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G. R. Evans

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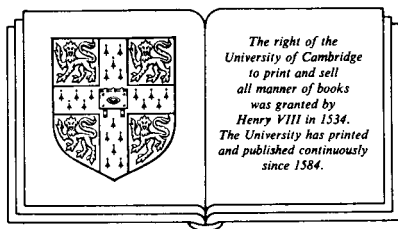
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THE LANGUAGE AND LOGIC OF THE BIBLE: THE ROAD TO REFORMATION

G. R. EVANS

Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge



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ABBREVIATIONS

AHDLMA	<i>Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge</i>
Aquinas	Commentary on Romans, Commentary on Galatians, Commentary on Thessalonians, in <i>Lecturae super Epistolas S. Pauli</i> , ed. P. Raphael, Rome, 1953
<i>Arch. Frat. Pred.</i>	<i>Archivum Fratrum Predicatorum</i>
Bellarmino	<i>De Verbo Dei</i> , Book I of <i>De Controversiis Christianae Fidei adversus huius temporis Haereticos</i> , Venice, 1587
<i>Cahiers</i>	<i>Cahiers de l'Institut Grec et Latin du Moyen Age</i> , Copenhagen
<i>Cambridge History Bible</i>	<i>Cambridge History of the Bible</i> , ed. G.W.H. Lampe, Cambridge, 1963–70
<i>Cambridge History LMP</i>	<i>Cambridge History of Later Mediaeval Philosophy</i> , ed. N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, J. Pinborg, Cambridge, 1982
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum Series Latina</i>
<i>Coll. Franc.</i>	<i>Collectanea Franciscana</i>
<i>Fasciculi Zizaniorum</i>	<i>Fasciculi Zizaniorum</i> , ed. W. W. Shirley, <i>Rolls Series</i> , 5, London, 1858
<i>Language and Logic I</i>	G. R. Evans, <i>The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages</i> , Cambridge, 1984
Luther, <i>Table Talk</i>	Luther, <i>Table Talk</i> , ed. and tr. T. G. Tappert, Philadelphia, 1967
Luther, WA	<i>Martin Luthers Werke</i> , Weimar, 1906–80
Luther's Works	Luther, <i>Works</i> , tr. J. Pelikan et al., St Louis, 1960–, 55 vols.
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
RTAM	<i>Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale</i>

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- Smalley, *Studies* B. Smalley, *Studies in Mediaeval Thought and Learning*, Oxford, 1979
- SSL *Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense*
- Wyclif, *Sermones* I–IV Wyclif, *Sermones*, ed. J. Loserth, 1887–9
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON SOME OF THE MASTERS AND SCHOLARS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

ALEXANDER OF HALES, (c. 1186–1245). He was educated and taught at Paris. In 1236 he joined the relatively new Franciscan Order and continued, now as one of the leading mendicant academics, to hold a Chair at Paris. He was one of the Masters who seems to have been influential in encouraging the use of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* as the basic textbook for theology students, after the Bible. (On Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, see pp. 101ff.).

AQUINAS, THOMAS, (c. 1225–74). He was educated first at the Benedictine house at Monte Cassino, then at the University of Naples. In 1244 he became a Dominican and was sent to study at Paris, under Albertus Magnus. In 1248 he accompanied Albert to Cologne, where he went to teach at the Dominican *studium generale*. Aquinas returned to Paris four years later to become lecturer at the Dominican house at St Jacques. He continued to lecture for the Order at Paris and in Italy. He was valuable to the Dominicans in several ways, but notably (for our purposes) as the compiler of a syllabus and textbooks of systematic theology which complemented the study of the Bible. He was a commentator, too, and his *Catena Aurea* brought together a 'chain' of patristic material for use in the study of Scripture.

BACON, ROGER, (c. 1214–92). He began his studies at Oxford. By 1236, if not before, he was in Paris, where he lectured on Aristotle's scientific works. About 1247 he gave up his chair to concentrate on scientific work, including some experimentation. About 1251 he returned to England and it is probably about then that he joined the Franciscan Order. In the later 1250s he was back in France. In the mid-60s Pope Clement IV asked him for an account of his teaching and Bacon set about writing his *Opus Maius* and his *Opus Minus* and other pieces, which he sent to the Pope. They reached him too late; he died in 1268, and Bacon was not only denied papal recognition but also

condemned by many who found his views novel and his temper unpleasant. Bacon questioned many established ideas. Although he was not primarily a Biblical scholar, he argued for the importance of the study of Greek and Hebrew as a basis for exegesis, and took a fresh look at problems of textual criticism.

BELLARMINE, ROBERT, (1542–1621). An Italian Jesuit, he became Professor of Theology at Louvain in 1570. In 1576 he went to Rome, where he became Professor of Controversial Theology at the newly-founded Collegium Romanum. He brought to his work there a knowledge of the theological work of the reformers which he had gained at Louvain. He was made a cardinal in 1599. He was a prominent controversialist, whose *Disputationes de Controversiis Christianae Fidei* (printed in three volumes, 1586–93) set out clearly and systematically the arguments for the Roman Catholic position against that of various reforming schools of thought. He included a substantial section on the Bible.

BIEL, GABRIEL, (c. 1420–95). He was educated at Heidelberg and Erfurt and later joined the Brethren of the Common Life at Butzbach. He was responsible, with Count Eberhard of Württemberg, for founding the University of Tübingen, and was Professor of Theology there. He was a follower of William of Ockham and one of the last major scholastic thinkers. He was also eclectic and forward-looking in his commentaries, of which the most notable is perhaps his commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (see pp. 101ff.).

BONAVENTURE, (1221–74). He was born John of Fidenza and studied at Paris under Alexander of Hales. He taught at Paris from 1248 until 1255 and again from 1257. He preferred to keep clear of the new Aristotelianism as far as possible and to keep to the Fathers, although he was well-grounded in logic and familiar with much of the new learning. He attempted to bring together the analytical and academic study of theology with the spiritual and aspiring in a way which is more characteristic of the twelfth century than of his own. His commentaries on the Bible show strong marks of the new learning, although they are substantially traditional.

BRADWARDINE, THOMAS, (c. 1290–1349). He studied at Oxford. Bradwardine was respected as a theologian and mathematician and he acted in various diplomatic capacities on behalf of the king, as well as pursuing a career in ecclesiastical adminis-

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tration. He was consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury shortly before his death. He supported the doctrine of the necessity and irresistibility of divine grace against a group of contemporary 'Pelagians', and it is in this connection that he appears in this study.

BUCER, MARTIN, (1491–1551). He became a Dominican in 1506. In 1518 he began to correspond with Luther. In 1521 he received a papal dispensation from his monastic vows and soon after he married. He became a leader of reform in Switzerland especially after the death of Zwingli in 1531 and in Germany. He took part in unsuccessful conferences between Protestants and Roman Catholics at Hagenau (1540), Worms (1540) and Ratisbon (1541), and tried unsuccessfully to introduce reformed doctrines at Cologne. In 1549 he went to England in disillusion, where he was welcomed by Edward VI and Cranmer. In the same year he became Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. He had some influence on Cranmer.

CALVIN, JOHN, (1509–64). His parents intended him for an ecclesiastical career, but after some years of study at Paris (1523–8) he seems to have doubted his vocation. He went on to study law at Orléans and then at Bourges. There he came under the influence of a group of protestant thinkers. He wanted to settle in Basle as a scholar, and there he wrote the first edition of the *Institutes*, published early in 1536. But in 1536 he felt it his duty to join Farel in organising the reforming changes which were under way at Geneva. He was appointed preacher and Professor of Theology there. After an interlude at Strasbourg, where he became a close friend of Martin Bucer (1538–41) and completed a fresh edition of his *Institutes* and a commentary on Romans, he returned to Geneva. Before his death his influence as a controversialist and theologian spread widely beyond Geneva. He is the author of a massive series of commentaries on the Bible.

COLET, JOHN, (1466?–1519). He studied at Oxford, and later at the University of Paris, and in Italy, where he was able to learn Greek. His humanist sympathies and the Neoplatonic ideas he picked up in Italy helped form a strong bond of friendship between Colet and Erasmus of Rotterdam. He was also a friend of Sir Thomas More. He delivered a series of lectures at Oxford on the Pauline Epistles in 1497. From 1505 he was Dean of St Paul's, and when, on his father's death, he inherited a fortune,

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he founded St Paul's School, where Greek was taught as well as Latin (to boys of every nationality).

ECK, JOHANN, (1486–1543). From 1510 he was Professor of Theology at Ingolstadt. He was influenced by humanists with whom he came into contact to write anti-scholastic commentaries on Aristotle and Peter of Spain. Friendly with Luther until he quarrelled with him in 1519, he became a leader of Catholic opposition to German protestantism and took the Catholic side at Augsburg in 1530, when the Lutheran confession of faith was presented to the Emperor Charles V for his approval. He himself published a German version of the Bible for Roman Catholic use in 1537. He is an example of a humanist who was not in the end attracted to the reforming position.

ERASMUS, DESIDERIUS, (c. 1466–1536). He was educated by a humanist Master at the school of the Brethren of the Common Life. In 1486 he became an Augustinian canon and in 1492 he was ordained priest. In 1495 he studied at Paris, and in 1499 travelled to England with his pupil William Blount. He made a friend of John Colet and, on a later visit to England, of Thomas More. He continued to lead a wandering life, settling at Basle from 1521 to 1529 and then at Freiburg until 1535. He produced a Greek New Testament with a new translation into classical Latin and editions of a number of works of the Fathers, as well as writing on matters of theological controversy.

FULKE, WILLIAM, (1538–89). He was educated at St John's College, Cambridge. He became a fellow in 1564, and in 1578 was elected Master of Pembroke Hall. He took a prominent part in controversy, supporting the puritan position against the Jesuit Edmund Campion. His influence was mainly confined to England.

GERSON, JEAN, (1363–1429). He studied and taught at Paris, working for reform of the Church on the side of the Conciliarists, but without wanting to deny papal primacy. A major author of spiritual writings, including commentaries on the Magnificat and the Song of Songs, his mystical teaching was influential on Martin Luther in his youth and on a number of Counter-Reformation figures, notably Robert Bellarmine. He was also the author of a body of sermons, some in the vernacular, which he used as a vehicle for commentary, too.

GROSSETESTE, ROBERT, (d. 1253). He studied at Oxford, where he

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became Chancellor and the first instructor of the Franciscans there. He taught himself Greek and made translations of the new logical and scientific works of Aristotle now available in the schools. He wrote a number of Biblical commentaries, notably that on the Hexameron, where he marshalled his scientific learning to some effect. From 1235 he was Bishop of Lincoln.

HOLCOT, ROBERT, (d. c. 1349). The author of a commentary on the *Sentences*, which was finished c. 1332–6, he held the Dominican Chair at Oxford until 1333–4. He may have been Regent at Cambridge later. He was one of the ‘Pelagians’ attacked by Thomas Bradwardine. His commentary on Wisdom was popular. He was also the author of commentaries on Ecclesiasticus and the twelve minor prophets.

HUS, JOHN, (c. 1369–1415). He taught at the University of Prague. Influenced by Wycliffite writings, he was condemned for similar opinions, for which he was martyred in 1415. Hus was especially drawn to Wyclif’s political ideas (that property-owning was wrong and that society ought not to be organised in a way which kept some people forever as underdogs). He denounced corruption among the clergy, as Wyclif did, and disliked the Church’s abuse of the system of Indulgences.

JOHN OF RAGUSA, (d. c. 1443). He entered the Dominican Order at an early age and in 1420 became Master of Theology at Paris. In 1422 he attended the Council of Pavia as Legate of the University. He preached the opening sermon at the Council of Basle of 1431.

LUTHER, MARTIN, (1483–1546). Educated at the cathedral school at Magdeburg and at the University of Erfurt, he became an Augustinian hermit. He was ordained priest in 1507 and sent to Wittenberg to study and lecture. He continued as professor there from 1511 until his death. Between 1515 and 1520 his thinking came to move along reforming lines. There were disputations, with Johann Eck and Martin Bucer among others. He was summoned before the Diet of Worms in 1521 and refused to alter his views. During the period which followed, when he broke with his Order and with the Church, he translated the Bible into German, and his teaching began to become influential. He is the author of a substantial corpus of Scriptural commentaries. On certain books of the Bible – the Psalms for example – he lectured more than once, and there is a clear

development of thought and method between the earlier and the later versions. He was one of the most significant single figures in setting the Reformation in motion.

MARSILIUS OF PADUA, (c. 1275–1342). He studied at Padua and Paris and was the author of the *Defensor Pacis* (1324), an immensely controversial work in its own day. It presents a challenging and original view of the relationship of Church and State and it provided material for later thinkers who wanted to question the claims to power made by the Church in their own day. Wyclif is perhaps the most important of these in the use he made of these ideas in interpreting the Bible.

MELANCHTHON, PHILIP, (1497–1560). He studied at Heidelberg and Tübingen and in 1518 he became Professor of Greek at Wittenberg. A friend of Luther, his *Loci Communes* (1521) set out the doctrines of the reformers. He was present at several of the Diets and Colloquies which met on Reformation matters during the 1520s and at the Diet of Augsburg (1530), where he was mainly responsible for the framing of the Lutheran statement, the Augsburg Confession, which was presented to the Emperor Charles V. He was a man of stronger humanist leanings than many of the reformers. He was the author of a number of Biblical commentaries, in which he emphasised the need for a historian's approach to interpretation, but which also show the marks of scholastic method.

NICHOLAS OF LYRE, (c. 1270–1340). He was a Franciscan and was Regent Master at Paris from 1308. He was a Hebrew scholar and familiar with Jewish commentaries, although he did not know Greek. He set out to establish the literal sense of Scripture and to concentrate on it rather than the allegorical interpretations others preferred. The foundations he laid made him a standard author well into the sixteenth century, and his *Postillae* became the first Biblical commentary to be printed.

REUCHLIN, JOHANNES, (1455–1522). He studied Latin and Greek at Freiburg, Paris and Basle, studied law and became a diplomat. About 1485 he began to study Hebrew and became interested in cabbalistic teaching. He wrote plays. He became involved in controversies over the destruction of Hebrew books in Cologne; Reuchlin fought for their preservation. He was a great uncle of Melanchthon; he was anxious to separate him from Luther and was himself a Catholic until his death. His principal influence (for our purposes) was on the study of Hebrew. In 1506 he pub-

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lished a Hebrew grammar and lexicon (*De Rudibus Hebraicis*) and in 1512 an edition of the seven penitential Psalms in Hebrew with a Latin translation. In 1518 he published a treatise on Hebrew accents. His work encouraged contemporaries to add work on the Hebrew text of the Bible to the flourishing new endeavour concerned with the Greek.

TYNDALE, WILLIAM, (c. 1494–1536). He studied at Oxford and then at Cambridge. He began to plan a translation of the Bible about 1522, but the Bishop of London opposed the scheme. Tyndale went to Germany and never returned to England. His translation was printed at Cologne (where the local magistrates stopped it) and at Worms in 1525. Tyndale lived out his life mostly in the English House at Antwerp, working on the text of the New Testament and writing. He emphasised the authority of Scripture. He wrote some commentary (notably on Romans) and a number of controversial and theological works, among them *The Obedience of a Christian Man*.

WYCLIF, JOHN, (c. 1329–84). He studied and taught at Oxford until 1374. Late in his career he became involved in theological and political controversy. His followers led the Lollard movement. He developed the view that lordship depends on grace (*De Dominio Divino* and *De Civili Dominio*). He argued that the present corruption of the Church was an indication that it could not be in a state of grace, and therefore its property was forfeit. Conversely, since grace confers lordship, even the poor and humble have true lordship if they are in a state of grace. The only test of the acts of the Church was, said Wyclif, whether or not they conformed with Scripture. He denounced the worship of saints, and a number of other abuses. He wanted people to be able to read the Bible for themselves, and he began the translation into English which was continued by Nicholas of Hereford and Purvey.

ZWINGLI, ULRICH, (1484–1531). He studied at Berne, Vienna and Basle, and was an admirer of Erasmus; he learned Greek. He became leader of the Reformation in Switzerland, lecturing on the New Testament in 1519. He was not, it seems, much indebted to Luther's work. Nevertheless, he taught similar reforming doctrines: that all the apparatus of the Church was unnecessary; only the Gospel contained truth and in it was to be found all truth necessary to salvation. His main difference of opinion with Luther was over the doctrine of the Eucharist,

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which he developed in the 1520s. He believed that it was purely symbolic. Zwingli upheld his opinions in more than one public disputation, and his movement divided Switzerland between his reforming party and its opponents. His influence extended beyond Switzerland through his writings.