive. For the types of arrangement used in some passages are difficult to categorize. In addition, there are variations of the relations which have been mentioned. But most of the major laws are contained in the preceding list, and the ability to observe them will result in the ability to note those not mentioned.
Fourth, the descriptive terms used to indicate the different relations may be varied, for in some instances other terms are more accurate and more expressive. The factors which determine how one shall refer to the relations of a certain passage are the individual tastes of the observer and the nature of the unit being studied. For example, causation may be expressed by the term "motivation" in the analysis of John 13:1ff. or by the term "purpose" in the analysis of Jude
The important thing is not the uniformity of nomenclature in describing the various relations, but an awareness of specific and well-defined laws of structure and the attempt to analyze passages in terms of them. For vagueness is fatal to structural observation.

Fifth, differences of opinion frequently arise in connection with structural analysis. When this occurs, one may be tempted to conclude that the process being suggested is subjective and therefore not dependable. Now it is true that subjective elements may enter into it and be the cause for differences of opinion. However, merely because this may happen, it does not follow that the process itself should be discarded. For every good thing has its dangers, because every good thing may be misused. The doctrine of justification by faith through grace, for instance, has been interpreted so as to condone sin. And yet we do not discard justification by faith because of this; rather we make an effort to interpret it properly and thus avoid the danger of license. So in relation to Bible study, the rational approach to such a problem is to erect safeguards which will insure insofar as possible that one's conclusions will be based on the concrete data of the passage being studied and not on personal prejudices or wishful thinking. It also helps to realize that differences of opinion often arise because various people see varying facets of the same truth. George Denny, moderator of "The Town Meeting of the Air," demonstrates this fact by the use of a ball, one half of which is black and the other half white. Holding the black side toward the audience so that the white half cannot be seen, he asks, "What color is this ball?" The audience replies, "Black." Then, turning the ball around, Mr. Denny retorts, "No. It is white." Furthermore, it should be remembered that at times the evidence for varying possibilities is evenly distributed, and differences will arise when one places more emphasis on certain data whereas another stresses the data which support a differing view. To summarize, the task of re-creating the minds and purposes of authors who wrote hundreds of years ago is a very complex one, and at times one cannot be sure that one has succeeded. However, one ought to make the attempt to interpret them in spite of the probability of error, because there are valid bases for so doing and one cannot afford to miss the values which may be derived from their writings.

5. Materials for Effecting Structure

a. Materials Described

The structure of a passage may be likened to the framework of a building. The structural relations which are used to construct a passage, such as contrast and comparison, correspond to the architectural concepts which are expressed by a building's framework. For instance, if the building is to be of Gothic design, then the individual parts of its skeleton will be related to each other in a certain manner, whereas the parts of its skeleton would be arranged differently if it were constructed on the basis of a modern design. The materials for effecting the structure of a passage may be compared with the steel or concrete used to execute a certain architectural concept in the construction of a building.

To be more specific, a literary unit cannot be constructed without the stuff from which literature is made. For example, an author cannot utilize the law of contrast to arrange a passage unless he has two things which he may contrast. That which he uses in the contrast is what has been termed the "material" for effecting structure. The various materials which may be used will now be enumerated and described.

(1) Biographical Material—Persons are often used to make possible structural relations. In Genesis 12-50, which is constructed from biographical materials, Abraham
is contrasted to Lot, Jacob to Esau, and Joseph to his brothers.

(2) Historical Material—Events are frequently employed as the "mortar and bricks" from which to construct passages. (Numbers)

(3) Chronological Material—The time element may be employed to effect literary structure. (Gospel by John)

(4) Geographical Material—Places sometimes serve as the stuff from which to build literary passages. (Exodus)

(5) Ideological or Logical Material—Ideas are used on many occasions to realize structural relations. (Romans)

The following facts should be noted regarding the materials for effecting structure.

First, there are no clear-cut lines of demarcation between them. In the process of using two persons to effect a comparison, one may also employ events; for people are the actors who make possible events, and one thinks of people in terms of what they do. And since events occur in time and at particular places, one cannot ultimately separate the chronological and the geographical from the biographical and the historical. Therefore, in analyzing a passage one should not think of one means to the exclusion of the others, but rather in terms of the means which is primary.

Second, the materials by which structural relations are executed may be at the same time the reasons for the use of structural relations. For instance, the desire to express certain ideas (ideological material) may cause an author to use particular laws of arrangement, such as repetition or instrumentation. So that by describing the factors listed above as materials, we are not thereby implying that they are only materials. We are rather calling attention to one of their functions, the function which is of primary interest at this juncture of our study.

Observation

b. Materials Illustrated

In order to clarify further the relationship between the laws of composition and the materials used to execute them, there follows a list of the various relations involved in literary structure together with some examples of how they are realized by the use of the materials heretofore discussed.

(1) Comparison
Biographical—I Samuel 13-31, I Kings 17-11 Kings 13
Historical—Genesis 12, 20, and 26
Ideological—John 13:1-35, Romans 5:12-21

(2) Contrast
Biographical—I Samuel 13-31, John 18-19
Chronological—Exodus 19-Numbers 10 and Numbers 11ff.
Historical—Deuteronomy 1-3, Joshua 7-8, Mark 9:1-29
Ideological—Deuteronomy 27-30, Isaiah 2-4, 10:5-12:6, 40-44, Micah 1-5, Matthew 5:17-48, Jude

(3) Repetition
Historical—Joshua 24:2-13, Judges
Ideological—Deuteronomy 5-11, Joshua 1, Habakkuk 2, Matthew 23, I Corinthians 13

(4) Continuity
Chronological—John
Ideological—Isaiah 13-23, Mark 4:1-34, I Timothy 4:6-6:2, Revelation 6, 8-9, 16

(5) Continuation
Biographical—Numbers 22-24, Jonah
Geographical—Deuteronomy

(6) Climax
Historical—Exodus, Mark 1:14-45
Ideological—Ecclesiastes
7. Cruciality
   Biographical—II Samuel 11
   Geographical—Exodus 12
   Historical—Exodus 5:1-6:8

8. Interchange
   Biographical—I Samuel 1-12
   Ideological—Hosea 1-3, Nahum 1, I John

9. Particularization and Generalization
   Particularization
   Generalization
   Historical—Acts
   Ideological—James 2

10. Causation and Substantiation
    Causation
    Historical—Deuteronomy 1-4, Isaiah 7, Acts 1-2
    Ideological—Ephesians 1-3 and 4-6
    Substantiation
    Ideological—Habakkuk 2, Hebrews 1:4-2:18

11. Instrumentation
    Ideological—Romans 5:1-11

12. Explanation or Analysis
    Historical—Mark 3, 11
    Ideological—John 5

13. Preparation or Introduction
    Historical—Genesis 2:4-25 and 3, Exodus 2:4 and 5:1-6:8, 25-34 and 35-40, Joshua 1 and 2:17, Isaiah 7

14. Summarization
    Biographical—Genesis 45
    Historical—Joshua 12, 23-24, II Kings 17
    Ideological—Romans 1:16-17, 3:21-31

6. Selectivity and Structure
   a. Meaning and Importance of Selectivity

Goethe once said, "The artist is known by selection." Someone else has observed that much had to be excluded from the Biblical record in order for some to be included. Since those who wrote Scriptural literature were artists in the truest sense, both of the preceding statements imply the same thing, namely, that purposeful selectivity characterizes the books of the Bible. In other words, Biblical authors had definite purposes which motivated their writings, and they chose their materials and utilized them in such a way as best to accomplish their purposes.

The factor of selectivity, then, is basic to the work of Scriptural writers. However, it is also important for the work of the observer. For he is ultimately searching for the author’s purpose, which is disclosed on the one hand by what the author chooses to implement it, and on the other by what he chooses not to use. Consequently, an awareness of the principle of purposeful selection is just as significant for the observer as it is for the author in the first place.
b. Relation of Selectivity to Structure

The process of selectivity on the part of an author is closely associated with literary structure. An author often chooses certain ideas or events because they bear certain connections to other ideas and events, relations whose employment will contribute to the realization of his objective. In the selection of those things which should be included in his book, the writer asks himself, either consciously or unconsciously, "How are these events or ideas related to other events or ideas? Are these relations conducive to the accomplishment of my purpose in writing this particular piece of literature?" An author's selection, then, is founded on an awareness and utilization of structural relations.

Because in an author's mind selectivity and structure are closely related, the recognition of the principle of selectivity on the part of the observer eventuates in his discovery of structural relations. For when one is aware of purposive selection, one will want to find the reasons for it; and to do so one must ask such questions as these: "What relation is there between this event or idea and the other events or ideas which surround it which caused the author to include it? How does its inclusion contribute to the framework of the whole?" By answering such questions, the observer is led to perceive the structure of a unit and consequently its message.

Thus the observer's utilization of the principle of selectivity becomes a helpful means of discovering structural relations. For certain relations led to an author's selection in the first place; therefore, an examination of his selection will in turn lead to a discovery of those same relations. For example, one of the reasons why the writer or compiler of Genesis chose to include the event of 12:10-20 must have been its relation to the events which surround it. When one attempts to find what some of those relations could be, one notes two among others: a contrast between an act of faith in 12:1-9 and an act of unbelief in 12:10-20, and the relation of causation in that God's protection of Abraham in verses 10-20 is a fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham in verses 1-9. In this manner the use of the principle of selectivity becomes a valuable avenue for uncovering structural laws and through them the author's purpose.

c. Kinds of Selectivity

(I) Quantitative or Proportionate Selectivity

This type of selection utilizes the element of mass or quantity. It entails the choice of a series of similar events or ideas whose sheer weight impresses certain facts on the reader's mind. Such selectivity is usually based on the laws of repetition and continuity.

The presence and importance of quantitative selectivity are often discovered by the application of the law of proportion, which involves the principle that an author devotes the greatest quantity of material proportionately to that which he feels is most significant and most helpful in conveying his message. Consequently, the observer often becomes aware of quantitative selectivity by determining the ratio between the amount of material concerned with certain facts and the time span covered by those facts, and by comparing that ratio with a corresponding one in regard to other materials. For example, if ten chapters are devoted to events covering one year, and one chapter is given to events covering one hundred years, it is obvious when one compares the two ratios of material to time that the author considers the events which happened in the one year to be much more important for his purposes than those which occurred in the hundred-year span. The book of Genesis affords an excellent illustration of the operation of such proportionate selectivity. Chapters 12-50, that is, thirty-nine chapters, are occupied with events which span a period of only four generations. On the other hand, the first eleven chapters cover a
period of many generations. It is apparent, then, that the author is calling particular attention to the Hebrew nation and especially to the patriarchs, and that what is contained in chapters 12-50 is more significant for the realization of his intent than the material found in chapters 1-11. This provides the observer with an insight which will be invaluable in the discovery of the writer's aim and message.

It should be noted, however, that the chronological element is not essential to the observation of proportion. In the logical type of literature, quantitative selectivity may simply involve devoting a greater amount of space to one idea or factor than to others. For instance, in John 17 about two-thirds of Jesus' prayer is given to indicating the bases for His petitions, whereas only one-third of the prayer is concerned with stating the actual petitions. This observation may well afford the grounds for using the law of proportion in the interpretation of John 17.

(2) Non-quantitative Selectivity

Under this classification belong those events or ideas whose choice does not involve the principle of mass or quantity. The aforementioned event recorded in Genesis 12:10-20 may be cited as an example of this kind of selectivity. It is not one of many similar occurrences, at least in certain respects. In its context it stands as a singular event. It pictures a self-reliant Abraham, whereas the preceding and following events depict a man of faith. Now it is true that in Genesis 20 one finds almost an exact duplicate of this incident. However, in its immediate setting it is peculiar.

Regarding this type of event or idea, the observer should ask: "Why did the author include this particular event or idea? Why is it where it is? What does it contribute to the whole in view of its relations to the surrounding events or ideas?" If these and similar questions are answered, one will discover the relations and purpose implicit in this kind of selectivity.

Exercise

Study the following passages from the standpoint of the principle of selectivity: Genesis 12-25, Judges, I and II Samuel, Acts, and I Corinthians. Look for quantitative and non-quantitative selectivity. Apply the principles and questions suggested in the preceding discussion.

7. Miscellaneous Suggestions for Observing Structure

a. Always look for relations. Remember that "things hook and eye together."

b. Keep in mind the various laws of arrangement as you observe and use them in your structural analysis.

c. Look for implicit relations as well as explicit ones.

d. Examine all connections closely, but especially conjunctions, prepositional phrases, and subordinate clauses. In the study of logical literature, such as is found in the Epistle to the Romans, pay particular attention to the connectives. Attempt to discover which are basic and which are secondary. For examples see the "yet," "notwithstanding," and "therefore" in II Kings 17, and the "therefore" in Romans 1:24.

e. The observer should be specific and exact in his analysis of structural relations. He should not be satisfied with a vague idea that for some undeterminable reason certain chapters are connected or belong together. Nor should he simply list the various connections of a passage. Practice these suggestions in the observation of Leviticus and James I.

f. Note carefully changes in pronouns and the implications of such changes for determining structure. (Mark 13, Jude)
g. Look for agreement between cause and effect, means and end, question and answer, need and remedy. (Matthew 18, Mark 13, Romans 1:11 and 12:1-15:13, Ephesians 1:3 and 4:6)

h. Observe the tenses of verbs as well as their presence and predominance, and consider the significance of these factors for the discovery of literary arrangement. (Genesis 1:1-2:3, Exodus 6:1-8, Joshua 24:2-13, Hebrews 11:32-38)

i. In observing the structure of books, be on the alert for organizing expressions and for strategic centers which may be used as bases for surveying the whole. These may serve as "Empire State Buildings" from which one may view the outline and movement of a book. There are two primary types of strategic areas:

(1) Historical—This kind consists of events which are either pivotal or climactic. Joshua 6, 24:32-33, II Samuel 11, and I Kings 11 are illustrations of this type of strategic area. In this connection see the laws of crucialitv and climax.

(2) Literary—This type consists of summary and interpretive passages. Genesis 45, Joshua 12, 23-24, Judges 2:11-23, II Kings 17, Acts 1:8, and Ephesians 4:1 afford examples of this kind of center. Note that some of these passages consist of events which, because of their very nature, are summarizations or interpretations. Genesis 45 and Joshua 23-24 belong in this category. In such passages the historical and literary types of strategic areas coincide.

j. Compare and contrast the beginning and end of books to find clues as to their content and arrangement. (Deuteronomy, Joshua)

k. In dealing with large bodies of material, first locate structural units or divisions. For example, Exodus has three main groups of chapters: first, 1-12:40, in Egypt; second, 12:41-18:27, to Sinai; and third, 19-40, at Sinai. Then, having found major divisions, attempt to discover the connections between these divisions. Do not be satisfied merely with finding main divisions, for structure involves more than the grouping of material. It is also concerned with the relations between the major groups of material. Therefore, having discovered the primary structural units, the observer ought to ask: "How are these main units related to each other? What function does each perform in regard to the others?" Practice these suggestions in the study of Genesis 25:19-36:43.

l. In observing narratives look for the development of the plot. (Genesis 3)

m. When examining epistles, look for epistolary structure. To discover what is involved in such structure, make a comparative study of the epistles.

n. When there is a promise, note its fulfilment; when the purpose is stated, look for its accomplishment. (Joshua 1, John 20, I John 5, Jude)

o. Note refrains or repeated expressions which may indicate structure. (Genesis 1, Psalms, Matthew)

p. Observe negative and positive, general and specific approaches to the same problems or ideas. (Hebrews 3:7-4:16, 5:11-6:20, James 1, 2, 3, 1 Peter, I John 1)

q. Look for the use of parallelism, especially in poetic literature. (Psalm 1)
r. Notice progression, how one thing leads to another. (John 17)

s. Look for changes in ideas and events. Attempt to discover when an author ceases discussing one thing and turns to another. (Romans 4)

t. Let the nature of the material being observed dictate its own structure. Be careful not to impose an arrangement on a passage.

u. Ask yourself these questions: “What is here? Why is it here? Why is it where it is? What difference would it make if it were omitted? What difference would it make if it were elsewhere?”

v. Observe chief characters, events, and ideas, as well as indications of chronological and geographical movement or lack of movement.

w. Use charts and outlines to indicate major structural relations.

x. When discovering and analyzing structure, look for and use a single basis of composition. For example, if one section of a literary unit contains and is described by a geographical type of structure, another section of the same unit should not be described chronologically or historically. To be more concrete, if chapters 1-12 of Exodus are called “In Egypt,” then chapters 19-40 should not be described as “The Law and the Tabernacle,” but as the “At Sinai” division. The first two titles are not comparable; such a shifting of bases for indicating structure should be avoided unless, of course, the literature itself demands it.

y. Be aware of the distinction between historical and literary structure, as well as their relation to each other. For example, the connection between the Great Confession in Mark 8 and the Transfiguration in Mark 9 is primarily historical. When one wants to determine the relation between these two events, one first asks, “Why did the Transfiguration follow by six days the Great Confession? What is therefore the connection between them?” These questions involve historical structure, and it is through them that the reader of Mark arrives at the reasons for the author’s selection and inclusion of the two aforementioned events, that is, their literary relations. Thus in this instance historical and literary structure are essentially identical. However, there are occasions when, although the literary arrangement follows in general the historical or chronological order, because of selectivity the author’s use of literary composition transcends that which is inherent in historical structure. For example, a writer may select two events, the first of which precedes the second from the standpoint of chronology. However, these events may have no specific historical connections. By placing them side by side in terms of literary structure, thereby utilizing one or more of the laws of arrangement, the author may convey a message which is completely distinct from what is inherent in the historical sequence of the events. Genesis 38 and 39 may afford an illustration of this. Furthermore, there are instances when Biblical writers rearrange the events so that they no longer follow their historical or chronological order. In such cases also literary structure is distinct from historical structure. When one observes this latter phenomenon, one should pay close attention to the literary arrangement and inquire as to the reasons for the alteration of the historical sequence. Luke 8 provides an example of a passage where the chrono-
Exercise

Keeping in mind the structural relations and the materials for effecting them discussed in the preceding pages, observe the structure of the following units: Genesis 1:1-2:3, I and II Chronicles, Nehemiah, Job, Malachi, Galatians, Philemon, Hebrews 1:4-4:13, and I Peter 1:3-2:10. Attempt to keep before you the other principles and suggestions given.

C. Observation of General Literary Forms

The third constituent of a passage which one needs to observe is its general literary form. This element is distinct from both those of terms and structure, for the same terms and the same structural relations effected by the same materials may be utilized to compose different kinds of literature. Therefore, to note terms and structural connections is not sufficient for thorough observation; one must also see the general type of literature used by an author.

The primary types of literary forms will now be described briefly and illustrated. An attempt will also be made to indicate some of the factors which make them significant for interpretation in order to stimulate the observer to note them carefully. In reading this material it should be remembered that various kinds of literature are sometimes used in combinations, and further that there are different ways of classifying literary forms. The following discussion suggests one means of classification.

1. Discoursive and Logical Literature

In this category belong all reports of extended discourses and all those writings which involve a presentation of ideas in argumentative form. Epistolary literature, some of the prophetic sermons, and the longer discourses of Jesus may be placed in this classification.

This type of literature appeals primarily to the intellect. Therefore, the importance of recognizing it is that an awareness of its presence will lead to a careful observation of its logical development; and it is only when special attention is given to its rational method that valid interpretation will result.

2. Prose Narrative

This sort of literary form is the chief kind employed, for example, in the book of Genesis and in the Gospels. Its primary purpose is not to relate impersonal historical facts, but rather to present evangelical or theological history. It therefore contains personalized history in the form of stories and biographical sketches. Its appeal is primarily to the imagination and to the emotions. Therefore, to attempt to interpret it without the liberal use of the imagination in its legitimate sense is to guarantee either partial or faulty interpretation.

It should also be remembered that prose narrative often contains some details which are not too significant for exposition, but rather have as their main purpose the completion of the color of the story. When one observes the presence of the prose narrative type of form, therefore, one should be careful not to press unduly every detail. One should make a distinction between that which is essential and that which is ornamental.

3. Poetry

Scriptural poetry has three main characteristics. First, it frequently utilizes figurative language. Second, it is emotional in nature. Someone has said that "poetry is the emotion of life made audible." And third, it employs parallelisms of different types, such as those which are synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic. Therefore, to be aware of the presence of the poetic form is to be on guard against its mis-
interpretation. For when one remembers that the poet employs flexible language, and that he expresses feelings rather than rigid logical concepts, one will not attempt to expound his language as if he utilized a literal, scientific vocabulary, or examine his statements at every turn for a precise, systematic theology. The awareness of the use of parallelisms will also be of great help in assuring correct exposition.

4. Drama and Dramatic Prose

The dramatic method involves primarily the personification, particularization, and vivid description of events or ideas for the sake of their moving effect. It is undoubtedly closely related to the poetic expression of truth. In view of these facts, one must determine whether a writer is speaking in terms of actual history or whether he is using the dramatic approach to make more striking the truth he is conveying. For example, one should realize that in chapter 2 of his book the prophet Isaiah may be utilizing drama in his description of the future place and destiny of Jerusalem, and that it would not be safe to assume that what the prophet declares there is intended to be literally factual.

Of course, one must beware of classifying all or most of the literature of the Old Testament in the category of drama. One should study the literature itself to ascertain its own claim as to its literary form, and one should avoid superimposing the dramatic approach on actual history. At the same time, the observer must recognize that the dramatic method is a legitimate form of literary communication, and that its presence needs to be taken into account in the process of interpretation.

5. Parabolic Literature

The parabolic form employs the principle of analogy. This is indicated by the signification of the word "parable," which is a combination of the Greek terms para and ballo and therefore literally connotes "that which is thrown or put forth beside something else." Thus a parable consists of two parts, the spiritual truth which is being illustrated, and the brief physical narrative which is placed beside it for the purpose of clarification. Excellent examples of parabolic literature may be found in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 15.

6. Apocalyptic Literature

The term "apocalypse" literally means "uncovering" or "revelation." Apocalyptic literature is often characterized by the use of symbolism and descriptions of visions which are predictive in nature. The book of Daniel in the Old Testament and the book of the Revelation in the New Testament are good illustrations of these characteristics of apocalyptic literature.

D. Observation of Atmosphere

The fourth element in the observing process is that of atmosphere. By atmosphere is meant the underlying tone or spirit of a passage, which though intangible, is nevertheless real. Some of the moods by which a portion may be characterized are those of despair, thanksgiving, awe, urgency, joy, humility, or tenderness.

At times the mood of a passage cannot be determined until the reader has engaged seriously in the process of interpretation. On the other hand, it is often true that thorough observation will reveal its underlying atmosphere. In any case, until one has discovered the mood of a portion of Scripture, one has not come into vital contact with its author's mind and spirit.

It should be noted that some passages may involve a combination of various moods. In fact, there may be a drastic change of atmosphere within one unit of Scripture. Therefore, one should be careful to observe all of the atmospheric elements of a passage.
IV. AIDS TO OBSERVATION IN GENERAL

A. Use a pencil or pen while observing. Writing down one's observations is beneficial for several reasons, not the least of which is the fact that it impresses them upon one's mind. Writing is a great aid to memory.

B. There are two primary approaches in the observation of a passage. One type of observation begins with a detailed noting of particulars and proceeds to the observation of the whole. The second kind of observation begins with a survey of the whole, progresses to the noting of particulars, and moves finally to a synthesis of the particulars. Both of these types are valid and useful. The first reflects the usual process followed in the reading of a passage, for it involves beginning from the beginning and moving term by term, phrase by phrase, and clause by clause to the conclusion. The writer has found that this procedure is more helpful in the observation of a relatively short passage, where perspective is not so important. The second kind of observation is most salutary when one is dealing with a longer body of material, where perspective is essential to effective observation. However, the reader is urged to experiment with both types and to determine for himself which best suits him.

C. This calls attention to the fact that two errors should be avoided in observation: first, seeing the whole without noting details; and second, seeing details and missing the whole. Observation should be both analytical and synthetical. In fact, analytical observation should have as its objective synthetical observation. It is for this reason that the observational process should always culminate with a view of the whole.

D. A further distinction should be made between the course followed in the observation of a paragraph or segment and that followed in the observation of a subsection, section, division, or book. Obviously the examination of the second or longer type of passage cannot be as minute as the examination of the first, at least in one's initial approach. Therefore, in observing a larger body of material, it is well to scan it several times if possible, noting key terms, phrases, or statements; chief persons, places, and events; structural units; major relations; and crucial chapters. The observer can then concentrate on those elements and sections which seem to be most significant.

In order to get the contents and relations of a longer passage before one, it is often helpful to name the chapters as one scans them. This is especially true in the study of narrative portions.

By all means, one should not become entangled in minutia when making an initial approach to a long passage.

E. In recording detailed observations, enumerate them so as to make them distinct from each other. Use some means, such as underlining or encircling, to indicate major observations. Utilize charts to show main observations, especially in the realm of structural relations. Find ways of organizing your observations so that they will be accessible with the least possible effort. Give specific chapter and verse references for each observation so that there will be no question as to the particulars of the text upon which the observations are based.

F. Although observation should result in seeing every particular of a passage, when recording observations one should write down only that which is noteworthy. One should not list as observations, for example, every "the" which appears in a passage. Only in those cases when the term "the" is significant should it be recorded. Mark 15:39 is an example of such an in-
Unless this type of discretion is applied, the process of listing observations will become inefficient and discouraging.

G. When recording observations, avoid simply copying the words of the text. Indicate something about them. For example, when observing Isaiah 55, one might note these facts:

The passage begins with “Ho.” (v. 1)
The passage is addressed to “everyone that thirsteth.” (v. 1)

Such a procedure will promote awareness and help to fix in mind the observations made.

H. The four elements of a passage, namely, terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere, need not and should not be noted separately. For instance, the observer should not look first for all the terms of a passage before he notes its structural relations. Now it is true that there is a certain order inherent in the observation of the components of a passage. One cannot note a connection between two terms before one observes the presence of each of the terms. Furthermore, both literary form and atmosphere cannot be observed with finality in some instances until the whole unit has been examined, since they sometimes change within it. However, it still remains that all of the elements of a passage need not and should not be observed in a rigid order. A person may well note the use of two terms and then note the relation between them. He may then proceed to the observation of more terms, together with the relations and interrelations between them. Thus a list of observations will involve an intermingling of term-al, structural, formal, and atmospheric observations.

I. Observe every passage as if you had never seen it before. Let every approach be a fresh one. Refer to previous observations only after you have completed your latest observational approach. It is said that Toscanini never looks at a score of music without seeing it as though he had never seen it and was seeing it for the first time.

J. Discipline yourself to see how many different observations you can make on a given passage. Learn to spend hours in the process of observation. It is the disciplined observer who is the effective and thorough observer.

K. The principle set forth by the following statement is an excellent aid to observation: “An observer will have his eyes open to notice anything which according to received theories ought not to happen, for these are the facts which serve as clues to new discoveries.” Joseph’s gracious attitude toward his scheming brothers is an illustration of this. (Genesis 37-50) In fact, it is frequently helpful to contrast what is found in a passage to that which might be found there but is not. For example, the Psalmist says, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” He does not say, “The Lord is a shepherd, I shall not want.”

L. Asking oneself the questions implied in the following lines is often helpful:

I have six faithful serving men
Who taught me all I know.
Their names are What and Where and When
And How and Why and Who.

M. Note any significant omissions as well as the events and ideas which are included. Stevenson once remarked: “To omit . . . is the one art of literature: ‘If I knew how to omit, I should ask no other knowledge.'” If this statement even approximates the truth, as it undoubtedly does, then it is of supreme importance that the observer note carefully an au-
N. Compare and contrast observations. Dr. Alexander Graham Bell's formula for a liberal self-education was: Observe! Remember! Compare! "

O. It is often useful to compare and contrast various passages or books, such as the books of the Kings with I and II Chronicles, the minor prophets with each other, parallel Gospel accounts, and the Synoptics with the Fourth Gospel.

P. Compare and contrast the different translations of the Scriptures.

Q. At times try thinking in terms of writing a newspaper report or painting a picture of a passage. These and similar means cause one to observe more exactly. Try this suggestion in the study of Exodus 35-40.

R. Make rough maps indicating the geography of a unit. This is especially helpful in the observation of such books as Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, the Gospels, and the Acts.

S. In observing biographical material, note the characteristics of the men involved, their concept of and attitude toward God, their actions, reactions, and motives.

T. In examining epistolary literature, note the following factors: the identity and characteristics of the writers; the location, characteristics, and problems of the recipients; the answers given to their problems; the occasion and purpose of the letter; its literary features, leading ideas, and central truth.

U. Note marginal readings. Someone has said that "the wisdom of the revisers is in the margin."

V. Look for the concepts of God, Christ, man, sin, and redemption, since these represent the primary themes with which Biblical authors are concerned.

W. In dealing with segments in the narrative type of literature, such as the Gospels, it is usually helpful to name the paragraphs. Such a procedure aids one in noting and remembering the main characters and events and enables one to observe, record, and recall relations.

There are two primary types of paragraph titles: first, the descriptive title, which delineates the subject matter in terms of place, people, or event; and second, the analytical or interpretive title, which is based on an exposition of the material. A descriptive title for Mark 7:24-30 might be "The Syrophoenician Woman." An analytical title for the same paragraph might be "The Universality of Faith." It is obvious that the kind of paragraph title in which the observer ought primarily to be interested is the descriptive title, since the analytical title is more interpretive in nature.

A paragraph title should have the following characteristics: brevity—two or three words if possible; memorableness—imaginative, catching; uniqueness—applicable only to one paragraph; suggestiveness—recalls the content of the paragraph; suitableness—befitting the paragraph; and individuality—helpful to the particular individual using it. Sometimes it is possible so to name paragraphs as to suggest the relations between them.

The naming of paragraphs should never become a cursory practice. One should be conscious of the reasons for it and should engage in it only when so doing enhances one's study.

X. Be able to distinguish between an observation, an interpretation, and an application. Avoid application altogether in the observing process and keep interpretation to a minimum. The latter suggestion does not apply to the bridge between observation and interpretation, namely, the interpretive question, which will
be discussed later. Further, it should be remembered that some interpretation must enter into the observational process. For there is no clear-cut line of demarcation between the first two steps of inductive study and it is infeasible to manufacture one. For example, the observer marks the use of the term "but" in a certain statement. If he were to limit himself strictly to observation, he could not even call attention to the fact that "but" involves contrast; for such a notation is the beginning of the process of interpretation, which is further completed by answering the question, "What is the meaning of the structural relation of contrast as it is used in this instance?" However, to restrain one from indicating that "but" reveals contrast would be to doom observation to an impractical and insignificant role. For these reasons the notation that "but" involves contrast should be included in the first step of methodical study, as has been suggested in the preceding pages. This may be done because the interpretation involved in such an observation is so self-evident that there is no danger of arriving at conclusions without first examining all the evidence. However, when it comes to the more intricate interpretations, one ought to await the general completion of the observational process. Thus although interpretation cannot be fully eliminated from observation, it should certainly be kept at a safe minimum.

To put it another way, neither too little nor too much should be expected from observation. The process of observation should eventuate in some significant discoveries, although it is true that all one's findings will not be equally significant. On the other hand, observation should not be construed so as to include the whole study process. Such a view would reduce Scriptural study to one step and would tend to remove both inductiveness and methodicalness from it. One should rather understand the limited though important purpose of observation and do that which will result in its accomplishment. This purpose is to become aware of the terms, structure, literary form, and atmosphere of a passage. The meaning and application of that of which the observer becomes aware should generally await the further phases of study.

V. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATION

There are two marks which characterize the efficient observer: awareness and thoroughness. He is not mechanical in his observation. Rather he is alive to the contents of a passage. He perceives, he actually sees. And he sees all the components of a passage. He takes nothing for granted. He disciplines himself to absorb consciously the entire unit. He marks attentively each term, because he knows that any artist who is worthy of the name makes a thoughtful and purposeful selection of terminology. He also notes carefully the relations and interrelations between terms. He keeps his eyes open to the smallest as well as the largest connections. He pays close attention to the general literary form and atmosphere of a passage. In brief, all the constituents of a Biblical unit become a part of the consciousness of the proficient observer.

VI. EXERCISE ON OBSERVATION

A. Note carefully the terms, structural relations, general literary forms, and atmospheres of the following segments: Leviticus 16, Psalms 19, 24, 44, 51, 150, Isaiah 1:2-31, Matthew 11, 18, John 9:10, 15, Romans 8.

B. Observe also the key terms, main relations, general literary forms, and underlying tones of the following books: Ruth, Ezra, Esther, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel,