

William Gouge's Interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-3

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[Abstract]

The purpose of this article is to study William Gouge's commentary on Hebrews 7:1-3 focusing on his exegetical method in Hebrews 7:1-3 and his interpretation of Melchizedek. Gouge's main exegetical method on Hebrews 7:1-3 was typological interpretation and he approached the text through the Ramist method. In addition to those exegetical characteristics, Gouge frequently used Humanistic skills, such as the philological, grammatical, and historical studies of the text, to pursue the literal historical meaning of the text. Gouge also followed his Reformed brethren in stressing the importance of applying the meaning of a text to contemporary Christian community and he used the scope of the text in order to find the proper interpretation of it. In particular, Gouge's exegetical methods lead him to reach

논문투고일 2018.07.31. / 심사완료일 2018.08.23. / 게재확정일 2018.09.04.

the conclusion that Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:1-3 is a real historical person, namely, Shem, the son of Noah, and who serves as a great type of Jesus Christ.

Key Words: William Gouge, John Owen, Hebrews, literal historical interpretation, typology, Ramism, Melchizedek, Shem

I. Introduction

The interpretation of Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:1-3 has been an exegetical issue in the history of biblical exegesis.¹ Since this passage deals with important issues about Christ's identities and offices, many biblical interpreters have commented on this text throughout Christian history. The main interpretative questions of this text are identified as follows: Who is, indeed, Melchizedek and how is he applied to Christ? Because of the "complexity" of the interpretation of this text, even John Owen, who was "unquestionably the foremost Puritan expositor of Hebrews,"² stated that "there are almost as many different analyses given of this chapter as there are commentators upon it; and sometimes the same person proposeth sundry of them, without a determination of what he principally adheres unto."³

1 Concerning the history of exegesis on Hebrews 7:1-3, see Bruce A. Demarest, *A History of Interpretation of Hebrews 7, 1-10 from the Reformation to the Present* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1976).

2 Demarest, *A History of Interpretation of Hebrews 7*, 47.

William Gouge is one of the puritan exegetes who wrote a commentary on Hebrews in the seventeenth century.⁴ His posthumous commentary of Hebrews⁵ was a collection of 1,000 expository lectures delivered at the Blackfriars church during the course of thirty years of Wednesday's Lectures.⁶ Charles H. Spurgeon commended Gouge's commentary on Hebrews as "We greatly prize Gouge upon any topic which he touches, he gives outlines which may supply sermons for months."⁷ In his commentary on Hebrews, Gouge deals often with the interpretation of Melchizedek and the exposition of 7:1-3 was crucial for an understanding of it.

This article will study Gouge's commentary on Hebrews 7:1-3 focusing on his exegetical method in Hebrews 7:1-3 and his interpretation of Melchizedek. In this study, I will show that

3 John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 21 (Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 291. Concerning the difficulty of understanding of this passage, Thomas Goodwin also commented that this issue was like a "strange riddle." Thomas Goodwin, *The Knowledge of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ*, in *The Works of Thomas Goodwin*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: Nichol, 1861- 1866), 446

4 Concerning the life and works of William Gouge, see *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee, vol. 22 (Waterloo: London, 1890), 271-73, and "A Narrative of the Life and Death of Doctor Gouge," prefixed to *His learned and very useful commentary on the whole epistle to the Hebrews ... being the substance of thirty years Wednesdayes lectures at Black Fryers, London* (London: 1655). Regarding Gouge's contemporary commentaries on Hebrew, see Henry M. Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God: John Owen and Seventeenth-Century Exegetical Methodology," (Ph.D. diss., Calvin Theological Seminary, 2002), 18-24.

5 William Gouge, *Commentary on Hebrews* (1655; repr. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1980).

6 Demarest, *A History of Interpretation of Hebrews 7*, 45.

7 Peter Masters, "Foreword," vii, in Gouge, *Hebrews*.

William Gouge's main exegetical method on Hebrews 7:1-3 was typological interpretation and that he approached the text through the Ramist method. In addition to those exegetical characteristics, Gouge frequently used Humanistic skills, such as the philological, grammatical, and historical studies of the text, to pursue the literal historical meaning of the text. Then, I will show that Gouge followed his Reformed brethren in stressing the importance of applying the meaning of a text to contemporary Christian community and he used the scope of the text in order to find the proper interpretation of it. In particular, I will show that Gouge's exegetical methods lead him to reach the conclusion that Melchizedek in Hebrews 7:1-3 is a real historical person, namely, Shem, the son of Noah, and who serves as a great type of Jesus Christ.

II. Gouge's Exegetical Method on Hebrews 7: 1-3

1. The Use of Ramism in the Exegesis of Hebrews 7:1-3

(1) The Use of Ramism in the Seventeenth Century

The logic of the French philosopher-logician Pierre de la Ramee (Peter Ramus; 1515-72) deeply influenced the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁸ Unlike the huge expository locus method in Heidelberg theology, Ramus devised "a method of logical discourse by means of partition or dichotomy which gave

⁸ Donald K. Mckim, "William Perkins' Use of Ramism as an Exegetical Tool," in William Perkins, *A Commentary on Hebrews 11*, ed. John H. Augustine (The Pilgrim Press: New York, 1991), 32.

to Reformed theology an extreme clarity and conciseness of approach.”⁹ Instead of the ten Aristotelian categories or predicaments, Ramus provided new “seats of argument such as, cause, effect, subject, adjuncts, opposites, comparatives, similitude, dissimilitude, definition, and division.”¹⁰ Ramists also “unfolded” a text by this method so that “the interior logic or thought pattern of the author” could be clearly discerned.¹¹ Therefore, Ramus offered “extreme clarity in the organization of argument” to Protestant theologians who tried to establish the structure of orthodox dogmatics.¹²

On account of these differences between the Ramist method and traditional Aristotelianism, several contemporary scholars such as Donald K. Mckim regarded Ramism as radical separation from traditional Aristotelian logic.¹³ He insists that:

Ramus wished to liberate logic from the highly formalized, scientific structure of its medieval heritage. Chiefly, he sought a simplification of logic from the strictures of Aristotelianism to the more practical emphases of the *studia humanitatis* centering on the human “lifeworld.” This focus was proposed by the Renaissance humanist tradition and represented a significant departure from the reigning Aristotelian logic being used by Lutherans and Calvinists

⁹ Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 1: Prolegomena to Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 62.

¹⁰ Muller, *Prolegomena*, 182.

¹¹ Mckim, “William Perkins,” 41.

¹² Mckim, “William Perkins,” 184.

¹³ Donald K. McKim, “The Functions of Ramism in William Perkins’ Theology,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 4 (1985): 508.

of Germany and Switzerland.

Mckim argues that England puritans such as Perkins followed “the humanist tradition of topical logic” with Ramus against the scholastic tradition.¹⁴

However, the Ramist method was “not a wholesale rebellion against Aristotle, nor was it a radically new departure in logic.”¹⁵ Concerning the characteristics of Ramism, Richard A. Muller refutes Mckim’s arguments in that (1) the crucial ideas of Ramus were directly cited from Aristotle, (2) novelties were uncertain as in the case of Ramist Syllogism, and (3) Ramus’ recourse to Plato and Socrates and Ramus’ method of bifurcation followed dialectic ideas which were already used by Rudolf Agricola and Philip Melancthon.¹⁶ Moreover, even though Ramus attacked “the complexities of Aristotelian logic, particularly against the categories of predication,” he did not raise an objection against Aristotelian physics and metaphysics.¹⁷ Hence, Muller concludes that:

The seventeenth-century understanding of Ramism was, thus, not as a model that set aside Aristotle and scholastic method, but as a model that modified and adapted both. Ramism emerges, therefore, not as an opposition to Protestant scholasticism but as a significant element in its framework and fashioning.¹⁸

14 McKim, “The Functions of Ramism,” 514.

15 Muller, *Prolegomena*, 181.

16 Muller, *Prolegomena*, 181.

17 Muller, *Prolegomena*, 182.

The method of Ramus was not against Aristotle. Rather, Ramus altered the traditional logic of Aristotle “in the context of the newer patterns for teaching logic in his own time, particularly in the context of the Agricola model for dialectic as a more discursive, topical approach to that teaching that combined demonstrative with persuasive argumentation.”¹⁹ Consequently, there was no “identifiable difference” between the Reformed orthodox theology of the Ramists and the Reformed orthodox theology of their non-Ramists or Aristotelian contemporaries.²⁰

(2) The Use of Ramism in Gouge's Exegesis of Hebrews 7:1-3

The method of Ramus played a significant role as an exegetical method in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.²¹ Puritans such as William Perkins and William Ames interpreted Scripture through the Ramist method.²² Muller explains the impact of the Ramist method on Biblical interpretation as follows:

The Ramist method of definition of the component parts of a topic and of the progress of an argument by bifurcation was used by many Reformed theologians in the late

¹⁸ Muller, *Prolegomena*, 183.

¹⁹ Muller, *Prolegomena*, 182.

²⁰ Muller, *Prolegomena*, 184.

²¹ Concerning the use of Ramism for the exposition of Scripture in 16 & 17th century, see Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 2, Holy Scripture: The Cognitive Foundation of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003), 507-09.

²² Mckim, “William Perkins,” 32. Concerning the general introductions of Ramist puritan exegetes, see McKim, “The Functions of Ramism,” 506-08.

sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries not only as a structural device in theological systems and treatises; it was also employed in varying degrees as a logical tool for the exposition of Scripture.²³

William Gouge also used the method of Ramus for interpretation throughout his commentary on Hebrews.²⁴ Gouge's exegesis of Hebrews 7:1-3 is a good example of the Ramist method. Gouge's exegesis of Hebrews 7:1-3 is instructive in showing both how Gouge worked with Scripture as one committed to the Ramist method and how that method functioned for him as a biblical exegete.

First of all, Gouge described the scope of this chapter and dichotomized it: Gouge offered the standard statement of the basic purpose or scope and of the flow of discourse in the book. He stated that:

The sum of this chapter is, the excellency of Christ's priesthood.

This is set out two ways:

1. By way of similitude.
2. By way of dissimilitude.

²³ Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 507-08.

²⁴ Gouge also used Ramism in his representative works such as *An Exposition of Part of the First and Six Chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (London, 1630); *Gods three arrows: Plague, Famine, Sword, In three Treatises* (London, 1631). Concerning Gouge's use of Ramism, Mckim stated that "William Gouge taught logic at King's College and became a member of the Westminster Assembly. His works were filled with Ramist charts." Mckim, "Function of Ramism," 508.

The similitude hath reference to the priesthood of Melchisedec, from the beginning to verse 11. This dissimilitude to the priesthood of Aaron, from verse 11 to the end.²⁵

Then, Gouge analyzed it in the form of an extensive Ramist table. First, he divided demonstration of the excellency of Melchizedek's priesthood by similitude into two ways: "1. Simply, ver. 1-3. 2. Comparatively, from ver. 4 to 11." After this dichotomization, Gouge proceeded to divide the simple demonstration into two ways, "1. propounded; 2. illustrated." The first way of demonstration was dichotomized into "1. by an historical narration of sundry passages registered 2. by a mystical explanation of some of them, and others." The matters of history were further divided into four categories, "1. The name of the high priest 2. His offices 3. His actions 4. His prerogative."²⁶

Gouge also dichotomized "matters of mystery" into "either revealed or unrevealed." Then, revealed mystery was further divided into two mysteries: "One from his name Melchisedec, that he was a king of righteousness" and "The other from the place of his government, Salem, that he was a king of peace." After this division, Gouge shows five "concealed" mysteries regarding Melchizedek. Then, he explained that the illustration of the simple demonstration "is by a resemblance of Melchisedec to 'the Son of God,' ver.3."²⁷

²⁵ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466.

²⁶ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466

²⁷ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466.

Gouge also divided “the comparative demonstration,” which is his second part of the demonstration by similitude, into “three particulars.” The three particulars of the comparative excellency of Melchisedec are “1. That Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec (4-6). 2. That Melchisedec blessed Abraham (ver. 6-7). 3. That Melchisedec ever liveth, but all the Levitical priests died (ver. 8-10).”²⁸

Then, Gouge dealt with the dissimilitude which is the second major part of this chapter. He said that “the dissimilitude betwixt Christ’s priesthood and Aaron’s is largely amplified in the remainder of this chapter.”²⁹ He divided the dissimilitude into the “seven particulars.”³⁰ After classifying the whole chapter through the Ramist method, Gouge annotated them through a further verse-by-verse presentation of the meaning of the more difficult passages.

Lastly, when he expounded the text, Gouge used the reasoning process to secure his points. Ramists also relied on syllogistic reasoning to clarify the meaning of the text.³¹ Concerning the excellence of Christ’s priesthood, he stated that:

This comparative excellency of Melchisedec is exemplified in three particulars. 1. That Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec.···Upon this account Levi and all his posterity were in the loins of Abraham, and in him paid tithes to

²⁸ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466.

²⁹ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466.

³⁰ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 467.

³¹ Mckim, “William Perkins,” 41.

Melchisedec.

The argument thus lieth:

- (1) That priesthood which received tithes or others is more excellent than that which paid tithes thereto;
- (2) But Melchisedec received in Abraham tithes of Levi, Aaron, and all their posterity;
- (3) Therefore Melchisedec's priesthood was the more excellent, ver. 4-6.³²

Through syllogistic reasoning, Gouge proved why Melchizedek's priesthood is more excellent than Aaron's.

In sum, William Gouge used Ramist philosophy and logic as a method of approaching and interpreting Hebrews 7:1-3. Ramism provided Gouge with a framework for interpreting the text. Gouge analyzed Hebrews 7:1-3 logically through the Ramist method: A text was placed in its context, the words of the text, and then the process of dividing or "distributing" the text was begun.

2. The Use of Typology in the Exegesis of Hebrews 7:1-3

(1) The Use of Typology in the Seventeenth Century

Protestant theologians of the seventeenth century "vigorously" used typology as an exegetical method in order to seek "a harmonious interpretation" between the Old and New Testaments.³³ They applied typological interpretation when Old Testament events, persons, and practices foreshadowed the

³² Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466.

³³ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 264.

coming Christ and the ministry of him and his church.³⁴ In his famous work, *The Figures or Types of the Old Testament*, Samuel gave the seventeenth century definition of a type: “it is a shadow of good things to come: Or if you would have it more at large, you may take it thus, A type is some outward or sensible thing ordained of God under the Old Testament, to represent and hold forth something of Christ in the New....”³⁵ Therefore, through typological interpretation, the post-Reformation writers revealed not only the historical meaning of the text, but also a “mystical meaning” of the text which would be fulfilled in the New Testament era.³⁶

On account of this aspect of typological interpretation, several contemporary scholars assert that typology itself requires that there are various meanings which can be found in the Bible; therefore the historical sense does not always provide the full scope of the meaning of the passage.³⁷ According to these scholars, by employing typological interpretation, the Protestant exegetes of the seventeenth century regressed to “the form of allegory which suggested the medieval quadriga hermeneutical methodology.”³⁸ Discarding the Reformation principle of exegesis

³⁴ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 264.

³⁵ Samuel Mather, *The Figures or Types of the Old Testament, by which Christ and the Heavenly Things of the Gospel were Preached and Shadowed to the People of God of Old* (Dublin, 1683; repr. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1969), 52.

³⁶ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 264.

³⁷ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 265. Concerning the statement of these scholars, see Kemper Fullerton, *Prophecy and Authority* (New York: Macmillan, 1919), 175; Thomas Davis, “The Traditions of Puritan Typology,” in *Typology and Early American Literature*, ed. S. Bercovitch (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972), 43.

which emphasized the literal historical meaning of the text, they argued, the exegetes of the orthodox period employed typological interpretation in order to establish and preserve their "rigid" doctrine.³⁹ Consequently, critics of orthodox exegesis claim that typological interpretation of the seventeenth century almost followed the medieval allegorical interpretation.⁴⁰

However, recent studies have pointed out that typological interpretation was not a reversion to the medieval allegorical interpretation.⁴¹ Rather, the Puritans followed the same exegetical principles as their Reformed predecessors: "a complete rejection of Alexandrian-styled allegorical interpretations as the 'fancies' of men, yet all the while recognizing that some biblical

³⁸ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 265.

³⁹ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 265.

⁴⁰ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 265.

⁴¹ Mason Lowance, "Typology and the New England Way: Cotton Mather and the Exegesis of Biblical Types," *Early American Literature* 4 (1969): 15-37; Mason Lowance, "Introduction," in *The Figures or Types of the Old Testament*, Samuel Mather (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1969), v-xxiii; Sac van Bercovitch, *Typology and Early American Literature* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1972); Perry Miller, "Introduction," in *Images or Shadows of Divine Things*, Jonathan Edwards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 1-41; Thomas Davis, "Edward Taylor and the Traditions of typology," *Early American Literature* 5 (1970): 27-47; Wallace Anderson, "Editor's Introduction to 'Images of Divine Things' and 'Types,'" in *Typological Writings*, Jonathan Edwards (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 3-33; Harry Stout, *The New England Soul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 45; Emory Elliott, "From Father to Son: The Evolution of Typology in Puritan New England," in *Literary Uses of Typology: From the Late Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Earl Minor (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 204-227; Victor Harris, "Allegory to Analogy in the Interpretation of Scriptures," *Philological Quarterly* 45 (1966): 1-23; Charles Cannon, "William Whitaker's Disputatio de 1e Sacra Scriptura: A Sixteenth-Century Theory of Allegory," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 25 (1962): 129-38.

texts demand a typological reading in order to elucidate its full literal sense.”⁴²

Recent scholars such as Richard Muller and Brevard Childs have demonstrated that the Reformers’ hermeneutical principle, which emphasized the literal sense of the text, does not mean radical discontinuity with the previous medieval expositors.⁴³ According to recent studies, the Reformers still pursued a “spiritual” meaning of the text,⁴⁴ but they “tied it closely to the literal wording.”⁴⁵ The mediaeval quadriga exegetical principle was “already” under attack by many churchmen from various directions in the late medieval periods.⁴⁶

Even though they abandoned the medieval quadriga hermeneutic principle, along with many of the allegorical conclusions, the Reformed biblical expositors regarded a figurative or spiritual meaning as “often an integral dimension of the literal text itself.”⁴⁷ According to them, the literal sense

⁴² Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 263.

⁴³ Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 469-70; Richard A. Muller, “Biblical Interpretation in the Era of Reformation: The View of the Middle Ages,” in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, ed. Richard A. Muller and John Thompson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 8-13; Brevard Childs, “The Sensus Literalis of Scripture: An Ancient and Modern Problem,” in *Beiträge zur Alttestamentlichen Theologie*, ed. Donner, Hanhart, and Smend (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1977), 80-93; David Steinmetz, “The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis,” *Theology Today* 37 (1980-81):27-38; Christopher Ocker, “Medieval Exegesis and the Origin of Hermeneutics,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 52 (1999):328-45.

⁴⁴ Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 484-88; David Puckett, *John Calvin’s Exegesis of the Old Testament* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), 88.

⁴⁵ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 266.

⁴⁶ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 266.

⁴⁷ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 266.

of the text could be expanded to “symbolic meaning” beyond itself.⁴⁸ However, reformed exegetes held that the spiritual meaning of the text should “reside in and be controlled by” the grammatical meaning of the text.⁴⁹ In this way, typological interpretation was a crucial principle for the sixteenth-century exegetes.⁵⁰

(2) The Use of Typology in Gouge's Interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-3

Because the text associates the events and persons of the Old Testament with the person and work of Christ in the New Testament, William Gouge's exegesis of Hebrews 7:1-3 is a good example of Puritan use and is a proper exposition of typological material in the New Testament. First of all, like most expositors who wrote expositions of this text,⁵¹ Gouge begins his discussion of this chapter with an analysis of the scope of the text within the purpose of the epistle as a whole. Gouge stated that “the excellency of Christ's priesthood” is the design of this chapter.⁵²

⁴⁸ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 266.

⁴⁹ Donald Dickson, “The Complexities of Biblical Typology in the Seventeenth Century,” *Renaissance and Reformation* 11 (1987):258; Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 491 ; Richard A. Muller, “The Hermeneutic of Promise and Fulfillment in Calvin's Exegesis of Old Testament Prophecies of the Kingdom,” in *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century*, ed. David Steinmetz (London: Duke University Press, 1990), 73.

⁵⁰ Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 488; Richard A. Muller, “Perkins and the Protestant Exegetical Tradition,” in *A Cloud of Faithful Witnesses: Commentary on Hebrews 11*, William Perkins, ed. J. Augustine (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 75.

⁵¹ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 303.

⁵² Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466.

According to Gouge, the author of Hebrews desires to contrast Christ's priesthood with Melchizedek's and Aaron's and, therefore, to demonstrate the superiority of the former.⁵³ Concerning the purpose of the text, Gouge stated that:

The apostle doth the rather induce these two orders (Melchisedec and Aaron), because there never were in the church any but these two orders of typical priests. The Jews had the order of Aaron's priesthood in high account. The apostle therefore proves the other order of Melchisedec after which Christ was a priest, to be far the more excellent, that thereby he might draw the Hebrews from the legal ceremonies unto Christ and his gospel.⁵⁴

Likewise, Gouge assumes that the first three verses were written by the apostle in order to give an account of Melchizedek and to relate the typological connection between his priesthood and Christ's.⁵⁵

With this perception of the scope of typology, Gouge proceeds to speculate concerning the historical identity of Melchizedek.⁵⁶ In order to make typological interpretation valid, Melchizedek must be identified not as an imaginary person but as "a real historical person."⁵⁷ Otherwise, Melchizedek cannot be "a type of Christ" and "instead becomes a source for New Testament allegorizing."⁵⁸ Therefore, Gouge's account of Melchizedek was

⁵³ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466.

⁵⁴ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466.

⁵⁵ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 466.

⁵⁶ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 467.

⁵⁷ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 307.

⁵⁸ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 307.

grounded in the historical character and events surrounding the biblical record of Melchizedek.⁵⁹

To demonstrate the historicity of Melchizedek, first of all, Gouge refuted the other commentators who taught that Melchizedek was someone who was “greater than Christ,” an appearance of the Holy Spirit, God himself, an angel, or one of Ham’s descendants.⁶⁰ Gouge briefly rejects these notions. Especially, when he refuted the idea that Melchizedek means “someone who is greater than Christ,” Gouge denied this idea on the basis of the principle of typology: The antitype far surpasses the type.⁶¹ “Gouge stated that “Melchisedec was a type of Christ, and Christ the truth of that type; but the truth is greater than the type.” If Melchizedek was someone who surpassed Christ, typological interpretation would be invalid anymore. Therefore, Gouge concluded that Melchizedek cannot be someone who surpassed Christ.⁶²

After rejecting the opposing views, Gouge identified Melchizedek with “Shem,” the son of Noah. Gouge offered eight arguments to show that the Melchizedek of Hebrews 7 referred to Shem.⁶³ From this conclusion, we can note that the historicity

⁵⁹ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 467-83.

⁶⁰ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 467.

⁶¹ When he explained why God gave Melchizedek as a type to the church, Gouge exposed on the basis of this principle again. He stated that God gave a type in order to support the faith and hope of church “till the fullness of time should come; that, when it was come, they might the more readily embrace and receive that truth, and more confidently rest upon it.” Gouge, *Hebrews*, 481.

⁶² Gouge, *Hebrews*, 481.

⁶³ The eight arguments of Gouge are as follows: “1. Shem lived an hundred years before the flood: and none born before that time was then living. So as his parentage might well then be unknown. 2. He was the most honourable then

of type was one of the typological principles of Gouge. Since Melchizedek had an historical identity as Shem, the son of Noah, Gouge's interpretation cannot be seen as allegory.

Many respected puritan exegetes such as Andrew Willet⁶⁴ and Henry Ainsworth⁶⁵ followed Gouge's understanding of Melchizedek as Shem.⁶⁶ However, John Owen did not agree with identification of Melchizedek with Shem.⁶⁷ Owen rejected this interpretation because it was contradictory to the description of verse 3, that Melchizedek was "without father" and "without mother."⁶⁸ Concerning this description of Melchizedek's lineage, Gouge stated that because Shem lived before the flood, nobody

in the world, so as he might well be counted greater than Abraham. 3. Shem was a most righteous man, and in that respect the title Melchisedec might be given unto him. 4. God is styled 'the Lord God of Shem,' so as he may fitly be called the 'priest of the most high God,' 5. Shem was that stock from whence Christ according to the flesh descended. 6. To Shem was the promise made and in that respect, he the fittest to bless others. 7. Shem was the root of the church, even that root from whence. Abraham and his posterity sprouted so and fit to bless him. 8. All the following branches of the description of Melchisedec, may fitly be applied to Shem, as will appear in opening the particulars." Gouge, *Hebrews*, 468.

⁶⁴ Andrew Willet presented twelve arguments to support this opinion. Andrew Willet, *Hexapla in Genesis* (Cambridge, 1605), 161-63.

⁶⁵ Henry Ainsworth used many Rabbinic materials to prove this claim. Henry Ainsworth, *Annotations upon the Five Bookes of Moses, the Booke of the Psalmes, and the Song of Songs*, vol. 1 (London, 1626-1627; repro Ligonier: Soli Deo Gloria, 1991), 56.

⁶⁶ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 307.

⁶⁷ John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*. In *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 1. 21 (Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust, 1991), 297.

⁶⁸ Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 297. Instead of identification of Melchizedek with Shem, Owen insisted that Melchizedek was a descendant of Japheth. He suggested two arguments to support this claim. (1) God gave promise of blessing to Japheth through Shem (2) Japheth's descendants came to Canaan. Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 299.

might know his parents.⁶⁹ Willet refuted this objection and stated that even though Shem's parents are recorded in Scripture, his parentage was unknown to his contemporaries.⁷⁰

Lastly, Gouge further countered an interpretation advanced by some who asserted that it is "the safest to determine none at all to be this Melchisedec, but rather to speak and think of him as of one unknown, whose father, mother, kindred, age, and generation are not made known ... because he is here so transcendently described." David Dickson, Benjamin Keach and Thomas Manton were those who refused to seek the historical identity of Melchizedek.⁷¹ Gouge denied this idea and stated that the mystery of Melchizedek can be interpreted because it gives proofs in the text "for finding the true and full sense of them."⁷²

Having established Melchizedek's historical identity, Gouge next proceeded to explain the importance of the descriptions made by the apostle concerning Melchizedek. Gouge listed many typological correspondences between Melchizedek and Christ throughout his exegesis.⁷³

⁶⁹ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 468.

⁷⁰ Willet, *Hexapla in Genesis*, 162.

⁷¹ David Dickson, *A Short Explanation of Hebrews of Paul to the Hebrews* (Cambridge, 1649), 33-34; Benjamin Keach, *Tropologia: A Key to Open Scripture Metaphors* (1682; repro London: William Hill Cambridge, 1856), 973. Thomas Manton, *Jesus Christ, True God and True Man in One Person*, in *The Works of Thomas Manton*, vol. 1 (London: Nisbet, 1870), 479. However, the seventeenth century puritan exegetes "commonly" tried to reveal the historical identity of Melchizedek. Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 306.

⁷² Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 306.

⁷³ Throughout his exegesis, Gouge presented nine different correspondences between Melchizedek and Christ: "king, a priest, both a king and priest, blessed the faithful, received gifts from the faithful, the king of righteousness, prince of peace, the union of two natures, and eternal priesthood." Knapp, "Understanding the Mind

In the first verse, Gouge interpreted that Melchizedek foreshadowed the coming of Christ because Melchizedek was the king of Salem and the priest of God. Gouge asserted that Melchizedek's kingship was to be understood typologically as foreshadowing Christ's kingship,⁷⁴ and that Melchizedek's priesthood was to be understood typologically as foreshadowing Christ's priesthood. Concerning the excellence of Melchizedek, Gouge showed that Melchizedek was more excellent than any other kings and priests in the Old Testament because he was "herein a peculiar type of Christ, who was all in all to his church, both King, Priest, and Prophet."⁷⁵ That is, because of his resemblance of Christ in that he held two offices as king and priest at the same time, Melchizedek was an excellent type of Christ.⁷⁶

However, not everybody agreed with Gouge's typological interpretation of verse 1. John Owen rejected Gouge's suggestion that Melchizedek was a type of Christ as a king.⁷⁷ Comparing with Gouge and other contemporaries, Owen used typological interpretation more limited way.⁷⁸ On the basis of his understanding of the scope of this epistle, Owen stated that "this [Melchizedek kingship] doth not belong unto that wherein he was principally to be a type of Christ, nor is the Lord Christ anywhere

of God," 312. Moreover, Gouge's nine typological correspondences of this text are "very similar to" those of many other prominent puritan interpreters. Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 309.

74 Gouge, *Hebrews*, 469-70.

75 Gouge, *Hebrews*, 470.

76 Gouge, *Hebrews*, 470.

77 Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 300.

78 Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 312.

said to be a king after the order of Melchisedec, nor doth the apostle make any use of the consideration of this office in him.”⁷⁹ Owen only acknowledged the possibility of “moral resemblance between them.”⁸⁰ However, William Gouge was also aware that the most primary correspondence between Christ and Melchizedek in this chapter was about Christ’s eternal priesthood.⁸¹ Gouge stated that “the most especial and principal thing wherein Melchizedek was made like unto the Son of God was in this, that he abideth a priest continually.”⁸² Therefore, even though Gouge related many features of Melchizedek to Christ, he recognized that Christ’s everlasting priesthood was the main characteristic of the antitype.⁸³

In his interpretation of verse 2, Gouge further associated other illustrations of Melchizedek with Christ. First of all, Gouge dealt with the historical event of Abraham giving a tenth to Melchizedek. Concerning this event, Gouge stated that “in this act of blessing, Melchisedec was an especial type of Christ.”⁸⁴ Gouge thought of Abraham’s tithe as emphasis on Melchizedek as a type of Christ.⁸⁵ Gouge also revealed the reason why Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek:

Principally and especially did Abraham give the tenth to

⁷⁹ Owen, *An Exposition of Hebrews*, 300.

⁸⁰ Owen, *An Exposition of Hebrews*, 300.

⁸¹ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 482.

⁸² Gouge, *Hebrews*, 482.

⁸³ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 322.

⁸⁴ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 474.

⁸⁵ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 311.

Melchisedec, as he was a priest of God. Two reasons moved Abraham to do this:

1. To shew that of Christ he held whatsoever he had; in testimony whereof he gives a part to him that rag a type of Christ and stood in his room.
2. To shew how just and equal it is that they who communicate unto us spiritual blessings, should partake of our temporals.

These two reasons, resting upon a moral and perpetual equity, shew that in those general cases Abraham is a pattern to all sorts of saints in all ages, do as he did...⁸⁶

According to Gouge, since Abraham was aware of the typological nature of Melchizedek, he gave a tenth to Melchizedek “not as he was, but according to who he represented.”⁸⁷

One of the features of Gouge’s typology in Hebrews 7:1-3 was to make a distinction between a “type” and a “pattern.” First of all, the concept of pattern applied to Abraham in the interpretation of verse 2. Gouge considered Abraham to be “all sorts of saints in all ages” because Abraham’s tithing is a model for all future believers.⁸⁸ This distinction is more clearly seen in the interpretation of the name of Melchizedek in verse 2:

In the name and meaning thereof, Melchisedec is to be considered two ways:

1. As a type. 2. As a pattern

⁸⁶ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 475.

⁸⁷ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 311.

⁸⁸ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 475.

As a type he foreshewed two things:

1. That Christ was a true King. 2. That Christ reigned in righteousness...

As Melchisedec was a pattern to future ages, his name importeth two other points: 1. Men may be kings... 2. Kings must rule in righteousness. They must so carry themselves as they may truly be called Melchisedecs.⁸⁹

When Gouge revealed the typological relation through the meaning of Melchizedek's name "king of righteousness," he made a distinction between a "type" of Melchizedek and a "pattern" of Melchizedek. According to Gouge, Melchizedek was not only a "type" which prefigures Christ, but also a "pattern," as "a model for all future ages."⁹⁰ Hence, in addition to the role as a type, Gouge exposed that Melchizedek was a pattern representing "(1) men may be kings, and (2) kings must rule in righteousness."⁹¹

Gouge revealed the typological relation between Melchizedek and Christ through explanation of the meaning of Melchizedek's name. In verse 2, the apostle declares that Melchizedek's name is "king of righteousness." Therefore, Gouge interpreted that Melchizedek prefigured Christ as the true King who reigned in righteousness.⁹² Gouge also built upon the correspondence between Christ and Melchizedek from the meaning of "King of peace," which is another name of Melchizedek. Through analyzing this name, Gouge showed that Melchizedek

⁸⁹ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 478.

⁹⁰ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 311.

⁹¹ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 478.

⁹² Gouge, *Hebrews*, 478.

foreshadowed Christ, who brought peace “betwixt the Creator and creatures and among creatures themselves.”⁹³

Gouge expounded that the apostle’s description of Melchizedek as “without father, without mother, without descent, and no beginning of days nor end of life” in verse 3 prefigures the nature of Christ. Especially, the nature of Melchizedek as “without father and without mother” indicated the human and divine natures of Christ, respectively. Hence, Melchizedek prefigured the hypostatic union of Christ’s two natures.⁹⁴

However, John Owen did not agree with Gouge’s interpretation. Owen asserted that since a type must be rooted in historicity⁹⁵ and the scope of this chapter is to reveal Christ’s priestly nature, the description of Melchizedek’s lineage cannot prefigure the hypostatic union of Christ’s two natures.⁹⁶

Finally, concerning the identity of Melchizedek, Gouge reached the conclusion that:

Hereby we see that God of old gave visible types and resemblances of his Son, and that before he was exhibited in the flesh. Melchisedec was a mere true man, yet was he so set forth as he bare a resemblance of the Son of God. In other respects, Aaron and other priests, Moses and other prophets, David and other kings, were special types and resemblances of Christ.⁹⁷

⁹³ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 479.

⁹⁴ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 480.

⁹⁵ Owen, *An Exposition of Hebrews*, 336.

⁹⁶ Owen, *An Exposition of Hebrews*, 337.

⁹⁷ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 481.

For Gouge, Melchizedek was both a historical person and a type of Christ. Gouge also expanded the boundaries of Christological typology beyond Melchizedek. Gouge claimed that, not only Melchizedek but also other figures of Old Testament such as Aaron and Moses functioned as types of Christ. From this point, we can note that one of the typological principles of Gouge is that multiple types foreshadowed a single antitype.⁹⁸

3. The Influence of Humanism

(1) The Influence of Humanism in the Seventeenth Century

Biblical interpretation in the sixteenth century was deeply influenced by many factors, one of which was Renaissance Humanism.⁹⁹ Concerning the influence of humanism on the sixteenth century, Muller says:

The Reformers drew heavily on the textual and philological skills of Renaissance humanism ... it is nevertheless impossible to separate the Reformation of the sixteenth century from the development of Renaissance humanism, particularly when humanism is understood as the application of revised theories of logic and rhetoric and of vastly increased philological skills to the critical examination of ancient texts.¹⁰⁰

“The main trend” for biblical exegetes of the sixteenth century

⁹⁸ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 481.

⁹⁹ Richard A. Muller, “Biblical Interpretation in the 16th & 17th Centuries,” In *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald McKim (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1999), 124-25.

¹⁰⁰ Muller, “Biblical Interpretation in the 16th & 17th Centuries,” 124-25.

was to seek the plain literal meaning of the text “under the tradition of Renaissance humanism.”¹⁰¹ Muller also explains the influence of Renaissance Humanism on the seventeenth century as follows:

When it is examined from the perspective of the history of exegesis, the era of Protestant orthodoxy (c. 1565–1700) must be regarded not only as a continuation of the philological and interpretive development of the Renaissance and Reformation but also as the great era of Protestant linguistic study, whether in the biblical or in the cognate languages. Since it has so often been implied that the Reformation was a time of exegesis, virtually without dogma, and the era of orthodoxy was a time of dogmatic system without exegesis, it must be added that at no time before or since the era of orthodoxy was systematic theology so closely wedded to the textual and linguistic work of the exegete.¹⁰²

Humanism’s emphasis on the philological, grammatical, and historical studies of the text caused the Protestant Biblical Scholars of the Post-Reformation era to pursue the literal historical meaning of the text on the ground of humanistic methods.¹⁰³ William Gouge was also one of the biblical Scholars

¹⁰¹ JinYoung Kim, “The Exegetical Method and Message of Peter Martyr’s Commentary on Judges” (Ph.D. diss., Southern Theological Seminary, 2002), 55.

¹⁰² Muller, “Biblical Interpretation in the 16th & 17th Centuries,” 135–36.

¹⁰³ Muller, “Biblical Interpretation in the 16th & 17th Centuries,” 135–36.

who stood with the humanistic interpretation methodology of the Seventeenth century.

(2) The Influence of Humanism in Gouge's Interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-3

The study of the original source for the understanding of Scripture was one of the most prominent features of the biblical interpretation in the seventeenth century era.¹⁰⁴ The protestant writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries placed renewed emphasis on the Greek and Hebrew languages because of their benefit for the study of original material, and they put "a strict emphasis on the literal sense of the text."¹⁰⁵ Interpretation of the text by revealing the meaning of the original language is widely evident in Gouge's exegesis of Hebrews 7:1-3.

Among many examples in his exegesis of Hebrews 7:1-3, his interpretation of "king of Salem" in verse 1 will demonstrate the influence of the humanistic tradition on Gouge. In discussing the meaning of "king of Salem" of verse 1, Gouge used a humanistic basis to explain the meaning of the phrase. First, he revealed the meaning of "king" on the basis of Hebrew, Greek and Latin.¹⁰⁶ After that, Gouge showed the original meaning of "Salem" by studying the root of the word in Hebrew. Then, he

¹⁰⁴ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 116.

¹⁰⁵ Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 116. However, the emphasis of "the literal sense" was not rejection of a "spiritual" sense as in the modern critical method. Instead, biblical interpreters of the sixteenth and seventeenth century "sought to locate the spiritual sense of a text entirely in its literal wording." Knapp, "Understanding the Mind of God," 116.

¹⁰⁶ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 468.

defined the meaning of “Salem” through the various usages of the word in Bible. After the philological study of the place, “Salem,” Gouge showed its literal historical background. Gouge identified “Salem” with “the place where afterwards Jerusalem was built” and “where Solomon built his temple.” For this conclusion, he also revealed the meaning of “Jerusalem” in Hebrew. He analyzed it and revealed the characteristics of word “Jerusalem” as a compound verb. For the literal historical meaning of the text, Gouge added historical information: “Jerusalem was called by this name Salem in David’s time.” He also revealed the reason why “Salem” was called “Jerusalem.” He asserted that it was called Jerusalem “in memorial of God’s providence in preserving Isaac from death, when his father was about to sacrifice him.” Finally, Gouge reached the conclusion that the location of “Salem” is identical with Jerusalem. Likewise, through the philological understanding of the text, Gouge tried to pursue the literal historical meaning of the text.¹⁰⁷

In addition to its renewed emphasis on the study of biblical languages, humanism also led the biblical interpreters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to study the cognate languages such as Syriac, Chaldean, and Aramaic but also non-Christian Jewish writings.¹⁰⁸ The Protestant writers also used contemporary translations such as those of Beza and Erasmus.¹⁰⁹ William Gouge was not an exception to this humanistic trend in his interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-3.

¹⁰⁷ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 469.

¹⁰⁸ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 123.

¹⁰⁹ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 125.

In his interpretation of four mysteries of Melchizedek in verse 3, Gouge quoted the Syriac version of Scripture. Gouge cited the meaning assigned to the verse in the Syriac translation in order to pursue the appropriate meaning of the text.¹¹⁰ He also used the contemporary translations of Beza and Erasmus.¹¹¹ Gouge referred to its usage in the Septuagint, as well.¹¹²

The influence of Hebraic studies on the post-Reformation period is present in Gouge's interpretation of the text. First, Gouge relied on the opinion of Jews when he asserted Melchizedek was "Shem." Gouge stated that he found "two and twenty rabbis of the Jews to be of this opinion, and inferreth that it was the common opinion of the Jew."¹¹³ Even though Gouge did not mention the exact name of his source, he used the Jewish opinion of Salem's location in his exposition of verse 1.¹¹⁴

In addition to these exegetical methods, Gouge made efforts to investigate and uncover the reasons and arguments which lay beneath what were otherwise simple and abbreviated expressions. For example, in the exegesis of verse 1, Gouge tried to explain why Melchizedek and Abraham were neighbors. Gouge explained that Salem was near by the place where Abraham lived. He further explained the historical background of those days: "Abraham sojourned in the land of Canaan, and Salem was a place bordering near unto it." Therefore, Gouge argued that

¹¹⁰ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 480.

¹¹¹ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 480.

¹¹² Gouge, *Hebrews*, 468: 470: 472.

¹¹³ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 468.

¹¹⁴ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 469.

“there might be also a spiritual relation to move Melchisedec to do the courtesy which he did to Abraham” because both Abraham and Melchizedek served the same God.¹¹⁵

In the exposition of verse 2, Gouge also sought to uncover the historical situation behind the text. Gouge tried to understand when Melchizedek received this name. However, he stated the difficulty of this explanation because “it is uncertain whether this name was given him in his infancy or after he was a king. Then, he stated that “If this Melchisedec were Shem, then Shem was his proper name given him in his infancy so as it is most probable that it was given him after he was king and manifested his righteousness in governing the people.” He also stated that “if this name were given him in his infancy, it was certainly by way of prophecy. The Spirit foreseeing what his office should be, and what his practice would be, directed those that gave him his name to give this name Melchisedec.”¹¹⁶ In this way, by revealing the historical situation behind the text of Hebrews 7:1-3, Gouge tried to interpret the meaning of the text more plainly and literally.

4. Application to the Contemporary Church

(1) The Use of Application in the Seventeenth Century

Biblical exegetes of the seventeenth-century presupposed that the Bible was oriented not only to its original hearers but also to the present Christian community.¹¹⁷ According to the

¹¹⁵ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 472.

¹¹⁶ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 478.

¹¹⁷ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 89.

seventeenth-century exegetical principles, a proper interpretation of the scriptural text applied to the present-day church.¹¹⁸ Hence, the seventeenth century orthodox writers thought of “the great end” of the scriptures as “perpetual witness” to the present Christian community.¹¹⁹

Concerning the application of the Bible to the church in the seventeenth century, Robert Boyle stated that

The several books of the Bible were written chiefly and primarily to those to whom they were first addressed, and to their contemporaries, and that yet the Bible not being written for one Age or People onely, but for the whole people of God, consisting of persons of all Ages, Nations, Sexes, Complexions and Conditions, it was fit that it should be written in such a way as that none of all these might be quite excluded from the advantages designed them in it.¹²⁰

Therefore, in the process of exegesis, reformed exegetes emphasized application of the meaning of the text to the contemporary Christian life and practice.¹²¹ They assumed that right exegesis of the text naturally led to the application to the

¹¹⁸ Muller, “William Perkins and the Protestant Exegetical Tradition,” 87. See also, 82; Muller, “Biblical Interpretation in the Era of Reformation,” 11; Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 509.

¹¹⁹ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 89.

¹²⁰ Robert Boyle, *Some Considerations touching the Style of the H. Scriptures extracted from several parts of a discourse concerning divers particulars belonging to the Bible* (London, 1663), 21-22.

¹²¹ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 91.

present-day church.¹²²

(2) Application in the method of Ramism

A significant function of Ramism was to stress “the dynamic unity” between doctrine and practice.¹²³ The Ramists’ emphasis on the practice is well illustrated in their definition of theology.¹²⁴ Peter Ramus defined theology as “the art of living well” (*Theologia est bene vivendi*).¹²⁵ William Perkins said theology was “the science of living blessedly for ever.”¹²⁶ William Ames also wrote that “Theology is the doctrine or teaching of living to God.”¹²⁷ For them, theology was not a mere speculative discipline.¹²⁸ Concerning the influence of Ramists’ definition of theology on the method of the orthodox period, Muller stated that:

Although any estimate of the importance of Ramus’ definition must be tempered by the fact that theology had long been defined as either entirely or partly practical, it remains true that the definition of theology as the doctrine of living blessedly or living to God was appropriated together with the Ramist method of bifurcation and that Ramus

122 Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 90.

123 Perkins, “Function of Ramism,” 508.

124 Perkins, “Function of Ramism,” 516.

125 Peter Ramus, *Commentariorum de religione Christiana. libri quatuor* (Frankfurt, 1576; repr. Minerva, 1969), 6.

126 William Perkins, *The Workes of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the Vniuersities of Cambridge, Mr. William Perkins*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: John Legatt, 1616-1618), 11.

127 William Ames. *The Marrow of Theology* (1629; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 77.

128 Perkins, “Function of Ramism,” 506.

tended to influence theology toward an emphasis on praxis:¹²⁹

Likewise, Ramus' understanding of theology led Ramists to emphasize not only right doctrine but also "right living."¹³⁰ Especially, the Ramist emphasis on observance provided "the theoretical framework" to English Puritans who were passionate to change life and behavior of a congregation.¹³¹ Therefore, through the method of Ramism, English puritans such as William Gouge were able to keep the balance between doctrine and practice.

(3) Application in Gouge's Interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-3

In his exposition of Hebrews 7:1-3, Gouge devoted considerable space to explaining what lessons were to be learned and practiced from the text. Gouge followed his Reformed brethren in stressing the importance of applying the meaning of a text to contemporary Christian life and practice.

This fundamental understanding of interpreting the Bible as containing God's present witness to contemporary situations is well illustrated in Gouge's preface of Hebrews commentary. Gouge elaborated upon the intent of the epistle to speak to the church:

¹²⁹ Muller, *Prolegomena*, 183. See also, Keith L. Sprunger, "Ames, Ramus, and the Method of Puritan Theology," in *Harvard Theological Review*, 59 (1966), pp. 133-37.

¹³⁰ Perkins, "Function of Ramism," 511.

¹³¹ Perkins, "Function of Ramism," 511.

Quest. Was this epistle written for the Hebrews only? Ans. Though it were in special manner directed to them, yet was it not written only for their use, but for the use also of the whole Christian church; and therefore it hath ever been read in all churches... As for this epistle to the Hebrews, it may seem, in sundry passages thereof, to be written in a prophetic spirit, to meet with sundry heresies that were in future times to be broached, rather than such as at that time were discovered.¹³²

These statements explain why Gouge is determined to fill his commentary with guiding insights from the text for the life of the church. Following this rule, then, Gouge frequently draws doctrinal and practical conclusions as he moves through the text. During the course of his exposition of the first three verse of Hebrews 7, Gouge makes about 15 applications.

In his interpretation of verse 1, from the case that Abraham rescued the son of his brother, Lot, Gouge concluded that men should help their kindred who are in distress and that it is justifiable to even use force in rescuing them from the hands of enemy. By giving the example of Abraham who rescued Lot at the risk of his own life, Gouge concluded that this is why God has designed us to live in family relationships. Gouge commended Abraham because he rescued Lot regardless of danger. Moreover, Gouge urged us to train our children to be loyal to their families, so that it might become natural for them to show this loyalty in all their “bonds of relations” in all sorts of distresses.¹³³

¹³² Gouge, *Hebrews*, 6.

Interpreting the meaning of Melchizedek's royal entertaining of Abraham's army in verse 1, Gouge strongly opposed unjust treatment of soldiers, such as not paying them their due, wages and allowance. Then, Gouge stated that we should commend "those who have built hospitals, or given revenues, or otherwise provided for" soldiers who could not live for themselves because they were disabled in war.¹³⁴

Gouge also applied the lessons from his exegesis to a refutation of Roman Catholics.¹³⁵ For example, in the interpretation of verse 2, Gouge pointed out that Melchizedek was a Hebrew name, but the recipient of this epistle was Greek. Therefore, Gouge stated that the apostle translated the name of Melchizedek from Hebrew into Greek in order to help the readers to understand the meaning of the text. After this explanation, Gouge began to attack the papists. Gouge criticized papists because they use Latin in "all their public prayers and other sacred ordinances, as reading the word or administering sacraments." Gouge stated that Latin was not a language which the common people spoke at that time. In this way, Gouge understood that the papist's use of Latin was contrary to the apostle's purpose.¹³⁶

¹³³ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 472.

¹³⁴ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 471.

¹³⁵ Gouge's refutation on Roman Catholics was one of the main applications in his commentary. In his preface, he stated that "many intercessors and mediators to be under the gospel; and sundry other which have been published by papists, long since this epistle was written. So as this epistle, in sundry respects, may be as useful to us who live in the time of popery, and are much infested with popish heresies, as to the Hebrews, if not more." Gouge, *Hebrews*, 6.

¹³⁶ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 477.

5. The Use of Scope

(1) The Use of Scope in the Seventeenth Century

As a hermeneutical assumption, biblical writers of the seventeenth century regarded the *scope* as a crucial method for “fixing the proper interpretation of a passage.”¹³⁷ The scope of a text means “the focus, design, target, or intendment of the passage.”¹³⁸ The orthodox writers of the Reformation and post-Reformation eras interpreted the text within the boundary of the author’s purpose and intent.¹³⁹

However, the understanding of “scope” in the orthodox period is different than in the modern period. The modern period understands scope as “seeking author’s historic situation and finding the meaning of a text there.”¹⁴⁰ Concerning the difference between them, Henry Knapp states that:

The modern method looks at the texts in parts, seeking to discover the historical referent that lay behind the words, whereas the pre-critical view of scope placed a single passage or book within the larger context of the Bible as a whole. The precritical assumption of the scope was that

¹³⁷ Gerald T. Sheppard, “Between Reformation and Modern Commentary: The Perception of the Scope of Biblical Books,” in *A Commentary of Galatians*, William Perkins, ed. Gerald Sheppard (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1989), vii-xiii; Sheppard, “Interpretation of the Old Testament between Reformation and Modernity,” in *A Cloud of Faithful Witnesses: Commentary on Hebrews 11*, William Perkins, ed. J. Augustine (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1991), 46-70; Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle, *Erasmus on Language and Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977); Muller, *Holy Scripture*, 211-30.

¹³⁸ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 80.

¹³⁹ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 80.

¹⁴⁰ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 81.

the whole biblical witness determined an author's intent as the sacred text – biblical context determines the scope of a writing, not the historical situation alone as in modern hermeneutics.¹⁴¹

Therefore, unlike the modern critical exegetical method, the scope of the orthodox period focused on “how a book or text fits into the overall Christian belief as dictated by the analogy of faith.”¹⁴²

(2) The Use of Scope and Occasion in Gouge's Interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-3

Gouge relied upon his analysis of the scope of the text to guide him to an accurate interpretation of that text. In the preface to his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Gouge stated the occasion of this epistle, as well as its scope and method. He distinguished occasion and scope.¹⁴³ In section 9, Gouge explained the occasion of this epistle. First, he examined the issue of the context that precedes and follows the immediate text. Gouge stated that, at that time, Jews hated Christians so much that they persecuted even Jewish Christians and they were superstitiously obstinate to keep the Mosaic laws. Moreover,

¹⁴¹ Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 81.

¹⁴² Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 82.

¹⁴³ The seventeenth century exegetes used the concept of occasion to explain the historical circumstances which stimulated the writers to compose the biblical works. That is why the section of occasion usually included “a discussion on the author, date, subject matter, and original recipients of the works.” Knapp, “Understanding the Mind of God,” 83.

Gouge explained that many Christians even still tried to keep the law. Gouge also defined the original recipient of the epistle. Gouge stated that the apostle directly wrote this article for those who suffered much for their faith.¹⁴⁴

Then, he revealed the twofold occasion of composition. First, the purpose of the author was to “encourage” Christians to hold their Christian faith and not to walk away from it. Therefore, Gouge explained, this epistle is full of “many forcible encouragement, as well as warnings against apostasy.”¹⁴⁵ The second occasion was to remove “the conceit” that the covenant of the Old Testament “was abrogated” because of the New Testament.¹⁴⁶

In section 10, Gouge dealt with the scope and method of this epistle. This section was composed in the typical Ramist pattern. Gouge first of all revealed the scope of Hebrews:

That main point which is aimed at throughout the whole sacred Scripture, especially in the New Testament, is the principal scope of this epistle, and the main mark whereat the apostle aimeth therein, namely this, that Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient and only Saviour of man.¹⁴⁷

Gouge also dichotomized this epistle into two parts, “1. grounds of faith ; 2. rules for life.” Then, he further separated it into

144 Gouge, *Hebrews*, 6.

145 Gouge, *Hebrews*, 6.

146 Gouge, *Hebrews*, 7.

147 Gouge, *Hebrews*, 7.

two parts: "The grounds of faith" are set out from the beginning of the epistle to 10:22. "The rules for life" are illustrated from 10:22 to the end of the last chapter. Therefore, Hebrews 7:1-3 is included in the section about "the ground of faith."¹⁴⁸

Gouge stated that "the grounds of faith are all about Christ." One of his propositions about Christ was "His priestly office." Among all the points which were introduced in this epistle, all the content from 4:14 to 10:22 is about the priestly office of Christ. According to Gouge, Christ's priestly office is "comparatively" proved by two great types. The first type is Melchizedek, who prefigures Christ in the fifth, sixth, and early part of the seventh chapters. On these understandings of occasion and scope of the epistle, Gouge placed and interpreted Hebrews 7:1-3 appropriately.

III. Conclusion

William Gouge's interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-3 features several characteristics common to seventeenth century exegetes. As mentioned above, first of all, Gouge accepted the logic of Ramism in order to interpret this passage. He approached and analyzed the text through the method of Ramism. Therefore, Ramism provided Gouge with a framework for interpreting the text. Second, Gouge willingly turned to typology in an effort to discern the intended meaning of the passage. Through typological

¹⁴⁸ Gouge, *Hebrews*, 7.

interpretation, Gouge revealed not only the historical meaning of the text but also a “mystical meaning” of the text which would be fulfilled in the New Testament era.

Also, throughout his exposition of Hebrews 7:1-3, the influence and impact of the developments of Renaissance humanism are obvious. Greek and Hebrew texts of Scripture formed the basis of Gouge’s exegesis. Further evidence of Gouge’s humanism is found in his approach to the cognate languages and application of Judaistic insights into biblical studies. In addition to those methods, Gouge followed his Reformed colleagues in stressing the importance of applying the meaning of a text to contemporary Christian life and practice. Finally, Gouge used the scope of the text in order to discover the proper interpretation of Hebrews 7:1-3. On the understandings of the whole occasion and scope of the epistle, Gouge interpreted the text appropriately.

Gouge interpreted Hebrews 7:1-3 by using the exegetical methods of Ramism, typology, Renaissance Humanism, by limiting boundaries of interpretation through the concept of scope and by emphasizing the application of the text to contemporary life. Through these exegetical methods, Gouge found that Melchizedek was Shem, the son of Noah, and that he was also a type of Christ.

[초록]**윌리엄 가우지의 히브리서 7장 1-3절 해석**

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본 논문의 목적은 영국의 청교도 윌리엄 가우지의 히브리서 7장 1-3절 주석을 그의 주석 방법론에 대한 분석을 중심으로 연구하는 것이다. 히브리서 7장 1-3절에 나타난 가우지의 주된 성경해석 방법은 타이팔러지 및 라무스주의 방법을 통한 본문 접근 방법이다. 가우지는 또한 본문의 문자적 역사적 의미를 찾아내기 위해서 언어적, 문법적, 그리고 역사적 분석이라는 인문주의 방법을 자주 사용한다. 이 외에도 가우지는 본문의 적절한 의미를 발견하기 위해서 본문의 범위(scope)를 명확히 정하고 동시대 기독교 공동체에 본문의 의미를 적용하는 것을 강조한다. 이 모든 해석 방법은 가우지가 다른 개혁주의 성경해석가들과 방법론적인 연속성을 갖는다는 것을 보여준다. 특별히 가우지는 히브리서 7장 1-3절에 등장하는 멜기세덱을 예수 그리스도의 모형이 되는 역사적 인물, 즉, 노아의 아들인 셈으로 해석한다.

주제어: 윌리엄 가우지, 존 오웬, 히브리서, 문자적 역사적 해석, 타이팔러지, 라무스주의, 멜기세덱, 셈

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